

Chasing liberty

(1)

"She's always late" I mutter to myself. My feet hurt, its 30 degrees out, and I'm too annoyed to be waiting in the parking lot for my mother.

"Why are you still here? I saw your man by the foyer" -Nondumiso

"You sure? My mom is picking me up today"-Me

"Bye!" -Nondumiso

I roll my eyes, and slowly make my way to the foyer at my workplace. True to her word, I see his car before I even spot him. His tacky Golf R, with the personalized number plate. Gosh! Why the vrrr pah though?

I make my way to the passenger side and open the door.

Wait, what is Nondumiso doing in my seat?

Ubhale ufour, nogal!

Her head is buried deep in his crotch, and his hands tugging on her hair is not giving me any kind of peace. They look at me simultaneously, shock and fear consume his face, whilst a huge grin is plastered on hers.

"I was just telling Thabi that we should make this a party and let you join in"

My level of calmness is shocking, but I know my heart no longer lives in my chest, because I'm numb to the core. I smile slightly as I search through my bag and find what I'm looking for. I take my key sand decide they need to make contact with his new paint job. I key the shit out of his car, while he tries to frantically put his junk in his pants, literally. I can't shed a tear, I refuse to cry for a yellow, narcissistic moron.

"Baby" he jumps out of his car. I look into his eyes, and for a second I sense some remorse, but that soon turns to rage. He pins me against

his car and circles his hands around my neck.

"What do you think you're doing?"

Here we go!

"This paint job was more than your monthly salary" lapho, he's right. I only get paid 5k a month. Call center woes!

"Ffff...uuu" he tightens his grip.

"Carry on, by all means"

"You should be thanking her baby, she's taking care of me, so I don't get cranky when I'm around you."

"Whaaaaaat?"

"Yes, you can't be angry. You don't wanna give me some, you can't seriously expect me to rely on cold showers and my right hand"

This guy. He lets go of me when he sees my mother's car approaching and park behind him. My mom hoots and waves at him. He looks at

me and mouths "Come"

I walk with him to mommy's car and she smiles when she sees me.

"Hello, baby. I'm so sorry, I'm late. I was invigilating" my mom is a teacher.

He responds first. "It's okay ma, I came to pick her up anyway. I have a special date planned for us"

"Thabi, must you be this romantic?" -Mom

I zone out while they catch up and at that point I realize, there's another woman in my man's car! I'm not going anywhere with this monster!

"Actually, babe I really just wanted to go have an early night, I'm super tired." -me

"Hhayi Zinhle, the poor boy has planned something for you. Ungangiphoxi tu" -Mom

gosh, my mom's obsession with this guy. She finally saw her daughter in a somewhat serious relationship with a successful guy that has no

kids. I was done with being a disappointment to my mom. A couple of slaps here and there were normal in every relationship, right? His jealousy is only because he really loves me and he's a passionate person.

"Baby, I was hoping you'd sleep over" -Thabi

"Oh, yes. It seems like you kids have a special evening planned, and besides, Thabi lives much closer to your work." -Mom

"Okay, I love you mom." - me

She blows me a kiss and reverses out of her parking space. I look at this guy that has my heart in the palm of his hands, but he chooses to stab it every chance he gets. I make my way to his car, and open the back door and jump in.

Yup, I'm sitting in the back seat of my boyfriend's car, because his sidechick is occupying the front seat. I don't have the energy. I don't have the energy to do anything. I'm numb. He jumps in the car and seems to be unfazed.

[04/17, 14:30] Wdz: [2]

We arrive at his house in La Lucia. Yes, the 3 of us. It's a joke!

He takes my handbag and disarms the alarm as the lights go on.

"Wow, Thabi. Your place looks incredible, your interior decor is amaze"

I smile to myself, as I think about how I slaved endlessly picking the perfect pieces for every inch of this house.

I make my way upstairs, into his room and just jump into bed. I unlock my phone, and before I know it. He pulls both my legs and flips me over.

"So, you're telling him about our little situation?"
He says angrily.

"I asked you a bloody question!"

I just stare at the ceiling as I anticipate what's

to come.

"We've gone mute, I see. I have something that will make you talk"

He grabs my phone and pages through it vigorously. I'm calm, because I know, im beyond faithful to this asshole, and there's nothing to find. He constantly makes up stories about how I'm sleeping with my bosses and colleagues, I've alienated myself from any male, it's just too much admin.

He doesn't find anything (obviously) so he throws my phone against the wall. That's the 3rd one in 2 months, I think to myself. I'm silent and wouldn't dare utter a word.

"Baby, you know I love you right?"

I nod

"I love you more than life itself" he moves and makes his way towards me. I jerk backwards towards the headboard.

"Don't mind, Nondumiso. She knows you're the only woman for me, and she's agreed to take care of my sexual needs, while I wait for you to be ready"- Thabi

I laugh sarcastically, and he shoots me a look.

"Thabiso, I can't do this anymore. I may not be perfect, but I need more. I deserve more" -me

He climbs on top of me and he looks at me intently with his glossy eyes.

"Thabiso, let's just go on a break , just for a little whi.." Before I finish, he covers my mouth with his own, and he kisses me violently, biting my lip in the process. He licks the speckles of blood on my lower lip, and he smiles at me.

"Come, I wanna show you something"

He carries me bridal style and makes his way downstairs. I spot candles ordained in the living room leading to one of his custom made throne chairs. I guess he wants to do something

romantic to apologize. Why must he pull at my heartstrings like this? He gently places me on the chair and plants a soft kiss on my temple. Then he disappears.

I hear his footsteps approaching again and I can feel him behind me. His cologne fills the air, and the hairs at the back of my neck stand up as he makes contact with my arms. He places handcuffs on my hands, and I wonder what sick joke this is. Thabi has a flair for the dramatics.

"Baby, you're not ready to be intimate, and I respect that. I'm a lot of things, but I'm not a rapist. I'm a man though, and I need to be taken care of, but I don't want to cheat on you, so I have a solution. I never want to think about another woman while I release my load, so I want you to be present"

I look at this man, that is clearly delusional in search of an explanation. Then I see her, strutting in front of me, in lingerie Thabi bought

for me. I lick my lips as they get wet from the tears streaming down my face. My silent cries are met with her sarcastic giggles, as she looks at me in disgust.

"Girl, I'm doing you a favor here. At least you'll know who your man is sleeping with" -
Nondumiso

"Baby, you know I hate to see you cry" - Thabi
He kneels before me and tugs at my hair.

"Now shut up!" -Thabi

I bite my already bruised lip, as I feel my insides burning and turning to mush.

He turns his attention to Nondu, and they start kissing passionately. I shut my eyes, because I can't honestly watch this! But her moans are too loud to ignore. I open my eyes slowly, and he's staring at me, and calling her by my name. Saying how much he's imagining me making those moans. In everything he does with her,

even through their fellatio session, his eyes are planted on me.

After what seems like a lifetime of moans and groans, he's catching his breath after his climax. She's sprawled out on the Persian rug. I close my burning eyes, and squeeze out the last of my gallon of tears that I've cried.

He gets up and walks towards me, naked, and takes off the condom. He comes around me and uncuffs me.

I'm stuck on that chair, as if I've grown roots into it. He carries me upstairs and places me on the bed, at this point I'm a zombie. I let him take off my clothes and close my eyes as he pulls the covers over me. He jumps into his side and pulls me closer to him.

I'm broken, he broke me, and how will I put my pieces together again?

[04/17, 14:29] Wdz: [3]

I get out of bed as soon as I think it's morning. I haven't slept a wink, and I just want to get out of here. I make my way to the ensuite bathroom and lock the door behind me. I make my way to the large shower, and open the door and run the water while I take off my underwear. I swallow a lump in my throat, I can't cry anymore. It's physically impossible.

I get in the shower, and my legs fail me.

I end up sobbing on the floor and zone out.

I'm woken up by cold water cascading down my back and shouts from the other side of the bathroom door. I guess it wasn't a dream.

"Baby, at least tell me you're okay." -Thabi

"I'm fine!" I scream back. I stand up and turn off the water, and step out the shower. I grab a towel and walk towards the his and hers mirrors.

"Shit" I look like a train wreck. My 30 inch

Mongolian curls are soaked, my light complexion has turned red on my face, the bruises on my neck are really evident, and I can't even begin with my puffy eyes.

Time for some motivation!

I look intently into the mirror and mutter "you are beautiful, you are strong, you are.." I'm interrupted by another knock.

"Baby, please." -Thabi

I dry my body and lotion, then wrap a towel around my body and my hair. I walk towards the door, and breathe in deeply, bracing myself. I find him on the floor in his briefs. He jumps up when he spots me and embraces me in a warm hug. For a second, in his arms, I forget. I close my eyes and take in his scent, but I smell her. And then I remember..

[04/17, 14:30] Wdz: [4]

I pull away and look at the breakfast spread on

the tray that's on my side of the bed.

"I wanted to give you breakfast in bed, but I guess I failed" Thabi

I nod, and make my way to the walk in closet. I parouse through my clothes in his closet, that's he's spoiled me with throughout our 1 year relationship. Hmmmm, our anniversary is next month!.

I settle on a turtleneck black jersey dress that hits below the knees. It's a little snug, so it hugs my hourglass shape, perfectly. I take my black gladiator heels, with the gold buckles and walk out.

"Eat baby, please" Thabi

I walk over to the bed and start to nibble. He made all of my favorites, Belgian waffles, whipped cream, chocolate chips, cappuccino, strawberries, you name it.

He smiles as I involuntarily moan with every bite.

He hands me an iPhone 7 box, looks new. I open it, and find a wad of cash stuffed inside. Hmm, surprise surprise!

"The phone is in the charger, I want to be able to get hold of you" Thabi

"Thanks" - Me

He tries to brush my cheek with his thumb, but I pull away.

"Uhhh, is Vuyani around? I don't wanna be late." -Me

Vuyani is Thabi's driver.

"I was thinking, I'll take a quick shower and drop you off"

I knew better than to argue, I still have a lot of magic to work with my make up to conceal my puffy eyes, I can't afford to have bruises as well.

He ran to the shower, while I made my way to my vanity. I applied my make up and when I was done, he was walking in his towel, water

dripping on his abs. I looked at him through the mirror, and hated the love I still possessed for this man.

He dropped me off at work, and only drove off once I opened the entrance door.

I work at a call centre, and I can't imagine speaking to 500 different strangers today, let alone see that witch Nondumiso. So I make an executive decision. I'm done

[04/17, 14:30] Wdz: [5]

I turn around as the receptionist calls my name, gosh!

"Hey, can I get a pen and some paper?"- Me

She hands it to me, and I scribble 2 lines. Yup, my resignation letter will go down as the shortest in history, and I don't care. I laugh at the pathetic excuse of a letter, and at how little I care about anything at this very moment.

The weather is muggy, but I need the fresh air

as I walk from my work building in Umhlanga, to Gateway. I'm taking my sweet old time, and by the time I get there, it's going for 10 am. I decide on Tasha's. I'm seated at an intimate corner table and start my pity party.

It's 17:45 and I haven't left this restaurant, I've just been ordering one cocktail after another, and they're starting to get to my head.

The dinner Rush is coming through, and it's Friday, so it's getting packed.

I make my way to the loo, and find good looking guy waiting in line.

"Wow, I'm not even going to give you a pick up line. You're gorgeous" - guy

"Thank you" I blush

"I won't even ask for your name, I just want this moment to admire you" -guy

Okay, these cocktails are making me smile wider than usual.

He lets me in first , and he's a breath of fresh air, I've been so oblivious to the opposite sex, but now I'm single. Well, Thabi doesn't know yet, but I am.

I'm seated back at my table, and I have 32 missed calls, 4 voice messages, and 13 texts from Thabi. That's motivation enough to order another round.

[04/17, 14:31] Wdz: [6]

The waiter comes back and tells me "bathroom guy" wants my number. She points me at his direction, its him. With the most amazing smile. Only it's not for me, he has a companion. A female companion, and there are 2 kids, around 7/8 and they look identical. While analyzing my "bathroom guy" I'm blinded by the platinum ring on his finger.

Great!

I'm 7 cocktails in, and I'm done. Being sober is a thing of the past, and I feel myself getting

drowsy.

Shit!

A message alert comes through.

Thabi- "Get the fvck out of that restaurant, I'm outside"

I'm honestly surprised he hasn't already barged in and dragged me by my hair. He's done it once after an argument over me changing my password on my phone and a text from some guy at work. We were at a braai at his friend's house, I realized that he was really angry so I left him outside with his buddy's and went inside to cool off in the loo. I was still staring at my reflection in the mirror when he pushed the door open and charged at me. I still have a small scar on my neck from his strong grip that night. He threw me against the toilet bowl and eventually grabbed a chunk of my box braids and dragged me outside. I kicked and screamed and cried my lungs out while his friends

pretended to be oblivious to what was going on. I slept in the car that day, because he went back to the braai and locked me in the cold car. I witnessed a slue of girls walk past the car wearing close to nothing. Thabi only came back to the car at 04:40 am. Apparently I upset him so he needed to distract himself with his friends. I remember how he smelled of cheap perfume, but I wouldn't allow myself to believe that he did anything. He loved me. In hindsight I was really naive!

I huff, as my thoughts are interrupted by the sound of some one clearing their throat.

"Bathroom guy" I say as my lips curve into a flirtatious smile.

He chuckles and looks at me intently. " it's Siya, and I'd like to take you home"

Me- "Will I have to sit in the back with the kids?"

He laughs loudly this time and sits down. I gulp down the remainder of my drink, and signal for

the waiter, I intend on having just one last round. This "Siya" has other plans, because he takes charge. He pays my bill and helps me stand, I can't do it on my own.

I spot Thabi's car at the corner of my eye and I try running in the opposite direction.

Siya pulls me and throws me over his shoulder. As life would have it, Thabi was parked right behind Siya's car. He tries marching over to us, but we had already sped off in Siya's merc.

[04/17, 14:31] Wdz: [7]

I wake up to the sound of my phone violently vibrating on the bed next to me. I reluctantly open one eyelid, and see the monster's name plastered on the screen. I huff at the throbbing pain coming from my head, and the Sahara desert that is my throat. I try level myself up with my elbows, and moan at the discomfort. I open both my eyes this time, and that's when it hits me. Where am I?

I look around, panicking. I want to move, but I feel like I'm jolted to this bed, I can barely feel my body.

I hear a beeping sound coming from the door, indicating someone's entrance, and I quickly cover myself.

He looks fresh and clean, in his black Burberry golf T, Diesel Jeans, and Gucci slops. I don't even realize I'm staring until I hear him clear his throat.

I look away and pull tighter on the covers. Let me address the elephant in the room.

Me- "Did you and I.. Uhmm.. You know.. Like have.." I continue explaining using hand gestures, at this point he looks amused and just bursts into laughter. In a second he's serious again. He walks towards the bed and sits at the edge.

Him- "Trust me, you'd feel it babe"

He laughs.

"So, I got you some clothes to wear for now, I'm sure you wouldn't want to do the walk of shame." -him

His voice sounds like silk!

I smile and nod, after a year of being devoted to an unappreciative prick like Thabi, I forgot all how to communicate with the opposite sex. I'm a fish out of water.

Him- "So today, you don't speak? Don't tell me you're only induced by alcohol"

I smile, and shake my head. Why can't I speak?

Him- "Well, I thought maybe you'd like to grab a shower and get dressed, and I'll drop you off at work or school."

Me- "Home please"

Him- "Bunking?"

Me- " I quit my job yesterday"

I shrug my shoulders. His eyes move to my vibrating phone, and takes a look at the screen. He shakes his head, then tells me to hurry up as he leaves and closes the door behind him.

Jealous? But I don't even know him!

He barges in again as I put on my shoes. He marches over and takes my handbag, and the plastic bags he brought with him. I guess I should follow him out?

I take my time to analyze him from behind. He's taking long strides, and I'm barely keeping up. His broad shoulders, cute little but, his mesmerizing walk and his cologne has me following behind him like he's the pied piper.

I'm getting all kinds of stares from people in the lobby of the hotel. They probably think I'm his mistress, his platinum ring is hard to miss. I lag behind him, so it's not so obvious that I'm with him because right now I'm consumed by shame. He comes to a halt ahead of me then comes

towards me and intertwines my fingers in his and says "don't be shy"

I just pull off my best fake smile and walk out hand in hand with him. His firm grip wouldn't have allowed another option.

In the car, he keeps stealing glances at me, I'm trying not to pay attention to him, because I'm still trying to piece together the pieces from last night. I wonder if Siya noticed anything regarding Thabi. I need to make sure that I don't bump into Thabi anytime soon, or I'm pretty sure that he'll have me for supper.

I can barely keep my eyes open, the throbbing pain coming from my head and the nausea I'm experiencing has me saying a silent prayer.

"Lord please don't let me puke all over this beige interior"

I can't believe I was so reckless. I went home with a married stranger! He couldn't even spend the night, because he probably had to go back

to his family. I guess I should be relieved that he did leave me alone though, it's just that something about him just feels like home.

I muster up the courage to finally break the silence.

Me- "why didn't you just take me home last night?"

Siya- "you could barely talk, let alone walk, and you said something about staying with your mom. I thought it would have been inappropriate if you went home in that state."

Me- "so you just booked me a room and left, right?"

He chuckles, and it's a sarcastic laugh.

Siya- "so you really don't remember? Well I got you in the room and as I was about to leave, you sprung onto me in just your underwear, you've got good taste by the way."

I swallow the lump in my throats and bite onto

my lip that's now trembling. I'm so humiliated.

Siya- "luckily for you, I'm not that guy. I would like you to be sober for our first sexual encounter. Feel every caress, every lick, every thrust."

Me- "okay I think I get it! But I doubt there will ever be a next time, I don't do married men."

That last statement seems to bring him back to reality, because he's serious again in a second.

Siya- "as I was saying. You then asked me to come to bed with you, you started sobbing uncontrollably so I obliged. You asked me to hold you, and I did. Every time I'd try to get out of the bed, you'd tighten your grip so I waited for you to fall asleep then only did I leave. If you were mine, a tear would never fall down that pretty face. Not while I'm still breathing."

His last words send chills down my spine as I think of the possibilities. I sink into my seat and just admire the fine specimen next to me. He

keeps stealing glances at me and I realize that we've been driving around in circles.

He finally pulls over in a secluded area and looks at me. He scans every inch of my body, and I try to play it cool, but this man is undressing me with his dark brown eyes.

Him- "I've been driving around in circles, because I don't want reality to kick in yet. I want to be in your presence just a little while longer. But I need you to talk to me, okay?"

I swallow hard, and begin " I'm Zinhle, I live in Westville, I'm sorry you had to deal with my intoxicated self last night. I'm going through some things. I just hope you didn't get into trouble with the wife."

He takes a deep breath in and slightly shakes his head, then turns his attention back on the road.

[04/17, 14:32] Wdz: [8]

Our way home is filled with light chatter. His companion from the previous day was his sister and her kids. I involuntarily smiled when he told me this, I think he even noticed.

He still hasn't confirmed nor denied his marital status, but at the end of the day, it's none of my business, I've got my own baggage right now. The last thing that should be on my mind is a man. Thabi was everything I wanted and more when I first met him, and we all know how that managed to turn out. There's just something about Siya though that makes me feel safe. Call me crazy, but I feel safer around this stranger than I ever did with Thabi, but I know better than to keep my hopes up. He is married after all, and by the way his ring is indebted into his finger it suggests that he's been hitched for quite a while.

I go red with embarrassment when my mind wonders off and thinks about me jumping on him while wearing next to nothing. I wonder if

he liked what he saw. No that's the furthest thing that should be on my mind.

All of my thoughts have consumed my mind so much that I didn't realize that we're just a couple of meters away from my home. To tell the truth, I'm a little disappointed that he didn't at least ask me out to lunch, but the way that he's such a gentleman makes me even more attracted to him.

As the car slowly comes to a halt, I take time to assess this fine specimen next to me. He has a mature look to him, his mocha skin tone, his pitch black hair with specks of grey suggest he's in his late thirties. He's not cute because that would be juvenile, but he's handsome and definitely oozes charisma. The air is filled with silence, his hazel eyes pierce through mine as our heads close the gap between us.

Our lips finally touch, and I swear I see stars! He kisses me slowly at first as if he's waiting for assurance from me, and so I give it to him. I open my mouth, and allow his tongue to dance with mine. He tastes of peppermint, and his aftershave tickles the hairs in my nose, he smells so good! Our kiss deepens as we moan and groan under our breaths. His hands make their way to my breasts and start to draw patterns over my dress. His gentle patterns turn to squeezing, my nipples immediately respond and harden at his touch, while his other hand makes its way down south. Why is my body deceiving me like this? He growls when his hand meets my wetness and I travel my hand over to his crotch. Whoah, where does it end? My body tingles all over, then at the corner of my eye, I see the platinum band on his finger and I'm brought back to reality. I may be many things, but I'm not about to be the other woman willingly, so I compose myself and get the hell

out of his car, and run the next couple of meters home.

Thankfully mom isn't home, because I'm not ready for the 21 questions and the disappointment on her face after I tell her that I quit my job.

I lock myself in my room, and finally mourn the death of my relationship. I bawl, until my loud cries become soft sobs. My voice is hoarse, and my phone hasn't stopped ringing. I have dozens of texts from Thabi and other numbers I don't recognize.

Well this is what he does when he's messed up. He gets some of his married friends to call and text me and tell me how a strong woman doesn't break. How I should be patient and persevere and how it will be worth it in the end. Sometimes they even go so far as to play the

guilt card on me, telling me how depressed Thabi is and if he took his life, I'd be to blame.

A lot of the times, that's been my reason for reconciling with him. He'd threaten to kill himself and tell everyone it's because I cheated, and since I know that Thabi acts before he thinks, I've believed all of the threats. Not today though, the damage he's done to me and my pride and even my confidence will take years to fully repair.

I strip and look at my reflection in the mirror, I almost gave Thabi my body, but he humiliated me in a million different ways, and I almost just lay my morals down by the riverside for a married stranger!

I essentially no longer have a job because of Thabi, and I have to start all over again.

I lay back on my bed, and think of a game plan, I'm a 22 year old unemployed, single virgin, with no degree. The thing is, I never really was excited about anything I studied, hence I've started 3 different degrees within the last 3 years. I did a Bcom, a semester later I came back home. The following year, I committed myself to psychology, and after a year of that, I just wasn't feeling challenged. So lastly I decided to go back and do a BSc in Marine Biology, I don't know what possessed me there, because I'm not a fan of anything that resides in water.

So here I am, my mom is drowning in loans she took out to pay for my fees, so she literally can't afford for me to go back and study something I'm genuinely interested in. I decided to work so I can save up for school, whenever it'll be, it

hasn't been going that well because I give half of my salary to my mother just so she can pay off those loans sooner. She doesn't know how much I earn, because she wouldn't allow me to give her so much money, but I know that she needs it.

I never asked Thabi to take me back to school, because I knew that it would mean that I owe him for the rest of my life. So I take my monthly allowance from him and save that, although it's not that easy because he wants me to be in tune with the latest trends, and wants me to do my hair and nails every two weeks. I remember a while ago when I wanted to enrol in an intensive 2 week course, so that I could get promoted at work. I had hinted that I'm interested in a certain vacancy at work, and he wasn't on the same page as me. He told me that I should be happy with my current position and quit if I'm unhappy. He wanted me to be a

housewife, so to him it was all unnecessary.

Long story short, I ended up asking for some money to go shopping so I could pay for the course in secret. The money was accompanied by a strict message to send him over my receipts when I was done. The little money I had saved, would take 30 days to reflect. So I didn't do the course, nor did I get the promotion.

Here I am. So I'm too "rich" for financial aid, but too "poor" to pay for school out of pocket right now. Gosh, what a dilemma!

I need a plan, fast!

[04/17, 14:32] Wdz: [9]

The following couple of weeks were productive in the employment front. I had found a job in an upscale boutique in Umhlanga as a shop assistant.

My employer was Yvette, an elegant caramel skinned, tall and slender lady. She was only a couple of years older than me, but she was quite accomplished, with her own business and a happy marriage. I envied her a little, I really needed to get my shit together I thought to myself.

"Another delivery, pretty lady." -Yvette says as she models towards me with a bouquet of roses.

I roll my eyes, because I already know who they're from.

"Ugh, why can't he take a hint?" I say as I throw them in the bin.

Yvette- "What happened between you two anyways?"

I narrate the story to her and a tear escapes her

eye when I'm done. She doesn't say anything, I'm just welcomed by a bear hug.

Yvette- "How about I hook you up with someone?"

Me- "Uhhh no, a blind date? No Eve!"

Eve- "I'll get someone perfect for you, I'll cook and it'll be at my place so you'll be comfortable."

Me- "I've never even been to your place, so how exactly will I be comfortable?"

Eve- "Come on, you'll even get a chance to meet the hubby!"

Okay, she seems really excited, and I can't say no to her. She's my boss!

Me- "Okay.."

Eve- "Perfect, I'll let you know about the details. Now get back to work young lady"

We laughed and I went to the front to help a

customer.

The following days were uneventful, the commute between work and home was taking its toll on me, I missed being fetched from work, having a second home close by and even being brought lunch. I yearned for comfortability again, but that's what the problem was. I got too comfortable and it was at my own expense.

These thoughts sometimes made me think that maybe Thabi wasn't that bad, no matter what I was somewhat taken care of.

Mxim, no. I'd literally rather gauge my eyes out with a screwdriver!

I hadn't heard from Siya since our encounter, and that was a little depressing. I'd always imagine him parked outside of my house

waiting to catch a glimpse of me so he can talk to me. I'd always imagine how I'd play hard to get at first, but eventually oblige and sit with him in his car. I'd imagine how he'd tell me that he's a widower and how he's not married, and how he'd want me to be his one and only woman. Sadly none of this has happened, and I've lost all hope of it happening too. Siya has been the object of my day dreams, and I hate myself for it.

I'm on my way home after a long day at work. After a tedious walk from the taxi stop, I finally reach my house. Looks like mom has company over. I huff out loud. I'm not in the mood for pleasantries today.

The shock I get when I see Thabi and my mother chatting over tea and biscuits in the lounge. I try to turn around slowly and make a

run for it before anyone sees me, but Thabi spots me.

Thabi- "baby! Finally you're home! Come give me a hug."

My mom has a smile plastered across her face, so I walk over to him and just stand there like a plank. He grabs me and puts my arms around his neck while he puts his around my waste. I quickly pull away and turn my attention to mom.

Me- "I'm really not feeling well, can I just go to bed? I'll see you tomorrow Thabi."

Mom- "well at least walk the poor boy out Zinhle, he's been waiting for over an hour to see you."

Me- "yes, lets go" I nudge Thabi.

He places my hand in his and takes the lead.

We finally reach his car, and I yank my hand away.

Me- "Thabi, we're on a break. What are you doing here?"

Thabi- "you think I was gonna stay away, especially after how you humiliated me at Gateway?"

I roll my eyes and attempt to walk away. He grabs my arm and pushes me against his car.

Thabi- "Don't worry baby, I've forgiven you for that. I messed up and so did you. I just wanted to tell you that I'm working on myself. I want to be better for you baby."

He touches my cheek and tilts up my chin, and I see him coming for a kiss. I quickly turn away and he takes a deep breath in.

Thabi- "I know you need time, and I'll change for you. You'll see. As for that old man you were with the other day.. I'll kill hm. I swear to you, I'll kill him!"

With that he turns on his heels, jumps in his car and speeds off. He leaves me on the road, dumbfounded.

God, keep Siya safe!

[04/17, 14:33] Wdz: [10]

The evening of my "blind date" fast approached and before I knew it, it had arrived. Here I was at home in my room, wearing a thong and matching black lace bra, trying to decide on an outfit. An hour later I settled on a long black figure hugging jumpsuit with sheer sleeves and back, gold strappy heels, and gold sling bag. I applied minimal make-up and nude lip to complete my look. I didn't want to be extra, especially since it would be my first time meeting some of the people tonight. I also wanted to respect Eve's home and her husband.

I took an Uber that dropped me off at a petrol station close to Eve's place, I was having trouble with the location she sent. I gave her a call.

"Girl" Eve panted

Me- "I'm at a garage a couple of minutes away, the location is showing me flames"

Eve- "Okay love, hubby is doing an ice run now anyways, he'll just pick you up"

Me- "How will I know it's him?"

Eve- "He's driving my car. Shit my hollandaise sauce! Bye!"

5 minutes later, Eve's Merc C63s showed up. Just in time, I'm over making small talk with every Tom Dick and Harry here at the garage. Patrons driving by probably assume I'm a night walker and my outfit isn't helping my case.

I jump in the car.

He wraps up his phonecall after reprimanding the person on the other end of the line for calling him during "family time" and he grunts with frustration. I'm not paying attention, because I'm too consumed by my phone and a

picture that I've just been tagged in. Nondumiso in my bed, no in Thabi's bed wearing my lingerie. I know it's mine because I bought specifically for Thabi's birthday.

Although I'm a virgin, I'd always please him in every other way possible.

I lock my phone and sink into my seat and gaze ahead. Is this what he meant by changing and doing better for me? Who am I kidding, I know Thabi like the back of my hand. Hell would have to freeze over before he changes in any way for the better.

My heart is leaping out of my chest, and I have a deep resentment towards Thabi. I blink away the tears that threaten to fall. Thabi isn't worth reapplying my make up, so no I refuse to cry. My hands are trembling, I'm so angry and hurt!

He finally turns his attention to me.

Him- "Hey, so I'm..."

"Zinhle" he whispers with a look of complete shock on his face.

Our eyes meet, and here they are. Those rich hazel eyes that make my knees weak.

I've been so consumed with this stupid picture that I didn't realize just who is sitting beside me.

Compose yourself Zinhle!

Me- "Siya" it comes out as a whisper.

For that moment our eyes are locked on each other, neither one of us has blinked.

Our moment is interrupted by someone calling Siya via Bluetooth, shit. It's saved as "wifey". He shifts uncomfortably in his seat and answers.

"Love, did you find Zinhle?"

It's Eve on the other end of the line.

Siya- "Yes babe. I'm with her right now."

I laugh sarcastically, I can't believe this.

Eve- "Perfect. My love, please don't forget the Red Bull."

At this point my heart has completely stopped. Siya is the hubby, Eve is married to Siya!

Siya- "Okay hun!"

They end their call, and he dashes for the convenience store.

Just my luck! My mystery guy is married..to my BOSS!

[04/17, 14:34] Wdz: [11]

The drive to their house was awkward to say the least. He's stealing glances at me, actually no, he's staring at me.

Me- "Maybe we should keep our eyes on the

road"

He chuckles softly and reveals those perfect pearly white teeth of his. I take my phone out and start going through my photos, anything to distract me, because I can't handle what he does to my lady parts.

Siya- "So you're the one being set up with Brian?"

Me- "I guess"

His grip on the wheel tightens, what's that about?

Siya- "I don't think this is a good idea, I'll take you home now and tell Eve you have a stomach bug"

We come to a halt a few meters away from a monstrous gate. His chocolate brown hand makes contact with my thigh, and I immediately tense as I feel the electricity travel through my body. The veins in his hands bulge, as if they're

throbbing resembling the throbbing sensation in my under carriage.

I mentally count to ten, then manage to say "I'll be fine, I'm looking forward to meeting this so called Brian" I briefly smile and hope my voice didn't show my vulnerable state. He nods, clenching his jaw and drives to the large gate. He opens his window and punches in a code on the keypad and places his thumb on the sensor, his phone rings and he punches another code in.

Wow, what a security system, advanced I tell you! We're driving along the breathtaking driveway, with palm trees aligned on either side, and I finally see it, I'm in absolute awe of my surroundings.

The house is out of this world, to say the least. It looks like something out of "Architectural Digest" magazine. It's modern, yet sophisticated,

a perfect blend of both with its glass canopy that extends over the entrance of the home, and the immaculate wooden doors at the entrance. It has a few levels, but I guess I'll find out soon enough how many there actually are.

Siya- "look Zinhle.. I.."

I put my hand up, because I don't want him to finish his sentence. This is awkward enough, I'm not ready to here the cliches of "I'm sorry".

He looks at me with a blank expression on his face.

Me- "let's not make this harder than it already is."

He tries to interrupt me, but I don't give him a chance to.

Me- "don't worry, I won't tell Eve anything. Besides, there's nothing to tell."

I flash the biggest smile I can, while my heart continues to jump out of my chest.

I finally make my way out of the car, swiftly following Siya to the door, where we're met by Eve with the widest smile on her face as she throws herself at her husband giving him a short smooch. Love lives here vibes. She finally focuses her attention to me and pulls me in for a warm hug.

Eve- "Zinhle, finally! I'm so excited for you to meet Brian, he's roaming outside somewhere on a business call."

Crap, he's here already. I smile nervously and Eve hands me a glass of wine.

Eve- "Relax a little, this will help"

She winks at me.

Eve- "Well dinner is ready, but since the boys are still busy, let me show you around the house"

Me- "Okay"

I look up at the dual staircase that spiral down to the foyer, wow!

Eve- "Okay, let's just start down here, and hopefully we'll still have time to go upstairs."

She drags me across the foyer, to one of the hallways with a black and white palette with tiling patterns and with black marble columns. One of the living rooms has a rounded wall that accommodates the tall curved windows and the curved sofas inside as well. Everything meshes so well together. It's as if the furniture was specifically made for each room.

I could go on from the opulence in the kitchen with marble and brass finishings, all the way to the stone fire place in the main living room, and the intricately designed crystal chandelier suspended in the dining room.

Eve finally leads me to my seat in the dining area, I'm exhausted and we're only halfway through the first floor, I need to just dedicate a week to see everything in here, honestly.

My attention moves across the room to this fine specimen that seems to be floating towards me.

His smooth caramel skin, his short beard that accentuates his strong jawline, his light hazel eyes that have a hint of emerald, his broad shoulders, and that smile that resonates from across the room. Wow.

Eve- "Brian, I have someone I really want you to meet" Eve says with so much excitement, I think the wine is kicking in. Brian is a close friend of Siya's, practically brothers, they also happen to

work on some construction projects together.

He moves swiftly towards me and practically picks me up from my chair as he warmly embraces me.

He smells like heaven!

He holds out his hand.

Him- "Brian"

"Zinhle" -me

Brian- "Wow! I must say, you're gorgeous sweet face. Eve didn't do you justice" he says while he puts his other hand on top of mine.

He's looking deep into my eyes and I don't know whether to look away or reciprocate.

So I just smile, and blush in the process.

Siya- "Okay, let go of each other, and how about we eat?"

Okay, weird.

Siya insists for Brian to sit next to him,

something about talking business.

I guess I've gone to daydream land, because I'm brought back to reality by Eve snapping her fingers at me.

Eve- "Zinhle, are you good love?"

I look across the table and Brian and Siya have stopped their conversation. Brian looks concerned, Siya on the other hand is visibly uncomfortable, and I swear I can see sweat droplets on his forehead.

Hmmm this is pretty amusing, let me have a little fun.

Me- "actually, Eve there's something I want to tell you."

Siya practically jumps up from the table.

Eve- "baby sit down will you."

He sits down, and he looks straight at me, as if

he's trying to intimidate me. I look straight at him as well, I want him to sweat.

Eve- "please continue Zinhle. Excuse my husband, he knows better than to leave the table during dinner."

Me- "as I was saying. I want to tell you that.."

Siya interrupts me. Yip, he's sweating now!

Siya- "Maybe we should call it a night, its late after all."

Eve- "Siyabonga, keep quiet will you?"

Me- "I just wanted to compliment your cooking skills girl, this chicken is out of this world. I definitely want this recipe."

Siya finally breathes out and I give him a sweet smile.

The rest of the evening is filled with light chatter and a bit of banter. The wine is flowing and the

food is delectable.

"So guys, when are you making me an uncle?"
Brian asks the love birds, and I almost choke on my wine.

I just found out that the guy I've been obsessing over is indeed married and it's with my boss. I don't want to have to imagine them getting frisky. I'm not ready for that.

Eve looks pissed, as she takes the bottle in front of her and leaves the room. Uhmm okay.. at this point, you can cut the tension on the room with a knife, until Siya finally excuses himself and goes running after Eve.

"I think it's safe to say we've overstayed our welcome. Let me take your fine self home"
Brian says, looking at me intently.

Brian drives a Beamer, one of the latest models, and so I don't understand why he's driving 60km/h on the freeway. He eventually lets me in on his "plot". Since we didn't really get an opportunity to bond during dinner, he figures we should squeeze in the basics about each other now.

So from what I've managed to catch onto is that Brian is an entrepreneur. He dabbled in architecture and construction. He isn't divulging much about his life other than that and the fact that he has a past he would rather keep to himself for now. No wife and no kids that he knows of, his words not mine. He's primarily based in Johannesburg, so a lot of the time when he's in Durban he stays in Siya's pool house. Apparently him and Siya go way back and Siya helped him during his dark times. He also has a brother that lives abroad somewhere, unfortunately they don't communicate due to

certain circumstances that he'll tell me about at a later stage.

"I guess this is it" Brian says as he parks near my gate. He lowers the volume of the radio then places his warm hand on my cheek while he gazes deep into my eyes.

Brian- "Damn, you're gorgeous" he says in what seems to be a whisper. He tilts my chin up and traces his thumb along my quivering lip. He brings his head closer to mine until his cold nose touches mine. I suck on my bottom lip and, and I don't realize that I've closed my eyes until I'm startled by his phone ringing via Bluetooth causing me to shoot my eyes open. I see "Mbali Durban" plastered on the screen. Before I can stop myself, I reach for the screen and press the "accept" button.

Her- "Baby, you said your meeting wouldn't take

long. I'm in your favorite little number and I'm getting lonely now." She says in a whining tone. Unbelievable! I look over at Brian and chuckle loudly. I bid him goodnight loud enough for his Mbali to hear and get out the car just as she asks "who's that woman?"

[04/17, 14:34] Wdz: [12]

The next couple of days were sombre, Eve had left me in charge of the reigns at the boutique, because she was going through some "personal issues". Every time she'd check in, out conversations would be brief and would revolve around the boutique. Things were awkward. I wasn't sure whether her doting husband let her in on our little encounter or if I did or said something to hint that I have somewhat of a history with Siya.

This saddened me, I really had a soft spot for her, she had been nothing but kind and gentle

towards me during the time that I've known her, and we had really grown to be rather close. The guilt I was carrying over my incident with her husband was really eating me up inside, but I thought telling her would be selfish of me. Especially with whatever she's going through currently.

My phone rings, and it's Eve.

Me- "Boss lady"

Eve- "Hey pretty lady, hope you haven't burnt down my shop"

I laugh

"Last time I checked, everything was in order" -

Me

Eve- "What do you mean, the last time? Zinhle don't tell me you've left Jess alone in my shop, she's not the sharpest knife in the drawer"

We both laugh uncontrollably, because she's

right. Jess, the other shop assistant needs supervision in everything!

Me- "I'm kidding, all is well"

Eve- "Great, so I wanted you to come by the house, I want us to have a little chat this evening"

Me- "Ummm"

Eve- "Don't even think about blowing me off, tell Brian to drop you off"

After our blind date, Brian apparently hounded Eve for my number and she caved in. I was annoyed at first, and wouldn't give him the time of day, but he really worked hard at convincing me. He bought me lunch everyday, and the days when he wasn't around, he'd order my food and have it delivered. He called me constantly and he reminded me how much I enjoyed being taken care of. I was comfortable again, and

that's what I feared. I didn't want to unravel and get too comfortable. I was beginning to gain my independence back and I didn't want a set back. Comfortability is what landed me in an abusive relationship.

Brian and I hit it off, he was thoughtful and incredibly sweet, I was just nowhere being emotionally ready to date. He understood my views, and with his busy work schedule, we agreed that our relationship wouldn't have a fair chance at this time. Besides, Brian's honesty can be refreshing, but alarming at the same time. He told me about the people he's currently sleeping with, I didn't know whether to laugh or to cry. I definitely have a soft spot for him now. So I guess you can say we're only friends.

Me- "I'll be there"-

Eve- "Tell Brian I said hi" she giggled then cut the call.

Brian organized a cab to drop me off at Eve's place, and I was welcomed by Siya's aftershave as he towered over me, taking my coat. Our fingers touched for a split second and our eyes were locked onto each other. I really thought that I had buried any feeling towards this man, but my heart is leaping out of my chest at this point, and his smile has me weak at the knees.

Eve- "Are you two coming?" Eve asks standing a few meters away. Shit

I leap across the foyer and follow her to the casual dining room.

I take a seat, and almost choke on the wine I now have in hand when Eve opens her mouth.

Eve- "Zinhle, Brian told me everything"

What?

[04/17, 14:34] Wdz: [13]

Me- "Uhhh, about?"

Eve- "Come on, don't play stupid"

Me- "Okay, well, let me explain.."

Eve- "No, let me"

I gulp down my wine, trying to hide my trembling hands.

Eve- "Okay, so I appreciate your concern , but I'm fine. Siya told me you've been calling in and checking on me"

The whole time, I'm confused as can be. What is going on right now? What did Siya do?

Eve- "I walked in on him just staring at your number on his phone, he explained that he had just gotten off the phone with you and you were checking in on me."

Eve- "I know we've grown close Zinhle, and I just want to put your mind at ease"

Me- "Okay" I manage to say

Eve- "I know I haven't gone into detail about what my personal issues are, and I find it only fair to let you in. You're not just my employee, you're also one of my best friends. I'm sorry for being distant lately."

I pour myself another glass of wine, I have a feeling I'm going to need it.

Eve- "I was pregnant, but unfortunately it was ectopic. Long story short, I had to get an op, turns out they took out my Fallopian tube"

My tears are just free falling down my face, I look over at Siya and he's visibly heartbroken and uncomfortable.

Me- "I'm so sorry, i don't even know what to say or do."

Eve- "It's okay, after 3 miscarriages, I don't have any tears left to cry"

Siya walks over to her and holds her for a while. His eyes are red, and he's visibly broken. I realize at that moment that their lives aren't perfect. I also realize that my feelings for Siya are deeper and more intense than I had anticipated. Just witnessing him in a vulnerable state pulls at my heartstrings. I look at him, and all I want to do is jump across the table and take his pain away in every possible way.

Eve- "I've asked you to come, because I have an idea. I hate to ask this, but here goes nothing.." she takes the bottle of wine and drinks from it.

Eve- "Zinhle, I would love it if you'd be our surrogate"

"What?!?"- Siya and I shout in unison

Eve- "I know, I'm sorry for bombarding you guys

with this, but the chances of me carrying my own baby are slim to none, and adoption just isn't the same. I want my own baby with part of me and part of you Siya. Please" Eve says with pleading eyes that are glistening with tears.

Eve- "I wanna do this with someone I trust, and I trust you Zinhle"

I swallow a lump in my throat. She trusts me? The girl that's kissed her husband!

Eve- "We can draw up a contract, and you'll be handsomely rewarded. You can even go back to school after the birth, and you can be set up for life. Please just think about it"

Siya- "No! Enough!" -Siya shouts, and I almost fall off my seat.

Siya- "Yvette Khanyisile Nyathi, don't piss me off! I am your husband, and you will not bombard me with such in front of your

employees, do you hear me?"

Okay, now I'm just an employee. Eve keeps rolling her eyes as she drinks her wine from the bottle. My eyes are burning from my tears that are threatening to fall.

Siya- "Zinhle, it's time you left. I'll get the driver to take you."

I nod like a little school girl, and make my way to the foyer. The house is so silent, my heels are screeching on the tiled floors and I can just feel Siya's agitation towards them. Let me get out of here!

The moment I get home, I reach under my bed for my secret alcohol stash and drink the Henny straight from the bottle as I lightly chuckle at the events of this evening. There's no way in

hell Eve meant what she said about me being her surrogate I think to myself while stripping in front of the mirror and imagining myself with a swollen belly. I erase the thought from my head and wear my pink fluffy gown and make my way to my bed. My thoughts are interrupted my vibrating phone. It's an unknown number.

Me- "Hello?"

Silence

Me- "Hello?"

Caller- "Zinhle.." it's Siya

Me- "Yes" I'm annoyed right now.

Siya- "Please just give me 5 minutes of your time. I'm outside"

Me- "What?!?" He must be kidding. What would he want with the help?

I go over to the window and see his lights flickering across the road.

Me- "What..why are you here?"

Siya- "I really need to talk to you, please."

I'm curious to hear what he has to say, and I'm just a fool when it comes to Siya anyways. I hate that.

Me- "Give me a minute"

I guess I should find out what he wants right? 5 minutes won't hurt. I put on my slippers and walk to my mom's room. She's on top of the covers and she's fallen asleep with soft music in the background and her phone in her hand. I get closer and place a fleece throw over her curled up body and tip toe out of the house. It's freezing outside and the road is wet from the drizzling rain.

I run to Siya's car and literally jump in. It's so warm and cosy, I sink into the seat and he wastes no time, as he clears his throat and speaks.

Siya- "I'm sorry about earlier on, I was just really surprised at Eve's request, especially since it's not even something we had discussed prior."

I just nod and wait for him to continue.

"Well, we've struggled to conceive over the years, and since we've always imagined having a large family, it's really driven a wedge between us. She feels guilty for not being physically able to at least give me an heir and she thinks I blame her for it. That's the farthest thing from the truth, I love her and I just want us to get back to being completely happy again. We've drifted apart and maybe a baby is what will piece us back together"

It feels like a dagger has pierced through my

heart. He just told me that he loves Eve and didn't even flinch.

Me- "Siya.. I.."

Siya- "Please just let me finish. I wasn't on board with Eve's request because of my encounters with you, but Eve trusts you and is too embarrassed to ask a friend or family member and going through an agency can be a lengthy process. I know this situation is unconventional, but please consider Eve's request. Just be open to it. But before you do, I need to do this.."

He smashes his lips on mine, he smells of mint and his masculine aftershave. He parts my lips with his tongue, and deepens our kiss. Our lips are dancing with each other and our tongues are exploring each other's throats at this point. Our kiss is filled with passion and want as his

hand tugs onto the back of my head while his other hand travels under my gown and traces unknown patterns over my underwear. I'm lost in the kiss, and I unknowingly place my hand over his bulge. He grunts and unexpectedly stops. He shifts uncomfortably in his seat and tries to reposition his hard on.

"I'm sorry, but that can never happen again. I'm serious. I just needed to, one last time. Because if we go ahead with the surrogacy the only thing that will connect us will be strictly a business transaction. I have history with her, and I don't want to hurt either of you, you don't deserve it. So please think about the surrogacy, I'll have my lawyer draw up some papers and drop them off tomorrow just so you have a clear understanding of what's expected of you, then you can make an informed decision."

I just keep nodding at every word he says. I'm

really overwhelmed and I have a lot of thinking to do. With that I bid him goodnight and head back into the house.

My underwear is drenched, so I decide to take a shower just to cool off.

[04/17, 14:35] Wdz: Just to show you that I truly appreciate your support, here's a bonus birthday insert for one of my readers!

[14]

The following morning I received a lengthy text from Siya that read:

"Zinhle, I'm sorry. I'm sorry for how I've come into your life and scrambled everything. You don't deserve any of the things that I've put you through in the short time I've known you. I realized how selfish I was being by expecting you to agree to such a request and also

confusing you with my advances towards you. Maybe one day I'll sit you down and let you in on what's going on in my heart and my mind. For now though, whatever your decision is, I appreciate you being open minded and allowing yourself space to consider it.

Love Siya."

I read that text every chance I get, over and over again. I imagine those words escaping his succulent lips. His sincerity in his light hazel eyes.

I received the contract from Siya's lawyer a week ago, and Eve literally calls me twice a day asking if I've decided yet. Truth be told, I haven't. As soon as I think I've made a decision, I think of the cons then change my mind immediately.

They weren't lying when they said I would be handsomely rewarded, because the money and opportunities at hand are more than generous. I haven't had a chance to talk to anyone about this, because who do I talk to? My sister is thriving in her career in Germany, and I don't want to be the typical Zinhle that screws up as usual in her eyes.

Then there's my mother, honestly I've put that woman through enough and my priority now is to make her smile until her last breath.

The rules and regulations in this contract are never ending. No hot tubs or saunas, because the temperature could potentially cause birth defects to the unborn baby. No caffeine, no acidic beverages, I would even have a curfew! The list really is endless. I'd have to also move in permanently for the duration of the

hypothetical pregnancy, Eve wants to be present for every stage.

If I sign on the dotted line, I'll be able to go back to school, start my own business, travel and there's even an option for reconstructive surgery after the birth. But how do I stay under the same roof as Siya for 9 months and keep my hands to myself? How will I explain my lengthy "disappearance" to my mother? The guilt I'll feel knowing that I betrayed Eve's trust, and will I be able to have a life grow inside of me and then just give him/her away?

If I don't agree, how do I just crush Eve's dreams of having her happy family? I'd probably also have to find another job, and save for at least another year, take out a loan and then only go back to school. But at least I wouldn't have to deceive my mom, I'd continue with my

cocktail hours and I'd be my own person. Let me also address the pink elephant here. How do I have a baby when I haven't even had sex? Eve doesn't know this, so would I have to divulge this to her?

This is all just so overwhelming.

I look at the contract one last time, with all of the highlights and the notes I've written in the margins. I place it in its envelope and shove it in my bag.

I make a mental note to contact Eve and set up a meeting with her husband. Three days, I'm making my final decision in three days, but for now, I need to relax.

I'm about to lock up at the boutique and in walks the dog himself, Brian.

Me- "Brian, I really don't have time for this right now" I say in an annoyed tone.

I'm serious, I just want to stay far away from the male species for now it's for the best. I'm connected in every way possible to Eve, it feels like I'm suffocating.

I work for Eve, I have feelings for her husband and now I'm supposed to be in a relationship with her husband's best friend. It's too much!

Let me not get started on Brian and his sly ways. I called him after that awkward dinner at Eve's place. He always manages to put me back in a good mood, and I was craving a laugh that day. I had just received the contract from Siya's lawyer, and reality was kicking in, so I called Brian. A woman answered the phone and told me her man was in the shower and I should leave him alone.

She continued to tell me how Brian told her

about me and how he's only around because I'm vulnerable and have no one else so he feels obliged to.

She knew so much about me, it was obvious that I was the topic of their pillow talk. That disgusted me. I never want to be anyone's charity case, and I was honestly hurt by Brian.

Brian- "Zinhle, come on! Don't be like that, I come baring gifts" he says while holding out a gift bag.

Me- "Leave it on the counter and see yourself out." I say. I may be taking a break from men, but show me someone willing to refuse a free gift?

He strides towards me and I involuntarily take a step back. I honestly don't need this right now.

Brian- "Please just open it. I won't leave until you do."

Me- "Fine"

I take the bag from him and there's a wrapped box. I unwrap it and find a gorgeous Rose gold Michael Kors watch just staring at me. My mouth curves into a smile, as I think of my misfortune a few weeks ago when I was mugged on my way home. Yip they took my Tag watch that I had conveniently borrowed from Thabi at the beginning of our relationship.

Brian- "You like?"

Me- "Thank you Brian. Now leave Brian" I say in a bored tone.

He softly chuckles then looks into my eyes.

Brian- "I'm sorry about the other night, I wish I could say it's not what you think, but I'd be lying."

Gosh, he's an idiot.

Brian- "Zinhle, she's someone I have relations with. I've been distant, so she's been listening in on our conversations when I think she's sleeping, and she's gone through our texts countless times. That's the only way she knows about the intimate details in our conversations. Zinhle I would never betray your trust like that, your presence in my life has had such a positive effect on me. Please believe me."

Me- "Brian, there's no need to explain yourself. We barely know each other."

Brian- "How about we change that a little. Let's do something. Maybe dinner or a movie or both?"

I did want to let loose a little, but not with this womanizer.

Me- "Maybe another time. I'm super tired and my bed is calling my name."

Brian- "Okay, give me back my gift."

He really is an idiot. But he's an idiot that makes me laugh, and that's what I need right now. I need to laugh. I suppose dinner won't hurt.

Me- "Okay, dinner. As friends!"

Brian- "Great! Movie it is."

I can't help but laugh and shake my head. I lock up and we head to Gateway to catch a movie.

I'm really glad I took him up on his offer I think to myself as we make our way home in his car. The evening was truly worth it. I decided to torture him and watch a chick flick; bad idea because he spoke the entire time! He's hilarious, and his presence was refreshing.

We finally arrive at my home and he jumps out,

walks over to my door and helps me out.

Brian- "I should have done this the first time around."

Me- "Thank you sir" I say to him as I slightly curtsy. He leans in closer and just as I think he's about to kiss me, he gives me a bear hug and whispers "goodnight Zinhle."

With that, he jogs over to his side and is in the car within a second. I'm still standing there confused and a little embarrassed, I had parted my lips and closed my eyes in anticipation. He flicks his lights nudging me to go inside the house. I guess he's rushing to see Mbali or whoever is on the roster for today.

I take a quick shower once I'm inside the house, wear a onesie and make my way to my mom's room. I snuggle up next to her on her bed. This

is exactly what I need right now, these men are confusing me!

[04/17, 14:35] Wdz: [15]

Today is dee day. It's a Friday, and after work I have a meeting with Eve and Siya. I'm still going back and forth with my decision, I just hope that my instincts kick in at the last minute and help me make a sound decision at least.

It's already my lunch hour, and I can't stomach the thought of food, my stomach is doing somersaults. While I nibble on a sandwich, my phone rings and it's Eve. I just let it go to voicemail, because I don't trust myself with speaking right now. She's probably just confirming the time for our meeting and if I have any dietary preferences for this evening. She's such a wife!

The rest of the day flies by much to my disappointment, because now it's time to lock up, Siya's driver is already waiting outside for me.

I pack up and make sure to carry my note pad where I have jotted additional notes regarding the contract.

On my way to their house, I page through my phone and come across a voice message from earlier that Eve left.

Eve- "Zinhle, I'm so sorry but I can't make it tonight. I completely forgot about the conference I've been preparing for for ages. It's this evening, so I've had to fly to Cape Town. I wish I could get out of it, but I'm the key note speaker so it's impossible. You'll be meeting with Siya alone for today, he'll just relay your thoughts and so on to me. Once again, I'm sorry.

Make yourself at home when you arrive, I left some lasagne in the fridge so don't starve my man. And Zinhle, I'll respect any decision you make!"

This must be a joke, there's no other way. I'll be alone with him with nothing to distract me. Zinhle behave!

I arrive at the fortress and the gates open. I make my way out of the car, I'm taking the smallest steps imaginable just to prolong the walk to the large door. I eventually reach the door and ring the door bell with my trembling finger.

"Coming!" He shouts from inside.

I take a few deep breaths in, I can do this!

He opens the door, wearing nothing but

charcoal grey sweatpants.

I travel my eyes over his torso and make my way down to his deep "V" leading down south. He clears his throat and says.

Him- "Sorry, I was in the shower. Come on in Miss Khumalo."

Well he did say that what connects us would purely be a business transaction. I just didn't assume that he'd be this formal. So I guess calling me that will be the norm now.

Siya -"Make yourself comfortable, I just need to grab a sweater and make myself a little more presentable. My apologies for this" he says pointing at his abs. I just look away, because my body always deceives me when I'm around him.

With that, he disappears up stairs and leaves me to make my way inside alone. I decide to occupy the dining room, since he's being formal, sitting in front of the TV would probably be a bad idea.

He makes his way to me and chooses the seat opposite me. He seems prepared too, because he's got in hand a copy of the contract, his iPad and a pen.

Him- "Let's just plough through this now. The sooner the better." He says in a formal tone.

Me- "Perfect" I say coolly

Me- "I'd like us to turn our attention to Section B, sub heading B2, page 4 on my copy. Rule 5; No cell phone?"

Siya- "It wouldn't be confiscated Miss Khumalo. We would just prefer a limited use of it during

the pregnancy. We would prefer for our child not to be exposed to such harsh radioactive waves. However that will be clarified in the final draft."

Me- "Noted. Rule 8; No cooking?"

Him- "The kitchen has sharp objects and of course the microwave. The same sentiments apply as with rule 5 regarding that. Again, that will be clarified."

Me- "I would actually prefer for rules 5 up to 37 to be reviewed. I'll have a curfew, the temperature of the water in my bathroom will be regulated, being restricted to room temperature water for drinking, pre planned meals, listening to classical music, and no sex? Siy.. Mr Nyathi it's a little excessive don't you think?"

Siya- "I understand your concerns, however these rules and regulations have been designed to protect your health as well as that of the

baby. We want the best of the best for our child, and that does not include a strange man releasing his load a few centimeters away from where my baby will be cooking. If abstinence is going to be a struggle for you, then I suppose we have a problem on our hands."

He says as he looks at me intently. I can feel my cheeks heat up with embarrassment. He excuses himself from the table and emerges with a glass containing what I assume is whiskey. From where I'm sitting, it's a triple.

It's 00:45 am and we're still at it. I'm exhausted and famished, but I want Siya to comprehend that I'm not a doormat and that I'm taking this seriously. So much so that I declined a bottle of wine, I never say no to wine.

Siya- "Okay Miss Khumalo, you've driven your point home. Before we continue, are you

considering this? Will you be our surrogate?"

Me- "Yyee.."

before I continue, he rushes over to me and scoops me up into a warm embrace. He repeats the words "thank you" over and over again and I can feel his heart jumping out of his chest with excitement.

He finally lets go and apologizes for "crossing the line" this is my cue to head to the kitchen and warm up our food.

I'm not in the mood to hear how much we need to keep our hands to ourselves, because quite frankly I've never initiated physical contact to begin with. We're seated at the table enjoying our dinner while Siya is ogling his phone with a wide smile on his face. I guess he's told Eve, because they keep texting back and forth.

He puts his fork down and walks over to my side of the table. As soon as he's close by the hairs on the back of my neck stand up. I don't want to look at him so I concentrate on the lasagne in front of me.

He sits down beside me and grabs my trembling hand. I'm still not looking at him, I know I'll get lost in those hazel creations and I don't want to disrespect Eve's home like that that.

Him- "Zinhle, I know this isn't an ideal situation, but it's what the universe has thrown at us. I hate that this is how it's going to be, because frankly I don't think I can trust myself around you. However, thank you from the bottom of my heart. I feel elated, and this news gets sweeter because you're the one giving me the greatest gift I could ask for."

I smile, and for a split second I picture how my life would be if he weren't married. I wonder what glorious things he would have done to my body. I wonder if our relationship would be long term and if we'd have kids, and if they'd have his eyes and my smile. I quickly snap out of this day dream, I can't have this attachment to someone that so badly yearns to have a family with someone else. The fact that he's okay with me incubating their baby tells me that his feelings for me are nowhere near as deep as mine for him.

I'm genuinely happy for them, I can only hope that one day I'll have this too. Siya keeps hinting that I should get an Uber to take me home, he's boarding his private plane in an hour to celebrate the good news with Eve. I guess this is it, I'm merely an oven in his eyes and I

shouldn't expect anything more from him.

What have I just agreed to?

[04/17, 16:11] Wdz: [16]

The following weeks were stressful to say the least. Meetings with lawyers became my every day reality. Siya and Eve wanted this to be done without a hitch, so they even hired me a lawyer so as to ensure that I clearly understood every word in the contract. Eve was expanding her "empire" so she wasn't around as often, but when she was, she made her presence known. Her excitement couldn't be contained, and I was content with being the reason for their happiness.

I had to cook up a good lie to tell my mom so

that she wouldn't be worried about my 9 month disappearance from her life. Eve tried to urge me to just let her in on some of the details, but I was certain that was not an option. We agreed on halting my visits with my mom once I start to show. Now I just need to make my alibi airtight.

I've been gravitating more towards telling her that I got a full bursary somewhere far like North West. That'll put her mind at ease and will explain my not being around as often. I'll have to apply to enroll at UNISA, I'll be couped up indoors for almost a year of my life, I might as well do something productive in the process. Perhaps I'll explain everything to my mother one day, but I don't see it happening in the near future.

Now that I'm somewhat satisfied with the changes in the contract, now goes the next

phase of our process; the medical examinations. I don't even understand why this has to be so intense, because this baby won't be biologically mine. I'm literally just serving as an oven.

Siya and Eve, however requested for the process to be done in a certain way, and I'm tired of asking questions and having reservations;so I'll just oblige. At this point I'm certain that this couple really does have my best interests at heart as well, and in order for this arrangement to work, I will have to trust them completely. Might as well start now.

I'm at Rocco mamas, about to indulge in this monstrosity of a cheese burger when Eve comes barging in interrupting my moment.

Eve- "Zinhle, don't you think you should opt for a

salad instead? You don't want those toxins in your body girl. Besides, I think you should get used to a healthier lifestyle sooner rather than later." She takes my burger and tells the waitress to take it away.

I'm so angry, I'm shaking. I don't want to say anything I might regret so I take my bag and hop into a cab outside and head back to the boutique. That was really uncalled for, Eve is not my maker and is she trying to show me a glimpse of what's to come?

Eve arrives soon after me, and the rest of the day we're trying our best to avoid each other. We're packing up for the day, and she asks to speak to me in the back. Let me brace myself.

Eve- "Zinhle, you know that I have your best

interests at heart. With that said, for pretty much the next year of your life, I own you sweetie. So do yourself a favor and just do what I say."

I can't believe my ears, I grab my bag and charge towards the door. Not soon enough, because she grabs hold of my arm. My reflexes are overly sensitive at this time because I land a slap across her cheek. When I realize what I've done I attempt to get closer to her and apologize, but she screams for me to leave.

I rush out the store and bump into Siya outside. I can't help myself, I run straight into his arms and just sob. I hold onto his broad shoulders, and his warmth finally calms me down. He lifts my chin up and wipes my wet cheeks with his handkerchief. I just gaze deep into his eyes that I can get lost in for centuries.

Siya- "do you want to tell me what happened?" I shake my head no and snuggle my head on his chest.

Me- "I just need a hug" I say to him in a whining voice. He chuckles softly and squeezes his arms around me and I feel better. I've just been so overwhelmed, this is exactly what I need. It definitely helps that Siya is the one to the rescue.

Eve- "and what's going on here?"

Damn!

[04/17, 16:12] Wdz: [17]

I jump off Siya's chest and contemplate whether to give him his handkerchief back or not. I should probably wash it first. I see Eve marching towards us so I run/walk away from them. People are looking at me like a stole something, because Eve keeps calling after me,

but there is no way I'm stopping!

I finally make my way home and decide to keep my mind busy with cooking.

Dinner is ready and I'm catching up with my mom in front of the TV. My mother has stories for days, and her impersonations are top notch, so I'm currently in stitches and I've almost forgotten about the mess I've thrown myself in. Until my phone beeps. Text messages from Siya.

"We need to talk"

"Call me"

"Zinhle, I'm coming there now!"

" I'm outside"

"Come outside, or I'll knock on your mom's front door"

The last one is enough for me to jolt off the couch, I don't want to test whether he's telling the truth or not.

Mom- "what's wrong Zi Zi?"

Me- "I don't have cell service and I'm expecting a call, I'm gonna go outside quickly."

Mom- "Thabi? Are you two fixing things finally? I wonder what you did to make him finally give up."

I had told her that Thabi and I were taking a break, because she noticed me taking public transport all the time and she knows how Thabi was against me taking taxi's.

According to him, he didn't want me to be ogled by perverse taxi men. I obviously didn't complain, because who would?

Me- "I'll be right back ma."

I make my way to Siya's Range and wonder just how many cars this man has.

Me- "Siya, I thought we agreed to stop meeting like this. I'm over whelmed as it is, and I don't want any more confusion right now."

Siya- "I set up this meeting, so I'll be doing the talking." I nod like an idiot. I hate the authority he has over me.

Siya- "as I was saying, I heard you slapped my wife today. I'm not even angry, but disappointed that you'd do something like that. With that said, Eve also filled me in about how she aggravated the situation. The both of you are grown women. I have mines to manage, monuments to build, million Rand deals to sign off on. Do you think I need this crap from either of you?"

He's huffing and puffing, and I'm half scared, but half aroused as well. I part my lips and attempt to speak, but nothing comes out so I

bite my bottom lip and just look at him.

Siya- "Don't do that, damnit Zinhle"

He whispers

Me- "I'm so..rry"

I don't even know what I'm apologizing for, but I guess it's what I should do.

Siya- "actually, get out of my car. My assistant will contact you next week regarding your medical analysis. Eve is sorry about today by the way. Zinhle.."

I look up at him and get lost in his eyes as usual.

Siya- "please get out of my car"

I try to protest, but he interjects.

Siya- "Now!"

I open the door and head back into the house.

**** SIYA****

Hi, I'm Siyabonga Nyathi. I'm Eve's husband. I'm 37 years old and I'd like to consider myself somewhat of a business mogul. From an early age I always had my eyes set on the kind of life I wanted to live, and I think it's safe to say that I'm living it right now.

Over the past 2 years I've set my focus from construction to mining and it's the best thing I've ever done.

Eve and I have been married for a couple of years, I'm not good with dates and sentimental stuff like that so I can't really say just how many years we've been married.

Eve and I have always been friends above everything else, and that's what has helped us overcome our milestones throughout the years.

I've always imagined having a squad of babies, because I want my legacy to live on, I want someone to call me dad.

Unfortunately Eve and I have been unsuccessful in that department. Before we started dating, Eve was in a toxic relationship and she was really broken when we met. Turns out, she was pregnant with her ex's child. One day she asked for some money to do her hair, we had barely started dating at this point, but I loved spoiling her so I willingly transferred her the money. Little did I know that she was 22 weeks pregnant, so she used the money to pay someone to perform an illegal termination. She bled out and was rushed to the hospital, and disappeared for 2 weeks. She reemerged and gave me some excuse which I believed. I only found this out 2 years into our marriage.

She was losing weight, having nightmares and was a walking zombie. My mother took her to a traditional healer, and that's when the news came out. She had to perform a ritual for the baby which I funded. So it's safe to say that my mother is definitely not a part of the Eve fan club.

That was a dark time in our lives, but we managed to overcome it. You see, Eve came into my life when I needed stability the most. I was a workaholic and had lost sight of what it is I was working for. We became friends, she made sure I was fed, she paid attention to the small details of my life, so I figured the next natural step would be marriage. So here we are. A couple of years later with no baby, and Eve blames herself, and I know I shouldn't say this but I have slight resentment towards her for what she did years ago. I feel deep down inside, it's hindering us from conceiving somehow,

although the doctors have ensured us otherwise. I'm not getting any younger, I want to retire by the time I'm 50, but I thought I'd have my own blood take over my empire.

That's where Zinhle comes in. Lord, where do I start. The first day I saw her, I couldn't help but just pause and admire her beauty. It was captivating to say the least. I remember I couldn't get my sister out of the restaurant fast enough that day. I've never stepped out on my marriage, and I've never intended to, but Zinhle leaves tingles on every inch of my body. I can communicate with her without speaking, our souls just connect.

As I said, I'm not a sentimental person, so I've never had anything to compare true love to. So I've always assumed that if I'm taken care of, then I'm probably loved, the fair thing to do

would be to reciprocate right?

Although the tingling sensations that linger on forever have kept me up at night. The feelings I have for Zinhle are foreign. I don't even know her that well, yet she feels like home. This is why I have to nip this in the bud before temptation gets the better of me. My father cheated on my mother countless times, i saw how it broke her when various women would come to declare their pregnancies. It became worse when my father passed on, the children that came to get their nonexistent inheritance.

That's why I swore that I would never be that man. I'll suppress whatever feelings I have for Zinhle until they completely disappear. I just hope it will be possible, especially with us living under the same roof soon.

I must say I added the part where she should reside with us. That's a story for another day.

[04/17, 16:12] Wdz: [18]

Siya's mixed signals are infuriating. It would be easier for me to forget about him if he'd stop making advances on me, because now I've taken a couple of steps backwards.

Worst part is that there's no escaping him, in a few months I'll be his housemate. Which is why I need a distraction, for now I should live and enjoy my life, because very soon it won't be my own.

The next couple of days are sombre. I decided to postpone the medical screening for a few weeks, just to wrap my head around everything. Eve hasn't been at the shop since the incident, and even our conversations over the phone are awkward. I need some light on this darkness, so I decide to call Brian. We speak almost everyday, even if it's just sending each other

memes. We've really formed a great friendship, he tries to make advances on me, but I know it's just because he's a serial flirt.

Brian- "Zee!"

Me- "Brian!" I say in a whiny tone, he chuckles softly.

Brian- "Out with it, what do you want?"

Me- "Well if you're gonna be mean, I'm not going to tell you."

Brian- "Sweet face, what can I do for you?"

Me- "That's more like it! What are your plans tonight? What do you say we paint the town red?"

Brian- "Well, I'm actually in Jhb right now. But since you've asked so nicely, I'll pick you up at 9pm."

Me- "Brian no. I thought that maybe you were around. We can reschedule and do something when you're in town."

Brian- "I'm not a fool to let an offer like this go to waste. I'll take a friend's plane in an hour or so. You just be ready by 9pm. Bye sweet face!"

With that he hangs up. He's such a breath of fresh air, exactly what I needed!

I can't wait for closing time, in my mind I'm already on my third drink.

The rest of the day is rather busy, I've barely had time to sit down and have lunch, but I'm not complaining. Keeping busy means my mind is too occupied to overthink.

It's finally closing time and I'm at the back wrapping up some paper work when I hear the door open.

Me- "Sorry, we're closed!" I yell as I get up off my seat. I hear footsteps approaching the back door and I think the worst. Maybe this is a

robbery. I take the closest "weapon" to me; a stapler and say a silent prayer. The door knob turns and I charge towards it with all my might.

Siya- "whoah whoah Zinhle, it's me Siya, it's me!"

I've been punching and kicking with all my might for at least 30 seconds, and he hasn't moved not even an inch. All of my efforts were wasted on Siya. What is he doing here?

He's got a firm grip on my hands and he tells me to breathe in deeply, as I'm still trying to catch my breath.

I snatch my hands away and march to the desk to grab my handbag and cellphone.

Me- "your wife isn't here, and I was just leaving."

Siya- "I see, I just can't get hold of her, and she isn't at home."

I look at him with a bored expression on my face.

Me- "please excuse me."

He's blocking the doorway and he's not shifting to the side. Instead he strides towards me, and before I know it, he's inches from my face and my breathing changes.

He covers my mouth with his, and as I try to protest, he picks me up and wraps my legs around his waist and walks over to the desk. He gently places me on the desk and stands between my legs. He hikes up my dress and nibbles on my ear while his hands roam my lower body. He traces soft kisses from my neck and finally on my inner thighs. I'm breathing uncontrollably, and when he licks my castle over my lace underwear, I almost go over the edge.

I jump up from the desk and push him away, this time he takes a step back.

Me- "No Siya! No!"

I shout at him.

Me- "I don't deserve this! You're married, stop messing with me. Just leave me alone!" I cry out loud.

As he tries to move closer, I grab my things and bang the door on my way out. I left the keys on the desk so he can lock up.

Now, I definitely need that drink!

I arrived at home 2 hours ago. I quickly got started on the pots and cleaned the house simultaneously. I need to butter up my mom before going out. Luckily she's at a friend's bridal shower, so I won't have to listen to her guilt trip me. Lord knows that she's good at that. I'll send her a short text to tell her that I'm leaving, hopefully she doesn't call!

I'm in my room, sitting cross-legged in front of my full length mirror. In one hand, I have my

Hennessy and lime concoction, and in the other, my make up brush. I'm putting a lot of effort into my look tonight, it's been a while since I felt sexy, and besides, I want to make some people sweat tonight!

The mountain of clothes I keep tossing on my bed is increasing, and I still haven't decided on an outfit. I've decided however that a jumpsuit won't work for tonight. I intend to drown in the liquors, that means a lot of bathroom breaks, and a jumpsuit has too much admin. So I settle on an off the shoulder red freakum dress with fairy sleeves. It's not too much, and in this case less is definitely more.

My a\$\$ is peachy, my waist is snatched, my breasts are tight. I'm making my own self sweat a little. I sweep my curls over to one side, and look at my reflection in the mirror. Girls, lock

your men away! I put on a choker, scrappy heels and carry a gold clutch. I complete my look with a red lip and snap some photos.

My mini photo shoot is interrupted by Brian face timing me, I don't answer though, because I want to see his reaction when he sees me in person rather.

I look through the window, he's brought the G wagon to come and play, and I don't mind at all. I say a small prayer asking God to keep me safe, I never go anywhere without praying. The Lord has seen me through some really difficult situations.

I reach the car outside, and Brian is visibly impressed with what he sees.

Me- "it's rude to stare, you know."

He whistles and makes me do a 360 degree

turn for him.

Brian- "Sweet face, do you blame me though? I look like a peasant next to you, should I go change?"

Brian has a flair for the dramatics, I've noticed this. He's looking yummy in his jeans, golfer and Gucci bomber jacket. He smells good enough to eat too.

Me- "are you going to drool the whole night, or are you gonna let me in."

He finally opens the door for me and we leave.

Brian- "Let's get fueled up with some food first and get our livers ready, shall we?"

Me- "For tonight we shall partake in a turn up!" I shout as I increase the volume on the radio. He laughs loudly and we dance in the car as we make our way to the restaurant.

[04/17, 16:12] Wdz: [19]

The food was delectable, but now it's time for the main event, we're off to the club.

We arrive at the club, and we receive VIP treatment. It definitely boosts your ego, when you walk into a place with a well established person. There's no waiting in long queues, no trying to negotiate entrance fees, no kissing ass just to get a place to sit and no budgeting for your drinks.

We're seated at our VIP cubicle, and it's just him and I on our couches. The table is decked out with drinks, and I can see the thot's eyeing Brian like he's a piece of meat and they haven't eaten in weeks. I decide to sit next to him, because we may not be together but he's my date, and he's mine tonight.

The music is right, the drinks are flowing and we're enjoying each other's company. This is just what the doctor prescribed.

We're having harmless fun, my legs are on his lap and he's smoothing his hands on them ever so often.

Our moment is interrupted.

"Brian! Zinhle!"

It's Eve and Siya. Is there any escaping these two though?

Siya- "Fancy seeing you two here" he says while easing his eyebrows.

Brian has a look of confusion on his face.

Brian- "I told you I was coming here with Zinhle tonight."

He narrows his eyes at Siya. Siya pretends to be oblivious to what's been said and signals for a

cocktail waitress, while he plonks himself in the couches.

Eve- "This is so cool. Siya wanted to let loose tonight, he insisted he wanted to come here. Your bromance is rather cute!"

Brian- "well, let's get this party going then!" He helps Eve sit down while I down my drink in one gulp.

Me- "I'm going to dance." I whisper in Brian's ear. I let my lips linger a while longer on Brian's ear, making it look a lot more sultry than it is. I see Siya at the corner of my eye shift uncomfortably. Good!

I rub Brian's thigh one last time and head for the dance floor.

I'm dancing like my life depends on it. In between the twerking and the grinding, I'm

making a few men sweat.

While I'm getting my groove on, I feel manly hands circle my waist. I jump away, but it's only Brian. I look over at Siya, and the veins on his forehead are bulging out. I eventually look away, because he's not blinking and he's scaring me a little.

I continue to bump and grind on Brian, because I refuse to let anyone ruin my night. Brian's bulge in his pants is growing by the second and it's snuggled onto my lower back. I smile to myself as I watch Eve walk to her man and give him a lap dance. I think the champagne is working its magic on her. Siya however still hasn't taken his eyes off of Brian and I.

My dance session is interrupted when someone

tugs at my arm roughly. I look up and see none other than the monster himself, Thabi.

Before Brian can act, his friends jump him and attack him with punches. Thabi pulls me across the dance floor, I'm kicking and screaming and see Eve across the room just look at me. I don't know if she's too shocked to do anything or if she just doesn't want to do anything.

I scream out for Siya and I see him jump across the room. He's in front of me within a second and he's landing punches on Thabi and there's blood everywhere. Siya looks like he's in a trans.

Me- "Siya, you're going to kill him!" I scream out to him. The bouncers finally get Siya off of Thabi who is now on the floor with blood all over his face.

Eve finally comes out of nowhere and hugs Siya from behind.

Eve- "Baby, let's go."

I'm not in the mood to watch them together. So I go looking for Brian. I find him on the other side of the club with an ice pack on his fist.

Me- "Brian, are you okay?"

Brian- "you should see the other guys. Next time I'll kill them"

He laughs softly. He cups my chin with his hand and gives me a concerned look.

Me- "I'm fine Brian, I'm more worried about you."

Brian- "I'm good sweetface, they just caught me off guard, but they messed with the wrong one. I think it's time we left this place."

Me- "I agree."

I take his hand and we walk out. I see Thabi

sitting at the back of an ambulance outside, and I quickly look away. I don't want to feel guilty, so it's best just to avoid it.

"Bri!" Siya calls out from a distance, and we make our way to him and Eve.

Eve is holding on to her man for dear life and she doesn't acknowledge our presence. She asks Brian if he's okay, and that's it. No mention of me. Siya finally comes closer to me and asks if I'm hurt, and I shake my head vigorously as tears escape my eyes.

Siya is about to pull me in for a hug when Eve tugs on him.

Eve- "baby, I think we should just go. I don't want to be here anymore. I promise I'll make you feel better when we get home."

Siya nods and his eyes are locked on mine for a

few seconds.

Siya- "maybe we should take you home Zinhle. Brian's hand looks pretty bad. I don't think it would be safe for him to drive a long distance."

Eve is shooting daggers at me.

I know when to take a hint.

Me- "No, I'll be fine. I'll go home with Brian and just make sure he's okay."

Siya frowns and before he can protest, Eve pulls him towards their car. He keeps looking back in my direction, and I shake my head trying to tell him to stop.

Brian- "So you're spending the night with me?"

Me- "I guess so!"

[04/17, 16:12] Wdz: [20]

We are on our way to the Nyathi mansion, and

I'm driving the G wagon. I'm sad about Brian's hand, but when will I get an opportunity to drive such a car ever again?

Brian won't let me go faster than 80km/h even on the freeway. He says he's had enough accidents for the day.

We're going to the Nyathi mansion, because I did say that Brian stays in Siya's pool house when he's in Durban. Today is no exception.

We finally arrive, and I park the car close to the fountain. Brian is behaving like such a baby, he's limping now and whining all the way to his pool house.

As we approach the pool house, I hear footsteps behind us, and it's Siya. Good Lord!

Siya- "are you guys good? Zinhle I can offer you

a guest room in the main house rather just so you're more comfortable."

Me- "No thanks, I want to make sure this big baby settles in and gets a good nights rest after all the action from earlier." I say smiling at Brian.

Siya- "well Zinhle, you're not a doctor, there's not much you can do."

Brian- "I beg to differ."

Brian gives me a mischievous smile.

Brian- "Dude, go back in the house and make love to your wife. Don't be too loud, we'll try not to be either."

I smack Brian's arm, and he cries out.
Overreacting as usual.

Me- "goodnight Siya."

I turn on my heel and pull Brian to follow me. Siya stands in the same spot for what seems like forever. We reach the pool house and I finally see him walk away with his hands in his

pockets. I don't understand what it is that man wants from me.

We enter the spacious pool house, and it's almost the size of my home. Brian walks over to the liquor cabinet and pulls out a bottle of whiskey and one of vodka.

Brian- "since our evening got ruined, let's have a little fun. Then you can tell me about those guys from earlier." He says holding up the bottles.

He disappears to what I assume is his bedroom and re emerges in sweat pants and a vest. He passes me a t-shirt.

Brian- "I think that'll make you more comfortable. You can use the other bedroom to change."

I nod and go over to the other room to change.

His t-shirt could pass for a dress on me, but I look rather cute in it. I go over to the kitchen to where he is, and he looks adorable in his apron. He's making steak and a salad. That's when I realize that I'm starving. Drinking always does this to me.

We're sitting on the floor in the lounge and I look over at Brian, he's so adorable. He's placed cushions on the floor, decked out our food on a fluffy white blanket. He's placed our snacks on the side and lit candles all over the house. We're having a great time talking about everything and nothing.

I have my legs on his lap and he's feeding me strawberries while we sip on our adult beverages. I think we've passed the tipsy stage, and his hands are travelling all over my body. He flips me over and his breathing changes.

Brian- "Sweetface, you're gorgeous you know that?"

That comes out as a whisper as he trails soft kisses along my neck.

He pulls up my t-shirt and stares at my body.

Brian- "you look good enough to eat."

He trails more soft wet kisses on my stomach and sucks on my navel. I flinch, but I'm too buzzed to say or do anything.

He travels further down and spreads my legs apart. His tongue makes contact with my castle over my underwear and an electric current travels through my body.

My mind and soul is in another dimension as I hold his head in between my thighs. He licks the entrance to my castle like it's ice cream.

Me- "Aah, Siya don't stop! Yes Siya!"

Then he stops.

Crap!. I'm sober in a split second.

Brian gets up abruptly.

Brian- "what did you just call me?"

[04/17, 16:12] Wdz: [21]

My eyes are closed and I'm too scared to open them. Think Zinhle! Well they do say, "when in doubt play dead." So I decide to over play my drunken state.

I roll over onto my stomach and mumble "come to bed Brian" and release the best fake snore I can. He stands over me for a few seconds, then I hear him let out a sigh. He finally levels himself onto the floor and lays behind me with his arm around my waist. He pulls a blanket over our bodies and within minutes, it's lights out for me.

The following morning, we're woken up by someone vigorously shaking us. I moan and cover my face with the blanket. Brian inches closer to me and I feel his morning pole standing to attention. I shoot my eyes open and leap up. It's too fast because I feel dizzy and then I feel someone's hands around my waist as I see the room spin. I can distinguish that touch from anywhere, I know it's Siya.

Him- "easy there" he says as he scoops me up and gently places me on the couch. He kneels in front of me and touches my cheek with his thumb.

Siya- "are you okay lo.. Ummm Zinhle."

Me- "I'm fine Siya" I snatch his hand away.

Brian- "What about me? Why don't you ask me? I am the one that was in a physical altercation

after all."

Siya focuses his attention to Brian.

Siya- "I'm actually here to tell you that breakfast is ready."

Brian- "At 07:00 am? Are you sure you weren't snooping around?" He raises his eyebrows

Siya- "Good thing this is my house so I can do all the snooping I want."

Brian huffs loudly.

Brian- "Sweetface, I think next time we should book at a hotel room. Maybe we kept them up with all those groans we were making."

I see Siya rolls his hands into fists, and I know it's time to intervene. I stand up and touch Siya's shoulder.

Me- "Give us a minute. We'll be right out."

Siya stays in the same spot for about 30 seconds then he finally walk out.

**** SIYA****

I could barely sleep last night, knowing what could be happening in my pool house. I sent an email to my staff at 04:30 am to ensure that breakfast was served early today. I wanted a reason to interrupt whatever was going on in there.

Last night, I nearly lost it when I saw that little boy drag Zinhle across the club like that. I lost track of my surroundings, and I'm ashamed to say, I even forgot about Eve.

When Zinhle said she'd be going home with Brian, I didn't realize that I'd get so angry. Poor Eve, I really took it all out on her until this morning. She can barely walk right now, but she's not complaining. She's been giddy ever since our last round and has been complimenting me non stop on my

"performance" . I can't stomach seeing Brian and Zinhle together, and how they flaunt their "situationship" in my face is sickening. Perhaps I should sit Brian down and tell him that Zinhle is my territory. He's always respected me, I'm sure he'll back off.

The only way I'm going to remain sane is if Zinhle is single for at least the next year of her life. I know I'm being selfish, but how am I expected to survive seeing her with another man right under my nose?

Speaking of another man, that little boy from last night needs to be properly dealt with.

[04/17, 16:12] Wdz: [22]

****BRIAN****

Hi there, I'm Brian Evans. Best friend and business partner to Siya Nyathi. I go way back with that man, and I must say that I owe some

of my successes to him. Which brings me to this beautiful gem that's Zinhle.

She's brought so much light into my life. Sometimes I find myself smiling just at the thought of her, but I know I don't deserve her. She's too pure, I would hate to be the one to taint that.

Although, what happened in the early hours this morning has raised a million questions.

Zinhle called me Siya! While I was trying to pleasure her, she called me by my best friend's name. That was a huge blow to my ego, I'm still recovering.

It's amusing to me how she manage to cover it up. Falling asleep was a genius move, so I humored her for the time being. However I need to get to the bottom of whatever is going on between Zinhle and Siya, perhaps I can squeeze at least a million from Siya as blackmail? Hmm

let the games begin!

****ZINHLE****

I was so embarrassed when Siya walked into the pool house and saw me in nothing but a t-shirt. I probably looked like a thot that had too much to drink and just opened her legs. I feel disgusted and I'm ashamed. I only wanted to make Siya jealous, and now he's probably glad that we're not in a romantic relationship. I wouldn't even blame him if he withdrew from the contract now. He made it abundantly clear that he didn't want someone loose to be his surrogate, and that's what I am. How do I always find myself in these situations?

Then there's the Brian issue from last night. I can't believe I called him Siya's name while he was probably in his house banging the daylights out of his wife.

His wife, Eve. I'm still surprised by her behavior last night, but I'm terrified that she could possibly know about me and her husband. I've been playing with fire all along, what was so hard about keeping my hands to myself?

I'm not going to breakfast, I need my bed and I'm sure I have a lot of explaining to do when I get home, rather sooner than later.

I emerge from the bathroom in my freakum dress from the previous night and Brian's slippers, I'll return them at a later date. It's bad enough that I'm about to do the walk of shame.

Me- "Bri, I'm calling an Uber I need to head home."

He walks towards me from the kitchen, and he's no longer wearing his vest. I look away, because now is not the time to perv over him.

He cups my face in his hand.

Brian- "i can drop you off, that will give you time to tell me why called out Siya's name last night."

My eyes almost fall out of their sockets, and I can feel my cheeks heating up.

Me- "Brian, now is not the time for your jokes. You saw that the liquor got the better of me. I hope your hand is better."

I take it in mine and plant small kisses on his knuckles.

Me- "I'll see you around Brian."

I blow a kiss to him and head out.

I send a quick text to Siya asking him to open the gate for me, and instead I see Eve walk out of the house and she's coming towards me. My heart suddenly beats fast because I can't read her expression, is she pissed or is she frowning due to the sun. Nonetheless, she's marching

towards me and I have to stand my ground.

Eve- "hi"

I nod and smile shyly.

Eve- "I didn't get a chance to check on you last night, but I hope you're good."

Me- "I'm fine thanks. I was actually just on my way out. I need to go home and rest."

Eve gives me a wide smile and comes towards me and holds me in an embrace.

Eve- "Zinhle, I don't know what your intentions are with Siya, but stop while you're ahead. You don't wanna go to war with me, trust me sweetie. I like you, that's why I'm being nice enough to warn you. You are merely our oven, behave like one!" She whispers in my ear.

She let's go of me and opens the gate.

I walk away with my head hanging low.

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: [23]

****ZINHLE****

I'm at home curled up in my bed. I'm really craving my stash under my bed, but alcohol doesn't seem to love me lately. I'm cuddled up next to my teddy, and I don't have tears to cry.

It's times like these that I wish I was established enough to have my own apartment. I love my mother to death, but today I need to be alone. I'm dreading when my mother comes home. I know I'm going to have to grovel for not coming home last night, cook and clean, but I'm really not in the mood hey.

My phone has been blowing up since I got home, but I'm not ready to face the world. I know it's probably threats from Thabi, Siya

pretending to care, and Brian just being Brian.

I realize there's no use crying over spilled milk. I've made my bed and now it's time to lay in it.

So I end my pity party. I get up from bed and make my way to the kitchen to get started on dinner. I'm making a 3 course meal, because I even hate myself right now for what occurred last night. I need my mommy's love and affection, so allow me to grovel. While I'm busy with the pots, I put our clothes in the washing machine then headed to the lounge to do my spring cleaning. Just as I was mopping the house, in walked my mother and she was happier than I expected.

Mom- "hello baby!"

She walks over to me

Me- "hey ma!"

She kisses me on the cheek. Okay so I guess

I'm not in trouble then.

Her- "let me not disturb you ke."

She walks away, and I realize that she's not wearing make-up, her dress has stains on it and she's being too calm for my liking. My mom never leaves the house without at least a hint of mascara.

Wait! She didn't sleep at home!

She doesn't know that I didn't come home last night, because she didn't either!

I continue with my cleaning, and I'm in a better mood now that I'm not in trouble. I finish up with supper and set the table for the 2 of us. I go to her room to tell her dinner is ready and she's lying on her bed on her back, with her feet touching the head board. She's in her gown, and she's paying so much attention to her phone she doesn't even hear me walk in. She's giggling,

and I just stand next to the bed for a few seconds. Seeing her like this makes my heart smile.

Me- "Mama, supper is ready"

Her- "Thank you baby. I'm not going to eat too much, I have a church meeting with Lindiwe."

I roll my eyes, 2 nights in a row. It looks like my mom's love life is heating up!

If you're wondering what happened to my dad, well he passed away a few years after him and mom got divorced. He was abusive towards her during the last years of their marriage, my sister and I finally sat her down and told her that she'd have our blessing if she wanted to leave, so she did. They got a divorce and he divorced his daughters too. The last time I saw him was when he came home to find us packing our

belongings.

That was one of the most terrifying days I've ever experienced. We were literally throwing our clothes into plastic bags when he arrived. He locked the gate so as to block us from leaving, then he came into the house. He was a little intoxicated, so his speech was slurry, but he was visibly angry. None of us stopped what we were doing, instead that made us pack at an even faster rate.

We were throwing appliances, clothes, picture frames into the car. That's when he became violent, grabbing and pushing my mother. My sister and I had to intervene, she threw a vase on his head while I scrambled over to his pockets and stole the key for the gate.

A few months later in divorce court, he stood in front of the judge and relinquished all custody rights to myself and my sister. Yes, he

requested to no longer be responsible for us.

That was my last memory of my own father. A few years later he developed a heart condition that took his life abruptly. He led a reckless lifestyle, so it was inevitable. Needless to say, he didn't leave us anything. His relatives claimed in all of his policies and disappeared. The last time I visited his gravesite was the day of his funeral, and frankly I don't plan on going there ever again. That man tainted what would have been an amazing upbringing, so I guess it's safe to say that I still have slight resentment towards him.

My mom felt obliged to plan and pay for his funeral. She's always been so consumed by guilt, it would keep her up at night.

It's only in the recent years that she's began to accept happiness in her life, and the possibility

that there's someone making her happy, has me satisfied. Telling her about my predicament would be selfish of me.

Mom eats four spoons of the butternut soup starter, and excuses herself to go get ready for her "meeting".

I guess I'll be alone tonight, but I'm not complaining. I need some time to reflect and mentally accept my situation.

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: [24]

It was Monday morning, and I was feeling refreshed. I had attended church the previous day, because I needed to draw my strength from my faith. As soon as I stepped out of church, I felt rejuvenated and renewed. I knew that I had to embrace the cards that I had been dealt.

I'm in my room and I'm getting ready for work when an email notification comes through. It's an email from Siya notifying me that my medical examination will commence during the course of the week, because Eve and him have other obligations over the next few weeks.

Okay this is nothing I can't handle.

The following days at work were interesting. Eve was around the boutique more often and she behaved as if nothing happened between us, so I did the same. I wasn't going to feed into whatever game she was playing. There's more to life than that, and I guess the sooner I show her I mean no harm, the better for me. I am not interested in making any enemies.

The day of my medical examination arrived, and

the Nyathi driver was already waiting for me outside. I'm meeting Eve and Siya at the hospital. Apparently, Siya has a close friend that's a doctor and will be the one administering the surrogacy process.

I arrive in the doctor's rooms, and the first person I see is Siya seated on a couch in the corner. He's just staring at the ceiling and he looks as if he has a lot on his mind.

Me- "ahem"

I clear my throat, and he looks over at me. He jumps off his seat and offers it to me. I don't know why, because it's a 3 seater couch and the both of us could sit comfortably. Oh well, I'm not going to dwell on this.

Him- "afternoon Zinhle. Eve couldn't make it today, she has a deadline she's afraid she's

going to miss, so unfortunately you're stuck with me."

I roll my eyes, this is great. I thought Eve didn't trust me with her husband, now she has us alone attending a doctor's appointment. This must be a test.

Siya and I fall into an awkward silence.

Us- "so.."

we speak in unison.

Siya- "Sorry, you go first."

Me- "I was just gonna ask where the doctor is and how long this is gonna take?"

Siya- "I'm sure he's been paged, he cleared his schedule for us so we won't wait long."

I nod.

After a few minutes in walks a middle aged man that introduces himself as Dr Steven.

Him- "let's get started shall we?"

I plonk on the bed close by and he starts with his process.

He draws blood, what seems to be a lot of it. He gives me a cup to pee in, takes my blood pressure and continues. I feel like a science experiment at this point. He's jotting down numbers, and I see Siya just standing in the far corner watching everything happen.

Dr Steven- "we're almost done. We just need to do an internal ultrasound and Pap smear."

Okay whoah, that's where I have to draw the line.

Me- "Can't you just perform an external one rather?"

He looks over at Siya, and he nods, so the Doctor proceeds with the external one.

Me- "could you excuse us for a second, please Doc?"

Him- "Sure" he gives me a slight smile and leaves the room.

Me- "Siya, I can't do the Pap smear right now. Can we please just over look that detail? Please?"

I'm not even looking at him, I'm staring at the floor.

He walks over to me.

Him- "I don't want you to feel uncomfortable, I understand."

He calls the doctor to come back and he's setting up for the Pap smear.

Siya- "That will be all for today."

Doctor- "But Mr Nyathi."

Siya- "Do I pay you to disagree with me?
Because I don't remember that being the case.
Zinhle get ready, I'm taking you home."

With that he turns and storms out.

I'm at the entrance of the hospital and in front of me parks Siya in his Porsche. I continue to just stand there and look around pretending to be oblivious to him.

He finally presses down the window and waves for me to come in.

I'm trying my best here to stay away from temptation and allowing Siya to take me home is written temptation all over. I'll just tell him I'm waiting for a cab then I'll try find a taxi rank nearby.

I go towards the car and stand by the passenger side.

Siya- "Zinhle, what are you doing? Get in the

car!"

Me- "Uhhh Siya, I'm actually waiting for a cab, so I'm fine."

He turns off the engine.

Siya- "Okay, I'll wait with you."

Truth is, I don't have the money for a cab, and I don't want Siya to latch on to the fact that I'm vulnerable.

Me- "Siya, it's fine. It's still quite far"

Him- "I have all day."

He says as he reclines his seat.

After 20 minutes of standing and waiting for the cab, I see that he's fallen asleep.

I briskly walk away from his car. Problem is, I don't even know where to get a taxi.

I eventually come across a petrol station and decide to ask the people that work there.

While an employee gives me directions, I feel someone's presence behind me and that cologne is his.

Him- "And the cab?"

Me- "It cancelled. I'm just gonna take a taxi instead." He scoops me up and puts me over his shoulder and plonks me in the passenger seat. He comes around and sits in the drivers seat and speeds off.

I'm looking out my window and I can feel him staring at me.

He eventually clears his throat.

Siya- " Can I ask your reason behind not wanting to do an internal examination?"

I ignore him.

Siya- "I'm talking to you."

Silence.

Me- "Siya what do you want?"

Him- "You."

I just look at him.

Siya- "What I was trying to say was that I want you to tell me what the issue was back there."

Me- "You know what I want? I want you to leave me alone. You and your wife, just leave me alone. I'm just an employee so treat me as one. There's no need for us to play happy family. All of you just leave me alone!"

Siya laughs in a sarcastic manner.

Him- "You must be joking. Now you're jealous of my wife because I'm not pursuing a relationship with you? Don't talk about my wife Zinhle. I'm married, get over it."

What?

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: [25]

With every passing day, I regret my decision to be a surrogate. I've become resentful towards the Nyathi's, my entire life revolves around them.

I've been so preoccupied with this surrogacy thing that I've forgotten about my birthday. I've hosted extravagant parties in the past, but it's not an option this year. I'm just not up for it, and besides, I'm beyond broke. I just want to be alone and I'm sure that's not too much to ask.

I'm searching the internet for quaint guest houses in the South Coast when I come across a perfect one. I book online and transfer the money, there's no turning back now. I plan on being alone for the weekend, drinking and

shoving my face with junk food, listening to music and try to find the Zinhle before this saga.

It's Thursday and I it's my birthday! I'm at work as usual and I need to tell Eve that I'm leaving work early tomorrow, hopefully she agrees, I'm really looking forward to my little adventure.

A delivery man comes in carrying a large bouquet of white roses.

Him- "delivery for Zinhle?"

Me- "oh, that's me"

I walk over to him and sign on the piece of paper. There's a card buried in the roses, and I read it.

"Happy Birthday Zinhle, lots of love Thabi"

A tear escapes my eye when I realize that the one that brought me so much pain is the only

one that's wished me a happy birthday. My mom seems to have forgotten, and I haven't reminded Eve or Jess, so it's just a normal day.

I debate on whether to call or text Thabi thanking him for the roses, but I decide not to. I don't want to open a can of worms.

I go to Eve's office and I gently knock on the door. She yells for me to come in and I do.

Me- "uhmm Eve, I just wanted to let you know that I have to leave early tomorrow."

She raises her eyes her computer and raises her eyebrow.

Her- "oh?"

Me- "yes, I have to be somewhere and it's quite a distance so I'm going to need to travel earlier."

Eve- "So you want me to give you a bulk of the day off because you have to go somewhere and travel?"

Well you're being pretty evasive for someone who's asking for a favor."

Sigh.

Me- "it's my birthday today, and I've planned to go to the South Coast for the weekend. I want to get there at a reasonable time because I don't want to worry about safety."

Her- "well aren't you fancy? Okay you can leave early."

I nod and as I'm about to walk out, she clears her throat.

Her- "oh, and happy birthday."

Me- "thanks."

With that I walk out.

I get home and I'm dog tired. I head straight to my room, because mom isn't home. I'm too lazy

to cook so I'll just order pizza instead.

Mom walks in an hour later and she's singing happy birthday to me outside my room.

I get up and open the door, she's carrying a cute little chocolate cake with my name on it. I smile warmly.

Me- "thanks mom"

Her- " I'm sorry I didn't say anything the whole day, I had forgotten that today's my baby's special day. Come to the lounge."

I follow her to the dining room and she has the table decked out with take out. She's lit some candles and for the first time in a while I'm happy.

Me- "mom you didn't have to! But thank you"

I go over to her and squeeze her.

The rest of the evening is amazing. I'm so full, I'm sure my stomach is about to burst. I'm sitting with my feet up and mom is cleaning up, perks of being the birthday girl!

It's Friday and I can't wait for what's to come. I carry my luggage to work, and I'm literally counting every second that passes.

It's finally time to leave and I couldn't be happier. I bump into Siya as I'm leaving the shop.

Me- "sorry Mr Nyathi."

That's how I've been addressing him since the day he accused me of being jealous of his wife.

Him- "Zinhle, I told you there's no need to call me that."

I smile then walk past him.

Him- "where are you off to with that luggage?"

Me- "somewhere."

I push through and hop into a cab outside.

After what seems like forever, I've arrived at the guest house. It's cute and oh so perfect. I unpack and luckily I packed a few bottles of wine. I have a glass while I switch on my laptop and play some music.

I take a shower and get dressed in some underwear and a gown. I hop into the bed and decide to play some movies and continue with my wine. I'm falling asleep when I'm startled by a knock on the door.

I jump up and walk over to it. I open it, and I can't believe my eyes.

Me- "Siya?"

Him- "are you gonna let me in?"

I step aside and he comes in.

I tighten my gown and walk over to him.

Me- "Mr Nyathi what are you doing here?"

Him- "I wanna do this"

He says as he scoops me up and wraps my legs around his waist. He smashes his lips onto mine. He tastes of whiskey and his string cologne already has me wet. He gently places me on the bed and loosens the belt on my gown. I'm left bare with just my white lace underwear and he licks his lips at the sight of me.

He comes down and plants wet kisses from my ear to my navel and back up again. He nibbles on my ear and I let out a soft moan. His hand travels down south and he runs his fingers over my castle. He takes off my lace underwear and tosses it to the side. He uses his tongue on my chest and lands it on my breast. He's tracing circles around my nipple and I can't stop the sounds coming out of my mouth. He softly grazes his teeth over my stiff nipple while he traces circles at the entrance of my castle.

Me- "aah Siya!"

He travels his tongue to my other breast and nibbles on my nipples. He stops for a second and gazes into my eyes.

Him- "you're gorgeous"

His face is right on my castle, and he opens my legs wider. At this point, it's Victoria falls down there and that seems to turn him on because he's groaning under his breath. He licks my entrance then blows warm air and I scream because it feels so good. He finally inserts his tongue and flicks it inside. He's eating me like I'm his last supper and I've never felt such pleasure. He places his index finger inside and I'm close to the edge. I shut my legs closed with his head in between and I grind on his face. He goes faster and I tip over the edge like there's an electric current going through me. He licks me clean and he looks like a man possessed as he undressed leaving his erection spring freely.

It's so big and scary, with its veins bulging out it looks painful. I wish I could get on my knees and return the favor, but I can barely feel my legs.

He comes down and levels himself with his elbows and rubs his monster over my entrance, he's leaking. His breathing has changed and I'm half scared and half aroused. He kisses me with aggression and want and I reciprocate. I'm dry humping him and he's moaning and groaning under his breath.

He inserts himself and I feel a stinging sensation down there.

Him- "Aah Zinhle, you're so aaah!"

Me- "Siya, I'm a vir.."

Before I can finish, he thrusts into me hard. I cry out in pain. He pushes harder and deeper and stays still.

He looks at me.

Him- "Zinhle?"

He inches deeper and harder as I feel my walls tare. A tear escapes my eye, and he kisses my cheek.

Him- "we're almost there."

One last deep thrust and he's bulldozed down my wall. He's sweating and moaning and our eyes don't lose contact. He continues to move in slow and long strokes and I'm in so much pain, I need this to end. He finally releases his load and collapses on top of me while he shakes uncontrollably.

Must be the same current that was pulsating through me.

He has a tear in his eye.

Him- "thank you, thank you for this gift." He says kissing my forehead. I turn around and face the

other way and switch off my bedside lamp. I allow my tears to fall freely as I come to realize what I've just done. I lost my virginity to a married man.

The following morning, I wake up in bed alone and my heart breaks. I feel so dirty and cheap. The sheets have blood stains on them so I remove them and call reception for fresh ones. I go take a shower and scrub my body until it's painful.

When I come out in a towel I find Siya on the bed. He looks up at me when he hears me and greets. I greet back.

Him- "I got us some breakfast, come sit down."

I sit next to him.

Him- "do you need anything?" I shake my head and he gets up and goes through my things. He emerges with my lotion and he opens my towel.

He lathers my body and gets a gown and dresses me. He picks me up and makes me sit against the headboard. He gets a tray and places my breakfast on it and places it on my lap.

He sits next to me on the side of the bed, and he feeds me. When he's done, he takes the tray away and comes to sit beside me.

Him- "Zinhle baby, why didn't you say something?"

I raise my shoulders.

Him- "I'm so sorry, but thank you for that amazing gift. " I nod.

He takes a packet and and takes out some pills. He hands it over to me.

Him- "that's the morning after pill you should probably take it sooner rather than later. I don't want you to find yourself in a compromising situation."

I put it on the side table and curl into bed.

He snuggles me from behind, and I wish it didn't feel this good, but it does.

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: [26]

****ZINHLE****

We spend the rest of the day cuddling in bed together, watching movie after movie on my laptop. Everything from "Bridesmaids" to "The Conjuring" I know most words in all of these movies, because I'm such a movie fanatic, so Siya had reprimanded me a few times. He's had to shut me up with a few smooches here and there, but none of us are complaining. Just being in his embrace makes me feel safe and content.

Siya leaves to go buy us some food, snacks and more wine because my stash is finished. I don't

want to overthink everything right now, I just want to live in the moment. I switch on my playlist and decide on some Dru Hill, I love me some slow jams on any given day, and today the mood is even right.

I go onto my sister's Facebook page and stalk her. I do this everyday as my daily ritual before I go to bed. I hardly speak to her, and that's the only way I know what's going on with her. One new upload, it's a gift she got from her new bae. I steal it and save it under the folder I've created for her in my laptop. I'm such a creep.

Then "5 Steps" plays.

"I don't know how much longer

You're going to be here

So I say my prayers

Every night"

I go over to the cupboard and put on my short silk pj's and as I bend over to slide up my pyjama pants that's when I feel his hands encircle my waist. He bends down and slides them off and I don't protest. He picks me up bridal style and places me on the bed. He takes my top off and I'm left exposed.

Siya devours every inch of my body and it feels amazing. He worships my castle and before I know it, I'm shaking and shivering with ecstasy. He pulls the covers over me, but I'm not ready for this to end. I jump onto him and start to kiss him. I feel his bulge growing beneath me, and it's making me feel warm and wet. I help him out of his sweater and vest and unbuckle his belt.

Him- "Are you sure about this?"

I nod and gaze deep into his eyes. I lick my lips

and I help him out of his pants and briefs. His erection stands to attention and I swallow a lump in my throat in preparation for what I'm about to do. I lick his tip and revolve my tongue around it.

Siya- "Aah Zinhle baby!"

I nibble on his perineum and he almost jumps off the bed. I take him all in my mouth, he's so large my gag reflexes are working overdrive, but I'm not stopping. I travel my tongue down and suckle on his balls while pumping his member.

Siya- "Zinhle.. I'm cloo..se!"

I stop and roll over and lay on my back.

Me- "I want to feel you inside me. Please Siya."

I didn't have to ask him twice, because he flips over and teases my entrance with his head. We're moaning and groaning and he finally thrusts all the way in. I cry out in pain.

Him- "should I stop?"

I vigorously shake my head no. He does long and slow strokes and my pain is slowly turning into pleasure. Our eyes are locked onto each other, and I think that this is what making love feels like. He caresses my breasts and is gentle yet rough in his thrusts. His breathing intensifies and his speed increases.

Him- "Zinhle, I love you."

He goes over the edge and I feel his load fill up inside of me. He kisses me all over my face then gets up and comes back with a warm towel. He cleans us up and wraps his arms and legs around me.

Me- "I love you too." I whisper and we doze off. I wake up in the middle of the night and Siya is wrapped around me like ivy. I slowly take his hands off of me and get up. I grab a bottle of water and the pills he brought and down them then I get back in bed with him.

The following morning, the mood is sombre. It's raining outside and the weather matches the mood in the room. I'm packing my clothes and he's hovering around me. I'm done with packing and he takes my luggage. As he walks towards the door, he comes to a halt and turns to face me. He cups my face and gives me a long gentle kiss. He sighs and shrugs his shoulders. Him- "let's go."

In the car, we've fallen into silence. He's holding my hand the whole way and I'm resting my head on his forearm. We're a few minutes away from home and I feel tears stinging my eyes, reality has struck.

He parks a few meters away from my home and switches the engine off. He turns to face me.

Him- "Zinhle look.."

I put my hand up in protest.

Me- "Siya, I know. You're married and you're not gonna leave your wife, I don't expect you to either. What happened this weekend is something I'll hold near and dear to my heart, but I know better than to have any expectations. So let's not make things worse and harder than they have to be, I know where we stand."

With that, I kiss him on the cheek and get my luggage from the back. I look back at him one last time and blow him a kiss and walk away.

I walk into the house, and surprise surprise mom isn't home. I don't mind though, I need to sleep and nurse my sore body. I look outside my bedroom window, and Siya is still parked in the same spot.

He calls me over and over again, but I don't pick up, there's nothing left to say. He finally drives away.

****SIYA****

I don't think I've ever felt this way before. This weekend was everything I could have ever hoped and wished for and more. Zinhle gave me her purity, and I would have stopped, but nothing has ever felt so right. I didn't think about Eve not one time this weekend, and I don't even regret it. I know that makes me a terrible husband.

I know without a doubt that I'm in love with Zinhle, but I can't do anything about it right now. I can't offer her much, even though I'm sure that she's my soulmate. I wanted to tell her how I feel and ask if we can figure things out together, but she made me realize that I'd just be hurting her in the process. I'm Stuck between a rock and a hard place, and I don't know how to get out.

Zinhle made it clear that she doesn't want to wait around for me to sort out this mess, so I need to respect that. I need to go back to my house, I've got some explaining to do.

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: [27]

****ZINHLE****

The next few weeks aren't that bad. I have a good routine going. I wake up, pray, go to work, come home and sleep. Some days are worse than others when I can't get out of bed because I miss Siya and our time together so much. I've blocked his number and we only communicate through lawyers or his PA.

Listening to Eve rant and rave about her husband every day is sickening. Apparently they have phone sex every other day, I've heard her a few times and they are going away to the

Seychelles soon. Nice life problems I tell you.

Apparently they want to have their last "hoorah" before the embryo implantation which is just a few weeks away now.

This is all very confusing, because he's had my favorite white roses delivered to me everyday since our weekend together, with little notes buried inside, with some of our inside jokes and him professing his love for me. Not once have I called him or texted. The withdrawal has been killing me, but it's what I have to do.

I could be pregnant during my festive season because the implantation is fast approaching and I don't know how I'm going to cope without alcohol as my crutch.

I've decided to go out for cocktail hour with

Jess the shop assistant and some other girls that I'm aquatinted with. It's month end in October, and I've just been paid, and I'm blowing it all. Jess and I are excited for the night ahead, and Eve is leaving early for their vacation away. I decided to look good for work today, because I'm not going all the way back home to change. That's valuable cocktail time. We're playing music in the shop and I'm dancing in front of the full length mirror while Jess cheers me on. Rihanna's "Wild Thoughts" comes on and I channel my inner Ri-Ri.

I look up to find Siya staring at me through the mirror and I see the bulge in his pants. I immediately stop and walk over to the counter and decrease the volume. Siya marches off to Eve's office and Jess giggles.

A few minutes later, the moans and groans coming from Eve's office are deafening. Eve is

screaming at the top of her lungs and my heart palpitates. How can Siya be this disrespectful? I feel my cheeks get wet and I run out of the shop, before I embarrass myself.

**** SIYA****

I walked into Eve's boutique and saw Zinhle in front of the mirror, I swear my heart stopped. Just being in her presence has a growing effect on me, literally. She wakens my little monster every time I'm around her.

When I got into Eve's office, she saw my bulge and charged for me. I tried to stop her, but she literally begged me to take her on the desk. I had built up frustration with the whole Zinhle thing, so I did. I pounded Eve hard, and her screams broke my heart, because I knew that on the other side of the door was my heart hearing everything..

****ZINHLE****

I've calmed down and I'm walking back to work. I bump into Siya as he walks out.

Him- "Zinhle, I'm.."

Me- "No!"

I jog inside. Eve leaves and sarcastically apologizes for the noise and giggles on her way out.

I will not let this bother me. I have a great night planned and that's all that matters.

The rest of the day Jess and I are in high spirits as we anticipate drinking ourselves silly.

We're at the restaurant and I'm genuinely enjoying myself. No Siya, Brian or Eve smothering me. It's just me and my girls. I order 2 courses, because I'm famished and the girls look at me like I'm crazy. I ask for a second portion of chicken livers before my main meal

comes, and I'm thoroughly enjoying my cosmo's. The conversation is flowing and we're having harmless fun. I indulge in my seafood pasta and I'm tempted to lick the plate, when I gag. I run off to the loo and I throw up my entire dinner contents. I probably ate too much.

I rinse my mouth and go back to the table.

Jess- "are you okay?"

Me- "yeah, I just ate too much. Let's order another round of drinks."

I finish my cosmo and I feel it coming up and so I run back to the loo and throw up again. I think it's time to go home.

At the table, I tell the girls that I should leave and they're disappointed, but they understand. I get home and soak myself in a bubble bath. I realize that I've started my period and it makes sense now why I've been throwing up.

The following days I'm grumpy and miserable and I want to cry every 2 seconds. Eve and Siya are back from their vacation and Siya walks into the boutique. His cologne makes me gag and I have to run to the loo.

I come back and head for Eve's office, she's with Siya. I take deep breaths to prevent myself from puking.

Me- "Eve, please can I go home. I feel like death."

Her- "What's wrong?"

Me- "I'm on my period, and I'm dying."

Siya clears his throat uncomfortably, and I don't care what he thinks at this point. I just need to get out of here.

Her- "Sure, you look terrible. Should I get the driver to take you home?"

Me- "Yes please."

I start crying and I don't know why.

I run out because I can't stomach Siya's cologne any longer.

2 weeks later I'm feeling better, although now I don't have an appetite at all. The embryo implantation is today and I'm so scared. I arrive at Dr Steven's rooms and Siya and Eve are already there.

The Doctor conducts more tests and i have to pee in a cup again. A few minutes later, he re emerges and asks to speak to Siya.

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: [28]

****SIYA****

Steven asks to speak to me before we commence with the implantation.

I follow him to his other office.

Him- "we can't continue with the surrogacy."

Me- "what? Why?"

Him- "Zinhle is already pregnant"

Me- "whaaatt?!?"

Him- "She's about 6 weeks along. Do you know who the father is? She probably should discuss her options with him."

I'm pacing the room at this point.

Him- "Siya!"

Me- "It's me." I say in a low tone

Him- "I'm lost."

Me- "I'm the father."

I sit down and bury my head in my hands.

Steven- "Shit man. This is a mess."

Me- "Don't you think I know that?" I bang on the desk.

Him- "well there are options worth exploring."

Me- "let's hear them."

Him- "termination."

Me- "Absolutely not! I've been waiting for years to be a father, and you wanna take it away from me? No!"

Him- "We have to tell Zinhle though, she deserves to know that the baby she'll be carrying over the next few months is hers."

Me- "Not yet. What if she wants to terminate when she finds out? Eve will kill me, and I'm going to be a dad. I can't let someone take that away from me. I'll tell everyone at a later date."

Him- "Siya, I don't agree with this. It's unethical."

I laugh sarcastically.

Me- "Steven you're hardly one to talk about ethics. I know about your past remember? I was there idiot! You know better than to disobey me. Now go back in there, and not a word of this to anyone. Make sure my baby is healthy. Say you

have to reschedule the implantation or prod her and pretend you did it. I don't care."

With that I walk out and head to the bathroom.

I look at myself in the mirror and notice that I'm crying. My eyes are red, my cheeks are wet and I'm shaking. I'm going to be a father! What Zinhle and I did those few weeks ago was magical and out of this world, and God has seen it fit to bless us with a soul. I'm elated and the love I have for Zinhle is overflowing and I know that I have some tough decisions to make.

I know it seems selfish of me not telling Zinhle that she's already pregnant, but I know that she wants nothing to do with me and I fear that she'd kill our baby in the process. This isn't an ideal situation and people act haphazardly in scary scenarios as this, I can't take that chance. I'll fix this, if it's the last thing I do, I'll fix this.

I walk back into the consultation room and find Steven jotting down something on his notepad. I'm grinning from ear to ear and Eve looks at me in confusion.

Eve- "baby, Steve says we can't do the implantation today. Apparently Zinhle's vitals aren't good. She's been throwing up over the past few weeks so he thinks he should treat the bug first."

Steven- "Sorry Mr Nyathi, but I think she should be on some medication and get some vitamins then we can explore the implantation once the toxins have left her system. It'll take a few weeks give or take."

Zinhle shoots up off the bed.

Zinhle- "Am I that sick? I'm not gonna die am I?"

She bursts into tears, I would love nothing more than to embrace her and tell her the truth, and

sail off into the sunset with her. But reality doesn't permit me to do so.

Steven- "You'll be absolutely fine. I'll write you a prescription, and just try to have some food in your stomach at all times. You'll need your strength."

Me- "I think you should move in with us for the time being. We have staff that'll take care of you and ensure you have a speedy recovery."

Eve- "I think Zinhle should be surrounded by family not a bunch of strangers, we'll check on her when we can and re convene with the implantation."

Zinhle looks down and she's sobbing uncontrollably. Seeing her like this breaks my heart and before I know it a tear escapes my eye. I quickly wipe my eyes and excuse myself as my phone rings. It's Brian.

Me- "yes?"

Brian- "whoah, what's wrong?"

Me- "what do you want Brian?"

Brian- "well now that you've asked, I want us to meet, trust me it's worth your while. It's about you and Zinhle."

My heart literally leaps out of my chest.

Me- "whatever man, send me the time and place." I hang up,

****ZINHLE****

I'm so confused and concerned about what's going on with me. The Nyathi's have left me alone with Steven, and he's scribbling what looks like a prescription.

Me- "Are you sure I have nothing to worry about?"

Steven looks uncomfortable and that scares me

even more.

Him- "Zinhle, I've been a doctor for longer than you've been alive. All you need is these meds and you'll be good as new."

He gives me a brief smile.

Me- "With all the throwing up and loss of appetite, I thought I was pregnant. Thank God I'm not, because then I'd kill myself. I'm sure the guy would want me to terminate, but I'd never do such a thing, then I'd be left alone. I'm sorry I'm rambling, you're just the only person I can talk about any of this with."

He comes around the desk and hugs me from the side and I immediately feel better. He hands me the prescription and his card for when I need anything.

Steven- "I've also given you something for the nausea. Trust me Zinhle, you have nothing to

worry about."

Me- "thank you doc, I appreciate it."

I smile and take my bag and walk out.

[04/17, 16:13] Wdz: Good morning

[29]

****SIYA****

I'm at some stupid coffee shop waiting for this idiot Brian. I've been here for over an hour, and now he's not answering my calls. I'm annoyed and order a shot of espresso. It arrives as Brian arrives and he has a smug look on his face. He takes a seat across from me.

Me- "Brian get straight to it, what do you want?"

Brian- "whoah Siya, so you aren't even gonna offer me a drink? I'm offended."

I take my wallet and drop a few notes on the

table.

Me- "I don't have time for this shit."

I get up. Brian takes out his phone and slides it to me.

Brian- "I think you'll have time for this."

I look down, and it's me and Zinhle on his phone. I swipe and there are tons of pictures of us from the South Coast, even a few short videos of our love making sessions. I sit back down, I'm fuming.

Me- "What the fuck is this?"

Brian- "This my dear brother is my investment. I wondered why things were always awkward between you two, but now I know. It's because you're fucking the girl that's supposed to be my girlfriend!"

I chuckle loudly.

Me- "you're pathetic you know that? You've stooped so low, it's actually sad. Zinhle be your

girlfriend? Not even in your wildest dreams! Have you forgotten who you really are? Beneath the designer suits, the private planes, the trips? You're pathetic! Always have been and always will be. Delete those videos and pictures or suffer the consequences."

Brian- "Siya Siya Siya.. its cute how you think this is all a joke brother. Good thing you mentioned my past, so you should know just how dangerous and persuasive I can be. So listen and listen carefully. With a touch of a button, I can send these pictures and videos to Eve, your mother, the papers, your board members. All I want is half of your shares at the mine, and an additional R5 million just for the heartbreak. I promise I'll leave your precious little virgin alone, and I'll delete every copy of these images."

With that he gets up and leaves, I bang on the table in frustration.

I'm pissed as hell, the same day that I've heard the best news is the same day that I've heard the worst. My only concern is Zinhle and how this could potentially damage her for life, I have to fix this.

Brian has always been a little envious of me, I guess I never knew to what extent. He comes from money, his father is German, but he never took advantage of the opportunities that were literally handed to him. I on the other hand built myself from the ground up. Everything I have is due to my hard work and determination, and Brian can only dream of reaching my level of success.

This is what this is about. Jealousy. I'll be damned if Zinhle is caught in the crossfire.

****ZINHLE****

I'm happy that I'm not pregnant, that was a fear that's been lingering in there back of my mind, and at least that's now one less thing to worry about.

Luckily the Nyathi driver comes to pick me up at the hospital, and I head straight for the pharmacy. I need to get better as soon as possible. I fetch my prescription and it's just a bunch of vitamins and nausea medication, I guess the pills that Doctor Steve gave me are the antibiotics I need.

I make my way home and I'm quite relieved. I'm relieved that the implantation didn't happen, I feel like maybe this is the Lord saving me from myself.

I arrive at home and I'm exhausted, I eat an apple so I can drink my medication and go to bed. I plonk myself onto my bed and doze off almost immediately.

I wake up the following morning to a text from an unknown number.

"I love you, never doubt that." It reads. Who is this? Siya? Brian? Thabi?

My thoughts are interrupted by a sudden urge to throw up. I run to the bathroom and do my business. I'm getting tired of throwing up and feeling lethargic, I need to woman up and eat something so I can drink these pills. I take a sniff of my citrus oils for my fatigue this early in the morning, I've always been intrigued by holistic medication.

I go to the kitchen and make quite a breakfast spread. Eggs, bacon, mushrooms, sausages, waffles and a fruit salad.

By the time my mom emerges from her room, I've eaten more than half the food.

Mom- "Baby, so much food!"

Me- "So now you think I'm fat? Thanks a lot! I don't understand why you're always so mean to me ma! Fine, I'll be an anorexic just for you."

I march off to my room and slam the door behind me. I jump into bed and sob. I hate that I don't have control over my emotions right now, how am I going to explain this to my mom?

I drink my pills and decide to just laze in bed for a while longer, I'm early for work anyway.

I wake up to my phone ringing, it's Eve.

Crap, it's 11:10 am, how did I sleep for so long?

I pick up.

Eve- "where the hell are you?"

Me- "I'm so sorry Eve, it's this bug I have. I feel like death, I'm on my way though."

Eve- "if you're not here within an hour, consider yourself unemployed."

With that she hangs up. I get up and get dressed in jeans, a tank top, biker jacket and wedges. I take my flip flops and throw them in my handbag, I feel dizzy so I don't trust myself with heels.

I call an Uber, because there's no way I'll make it in time using taxi's. There goes the block heels I've been saving up for.

45 minutes later, I'm at work. I know I need to go to Eve and apologize about being so ridiculously late. I tip toe and prepare my speech in my head. Her door is slightly open, and she's on the phone.

Her- "I know love, but my husband is around and

I don't have an excuse to up and leave."

Caller- "...."

Her- "babe, I promise I'll make it worth your while, just be patient. My husband is leaving on business soon, then you'll have me all to yourself. Wait, I think I hear someone."

I hide behind a box and pray to God that she doesn't find me.

Her- "it's nothing. You know I can't trust these low lives that work for me. So what are you gonna do to me when you see me?"

She closes and locks her door.

I quickly run to the front of the shop and sit on the counter.

Why did I hear that conversation? I don't know if I'm crazy, but that sounded like Eve is having an affair!

[04/17, 16:14] Wdz: [30]

****ZINHLE****

After composing myself, I burst into laughter, this is rather amusing!

The guilt that I've been feeling for months has almost been alleviated from my shoulders. I still feel guilty for having relations with a married man, but I feel better about the situation.

Eve is cooped in her office the rest of the day and only emerges just before closing time.

Eve- "you don't look sick at all Zinhle. Were you lying?"

Me- "what? No! I feel a lot better, I think it's the medication that the doctor gave me. I'm really sorry about earlier though, it won't happen again."

She steps closer to me.

Her- "You're right, it won't happen again, because next time you shouldn't bother coming in."

She flashes a smile then walks away.

I sort through the shelves and the racks, then I have an urgent craving for some chicken livers. My mouth is watering and all of a sudden, I burst into tears.

I'm sniffing while I pack my bag, then in walks Siya. He greets me and before I can greet back, his cologne hits my senses and I gag in my mouth. I grab the trash can and empty the contents of my lunch. I hear him come closer to me and I raise my hand.

Me- "No, Siya you stink."

I squirm when I realize what I've just said and shoot my eyes open.

Me- "I'm sorry, I didn't mean that. The bug I have

has me sensitive to smells and food. The medication seems to have my emotions all over the place, and all I want is a large bowl of chicken livers and a bottle of wine with a straw, that's all."

I say as tears travel down my face.

Me- "I'm sorry, I don't know what's wrong with me let me go get those livers and wine, I'm sure I'll feel better."

I grab my hand bag and phone and leave a confused looking Siya standing there.

On my way to the restaurant, I realize that I puked and left my waste in the trash can, how disgusting. I completely forgot to take it out. I ask the cab to turn around and take me back to the shop. I arrive and find Siya putting a new garbage bag in the bin, my cheeks are flushed with embarrassment.

Me- "I'm so so sorry."

I cover my face with my hand.

Me- "I can't wait to fully recover, I'm such a mess. Enjoy the rest of your evening, my meal is waiting."

I wink at him and he smiles, but he grabs my arm.

I look up at him in confusion.

Him- "let me take you home. Wine isn't a good idea, it's a weeknight, and I'm sure alcohol doesn't mix with antibiotics Zinhle."

Crap, he's right.

I start to cry softly.

Me- "Do you think they don't mix with chicken livers as well?"

He raises his eyebrows, I feel ridiculous so I walk out and hop into my cab.

I arrive at the restaurant and order my livers and a mock tail. My food arrives and it's so good I could cry. I take a long sip of my virgin cocktail and I'm so happy and content. I finish my bowl and realize I'm nowhere near being full.

In fact, I feel hungrier than when I arrived, then it hits me. I probably have a tape worm or something, that would explain the nausea and the cravings.

My stomach turns at the thought, luckily it ends there.

I order 2 main meals; a chicken alfredo and a steak.

Waitress- "is the other meal for someone else? Will someone be joining you?"

This girl is telling me I eat too much?

Me- "listen here cocktail servant, is it a crime to want to indulge in some food? You think I'm too

fat to eat what I want? Don't answer that, cancel my order before you spit in it. Bring me the bill if it won't be too much of a hassle."

She looks confused and hurt, but I honestly don't care.

I'm shaking as I take my purse and attempt to take my card out.

My purse falls to the ground, and as I'm about to pick it up, I see familiar hands pick it up and place it on the table.

It's Siya.

Just looking at him has me leaking down there.

He seems to have changed into jeans and a sweater, and he doesn't smell.

I sniff in his direction and he chuckles.

Him- "what are you doing?"

Me- "You don't smell"

Him- "well I went home and scrubbed myself silly after you said I stink, I opted to give the cologne a break for now."

I smile like an idiot and lick my lips.

Him- "Do you wanna tell me what that was about?" He says pointing at the waitress.

A tear escapes my eye.

Me- "Siya, I was such a bitch to her I can't even look in her direction. I hate what's going on with me. My pills aren't really working, because half the time they land in the toilet bowl, and I'm tired. I'm so tired."

The waitress walks back to the table and tosses the bill on the table, I touch her arm.

Me- "Sisi, I'm so sorry about earlier on. I literally have no excuse, my hormones and cravings are all over the place and I'm sorry for putting you in the crossfire."

She smiles and steps closer to the table.

Waitress- "it's okay, I understand. That's how I was when I was pregnant too, it's completely normal. By the way, the staff were just saying how you guys are the cutest couple we've seen."

I just smile because I don't trust my words right now, and she walks away. Siya pays for the bill and tells me he's taking me home. I fall asleep with my mouth open and feel him gently rubbing my thigh.

Him- "we're here."

I yawn and stretch then thank him for the ride. I open the door and before I jump out, I smash my lips onto Siya's, he responds and I start making foreign sounds under my breath. Then I stop. I'm quarter to asking him to take me in his car, but no, not today Satan, si I just jump out and head into the house.

[04/17, 20:00] Wdz: [31]

****BRIAN****

I know you're probably thinking that I'm a monster, but a man has to do what a man has to do.

I was only going to ask him for a million, but his arrogance pissed me off and will cost him an additional 4 million.

Don't get me wrong, I love and admire Siya; he's moulded me into the man I am today, in business as well as my personal life. I'm just tired of being compared to him and have him on the front line of everything, and he only gives me the scraps of what's left behind.

My father tells me every chance he gets that I should be more like Siya. Well now he'll be

pleased because having his shares and that cheque from him will have me up to parr and somewhat within Siya's level.

It's unfortunate that Zinhle has to be caught in the crossfire, but she bruised my ego too. Just when I think that I've escaped living in Siya's shadow, then I'm called by his name in bed? Never! Every man has his limits, and I have reached mine. I'm not bluffing, if Siya doesn't pay up, I'll shake up his world like an earthquake.

****SIYA****

This thing with Brian is consuming me more than it should be. I don't want to do anything drastic, so I'll go on my business trip and hopefully I'll gain some perspective while I'm away.

Zinhle is keeping me on my toes, and my love for her is growing by the second. I know it's not infatuation, because I doubt I'd clean up anyone's throw up so willingly.

I don't know if it's in my head, but Zinhle is already starting to glow. I hope our creation looks just like her. I know when I get back from my business trip, I have to come clean to both ladies in my life. I want to take Zinhle with me, but I don't want Eve to kill her.

I can only hope and pray that Zinhle finds it in her heart to forgive me once she learns the truth about her pregnancy. I want to be an active father, whether she wants me in her life or not. I just have to keep this under wraps for a while longer.

****ZINHLE****

Siya is going away on business soon and he's requested that I meet with Eve and his lawyer at the mansion soon to begin with the money transfers and so on. I don't know why, because technically I'm not about to get pregnant with their baby for at least a few weeks.

Doctor Steven's medication is finally kicking in a bit. I'm not as lethargic or nauseous, and my appetite has kicked in more than I like. He warned me that I could have some food aversions and random cravings, and that's exactly what is going on. I crave Oreo's with peanut butter, gherkins with mayonnaise and Maas with milo. It's delicious, but I know in my mind that it's disgusting.

Jess has been persuading me to do a pregnancy test, I've told her that I've seen a

doctor and I'm definitely not pregnant. One of these days I just might humor her and do it though, because she's being such a nag. Giving me baby names and so forth.

Siya has sent me a code so I can get into the mansion without a hassle because apparently Eve will be held up at an expo for a while, so he wants me to proceed with the lawyer via Skype in his study.

The driver is off today, so I have to take an Uber. I arrive at the mansion, punch in the multiple codes then finally enter. I repeat the process at the door and walk over to the casual lounge. I sit there for a while, waiting for Eve, but still nothing. I decide to go to the kitchen for a glass of water, when I hear bangs and clashes upstairs.

They startle me, so I decide to call Siya, but his phone goes straight to voicemail. The bangs continue, and now I'm a little scared. I try to call eve, but her phone is on voicemail as well.

I jog up the countless stairs towards where the sounds are coming from, and it's in one of the bedrooms. Someone is moaning in sexual pleasure. I tip toe to the door and peak through the slight opening.

Nothing could have prepared me for what I see at that moment. Eve is bent over in all her naked glory, and someone is taking her from behind.

My eyes are falling out of their sockets, and my feet are glued to the floor. My heart is beating so fast, I'm sweating profusely and my eyes start to water.

I stand there for a few more seconds and realize that they're about to climax and I know for a fact that I won't be able to stomach that. I run downstairs, grab my bag and leave. I finally make it out of the estate and I get into a cab. I experience a sharp pain in my lower abdomen and I try breathe through it, but I feel another soon after it.

I quickly send a text to Siya and Eve to reschedule our meeting, I need to go straight home, because these cramps are getting closer together.

I finally arrive at home and tuck myself in bed with a hot water bottle. 2 hours later, I'm woken up by another sharp pain and it's so painful, I start crying and my phone rings.

Me- "what?"

Him- "Zinhle, I got your text. You said you don't feel well. What's wrong?"

I yelp out in pain and hold onto the sheets.

Siya- "where are you? I'm coming now."

Me- "Siya, I'm dying."

Then it's lights out for me again.

I'm woken up by someone picking me up off the floor, I don't even know how or when I got there.

I open one eye.

Me- "Siya, your cologne."

He chuckles softly.

He scoops me up and runs downstairs across the road and places me in his car. I'm too fatigued to ask him how he got in my house and how he got back so quickly.

He starts the car and speeds off. Siya's voice seems further and further away, then it's lights out for me.

[04/17, 20:10] Wdz: [32]

****ZINHLE****

I open my eyes and observe my surroundings. It looks as if I'm in a hospital room on a hospital bed. My hand is squeezed in a tight embrace, and I see Siya holding onto it tightly. My other hand is hooked on an IV, at least the pain seems to have subsided. I squeeze his hand and he raises his head off the bed.

His eyes are bloodshot red, and he looks visibly concerned. He cups my face in his hands and gazes deep into my eyes, when his eyes release tears. He kisses me on my cheek and holds onto me for dear life. I link my hands around his

neck and hold him until he calms down a bit.

I reach over to my bedside table and grab a glass of water with a straw inside. I nudge him to drink and he takes a short sip then makes me drink some.

Siya- "How are you feeling?"

Me- "Hungry."

He smiles slightly.

Him- "Let me call Steven."

I nod and he walks out.

Before I blink, Doctor Steven and Siya walk in. Steven gives me a brief smile and stands beside my bed.

Steven- "Zinhle, you gave us quite a scare there. Nothing to worry about though, You're stable and doing better than expected." Siya is

hovering and pacing up and down.

Me- "Siyabonga, you're making me dizzy. Please sit down."

His eyes shoot up, and he walks over to the chair he was sitting on.

Doctor- "As I was saying, your blood pressure is extremely high, and that's never good with someone in your position."

Me- "My position?"

Siya- "Yeah doc, what do you mean by that? What position is that?"

Siya gives Steven an inquisitive look and narrows his eyebrows.

Steven coughs.

Doctor Steve- "Well, your type of bug. We need to ensure that all of your vitals are stable. So you should stay away from stress, just until the

toxins are completely flushed out."

Stress. My mind wanders to the events of earlier today and that picture of Eve and another man that I saw. If I wasn't sure before, what I witnessed, was proof enough. I look over at Siya and look at how oblivious he is to the disgusting acts that occur in his own home. My mind is racing in a million different directions of whether I should tell him or not. He deserves to know, but not from me. I'm in too deep with this guy and I don't want him to actively pursue a future with me because his marriage didn't work out. I want him to do it in his own accord. Out of nothing but love and want for me.

I snap back into reality when Siya shakes my arm slightly.

Doctor- "I'm going to keep you in here for observation just overnight. Tomorrow morning

you'll be good to go."

Me- "Thank you. I just need to call my mother, she's probably worried right now."

Doctor- "That's already taken care of. Mr Nyathi took the liberty of contacting her and telling her you have a summit to attend and that you'll see her in the next few days."

I raise my upper body off the bed and level myself with my elbows.

Me- "Siya, why would you lie?"

Siya- "I'm sorry, I wasn't thinking. I just didn't want her to worry, and I wanted you to have enough time to rest."

Me- "Leave! Now!"

He stays in the same position. I bang on the bed and go hysterical.

Me- "Leave damnit! I'm just your little puppet! I

wish I never met you! I regret the day I shared a bed with you. No wonder you don't have kids, God can see that you're too fucking selfish!"

He stares at the floor and his tears are making a small puddle on my bed. I turn to face the other way.

Me- "Doc, may I have some food please, and make sure this man doesn't come near my room during my stay here."

He nods and walks out. After a few seconds Siya follows.

Doctor Steven re emerges a few minutes later with plastics and plastics of take aways. I sit up and my face lights up, I even clap shortly.

Me- "thank you thank you thank you!"

Steven- "Thank Mr Nyathi." He winks at me and leaves.

I indulge in all the food, and luckily my nausea is

behaving. I eat 2 burgers, large fries, 8 hot wings and 4 slices of pizza. I down it with a Krusher, and have an Oreo Mc Flurry as dessert. I look at all the empty containers and I feel tears wet my cheeks, I'm a pig.

The rest of the day I ignore my cravings, I will not allow this illness to get the better of me. My body is one of the few things that I have going on for me. My stomach is grumbling the whole night, but I will not succumb into temptation.

It's finally morning, and Dr Steven walks in with a paper packet in tow. He puts it on the bed then greets me.

Him- "Well it seems that you guys are doing great. I just have to sign your release forms then you're good to go."

Me- "guys?"

Him- "huh?"

Me- "Never mind. I thought.. never mind!"

Him- "Here are some clothes and I think your phone is in the bag. Keep well Zinhle."

He walks off.

I look into the paper bag and i see some new clothes. This has Siya written all over it.

I go to the bathroom and take a quick shower and get dressed. Siya bought me a long flowy dress that doesn't accentuate a single curve, and it's a size too big. He probably thinks I'm fat too. I sigh and pack my things into the bag and check my phone.

Eve has been blowing up my phone, and I know I have to go to work regardless of how I feel. There's no time to start at home and change, so I guess I'll just go looking this hideous.

I arrive a few minutes late to work, but fortunately Eve is out running an errand. Jess runs towards me and gives me a warm hug.

Jess- "Girl, so I tried this new organic perfume, you have to smell it."

And boy can I! It smells like honey and lavender and grass. It's disgusting. I try to keep a straight face, but my gag reflexes deceive me. I run to the bathroom and throw up. I rinse my mouth, and Jess barges into the loo.

Jess- "I'm tired of you being in denial now. Humor me and just take these." She hands me 3 pregnancy tests.

I laugh and try to walk past her, but she grabs my arm.

Her- "If I'm wrong, we'll laugh about it and I'll buy you some cocktails after work. If I'm right, girl

you have some decisions to make."

I take them and shake my head and walk back into the toilet.

I pee on all 3, walk out and wash my hands. I hand them to Jess and walk past her.

Me- "I'm in the mood for margarita's" I wink at her.

I walk back to the front and sort out the counter. I'm busy with an email when Jess emerges and sits me down gently on the chair. She pushes the tests towards me, before I look at them I roll my eyes.

Me- "Jess, I told you I'm not pregnant! Now make those reservations."

Her- "Actually Zinhle. Look.."

I look down, and I swear the room spins.

[04/17, 20:14] Wdz: [33]

****ZINHLE****

After a few minutes of being in another dimension, I snap back to reality. Jess looks just as shocked and I have a blank expression on my face. She breaks the silence.

Her- "Zinhle, you have options. This is not the end of the world. We can research just what they are." She's rambling and my mind isn't present, half the things she's saying, are landing on deaf ears.

Me- "Jess, not a word of this to anyone. I need to think. Let's just go through the rest of the day without talking about this. I'll figure something out. Don't tell Eve."

She nods and she pulls me in for a squeeze. Just in time, Eve walks in.

Eve- "Good morning my loves! Isn't it a beautiful day?"

Jess and I mumble beneath our breaths.

Eve- "Well I guess you could say I got it all yesterday. You know when your man gives it to you so good, you cry?"

Me- "Yesterday? Wasn't Mr Nyathi away on business?"

Eve- "Well yes, but he came back this morning."

Me- "But you said he gave it to you good yesterday."

Eve- "well I guess I was mistaken."

Me- "Right"

I give her a blank stare. She shakes her butt all the way to her office. Jess gives me a confused look, but I ignore it and continue with my duties.

I've only been working for about 2 hours, but in exhausted. I'm sure it's not only due to the baby, but how my mind has gone into overdrive since I've found out. Oh my, I'm having a baby. While I'm still consumed by my thoughts, I hear Eve on the phone in her office. It's my new hobby to snoop, so I quietly walk closer to her door. This woman really needs to get these walls soundproofed if she wants to pull off an affair.

Eve- "Baby, we have to be more careful. It's the last time you come to my house. But I must say, the way you fucked me yesterday, I can barely walk today."

Caller- "...."

Eve- "I can only cook up an alibi for next week maybe."

Caller- "....."

Eve- "I know, I wish I could wake up to you in

between my legs everyday, but we have a plan and we need to stick to it."

Caller- "....."

Eve- "goodbye my love."

I hurry back to the front, and by the time Eve emerges, I'm assisting a customer. She looks at me suspiciously and I give her a wide smile.

Jess has been hovering over me the whole day. She's making Eve suspicious, and I can't trust that she won't break under pressure. I walk over to her.

Me- "babe, I'm fine so relax okay? I'll keep you updated, this has to be our little secret okay?"

I'm finally done for the day, and in walks Siya. I roll my eyes and leave. He repulses me. He must've known this whole time that I was pregnant. Doctor Steven is one of the best in

the country, he's even ranked in top few in the continent so there's no way he would have missed the fact that I have a human life growing inside of me. Siya must've paid him, I conclude.

Looking back on everything, I realize my being extremely gullible. All the signs pointed towards pregnancy, but I trusted Siya with every fiber in me. Why would I perform another pregnancy test after peeing in a cup at a reputable doctor's office?

I've been trying to stay calm the whole day, because I lived through the pain of stressing and I don't want to go through that again. Besides, I don't want anymore favors from Siya.

How long was he going to keep this from me? Thinking I'm sick, meanwhile I'm carrying his baby. How can he take such a risk with my life? What am I supposed to do now?

I decide to stop by an Internet cafe before I go home. I research and gather as much information as I can on termination clinics in the country and print it. I fold the papers and shove them in my bag, then head home.

I arrive home, and mom has cooked lamb curry, I can smell it from the door. I run to the kitchen, but she's not there. I get a spoon and dig into the pot and stuff my face. I grab a loaf of bread, and indulge. I come to my senses, 6 slices later and countless spoons later. I stop there and then. I clean my face and the kitchen and head for my room.

I walk to my room and on my way peep through mom's door. She's fast asleep on her covers. I see a large bouquet of flowers on her far table, and I smile. I walk to my room and land my body

on my bed. Im lying on my back when I decide to call Siya.

He answers on the first ring.

Him- "Zinhle."

Me- "Siya, I need to see you now please."

I hang up.

10 minutes later, he calls to tell me he's outside. I grab my little gift box that I bought earlier and my research papers from my bag then walk out.

I jump into the car and just look at him for a few minutes. I'm livid, but I'm trying to stay calm.

Me- "Siya, I got you something."

He looks at me, both confused and intrigued.

I hand him the gift box. He looks at me with appreciation before opening it.

I watch his every move carefully.

He lifts the lid then looks at me dumbstruck.

Me- "Surprise!"

He swallows what seems to be a lump in his throat.

Him- "Zi.."

Me- "Well, you don't look surprised. Well in case you didn't know what those are, they are pregnancy tests. Those double lines on the 2 tests and the one that's written PREGNANT in bold means I'm pregnant. But you already knew that didn't you?"

Him- "wait, I can.."

Me- "explain? You can explain how you decided to keep me from knowing the most important piece of news in my life?"

Him- "No.. I.."

Me- "You what? You fucked me, found out I was pregnant then what was going to happen? Those pills that Steven gave me, are they even healthy during pregnancy or are they termination pills?"

Him- "I would never.."

Me- "Fuck you Siyabonga Nyathi! Fuck you! I gave you my most prized possession and this is how you treat me? Am I really worth nothing to you? Do you hate me that much?"

I sob out loud.

Me- "Siya, I loved you with every beat of my heart. I loved you with your baggage, your mixed signals, but this? Uyang'zonda bab' Nyathi (you hate me Mr Nyathi) and I think I hate this creature growing inside of me."

I take the papers about termination and shove them on his lap and watch as he rummages through them.

Him- "Zinhle, no! Please don't, I'll do anything."
He cries out loud.

Him- "This is what you want to do? You want to kill our baby? Our blessing from God?" It comes out as a whisper.

I stare at him.

Me - "maybe. You see? It sucks not knowing, doesn't it?"

With that, I open the door and run back in the house.

[04/17, 20:15] Wdz: [34]

****ZINHLE****

The next few days, I decide to do the things that I've neglected, the things that I enjoy. I go jogging every morning for 45 minutes, meditate,

I try out different cooking and baking recipes, I've even gone back to reading to the elderly in an old age home close to my house.

I sent Eve an email requesting some time off for personal issues, she just told me to bring my copy of the key for the shop when I can. After her reply, I switched off my phone. That was a week or 2 ago, I haven't been keeping track.

My mom has been acting suspicious lately. She's not her bubbly self around me, only on the phone with her mystery man do I see her spark. Her added suspicions is what is forcing me to make a decision about this pregnancy soon.

The days keep passing, and I still haven't verified my pregnancy with a GP, but I don't

want to verify it. I want this whole saga to be a long nightmare that I wake up from, but the chances of that happening are zero. Today I've decided that I can't keep this baby, all outcomes aren't conducive, and I fear I will resent him or her because they'll be a constant reminder of the whorish mistake that I made. Let alone the fact that my mother would kill me and I wouldn't be able to afford the life I'd want to give him/her.

So today I wake up and pray, asking God to forgive me for what I'm about to do. I get dressed in ripped boyfriend jeans, a loose fitting top and my white All Star sneakers. I wear light make up and wear my shades to conceal my red puffy eyes. I grab my bag and head out to my Uber.

Before I reach the front door, my mom calls after me.

Her- "My baby, I don't know what is going on with you, and I'm not going to pretend to know. What I do know is that it's eating you up inside, and you are just a shell of who my Zi Zi used to be. Whatever it is, I'm here. A mother's love is unconditional. That will never change. You may be confused now, but don't make permanent decisions on temporary emotions. Everything happens for a reason."

She pulls me in for a warm embrace and kisses the side of my cheek.

I pull away and run out, I have to stick to my guns and go through with it.

The cab drops me off a few meters away from the clinic and I walk the rest of the way there. My heart is so heavy, I just want someone to talk to, someone to reassure me that it will all be okay. I want to tell my sister everything that's happened, and have us laugh at my misfortune.

But I'm here, alone, and I'm going through with this. I clench onto my bag and make my way inside.

Apparently they have to perform an ultrasound so they can determine the correct termination method depending on how far along I am.

I lay on my back on the bed and lift my top up. The nurse applies a cold gel on my stomach and places the machine on my abdomen. I look away from the screen and ask her to turn down the volume. I don't want to hear the heartbeat.

The nurse finishes off and gives me a paper towel to wipe my belly. I follow her to the consultation room.

Nurse- "So I was able to establish how far your pregnancy is. You're about 9 weeks into your pregnancy and well there's something else."

Me- "what?"

Nurse- "I saw 2 heartbeats. So your termination could be a little more intense. We'd probably have to perform a surgical abortion instead of a medical one. We'd use a speculum.."

Me- "2? 2 heartbeats? Are you sure?"

Nurse- "I'm pretty sure. So i need to know if you're going to continue with the termination?"

Tears flood my cheeks.

Me- "Uhm I'll need some time, thank you."

I rush out.

****BRIAN****

So I've been following Zinhle around, just to add to the ammunition that I have. Siya has been

too quiet for someone whose life can potentially change in a second. I've figured that gathering more intel will secure that R5 million pay day.

Nothing could have prepared me for seeing Zinhle walk into an abortion clinic. She spent quite some time in there too.

I've been tapping on my steering wheel for what seems like forever, debating whether I should go inside and stop Zinhle, or I should just leave things be.

Just as I grab my phone and open my door, Zinhle comes running out. I close my door and recline my seat. She's visibly distraught, even through her shades, I can tell she's been crying. My heart aches a little, she's the one person

that doesn't deserve any of this.

Watching her is too depressing for me. I need a quickie. I speed off to my girl that's been waiting all morning.

****ZINHLE****

I feel dizzy so I sit on the side of the pavement and regain my normal breathing pattern.

I compose myself, I am sitting on the filthy floor after all.

I get up and drink a bottle of water from my bag. I decide it's best to kill 2 birds with one stone since I'm already out of the house. I'll just go drop off my keys at the boutique now.

I grab a taxi and arrive at the shop to find the

"Closed" sign up. Eve puts it up if she's at the back having lunch and there's no other shop assistant around.

I use my key to open up and walk to the back. My jaw drops to the floor when I find Eve holding onto her desk and someone pounding her from behind.

Eve- "Yes! Yes Brian! I'm cuuumming!"

[04/17, 20:17] Wdz: Morning morning!

[35]

****ZINHLE****

I stand there glued to the ground for a few minutes, then I run as fast as my legs can carry me, I run away until I'm out of breath. I go straight home and lock myself in my room. I pace my room, but then I feel dizzy so it's time I laid down. I take off my shoes and smash my

body onto the bed. I screech as I feel something poke my back. I find a few letters scattered on my bed, but one strikes my eye.

It's a letter from UNISA. I've been accepted into both courses I've applied for; BSc Pharmacology as well as Chemical Engineering. I'm ecstatic!

I've dreamed of starting my own skin care/cosmetic range for a while now, so I figured either on if these qualifications could bring me a step closer to doing so. I'd be an entrepreneur with a qualification. I wouldn't just be throwing money in the operation and barking orders, but I'd be able to be involved with the process.

I've always imagined this dream to be unattainable, but I'm pregnant with twins, the father of my babies is married to a woman cheating with his best friend. So anything is

possible!

I'm jumping around in my room when I feel dizzy and I get the urge to throw up. I run to the bathroom and throw up. When I'm done, I flush the toilet, and sit there for a minute, looking at my stomach.

Me- "Hi babies, it's me your mom. Wow, I didn't think I'd say that anytime soon, but that's who I am. I'm your mommy. You really took me by surprise, and I'm sorry for thinking the worst and almost taking your lives from you. But I swear on everything I love and hold dear, that I will protect you with even my last dying breath. Just stay in there and cook as long as you need to and promise you won't come out looking like your daddy."

I hold onto my stomach a while longer and then get up to brush my teeth.

I go to my room and switch on my laptop. I play Tamia in the background while I browse the internet. I'm ignorant regarding pregnancy and symptoms and foods to avoid etc, so I try to find as much information as I can and try absorb it all. I also realize that I don't have a gynecologist, now that I'm keeping my munchkins, I need the best healthcare I can afford.

Crap, about that. How am I going to afford all of this? My tuition, my babies, the appointments, and I'm no longer on my mom's medical aid.

So that needs to be a priority, get some medical aid quotes, try to find employment, and calculate my savings. I don't want any financial assistance from my mother, I've dented her bank balance enough over the years. I just hope that I'm able to do it all, and my savings stretch over the upcoming months. I look at my designer bags and shoes peeping through the closet, and think to myself that a logical option

would be to sell them at some point. Hopefully Eve pays me for the days that I've worked, I'm going to need that money.

I start my breathing exercises as I see my chest move up and down uncontrollably. I need to have faith that it will all work out. I might not be able to give my munchkins what I want to give them, but hopefully I'm able to give them what they need.

I've been trying to avoid thinking about Eve and Brian, but I'm failing. I know one thing, and it's that I'm not the one that's going to tell Siya. I just have so many unanswered questions, like how long has this been going on for? Is it a full on relationship? Is it purely sexual? Was he the guy she was talking to the other day about "having a plan?" Or is that another man.

I laugh out loud, this is amusing.

I guess that's what Siya gets for being such a

selfish prick, a cheating wife!

I also need to butter up Siya, because I want out of this contract. The one person that could help me is him. I'm not sure about Eve's motives right now, so I doubt I can trust her. It seems like she's on a warpath on her own, and I don't want to be the target. Hopefully there's a little flexibility in this contract.

****SIYA****

I haven't slept in what seems to be forever. Ever since Zinhle shoved those papers about termination on my lap, my life has been on a downward spiral.

I have been spending a lot of time away from my house, I've needed time to think and put everything in order. Eve is away on her expo's or

conferences or whatever they are, frankly I don't care either. I'm starting to resent my relationship with Eve, because ultimately that's what's keeping me from being with my soulmate, and now it just feels like it was all a farce.

Speaking about my heart, I received disturbing news today. I've had someone watch over Zinhle in my absence, I know she wanted me to stay away, that's why I've sent someone else to do the job.

Apparently she went to an abortion clinic earlier today. I had prayed and pleaded with God to do something to prevent her from harming our baby, but I guess it didn't work. The report I received also included that there's someone else keeping tabs on her. The description matches that of my friend, Brian. He's so

predictable.

There's a method behind my madness. I'm not giving Brian a black cent, because I've decided that my future doesn't have Eve in it. The day after my trip from the South Coast with Zinhle, I knew that staying would make both Eve and I miserable. So I met with one of my lawyers that very day to organize a generous settlement for Eve. I've been postponing my follow up meetings because of my schedule and then finding out about the baby. That's consumed my mind every second of every day. So much so, that I had to send some guys to roughen up that Thabiso boy of Zinhle's. I can't have our creation under any stress, Thabiso gives me stress and I didn't even date him. Hopefully he gets the message, because if he tries to fight fire with fire he will lose. That would be like bringing a water gun to a nuclear war.

I'm sitting in my study in my house, and I'm looking down at a mound of papers. Settlement for Eve, the estate for my unborn baby, and even the surrogacy contract. It's true that when you make plans, God laughs at you, because if you hinted any of this a year ago, it would've been a joke.

I need to afford Eve the respect of sitting down with her and having a lengthy conversation regarding our marriage and it's future, or lack thereof. I need to make her realize that our marriage isn't on the line because of Zinhle, it's on the line because I now know what true love is, and I don't want either one of us to live another minute without exploring it. I don't believe in polygamy, i want to give my all in a single relationship and devour one person for the rest of my life, so having a timetable for the

women in my life is absurd to me. I can't bombard her with lawyers haphazardly, she's been a part of my life for years, and that needs to be respected. We have countless memories, we know so much about each other, our inside jokes, the days we cried together, the days we laughed together, the days we laughed until we cried together. Our mutual friends, our mutual enemies. Regardless of what's going on currently, we've had a life together and that counts for something. I did break my vows, and I need to be accountable.

Hopefully I can set this up sooner rather, the sooner I come clean to Eve, the better. I no longer want this weighing on my shoulders.

Sometimes I wish I'd never met Zinhle, because then I'd be content and would still be oblivious to the possibilities of something greater than me; something intangible and inexplicable;

something that's awoken my spirit and flair for life. I'm about to change Eve's life forever, I just hope she's able to forgive me one day.

I know that Zinhle went to an abortion clinic, but I have faith in the woman that has my heart. I'm holding on to the tiniest glimmer of hope that my baby is still alive.

[04/17, 20:18] Wdz: [36]

****ZINHLE****

It's been about 2 weeks since I witnessed Eve and Brian do the unthinkable, but it still feels like yesterday. Eve hasn't contacted me , she's probably debating in her head whether I saw her or not. That's no longer my issue though. The Nyathi's can deal with their own baggage, I've got a ton of my own. I was already a catalyst in Siya breaking his marriage vows, I'm not about

to be the bearer of such horrific news that frankly have nothing to do with me. Siya deserves to know that he's being stabbed by a double edged sword, not only is his wife cheating, but she's cheating with his best friend. He will not be finding out from me though, no thanks.

After hundreds of phone calls, I've finally found a gynecologist, and today I have my first consultation. I know I'm a little late, but this has all been so overwhelming, I've been doing things at my own pace. He's a credible doctor, with international experience. He's even helped in a few refugee camps delivering babies and offering infant care, so at least I'm comforted in knowing that I won't just be a pay cheque to him.

I'm anxiously waiting in the waiting room, when

my name is called. I meet the Doctor, and I stop in my tracks, he looks younger than I assumed he'd be. He can sense that I'm anxious so he tries to make light conversation.

Him- "There is nothing to worry about Miss.." he rummages through his papers in front of him.

Me- "Khumalo.. but please just call me Zinhle."

Him- "Okay then Zinhle, you can call me Sbu. Doctor Ngcobo is too formal for my liking."

I nod and he flashes his smile.

He's a a dark mocha skin tone, with bushy eyebrows and thick long eyelashes. His eyes are a mixture of a light hazel and a hint of emerald. I could get lost in then for days. His smile lights up the room and he has an effortless friendly persona.

Him- "Okay, so mind telling me what I owe the pleasure of seeing such beauty so early in the

morning."

I smile and lick my lips. I think I chose the wrong doctor. I'm nervous enough, and his charm and good looks aren't making things easier.

Me- "I'm pregnant."

His eyes shoot out.

Me- "Surprising?"

Him- "I guess I just assumed you were here for family planning. Continue though."

Me- "Well, I took some home tests and they were all positive. So I guess the next step is to get it confirmed."

Him- "Uhhh okay, I see. Well then let's get you onto the bed and see if there's something cooking underneath those abs."

The flattery!

Him- "Let's put some cold gel on you, shall we?"

I give him a concerned look.

Him- "Don't worry, you'll hardly feel anything. Follow me."

He leads me to the bed and he tells me to lift up my dress, so I do, revealing my red lace thong.

He clears his throat then grabs a large paper towel and places it on my lap. I flinch as he applies the cold gel and proceeds with the ultrasound and slightly pushes down on my abdomen.

Him- "Are you okay?"

He touches my hair, and I nod.

Him- "Ooh lucky you, you get 2 babies for the price of one. Talk about killing two birds with one stone hey?"

He laughs, but I just give him a blank stare. He clears his throat then points at the screen.

Him- "So those two dots, are your babies Zinhle, and that sound is their heartbeat."

I sob and hold onto his arm, he comes closer to me and gives me a warm hug. After what seems like forever, I finally pull away.

Me- "I'm sorry." I sniff away the last of my tears.

Him- "Don't apologize. Let me print these out for you and we can have a chat in my office. I'll give you sometime alone."

He leaves the room and I wipe my belly and lower my dress. I make a mental note to wear pants and a top next time. I only wore this dress because I feel myself gaining a little weight, and this avocado figure hugging maxi dress is one of my favorites, I wanted to wear it before I become a whale. I put on my gladiator sandals and grab my bag. I take a deep breath in then I finally turn the knob and make my way to the office.

I sit across from the doctor and he has a wide smile on his face, so I reciprocate.

Him- "So Zinhle, everything seems normal, your blood pressure is a little high, that's something I'd like us to work on. Other than that, congratulations, it looks like you're carrying twins. You're at a critical time in your pregnancy, almost 11 weeks, and carrying twins makes your situation more delicate."

I nod at every word he says.

Him- "I'll prescribe you some pre-natal vitamins. If you don't mind me asking; Where's the father? A support system is necessary during such a time, and since your blood pressure is a little concerning for me, I want to know if it's being triggered by the pregnancy or other issues."

I lick my lips, because Siya is someone that I

work hard at forgetting everyday.

Me- "The father is no longer in the picture, and honestly I think that situation with him has probably increased my BP levels to some extent, but I'm working on it. I've gone back to meditating, so hopefully that has a positive effect."

Him- "You meditate? I've always wanted to try it, but I think I'm too hyper for it."

Me- "Well maybe one day I'll show you how. Everyone does it differently, so it's not that hard."

Him- "I'll hold you to that."

He flashes a smile.

He hands me a small folder with my babies ultrasound and my prescription.

Him- "Do you have any questions for me?"

Me- "Yes, actually. I just think they might take the whole day though, and you might find them

a little ridiculous. It's just that this is my first time.

Him- "Okay, before your blood pressure spikes, I'll give you my email address and you can email me your questions or concerns or whatever, anything we leave out, maybe we can meet up for coffee then."

Me- "Ummm.."

Him- "It's a deal then. Set up your next consultation with Stephanie in the front. I guess I'll be waiting for that email."

He winks at me and I take that as my cue to leave. I reach the door of his office, and turn around because I can feel his eyes burning a hole straight through my booty.

I'm right he's staring right at it, he looks down when he realizes I've caught him and I smile to myself.

I bask in the sun and look up into the heavens. I take a moment to thank God for keeping me and my babies safe, and I realize then that this is all a blessing. Blessings don't always come in a big red bow, and this is just one of those examples. This isn't an ideal situation, but I've been entrusted with two human lives, and that's amazing.

I walk to a Mugg & Bean close by and indulge in some choc chip flap jacks. I take advantage of the wifi and apply for a few bursaries, and I read my emails. I've received a few quotations regarding medical aid and hospitalization plans, tomorrow I need to confirm my premium payment. I feel a sense of empowerment, as I take charge of my life one step at a time. I email Siya that I need to talk to him and he calls almost immediately.

Me- "Hi"

Him- "Zinhle.. Baby, are you okay?"

Me- "I'm fine. Look I need to speak to you in person, preferably somewhere public."

Him- "Where? When? Should I pick you up?"

Mr- "At your earliest convenience. You can email me and I'll be there."

I drop the phone and let out a breath I didn't realize I was holding. I guess he still has an effect on me.

I have a few decisions to make regarding him. I know I can't keep the babies from him forever, but I'm still so hurt by what he did. I need him to squirm a little. I just need one thing from Siyabonga Nyathi; a way out of this contract.

[04/17, 20:20] Wdz: [37]

****ZINHLE****

The festive season is pretty much upon us, and I'm not in the festive spirit yet. I've tried looking for a job everyday, but most places are shutting down soon, so they aren't looking to employ anyone. Unless I decide to work as a waitress, and unfortunately standing and working for 14 hours a day isn't ideal in my situation. I can barely stand for 2 hours without needing a nap as it is. Yet again, I can't expect my mother to be responsible for 3 lives. She's been agitated at seeing me laze around everyday around the house, but my mom is too sweet to say anything.

I'm soaking in a warm bath with a few drops of ylang ylang. I'm trying to take control of my blood pressure, and my holistic remedies have never failed me before. I'm playing Adele on my phone, while I type a lengthy email to Sbu the

doctor.

He's been a gem. He's answered all of my crazy questions, and he's allowed me to feel comfortable enough to ask even the most outrageous of questions That's all I wanted from a gynecologist, someone I could be completely transparent with. Right now I'm asking him about if it's mandatory to deliver via C-section since I'm carrying twins and if my babies will get affected by that drinking spree I had earlier on during the pregnancy. I know I should get a midwife or a doula, but who has that kind of money lying around? Not me. Besides, Sbu isn't complaining.

Sbu calls as soon as I click the "send" button.

Him- "Zinhle, did you see what time it is?"

Me- "I know it's after work hours, but this

question just came to mind, and I need your professional opinion."

Him- "You've asked me millions already, and you still have a few months to go, don't worry."

Me- "but Sbu.."

Him- "No. I know you want to be prepared for the babies, but you should also enjoy this time and stop stressing over the small stuff.

Embrace the unknown, it's part of becoming a mother. Anything else you want to know we can discuss after your consultation in a few days over a cup of tea or Milo. That's what you're craving these days right?"

We both laugh.

Me- "Okay, okay thank you Sbu. Goodnight!"

Him- "Goodnight Zi Zi"

We hang up and I lay in the water. I hum to the song that's playing. As I close my eyes, my mom barges into the bathroom.

Mom- "Zi Zi you've been in here forever.." she looks down at me with a confused look plastered on her face, as she analyses my naked body.

I jump up and turn my back to face her, I haven't told her the news yet, and my full breasts and chubby tummy could give me away. I grab the towel from the floor and cover my body.

Mom- "Zinhle?"

Her eyes are glistening with tears.

Me- "Ma, I'm done. I forgot my face mask in my room." I rush past her and go to my room. I slide down against my door and try wrap my head around what she could possibly thinking at this moment. My heart is leaping out of my chest, and my nerves are slightly kicking in.

A few minutes later, I hear her walk towards my

bedroom. She stands outside my door, she clears her throat and I can hear that her voice is breaking when she starts to speak.

Her- "Uhhh I wanted to tell you that your sister will be coming in a few days, and I'm busy with the church conference so I'd appreciate it if you'd clean up her room a little. Goodnight Zinhle." With that she walks away and I hear her door shut closed and shortly afterwards I hear her lock her door, which is something she never does.

She never called me by my full name. I was either her "baby" or "Zi Zi"

How am I going to explain this to my family?

What do I do if she asks me to leave her house when I officially tell her?

What will I do? Shack up with the Nyathi's and play happy family?

The day of my consultation has finally arrived, and I'm so excited to see how my munchkins are doing. I decide on wearing white leggings and an off the shoulder frilled blue and white shirt, nude wedges and nude bag. I don't want a repeat of last time, and with this outfit, you can barely tell that my hips are expanding and I look like I have a beer belly.

I'm on the bed in the consultation room and I'm smiling from ear to ear. I still can't get over their heartbeats. Sbu prints out a copy of my munchkins then we head to the office to talk.

Him- "So they seem to be doing good. 13 weeks now so your state isn't so critical anymore. Your blood pressure is stabilizing, but it's still not where I want it to be. I'll have to continue to monitor it, we don't want you developing preeclampsia."

Me- "They're fine though right? They're growing

rate is fine?"

Him- "Yes, everything else seems to be fine." I breathe out a sigh of relief.

Me- "Is my weight gain normal though? Should I go on a diet or something?"

Him- "Zinhle, you're carrying not one, but two little humans, so don't compare your pregnancy to others. At least you have an amazing reason for gaining weight."

He winks at me, then jots down some notes in my folder, I try to peek to see, but his handwriting is that of a 2 year old learning to write cursive.

Him- "Since you're not paying for my adterhours services, it's only fair that you take me out to lunch."

I laugh slightly.

Me- "I know Doctor Ngcobo! You don't have to

tell me twice."

I roll my eyes.

Him- "Good, let me grab my things then we can go."

Me- "Your other patients?"

Him- "I cleared my schedule. I wasn't about to let this opportunity pass me by."

He grabs his things then leads his way to his car.

I'm walking behind him, and I'm ashamed to say that I'm checking him out. I blame it on the hormones though.

He's wearing navy slim fit pants, a crisp white shirt tucked in, tan loafers and tan belt.

He stops ahead of me.

Him- "Do I need to call my lawyer and file a sexual harassment suit?"

He laughs out loud, and my cheeks turn red with embarrassment.

He opens his car door for me and we drive off.

We arrive at a quaint yet elegant restaurant by the beach in the North. Our conversation is effortless and it's safe to say we're both enjoying ourselves. For this one moment I don't think about finances, employment, or anything else. It's just us.

Him- "So do you think you're ready for after this 9 months is over?"

Me- "honestly, no. I'm scared shitless, but I'm praying for strength everyday."

Him- "Well if you ever need anything, I'll be there."

He brushes my hand.

Me- "Thank you, I really appreciate everything you've done so far." I flash him a smile.

He tells me about his siblings and his deep love that he has for his mother. His eyes light up when he talks about his family, and it makes my heart melt. He tells me that he plans on opening a public clinic with private facilities in the next year or two. I'm awed at the humanitarian within him.

We sit for hours in the restaurant until we realize we're the only 2 people left.

He pays the bill and we leave. Outside my house, I bid him goodnight and he kisses my hand.

He's been the perfect gentleman.

[04/17, 20:35] Wdz: Good Morning, have an awesome day!

[38]

****SIYA****

I've tried not interfering in Zinhle's life, but seeing her with another man, I don't know if I can do that. That's where I draw the line. When I received an update that Zinhle was with some doctor at a scenic restaurant by the beach, I didn't even wait for my meeting to come to an end. I told the guy to reschedule or get lost and I left him in my office. Its a miracle I didn't get involved in a car accident, because I was flying. I tried calling Zinhle on the way to the restaurant, and surprise surprise; my number was blocked.

I arrived at the restaurant with my gun in hand as I walked towards the entrance, but then I caught a glimpse of Zinhle. She was laughing and glowing, it made my heart melt. The last

time I was with her she was angry, disappointed, distraught and I inflicted those tears she cried. Seeing her so happy made me realize that my anger isn't what she needs. So I walked away. I went back to my car and decided I'd give the nerd a fair chance for now, but he shouldn't mistake my kindness for weakness. Let them have their last supper, as for me, I waited in the parking lot just in case he lay his filthy hands on Zinhle. I called her again with a blocked number, and I literally saw her look at it ring then she rejected it. She probably knew it was me. That was the worst 4 hours of my life. I can't count the times I had to take out my bullets to stop myself from blowing a hole through that geek's head.

I've given Zinhle her space, not because I wanted to, but because I wanted to come back into her life with something concrete to offer her, and I can't do that as a married man.

I fear though that she's used this time to get over me and move on, whilst I'm even deeper in love with her than before. I went to my house a week ago to talk to Eve about separation and she went ballistic; throwing vase after vase at me. She finally calmed down, then her emotions switched from anger to hurt and desperation.

She begged and pleaded to give us a chance, she even knelt before me pleading with me to try counseling or whatever it takes to make us better. I hated that I was the reason for her tears, but what was I to do?

I left my house that day with my heart heavy. I set up a meeting with my lawyer the following day to adjust the settlement, although I know that throwing money at a problem isn't the best thing to do, right now I feel as if it's the only thing to do.

Something about Eve was unsettling though that day. It was in the morning, yet she was fully clothed, in a stained figure hugging dress. Her lipstick was smudged and she wasn't wearing her ring. I remember laughing to myself as I saw her fake eyelash flutter and hang in for dear life. It looked like she had a rough night, or worse; she didn't sleep at the house. So I did the next natural thing. I had some guys tail her. I'm awaiting a full report later in the week, but I need to know now. So I've decided to go do some snooping myself.

I arrive at the house and it's cold. There's no warm homely feeling. No cupcakes that Eve used to make everyday with the colorful icing. There's no pots on the stove or loud TV playing. My house barely resembles what it used to be. I head up the stairs and hear sounds coming

from my bedroom. I take out my gun and run to my study and grab a silencer. I'm trying to remain calm, because it's probably just Eve in some rage throwing my belongings away.

I go back to my room, and nothing could prepare me for the filth I see. I blink a few times to make sure that my eyes aren't deceiving me, but through the small opening by the door, I see them in all their naked glory on my R75 000 orthopedic bed. My marital bed. The same bed that I've taken Eve countless times.

I open the door wider and watch them as they jump off each other and conceal themselves with the covers.

Me- "Don't stop on my account."

I screw the silencer onto my gun and walk in.

Eve- "Siya please.." She pleads frantically.

Me- "Please what?" I ask in a calm tone.

I walk across the room to a couch opposite the bed and sit down. I pour myself a drink from the whiskey on the table close by and gulp it down.

Me- "Continue."

They look at me confused and shocked.

Me- "Continue and pretend I'm not even here. " I slouch back into the couch.

I give them a smile and they just stand there shaking. I shoot the headboard and that startles them.

Me- "I said continue! Eve I believe you were busy giving him head so continue."

I wave the gun in her direction. She slowly makes her way to him and kneels before him. I shoot at the bedside lamp, and she takes him in her hand. She puts him in her mouth and he's frozen. His jaw is on the floor and his eyes have fallen out of their sockets.

I point the gun at him.

Him- "My man there's no need for this."

Me- "You fuck my wife in my house and now you're telling me what to do? I think you were tugging on her hair and making a different facial expression. Now change your facial expression or should I?" I cock my gun and point it towards his face.

He pretends to enjoy it and I laugh.

Me- "Pussy"

I pour another drink.

Me- "So what do you usually do after this?"

They look at me confused. Eve is crying uncontrollably, but I'm not touched, not even in the slightest.

Me- "I asked a question! What do you do after giving each other head? And by the way Eve, I'm

disappointed in you, you usually put so much effort into that."

I shake my head.

Eve- "Siya, I'm sor.."

Me- "Sorry? Sorry for fucking my best friend in our bedroom? Sorry for being caught? Sorry for being a cheap whore that opens her legs? Spare me. I'm ready for the main act, come now Brian. Do you usually enter her from behind or does she ride you like a bicycle? You guys really aren't impressing me." I look at them intently.

Him- "Siya dude, it's not even what it looks."

Me- "It doesn't look like my brother fucks my wife when I'm away? Oh you guys must have been giving each other genitalia examinations right?"

I stand up and shoot Brian in the leg. He cries out in pain.

Me- "Wait! I have an idea! Let's play a game. Since you two have been playing the Let's fuck each other in Siya's bed and see if he'll find out game, let's play some Russian Roulette."

I take the bullets out of my gun.

Me- "So, I'm gonna put one bullet in here, I'll keep shooting at each of you until the unlucky person gets a billet through them. So who do you think I should start with?"

Eve- "Siya, no! Don't!"

Me- "Well if you insist my dearest wife!"

I aim for her arm and shoot. She screams out.

Me- "Shut up! You didn't get shot! Now let's try my brother over here."

I aim at his other leg and shoot, but nothing.

Me- "Eve, where should I aim this time?"

I shoot at her stomach, but nothing.

Me- "Brian, are you praying over there? Well I hope your prayers get answered, because it's your turn again buddy!"

I aim at his upper thigh then shoot. The gun goes off and blood spews out of his thigh. They both scream at the top of their lungs.

Me- "Well I guess you'll just have to ride him now."

She sobs until she gets hiccups and looks at me with pleading eyes as she slowly makes her way on top of Brian.

Me- "I don't have all day Eve!"

She jumps on top of him and he yelps in pain. She grinds him slowly.

I stand up and shoot the bed, and they both jump up.

Me- "You." I point the gun towards Brian. "You're dead to me."

I point the gun at Eve- "You disgust me." I spit on the floor. I want a divorce, I'll have the paperwork dropped off by tonight and I want it signed by tomorrow morning. Don't try me Eve. Let me not disturb your love making session then, enjoy Bri."

This is why my PI report has been taking ages, they knew what was going on and they didn't want to be another target for telling me.

[04/17, 20:36] Wdz: [39]

****ZINHLE****

Christmas is next week, and I've been trying to avoid my mother the best way I can. I think she's been doing the same, because we've gone days without seeing each other. She wakes up early and leaves before I wake up, and she only comes back once I'm asleep. I feel like I'm

making her uncomfortable in her own home, and that's not fair. I've contemplated renting a small apartment, because I don't want to crowd her. I doubt I'd be able to handle the looks of disappointment from her for an entire 9 months. However, the way my finances are set up right now, I'll probably only afford a small cottage or a back room, and that's not the life I want for myself right now.

When I was in high school, I was reckless, it's through the grace of God that I passed so well in matric. I was such a hippie, hence my fascination with holistic living now.

I wouldn't come home, I'd go clubbing, come home wasted, I was a free spirit. I was never interested in sex and having boyfriends, it was just my spirit that yearned for happiness after the drama with my father.

I put my mother through many sleepless nights, she'd cry herself to sleep sometimes asking God what she did wrong for me to hate her so much. It got worse when I put her in debt of over R100 000 because of my indecisiveness during my varsity years. I've just always been a true believer in living an authentic life, unfortunately sometimes it was at the expense of my mother's happiness. This was when my sister and I drifted apart. She chose a degree and stuck to it, she completed her last year of study in Canada. She's been moving from country to country, teaching English. She was recently presented with an opportunity to teach at some Ivy League University abroad. She barely comes home often, I think it's because I repulse her. Ever since my father, anyone who broke her trust, she'd cut off immediately. She's not a second chance kind of woman, so I broke her trust and therefore she cut me off. She's only four years older than me, but our bond has

faded over the years and she behaves like a distant aunt towards me. She sends money to mom every few months with strict instructions not to pay for any loans, but to use it on spa treatments and a weekend away; alone. My mom would never tell me this, so I found this out one day when I was eavesdropping on their skype conversation. I can only imagine the vile things she'll say to me when she finds out I'm pregnant, and not even dating the father of my kids. She'll probably take mom back overseas with her. She's been telling mom to resign and go to live with her for over a year now, stating that she needs to stop "babying" me. Just thinking about this whole situation, gives me heart palpitations. This festive season will be the worst yet, and I'll be going through the wrath of my family alone, with no one to hold my hand or to vent to. I just hope I can keep my blood pressure under control.

Staying in my relationship with Thabi was primarily based on the fact that I thought what he had to offer me was all that I deserved. I inflicted pain on my family so even after praying for forgiveness, I was given someone who did the same.

So one day, I stopped. I worked hard everyday at gaining her trust and it came back eventually. Now we've forged an incredible bond, I can't say the same for my sister though. Hence I'm dreading her being here over Christmas, especially since my little bump is a little visible now.

My mother is a 46 year old beautiful, strong black woman that doesn't look a day older than 30 in my biased opinion. She's been through the worst, through her marriage, her divorce leaving her without a cent to her name, being shunned

by friends, family and church members because of the divorce, but that's never damaged her faith or her spirit. She's an absolute vision, thank goodness my sister and I took after her in the looks department. She's so pure, even the depths of her heart aren't tainted. Now that she's on the market, she's glowing. Just when I thought she couldn't get any more beautiful, I see it happen more everyday.

I need to have this contract dissolved by the new year, so I'm going to take Siya up on his offer. He emailed me earlier and this is what it read.

"Zinhle, you mentioned a while ago that there are some things we need to discuss, and I couldn't agree more. I would like to take you to dinner, consider it a date, since I never got an opportunity to take you on one, please accept my request for all times sake.

Regards

Your Siya"

My Siya? Nope, more like Eve's Siya. Well I emailed him back telling him I'd be ready by 18:30 pm and I guess it's a date.

My nerves are kicking in and the fact that I can't fit in the outfit I had planned to wear is stressing me out.

I finally decide on a white below the knee figure hugging dress with long sleeves and a high neck abd cut outs on the shoulders. It's so tight, I can barely breathe, but it looks good and it zipped up so I'll worry about the rest later.

I haven't put make up on my face in ages and so I'm going all out tonight! I finish it off with a red lip. I put on my tan gladiator heels and grab my tan below the knee coat and my white tote bag.

I look at my reflection in the mirror, and I look good. I just need to remember to carry my bag in front of my belly the whole night and I'll be good.

It's 18:45 and Siya has been parked outside since 18:00. I'm just sitting on my bed and I'm so nervous, I'm shaking. I rub some myrrh on the back of my neck to calm down my anxiety. I take one last breath in and I finally leave.

As soon as he sees me approaching, he gets out and comes towards the passenger side to open the door. He looks just as nervous as I am, if not more. He looks yummy in dark slim fit jeans, navy and white checkered shirt and a navy blazer. I walk past him and take a whiff of his cologne.

Me- "You changed your cologne."

He chuckles.

Him- "I had to."

He flashes his perfect smile and narrows his dreamy eyes. My heart skips a beat and so I jump into the car. As he comes around to his side, I say a silent prayer to behave.

[04/17, 20:41] Wdz: [40]

****ZINHLE****

We're on our way to the restaurant, and we've fallen into a calming silence in the car. He tried placing his hand on my thigh earlier on, but I quickly removed it.

Him- "You can put your bag in the back instead of carrying it on your lap like that."

I hold onto my bag tighter.

Me- "No, I'm fine thanks."

We finally arrive at a secluded French restaurant. He opens my door and helps me out of the car, he tries to hold my hand as we walk to the entrance, but my palms are sweaty, and I don't want him knowing how nervous I am. We enter the restaurant and what I see before me is a magical sight. It's dimly lit with white rose petals scattered all over. There's a pianist and someone singing Agent Provocateur "I want to know what love is."

I'm trying to keep my emotions in check as he leads me to our table.

Me- "Where is everyone?"

Him- "Well technically this is our first date so I had to make it special. I booked the restaurant for us."

I smile and bite in my trembling bottom lip, and blink away my tears. Siya opens my chair, and it's then that I notice the menu with our names

on it. "Siya & Zinhle"

Even the bottle of water has our names on it. I squint my eyes and he softly chuckles.

Him- "I told you I wanted it to be special."

He winks at me, and reaches across the table and brushes my hand with his thumb. I snatch my hand away and he clears his throat. He calls a waiter to take our drinks order, and I decide to make him sweat just a little and order a glass of wine for myself. He gives me a concerned look and I look the other way.

He keeps shifting in his seat and he's visibly uncomfortable, but he's not saying anything. He switches his drink order from a Cola Tonic to a double scotch.

Our drinks arrive and Siya asks the staff to give us some space.

Him- "What are you doing?"

Me- "What do you mean Siya?"

Him- "Did you really go through with it?"

Me- "What do you think?"

Him- "Zinhle, stop with the games please. Just tell me."

His eyes start to glisten.

Him- "Please tell me you didn't. Please."

Me- "Well you're no longer going to be a father.."

He gulps down his drink and stands . I look up at him and see a tear trickle down his face. I reach for his hand.

Me- "Siya sit down."

He breathes out loudly then takes his seat.

Me- "As I was saying. You're not going to be a father.."

Him- "I heard that already Zinhle!"

Me- "Would you let me finish please? I was

saying for the third time now, you're not going to be a father to one baby, you're going to be a father to 2."

Him- "What? Wait, what do you mean?"

Me- "I'm having twins!"

He flashes his pearly whites at me and then he allows his tears to fall down his face.

Him- "Zinhle.. wow! I'm.. I can't put this feeling into words. You've just made me the happiest man on the planet Ma Khumalo! And WE are expecting twins. You're not alone in this."

I roll my eyes as he cups my face, then he plants a smooch. Just as I start to feel tingles all over, he stops. My eyes are closed and my lips are still pouted, he shakes my shoulder then I snap back to reality. Mxm.

Our evening is filled with laughter and light banter, but now I need to get this off my chest.

Me- "Siya.." I say as I grab his hand and stroke it slightly.

Me- "Siya, since I'm pregnant with our babies, I really don't think the contract is viable. I want to make sure that my munchkins are protected. I don't want someone thinking they have rights to them. They only have one mother and one father, and they're seated at this table right now."

Him- "I definitely understand, and you have nothing to worry about. Everything is sorted out. The only thing I want you to worry about is keeping those Nyathi prince's or princesses healthy."

I squint my eyes at him.

Me- "They will be Khumalo's obviously."

Him- "We can talk about this at a later date okay?"

I nod and we continue with our meal.

I'm done with my meal and I keep stealing some of Siya's roulade from his plate.

Him- "Still hungry?"

He holds in a laugh.

Me- "Great, everyone thinks I'm fat!"

I take my coat off, because I'm tired of concealing the fat body he already thinks I have.

Me- "Excuse me."

I stand up and make my way to the restroom. I do my business and walk to the sink to wash my hands. I powder my nose and reapply some lipstick. I look in the mirror and wink at myself.

"Zinhle, do not lead into temptation." I say out loud and make my way to the door. Before I reach the door I realize that I have a paper towel stuck at the bottom of my shoe. I reach down to take it off, then the unexpected happens; my dress rips.

I'm pacing the bathroom and it's been over 10 minutes since I've been in here. The tare is right down my ass. I have no choice but to call Siya. The phone rings.

Him- "Come back, I'm starting to miss you!"

Me- "Siya please bring my coat to the ladies."

Him- "What? Why?"

I sob loudly and he hangs up.

A minute later, he comes running in. He's touching my stomach and asking if something's wrong.

Me- "I'm fine. I just have an issue."

Him- "What is it? Tell me what's wrong."

I turn around and he bursts out laughing. I start crying, but my cries soon turn into laughter.

Me- "Siya, I'm so fat and I'm only in my first

trimester! Can you imagine what's going to happen next trimester? Let alone in the third!"

I'm trying to hold my tears in, but one escapes.

Him- "Zinhle you look amazing! I didn't think you could surpass how beautiful you were when I met you, but right now you're glowing. Zinhle, I love you. You don't have to say anything, but I just want you to know that I love you more with every passing second. Your hips growing wider and your ass ripping through dresses is testament that our babies are growing stronger and healthier."

He kisses me on my forehead.

Him- "I'll wait for you at our table. Take all the time you need."

With that he leaves, and as he reaches the door, he turn and flashes his infamous smile.

[04/17, 20:42] Wdz: [42]

****SIYA****

I woke up in my penthouse today with a huge grin on my face. I haven't woken up in a good mood in the longest time. I slept with the ultrasound copy on my chest, I kept waking up during the course of the night, thinking it was all just a dream, but that photo of my babies made me realize that my dream is my reality.

My date with Zinhle last night was beyond incredible, and it's a good thing I didn't have dessert, because I got a good taste of it last night. Just when I think I know her, she pulls the rug from beneath me and surprises me; she's always keeping me on my toes. She's giving me so many mixed signals, I don't even know if she still wants me in her life as her partner. I guess that's what I get for confusing her so many times.

I'm like a love sick puppy right now. I'm a 37 year old man that's getting excited just by thinking about his baby mama. Oh! I have a baby mama now, but I wouldn't have it any other way. There are only 2 people who are standing between me and my future; Eve and Brian.

Eve refuses to sign the divorce papers, I don't know why because she's just prolonging the inevitable. I don't even hate her, I'm indifferent towards her. The betrayal, the deceit, the patronizing is too much to recover from, and frankly I want to be done with this whole mess.

Eve has the nerve to complain about the settlement amount, when I've been more than generous in my offer. I've decided that she can keep the house, her cars and I've offered her a R2 million lump sum settlement, and yet she has the gall to want more. She feels that she's entitled to alimony apparently as well as my

property in Sandhurst. I've tried with this woman, I really have. I've overlooked her whorish behavior and focused on the bigger picture at hand, but Eve is testing me. I don't want to stoop to the level I'm capable of, but she's really forcing my hand. My persuasion methods aren't always the safest, but if she's willing to risk it all, then let's dance.

Brian is a different story, he vanished off the face of the earth after the incident at my house, by so doing he's also become a pain in the ass, because I know that wherever he is he's planning something big, and I'm the target. Another reason why I brought up the topic of Zinhle getting another place to stay is because I need to ensure that she's safe. Brian has nothing to lose, and Eve is a woman on a mission to break me, so I need Zinhle to stay somewhere she'll be protected, and her mom's house isn't it. Besides, I don't want to turn Mrs

Khumalo's home into a war zone.

Christmas is literally just a few days away, and for the first time in ages, I'll be enjoying it as a single man. I've decided that I'll spend Christmas with my mom like the old times, I know she'll be interested to know about the crazy turn of events in my life. I'm expecting an "I told you so" from her regarding the Eve situation.

I've been talking to Zinhle on the phone about Christmas and gifts. I told her the only gift I want is to hear our babies heartbeat for myself. She seemed to brush it off, so I guess she's not ready for that yet, I have no choice but to understand.

I'm working from my study in the penthouse

when I receive a phone call from Zinhle, every time I see her name plastered on my screen, I involuntarily smile.

Me- "Miss Khumalo!"

Her- "Hey daddy!"

I laugh softly. This woman though.

Me- "To what do I owe the pleasure?"

Her- "Well baby daddy, I hope you don't mind getting your Christmas present early"

Me- "Huh?"

Her- "I've booked a scan for us in a few hours time."

Me- "What? Are you serious? Where?"

Her- "Firstly of all, you're welcome! I'll send you the location, that will be easier. Just don't be late, it's at 11:00 am, and I had to beg for this slot."

Me- "I'll be there at 10:00 am, do I bring

anything?"

Her- "No, it's 11:00 am Siyabonga! Just bring yourself and get ready to unofficially meet your kids. This isn't even a consultation, it's just a scan, you'll be back at work by 12:00pm."

Me- "Thank you MaKhumalo, I can't wait."

Her- "Bye baby daddy!"

Then she hangs up.

The rest of the morning, I'm unable to concentrate, so I put my documents away and decide to make myself something to eat in the interim.

I make myself a mushroom and pepper omelette and a smoothie on the side. I eat a few bites of the omelette and take a few sips of the smoothie, my excitement has me by the balls right now I can't concentrate on anything else other than that 11:00am appointment.

I decide to take a shower and get ready, I'd rather be early than be a minute late. After my shower I get dressed in faded blue jeans, a white Burberry Golfer and tan Burberry sneakers. I grab my new cologne and spray a few times, I don't know if Zinhle's sensitivity to smell has finally stabilized, but I'm not taking chances. I grab my phone and keys and leave.

Zinhle had forwarded me the location and I'm a few minutes away from the early, it also seems like I'm early. While driving, Eve calls me, which is surprising because she's blocked my number so getting hold of her is almost impossible.

Me- "What"

Eve- "That's no way to talk to your wife."

Me- "Eve I don't have time for this bull."

Her- "Okay okay. Siya, I'm going to agree to the settlement."

Me- "Okay, sign on the dotted line then forward it to my lawyer."

Her- "Well, I'm going to sign but under my conditions."

Me- "What the hell do you want now?"

Her- "Siya, I want you to meet me at the coffee shop we used to go to when we were dating."

Me- "Eve, I'm almost worried. Are you losing it?"

Eve- "That's the only way I'm signing your settlement. We were both there when we signed our marriage license, it's only right that we both be around for signing the settlement. If you don't want to then I guess we'll meet in court."

Shit, I can't stomach going to court, that will be months of back and forth, and months of me still being married to that witch. I need this to be done so that I can focus on my future with

my heart.

Me- "When?"

Her- "Now."

She drops the phone. I call her back and it goes to voicemail.

Shit! I look at the time and bite my fist. I hope Zinhle understands that this is for her and those princes she's carrying. I stop the car and make a U- turn.

****ZINHLE****

I'm at the midwifery clinic for the scan waiting for Siya. I didn't book an appointment with Sbu, because I fear the things Siya will say and do when he sees my young and handsome doctor, so I'm going to have to ease him into the idea. Besides, I'm not ready for Sbu to see the platinum ring that lives on Siya's left hand, I judge myself enough for it, I don't want Sbu or

anyone looking at me in a different light. Although Siya wasn't wearing it at dinner the other night, he probably just forgot it somewhere though.

We're forging a good bond over the phone, and I really do care about him and him having a relationship with the munchkins so I booked this appointment specially for him. Which is why I'm a little agitated at the fact that he sent me a text saying he'll be a few minutes late, and I should buy us some time. How the hell do i "buy us some time" at a clinic where we have a 20 minute slot?

It's 11:10 and his phone is on voicemail. Typical Siya with his mixed signals, one day he's hot then the next he's cold. I'm so disappointed, I feel tears trickle down my face. I take a deep breath in and walk towards the ultrasound room,

I guess I'll be doing this alone.

I hear my munchkins strong heartbeats and that immediately calms me down. They seem to look different every time. I get my copies of the ultrasound, pay and then leave the clinic. I'm annoyed, so I deserve a treat. I want something rich and creamy and fattening, so I decide to haul a cab to a coffee shop that I heard have the best Belgian waffles. Eve wanted to take me when we were still besties, because she knew my obsession with waffles.

I walk in the coffee shop and it has a great ambience, it's a perfect blend of rustic and modern. I take a few steps, then I stop in my tracks when I see Eve and Siya at a corner table. I walk towards them just to make sure it's them, then Eve spots me. On cue she jumps across the table and plants a smooch on Siya's lips. I

know I have no right to feel anything, but I do. It hurts and I can't watch any more of it, so I run out.

[04/17, 20:42] Wdz: [43]

****SIYA****

Me- What the hell are you doing? This is the shit you called me here for?"

Eve- "Come on baby, I get it, you're angry, but we can still make it work."

She continues to touch me and brush my hand, yet her focus is on the entrance. Then I see her, my heart.

Me- "Shit." I stand up.

Eve- "I was just about to sign though baby."

Me- "Screw it, its pointless negotiating with the devil. I'll see you in court."

I jog towards the door and Zinhle is pacing up

and down the cobble stone parking lot. She looks too sexy for my liking in an oversized white shirt loosely tucked into her ripped denim shorts and white sneakers.

I snake my arms around her waist, and she jumps away in shock. She rolls her eyes when she sees it's me and walks away.

Me- "Zinhle!"

Her- "Yes Mr Nyathi?"

Me- "Wow, we're back there again? Okay, I need to explain."

Her- "Siya, there's nothing to explain. Eve is your wife, I'm just the woman carrying your kids. One mistake lead us here, that's no reason to force relations between us."

Me- "Okay, no. Hold it right there! Can I get a word in?"

Her- "Siya, no! It's all good, I'm fine. I'm kind of

seeing someone too."

She looks through her bag and takes out a small envelope.

Her- "Merry Christmas Mr Nyathi."

I look through the envelope and it's the ultrasound from this morning. I try run after her, but she jumps into a cab and it speeds off. I try calling her, but she rejects all of my calls.

I've messed up, yet again. She'll never understand that I was trying to finalize my divorce and that I wasn't fraternizing.

Still no signed divorce papers, and I'm in an even worse place with Zinhle.

Fortunately I know that she's bluffing about "seeing someone" because I get hourly updates on her and from what I know, the only person to look out for is that saint of a doctor, and I'll be keeping a very close eye on that little friendship.

****ZINHLE****

Siya is so predictable. Just a few days ago, he was wining and dining me, and now he's playing happy family with Eve. I wouldn't expect anything less from him. From now on, I'll just be seeing him as the father of my kids, nothing more. I think it's time to accept that this wasn't my year relationship wise and move on.

Christmas is in just two days, and my sister lands today, and I've had to plan my outfits for every day, because I only plan on telling them after the Christmas celebrations, maybe even after New Years Eve, who knows?

My mom has gone to the airport to wait for my sister's arrival.

I've been slaving away in the kitchen, preparing a special supper for my sister's arrival. I've

made a spinach and feta quiche for an appetizer, stuffed chicken breast with roasted vegetables and a honey mustard sauce for the main meal, then lemon cheesecake for dessert, it's her favorite type of dessert. My head is spinning, I've been standing for ages and I think the nerves of seeing my sister for the first time in ages are also kicking in. Luckily my apron does a good job at concealing my expanding tummy.

I've opted for ripped jeans and a ruffled blush shirt. My jeans don't zip all the way, and obviously don't button at the top either. Fortunately though, my shirt conceals that.

Now that I'm done with the cooking and cleaning up, I really need a power nap, so I head to my room and diffuse some lavender to help with my anxiety, and I lay in bed. I'm woken up

by a knock on my bedroom door, and I immediately tense, that must be mom or Ziyanda, my sister.

Me- "Come in!"

I breathe out, and look at the door in anticipation.

It's not my mother nor is it Ziyanda.

Him- "Hi Zinhle."

Me- "Brian, what are you doing here?"

Him- "Sweet face, is that how you greet someone you haven't seen in ages?"

He walks towards my bed.

My heart is leaping out of my chest, and my phone is across from the bed on my vanity, so there's no calling for help. I try to regulate my breathing for my babies sake.

Me- "Hi Brian, long time no see!"

Him- "Now that's more like it!"

He comes toward my bed until he reaches it then he plonks himself on it. He strokes my leg softly and I move back until my back touches the headboard.

Him- "How are you Zinhle? How's the baby?"

I give him a confused stare, Siya the idiot must have told him. I don't know why because I remember specifically telling him to keep this to himself, but here we are.

Me- "Just fine thank you." I give him a half smile.

Him- "Great, well you look healthy." He says as he reaches for my tummy. I jump up off the bed and he yanks my arm.

Him- "Sit down!"

I sit down slowly and gently on the bed. A million thoughts scramble through my mind, how did he even get in the house? What is he doing here? He's not capable of rape is he?

He hands me an iPad and it seems to be a video.

Him- "Press play."

So I do. I scream out loud and drop the iPad. It's a video of Siya and me in the South Coast, making love. You can see my face as well as Siya's face clearly. Every inch of our bodies shows, and there's even a close up on his ring finger.

My hands are trembling.

Me- "Whhhhy?" I ask in a breaking voice.

Him- "I hated the fact that it was you, but you did do something you shouldn't have, you fucked a married man, hence resulting in that little bun in that oven." He says pointing at my stomach.

Me- "What do you want?!"

I shout.

Him- "Ooh, feisty! I like! This is just a warning. If

you weren't pregnant and if I didn't have a soft spot for you, I would have abducted you and sent Siya your remains piece by piece."

I swallow a lump in my throat, that's rather disturbing. Brian no longer resembles the kind thoughtful man that I had grown to like. He's just a shell of a man now, without emotion. His eyes don't sparkle when he talks to me, and his addictive smile is nowhere to be seen.

Me- "Brian, come on. I've got nothing to do with whatever is going on between you guys. You guys have known each other for decades, I only came into the picture a few months ago, and I promise I have no relationship with him."

Him- "Shut up! Shut up! I want you to run to your little boyfriend and tell him I gave you a warning. He knows what to do. Merry Christmas."

He kisses my cheek and leaves.

My tears are free falling down my face and I need to do my breathing exercises to calm

down. I get up and slowly make my way to my phone. My hands are trembling as I try to dial Siya's number. My door swings open and its mom. She startled me and my phone falls to the floor.

Mom- "Zinhle! We're back. Your sister is in the lounge, come!

Me- "Okay, please give me a second."

Mom- "No Zinhle! Now!"

The authority in her voice startles me, so I straighten my shirt and follow behind her. We reach the lounge, and there she is, reclined on the couch.

Me- "Hey Ziyanda!"

She doesn't flinch, her back is still facing me.

Ziyanda- "Hi"

I sigh and walk towards her. This is going to be

the longest few weeks in my life!

[04/17, 20:43] Wdz: This insert is for everyone that's studying or completing an assignment. Put your books aside for 5 minutes, and enjoy!

[44]

****ZINHLE****

We're seated around the table, and mom and Ziyanda are catching up and laughing at their inside jokes. We're on the second course now, and I'm trying not to clean my plate too quickly, but I'm famished.

Ziyanda stops talking about her worldly adventures and clears her throat.

Ziyanda- "Mom, you've outdone yourself with the food this evening. I really wasn't expecting this, but thank you."

Mom- "Actually you should thank your sister here, she prepared the food. She even made your favorite lemon cheesecake."

Ziyanda- "Oh."

Then we fall into an awkward silence.

I clear the table and head to the kitchen and drink some water. I knew not to expect Ziyanda to be warm and welcoming, but I didn't expect her to be rude so early in her stay. However, I'll kiss her ass for mom's sake, seeing us argue breaks her heart, so I'll try keep my thoughts to myself for the duration of Ziyanda's stay.

I walk out of the kitchen carrying the cheesecake and walk in on Ziyanda complaining to mom.

Ziyanda- "Mom, I thought you were gonna make your delicious oxtail with samp, or ubhontshisi

no jeqe (beans and steamed bread) I have enough of this fancy food phesheya (overseas) and I was craving something else.

Mom- "Hhayi Yanda, your sister put a lot of effort into tonight's meal, the least you could do is be appreciative."

I walk into the lounge and clear my throat. I place the cheesecake on the middle of the table and hand them their side plates.

Ziyanda- "I'm tired, I'm going to bed. Goodnight ma." With that she gets up off her seat and heads to her room.

Mom releases a loud sigh

Mom- "Well, at least there's more for us!"

She winks at me.

I sit down with mom and we have slice after slice of the cheesecake over interesting conversation. I want to go to my room to try and

call Siya, but I'm enjoying my little bonding session with mom, especially since I know it's probably going to be the last one in a while.

We carry the remainder of the cheesecake to the lounge and cuddle on the couch together. We watch "White Chicks" together and laugh until we're in stitches. I end up falling asleep on the couch and I'm woken up by mom gently shaking my shoulder. I look down and realize that my shirt is hiked up, revealing my swollen tummy and my jeans that don't zip.

I jump up off the couch and fix my shirt.

Me- "I think I ate too much, I'm literally bursting."

I laugh, and my mom just gives me a blank stare.

Her- "Goodnight"

She leaves the room and I hear her bedroom door bang closed.

I clean up the dining room and kitchen then finally make my way to my room, at this point I'm so sleepy I can barely see, and my feet can barely carry me.

I run for my phone and find 64 missed calls from a private number, it's probably Siya because I blocked his number after the coffee shop incident. I also have 3 missed calls from Sbu and a few texts from him checking in on me. I enjoy my friendship with Sbu, but I don't want to lead him on so I decide to ignore him again. I lay on my back on my bed and call Siya. It rings once and he answers.

Siya- "What the hell Zinhle! Is it too much to ask for to answer my calls?"

Me- "Well in case you didn't realize I blocked your number!"

Him- "So it doesn't click in your head that the private number is probably me?"

Me- "Well that's the point Siyabonga! I blocked your number because I don't want to talk to you. Answering your calls would make that a futile exercise."

Him- "Wow. Do you understand that I've been worried about you for over 4 hours?"

Me- "Whatever Siya, I called so can I just say what I wanted to? Anyways, I think you need to have a lengthy conversation with your buddy Brian. He paid me an unwelcome visit in my mom's house, and.."

Him- "Stop right there. Zinhle, you may not like me, but there needs to be a level of respect here. Saying whatever to me will not fly, and your little attitude is unattractive. You may continue."

I huff and roll my eyes. Ugh, this man has a way of getting under my skin.

Me- "So Bab' Nyathi, is that better? I was saying that your friend Brian isn't the same Brian that I had grown to know. He told me to warn you,

whatever that means. Siya, he has a video of you and I being intimate, and Siya, he scared me."

I sniff and start crying softly.

Him- "I know, I'm sorry MaKhumalo. Can you come outside?"

I jump off the bed and run to my window.

Me- "Siyabonga, what are you doing here?"

Him- "I had to make sure that all 3 of my babies were safe. So I drove here as soon as I couldn't get hold of you."

Me- "You started calling me over 5 hours ago. You've been outside this whole time?"

Him- "Pretty much, but that's not important. I'm just glad you're okay."

Me- "I'm fine. Goodnight."

Him- "Zinhle, just five minutes please."

I sigh out loud.

Me- "Fine, 5 minutes and that's it. Please give me a sec."

I tip toe out of my room to the kitchen and dish up for Siya in mom's Tupperware dishes, I know I'm signing a death wish here. You don't touch a black woman's Tupperware dishes. I pack everything in a paper bag and tip toe to the front door. I run out and run towards Siya's Range and I jump in.

Him- "Hey baby!"

I roll my eyes and hand him the paper bag. His eyes light up when he sees the food.

Me- "Don't get used to this."

His smile fades.

Me- "I think our five minutes is up! Goodnight."

I try open the door, but he locks it. He grabs hold of my arm and kisses my hand.

Him- "I'm glad you're safe, but I think it's time we discussed your living arrangements. Brian is unpredictable right now, and I want to be able to protect you, but I can't do that if you're still living under your mother's roof."

I laugh and shake my head.

Me- "Let me get this right. You want to take me away from the only support system I have and throw me in some apartment somewhere, while you play happy family with your wife? So I wait to get weekly visits from you? No! If I need so much protection, then protect my heart first, stop hurting it every chance you get. When you're done with that you can protect me right under my mother's roof."

Him- "Zinhle, there are things that are going on right now that I can't share with you just yet. I can't promise you anything, because with promises come time frames, and I'm not in a position to give you any right now."

Me- "Siya, I don't care. I shouldn't have ever expected much from you to begin with. All I'd like to rely on you for is co-parenting the kids, the rest isn't important."

He grabs my face with both his muscular yet gently hands then brings it towards his. Our noses are touching and our lips are just a centimeter apart.

Him- "Zinhle. I didn't want to tell you this until it was final, but Eve and I are separating."

I give him a sarcastic laugh.

Me- "Sure, I stick my tongue down my ex's throat all the time too!"

Him- "Could you just listen? We're separating, and I don't want to go into detail about it, but can we speak like 2 adults for a second?"

I give him a blank stare.

Him- "I'll tell you the details later, but at least now you know. There is no hope of any

reconciliation between us. So can we talk about how you're moving out of your mother's house?"

Me- "Don't tell me something just because I want to hear it, and.."

Him- "So you're pleased to know that I'm getting a divorce?"

Me- "Don't divert Siyabonga!"

He looks at me intently.

Him- "If anything were to happen to your or our little blessings, I'd never live with myself. I'm trying to find a way to fix this without any violence, hence why I need you to move."

Me- "Siya I can't just up and leave my family. I haven't even told them I'm expecting yet, how do I explain moving to God knows where? I'll think about it, that's the best I can do."

I take his hands off my face and put them on his lap.

Me- "I'm going to tell them about the pregnancy tomorrow. I need to do one thing at a time, okay? Allow me that. I'm still going to have to explain who my baby daddy is, and that'll take about a week or two. I've got a lot ahead of me. Goodnight and have a Merry Christmas Siyabonga."

I shift my body closer to his, pulling him in for a hug, but he grabs my face and smashes his luscious lips onto mine. He nibbles on my bottom lip and probes my lips open with his tongue. He slides it in and explores my mouth with it. He grazes his teeth along my bottom lip while his hand wonders beneath my shirt. He licks my top lip and that sends pulsating sensations to my castle. He presses his succulent lips along my neckline and lifts my shirt. He traces wet kisses over my lace bra, then licks his index finger and travels his hand to my castle beneath my lace boy shorts. He

traces circles on my entrance then pushes his index finger in. He's groaning as he comes into contact with my wetness. He retracts his finger and sucks on it. He shifts back in his seat and buckles his seatbelt.

Him- "Goodnight Zinhle, thanks for the food." He winks at me.

I compose myself and fix my shirt. As I'm about to jump out of the car, he clears his throat.

Siya- "Can I show you something?"

Me- "I guess."

He speeds off.

Me- "Siya! I thought you meant something that's in the back or something."

Siya- "I'll have you back by midnight Cinderella." He winks at me. I sit back in my seat and buckle my seatbelt because it's pointless arguing with this man, and I'm too exhausted to do so.

We arrive in a private complex building near the beach.

Him- "Come, let's go."

He jumps out and takes his paper bag with the food in it then comes around to open my door. I get out slowly, analyzing my surroundings and he grabs my hand and leads the way inside. He opens the door to a luxurious loft apartment. I'm in awe of my surroundings. I walk in and gently push him to the side.

Me- "Wow what is this?"

Him- "Our place." He says as he sound me around and plants a long and passionate kiss on my lips. He picks me up and wraps my legs around his waist and gazes into my eyes.

Him- "I love you so so much MaKhumalo."

He walks us to the lounge and gently places me on the couch. He kneels between my legs and pulls off his golfer, revealing his rock hard abs

and broad shoulders.

Me- "Siya, I should.."

He shuts me up with a sensuous smooch that has my arms clinging onto his neck and moaning under my breath. He lifts my shirt over my head and it falls to the floor, revealing my swollen tummy and enlarged breasts through my white lace bra. He licks his lips at the sight of me and comes down to taste my lips. His tongue plays with mine, while his hand travels down to my jeans, he teases me by placing his hand over my lace boy shorts. His bare skin touching against mine, elicits a moan from me. He stops the kiss and tugs off my jeans, taking my underwear off with them.

He glares down at my bare lower body and brushes his lips against my tummy. He plants soft wet kisses all over my swollen belly and spreads my legs apart with his thighs. He finally

lifts his head and unclasps my bra revealing my enlarged erect breasts. He gently squeezes my mounds while I tug onto his head and bring it to my face. I kiss him with longing and need, he senses this and springs off the couch tugging his jeans and briefs off simultaneously. He lunges back down and comes into contact with my castle and inhales my scent. He licks my entrance lightly and I roll my head wanting more. He nibbles and sucks on my nub while slowly inserting a finger. I jump at first contact then I grind against it. I'm on the edge, and he stops abruptly, towering over me, leveling himself with his one elbow. I reach down and feel his monster, his bulging veins and leaking head sends chills all over my body. He rubs his head against my wet entrance and I groan in anticipation. He finally slowly slides in and gives one hard thrust that makes me scream in pleasurable pain. His eyes haven't lost contact with mine as he fills me up with long and slow

strokes. I grind against him and that turns a switch inside of him, because he thrusts deeper and harder at a faster pace while caressing my breasts. I dig my nails into his torso and I feel myself build up again. His monster is buried so deep in me, I feel it choking me from the inside. A few deep thrusts later, i fly over the edge. He lifts my legs and places them on his broad shoulders. He buries himself deeper inside of me and cries my name out as he fills me with his liquid. He tumbles on me and I feel his heart jumping out of his face. He kisses my cheek and picks me up and carries me upstairs to a bedroom that I assume is his. He places me on the bed, grabs a warm towel and cleans me then brings me to his chest and cuddles me.

A few minutes later, he wakes up.

Him- "Wake up Cinderella,before you turn into a pumpkin."

He says kissing me all over my face. He carries me to the shower and washes my body all over, seductively. Once we're done, we get dressed and he pulls me to him.

Him- "Do you really have to leave?"

I nod and grab his car keys, dangling them in front of him. He sighs then we head to the car and head home.

We finally arrive back home, and the car is consumed by silence. I grab his face and give him a smooch.

Him- "Please spend the night, I just want to wake up next to you guys."

I give him a brief smile then jump out of his car. I run back into the house and close the door slowly and lock it. I take my shoes off and turn on my toes and walk to my room. I find Ziyanda sitting on my bed.

Her- "Who was that?"

[04/17, 20:43] Wdz: [45]

****ZINHLE****

Me- Ziyanda, can we talk about this tomorrow please?

Ziyanda- "Does uma know that you've resorted to this blesser lifestyle?"

I laugh sarcastically.

Me- "Get out of my room please."

Her- "That's why you're so fat! Udla imali yamadoda amadala (you're spending old men's money)."

Me- "Tell me once you're done."

I sit on my chair next to the bed.

She stands up from the bed and walks towards me. She towers over me and stumbles, she has the look of disgust and contempt animated on

her face. From what I can smell she's been drinking, and it's hard liquor. She rings her hands around my neck and presses hard. I cry softly begging her to stop, but she looks like she's in another world.

Me- "Yanda! Yanda! I'm.. I'm.. preg...naaaant stooop!" I cry out.

She snaps out of it and I'm coughing and crying on the floor. She edges closer to me, and she's also crying.

Her- "Zinhle I'm.. I'm.. so..rry. She sobs softly."

Me- "Please leave."

She stays in the same position.

Me- "Leave!"

She flinches and runs out. I lay there on the floor, trying to regulate my breathing until I fully calm down. I crawl over to my bed and lay on the covers. I'm too drained to change into my pajamas, so I pull my mink throw over my

shivering body and close my eyes.

I wake up to the smell of bacon and roll my eyes as my stomach grumbles.

Me- "Do you guys ever say no to food?"

I say as I rub my stomach. I get up off of my bed and change into my fluffy gown. It's a bit warm, but it covers all of my protruding fat, so I'll endure the heat. I walk to the bathroom to brush my teeth, but I decide to take a shower when I feel some pain on the sides of my abdomen. I take a long shower trying to soothe the pain, and it seems to subside. I walk back to my room and bend over my bed when the pain comes back. I contemplate calling Siya, but the pain isn't severe and it soon subsides soon after.

I get dressed in a striped loose long sleeved

shirt dress and tie my weave into a messy bun. I apply some makeup and wear my gladiator sandals. I open my closet and take out the paper bags containing the gifts I bought for mom and Ziyanda and walk to the lounge to put them under the Christmas tree. I walk over to the kitchen, to find mom cooking up a storm.

Me- "Hello ma!"

I walk over to her and hug her from behind. She leans back and rubs my arms.

Her- "Zi Zi, finally! You and your sister have been sleeping the whole day! Yini vele?"

Me- "Ma, it's 11:00am hawu!"

Her- "Engabe niyoshadwa ubani! (I wonder who will marry you guys)

I laugh and lick the wooden spoon with chocolate icing.

Sometimes I forget how much of a big deal Christmas Eve is in the Khumalo household. We

do gifts on Christmas Eve, we cook up a storm and mom ends up giving the food away to homeless people, because there's so much food. Then on Christmas Day we head to church and come back to eat more food. It's been just the 3 of us during Christmas for the past few years.

Mom- "Your breakfast is in the oven."

Me- "Thanks ma."

I kiss her on the cheek and take my food and head to the dining room.

I'm halfway through my food when the pain comes back. I continue eating and drink some water when I'm done.

Then I hear Ziyanda's door knob turn and she emerges in her gown. She looks like she had a rough night, I can still smell the alcohol from where I'm sitting. She makes her way to the

bathroom and she stays there for a while. I'm so lazy, I want to help mom in the kitchen, but I can't bring myself to get up off my seat.

Ziyanda comes out of the bathroom in her towel and heads to her room, just the sight of her makes my heart race.

As I finish the last of my water after a sharp pain pierces through my abdomen, Ziyand walks past me and avoids eye contact by all costs.

Mom comes to me carrying a bowl.

Mom- "Zi Zi, you didn't take your soufflé, here you go."

She hands me the soufflé, my saliva drips as the aroma hits my nose. My mom really knows how to make my heart smile. I want to hold onto these moments as much as I can, because soon I'll be rocking her world.

Me- "Thanks mom."

I hold onto her arm and kiss her hand.

Me- "I love you mom." She holds onto my arm and blows me a kiss then disappears off into the kitchen.

By the time I've gathered the strength to go to the kitchen, mom is done with the food and is cleaning up.

Mom- "Please set the table for me. Set 4 place settings, I'm expecting someone."

I give her an inquisitive look and fold my arms.

She smiles and hits me with a dishcloth,

Her- "Hamba! (Go!) we laugh and

I set the table and go fetch my phone from my room when I'm done. I've got dozens of calls and texts from Siya, so I humor him and call him back.

Him- "MaKhumalo, finally."

Me- "You called?"

Him- "Are you okay?"

Then the sharp pain comes back. I yelp in pain and breathe through it.

Me- "I'm fine."

Her- "What was that then? Zinhle are you in pain?"

Me- "Not really. I'm probably dehydrated or something. I just need to drink some water and lay down."

Him- "I can pick you up and we can go to the doctor just to be safe."

Me- "Siya stop with trying to be this perfect man, it's annoying. I was fine before you and I'll be fine afterwards. Go enjoy Christmas with your family and just leave me alone!"

I hang up and head to the lounge.

Mom- "Okay, present time!"

We open our gifts and I'm happy with what I got. Mom got me a yoga mat, an iPad and a shopping voucher. Ziyanda gave me a pamphlet and diet plan from some gym, she decided not to open the gift I got her, and she's still avoiding eye contact with me. I got her and mom the same gift; diamond bracelets with our names engraved on the inside and diamond infinity rings to match. I spent more than 2 months pay on them, and she's not even opening it.

The part I've been dreading all morning arrives and there's no turning back now.

Mom opens her gift box and jumps in excitement. She kisses me all over my face and wears the jewelry immediately. She peeps through the gift bag again.

Mom- "Oh, there's a card as well?"

I turn away and wipe a tear that escapes.

Mom- "Zinhle, yini le? (What's this)"

I look at her as tears well in our eyes and see that she's holding the ultrasound image in her hand.

I shift closer to her and she shouts her hand up in protest.

Her- "No! What is this?"

Me- "Ma, it's an ultrasound." I say in a low voice as I stare at the floor.

Her- "Ungang'hlanyisi Mina! (Don't make me mad) i know that damnit! Why is it in here?"

Me- "I have news to share. I'm pregnant." I fiddle with my fingers.

Mom- "Nxah!"

She storms off to her room. The whole time Ziyanda is on her phone pretending not to hear anything. After a few minutes she walks past

me and huffs all the way to her room.

Mom storms back into the lounge.

Mom- "Are these 2 babies that I see?"

Me- "Yes ma."

Her- "Nkosi yami! (My Lord)"

Me- "I'm sor.."

Her- "Don't lie! You can't open your legs for a man, allow him to release his semen inside of you and then come here and apologize! I'm not a fool!"

I stare at the floor as my tears trickle down my face.

Mom- "How far?"

Me- "16 weeks"

Her- "I knew it! I knew it! Why though Zinhle? Why my child? Was I too strict? Was I too lenient?"

Me- "No ma, it wasn't you. I know I messed up, and I take responsibility. I'll fix this."

She huffs and walks back to her room.

I get up and walk to my room. I'm sobbing uncontrollably on my bed and before I can stop myself, I call Siya.

Me- "Si..Si..ya! She hates me! My mom hates me!"

Him- "Sshhh breathe, what happened baby?"

Me- "I told her, and she hates me!"

I whale out loud.

Him- "I'm coming. Breathe and try to calm down for the babies."

He hangs up and I cry into my pillow.

I'm woken up by a knock on my door, and mom barges in carrying a glass of water.

Mom- "Drink this, the crying isn't good for the kids. Come and eat."

She places the glass on my vanity then walks out.

I drink my water and walk out of the room to the dining room. I sit down and look at mom, and see devastation written on her face, while Ziyanda has a smug look on her face.

We're all toying around with our food, when there's a knock on the front door. Great, mom's date is here and we couldn't be in a worse space.

Mom jumps up and walks to the door. She comes back with someone following her.

Mom- "Zinhle, your boyfriend is here, apparently you invited him."

She steps aside, and there he is.

Me- "Siya?"

[04/18, 08:11] Wdz: [46]

****ZINHLE****

What is Siyabonga Nyathi doing in my dining room right now? I drop my fork onto the floor as he flashes his smile at everyone.

Siya- "I'm sorry I'm late, when Zinhle invited me, I wasn't sure I was going to make it because I had family obligations, but that finished early, so here I am."

I keep shaking my head at him trying to indicate that he should just leave rather but then he puts his hand on mom's shoulder.

Him- "I hope I'm not intruding ma."

I'm in the twilight zone right now, I blink profusely, thinking maybe it's a dream, but his broad shouldered tall self is still standing here in front of me.

He's wearing a charcoal grey slim fit jean, with a tucked in white shirt, a checkered light grey blazer, a black Hermes belt and black formal shoes. He looks and smells good enough to eat, and I see Ziyanda drooling from across the table.

Mom- "No, a friend of Zinhle's is a friend of mine." She smiles briefly, and I can tell it's not genuine.

Mom- "Zinhle, move that place setting and place it next to yours rather."

Me- "Mom, what about your guest?"

Mom- "I thought it would be best to cancel any outside visitors, considering.."

I shy away and move the place setting. Siya is just hovering behind me and he's making me uncomfortable, he's sending chills down my spine.

Once I'm done, I gesture to Siya to sit down and he unbuttons his blazer then takes his seat.

Mom clears her throat.

Mom- "Uhhh well I'm Zinhle's mom, uZamokuhle, this is Zinhle's sister uZiyanda, and of course you're well acquainted with your girlfriend over there."

Siya- "Oh, ngiyajabula ukunazi boMntungwa (I'm pleased to meet you) I'm Siyabonga wakwa Nyathi, Zinhle's other half." He says as he holds my hand on the table.

I feel like I'm having an outer body experience, my lips are glued shut, my mind is filled with dust, and my body is frigid. I don't know what to say or do.

Mom- "So Zinhle, this is why Thabiso broke up with you? You cheated on him?"

Me- "Cha ma (no mom) it's complicated."

Ziyanda huffs

Siya- "Actually ma, Zinhle left that boy."

Mom- "Because of you?"

Siya- "No, because he was abusive."

Mom and Ziyanda- "What?!"?

Siya gazes into my eyes and smiles.

Siya- "Yes, he drove her away. He was physically and emotionally abusive. I only came into the picture after your daughter found the strength to leave that coward, but he won't be bothering her anymore."

Mom- "Zinhle? Is this true?"

Mom says with glistening eyes.

I nod slightly.

Mom- "Why didn't you say anything? I was right here!"

She says as her tears fall down her face and wet her cheeks.

Mom- "Zinhle, am I not your mother? Have I not protected you your whole life? Yet you couldn't trust me with this?"

Mom drops her fork on her plate and sits back on her seat as she rubs her forehead with her hand. She releases a loud sigh and I can tell from her sniffing that she's crying. Siya clenches onto my hand and I wipe my cheeks with my other hand. I see Ziyanda wipe a tear that has escaped her eyes and she turns away when she sees me looking at her.

Me- "Ma, I'm sorry for everything. If only you knew how much I regret all of this, but I've grown to believe that these babies are a blessing from God. Mom, I'll take care of them myself, I don't have a plan yet, but I will."

Mom- "Zinhle, are you okay? Did he hurt you? Shouldn't he be arrested? Are the babies okay?"

Siya- "I'm sorry to intervene, but I had a man to

man conversation and he's been punished for his behavior."

Me- "I'm fine ma."

I smile through the pain that's piercing through my lower abdomen and Siya gives me a look of concern. I brush it off and drink some water.

Siya clears his throat.

Siya- "Ma, another reason behind my visit is to formally introduce myself as the father of the kids that Zinhle is carrying. I'm sorry that you found out so late and during such a festive period in the year. I hope this just means that we have another reason to celebrate though. I also want to make my intentions clear, I.."

I grasp his hand and squeeze.

Me- "We can talk about this later, I'm sure we're all hungry now."

I say as I stand to dish up, but a pain pierces through my side again and I stumble back into

the chair. Siya springs off his seat and holds onto my shoulders.

Me- "I'm fine, Siyabonga! Can we eat please?"

Siya- "Ma, please excuse us. Zinhle is experiencing some pain and I just want to ensure that she and the babies are fine. I apologize for ruining your Christmas Eve, I'll try making it up to all of you. Ma, Ziyanda it was great meeting you."

He flashes his infectious smile and picks me up from my chair.

Me- "I can walk Siya!"

That seems to fall on deaf ears because he takes my phone off the table and shoves it in his pocket, then he runs out to his car.

Him- "Call your doctor!"

He shouts frantically.

Me- "Yazi Siyabonga, I told you that I'm fine, besides, I doubt Sbu is working today."

Him- "Sbu? We're on a first name basis then? Even better, I'm sure he'll be more than happy to help us out."

He gives me a brief smile.

Me- "We don't even need to go to a doctor, but if you insist I'm sure you have one of your lapdog doctors on your payroll, so call one of them."

I sink into my seat and fold my eyes. Siya laughs and does the unthinkable. He dials a number and connects his phone to his Bluetooth.

Siya- "Good day, Sbusiso Ngcobo?"

Sbu- "Yes, how may I help you?"

Siya- "I'm calling on behalf of Zinhle Khumalo, she's experiencing severe pain and said you're the only doctor that she trusts. Could we meet you at your practice?"

I hear Sbu scrambling in the background.

Sbu- "I'm a minute away."

Siya- "Thanks doc!"

I look at him with my mouth wide open and he pretends to be oblivious to me, as he speeds in the direction of the practice.

I feel so bombarded and uncomfortable and just annoyed.

Me- "Siya."

He grabs his shades and puts them on then stares through the screen. I roll my eyes and look out the window.

Before I know it, we've arrived at Sbu's surgery and I'm too drained to even ask how he knew where to go or how he has his number. Siya unlocks the doors and jumps out the car, he runs around to my side and helps me out the car.

Me- "Siya, I feel perfectly fine now."

Siya- "I really don't have time for this. Are you going to walk in or should I carry you in?"

I hold my hands up in protest and roll my eyes. I get out of the car and walk towards the entrance, leaving him behind. I run/walk to Sbu's office and find him pacing up and down his office. When he sees me he freezes then charges towards me. He squeezes me in a warm embrace then finally let's go. He cups my face in his hands and gazes into my eyes.

Sbu- "Are you still in pain? Any bleeding? Discomfort?"

Me- "I..."

Siya- "Thank you so much for the concern, but I think I speak for the both of us if I say we'd like you to examine her, you can leave the hugs and the kisses to me."

He says winking at Sbu. Siya grabs my arm and kisses my cheek.

Siya- "Lead the way doc!"

Sbu walks to to his consultation room and I lay on the bed. Siya comes round the bed and holds my hand, I attempt to snatch it away, but that only makes his hold onto it tighter. Sbu lifts my dress and places the paper towel on my lap. Siya lowers it a bit to cover my bra which was showing slightly. Sbu sighs out loud and presses on my abdomen. He asks me to describe my symptoms and other detailed descriptions of the pain, I answer while Siya brushes my hair with his free hand.

Sbu- "Okay, let's just do an ultrasound to rule everything out, alright?"

Siya- "Great!"

Siya says with a wide smile plastered on his face, excitement is written all over his face.

Sbu sets up and proceeds with the ultrasound. I

start tensing when I don't hear anything. My heart beats faster and sweat droplets form on my forehead. I look over at Siya and he's oblivious to what's going on. Tears form in my eyes and they trickle down my face.

Me- "Sbu, what's wrong?? I can't hear their heartbeats! Why can't I hear their heartbeats?" I whale out loud.

Me- "Sbu, say something!"

[04/18, 08:12] Wdz: Good morning everyone! I hope you have an amazing week ahead!

[47]

****ZINHLE****

Sbu- "Wait calm down Zinhle! Calm down! Breathe! Someone must have decreased the volume on the machine, let me turn it up."

I try to breathe through my emotions and then I hear them. I hear my babies heartbeats.

Sbu- "Do you hear that? That's them, both of them, stronger than ever!"

I turn to look at Siya and he's in his own little world. His eyes are locked on the screen and his face is so animated, my heart melts when I see his reaction to seeing his kids.

He closes his eyes and a tear trickles down, he smiles and holds onto my hand even tighter, his head moving along to the babies heartbeats.

I turn my attention back to Sbu.

Me- "Sbu, are they okay?"

Him- "They seem to be doing great. Strong heartbeats and growing at a healthy rate."

Me- "The sharp pains?"

Sbu helps me up and attempts to help me lower

my dress, but Siya snatches his hand away. Siya carries me off the bed and helps me stand on the floor, then engulfs my mouth in his in a short and passionate kiss. I push him away slightly, and find that Sbu has left the room. This whole situation is frustrating and uncomfortable, is it too much to ask for a little peace in my life? I can't even say I'm rushing to get home, because the situation at home isn't any better.

I walk out and head to Sbu's office and sit across from an agitated Sbu.

Me- "I'm sorry for bombarding you with all of this,"

Sbu- "I thought you said the father of your kids wasn't in the picture."

Me- "He wasn't.. he isn't. It's complicated right now."

Sbu- "You know that we've grown close, I just want to make sure you're okay, emotionally."

Siya- "She's just fine, thanks doc! Shouldn't you worry about your patient's health and leave the emotions to me? I'm sure this little friendship breaches some ethics code?" He says frowning and narrowing his eyebrows.

Siya- "We appreciate your concern, but if you could please just do your job and tell us what's wrong, I'm sure then I won't be urged to make any phone calls regarding your inappropriate behavior."

Siya chuckles sarcastically and I mime "I'm sorry" to Sbu.

He looks at me then smiles.

Sbu- "Zinhle, it seems as if you're suffering from round ligament pain. Many women suffer from this at the beginning of their second trimester,

but yours is exacerbated due to the munchkins you're carrying. It's.."

Siya- "Munchkins? Wow! It gets better!"

I squeeze Siya's thigh.

Me- "I'm sorry, please carry on."

Sbu- "It's due to the fast rate that your uterus is expanding at. You'll feel it most when you change positions abruptly or cough. If it persists, you can come in again and I'll prescribe something mild for you to take, but for now you should just rest and take it easy. Try to hydrate and just change your position if you get uncomfortable. I need to take your blood pressure just to ensure that it's somewhat under control."

I nod and give Sbu a genuine smile. The whole time, Siya is shaking he's so livid.

Sbu comes around his table and takes my blood

pressure.

Sbu- "All is in order. I'll see you at our next appointment."

Siya chuckles loudly.

Siya- "That won't be happening doc. Thanks for your services, but we're done. He pulls me towards the door.

Me- "No! That's not your decision to make!"

Siya- "Oh, and we'd appreciate it if you stop calling and texting us in the middle of the night, it's distracting." He grabs hold of my arm and makes me follow him to the car.

The drive home is quiet and I'm staring out the window. Siya stops the car on the side of the road and lowers the volume on the radio.

Him- "Look, I'm sorry. I just can't stand seeing you with someone else. You were blatantly flirting with him right in front of me. I thought

we were building something solid here."

I turn to face him with my cheeks soaked with my flowing tears.

Me- "Siya, you don't get it! You're just like him! You're exactly like the man I was in a relationship with. You're controlling, selfish, self centered and arrogant! You want to control me and my life and it's not fair! If this is love then I don't want it, I'd rather live the rest of my life without it! I cry constantly because of you, and these aren't my hormones talking, it's me. I'm tired, I'm drained, and I just want peace to be restored in my life. I have no escape, literally nothing makes me happy anymore, nothing! I had an amazing friendship with Sbu, I trust him and he's been there during my pregnancy more than you have. You're busy talking about ethics, what about what Steven did? That doesn't count right? Is nothing sacred to you? Don't you care about my happiness and my life even if it doesn't include you? Siya, I'm almost halfway

through my first ever pregnancy, and I can barely tell you of one instance where I was genuinely happy and content. Right now I'm going home to an angry mother and crazy sister, yesterday I was threatened by your best friend, it's all just too much."

I catch my breath and sob into my hands. He tries to hold me, but I move back.

Me- "Please take me home so I can deal with the other mess in my life."

He sits there for a while and sighs out loud.

Him- "I'm sorry. I really am."

He switches on the engine and drives me home.

The drive home is silent, I want to touch his hand and apologize for my rant, but I meant every word of it, maybe I could've conveyed my thoughts in a better way though.

He parks near the gate to my house and shifts

in his seat to look at me.

He shuffles in the backseat and hands me a small box.

Him- "Open it."

I look at the box and slowly open it. There are some keys inside, I look at him with a confused look on my face.

Him- "This is your Christmas present. The penthouse, I've put it in your name, and the other key is for something that will take you wherever you want to go, it's parked in the garage of the penthouse. I want you to make that place your own, change the locks if you think I'll barge in unannounced. I just want you to be comfortable and not crowd anyone. Your mom and sister will visit obviously, but i agree with you, I think you also need some time to yourself to enjoy this phase. I'll also sleep better knowing you're somewhere secure. If you ever

feel threatened or afraid, you head straight to my study and lock the door behind you, all the codes are on my side of the bed. The study is the safest place on the property, its bulletproof and has emergency buttons all over, armed response can get to you within 3 minutes. Just know that I love the three of you more than my heart can handle, I'll love and protect you in this life and the next."

He comes closer to me and kisses me. It's gentle and warm, I can barely feel his succulent lips on mine, yet my heart is leaping out of my chest.

Me- "Siya, thank you for the gift, but it seems like you're saying goodbye. I want you to be part of every milestone during and after this pregnancy, don't you want to hear your babies heartbeats again?"

He smiles at me then kisses my hand.

Him- "Use that card! Apologize to your mother for me, tell her that I'll do right by you and your family no matter what, and Zinhle try to control your stress levels, don't let this thing with your mom or with any other situation dictate whether our babies live or die. Do that yoga voodoo shit if you have to."

He crouches down and makes contact with my tummy and brushes it while his nose touches my navel.

Him- "Hi munchkins, that's what your mommy calls you. You're my little princes or princesses, this is daddy, I love you so much it hurts. Every decision I make from now on has you two in mind. I've waited my whole life just for you two, but I don't mind waiting a little longer. Stay warm and snuggled in your mommy and never forget this voice, I make up only half of you, but you are all of me. Don't make mommy sick anymore, behave for daddy's sake please. Oh, and tell your mother to loosen up with the

moods. I love you guys." He kisses my stomach, and our eyes meet, both glistening.

Him- "Go inside now my heart."

I let my tears fall and I shake my head. He jumps out of his side then comes around to mine and opens my door. He gives me one final smooch then he helps me out.

Me- "We can still chill together, it's not late or anything."

Him- "No, it's time. Go."

I walk towards the gate while he stands in the same spot.

I run inside and head straight to my room, I run to my window and he's still parked there, a few minutes later I watch him speed off.

I go back to the lounge where mom and Ziyanda are seated and they jump up when they see me. Mom comes running to me and engulfs me in a

bear hug.

Mom- "Is everything okay? Are they still okay?"

Me- "They're fine thanks ma. I'm just going to take a short nap."

She nods and hugs me one last time as I disappear off into my room.

I'm woken up later on when I hear my mom scream and something break. I run out to the lounge and find shattered pieces of a teacup and saucer. I look up at ma and she's trembling while watching the TV. I look at the screen and drop to the floor at the headlines.

"Business Mogul and Philanthropist, Siyabonga Nyathi involved in brutal shooting and tragic car accident."

[04/18, 08:12] Wdz: [48]

****SIYA****

I've enjoyed being in our little bubble with Zinhle, it's been everything I could ask for and more. Christening our couch the other day wasn't in my plans, but after what happened in the car, I was too aroused to have an innocent night with my heart just a few meters away from me.

I've looked all over for Eve and Brian, but I've been unsuccessful. They're completely off the radar, and I can't ensure Zinhle's safety, that's what drives me so crazy. I didn't want to have to resort to violence to reason with the two people that have been such a huge part of my life, but they're forcing my hand. I've seen random cars parked outside Zinhle's house that speed off when I arrive. I've seen the numerous cars that follow my every move, and the people that hide behind newspapers and large shades that take notes on everything, even when I sneeze.

So enough is enough, I can't keep putting my babies lives in jeopardy because of me.

Whatever It is that Eve and Brian are planning, I know it's huge. This is about me and I'm ready for this to be done, and if it means I'll have to watch over my babies in heaven (or hell) then so be it. I meant it when I said I'd do anything for those 3 humans, and I'm just about to prove it.

I look in my rear view mirror and I see the familiar black SUV that's always following me, and I see another one ahead of me. I've tried losing them, but there seems to be more waiting for me at every corner I turn. I make a phonecall to one of my contacts, I need to ensure that Zinhle and the twins are taken care of if anything happens to me. I try call Eve and Brian one last time hoping against hope that

they're willing to negotiate; but now apparently their numbers don't exist. I bang on the steering wheel in frustration, I guess this is it, I know an ambush when I see one, and this without a doubt is an ambush, so I decide to send Zinhle one final voice note.

Me- "My heart, my love, my life. I've made so many mistakes when it comes to you, but you still gave me the most precious gift I could imagine. I don't have enough time to tell you how much I love you and our princes, but I'm comforted in knowing that our souls can do the connecting even in our next life. I choose you now, and I'll choose you then. Never forget to tell those munchkins how much their father loves them, and Zinhle I want to spend the rest of my life with you, no matter how long or...."

****ZINHLE****

I slide onto the floor while staring at the TV screen. Everything starts getting blurry and I blink, allowing my tears to fall. I let out a loud scream and whale on the floor uncontrollably.

Me- "Why? Why me Lord? Whyyyyyy?"

Mom runs to my side and cradles me like a baby, hushing me in the process. I sob on her chest, holding onto her shoulders.

Me- "Is he dead? Is he really gone?"

Mom- "I don't know baby, we need to be positive though. Think about those babies in there, try to breathe."

Me- "Mama ungilingelani uSiyabonga?
Ungenzani maaaaa? (Why is Siyabonga doing this to me)

Mom- "Ssshhh baby. It will all work out, try to stay calm."

She says in a breaking voice. I pull away from mom and try to take deep breaths in and I feel

my soul leave my body. My mom catches my head before it hits the ground and she straddles me blowing air on my face.

Mom- "No no no Zinhle! Wake up damnit! Oh Nkosi yami! (Oh my Lord!)"

I see Ziyanda at a distance rushing to my side with a glass containing water.

Ziyanda- "Its sugar water, she needs to get her energy levels up."

Mom raises my head and holds the glass for me to drink. I feel my body paralyze for a second, I can't blink or move my body.

I take short sips of the water solution and pant while crying softly when I'm done.

Mom- "Zinhle, I'm sure he's going to be fine, ngiyibonile leyansizwa (I saw that man) he doesn't scare easily. He knows he has a family to take care of, he's a strong man, not just physically, but I saw his strength and love in his

eyes. Have faith my baby."

She brushes my hair with her fingers and Ziyanda comes running back in with a wet facecloth, which she places on my forehead. I just stare at the ceiling then turn my head to face the TV and at that time, a picture of Siya's car is shown. It's rolled up into a small pile of junk, there's no way he made it out of there.

I place my hand on my stomach and allow my tears to fall at the thought of welcoming my munchkins into the world alone. How they'll probably look like him and remind me of him everyday. I remember that I need to calm down for their sakes and mine, Siya would tell me that too.

Me- "Ma, I need to lay down. I don't want them to be in distress."

I say pointing at my tummy.

Mom- "We'll carry you, I doubt you can walk."

I try raising my upper body up with my elbows but I fail dismally. Mom and Ziyanda help me to my room by carrying me. Mom has my head and upper body, while Ziyanda holds my legs. They place me on my bed and mom undresses me. She struggles with the buttons on my dress, especially since I can't move an inch. Once my dress is off, mom stares at my swollen stomach, I try suck it in, but I remember that it's pointless. She unhooks my bra then helps me into my gown and covers me with a fluffy throw. She also walks across the room and grabs my giant teddy bear and places it next to me, then she walks over to my diffuser and diffuses some lavender.

Mom crawls into bed with me and hugs me from behind. I feel her tears fall onto my neck and she hold onto me tighter.

Mom- "Should I make you some chamomile tea, it'll help you sleep."

I manage to shake my head and allow my tears to soak my pillow.

I wake up to a dark room and a heavy heart when I see my teddy next to me, I realize it wasn't all a dream. I sigh out loud and spring up to look for my phone. I crawl out of bed and stumble a few times, but I finally manage to grab it on my vanity. I crawl back to bed and unlock my phone. I go to my contacts and I realize that I have no one to call regarding Siya. We'd always be in our own little bubble, other people were never really a part of our "relationship" so I don't have any of his friends or family's numbers. The only people I know that are connected to Siya are Eve and Brian, and I'm desperate so here goes nothing.

I try Brian first, because I'm not in the mood for

Eve, but his phone is on voicemail. Then I try
Eve, I take a few deep breaths in as it rings.

Her- "Sister wife!"

I clear my throat.

Me- "Eve, hi."

Her- "You're calling me because..?"

Me- "I'm calling to ask about the Siya situation,
do you have more information?"

She laughs loudly.

Her- "It must suck being the side chick, no
phone calls or emails from anyone. If it weren't
for the news and this social media BS would
you have even known that your man is dead?"

Me- "D...d..dead?"

Her- "Oh, you didn't know? Do you think he left
us the same amount of money?"

Me- "Wh..where is h..h..he?"

I'm trembling and my voice is giving up on me.

Her- "I don't know, probably in some morgue somewhere. You know, he really saved me with the lawyers fees, because this divorce was going to drag and drag. At least now he's resting in peace wherever he is, and I'm resting in millions, so we're all happy."

I hang up on her, I can't handle another word that comes out of her mouth. I lay back in bed and as my tears rush down my face. Before I lock my phone, I realize that I have a message from Siya; it's a voice note.

I listen to him profess his love and it sounds like he's on the road. Before he finishes what he's saying, I hear a deafening loud noise then silence and he hangs up.

I decide to call him, and his phone is obviously on voicemail. So I decide to listen to his voicemail greeting, over and over again.

"Siyabonga Nyathi, you know what to do."

His velvety voice makes my heart bleed. I'll never hear it again, I'll never gaze into those eyes, I'll never witness his infectious smile.

Never again.

[04/18, 08:12] Wdz: [49]

****ZINHLE****

The next few days are torture for me. I'm in such a depressive state, I don't eat or bath or even leave my room anymore. I locked myself in my room the other day, and my mom almost had a heart attack when she called my name and I ignored her for minutes on end. I wasn't ignoring her intentionally, I was just in my own world mentally, thinking about the possibilities of what could have been, had Siya still been alive. An hour or so later a locksmith opened my door and my mom even requested that the hinges for my door be removed, right now I don't have a bedroom door. She replaced it with

a measly curtain, apparently she's doing this for me, but I know that's just another way of telling me that I'm on suicide watch.

I've heard Ziyanda come in my room at night and brush my hair while I sleep or she just sits on the floor beside my bed. This creeps me out, because I don't know if I can trust her. I don't know if she's mentally planning my funeral or if she sympathizes with my situation. I've been going through hell trying to figure out what happened to Siya, but I've been less than unsuccessful. I've tried calling Eve numerous times, to no avail. I've browsed the internet endlessly to find the details of Siya's accident, but there's only a picture and a headline without a descriptive story. I've looked for Siya's mom's number, as well as his sister's but still nothing. I've called every hospital within the vicinity and still nothing. It's killing me not knowing if he's still alive or not, of Brian did something to him,

if he needs help and worse of all, if he's had a funeral already.

I'm ashamed to tell my mom how little I know about Siya's current situation and how insignificant I seem to be in his life, as I still haven't received any information from anyone. It's ridiculous really.

I've been in bed for days now and I feel myself getting more and more drained by the second, then I remember that I'm a mother, I can't be selfish anymore, I have to put my babies needs above my own, I have to regain my strength no matter what. So I decide to get up and take a bubble bath. I soak in luke warm water for what seems to be an hour and scrub my body until I'm satisfied that I've washed off the dirt from the previous days.

I head back to my room and sit on my bed as I

think of what to wear. I lotion while sitting and wear my underwear while sitting as well. I opt for a maxi dress and sandals, I tie my hair into a half bun and apply some mascara and lipgloss on. I look in the mirror and see how broken I am, my eyes are still a little puffy and the light has been sucked out of them. I take a deep breath in and then head to the kitchen, where I find my mom daydreaming.

Me- "Hello ma."

Mom- "Zinhle mntanami (Zinhle my child) you're out of bed!"

She attaches me with a hug. I feel tears threaten to escape so I pull away. I head to the fridge, but mom shoves a plate in my hands and pushes me towards the dining room and even opens the chair for me.

Me- "Ma, thank you, but I don't have much of an appetite."

Mom- "Zinhle, you're eating for 3 now. At least eat as much as you can, please."

I nod and eat the omelette in front of me, and surprisingly I finish it.

Me- "I guess you guys were starving."

I say while stroking my stomach.

Mom comes back into the dining room and sits next to me. She stares at me until I eventually clear my throat.

Me- "Ma, I have to be somewhere right now. I'll be back later."

Mom- "Are you meeting with his family?"

I sigh loudly.

Me- "Uhhh, something like that I guess."

Mom- "Maybe I should go with you or better yet Ziyanda should go, just for support."

Before she gives me an opportunity to say

anything, she calls Ziyanda, who hurries into the room.

Mom- "Can you go with Zinhle to meet that boy's family? She needs some support."

Ziyanda nods and smiles.

Ziyanda- "Yes ma, of course. I just need to put my shoes on and I'll be good to go."

I get so annoyed, what games is Ziyanda trying to play here? She's still preying on me even when I'm in such a vulnerable state.

I shoot up from my chair and shout.

Me- "No, I don't want any of you guys to come with me, especially not you Ziyanda! For all I know you had something to do with this!"

Mom and Ziyanda gasp in shock.

Me- "I'm going alone! Goodbye."

With that I run to my room to grab my phone and bag and the gift box from Siya then head

out.

I haul a cab and make my way to the penthouse, I need to feel him again. I arrive at the gate and the security detail is friendly, I tell them my name and they inform me that they were instructed to take a photo of me upon my arrival to run a facial analysis on their database so they can determine that it's really me. I oblige, because the only thing that's on my mind is being inside his place, well my place and having a sense of him surround me. I also have to load my fingerprints onto the system so I can use that to enter from now on. Once the process is done, I head inside and run to the door of the penthouse. I breathe in a few times outside the door then I place my finger print on the scanner, turn the key, then I enter.

I close and lock the door behind me then walk inside slowly, I'm immediately hit by Siya's

strong scent and I call out his name, praying that he'll tell me he's upstairs, but nothing.

I walk over to the couch where we created magic not so long ago and lay there, imagining him on top of me. I lay there for a while, replaying every detail from the other night, until I feel my tears threaten to fall. I get up and make my way up the endless flight of stairs and stumble into his room. Everything is in its place, and I notice 2 photo frames on the bedside tables containing the ultrasound copies inside. I smile to myself and bite on my trembling lip. I plonk my body onto the bed and grab onto the covers and sniff them. I can still smell him.

I go over to his side of the bed and I find a piece of paper with a single white rose on top. I grab the piece of paper, and true to his words, I see the codes for the different rooms. However

there aren't any numbers on there, the thought he had to put into this.

The code for the study - The day we met.

Master bedroom - The day we consummated our relationship.

Garage - The day you pleased me in the car.

Nursery - The day I heard their heartbeats for the first time.

It goes on, and I wipe away a tear that trickles down my cheek.

Me- "You're an incredible man Siyabonga."

I smile to myself.

I lay in bed for hours, talking to Siya as if he's there. Telling him my fears, my hopes and professing my love for him.

After laying in bed for what feels like forever I rummage through every drawer looking for

someone, anyone that's close to Siya that I can call, but I find nothing.

I soon feel exhausted and hungry so I head down to the kitchen and look through the fridge. I find an endless supply of waffles and whipped cream and ice cream.

There's also a chicken dish that I decide to warm up and eat. I enjoy every single last bite of it and I wash the dishes once

I'm done. I take one last look at the penthouse, and decide it's time to go back home, it's even dark outside now.

I make my way home and head straight to my room, only to find Ziyanda on my bed yet again.

I sigh out heavily.

Me- "Ziyanda please can we not do this tonight? I know you want to make fun of my situation or whatever, but please I'm begging you, not

today."

Her- "Zi, please sit. I really need to talk to you."

I look at her and fold my arms.

Her- "I'll stand by the window, if I make you uncomfortable, but I really need to have an urgent conversation with you. Please."

She says as a tear falls down her face.

I breathe out loudly. What now?

[04/18, 08:12] Wdz: [50]

****ZIYANDA****

Hi, I'm Zinhle's older sister, Ziyanda. She considers me the wicked witch of the west, and I can honestly say that I don't blame her. A lot has happened in our lives, some of which she has no idea about. I've gone through the bulk of my life hating myself and a lot of people in my life, but Zinhle has always been on the top of

that list.

Things got out of hand though when I lay my hands on Zinhle, I regretted it the second I did it, and blaming it on the alcohol would be such a cliché, so the only thing I have to blame is the deep-seated resentment that has lingered in my heart for years and years. I just wanted her to feel a hint of what I've gone through in my life, but when the news came on about her boyfriend or baby daddy and I saw how broken she was, I wanted to take all of her pain away. I wanted to alleviate every last bit of stress she had, and I've decided that the only way I can help her is if she trusts me, and the only way she can trust me is if I'm completely honest with her about everything. So here goes nothing.

I've been debating in my head whether I should actually tell her what's going on with me or not,

because I don't want to add to the problems that she's already currently dealing with, but I want to be there for my sister and in order for me to do so I have to be transparent, no matter how uncomfortable it makes the both of us feel.

So I'm waiting for her in her room, praying to God that she doesn't chase me out, and she just lends me an ear. She finally comes back from meeting her in laws or whatever and I've convinced her to give me a few minutes of her time. I can tell that she's uncomfortable and anticipating for me to go crazy and jump on her again, but no, not today, never again actually. I'm going to stop blaming people for my fate.

I clear my throat in preparation for the bomb I'm about to drop.

Me- "Zinhle, firstly of all I want to apologize from the bottom of my heart for my animalistic

behavior the other day. Regardless of whether you're pregnant or not, I shouldn't have ever laid my hands on you, and I'm eternally grateful to God for sparing those kids in there."

Zinhle- "Whatever , I'm tired Ziyanda. Please just get to the point."

She looks bored and annoyed, so I take a deep breath in.

Me- "Okay, I'll just get right to it. I was about 12 years old, uKhumalo was still alive. (I don't call that man my father) I don't know if you remember, but mom was away for a week at a church conference. She hired someone to take care of us during the day, she'd put us to bed then leave."

Zinhle- "Yeah, I remember I guess, but what does that have anything to do with anything?"

Me- "Well, one day you were dog tired. You had been running around the whole day, and by the time Mam' Mavis the maid bathed you, you

were yawning nonstop and you ended up sleeping way before bedtime. Khumalo invited his brother ubabomncane uBhekmuzi to have a braai and some drinks. Khumalo passed out on the couch and Bhekumuzi came into your room. I had fallen asleep there after reading you a bedtime story."

I sigh and breathe through the tears that threaten to fall.

Me- "He came inside the room and walked towards your bed. I was in the other bed that I usually slept in when you were having nightmares or a bad day. I watched him unbuckle his belt and tower over you as you slept so peacefully. He threw his top onto the floor and reached for his manhood. He stroked himself with one hand while he gently brushed your hair with the other. I remember blinking a thousand times, hoping and praying that it was a dream, but every time I'd open them he'd be even closer to your small body."

I sigh and look out the window. Once my breathing returns to normal, I turn my attention back to Zinhle.

Me- "I sprung up out of bed and yelled at the top of my lungs for uKhumalo, but nothing. Instead, Bhekumuzi charged for me and gave me a backhand that left me dizzy while he continued to make a move on you. I ran out the room and tried waking Khumalo up, but he was so drunk he didn't even flinch. I tried everything, I slapped him and poured water on him, but still nothing. I realized that time was wasting and I needed to save you from that filth, so I did. I ran back into the room and fought him with all of my night, but my strength couldn't match his, so I had one last idea. He had taken off his trousers and was half naked, he straddled you, but still you were fast asleep, so I poked him and told him he should take me instead. At first he told me to go back to sleep, but I begged him to spare you

in exchange he'd do anything he wanted to me."

I wipe my tears that consistently fall down my face.

Zinhle- "Yanda.."

Her eyes are welling up and her mouth is wide open in shock and despair.

I hold my hand up, because for the first time, I want to let this all out.

Me- "He had his way with me that night, 3 times to be exact while you were sleeping peacefully just two meters away, and he took a part of me then that I know I'll never get back. This went on for years and years, until I fell pregnant in high school. No one knew, I had to lie about an excursion to mom so I could use the money for an abortion. Every time it happened, I'd picture you in my mind and be comforted in knowing that it was happening to me and not my baby

sister. Over the years I threatened to tell mom and Khumalo, but he played on my naivety and told me he'd do the same thing to mom while Khumalo is sleeping or passed out then he'd kill all of us. This is why I wanted to stay at Res when I went to Varsity and I hardly came home during the holidays. Fortunately I met someone during Varsity that restored some of the light that had dimmed in my spirit. He was everything to me, I shared stories about you guys and he shared stories about himself and his family. He introduced me to alcohol and it sometimes became my crutch. One day we were chilling at his place and drinking, but I passed out. Turns out he wasn't who I thought he was because he called three more of his friends to have their way with me."

Zinhle gasps loudly and bites on her lip that's trembling uncontrollably.

Me- "That's why I didn't think twice about moving overseas. I started resenting you for everything that had occurred in my life. I viewed everything as a domino effect, thinking that had I not been in your room that night years ago, none of what happened afterwards would have occurred. It got worse during your little rebellious stage. I resented you for living an authentic life without fear of threats or rape. I felt like you were enjoying your life at the expense of mine. You did whatever you wanted whenever you wanted to do it, and I never had that luxury. You got a chance to live in colour and see the world for what it is, while I never enjoyed being a child or a teenager or even my Varsity years. Things got a little worse when I was overseas and I found out that the man I thought was my everything, was sharing a bed with you. I got angry that even though I protected you my entire life, I couldn't protect you from that savage though. I felt like

everything I did was for nothing."

Zinhle looks so shell shocked, I don't even know what to do. So I run to where the door used to be so I can get her some water, but she stops me in my tracks.

Her- "The guy... The guy during your varsity years, who was it?"

Me- "Thabi, your ex."

[04/18, 08:13] Wdz: [51]

****ZINHLE****

My entire body is trembling at the news that Ziyanda just shared with me. My tears have dried up, and I literally have no more strength for them anyways. I start doing my breathing exercises, because I feel my heart work overtime as it beats uncontrollably. Ziyanda runs out and comes back with a glass of water and a cup of chamomile tea. I gulp down the

glass of water and I try regulate my breathing, then I take a sip of the tea.

Ziyanda turns to leave, and I use my last bit of strength to call out to her. She turns around and I pat the space next to me on the bed. I shift to make more room for her, and she finally makes her way towards me. She takes off her shoes and she lays in bed with me. I place my head on her stomach, the same way I used to when I was younger and I hold onto her stomach while she brushes my hair.

Me- "Yanda, I'm sor.."

Her- "Ssshhhh, none of it was your fault. If I go through things so that you don't have to then I'm willing to do it. Besides, I should be the one apologizing for channeling my anger in such an unhealthy way and towards the wrong person."

Me- "Yanda, I'm sorry you went through such hell right under our noses. In the grand scheme of things, the way you treated me was irrelevant."

Her- "Well, kid I only told you because I saw how much you were breaking and I wanted to be there for you. The only way that could happen would be if you trusted me, and the only way you would is if I came clean. So here we are."

Me- "Thank you for this." I hold onto her tighter.

Me- "Thabi? Can you.."

Her- "No, right now he's not worth it. Are you okay? How did your meeting go?"

I lift my head off her lap and lay on the bed next to her, and stare at the ceiling.

Me- "I'm trying to be okay for my munchkins."

Yanda laughs at that.

Her- "So that's what we're calling them?"

She puts her hand on my stomach and strokes it.

Her- "Dude, how did you hide this for so long?"

Me- "I was in denial for a long time hey, and I'm ashamed to say that I went as far as going to get an abortion."

Ziyanda gasps in shock.

Me- "I know I know. That's why I know I need to protect them."

Her- "I'll make sure you two are protected."

She gives me a side hug.

Her- "Tomorrow is New Year's Eve, any plans?"

I laugh sarcastically.

Me- "Yanda, I'm kind of in mourning. I think it would be inappropriate under the circumstances."

Her- "I know, but I think you need just a little fun in your life, or you'll go crazy. There's too much

on your plate. Besides it's not even confirmed that he's dead."

Me- "I don't know. I'm thinking of moving out soon, so I'll have to organize a few things. I want to be surrounded by Siya's scent and his belongings, I think it'll help me during the pregnancy."

Her- "Good luck with telling mom that. Come on, I'll help you when that time comes. I just want you to relax, you're a ticking time bomb right now."

Me- "Well I'll think about it, but what will I even wear? I don't even have maternity clothes or anything cute to wear to a party or anything. Besides, Yanda what will people say seeing a whale out and about? Pregnant people usually stay at home, I don't feel like I'm up for the stares."

Her- "Geez, I see you still have a flair for the dramatics."

She laughs.

Her- "Think about it, we can go somewhere intimate and chilled. I haven't been out and about this side in ages."

Me- "Okay, now go make me something to eat."

We laugh uncontrollably while she tickles me. She finally jumps off of me and leaves my room. I lay in the same position with a smile on my face, I'm glad we've sorted our issues out, but my heart still aches and yearns for Siya.

I look down at my stomach.

"You may no longer have a daddy, but now you've gained an aunty." I say with a grin on my face.

For the first time in ages, I sit and enjoy a meal with the three ladies in my life. Ziyanda cooked and I've even asked for seconds.

Mom- "I'm glad that we can support each other

during such a trying time."

Mom smiles from ear to ear and holds our hands.

Ziyanda- "So what did you decide regarding tomorrow?"

She directs the question at me. She seems lonely and she's making an effort, the least I could do is to appease her and go enjoy ourselves for a few hours.

Me- "I'll go with you, just for a few hours though."

Her- "That's fine, you can Uber back the second you get tired."

Mom- "Is there something you two want to let me in on?"

Ziyanda- "Zi Zi and I are going somewhere for New Years Eve tomorrow, nothing crazy I'll make sure of that, and we know that you'll be at church anyways

Mom- "Please be safe. You know how I feel about alcohol so I'm sure I don't need to have that talk with you. Should Zi Zi be going out in her state though?"

Ziyanda rolls her eyes.

Her- "Mom relax."

The rest of the evening is filled with lighthearted chatter and us reminiscing on the good old times. I see Ziyanda get uncomfortable, so I decide to change the subject.

Me- "Mom, I'm thinking of moving out temporarily."

Mom- "Ini? (What?)"

Me- "It'll be just for a few months maybe. I'm not coping with this situation, and sometimes I just need to be alone and work through my emotions. I can't do that here, because I know that you guys are constantly worried about me,

and in turn you don't give me the space that I crave. I'm more than grateful for everything you guys have done for me, but I need space."

Mom- "And where will you be getting this space?"

I release a loud sigh.

Me- "There's a small place that Siya got for me and the kids before his accident. I'll be there in the time being. You two will be more than welcome anytime, and I'll come this side on the weekends."

Mom- "Is it necessary though Zi?"

I nod and she shrugs her shoulders. That's usually a sign that I've won the argument, so I smile at her. I yawn and Yanda tells me that she'll clean up and that I should rest. I bid them both goodnight and head for my room. I get changed into a sleep shirt and cuddle my teddy in the covers. I listen to Siya's voicemail over and over again until I fall asleep.

I wake up in the morning, and I sigh out loud thinking of the day ahead. It's New Years Eve, and I'm sure the air is filled with excitement, I'm just not breathing it. I head to the bathroom and take a quick shower. Once I'm done, I lotion and wear a maxi dress with sandals, dresses are pretty much the only items of clothing that fit without a struggle.

I want to enter the new year with a different attitude and a different hairdo, so I've decided to take this weave off and explore the world of braids. I bump into Ziyanda in the kitchen and she's visibly excited for tonight, that just confirms that I'm definitely going, I don't have the heart to disappoint her. Once I tell her that I'm off to do my hair, her face beams with excitement.

Ziyanda- "Okay, I can come with. We'll have a

sisters day out."

As much as that sounds interesting, I'm not in the mood to talk to anyone so I'll be terrible company, and besides I feel too smothered these days. I'm spending tonight with her, so I'm sure I can have the morning and afternoon to myself and my thoughts.

Me- "It's fine, just stay here and look for something cute that I can squeeze into."

I wink at her, grab an apple and rush out without giving her a chance to respond.

I'm almost done with my braids at the salon when a call comes through from a blocked number.

Caller- "Good day, is this Zinhle Khumalo?"

Me- "This is she."

Caller- "You're speaking to Philip, one of Mr Nyathi's lawyers. This call is regarding his

estate."

My heart starts leaping out of my chest, my lips dry out and I start perspiring all over my body.

Philip- "In connection with any claims you may have concerning the estate, I suggest you reserve them for now. Mr Nyathi's death hasn't been confirmed. I was expecting a call from Mrs Nyathi, but she's gone mute. Nonetheless I was given strict instructions from him to contact you should anything happen to him. You're more than welcome to make use of the card and the other assets he's gifted you in the interim. I'll keep in touch."

Me- "Is Siya alive? Where is he?"

With that he hangs up. I try calling him back, but his phone is on voicemail. I'm so confused, my heart races and I have to take a few deep breaths in.

As soon as I'm done with my braids, I head straight home. I need a distraction from this whole situation, and getting ready for tonight's festivities will be a great distraction. I arrive at home and Ziyanda is buzzing, she's decided that we should go to an intimate house party at an estate in the North. She reckons it's safe and she knows some of the people that will be in attendance and she assures me that I'll be more than comfortable.

Ziyanda is busy curling her hair in my room while I try on outfit after outfit.

Me- "Ziyanda, I'm not going. Did you see how fat I am? Nothing conceals my bump and I look like I'm trying too hard on every outfit."

She huffs and rolls her eyes.

Her- "Why are you so dramatic? Your bump is the cutest thing, you're literally the sexiest pregnant woman I've seen. Just look at that ass!"

She whistles.

I finally decide on a little black dress with fringe on the torso, hopefully that distracts everyone from my bump. I wear my thigh high black boots and get started on my make up. I decide to go dark with my make up as well, finishing my look with a dark maroon lip.

Ziyanda finally finishes doing her hair and make up and she emerges from her room looking all kinds of sexy. Her cute body in her trendy cat suit is enough to give me a hint of jealousy, but I remember that I'm getting fat for my munchkins.

We finally arrive at the house party, and I'm pleasantly surprised. It's not crowded, there's catered food and the music is amazing, I'm actually enjoying myself.

I've had about three helpings of the starter, and I'm on my second helping of the main meal. I look down at my empty plate and feel disgusted at the pig that I suddenly am, so I decide to head to the bar for a tall glass of juice to wash my food sins away. Ziyanda is on some guy's lap and she looks a little tipsy. As I turn around with my glass in tow I bump into someone.

Me- "Oh my word! I'm so sorry, I think it'll come off."

I say rubbing on the stain with a serviette.

Him- "It's quite alright. Fancy seeing you here Miss Khumalo."

I look up and see those emerald green eyes.

Me- "Ssss...Sbu.."

I say in a surprised tone.

Him- "I thought I'd never see you again."

I don't want to talk about the last time I saw him because that means I'd have to talk about Siya, and I'm not emotionally ready.

Me- "I hope that stain comes out."

I say as I flash a wide smile.

Him- "You can make it up to me with a dance."

He says as he licks his lips. I'm not up to it for now so I gulp down my drink as I think of a way to let him down gently.

Him- "Great, you're even done with your drink. Let's go."

He pulls me across the room to the dance floor outside by the DJ booth. He seems a bit tipsy, because I don't know Sbu to be like this when sober. He's rubbing against me and I try to loosen up a bit, but I lose my balance a bit so I move my body while standing in the same position. He rubs my belly and I try push him away gently, but my vision is blurred. I excuse

myself and rush to the bathroom. I splash water on my face, but there's very little difference that it makes, I can barely make out my reflection in the mirror. My eyes are involuntarily closing, and I'm losing my balance. Just as I'm about to fall, I feel a man's hands snake around my waist.

Me- "No, no! Please! Help!"

He covers my mouth then it's lights out.

I wake up in bed wearing a t-shirt that doesn't belong to me. I spring up when I remember the events of last night vividly. I'm comforted when I realize that I'm in the penthouse, then I crumble again when I think I may have brought a man home. I reach to the other side of the bed where I notice a note, and I read it.

"Zinhle, you and your sister have to take better care of yourself. You were lucky this time around."

What?

[04/18, 08:13] Wdz: Good morning!

[52]

****ZINHLE****

Crap, this note could be from Sbu. He's the last person I remember speaking to. It hasn't even been a week since I got this place and I've already broken the one rule I was given; no guys allowed. My cheeks flush with embarrassment, what happened last night? I go to the ensuite bathroom and drink a few glasses of water then I stand under the shower for a while as I try to piece together the previous night's happenings. Once I'm done, I dry my body and walk back to the bedroom. I look for my phone, maybe Sbu can tell me what happened. I don't find it on the bedside table so I throw the pillows on the floor, looking for it on the bed. The note falls to the floor and I kneel to pick it up, and it's turned to

the back page, and there's writing there as well.

"Hydrate, go see Steven and make sure the munchkins are okay."

I read it over and over again until my vision is blurred from the tears that have welled up in my eyes. I look around hoping to see another sign to assure me that I'm not losing my mind, but nothing. I spring up in excitement and carefully run down the stairs. I reach the lounge and Ziyanda is passed out face down on one of the couches. I shake my head and walk to the kitchen to make us a hearty breakfast.

****SIYA****

The day I left the voice note for Zinhle, I had accepted my fate, fully and completely. I had made all the preparations for Zinhle and the twins to live a comfortable life without me. I had

written letters to my sister and mother and also allocated them with a lump sum that would see them live comfortably as well. In those letters I had also included information on Brian and Eve as well as a testimonial for the police. I had to bare in mind that the police would probably be on Brian or Eve's payroll, so I had to take things a step further. I sent one of my contacts to deliver some valuable information to one of the most powerful men I know, Brian's father Patrick. That package included intel on how many millions Brian had stolen from Patrick's empire over the years, receipts on selling confidential information to Patrick's rivals, even his involvement in planting illegal intel on Patrick's databases then tipping off newspapers, blogs and the legal system. I knew I'd find some interesting facts if I dug deep enough, I just never assumed it would be this bad. I compiled the package and added something for Brian's brother as well. How

Brian assumed his brother's identity and frauded multi million Rand companies, and how technically Brian's brother is on the continent's underground most wanted list.

That was my leverage, I knew that they would want to kill me sooner rather than later, so I needed a plan B in order to take them down from the grave. Patrick took a while to accept his two illegitimate sons, Brian's brother; Brandon knew where his bread would be buttered so he earned Patrick's trust and is now his partner in many of his companies. Brian on the other hand, threw away every opportunity presented to him, and in the process set out to destroy his father slowly. The reason why I sent Patrick the package is because knowing him, I was certain that Brian wouldn't make it to the new year, Patrick would definitely want to make an example out of him, so I included some intel on Eve's involvement as well, just to ensure that

the lovebirds made it to hell at the same time.

I had been trying to track Eve and Brian's locations for a long time, without success. I couldn't delve into it that much because I was still enjoying being a soon to be father, and that was my mistake. I let my guard down for a second and they capitalized on it.

The day that I said my goodbye to Zinhle, I was certain that it was for the last time. I had the majority of my contacts dispersed all over the continent looking for Eve and Brian, some were assigned to take care of Zinhle and her family and so I didn't prioritize myself, how could I though? I called for backup that day and told my contacts to kill me before I get abducted and tortured by that vulture Brian.

Only two of my contacts were available that day, so I could only think of one idea. I told them to meet me at the upcoming intersection with an 18 wheeler. I wanted them to shoot at the men who were following me and if they were unsuccessful due to being outnumbered, I instructed them to nudge my car off the road so that could buy me time to escape, or if push came to shove, I wanted them to drill bullets all over my body.

Things didn't work out that way though. I was busy with the voice note when I felt the first bullet pierce through my arm, the second grazed my neck while the third hit me hard on the chest. I put my car on cruise and pulled my pistol from the seat next to me and shot at anything that I could.

We arrived at the intersection and that's when the movie began. The 18 wheeler came to play.

My men jumped out and shot at everyone while one of them, Sakhile tried to help me out of the car. He was caught in the crossfire and was shot multiple times. By the time he reached me he could barely talk, so I knew I had to think fast.

I grabbed my phone and took out my tracker and shoved it down his throat. I ripped off his shirt and made him wear mine. I planted my wallet with all of my essentials in his pockets, then he grabbed hold of my hand.

Him- "Hade boss (sorry boss)" then he took his last breath.

My guys were fighting a losing battle and were visibly outnumbered, then I did the unimaginable. I slashed Sakhile's face with a piece of shattered glass. I knew that Brian would want confirmation of my death and that they'd both want a trophy for their success so I was almost certain that the lapdogs would transport "my body" to them. I needed to make

Sakhile unrecognizable so I'd be able to use my tracker in finding where exactly it is they were hiding.

I ran and crawled in the worst physical position ever. I watched from afar as the 18 wheeler crushed my car once the driver had been killed. I had a moment of silence for the men that I lost and slowly made my way to safety.

I broke into Steven's basement and used the phone in there to send an emergency text. He arrived within minutes and the rest is history. He put me under anesthesia and patched me up, I only came to on the evening of the 31st and the first word out of my mouth was "Zinhle"

I gathered the latest intel on her and found out that she was at a party in some estate. And I

thought; Not with my babies still in her. So I did the next natural thing, I went there.

I was less than pleased to find Zinhle in such a state, I was even angrier when I realized that she hadn't been drinking. Which meant she was drugged. It took a lot of restraint not to break that doctor's neck, but I had to look at the bigger picture. Zinhle was probably still being followed, so I couldn't risk innocent people getting hurt.

I dug my hand down Zinhle's throat probing her to throw up, and she did. It wasn't my first time being in contact with her stomach contents and I told myself that it probably wasn't the last either. Ziyanda was in an even worse state, I couldn't tell if she was drunk, drugged or both so I informed my contact, the guy whose lap Ziyanda was occupying to follow me home. I had to squeeze Zinhle through a tiny bathroom window, luckily we were able to leave while still in one piece.

That was done and dusted, now came the time to establish who drugged Zinhle and why. It's crunch time now.

[04/18, 08:13] Wdz: [53]

****ZINHLE****

Waking Ziyanda up was more of a mission than I could have imagined. It was like she was in a coma, I had to slap her a few times, but eventually she woke up.

Me- "I've made breakfast for us. We should eat the. Get ready to leave, I need to see a doctor."

She jumps up and runs towards me stroking my tummy over Siya's massive gown that I'm wearing.

Her- "If something is wrong, let's just skip breakfast and head straight to the doctor."

She stops mid-sentence and browses the room in confusion.

Her- "Screw breakfast! Zinhle, where are we?"
She opens her eyes wider and wider.

I laugh at her crazy reaction, because she seems scared but more excited.

Me- "Firstly of all, there's no way I'm skipping breakfast, do you understand how I've slaved away in the kitchen all morning. Besides, these gremlins never pass up an opportunity to eat, I'm starving as we speak. Secondly of all, this is my place."

Her- "Shut up! Don't lie!"

She runs around the first floor like a headless chicken, screaming her lungs out in excitement. She tries to open the guest rooms, but she's unsuccessful. I realize that I'm going to need some strength for today so I head to the kitchen

and dish up for myself. I watch from afar as she touches every piece of furniture like it's treasure.

She's still ranting and raving about the house and I'm done eating my breakfast, all two helpings. I decide that I should try look for something to wear in Siya's closet. My appearance is the least of my concerns right now, so if I only find an oversized t-shirt, I'll be glad and good to go. I need confirmation that the munchkins are okay, it's been a rough few days and last night is still a blur. This is why I had reservations regarding the party, people always spike drinks, but that's why I personally fetched my own juice, I was trying to prevent the worst from happening. It seems like Ziyanda didn't make it out scotch free either, she seems to have no recollection of last night's events at all, which is even worse than me.

I walk over to Siya's closet and scan my finger on the pad. I find all of this so unnecessary, what are people going to do? Steal his designer suits? I roll my eyes as the doors slowly slide open. I open my mouth in awe of the size of the closet and the immaculately colour coded packed items of clothing. I go inside and peruse through his coats, shirts, shoes and so on. I finally turn my attention to the other half of the closet and I'm surprised to find a few items of clothing for women. They take up less than a quarter, the rest of the racks and shelves are empty. If Siyabonga Nyathi isn't dead, I'll kill him myself if these belong to another woman.

I take a few dresses off the racks and find that they still have tags. I sniff then trying to distinguish the smallest whiff of a female's perfume, but nothing. I smile to myself as I smell nothing but the scent of new clothes. It's only when I analyze them do I realize that these

are maternity dresses. A tear escapes my eye as I try on a mini dress, it fits like a glove, so I look at the tag, I'm curious as to how much it is, but instead I find something written on it.

"Wear this at home ONLY"

I laugh to myself, he's still making demands from wherever he is. It's rust and I love my reflection in the mirror, so I decide I'll break this one little rule. I walk over to the shoe rack and find about three pairs of flats. Slippers, sandals and sneakers, no heels. I decide on the sandals, and as I raise my head to look at myself one last time, I hear Ziyanda shout my name from the bedroom so I walk over to the entrance to open for her.

Me- "Come in and take a shower."

Her- "Zinhle you said this place was little. If this is your little, I'm terrified to know what your large is." She says while holding a banana against her under carriage.

I throw a dress at her.

Me- "Yanda, can you stop with your sexual innuendos? We need to go."

I push her towards the bathroom.

I walk back to the closet and pull a pair of leggings and an oversized shirt for her to wear and the pair of sneakers. I throw the clothes on the bed and look for my phone.

Ziyanda emerges from the bathroom and looks through the clothes on the bed.

Her- "So you want to go out looking like a cute ball of sexy while I wear this? Awani amaleggings Zinhle Khumalo? (What are the leggings for Zinhle Khumalo?)

I laugh as she wears the oversized shirt and the sneakers and tosses the leggings over to me.

Her- "let's go. I've been dying to meet my nieces or nephews."

She says jumping in excitement. I had forgotten

how much energy Ziyanda used to have, she never gets tired.

I grab my bag and phone and we head out. Ziyanda calls a cab, because I'm too distracted by the texts that are swarming in my phone. It's only when we're enroute to Steven's surgery that I realize that I still haven't peeped in the garage at the penthouse to see what four wheeled box is waiting for me. I guess I also just haven't been in the mood. Today is the first time in a while where I've been able to exhale and relax. That note in the bedroom gave me a glimmer of hope that at the end of this very dark tunnel, there is light. I may not know where he is or how he is, but I'm hoping against hope that he's still alive. I don't know how or why what happened to him, happened but those details are trivial. Siyabonga Nyathi better be around to see his babies be born.

We arrive at Steven's surgery and it seems as though he's been waiting for my arrival, because there's no one else in his building besides him.

Him- "Zinhle, I've been worried all morning. Are you okay? Experienced any cramping or spotting?"

Me- "No, everything feels normal."

Him- "I gave you something to flush out any remains of whatever substance you were drugged with. At least you threw up last night, so hopefully the substance wasn't given a chance to do any harm."

Ziyanda- "Drugged? Zi, you were drugged?"

Me- "Well, my drink was spiked. It wasn't..."

Ziyanda- "No Zinhle! Don't you think that's something you should've woken me up with. Hey Ziyanda wake up, I need to go to the doctor urgently, my drink was spiked."

Ziyanda shouts and rambles on and on, until finally Steven intervenes.

I'm on the bed as Steven performs the ultrasound which seems as if is taking forever. Ziyanda's eyes are locked on the screen, and I smile to myself because I'm so glad we've reached this point in our relationship, and she gets to meet the munchkins for the first time.

Her- "The munchkins are so adorable, but is their heartbeat meant to be that fast?"

She turns to face Steven.

Him- "150 beats per minute is perfect, they're nice and strong. You have no idea how happy I am to see that they're fine, otherwise I was going to die."

Ziyanda frowns and stares at Steven.

Her- "Then you say that I'm dramatic."

I laugh as I see Steven wipe sweat droplets that

have accumulated on his forehead. He seems tense.

Him- "Do you want to know the sex?"

Me- "No! We'll wait."

I really wanted to receive this news with Siya in the room. I may be holding onto a hopeless dream, but that man owns my heart, I have no choice but to trust in him.

****SIYA****

I've been impatiently waiting for an update from Steven regarding the babies, but it's taken longer than I had expected. I wanted to be present during today's ultrasound, but I'm done putting Zinhle's life in danger, and it's time I went to go pay Eve a visit.

Never in my wildest dreams did I ever imagine that I'd be in the middle of a war with the two

people I would have trusted with my life. What drives me insane is the greed, I can't stand greedy people. Had Eve accepted the settlement terms, our marriage would have been dissolved by now and we'd both be living separate lives. After betraying me, she didn't deserve a cent from me, but I gave her the benefit of the doubt. R2 million would have been enough for her to establish herself. What I won't do though is pay a grown man with a smaller package than mine because he wants to feel like a man.

I want this to be done with so I can reunite with my family. I've triangulated the location of the savages, and I'm preparing for making my way there. When they realize that they don't have me in their custody, they'll only come back stronger for their vengeance. Before I make my way to the deserted warehouse in the outskirts of the North, I laugh to myself. Eve has resorted to

living in the middle of nowhere? Before I make my way there, I think it's time I paid Sbu a little visit.

[04/18, 08:13] Wdz: [54]

****ZINHLE****

Me- "Is everything okay?" I've barely made it halfway through my pregnancy, yet I feel that's the only question I seem to ask.

Steven- "Their organs are developing at a normal rate and their heartbeats are perfect, they don't seem to have been affected from last night's incident. The drug is no longer detectable in your urine, so it seems to be flushed out."

I breathe out a sigh of relief. Steven hands me a copy of the ultrasound and I smile at how fast my babies are growing, then I say a silent prayer pleading with God to bring Siya home in one

piece so he can watch his children grow.

Me- "Thank you Steven."

I stand up to leave, but he grabs hold of my arm and stares deep into my eyes.

Him- "Ziyanda, please give us a second. I just want to perform an internal examination quickly."

Ziyanda- "Wait, I thought you said that she's fine."

Ziyanda folds her arms across her chest and gives Steven an inquisitive look.

Me- "Just give us a minute Yanda please."

She stares at me, then finally huffs and storms out.

Me- "What's wrong? Were you lying about the babies being fine?"

I ask in a panic.

He rubs my shoulders in an attempt to calm me

down.

Him- "Everything is fine. I just needed to talk to you in private."

I widen my eyes in curiosity.

Me- "Okay, what's going on?"

Him- "I can't tell you much, but hopefully this helps with any questions you may have."

He hands me an envelope and I hold onto it with trembling hands.

Him- "You should read this here and now, so it can be destroyed. I was also asked that you don't utter a word of this to anyone."

I nod and rip open the envelope where I find a folded piece of paper that seems like a letter.

It reads:

"To the mother of my kids. I had to go old school and write a letter, it's the only communication method I trust right now.

There's nothing I crave more than to be in your presence again, but there's a few things I need to take care of, your safety being at the top of that list. Please refrain from parties for now, just until this mess has been resolved. Tell the munchkins that daddy is dying without them. I'll reveal all in due time, just take care of yourself please and I'll take care of the rest. Don't trust anyone, keep your guard up at all times.

I love you, never doubt or forget that."

I read it over and over again, then I hold the note on my chest close to my heart. I close my eyes and breathe a loud sigh of relief.

Steven gently shakes my shoulder and I jump on him giving him a bear hug.

Me- "Thank you Steven."

I give him a kiss on the cheek and I see his cheeks flush. I let go of him and fix my dress.

I'm elated and I can't stop smiling.

Steven- "Take care of yourself, I'll see you soon."

I run out to Ziyanda and we haul a cab outside.

In the car, I finally take a few minutes to read through the dozens of texts on my phone. The majority of them are from Sbu, I even have voice messages from him. After listening to them, I hear the concern and frustration in his voice, so I decide it's best that I have a face to face conversation with him instead. I'm more than embarrassed over last night, but he wasn't exactly sober and behaving, so we're both guilty. I also have to set some clear boundaries, I understand that he may have been intoxicated, but drunk or not he's just a friend, physical contact outside of the consultation room is inappropriate. I'll have to face him sooner or later, and I'm in a good mood right now, nothing

and no one can burst my bubble.

I give the driver the address to Sbu's surgery and I sit back as Ziyanda has an annoyed look written all over her face.

We finally arrive at the location, and I tell Ziyanda to stay in the car, I'm glad she obliges, because I'm not in the mood for any questions . I make my way inside and it's pretty quiet inside, and empty as well. I walk to Sbu's consultation room and find the door wide open. My heart starts leaping out of my chest as I hear loud bangs from objects flying to the ground. I cover my mouth with my hand, because I don't want to make a sound, but I'm shocked to see what happens next.

Sbu pounding a woman on his desk. He tosses everything on the floor as he torments her with his member. I bite my bottom lip as my insides

warm up yearning for some sexual healing, I snap out of it and conclude that my hormones are to blame. The screams are loud and familiar. Then I catch a glimpse of her face, Eve and the frown of sexual pleasure plastered on her face.

****SIYA****

I've decided not to pay Sbu a visit after all, I'll instruct one of my guys to do it. I have bigger fish to fry, the signal of the tracker is becoming weaker, and I'm flying in the car to the North. I plan on sharing my location when I arrive so I can get some backup, some of my guys are already within close proximity of the warehouse.

I arrive and immediately send my location. I say a silent prayer to God asking for forgiveness for what I'm about to do, I'm also begging him that I make it out alive. I can't wait any longer, so I grab my pistol and decide to throw caution

to the wind and make my way inside the abandoned warehouse. I'm attacked by two men that I manage to take down then I run inside.

I hear footsteps behind me, and as I'm about to shoot, I realize that it's my guys. They signal to each other to enter the separate rooms, and I signal the direction I'm going in.

Something is amiss here. I don't come into contact with anyone else, and it seems to be empty. I come across a room with light and I charge towards it, only to find Sakhile on the floor with my tracker beside him.

I throw my hands up in frustration.

Shit!

[04/18, 08:13] Wdz: [55]

****ZINHLE****

Eve's debauchery knows no bounds. My mind races with unanswered questions. My mouth dries up and I start feeling light headed. I take deep breaths in and out then I slowly reach down to take off my sandals, while Eve's moans pierce through my ears. I hear Sbu grunt loudly and comment on how good she is. I know I kept quiet about Eve and Brian, but this I can't keep in. I crouch down and carefully take out my phone. I click away through the small peephole, but I remember that I can't call Siya. The only way we can communicate is through Steven, but after hiding my pregnancy from me for so long, I doubt that I can fully trust that man.

I take my bag and run out just as I hear Eve say "take me against the door."

As soon as I get in the car I tell the driver to drive, while I try to catch my breath. Ziyanda

gives the driver our home address and blows in my face, because I'm starting to hyperventilate. My breathing is finally under control and Ziyanda has a lot of questions, but thankfully she doesn't voice them out immediately.

We finally arrive at home and Yanda helps me out of the car. We enter the Khumalo residence and find mom running around in the house. She's wearing one shoe, a dress that isn't zipped while she tries clasping her wristwatch and her diamond necklace.

It's only after a few minutes that she realizes that Ziyanda are just staring at her. She stops and throws her hands in the air in frustration.

Her- "Where the hell have you two been vele? You didn't bother calling me, I almost called the police!"

Ziyanda just laughs and walks towards her. She zips up mom's dress and clasps her diamond necklace, then she spins mom around to face her.

Ziyanda- "Mom, we're fine. We slept at Zinhle's new place, she wanted to show me around. Let's talk about you though. Where are you off to?"

Ziyanda asks as she folds her arms across her chest and analyzes mom from top to bottom.

Mom shy's away and walks to her room.

Her- "Have you two seen my other shoe?"

I laugh and shake my head.

Mom emerges from her room wearing a new pair of shoes that I haven't seen in her closet before.

Mom- "I'm meeting the ladies from the stokvel to review our code of conduct and vote for a new chairperson."

I can't help but laugh at how anxious and excited mom is for this "stokvel meeting"

Ziyanda and I eye her every move and she finally turns around.

Mom- "What? Don't I look okay? Actually it doesn't matter, I don't need to look glamorous or anything right? Well you girls don't need to wait up for me, you know how these things can drag for hours."

She runs to me and kisses me on the cheek while rubbing my stomach, then she jogs to Ziyanda and kisses her on the forehead.

Mom- "I love you guys!"

She shouts as she leaves.

Ziyanda and I look at each other then burst out in laughter. We finally calm down and retreat to our respective rooms, Ziyanda wants to take a nap, and I need to call Steven, hopefully he can get me in contact with Siya.

I call numerous times, but to no avail. So I lay on my back, I also need a power nap, I feel exhausted.

I'm woken up by Ziyanda tickling all over my body.

Me- "Ziyanda I'm going to pee on myself!"

I scream as I laugh uncontrollably.

Her- "Come, let's go!"

I shake my head and cover my head with a pillow. Yanda shoves it off and tugs at my legs.

Her- "I need you to do me a small favor."

Me- "Okay, tomorrow." I say as I snore loudly.

Her- "No, I need your help now! Wake up, I need to tell you something!"

I raise my head and give her a bored look.

Me- "What Ziyanda?"

I ask in an annoyed tone.

Her- "I met someone a few weeks ago while I was abroad, and well he's come to South Africa to pay me a visit. He's going back tomorrow."

Me- "Okay, have a great time. I'll lock up after you."

Her- "No, Zinhle! He asked me to cook him a traditional home cooked meal, it's the least I can do after he's endured hours of flying just to see me for a few hours."

I open my eyes wider.

Me- "What will umama say about you wining and dining a man in her dining room?"

She bites on her bottom lip.

Her- "Actually, that's where you come in. Since you have that gorgeous pad, maybe I could borrow the kitchen? And it would even give you an opportunity to meet him."

I give her a blank stare.

Me- "Ziyanda, you're putting me in an uncomfortable situation. One of Siya's last wishes was that I don't bring men into the house. I'm sorry, I can't."

Her- "Come on! He'll be my guest, and if you're really uncomfortable, I'll just go out somewhere with him."

She holds my hand and kisses it all over and shows me her pleading eyes.

Me- "Who is this guy? Do you trust him?"

She jumps on the bed in excitement.

Her- "His name is Brandon, he's amazing. He's showered me with gifts and given me his time and affection. Now, he's come all this way because Skype just isn't enough anymore and we want to have a serious conversation about our future."

Me- "Wow, it's that serious?"

She nods.

Her- "I think he's the one."

I sigh loudly.

Me- "Okay, we can go to the penthouse, but he'll only eat canapés and then he'll take you out. He won't go anywhere near upstairs or any of the guest rooms on the first floor. He is only to chill in the lounge or the kitchen, as soon as I feel uncomfortable I'm calling the police, no questions asked."

She jumps around in excitement and attacks me with a hug.

We're on our way to the penthouse and I realize that I'm uneasy about Ziyanda's guest, so I brace myself for her reaction to what I'm about to say.

Me- "Yanda, I'm sorry but I can't be okay with your guest coming over. I'm on edge, especially since I was recently drugged. Can you guys just

go out rather?"

She frowns then she smiles.

Her- "It's okay, I understand."

She squeezes me from the side.

We arrive at the penthouse and make our way inside. I unlock a guest room downstairs for Ziyanda while I go upstairs to change into Siya's gown. My hormones are all over the place, all I want is him on top of me. I sniff his gown as I drape it on my naked body and I lay on the bed and doze off.

I'm woken up by a screaming Ziyanda. I spring off the bed and tie the belt of the gown.

Her- "I missed you so much Brandon! Come in! Zinhle!" She shouts from downstairs and her voice echoes throughout the house.

So she allowed her guest to come into my house without my permission? I walk down the

stairs and Ziyanda runs to me.

Her- "He really wanted to meet you. I'm sorry, but Brandon literally begged to see you, I'll just put my shoes on and we'll leave."

She kisses me on the cheek.

Her- "Brandon, this is my sister Zinhle."

He turns around and I gasp in shock.

Me- "Brian?"

I manage to say as I feel warm liquid run down my legs.

[04/18, 08:14] Wdz: Steal it ke! I'm your egg, fry me.

[56]

****ZINHLE****

I lick my lips that have suddenly shriveled up

and slowly turn around to run up the stairs. I barely make it to the second floor when I feel his hands tug onto my hair.

Him- "I'm going to be nice and I'm going to help you downstairs. Don't try my again. Relax, I'm not going to kill you..yet!"

He helps me down the stairs and walks ahead of me as Ziyanda attempts to run to her guest room. He yanks her arm and throws her onto the floor and she screams out loud in pain. My mind is too consumed with trying to get out of his presence, that I don't pay attention to the fact that I'm wet. I'm too frightened to look down my legs and check if it's blood that rushed down them, because if I find out that it is I know that I'll lose my mind then there will definitely be no hope of getting out of here. My babies have to be okay, they just have to be.

I slowly turn around and attempt to make my way to another guest room in hopes of finding a

panic button, but I hear a gun go off that startles me and has me holding onto the rails for dear life. I hear Ziyanda scream.

Her- "Brandon, what the hell is wrong with you?"

She runs to my side and helps me sit on the last step of the spiraling staircase.

I'm sobbing quietly and holding onto my stomach tightly as I look at my shivering legs. I try to control my breathing and it's then that I realize that I peed on myself. Ziyanda strokes my back and kisses my tummy then she turns her attention to Brian.

Her- "Brandon Evans, get out of this house right now, or I'll call the police."

She says in an authoritative tone as she charges for him.

I scream out after her to tell her to sit down, we don't know of Brian's capabilities, and right now

he looks like a man on a mission that shouldn't be disturbed.

Brian- "I'm not here for you honey, and if you know what's good for you, you should probably take a seat and shut the hell up!"

He shouts as he points the gun at Yanda.

She runs to my side and lays my head on her chest, as she strokes tummy and my back.

Her- "Zinhle breathe, remember those two lives in there, I plan on meeting them in four months no excuses."

She whispers with her voice breaking.

Brian- "As much as I love watching you two cuddle, I must say it's really heartwarming. However, I don't have time for this. Get up and sit over there. By the way sweetface, I must say, you look absolutely ravishing." He says as he analyses my entire body and blows a kiss at me.

I roll my eyes and huff in frustration, this man is merely a shell of who Brian was, or at least who I thought he was.

Ziyanda helps me up and we walk to the dining room, she helps me sit on one of the chairs and she sits besides me. I've become so uncomfortable as the wet dress in wearing clings to my thighs

Brian takes off his blazer and throws it on the kitchen counter. He rolls up the sleeves on his shirt without losing eye contact with me, then he slowly makes his way towards me with his gun in tow.

Me- "Brian, please don't hurt me pleeeaaase!" I plead with him as tears rush down my face. He gives me a wide smile until he's just a few centimeters away from my face.

Me- "Brian, please can I go clean myself up. I promise I won't do anything stupid."

He chuckles loudly.

Him- "You know that I don't mind you in any state." He says as he kisses me on the cheek.

Ziyanda- "What the hell is going on here? How do you two know each other? Zinhle why are you calling him Brian?"

She shouts frantically in a high pitched voice.

Brian- "Zinhle shut up your chihuahua, or I'll be forced to do so!" The authority in his voice is enough for me not to ask any questions, but to do as I'm told.

Me- "Ziyanda, I'll explain later." I try to plead with her.

"Let's try get out of this situation first."

I whisper to her.

Brian slaps me hard across my cheek, and I swear I see stars. I close my eyes in an attempt to breathe through the physical and emotional pain, but then I feel his hands squeeze my

knees. I shoot my eyes open and I see him staring at my little bump. He plants a kiss on my navel and strokes my belly.

Him- "So these little guys were supposed to be mine, but you had to go into forbidden territory."

He shakes his head, and I gasp out in shock when I see him press his gun against my stomach.

Me- "Brian, please! Pleeeaaase!"

I cry out as tears and mucus from my nose flood my face.

Me- "I'll do anything, I swear I'll do anything!"

Ziyanda is crying out as well and her cheeks are red.

I take deep breaths in and out as I pray to God to spare the four of us, Ziyanda, my kids and myself.

Then I hear Brian cock his gun on my belly. I look away, and he pulls my face to look at him.

Him- "I want to see your face when I take the most precious thing from the invincible Siyabonga Nyathi."

Me- "Pl...plea...pleeeaaasssee!"

Him- "Shut up!"

I bite on my lip and just stare at him in defeat.

I hear Ziyanda jump off her seat and charge towards Brian, then I hear his gun go off. I shut my eyes because I'm not ready for the sight that awaits me.

****SIYA****

I've been making phonecall after phonecall trying to beef up security for Zinhle and her family, as well as mine. My mind is in a million different places, but my main concern is Zinhle, because I know that she's the main target now.

I make my way to the penthouse, but it's taking longer than I'd like because that warehouse was just so damn far.

My mind wonders off when I receive a report of shots fired in the penthouse. I try to log onto the surveillance system in the house, but I'm unsuccessful. I'm trying to keep my eyes on the road, but I'm also trying to rescue my family simultaneously. I make a few phone calls before I reach the penthouse and load my bullets in my guns.

I decide to enter through the garage, if this savage has backup then my backup will deal with his.

I cock my guns and make the agonizing journey inside. I walk slowly into the garage and past the unused car. I make my way up the stairs to the first floor, but then I'm stopped in my tracks

when I hear a gunshot.

Shit, I'm too late.

[04/18, 08:14] Wdz: [57]

****SBU****

Hi, I'm Sbusiso Ngcobo. I'm a specialized ob/gyn and I love my job. I don't have much of a family, my parents died when I was just a boy, and I had to put myself through school when my grandmother who had become my guardian, passed away. I've been abroad for years, but I decided to come back home to fulfill my long term dream of opening a public clinic with advanced technology and treatments.

A few weeks ago I met Zinhle Khumalo, and I was smitten. We just clicked, it felt like I had known her forever. She has a wicked sense of humor and she also laughs at my dry jokes

which is always a plus. What was surprising was what happened once Zinhle left.

A feisty tall and slender woman walked in and locked the door behind her. She cat walked towards me and walked around my desk until she was just merely centimeters away from me. I attempted to open my mouth, but I felt like I was in the twilight zone. She sat on my desk with her legs wide open, one on either side of my chair. She was wearing the shortest dress I think I've ever seen, so in her position, she left nothing to the imagination.

Her eyes were dark and mysterious, her short hair coiled in a short pile on her head. She flung her shoes across the room and travelled her slender leg all over my groin, which immediately responded to her sensuous touch.

Me- "Who are you? What's going on?"

Her- "Ssshhh"

Then she straddled me, and there was no

turning back. The rest as we say was history.

I thoroughly enjoyed every lasting second of that experience, I had no complaints whatsoever. Not until the second visit I received from the mystery woman. She showed up, and I remember my shaft rise to attention at the mere sight of her. She locked the door behind her and strutted all the way towards me, just like the previous time. She sat on my lap and started grinding against my rock hard crotch. She then pulled out a cellphone and played a video of our sexual encounter. I pushed her off my lap and she narrowed her dark yet innocent eyes at me. She explained that watching herself in a sex act aroused her beyond belief and she wanted to take our sexual escapades a step further. My mind was against it, but my body gave in. She knew which part of my body to linger her soft and succulent lips on. Her various positions and adventurous spirit gave

me a run for my money. It was magical and passionate, it was nowhere near making love, it was screwing each other's brains out and I loved every minute.

Once we were done, she briefly introduced herself. Apparently she's Zinhle's estranged older sister Ziyanda. She had been unsuccessful in her attempts of getting hold of Zinhle, and she really wanted to reconcile. She was no longer the same confident woman that had just rode me like a bicycle, she became vulnerable and miserable, I ended up having to comfort her, that sight really made my heart bleed. Somehow she persuaded me to convince Zinhle into going to lunch with me, and so we did. Ziyanda told me that she wanted me to get as much information about Zinhle as possible so that she could figure out a way back into Zinhle's life. I commended her on her determination to reconcile with her sister, so I

helped where I could.

Our enigmatic love affair continued and she invited me to an intimate New Year's Eve party, which I was excited to attend. After she pleasured me in the car ride to the estate, we arrived in high spirits. I was surprised to see Zinhle in a far corner alone, stuffing her face with all the food available, and yet she still looked ravishing. Ziyanda interrupted my lustful thoughts and pulled me to the side where she proceeded to perform fellatio on me. She was always ready! I watched from afar as Zinhle walked to the bar and that is when Ziyanda shoved a glass of juice in my hand and instructed me to swop it with Zinhle's. Apparently she spiked the beverages with a little something to get the party started, but now she was concerned about the twins in Zinhle's belly. I hesitated at first, but she physically pushed me onto Zinhle, and that's how I

"bumped" into her. I looked at Ziyanda in the background and swoped the drinks when I saw Ziyanda flash her iPad with our infamous video plastered on the screen. Im not one for blackmail, but she had an incriminating video of me and I had no idea what her plans were regarding it.

This is why I took her to the dance floor, just to ensure that she was okay, but she disappeared for the rest of the night. Ziyanda was rather annoyed that her sister just left, but I was more annoyed at that video that she was flashing around, so I grabbed her and it was time to have a serious conversation with her.

Apparently she only did it because she wanted to save her sister and the twins, besides she more than apologized in one of the guest rooms at the mansion.

I could barely sleep or concentrate on anything other than Zinhle, she just disappeared without a word. It's now the first day of the new year and I'm going to the office.

I have a few test results that will be arriving today, and since I gave everyone the day off, I'll be the one receiving them.

I arrive at the surgery and I'm surprised to find my office door open, I usually always lock it. I open the door wider and I find Ziyanda bent over and looking through my medicine cabinet. I get distracted for a second by her small round bottom, but then I remember that she shouldn't be in here, let alone anywhere near my cabinet that is locked at all times.

I clear my throat and she jumps up in shock. She turns to face me and licks her lips as she slowly walks towards me. She circles her arms around my neck and nibbles on my ear. I pull

away.

Me- "Ziyanda, what is going on here? What are you doing in my office, and more especially, what are you doing in my cabinet?"

Her- "I came to surprise you. You said something yesterday about being in the office today, so here I am."

With that she attacks me with a passionate kiss while her hand reaches for my already hard member. I want to stop her, but she knows the buttons to push and how to make me feel good. I'm a man whose needs haven't been met in months, so this fantasy that I've been living, has provided me with a new lease on life. I've been so absorbed in my career and helping others that I've neglected helping myself. I've only been in love once and she broke my heart.

Afterwards I dabbled in casual relationships which wouldn't last, because of my traveling, but now that I've set my roots back here in

South Africa, it's time that I nursed my feelings, Zinhle was a great start, but Ziyanda has revived a sense of adventure in me. With Zinhle I had opened my heart, but was dismally disappointed learning that the father of her kids was still a factor, now Ziyanda is igniting a spark in me that had died out long ago. I know this may not be love with Ziyanda, but whatever it is, I'm willing to explore it.

So instead of her taking the lead, I decide that it's time to shag her into submission. I understand that she thinks I'm weak, but none of that matters right now. I'll show her who I really am, she'll be screaming my name, and up first is my desk.

****EVE****

Hi, my name is Yvette Khanyisile Nyathi. Wife to Siyabonga Nyathi, and upcoming business mogul in my own right. When I met Siyabonga, I

was truly broken. The love of my life had left to pursue a career overseas. I was to follow him in the coming months, but then I found out I was pregnant. A baby wasn't in our plans and we agreed that we'd only explore that at least 5 years down the line, so my pregnancy was a shock and a setback. He ended up not sending me money for my visa's or passport. He disappeared, and ignored my efforts to get hold of him. His father warned me multiple times to stay away from his son. Then I met Siya, he was caring and kind and financially established. I needed the money to get rid of the baby and take care of my family so I entertained his advances and ensured my future as Mrs Nyathi.

He was never around, always chasing the next million Rand deal, expecting me to be the doting housewife. I tried opening myself up to loving him, but I couldn't bring myself to move on from my ex. My first year of marriage was torture,

Siya was an excited newlywed and I on the other hand was miserable. There was only one person I could find comfort in, Brian. He was attentive and affectionate. I used to find solace in him, and eventually one thing lead to another one night, and I was screaming his name over and over again in ecstasy. There was something about the thrill he restored in my life. Our relationship advanced to the point where I'd be anxious for Siya to leave on his business trips, so Brian could come over. He'd make me feel like the only woman in the world, and as our relationship developed, so did my love and adoration for him.

Brian also reciprocated the love I had for him and that's when the demands began. He wanted me to leave Siya for him, and as much as I loved him, I was living a comfortable life and Brian's career would be a little sketchy at times. When I fell pregnant again, Brian found out before I

could even tell him. Needless to say, I had no idea who the father was, but Brian was convinced it was him so he threatened to tell Siya. I thought the best option would be to terminate and just tell him I miscarried, and so I did. Over the years he's tried proving himself to me and I've finally given in, the way he showed an interest in that little girl Zinhle drove me crazy. I couldn't handle another man rejecting me, so I told Brian I was ready to divorce Siya, but he had an even better plan, for us to eliminate him.

I signed a prenuptial agreement before Siya and I got married, it was a small price to pay for assuring him I wasn't in it for the money. However, now that Siya has been raking in the millions, Brian helped me understand that the better option would be cashing in on the life insurance and his shares in various companies once he's gone.

Brian has his own personal vendetta against Siya and he promised to help me sort out that skank Zinhle, so our relationship is definitely a win-win. Our relationship has definitely improved once he let me in on a little secret; he's related to the man that broke my heart, Brandon. I've helped him in committing fraudulent acts in Brandon's name, and it's helped me emotionally in getting over him. Brandon was never held accountable for the selfish act he did years ago, and Brian helped me there as well, I finally regained my power and I never felt better.

Brian has sworn to take care of Siya and I've assumed the responsibility of taking care of Zinhle, she had both of the only men in my life running after her like lost puppies, ill be damned if I lose another man again. I've had to resort to

drastic measures regarding Zinhle, sleeping with the green eyed monster wasn't part of the plan, but what Brian doesn't know can't hurt him, and besides Sbu's member doesn't have me complaining. Siya was my V12, but I still left, so who am I to complain if I get a V8?

My plan is to terminate those little devils that she's carrying, then I'll send her to her grave; slowly but surely.

[04/18, 08:14] Wdz: Morning everyone! Have an amazing and fruitful week ahead.

[58]

****ZINHLE****

My breathing is uncontrollable and I can't bare to open my eyes, then I hear Brian's evil laugh. I take a deep breath in and mentally prepare

myself for what I'm about to see. I hold onto my stomach, and I think I have too much adrenaline pumping through my body to feel the pain.

I finally slowly open my eyes and my eyes shoot straight to my stomach. I analyze my body and I don't see blood, so I breathe out a sigh of relief, but then I see blood on the floor. I blink away my tears as I call out Ziyanda's name. I see blood all over her her and I immediately think the worst.

Me- "Ziyanda! Yanda talk to me!"

Her- "I'm fine! This asshole shot me."

She says in what comes out as a whisper while she holds onto her left arm, where the blood seems to be seeping from.

Me- "Just don't close your eyes okay? We'll get you help."

Brian chuckles louder.

Him- "Zinhle, it's over my dear. Now if she interrupts me again, the next one will go straight through her head. Don't try me."

Me- "Pppllleeeaaaasee Brian, call an ambulance for her and leave her out of this."

He walks towards Ziyanda and presses a finger through her bullet wound on her left arm.

Ziyanda screeches in pain, the sight saddens me, especially since I don't know how we're going to make it out of this one.

Brian strokes Ziyanda's hair and tugs at her throat.

Him- "You made it so easy dear Ziyanda. You bruised and battered women are all the same! Buy a gift here and buy some lunch there, and then you're ready to plan the rest of your life with someone? Come on! That's why I liked you a little Zinhle, you made me chase you, that was refreshing. It pains me to have to put you through this, but hey Siyabonga needs to stop

winning in life!"

Me- "I have nothing to do with this, Ziyanda has nothing to do with this! Please just let us go!"

Brian stands and crouches in front of me.

Him- "Zinhle, you don't get it! For over a decade, I've been second best in everything because of Siyabonga! I've watched him play happy family with Eve for years, yet I was screwing her every other night in his very bed! Do you know how long I begged and pleaded for her to leave him, but she wouldn't? Then there was you, you also chose him over me, regardless of him being so visibly attached!"

He chuckles softly and shakes his head.

Him- "Then there's the fact that I have to constantly chase after him for contacts in the construction and mining world. The fact that I always have to resort to crime just to be ten steps behind him and so I can afford half the lifestyle he can. No! If I can destroy my brother

and my father, I sure as hell don't have to blink at destroying him. The best way to do so is to start with his heart, that's where you and those lives in there come in. Then it'll be him, and I can't wait for the moment when I drill a bullet through his head. I'll be living in his house, with his wife, spending his money."

He laughs sarcastically.

?- "Why don't you do it now?"

That voice has a sense of calming me down even during the roughest hurricane.

With that another gun shot is fired, I scream in shock. I jump off my seat and crouch down to Ziyanda's side. She's barely conscious, so I slap her a few times. I drag her by her legs across the floor in an attempt to find shelter, but her body is too heavy for my trembling body to carry. So I kneel beside Ziyanda and just pray to God. I hear someone drop to the floor so I peak

my head up and pray that's not Siya. I see Siya on top of Brian throwing punch after punch and it seems like Brian is just laying there lifeless.

Me- "Siyabonga, you're going to kill him, and I will not have the father of my kids go to jail for murder!"

I shout as I crawl towards him.

Brian laughs with blood all over his face and spits it out on the floor.

Brian- "Listen to your little girlfriend, don't kill me."

Siya- "Zinhle, stay with your sister help is on its way. Go!"

Me- "No! You kill him, you kill the possibility of us ever having a relationship, and you kill your chance to parent these kids."

Siya looks livid, but I'm tired of the drama. As much as I want to see Brian's brain splattered

across the dining room, I can't be okay with murder. I'm a mother and I can't be okay with this, I can't.

Siya stares at me and takes a few deep breaths in. He's finally calm and he grabs Brian's neck and throws him on one of the chairs.

Siya- "You're right, I'm not gonna kill him."

Brian laughs loudly.

Brian- "I knew it! He's so weak!"

He laughs and coughs out blood.

Siya looks at him intently and then flashes a wide smile.

Siya- "I won't, but he will."

Siya turns his attention to the door and an older white male floats in. He oozes authority as he walks over to us.

Siya- "Patrick, he's all yours now."

Him- "Thanks Siya. Brian my son, let's go

somewhere we can talk about how you've been screwing me over for years, shall we?"

He snaps his finger and within seconds 3 men in black suits lift Brian to his feet.

Brian- "No! Siya man, don't do this!"

Patrick- "Get this filth out of here, I won't disrespect this young man's house any longer. Siya, it's been a pleasure and congratulations."

He says pointing at my stomach, they shake hands and exchange winks.

Once he leaves, the first floor is flooded with first responders. Ziyanda is placed on a stretcher and is wheeled out. I stand up to follow behind, but Siya stops me.

Him- "Babe, no. You're in no position to go to the hospital. You need to rest, I'll get Steven to come check you out, but I don't want you on your feet and stressing. I'll go to the hospital

and ensure that Ziyanda is safe."

I have no strength to talk or do anything so I just look at him. He crouches down and picks me up.

Him- "Why are you wet?"

He asks as he narrows his eyes. My cheeks flush with embarrassment, and I bury my head on his chest.

Him- "Zinhle?"

I refuse to tell this man that I peed on myself, that's where I draw the line. He chuckles softly, and jogs up the spiraling staircase. He helps me stand once we're in the master bedroom and he slowly strips me naked while I just stand there like a statue. He proceeds to take his clothes off as well until he's completely naked, and I look away when I see his monster stand to attention and just stare at me. He kisses me on the cheek then leads me to the bathroom, he nudges me inside and he adjusts the

temperature to warm. He scrubs every inch of my body and once he's done he rubs his shower gel on himself then stands under the other showerhead. I stare as the water cascades down his torso to his monster and below.

Within a few minutes, he's done and he switches the water off. He helps me out of the shower and dries my body with a towel. While he wraps one around his waist. He brings a gown and helps me wear it then carries me to the bed where he tucks me in.

Him- "Zinhle, never feel ashamed or embarrassed around me okay? I told you that I love you, believe me. I'll go to the hospital and make sure Ziyanda is okay and has security."

He kisses me on my forehead and gets up to leave, but I hold onto his arm.

Me- "Please just stay until I fall asleep. Please."

I say as a tear trickles down. He gets in the covers and embraces me from behind, with one

hand on my stomach and the other stroking my forehead. I hold onto him tighter and sob softly as i turn my body around to face him. I stroke his face then bury my face on his bare chest.

Him- "Ssshhh I'm here my love, I'm here."

[04/18, 08:14] Wdz: [59]

****ZINHLE****

I'm woken up by soft wet kisses all over my face.

Him- "Zinhle, wake up. The doctor is here."

I close my eyes and cover my head with a pillow.

Him- "It'll be quick. Come on love."

I roll my eyes and yawn then shift my body off the enormous bed.

Siya- "I'm going back to the hospital, Ziyanda was in surgery the last time I was there. Do you need anything?"

I shake my head, because I'm still so exhausted and that includes my mind. I can't think of whether I need anything or want anything, regardless of what I need, it never comes to fruition.

Siya smiles and turns to leave then I call after him. He turns on his heel and walks towards me. He strokes my face and gives me a concerned look.

Me- "I know what I need. I need a peaceful life but most importantly, a peaceful pregnancy."

I push past him and run downstairs. I'm greeted by Steven downstairs who has set up some of his equipment in the lounge.

I lay motionless on the couch as he examines every inch of my body. Thankfully the twins are safe, but he orders me to relax for the next few weeks, I laugh when he says that because my life has been filled with one drama filled experience after another.

Steven- "Miss Khumalo, you really should take it easy. You've been lucky these past few incidents, but your babies are starting to feel the strain. Just relax, and use these amenities that are at your disposal."

He says pointing at the various luxury items in the house.

Siya- "She will, I'll make sure of it."

He says as he walks down the last few steps of the staircase. He walks towards us and shakes Steven's hand.

Me- "I'll try doc. Thanks for the visit."

I stand up and tighten the belt of the gown, and attempt to make my way out of the living room, but Siya grabs hold of my arm.

Him- "I'll fix this, I swear that I'll fix all of this and we'll be a family okay?"

I stare deep into his eyes, and I feel my heart

palpitate. I see the man that I love with every fiber of me, the man that I gave my purity to on a silver platter, the man that I lay my morals to the side for, but also the man that has brought so much drama into my life. I'm glad that he's alive, but he's turned my life upside down and inside out within just twenty four hours of reappearing in it.

Me- "I'll be upstairs."

I give him a slight smile and dash upstairs. I jump into bed and reach for my bag so that I can take my vitamins. I'm so fatigued, I guess that's what happens when you're in a real life action movie. I snuggle up close to the larger pillows and close my eyes. As I start to doze off, I'm woken up by Siya clearing his throat.

I turn to face him and he's holding a tray. I want to frown, but I'm distracted by the aroma.

Me- "What's this?"

I try to say in an annoyed tone. He kneels on the

bed and I see a large portion of creamy pasta and a tall glass of milk, my mouth salivates at the thought of the taste.

Him- "I made this for you when I came back from the hospital."

I grab the tray from him and place it on my lap.

Me- "Did Eve teach you how to cook?"

He looks at me intently as he raises his eyebrow.

Me- "Did she?"

He stands up and heads for the door.

Him- "I'm off to the hospital, I'll be back as soon as I can."

I laugh sarcastically.

Me- "Didn't you say this was my place? So shouldn't you ask if you CAN come back later?"

Him- "Whaaa.."

Me- "Siya, I think you should maybe find your

own place for now. The doctor said I should take it easy, and with you still in my life I doubt I can. What I said to you a week ago, still remains."

I get off the bed and walk towards him and nudge him towards the door.

Me- "I'll let you know regarding my appointments and the rest, but for now I'd like to be left alone. You've got baggage Siyabonga Nyathi, and it's not the Louis Vuitton kind."

I open the door and push him out.

Me- "By the way, your wife was fucking Brian and now I saw my doctor balls deep in her. She's liberal I must say."

I shut the door and lock it then run to the bed to check in on my mom and to indulge in the meal my baby daddy made for me. While he bangs on the door nonstop.

****ZIYANDA****

I've just woken up from surgery and my body aches all over. The physical pain however is nothing compared to the emotional pain I'm currently experiencing. My heart is bleeding as my mind wanders off to Brandon, or should I say Brian.

I just can't seem to catch a break in my life, and I'm trickling down my misfortune onto my baby sister. A part of me wishes that the bullet went through my heart and I'd be in a morgue somewhere. When I met Brandon, he literally swept me off my feet. I was absolutely without a doubt infatuated, he sold me dreams and I bought them. It was over such a short period of time, but I was intrigued by this whirlwind romance. It was the first time ever that someone showed such an interest in my life without having their own selfish expectations.

We shared so much in common, that I felt as if I could be myself in his presence. He gave me a glimpse of the life that I yearn for and can only dream about having.

Here I am with a bullet wound from my supposed boyfriend and my future with him obviously down the drain.

The guilt I'm feeling seems to be blocking my airway, because I can't breathe when I think of how I put my sister's life and the lives of those babies in danger because of my misconception of the love I thought I had. In hindsight, I was so gullible, but I guess when you want something so bad, you confuse a mirage for the real thing. What I thought would be one of the best days in my life, the love of my life meeting my sister turned out to be unequivocally the worst day in history. Then again, I've known for years deep inside that I don't deserve a happily ever after.

I'm too battered and bruised to find someone willing to glue together the broken pieces that make up my soul. Who am I to want something more than my past? This is my destiny and it's time I accepted it.

I've been yet again rejected because of some special obsession pertaining to Zinhle. The one man that had rekindled a spark in me has extinguished it like it never existed. I've been merely existing for years, and all that I crave is to start living a fulfilling and exciting life. One where I don't have to drink pills just to fall asleep, one where I don't break into a cold sweat every night after the same nightmare, one where I feel and believe that my feelings and thoughts matter. I crave a life where I can look in the mirror and not be repulsed by what I see. A simple life where I can respect my body and find someone who does the same.

My thoughts are interrupted by someone clearing their throat. I turn around and find a tall caramel skinned yummy looking man. He flashes a warm smile and I m blinded by his snowy white teeth.

He glides towards me and sits on the chair beside my bed.

He strokes my hand and gazes into my eyes.

Him- "Hi, I'm Brandon Evans. The real one."

He winks at me.

[04/18, 08:15] Wdz: [60]

****ZINHLE****

I finished my meal, spoke to my mother and even listened to an entire TD Jakes sermon on my phone while Siya shouted his idle threats from the other side of the door. I think he's given up, because he's no longer banging himself against the door. Truth is, I don't even

know why I said that about Eve to him. I don't regret saying it, but I do regret the manner in which I said it, it was so crude and out of character for me.

I'm really tempted to get out of bed and open the door, but I'm terrified of what Siya is going to say or do, I'm also embarrassed at my little rant from earlier. I guess I'm just frustrated because of the sudden turn of events in my life, and he's the common denominator, yet his sister isn't on some hospital bed with bullet holes and he's not the one who has to try remaining calm when someone has a gun pointed to him. I guess I have to face him eventually, might as well brace myself for doing it now, besides I need to see my sister and make sure that she's taken care of.

I slide off the bed and make my way to the

bathroom. I stand under the scorching hot water and let out a loud cry and promise myself that it's the last time I allow tears to fall down my face, at least for the next 4 months. I get out after minutes of scrubbing my body and I dry myself then lotion. I walk to the closet and settle on a long navy tight fitting dress and wear the pair of slippers, this dress really accentuates my bump, I smile at myself in the mirror as I gawk at my protruding belly.

I walk back to the bedroom and make my way to the bedroom door, and take a deep breath in before I open it to go speak to Siya.

I find Siyabonga in the lounge on one of the couches with a bottle of whiskey in his hand. I clear my throat and stand a few meters away from him.

Me- "Hey, I want to go visit Ziyanda for a little while, you didn't tell me which hospital she's in."

I say as I fiddle with my fingers and stare at the floor.

He stands up and inches closer and closer to me until I'm cornered against the kitchen counter. My breathing changes and I smell the whiskey on his breath. His eyes are bloodshot red and I don't know if it's from being tired, angry or he's been crying. I try to open my mouth to speak, but nothing comes out as he stares at me. I try to shift to the side to get some space, but his arms have built a fort around me.

I know that he's trying to intimidate me, and it's working, however I'm tired of being his little puppy so I have to pull a brace face.

Me- "Can you let me pass please?"

I say as I fold my arms. He pushes against me and cups my face with both his hands as he stares deep into my eyes.

Him- "How did you know?"

I take a deep breath in and roll my eyes, which seems to annoy him even more.

Him- "Answer me."

He says through gritted teeth.

Me- "I'm sorry about what I said earlier on, I know that your marriage has nothing to do with me. How did I know? So you knew?"

He chuckles in a sarcastic manner and touches my nose with his.

Him- "You're diverting? Okay! Since you're incapable of having a mature conversation, I'll humor you. I knew about Brian, but your famous doctor, now that's news to me. Your turn, how did you know?"

I push his chest, but he barely budes so I crouch down and crawl under his arm and attempt to walk away from him, but he grabs hold of my arm and chuckles loudly.

Him- "See that? That doesn't help in proving

your maturity girly."

The anger I feel intensifies as I repeat his last statement over again in my head, and before I know it my hand lands hard across his cheek. The loud sound of contact takes me by surprise and shock. I walk a few meters away from him while he strokes his cheek.

Me- "I... I'm... I'm sorry, but you provoked me! I'll just put some shoes on then I'll go."

He laughs loudly and charges towards me.

Him- "You're not going anywhere, it's not up for discussion. I've got better things to do than to assign people to follow you around the whole day. Ziyanda is fine, I'll be checking up on her again, your mom is fine as well. If you miss her so much, then she can move in."

He moves towards me and stares at me intently when his body is merely inches away from mine.

Him- "Zinhle, that was the first and last time you get physical with me understood? Oh, and I get that I've professed my love for you on numerous occasions, however that does not mean that I'm your little toy boy. If you don't want to be my partner, then fine, but remember that I'm going to be a part of your life regardless, because of them."

He says as he points at my belly.

Me- "So that's why you left?"

He sighs loudly and gives me a bored look.

Him- "What are you talking about?"

Me- "That's why you left Eve, because you found out she's cheating?"

I ask as I bite my bottom lip.

Him- "Show me a man that wouldn't."

Me- "Oh... isn't that a little hypocritical, considering.."

I say in a low tone with my head bowed.

Him- "I'm leaving now to take care of a few things, do you need anything?"

I huff and I turn slowly and walk away with disappointment and frustration filling my heart.

Him- "How long have you known?"

Me- "Not long enough." I say as I jog towards the staircase.

Siya runs behind me and grabs my waist.

Him- "Careful! I think you should move to one of the bedrooms here on the first floor, it's safer in your condition."

Me- "When are you moving out?"

He chuckles.

Him- "But I'm not Zinhle. I told you that I plan on being present every step of the way, and I meant it. I'll occupy one of the guest rooms down here so I can be close to you incase you

need something."

Me- "I presume I have no choice in this."

Him- "Good, you're catching on! It's great to be back!"

He says and he gives me a kiss on the cheek.

I don't know what I was hoping for, perhaps that he left Eve for me? Whatever it is that I'm feeling needs to be buried, because pursuing a relationship with each other right now would be a recipe for disaster. He's barely divorced, and the kind of future I've craved with him is one that includes a wedding ring and more children, but for him; that would be jumping from the kettle to the pot.

****ZIYANDA****

We've been sitting in silence with this "real Brandon" man for minutes on end. I've been staring at him, debating in my head whether to

press the panic button or to be polite and shake his hand, with so many thoughts racing through my mind I decide to calm down and choose the latter.

He takes my hand and plants a soft kiss on it then he flashes his million Rand smile again. I blush and get a little flustered as I wonder how awful I look in the presence of this sex God. I try reach for the glass of water on the bedside table, but he grabs it first. He adjusts the straw and holds the back of my head to help me drink. I take a few short sips and we don't lose eye contact the entire time. Once I'm done, he takes out his handkerchief and wipes the sides of my mouth.

Me- "Uhhh.. thank you."

Him- "You're more than welcome. I'm sorry for just barging in like this especially after you've just come to, but I needed to see you urgently."

My mouth curves into a smile and I feel my

cheeks heat up.

Him- "So, as I've said already, I'm Brandon Evans. I heard what that scumbag did to you, and I just had to come and see that you're okay myself. I must say though, you look too damn gorgeous to be a patient. Are you sure you were shot and just came from surgery? Am I in the right room?"

He narrows his eyes and bites his bottom lip. I laugh, but huff loudly in pain, and he jumps closer to where he's sitting next to me on my bed.

I shift uncomfortably, because whether he's gorgeous or not, he can't be in the same bed as me. I'm still too damaged for this kind of physical contact with any man, let alone a man that's related to the animal that lead me here.

Me- "I'd like to sleep now. Please go."

I say as I turn to face the other way and cover my face with the bed covers.

I feel him slide off the bed and stand next to it for a few minutes. He plonks something on the table then I hear the door slam shut. I turn to the table and find a large bouquet of red roses, how tacky, a small package with a few goodies and his business card. I take the card and shred it without reading and toss the minute pieces on the floor. I turn to face the window, close my eyes and go back to thinking about my life.

[04/18, 16:27] Wdz: [61]

****ZINHLE****

It's been a few days being locked up in the fortress, and my boredom and frustration has reached its peak. I've barely seen Siya since our little tiff the other day, and I kind of miss him. I'm lonely and bored every minute of everyday,

mom is even concerned because I FaceTime her at least 5 times a day, then there are the countless texts in between. Siya and I decided not to tell mom about the shooting for now, because it would be too hard to explain over the phone, so she thinks that Ziyanda has gone to Mozambique with a few friends and has no cell phone reception. I hate lying to my mother, but it's what's best for now. I can't even voice my concerns to Siya because he's barely around, so I've decided to stomach it. My munchkins are my only comfort and if it weren't for them, I'd be unraveling and five minutes to a psychotic break. I talk to them, sing to them and even read some poetry to them. I want them to be cultured, so it's never too early to learn.

I'm on the floor in the lounge lying on my back after a dismal fail at prenatal yoga.

Me- "You guys just don't want mommy to do

anything do you? Now I can't do yoga? I used to consider myself a pro at this."

I say as I stroke my tummy.

Me- "What? You guys want some chocolate ice cream? Okay!"

I laugh at myself as I realize the sad reality that is currently my life. I head to the kitchen and reach for a small tub of ice cream in the freezer then sit down on one of the high chairs in the kitchen then I stuff my face.

I catch a whiff of his cologne before he says anything, then I hear footsteps come closer to me. He touches my shoulder and I feel an electric current pass through my body.

Him- "Are you going to share?"

I show him the carton that's almost empty and he chuckles slightly then he turns serious almost immediately.

Him- "I've come to grab some things, I've got a business trip going to a few different places, I'll be back in a few days."

Me- "Oh..."

Him- "I'll tell you once I arrive, and I'll be back before you know it."

Me- "You're barely around anyways, I'm sure it won't make a difference."

He sighs softly then kisses my temple and runs upstairs to his room.

His staff ended up moving the few belongings I have here in one of the larger guest rooms on the first floor. I couldn't go home to fetch my clothes because of "safety reasons" instead, I had to order the clothes from various online boutiques that I wanted and they were delivered; which was everything even down to underwear. I bought some lingerie because of my raging hormones, I thought that I should be ready for when Siya makes a move on me, but the

possibilities of that happening are slim to none for now.

I hear Siya run down the staircase, with his suitcase banging against every step. I don't know why he had the elevator blocked off, because it would make both our lives easier. He still hasn't moved into one of the guest rooms on the first floor, which means he's still occupying the master bedroom. I guess I could say he's been respecting my wishes by minimizing our time together, I just wish it wouldn't make me feel so miserable. I yearn for his touch and his mesmerizing eyes that have the ability to gaze deep into my soul. I miss just being in his embrace , but this is what I wanted, or at least it's what I thought I wanted so I'll just have to grin and bear it. I know that I probably have no right to feel this way after pushing him away, but the guilt that I've been feeling regarding our relationship sometimes

consumes me to the point where I'm unable to see past his marital status and the sin we committed. It's hypocritical of me to ambush Siya with blame, because I wasn't obligated to open myself to him, I just feel that perhaps Siya needs to experience being single for a while. I don't want him to feel obliged to pursue a relationship with me merely because I'm carrying his babies, it seems as if he's already got the weight of the world on his shoulders. From dealing with the guilt of committing adultery, to learning about his wife's own infidelities, his best friend attempting to murder his baby mama and her sister, then there's the constant stress of work, I thought I'd be alleviating some of the pressure and stress in his life by setting him free, I just didn't anticipate the emotional pain I would feel as a result. Lord give me the strength to handle when Siya really does move on without me and my babies have two mommies. I pray that it

never amounts to that, because I'm hopeful that we'll eventually find our way back to each other, hopefully though nothing detrimental occurs in the meantime.

I would like a break from being lonely in the house and perhaps some time with baby daddy will help resolve the tension between us.

Siya walks slowly towards me and rests his arms on my shoulders.

Me- "I was thinking, why don't I come with? It'll give me a chance to leave the house and I promise you won't even know I'm there, please!"

Him- "As enticing as that sounds, we have to follow doctor's orders and you have to stay here. I'll be back before you know it, promise."

He kisses me on the cheek and I hold onto his arm.

Me- "Please." I plead to him with my eyes

glistening with tears.

He sighs loudly.

Him- "Zinhle, you can't always have what you want. I've been away from work for much longer than my shareholders are willing to tolerate. I'll skip the shareholders gala dinner so I'll be back even sooner okay?"

I nod slightly.

Me- "So you're going to miss the ultrasound?"

Him- "I'm sorry, but I think I'll have to. I'll ask Steven for a copy of the taping."

I give him a slight smile and walk away. I feel his eyes bore into my back then I hear his footsteps grow more faint as he reaches the door, then I hear the door slam shut.

The following days are agony without Siya, especially with zero communication. I've tried calling and emailing him, but to no avail

although his face is smeared all over the internet and on TV, so I definitely know that he's alive this time around. I've been talking to Ziyanda every 2 hours on the phone and I can't wait for her to come home. I've convinced her into staying with me over the next few months and I'm eager for her to get discharged.

It's my 20 week ultrasound today, and I'm overly excited to see my munchkins. Steven is coming over with his equipment, because I'm still on house arrest so I've been trying to FaceTime Siya so he can be in the moment with me, but surprise surprise, he's unavailable.

I'm lying on the couch in my white bra lace crop top and white sweatpants while New Edition serenades me in the background.

Steven completes his set up and applies the cold gel on my belly while I hum to "If it isn't Love" by New Edition, then I hear someone's

footsteps come towards the lounge.

"I don't love her

I tried to tell myself

But you can see it in my eyes

So don't deny

I can't fool no one else

The truth is in the tears I cry

"Cause if it isn't love

Why do I feel this way

Why does she stay in my mind

And if it isn't love

Why does it hurt so bad

Make me feel so sad inside

If it isn't love."

He sings as he slowly makes his way towards us. I involuntarily smile and softly chuckle.

He slides and kneels beside me on the couch and hands me a bouquet of white roses and box of my favorite chocolate. Before I can stop myself, my lips land on his and suck on his bottom lip. I snap back to reality and push him a way gently.

Steven- "Okay we get it! Let's proceed shall we?"

Siya grabs my hand and stares at the screen.

Steven- "I don't know if you can see, but they both have their hands covering their faces today."

Siya- "Does that mean something is wrong?"

Steven- "On the contrary actually, their just sensitive to the light now because their senses are developing well in their brain."

After watching our munchkins and a few other tests, Steven hands us the ultrasound copy and

DVD.

Steven- "Zinhle, you're a bit anemic right now, it's understandable because you're carrying two babies, but you should start including iron rich foods into your diet. Foods like meat, dried beans and orange juice. I'll send you a list via email."

Siya- "I'll make sure she gets a big juicy, hard meaty steak tonight doc."

He says while staring at me. My insides heat up and I gulp down the lump in my throat.

Me- "Siya!"

He ignores me and assists Steven with his equipment and sees him out. He comes back while I'm busy indulging in my fourth piece of chocolate.

Him- "So you decided to wear a bra in front of Steven?"

Me- "Well he's seen more than my cleavage, and I don't have to conceal my belly when I'm indoors. Besides, i want an open view of my munchkins."

He shakes his head and dashed upstairs.

I suddenly feel exhausted so I take my box of chocolates and make my way to my room for a power nap.

I'm woken up by something heavy putting strain on my lap. I shoot my eyes open and find Siya's head resting on my thighs.

Me- "Siyabonga."

I whisper as I shake him, but he doesn't budge, then I feel a bizarre movement in my belly.

Me- "Siyabonga!" I shout and he shoots his eyes open.

Him- "What's wrong?"

I laugh as tears accumulate in my eyes. I grab his hand and place it on my belly.

Him- "Whoah, what is that? Are you constipated?"

I give him a bored look.

Me- "Siya, no! It's the munchkins, they're kicking!"

I say loudly as tears fall down my face onto my bare belly.

Siya's eyes sparkle with excitement and he presses both his hands on my tummy.

Him- "Zinhle! Wow!"

He eventually places his ear against my stomach while his hand strokes my tummy.

We stay in that position for what seems like forever, until we fall into a blissful sleep.

[04/18, 16:29] Wdz: [62]

****ZINHLE****

I wake up alone in bed surrounded by darkness, I guess I slept the bulk of the day. I get up and stretch as I walk to the ensuite bathroom. My face looks swollen from sleeping so I decide to take a quick shower. I dry and lotion once I'm done and pick a short black nightie to wear over my black lace boy shorts that I'm already wearing. The nightie is shorter than I had expected it to be, but I dismiss thoughts of changing from my mind because I feel fatigued. I look at my reflection in the mirror and stroke my belly with both hands. My nightwear leaves very little to the imagination, with its lace embroidered cups leaving my breasts in full display, the mesh and lace cut outs throughout the design of the nightdress and the stringy lace detail that forms the straps that lead to a low back mesh and lace design. I leave my braids loose and decide to make my way to the

kitchen, I'm starving and I'm drooling at the thought of food.

I open my bedroom door and I'm welcomed by rose petals making contact with my feet. They're scattered to make a pathway and I follow it. The rose petal pathway leads to the lounge where there's another pathway of rose petals and candles on either side leading to the east terrace. I open my mouth in amazement as I analyze the scenery. The terrace is illuminated by dozens of white candles and ordained with rose petals. I walk slowly to where the path leads me, then I see him, my Siya. He flashes his dazzling smile and signals for me to come closer. I wipe my suddenly wet cheeks and increase my pace as I walk to him. I finally reach him and I smother him with a bear hug. He eventually pulls away and opens a chair for me to sit on.

We're absorbed in each other's presence for the rest of the evening. He dishes two steaks for me and I laugh at the earlier conversation.

Him- "I told you that I'd feed you steak tonight."

He winks at me.

Him- "You really need to get your mind out of the gutter Zinhle."

He says as he smiles mischievously. I shake my head, because my mouth is too full to speak.

The evening winds down and just when I think it's time to go to bed, he gets up and clicks a few buttons on the entertainment pad for the house, and that's when New Edition- "Can you stand the rain" blasts through the outdoors speakers. I look at him in confusion and he holds out his hand so I take it.

He guides my hands to circle his neck and he

crouches down a bit to circle his around my waist. His lips nibble softly on my earlobes, then I feel his warm breath against my ear and neck as he sings along.

"On a perfect day, I know that I can count on you.

When that's not possible

Tell me can you weather the storm?

'Cause I need somebody who will stand by me

Through the good times and bad times

She will always, always be right there.

Sunny days, everybody loves them

Tell me baby can you stand the rain

Storms will come

This we know for sure
Can you stand the rain?

Love unconditional, I'm not asking just of you
And girl to make it last
I'll do whatever needs to be done."

I feel his heart beat race intertwining with mine. I can't handle it anymore so I pull away and pull myself up with my arms around his neck and circle my legs around his waist while his hands support and carress my butt. I plant soft kisses on his succulent lips then my insides burst with want, so I graduate the kiss to a higher level of intensity and passion. I hold onto his neck with one arm while my other hand strokes the back of his neck. My tongue aggressively explores the inside of his mouth while soft murmurs echo from my throat. He pulls away and

searches for confirmation and so I nod slightly and his lips curve into a smile. He engulfs my mouth with his and starts the agonizing journey inside the house. I grind against him as I feel my lady parts heat up from arousal yearning for some friction. I hear him grit his teeth as he holds onto my butt and gives a firm squeeze. He jogs up the flight of stairs with me still in his arms and without breaking a sweat, then we finally make our way into the master bedroom. He gently throws me onto the bed and stares at every inch of my body with his eyes that have now grown darker with want. He rips off his clothes and is left in just his briefs with his monster forming a large bulge. He kneels in front of me and rips apart my nightie and slides it off from beneath me. He inches closer until his lips are on mine again, but not for long as he jumps up and walks to the closet. He reemerges with something behind his back and he plunges on top of me. He nibbles on my

earlobe while his hand travels down South and traces circles on my castle over my boy shorts. I moan in pleasure then I feel his warm breath against my ear as he speaks.

Him- "Trust me."

He gently grabs hold of both of my arms and raises them above my head. That's when I hear the clink of handcuffs locking. I sigh out in discomfort and concern but he covers my mouth with his and suckles on my bottom lip. He traces his lips along my neck line, over my swollen belly and rubs his tongue over my navel. He licks along my pantyline and he roughly spreads my legs apart. His tongue makes its way to my slit over my underwear and he grazes his teeth over it. I arch my back in pleasure and moan softly at his lips and teeth making contact with my castle, then he grabs hold of my underwear with his teeth as he slowly slides my underwear down. His hands facilitate this motion until I'm left completely naked. He bites

his bottom lip and licks it when he sees me in my naked glory then he devours my cookie jar as if he's an animal possessed. He alternates between licking and sucking and then finally grazes his teeth on my throbbing nub. I almost jump up in frustration then I circle my legs around his neck forcing his face onto my castle. While he nibbles on my nub he sucks on a finger and gently inserts it, I grind against it and his indulging intensifies. I groan at how close I am to peaking then he stops.

Him- "Not yet."

I moan in frustration and he licks two fingers then inserts them through my slit. He stares at me intently as his fingers make circles inside my cookie jar and go deeper and deeper. I bite on my lips as his other hand lands on my left breast while his mouth attacks my right breast. I bring my arms lower to touch his head but his hand stops me before I can make contact.

Him- "What do you want Zinhle?"

He asks in a whisper against my chest. I ignore him and moan as my ecstasy peak builds up again. His fingers push harder and deeper inside and I yelp in need for more. I feel my ecstasy almost reach its peak, then he jumps off the bed.

Me- "Siya."

I whine.

Then he strips off his briefs and his monster springs freely, with its veins bulging all over. He levels himself over me and I feel his monster slap against my castle. His head is a few inches away from mine as he licks his lips.

Him- "What is it that you want Zinhle?"

I lick my lips and breathe through the aching need for him to be inside me. He lowers himself and traces circles with his monster against my slit, and his precum makes contact with my

wetness. He teases me by slowly entering an inch of his monster then coming out again.

Me- "Please"

I plead with him.

Him- "Tell me what you want Zinhle."

I try to speak but nothing comes out as I fidget with my arms, I eventually nudge him closer with my legs which makes him chuckle softly. He finally pushes in half of his member and I groan loudly as my walls try to accommodate him.

Him- "Tell me"

He whispers.

Me- "You. Every inch of you."

He smiles widely then thrusts in hard and deep the remaining half of his monster. He pulls himself out and my insides throb in pleasure and pain.

Him- "Are you sure?"

I nod like a schoolgirl in trouble for the first time.

Then he thrusts in with no mercy. Every thrust is deeper and is met by a moan and groan from the both of us. His pace increases and his thrusts intensify as he caresses each of my breasts

He pulls me to the edge of the bed and stands with him still inside me and he raises my leg and rests it on his shoulder while he kisses my ankle and nibbles on my toes. I'm almost over the edge then he stops moving while his monster is snuggled deep inside of me touching every corner and pleasure spot inside. I grind my hips against him but he holds me still.

Him- "Who's the man of this house?"

He asks with authority. I laugh softly and I see the intensity in his eyes so I bite my lips in order to shut up. He grabs my breast with one hand and massages it then licks his thumb and

massages my pulsating nub. He starts moving again, harder and I'm now screaming at the top of my lungs.

Him- "Whose the man of this house?"

Me- "You! You are Siya! You're the man!"

I scream as I feel myself tip over.

He flips me over and enters me from behind and my legs quiver at the pleasure. His hand doesn't lose contact with my nub while his other hand continues to caress my breasts.

Him- "Are you done sulking? I'm your man right?"

Me- "Yes! Yes you are baby!"

His thrusts are faster and deeper and just when I'm about to tumble over he flips me over and lifts me off the bed. He encircles his neck with my cuffed hands and wraps my legs around his waist and walks over to the tall window with me. He puts my hands above my head as he

supports my back and makes me lean against the window.

Him- "I want to see you cum."

My whole body trembles as I reach my peak and topple over. He holds onto my body and a few deep thrusts later he shouts my name in ecstasy. He plonks onto a chair close by with him still inside me and we stay in that position trying to regulate our breathing.

Once we catch our breath, he stands with his member snuggled inside of me, places me on the bed and reaches for the keys and unlocks the cuffs and throws them to the side. He rolls us over and I'm ontop of him, I try to shift off of him but he pulls me to his chest and strokes my back gently.

Him- "I won't do anything if you don't want me to. I just want to stay like this forever."

I roll to my side and rest my head on his chest while my leg wraps itself around him and his

monster still tucked inside of me, then we fall into a calm sleep.

In the middle of the night I'm woken up by him grinding against me and I feel his monster grow inside me by the second. The following minutes are occupied by gentle lovemaking until dawn.

I'm woken up in the morning by a dream where my mom shouts my name. I shoot my eyes open and slide off the bed. I make my way to the bathroom but I hear my mom's voice shouting out my name downstairs. I grab a gown and head downstairs frazzled, and there she is, Zamokuhle Khumalo standing on the bottom step.

Me- "Ma?"

I say with a confused look on my face.

She walks to wards the lounge and I follow behind her.

Me- "Ummm unjani ma?"

Her- "Unjani ma? (how are you mom?) That's not going to fly Zinhle Khumalo! Lo Siyabonga Nyathi wakho ushadile? (This Siyabonga Nyathi of yours is married?)"

She shouts as she folds her arms across her chest while I fidget with my fingers.

[04/18, 16:32] Wdz: [63]

****ZINHLE****

I fiddle with my thumbs until I'm startled by mom shouting again.

Mom- "Should I ask you again? Perhaps I stuttered. Zinhle Khumalo, is Siyabonga Nyathi married?"

Me- "Ummm ma, sit down. I'll make you some tea and we can talk about this properly."

Mom- "Did I say that ngifuna itiye lakho? (That I

want your tea?)"

Me- "No ma, okay let me explain. Please can we sit first though."

She sighs and sits on one of the one seater couches and I sit opposite her.

Me- "Well ma, as I was saying I can explain."

Siya- "No, let me. Sawubona ma."

Siya walks into the lounge with a casual grin on his face, wearing jeans and a vest and gives mom his hand to shake. Mom seems less than impressed as she snarcs at the gesture and folds her arms in disgust. Siya sighs loudly and levels himself gently on the couch as mom looks at him expectantly.

Siya- "Well ma, its lovely to see you again."

Mom rolls her eyes when Siya flashes a smile.

Mom- "Le ndoda yakho ibingafile? (Wasn't this man of years dead?)"

She asks focusing her attention on me. I gave an urge to laugh, but I suppress it when I can almost see fumes coming out of my mother's ears.

Me- "Ma, we spoke about this on the phone."

Her- "You didn't tell me that you were living together! Futhi angizile la ngaleyonto (besides, I'm not here regarding that.) This is the third time I'm asking this very simple question, uSiyabonga Nyathi is married?"

She says as she narrows her eyebrows.

Siya faces the floor for a few moments then finally clears his throat.

Him- "Well truth be told, yes, I WAS married. My marriage has been dissolved though. When I met Zinhle, I was in the process of separation with my ex wife and I didn't disclose my status to her, so she was completely in the dark. I didn't inform her because a divorce decree was merely a formality since my marriage had been

prior to meeting your daughter."

I've become mute and I'm glad that Siya has taken charge, I'm also relieved that he's equitting me of any part I had in this affair, I know it's terrible, but I've already dropped a massive bomb on her.

Mom stares at the both of us intently then huffs loudly. Her mouth curves into a sarcastic smile as she rummages through her bag and takes her cellphone out.

Her- "Then what's this?"

She asks while holding up her cellphone screen to fact us. I snatch it from her hand because I see Siya on the screen. I take a closer look and it's a picture of Siya and Eve. Siya's wearing a tux and Eve is wearing a red silk evening gown with a slit that reaches her hipbone. They seem to be dancing, and oblivious to the cameras that were obviously surrounding them. My trembling

fingers scroll down and I see the caption: "Mr & Mrs Nyathi opening the dancing floor at annual shareholder's Gala dinner."

Mom- "This was just two days ago, right?"

I hand back mom her phone and sit back down next to Siya. I conceal every emotion I'm feeling and bite my lips that are now quivering.

Siya- "Yes, that was a misprint. She's definitely my ex wife and well she's part of our fundraising committee, so that would explain her being in attendance."

Mom- "Hmm, so your ex wife was there, but my daughter, the woman whom you proclaimed you plan on doing right by, was here twiddling her thumbs? Hheh!"

She claps and laughs sarcastically.

Siya- "It was per doctor's orders that she stays at home."

Mom- "So now she can't speak for herself either?"

Did the doctor also prescribe that?"

Mom raises her eyebrow.

Me- "I wasn't up for a long business trip ma, I was fine with staying here. Can i get you some tea?"

I want an escape because I can feel the walls caving in on me.

Mom- "No!"

Siya- "I'm glad you came ma, I've been thinking that I need to discuss paying damages before the twins are born."

Mom- "I never thought I'd discuss damages regarding any of my children. I always assumed that the only negotiations I would have would be that of ilobolo."

Siya- "Hopefully soon, that can be on the cards as well."

He says as he holds onto my hand. I don't even bother snatching it away because I don't want

mom to raise even more concerns or questions.

Mom- "Does your wife know about your new living arrangements and the fact that you're about to become a father to two babies?"

Siya- "Ex wife ma. Frankly, it's none of her business, but yes she does know. If Zinhle at any time feels uncomfortable with my presence here, I'll leave. We just agreed on this for the time being because of the pregnancy."

The tension in the room thickens so I decide to change the subject.

Me- "Ma, I want you to feel something."

I walk over to her couch and sit on the arm rest. I grab her arm and place it on my belly and thankfully they continue kicking slightly. Mom's eyes light up and breathe a sigh of relief, at least she's distracted for now. Siya takes out his phone and snaps a few photos then disappears.

Mom- "Is he treating you right though? I never want you to go through any kind of abuse ever again, especially while I'm still alive. I've failed you before, please help me ensure it never happens again. Are you happy?"

I kiss her hand and hold onto it tightly.

Me- "More so than I thought was possible. Our relationship isn't perfect, but he's the father of my kids and I love him with my entire being ma."

Siya- "I love you more." He says as he walks in the lounge carrying a tray with some juice and muffins.

We spend the following hours catching up and talking about our series that we used to watch together.

Mom- "I'm not sure I'm pleased with this living situation. I know I should give you your space to flourish, but just know that I'm against this."

Siya- "I understand ma, its temporary, we promise."

Mom gives us both a blank stare so I decide to show her around the penthouse.

After a lengthily tour, I'm ready to go back to bed and Siya seems to be reading my mind.

Siya- "Well thank you for the visit ma, you should come back soon. Oh, and I'll inform my family members to contact yours regarding the damages."

Mom chuckles softly and shakes her head. She then comes closer to me and holds me in her arms for what feels like forever, but I'm not complaining, she feels like home.

Mom finally leaves and I head to my room with Siya on my heels.

Him- "I know you probably want me to explain?"

Me- "What are you talking about?"

Him- "The whole Eve thing. I know that you're confused with her being at the gala dinner?"

I give him a blank stare as I take my phone and scroll through it.

Him- "Well I can explain, it's definitely not what it seems, what happened was that.."

I hold up my hand.

Me- "It's fine, no need to explain."

I give him a brief smile.

Me- "I need to take a quick shower then I'll make lunch, do you have plans for today?"

Him- "Zinhle.."

Me- "Do you?"

Him- "I need to go to a few meetings, but I can cancel if you want."

Me- "No, of course not. You don't have to do that. I'll just see you later then."

I walk to him and give him a kiss on the cheek

then run to the bathroom.

****ZIYANDA****

I feel like I've been locked up in this room for years, every second that goes by feels like an hour. I'm grateful to Siya for making my stay here as comfortable as can be, it's like being confined to a hotel suite. If it weren't for the dozens of doctors and nurses that revolve in and out of my room, I'd honestly feel as if I were on holiday. However, I think I'm ready to leave this place now, I have too much time on my hands, and that causes me to think, which inadvertently makes me hate my life even more. I know that if I stay here any longer, I'll end up being a psychiatric patient.

Someone that's been filling the lonely hours is Brandon. I had to confirm with Siya if he was legitimate and could be trusted, and Siya

vouched for him so I welcomed his daily visits. He visits everyday, more than twice a day a lot of the times, and I'm scared to say that I see him in a different light. I've loosened up a bit around him, but I'm sure he still depicts me as an uptight and aggressive person, because I haven't shown any adoration for him in the slightest.

Brandon and I speak about everything, well he does most of the talking because I'm not falling into that trap of being transparent with my feelings again. He's told me about his business endeavors, his friends and his enemies, and even his past relationships. There's one in particular that he always drift off to, that ended many years ago. Apparently he left to go abroad for work reasons, he was in the beginning stages of becoming his father's protégé so he temporarily left his girlfriend/fiancé here in the country and she was soon to follow and live

with him. He sounds as if he never had any closure regarding this relationship, because the hurt in his eyes is evident when he speaks about his ex; how she disappeared and stopped taking and making calls, how she called his father one day telling him that she had moved on, and how he came to realize years later that she had married one of his friends. Whenever he talks about her, I see his eyes change and his mood dampen, I guess she really hurt him.

Brandon has convinced me to see a psychologist regarding the shooting and what Brian did to me, little does he know that I've been dodging figurative bullets my entire life. I haven't told him about my past, so he thinks that I'm damaged because of Brian, and therefore I've also played on. The psychologist is scheduled to come in today, Brandon said he'd introduce us because she's an old friend from his varsity days, and he says she's one of

the few people that he can trust.

Im lying in bed applying lipgloss on my lips, preparing for Brandon's arrival when a tall and slender woman swings the door open. She gives me a wide smile and locks the door behind her as she struts towards me. I frantically search for the panic button with my free hand, but she snatches my hand away then gives me a brief smile.

Her- "Relax, I'm the psychologist. I only locked the door so that we aren't disturbed. This is a safe environment."

She winks at me and strokes my arm.

Me- "Where's Brandon? He said he'd come in with you."

Her- "He's held up, so I decided to come on my own. He might join us later, okay? She reaches over me and analyzes my IV and that's when I

see her ID photo on her white coat, and I realize that there's no resemblance between the photo and the woman hovering over me right now. My heart starts beating uncontrollably as I stare at the short haired woman in front of me.

Her- "Looks like you're breaking a sweat, let's try calm you down."

She retrieves a syringe from her coat and I press hard on the panic button then try to plead with her.

Me- "Please, I'm begging you, don't do this! I don't even know you!"

She laughs sarcastically.

Her- "Do you know how long I tried getting Brian's attention years ago? Me being pregnant wasn't reason enough for him to call me back, and here you are getting daily visits from someone you barely even know. Well, he took my Brian, so I'll take his precious little Ziyanda, that's your name right?"

She inserts the syringe into my IV and releases the transparent liquid into it. I scream loudly, but she covers my face with a pillow.

Her- "Ssshhhh."

I yank out the IV syringe from my arm and screech at the pain. I try push her off me, but my vision blurs and my breathing is shorter. I kick her and jump off the bed when I hear her tumble onto the floor. I crawl to the door and manage to unlock it, but as I'm about to turn the handle my eyes involuntarily close and I drop to the ground. I hear Brandon's voice from a distance but I see his shadow right in front of me.

Him- "Khanyi? Yvette?"

Then it's lights out for me.

[04/18, 16:34] Wdz: [64]

****SIYA****

Yet again, I'm perceived to be the bad guy regarding the Eve ordeal. I was going to tell Zinhle about Eve as soon as I got home, but then I saw our munchkins and then I was fortunate enough to be present during those moments that they decided to kick and let us know that they're okay. That's my proudest moment as a dad so far, so how was I to ruin it with depressing news about Eve?

The day I left and declined Zinhle's request to tag along to my business trip, I had a score to settle and I didn't want her getting involved any more than she already was, so I figured that the less she knew, the better for both of us. My reason for leaving wasn't entirely based on a lie, I did have a few meetings with a few associates and the gala dinner was mandatory, I only omitted the part regarding Eve, so that's not being dishonest.

I decided to lure Eve out of whichever hole she was hiding in, so I invited her to the gala dinner. I knew that she was desperate and frantic from the sudden disappearance of her boyfriend Brian, therefore I knew that she'd be more inclined to accept my invite. She was most probably plotting and planning her next move without Brian, but losing him meant that she was vulnerable and so I had to capitalize on that. Sending her an invitation was a long shot, but I had to trust my instinct and hope that although our entire marriage was a lie, I was able to learn at least some of her tactics. I needed to meet her somewhere public, where I was certain that our encounter would be photographed and blasted on various newspapers and the internet, I just assumed that we'd be depicted as friendly ex's, but those inefficient journalists didn't get the memo. This was all so that if she suddenly disappeared or

was found dead in some alley, I wouldn't be a suspect. I had decided to relinquish my punishment for Eve to Brandon and Patrick Evans, as much as I wanted to drive a butcher knife right through her chest, Zinhle was right, I'm about to be a father, I can't be a murderer as well. I needed to have one last conversation with Eve, I needed to see for myself that the life I had shared with this woman was all a farce, and hopefully see some remorse of some kind, I guess I needed closure. It's difficult to open up about that to the woman that I've proclaimed my love for, because I'm sure that it's incomprehensible that I'd want closure from the woman that's caused so much destruction, but being lied to over a period of years is a mental setback, there's no algorithm in dealing with it, you go through the motions. I can't explain that to Zinhle without her thinking I'm still in love with Eve and want to reconcile with her. It's going to be even harder to explain that I've done all of

this to secure a safe and prosperous future for us and the kids, and now that Mam'Khumalo, Zinhle's mom has more information than she should, this has turned into an even trickier situation, I just took for granted that mam'Khumalo's boyfriend would occupy her time enough not to watch entertainment news.

That intimate photograph was taken at the wrong time. Me gazing into her eyes the way I was suggests that I was reclaiming my love for her, but on the contrary. I was trying to reel in the anger and hatred I have towards her for wasting some of the best years of my life and betraying me in the most unimaginable way. I was looking at the woman whose life I wanted to destroy, just not end, so now I'm the bad guy again and I'm hardly surprised.

I'm glad that Zinhle is being calm regarding this Eve thing, but her calmness is chilling and is

making me even more uncomfortable. It's like she's planning something catastrophic beneath those angelic eyes and I hate that I've brought so much upheaval into her life.

My phone has been ringing non stop and it's mostly calls from Brandon and Patrick, but I can't bring myself to answering my phone, because I have a hunch that it won't be good news and that will force me into leaving Zinhle alone right now, and frankly I don't trust her. I fear that I'll come back to an empty house, and the mere thought of that makes the room spin. I've got round the clock guard protection for her and other state of the art security measures in place to ensure her safety, and also ensure that she doesn't leave. Her mother gained access because hers was one of the photographs I uploaded onto the security database, so as soon as she peeps through the peephole in the door, it automatically opens for her, her timing

was just less than perfect this morning though. So I'm not leaving this house until Zinhle and I are in an even better space than last night, I don't care how many handcuffs, whips and thrusting it takes Zinhle and I will be happy by the end of today, we deserve it. I can't lose her physically, but an emotional disconnect that is irreparable is what would kill me.

My thoughts of getting back into Zinhle's good books are interrupted, and it's Patrick.

Me- "Mr Evans, I'm in the middle of something, can I.."

Patrick- "Shut up Siya! We have a problem on our hands.

Me- "What do you mean? What are you talking about?"

Him- "Well if you answered the phone the past 365 times I called, perhaps this could have been

avoided."

Me- "Get to the point please."

I walk to the kitchen and sit on a high chair.

Him- "Your wife, she escaped."

Me- "How the hell did that happen? Jesus Patrick!"

Him- "Calm down boy, there's more."

I sigh loudly.

Me- "How could you let this happen?"

Him- "Speak to that weak boy Brandon, he's my son, but he's not very sharp. He ordered the men to set up Eve in his condo and not the warehouse or container, so she wasn't necessarily captured or held hostage."

Me- "Why would he do that? He knows everything she's done to him!"

Him- "I guess it was because of their past, he never really got over her. So he said he needed

to have one last conversation with her in a non threatening environment. She obviously escaped."

Me- "Their past?"

Him- "That's not why I'm calling. I knew she was a slut after his money back then and she's just proven it now. Worst part is that she's included your sister in law too."

Me- "What?"

I shout.

Him- "The girl that's been in hospital for the longest time for a measly gunshot wound? Eve got to her and almost killed her for forming a relationship with Brandon. You boys like them crazy hey!"

He chuckles loudly until he chokes.

Me- "Ziyanda? Eve tried to kill Ziyanda?"

Him- "Go to the hospital and find out for yourself, I'm no news reporter."

With that he hangs up and I throw my phone on the kitchen counter.

Zinhle- "Is there something wrong with Ziyanda?"

Zinhle asks with tears threatening to fall down her face. I huff and look away. A small part of me dies when she cries, especially if I have something to do with the reason behind her tears.

****ZIYANDA****

My eyes flutter open, but I fail to keep them open. My vision is blurry and I see two shadows from afar, I try to squint, but my eyes are heavy so I stop the urge to try and I just shut them closed. I know that I'm still in hospital from the loud beeping noises of the machines and the IV that's connected to my hand as well as the uncomfortable oxygen mask that's smothering my nose. I hear whispering voices in the far

corner of the room and I assume that its doctors or nurses assessing my situation, but then I hear a familiar voice, Brandon's voice.

Him- "Khanyisile, did you see what you've done? Look at her!"

Her- "What about what you did to me years ago? Or my wellbeing didn't matter?"

Him- "What are you talking about? You moved on and said I should forget about you!"

Her- "Why would I say that especially if I was carrying out first child?"

Him- "What?"

Her- "Now you have amnesia? You don't remember how much of a coward you were that you sent your father to break up with me after I sent you that long email telling you I'm pregnant? Or how you started ignoring every effort I made to communicate with you? You disappeared when I needed you most!"

Him- "You.. you were pregnant? Then why did you tell my father that you were done with me and no longer wanted to join me abroad? Khanyi, you disappeared on me! Do you know how many sleepless nights I had after getting reports of you and your new man as if I never existed? I had started building our home where I'd hoped we'd fill with dozens of kids."

The woman laughs loudly and I want to move, but I can barely feel any part of my body. Tears flow down my face as I try to move my hands and think of the scary possibilities of permanently being in this vegetative state.

[04/18, 16:36] Wdz: Have a blessed Sunday everyone!

[65]

****SIYA****

I'm in my car driving like a maniac to the hospital to get the full story regarding Ziyanda and how Brandon could be such an uncertified moron. The lies I had to cook up to tell Zinhle yet again, luckily worked. She didn't hear the complete story, all she heard was Ziyanda's name so I had to spin it so she wouldn't go into premature labor. I told her that Ziyanda is getting discharged soon, so since I was in charge of her medical decisions, I had to sign a few papers. Zinhle didn't ask any questions, however I could tell that she was fuming from the numerous oils that she was rubbing all over her body before I left. She was diffusing all kinds of scents in almost every room of the house, by the time I left the house, it was smelling like a burning flower forest. That's how I knew that she was on edge, she told me once that diffusing and applying certain essential oils on specific pressure points on her body helps

calm her down. When she told me, I laughed uncontrollably, expecting her to do the same, but turns out, she was serious. So serious in fact that my laughter caused her to tear up. That day, I had a lot of groveling to do so I ended up humoring her and asked her to show me. For about twenty minutes I was her guinea pig, my stress was alleviated, I could feel my blood pressure decrease and I felt content. That new found feeling wasn't solely attributed to this alternative lifestyle she was introducing me to, it was seeing the light in her eyes and her bright smile that made all the stresses of the world disappear. Seeing her excited made me feel warm and fuzzy inside, it's not a feeling that I could explain, but I let her believe that my stress relief was due to her voodoo methods.

My car comes to a screeching halt in the hospital parking lot and I run inside to Ziyanda's floor. I run to Ziyanda's suite and I realize that

she's swarmed by doctors and nurses, one of which block me from entering. I sigh in defeat and decide to cool off in an office on the same floor that I know is vacant, since I had most of the rooms blocked from use on this floor for Ziyanda's safety. I enter the office and I'm taken aback by the sight before me, my ex wife with Brandon's tongue down her throat.

I clear my throat loudly and that seems to startle them because they release each other and fiddle with their clothing.

I look at each of them long and hard, shaking my head in the process, it's then that I realize that I have only one option. So I reach behind my back and take out my gun and reach in my biker jacket for the silencer. I screw it on within a second while o hear their voices pleading with me from a distance. I'm in my zone and I've ejected them from it.

Me- "Brandon, really? I wish I could say I'm

surprised Yvette, but I think we all know that closing your legs is a trait you'll never master. Tell me Brandon, how did she lure you in?"

Brandon- "Siya my man, you don't want to do anything stupid. Patrick would kill you in a heartbeat if anything happened to me."

Me- "You're right, but I'm sure I'd be rewarded for killing this slut over here, even though I'd do it without gaining anything. I just want to know how you justify this whole thing? My sister in law is fighting for her life and you come in here for a quickie with this harlot?"

Brandon- "Khanyi, or shall I call her Yvette, is my ex."

Me- "Of course she is."

I huff loudly.

Eve- "Your sister in law? That teenager really has you wrapped around her little finger hey?"

She laughs sarcastically.

Me- "I wouldn't have it any other way sweetheart."

I wink at her.

Brandon- "Yvette, shut up! Siya, let's not resort to calling each other names. I'll explain this whole mess, let's all just sit down."

Me- "You can explain everything even with her dead right? Let's get rid of her first."

Eve gasps in shock and I roll my eyes at her pathetic act.

Brandon- "I'll make this quick. Remember when we all used to hang out with Brian before I left to go abroad?"

Me- "Are we seriously taking a walk down memory lane right now, because I have a pregnant woman I have to go home to."

Eve chuckles loudly and folds her arms.

Brandon- "Well, just before I left for overseas, I spent less and less time with you and Brian.

One of the reasons was because my dad wanted me to forget about Brian because he wasn't interested in the family business so dad saw him as dead weight, the other reason was because I had a serious relationship and I wanted to spend every waking moment with my girlfriend before my departure. When I left, her and I had a game plan. I was going to go away for a few months while she sorted out her passport and visa and bank accounts where she'd send her family money once she was abroad and so on. She was to follow and live with me permanently once all the loose ends were tightened."

Me- "Touching."

I look at my gun then at Eve.

Brandon- "My dad viewed my relationship as a distraction though, my girlfriend wasn't white nor was she wealthy, so he decided to end the relationship without either of us being aware."

As you may know, my dad isn't a fan of the fact that I'm half black, so this relationship would have been a disaster in his eyes. He intercepted our communication, telling my girlfriend that I no longer needed her and telling me that she had moved on, leaving us both devastated on opposite sides of the world and evidently without communication."

Me- "Where do I come in? I'm starting to lose the little patience I have left!"

I shout.

Brandon- "My father told us both to move on, but my girlfriend at that point had someone growing inside of her. My child."

He holds back the tears that are threatening to fall.

Brandon- "So she moved on the only way she knew how, by killing any part of me that was in her life, that included my baby."

I look at him intently.

Brandon- "My father robbed me of an opportunity to be with the woman that owned my heart. He robbed me of being a father. The woman that I would have killed and died for, the woman who was to be the mother of my children, the woman that was meant to be my life partner ended up being yours."

Me- "Okay, you're going to have to refrain from speaking in riddles."

I narrow my eyes at him and he sighs loudly.

Eve- "I can't believe I married such an idiot! Before we dated I was with Brandon and madly in love with him. I may or may not have intentionally pursued a relationship with you because I may or may not have known that you were connected to Brandon. At first, I thought you'd let something slip about him and his new life or I'd find his number on your phone, but alas I didn't. At first you were a rebound, but

then one thing lead to another and our relationship flourished. It was obvious that Brandon wasn't coming back so I tried moving on."

I laugh loudly.

Me- "Since we're being so honest. Why would you fuck the love of your life's brother? Who does that?"

Brandon swallows a lump in his throat.

Eve- "Well at first, he was a shoulder to cry on, you were never around to nourish our relationship and allow me the space to open up to you. Then he had so many similarities to Brandon that I felt closer to Brandon somehow when I was with him. Before I knew it, I found myself falling in love with him. Siya, it wasn't per.."

Before I can stop myself I charge for her and wring her neck with my hands that have veins bulging out.

Me- "Shut up! Shut up and just die!"

I shout and smile as I see her eyes roll to the back of her head. I'm interrupted by four or five male nurses including Brandon tackle me to the floor. I see Eve fall to the floor coughing and gasping for air then Brandon runs to her side and carries her out bridal style.

Me- "If you don't kill her, she'll do it to you, don't be an idiot!"

I call out to Brandon as he disappears from my eyes.

Once I'm calm enough, the nurses leave me alone in the office. I call Brandon to no avail, so I dial Patrick.

Me- "Patrick, you were right. Your son is not very bright. He just helped Eve escape yet again, he's been brainwashed by her charm. He doesn't understand that she's not the same

person anymore."

Patrick- "I want this over with."

Me- "Eve tried to ruin you and your empire, are you really going to let that slide?"

Him- "It's about time this little girl experienced my full wrath. Stay well."

With that, he hangs up. I sigh out in frustration and make my way to Ziyanda's room.

I knock and let myself in.

I inch closer to her bed and I'm surprised to find her awake, her eyes wondering around the room. I stroke her hand once I reach her bed and she focuses her eyes on me. As soon as she sees me, she bawls and clenches my hand for dear life. The sight breaks my heart and I feel sweat droplets on my forehead thinking of how she didn't deserve any of this.

Her- "Siya."

She whispers.

Me- "Sssshhh, don't speak. I came to check on you. Do you need anything?"

She shakes her head and a doctor walks in. I take a deep breath in preparing myself for any bad news I could possibly hear regarding Ziyanda's condition.

Me- "Doc, can you tell me what happened?"

Doctor- "Mr Nyathi. We're lucky she's still alive. The drug she was infected with seems to have been a lethal concoction. Whoever did this wanted her to suffer a painful death. It seems that they wanted to paralyze her yet still have her conscious to see and feel everything happening to her. Among the drugs that were in the syringe was Succinylcholine, one of the drugs used in the lethal injection. We're lucky that she managed to fight back and rip the IV off before the concoction really made its way into her bloodstream."

Me- "So, it didn't get into her bloodstream?"

Him- "The drugs are barely traceable, and we've given her something to ween her off of them and counteract the side effects. She's weak, but she'll be fine."

Me- "Did you manage to find the person responsible?"

Him- "We know that you've got your own private security in place and I've spoken to them and they didn't find anyone else in here other than her new psychologist. Perhaps the perpetrator used a trap door or fire escape?"

I shrug my shoulders and look at Ziyanda who's trying to speak. I walk to her bed and bend my head lower to hear her.

Her- "Your wife. It was your wife that did this to me. Doctor, it was Mr Nyathi's wife and he could be an accomplice. Call the police, he knows something! There's no way she made her way through his security, he gave her a heads up. Call the police! Please!" Ziyanda shouts and

moves frantically.

[04/18, 16:39] Wdz: [66]

****ZIYANDA****

I'm getting discharged today and I couldn't be happier, however I'm not looking forward to sharing a house with Siya. I'm only going to the penthouse because I made a promise to Zinhle and I want to be supportive during her second half of pregnancy. I feel like we've gone back to being strangers again after I accused Siya of being an accomplice to my attempted murder about two weeks ago. I know that she's clueless regarding what happened, because she would have mentioned it in one of our many conversations on the phone. I don't know whether it's the boredom that's consumed her or if she's genuinely concerned about me or maybe it's both. However as much as fate hasn't been on my side and cheering me on

lately, I'm more concerned about her and those babies. I notice those long breaths she takes in when I ask her how she's doing, and those pauses mid sentence when we touch on Siya.

I always tell myself that I go through life's worst experience so that my baby sister doesn't have to. I took on this role from a young age, and now that i no longer harbor emotions of anger towards her involvement in my sordid past, I hate to see her hurt.

Brandon hasn't paid me a visit after his crazy girlfriend tried to kill me, he calls every other day however as soon as I answer his call, he hangs up. I've blocked his number and asked security outside my door to ensure that no visitors walk through the door, not even Siya. I need time to fully recover physically and emotionally without any outside influences,

there is a long list of questions that I want to ask Brandon, but I have to accept that I'll never have the luxury of hearing the truth and hearing his side of the story from his lips. Did he know about his girlfriend and her unwarranted jealousy? Why didn't he make an effort to ensure that I was okay after the incident? I know that the mere sight of him would make me gag, but was I really not worth five minutes away from his murderer girlfriend? In this case, it would have been the thought that counts. What repulses me even more is the fact that this woman that I have no history with almost altered my life forever, and this happens once my heart had began viewing Brandon in a different light? If this isn't a sign that I'm a man repellent, then I don't know what is. Brandon's girlfriend didn't only have my murder on her mind, but she was ruthless with the way she went about it, using harsh muscle relaxers apparently suggest that she planned on

inflicting physical pain before the final kill. So basically, this bitch wanted to use all kinds of instruments on me while I felt every tingle, scratch, stab, punch and so on and I wouldn't be able to move a finger. I'd stay there in a vegetative state feeling all the pain without being able to cry out for help, and that's the cruelest thing imaginable to me. I'm just glad that Siya and I are somewhat cordial after I accused him of being an accomplice, I was still confused and I felt betrayed yet again. I was trying to grasp onto my sanity, and trust wasn't a trait I possessed at that time, unfortunately he was caught in the cross fire, hence he had to take a trip to a nearby police station. From what I heard, he was barely there for an hour, and he was released, so my guilt has decreased to nothing. However, I know that a conversation between Siya and I is overdue, I can't allow this woman to walk free after posing such a serious threat to my life. My life matters, regardless of

how broken it is on the interior as well as the exterior, I'm still a human being and something should be attributed to that. I need to break this cycle of constantly being the victim, no one has ever been held accountable for the detrimental physical and emotional abuse that they inflicted on me, and I've reached my limit. I know that everyone says that God gives his toughest battles to his strongest soldiers, but is that all that I'll ever be? A strong soldier? Even when my faith is sucked out of me more and more everyday. I've reached a point where I go on my knees to pray, I close my eyes, but no words leave my mouth. I can't thank the Lord for blessing me with a new day because I'm not even sure I'm happy to see another day. I've reached my threshold, and I'm only living for two people now. I can't inflict the pain of planning my funeral when we should be preparing for the arrival of two precious souls, so that's what I pray for now; I pray for their

safe arrival and I pray for a life with minimalistic pain and sadness for them.

My mouth curves into a smile when I think about their pure souls and how Zinhle is entrusting me with being their God mother, that's how I know that I need to be okay for them. The security enters my room after knocking and grabs my belongings and helps me off the bed. They carry me and place me onto a wheel chair and wheel me out. The wheelchair is a tad unnecessary, but I need assistance with walking, as I still have some numbness on certain areas of my body. The doctor has ensured me that it will fade away and I'll regain sensitivity all over, however I wish that the muscle spasms would also subside, I feel like such an invalid. I'm assisted into the car and I'm surprised to find that Siya isn't inside, my heart starts to palpitate and I attempt to open the car door, but my arm fails me. I bite

on my upper lip as my nerves get the better of me, but then I hear Siya's voice. He's connected on the car's Bluetooth.

Siya- "Hey, I'm sorry I couldn't make it today, work has been hectic, turns out my death caused some of my stocks to plummet so I have major damage control."

I breathe out a sigh of relief.

Me- "It's okay, I understand."

Him- "Okay, those guys will take you straight to the penthouse, but they won't have access to enter, you can call Zinhle and she'll help you. I've got to go."

He hangs up and I smile to myself in excitement. I can't wait to see my sister, and hopefully her luck on finding such an honorable man in Siya will rub off on me.

We arrive at the penthouse and Zinhle greets

me and helps me with the bags inside, as soon as we're inside she attacks me with a bear hug. She holds on for what seems like forever as I feel her tears trickle down my back. I try to pull away, but she has a strong grip so I let her be. Just as I'm about to remove her arms from my neck, I feel slight movement from her belly. She eventually pulls away and gently places my hand on the side of her abdomen and I feel the moving again.

I crouch down until I'm leveled with her stomach and I stroke it.

Me- "Hey you two! Wow! What a welcome. I can't wait to meet you."

I say as I kiss her really swollen belly.

I start to feel dizzy so I sit on one of the bar stools close by.

Me- "You look amazing! Are you sure you're pregnant?"

I know I'm exaggerating, because she looks much larger than I had anticipated, but I'm on course with the way she looks. She's glowing, I'm yet to see a pregnant woman that exudes such sexiness and effortless beauty.

Her- "What happened to your cast?"

Me- "I removed it yesterday, I'm as good as new."

I say as I try to flash a smile.

She blows a kiss at me as she swiftly walks towards one of the guest rooms with my bag.

Me- "Is that my new room?"

I shout after her.

Her- "No, I just wanted you to sleep with me tonight?"

Me- "And Siyabonga?" Zinhle walks off and ignores me while I struggle to stand and follow her so I continue to sit and wait.

She re emerges and smiles at me as she makes her way do the fridge.

Me- "Are you deflecting?"

I raise my eyebrows.

Her- "He no longer lives here." she says in almost a whisper.

Me- "Do you want to talk about it?"

Her- "It happened a week ago. He packed his things and left. We weren't arguing or anything along those lines, we were good. I had gained control over my emotions and I was at peace with a lot of things, but that day he came back from signing your release forms at the hospital about two weeks ago, that was when our dynamics shifted. He was no longer sleeping here, he'd only come home in the morning to take a shower and leave again. Then a week ago he told me that we weren't working anymore and it would be best if we focused on co parenting without fraternizing."

She draws in a deep breath and shuts her eyes closed as tears trickle down her face. Then she flashes a smile without emotion.

I bite on my bottom lip, tongue tied. I'm not one to be giving relationship advice, but my heart aches when I see my baby sister in such a state. I assume she sees the sadness in my eyes because she walks towards me and hold both my hands with a firm grip.

Her- "Don't worry, I'm fine. Besides I've got a lot to look forward to, I'm officially a registered student!"

She screams while she crouches down to twerk. I laugh loudly because she looks like Humpty Dumpty, and I was never ready for such a sight.

Dinner time arrives and I'm impressed by the spread decked on the table, Zinhle has always been way more domesticated than me and I'm not complaining.

Zinhle- "Please give me a minute, I want to ask Siya if he'll join us for dinner."

She leaves the table and a few moments later reemerges looking shellshocked.

I slowly make my way to her and I realize that she's shaking.

Her- "Siya.. some woman just answered his phone. Apparently he's in the shower. Yanda it's barely been a week!"

I huff loudly while she takes in deep breaths of air.

Her- "Screw dinner, let's go out."

Me- "Are you sure?"

Her- "Get dressed."

With that she disappears to her room.

[04/18, 16:41] Wdz: [67]

****ZINHLE****

Needless to say, Ziyanda talked me out of going anywhere. Apparently my emotions are too raw and I shouldn't drive in such a state, she's also not feeling her best either, so here we are indulging in my dinner feast. I don't know when Ziyanda became the rational one between us, but I'm glad she's managed to calm me down. My anger has toned down but my mystery hasn't, I just fail to comprehend how Siya has managed to move on so quickly, I really expected more from him. Just two weeks ago I was the one answering his calls and sharing a bed with him, this rollercoaster of a relationship is physically, mentally and emotionally draining, I had a life before Siya therefore his new girlfriend shouldn't deter me from living again.

I see Ziyanda's mouth moving, but I haven't heard a word that she's said, my thoughts have consumed me and I'm reveling in the food on

my plate. I snap out of it when I see Yanda clap her hands inches away from my face.

Her- "Penny for your thoughts?"

Me- "I'm so glad that you're home safe and sound Yanda, I would never have been able to live with myself had.."

Her- "Ssshhh, I'm here in one piece. Zinhle, I know you're not okay, but as long as we still have blood running through our veins and air in our lungs, then our story isn't finished yet."

She winks at me and I help myself to a second plate full of food, at least my food has never betrayed me, although my figure is no longer existent and my hips and butt are expanding.

The rest of the evening is filled with loud chatter, lip syncing, and even more junk food. Yanda and I share stories of some of the wildest experiences we've had, and by the time the

evening winds down, my stomach aches from the laughter.

I've been ignoring the influx of text messages that are lighting up my phone and the constant ringing from Siya calling, I have no intentions of ruining my evening in any way.

Yanda and I are in front of the TV lying on a snow white fleece throw with our junk food decked on it. We're engrossed in the movie "Tangled" that we're watching and neither one of us seems to be blinking. I don't understand our obsession with this animation movie especially since we're in our twenties, but I blame it on the munchkins, I'm yet to hear Yanda's excuse.

We're singing along to all the songs from "Tangled" and I'm not ashamed to say that we know almost every word. We're making a

raucous throwing popcorn at each other and I must say, we look cute in our slumber party attire. Yanda is wearing a onesie, I wanted to wear one too, but it wouldn't zip over my navel so I had to settle for maternity lingerie. It's a long white chiffon nightie with embroidery covering the busy area and very little else, so I had to cover up with a white silk robe. Yanda and I are having a blast without effort, I see the colour in her face slowly reappear and I've almost felt gritted about the Siya situation, until I hear him clear his throat behind me. I spin on my heel and here he is, dressed in black, his short stubble has grown a bit longer and I hate to admit it, but he looks good enough to eat.

I swallow a lump in my throat.

Me- "Siyabonga." I say in a bored tone.

Him- "Ladies! You seem great."

Ziyanda- "We're incredible thanks."

Him- "Sorry to disturb, but someone wasn't

answering my calls or texts, so I had to come here personally,"

Me- "Did you knock Mr Nyathi, or do I have to change the locks now?"

He chuckles softly and walks away.

Him- "Zinhle, a word please."

He says firmly and I don't move, instead i turn my attention back to the TV and grab a handful of popcorn. Ziyanda sighs loudly and gets up to leave.

Me- "No, don't. I'm sure Siya was just leaving."

Siya laughs sarcastically and plants himself next to me and takes some popcorn then throws it in his mouth.

Him- "I have all night."

He says with a wide grin on his face as I roll my eyes at him.

Ziyanda- "As fun and entertaining as this, it's

been a long day. Night!"

I try to give her a death stare, but she doesn't seem fazed as she grabs the popcorn bowl and disappears into one of the guest rooms.

Siya shifts closer to me and I turn my attention to my phone, deleting all of his missed calls and text messages.

Him- "Why are you deleting those? Afraid someone will see them?"

I laugh sarcastically.

Me- "That must be a joke! Unfortunately we don't all have the luxury of dating and screwing whoever we please. Unfortunately for me, I'm a prisoner in this house."

Him- "Why did you ignore my calls and texts?"

Me- "Why did someone else answer your phone?"

I ask as I raise one eyebrow and he looks down.

Him- "That was my assistant"

Me- "How cliché"

Him- "I miss you."

He says as he inches closer and blows warm air into my ear. I shift away from him and look at him with disgust.

Me- "Two women in one night? Impressive Mr Nyathi!"

He leaps on top of me and my back lays on the couch. My chest moves in a fast paced upward and downward motion as his eyes turn dark with lust. He balances himself with his elbows, so that he's basically not touching me, but his warm breath and his cologne make my nipples harden.

Him- "Zinhle, what am I going to do with you?"

I narrow my eyes in confusion and as I open my mouth to speak, his lips cover mine and he

sucks on them as our lips weave together into a long and sultry kiss. When our lips pull apart, we're both out of breath and panting in each other's faces. This is the most action that I've had in a while so I entwine my hands around his neck and pull his face towards mine. I attack his lips with mine and flood his throat with my tongue. I open my legs as he loosens the belt of my robe and hikes up my nightie and I reach for his crotch and grab hold of his fast growing member. My other lips salivate at the growing monster against them. I shift positions so I'm the one on top and I grab hold of his buttons while I graze my teeth along his underwear and smile at the sounds escaping his lips. That's when I feel something vibrate in his pocket. I take it out and realize that it's his phone. He sighs loudly and edges closer to my hand to grab it, but I firm my grip on it.

Him- "Fine, answer it."

And so I do. I slide it to answer and I listen, it's a

woman.

Her- "Tonight was great Mr Nyathi, I hope we can do it again soon, I promise I'll make it worth your while. How about this wee..."

I don't let her finish, I hang up and throw the phone across the room.

Him- "What the hell? Zinhle! It's not even what you're thinking, I swear!"

Me- "So you didn't just come from an evening of adult fun with some random woman?"

Him- "Adult fun?"

He laughs for a few seconds then finally maintained his composure.

Him- "Can I explain?"

Me- "It's always something with you! If it's not your wife who is a certified slut, then it's you chasing panties all over the damn country! You

really couldn't wait until tomorrow? You just had to kill two birds with one stone? I'm Zinhle the slut that got fucked by a married man, listened to him fuck his wife in her office, how could I possibly think of a future with you? This is who you are! A man whore!"

I scream as I punch his chest.

Me- "You're all the damn same. You can't even trust the man you share a bed with hey?"

Him- "Are you done?"

His calmness peaks my anger to a level I didn't know was possible for me. I grab a cushion on the couch and land blow after blow on his chest while he doesn't seem to flinch.

Him- "I had a business meeting at my new place today. The woman you just heard on the phone was amongst one of the people in attendance. The meeting came to a close and she helped with the cleaning up. I hadn't planned anything, but with the two of us alone, rather intoxicated

and both horny, we had one thing on our minds.
I..."

I jump off the couch and attempt to walk away, but then I realize that I probably need to hear this so I get over Siya for good, so I turn around and sit on one of the couches close to him and look at him expectantly.

Him- "I didn't want to do anything with her, but she was really persuasive and I needed an outlet to forget about you!"

He says as he buttons his pants and tries to edge closer to me but I shake my head at him.

Me- "Why would you want to forget about me? Why Siya?"

I ask as a tear runs down my cheek. He walks towards me and kneels in front of me with his elbows resting on my thighs.

Him- "I have to. I've exposed you three to so much danger Zinhle. Every misfortune you've

experienced in the past months has emanated from me, do you understand the stress and frustration I feel because of that everyday? Ziyanda was the last straw, I had to remove myself from this equation for the bigger picture; your safety and that of those munchkins. I guess this is one of those instances where love isn't enough."

He says as tears flow down his face.

Me- "Did you fuck her?"

Him- "You don't understand. I live, breathe and dream you and those babies. I spoke about you the whole night, everyone is aware of who my heart belongs to and will forever belong to. This woman seduced me just to get the edge off."

Me- "So you two shagged?"

Him- "Zinhle.."

Me- "Answer the damn question!"

Him- "Zinhle, I love you with everything, I swear

to you."

Me- "You did.."

I say gasping for air as tears trickle down my face.

Him- "No! I couldn't! We kissed and that was it. She's not you, no one out there is you, and if I can't have you then I don't want anyone else."

Me- "So you guys kissed and then went to take a shower?"

He closes his eyes and inhales a deep breath of air.

Him- "I took a shower because I was shaking on the inside I missed you so much. I needed to calm down. I'm sure she answered to stir something up and she probably made that call just now for the same reason."

I close my eyes as tears race down my face.

Me- "So this is what we are? Other people are deciding the fate of our relationship? Our love

isn't strong enough for us to focus on each other?"

Him- "I pray for that every second of everyday, but how will I live with myself if Eve decides to go on a jealous rage and drill bullets through your head? I'm the problem, let's remove the problem."

Me- "You know what's sad? The fact that YOU broke up with me because you claim you love me too much to endanger me by being with me, BUT almost sleeping with someone isn't hurting me? You don't think that I'm feeling the same pain as that of a bullet as I'm feeling knowing that another woman just sucked on those lips, held your package and saw my man in his naked glory? You think that the aching feeling that's piercing my heart is better than blood seeping through a wound? Well, I have news for you, it's not. I'm dying from the inside right now!"

Him- "Zinhle, I'm sorry. I know that I can't live without you, I know that for sure! I'll wait and do whatever it takes for us to be together, I was stupid! Please!"

He pleads frantically with bloodshot red eyes.

Me- "No, go have your sexual escapades with your employees or whoever else is on your list. I would prefer it if you weren't present in my next doctor's appointment, I think we both need time to strategize our situation. Best believe that I'll be hopping on the next dick willing and inviting, these hormones have me horny all day everyday, I hear there's nothing like sex with a pregnant woman, do you agree?"

He clenches his fists and stands to face his back to me.

Him- "Zinhle, don't try me!"

Me- "I'm no longer on house arrest, otherwise I'll call the cops and tell them I'm being held against my will. Now please excuse me, I've got

to go wax."

Him- "Zinhle, don't piss me off please!"

Me- "Should I do a landing strip or go Brazilian with my wax?"

He turns and charges towards me and I run to the other side of the lounge.

Me- "Oh, and I'm planning on having a neutral nursery, since the sex of the babies will be a surprise. So I guess I'll be using that little card of yours, hopefully mommy can squeeze in some lingerie. Now if you could please leave, It's been a while since I've been on the dating scene, I need to prepare."

I say as I walk towards the door to open for him. He stares at me for an eternity then finally slowly make his way out.

Him- "We're having girls, buy some pink shit."

He says as he runs out and disappears.

[04/18, 16:42] Wdz: [68]

****ZINHLE****

I wake up in the master bedroom cuddled against Siya's pillow that still smells of his scent and take a long sniff. I stretch to the side table and take my phone where I see a text from Siya that he sent in the early hours of the morning that reads: "I still love you and I'll never stop. I'll spend everyday proving it to you."

My mouth involuntarily curves into a smile as I read it over and over again. I hear a knock on the bedroom door so I shift my body off the bed and go to open. I find Ziyanda standing outside with a large tray with two plates.

Her- "Move! This thing is heavy!" She says as she pushes me to the side and runs to the large bed. I follow behind her and plonk myself onto the bed.

Her- "Well I thought I'd surprise you with breakfast in bed, but these fingerprint pads and

dozens of codes are too much for me."

I laugh as I shove a rasher of bacon in my mouth,

Her- "Do you want to talk about your screaming match with Siya last night?"

I shake my head as I drizzle some syrup on my scrumptious looking pancakes then take the biggest mouthful I can.

Her- "So what are we doing today?"

I swallow the last of my pancake and gulp down some juice.

Me- "We can do anything. We can go out for lunch, go shopping or anything really. Durban is our oyster."

I say as I bite into a strawberry.

Me- "Maybe we could window shop for some items for the nursery so we can get an idea of how it should look."

Her- "Okay, we're still doing the neutral scheme for the nursery right? I've got some great ideas."

Me- "No! I know what colour everything will be now."

Her- "Why didn't you tell me you and Siya changed your minds about having it be a surprise?"

I give a bored glance.

Me- "It was meant to be a surprise, but Siya saw it fit to take that from me too."

She jumps on the bed and places both hands on my belly with excitement gleaming from her face.

Her- "So?"

Me- "Girls. We're having girls."

She screams and leaps off the bed, then rubs around the room. I can't help but laugh and contract some of her excitement, so I scream while stealing some food from her plate.

Her- "We need to celebrate! Get ready, we've got shopping to do!"

She runs to me and attacks me with a hug, then she leaves the room. I sit back on the bed and finish the food on both plates, it's rude to leave food behind. I finally make my way to the bathroom and take a long shower.

Once I'm done with my refreshing shower, I walk to the closet and browse through the few clothes that still reside in Siya's closet. I decide on a white short flair rap dress and slops. My feet have been swelling a little more than usual lately, and since it seems I have a long day ahead of me, comfortability is best. I grab my phone and run downstairs to grab my handbag, it's time I had a peep of the car that's supposedly mine. I enter the code leading to the garage and slowly walk down the few steps in front of me. The lights eventually illuminate the

large space, and I see it, my car. I blink a few times to make sure that I'm not day dreaming, and it turns out, I'm not. A Snow White RangeRover Evoque parked in front of me, just waiting. I run around touching every inch of it, then I come across the number plate, and it's personalized. "CYAZ ZI"

I read it over and over again until it clicks. "Siya's Zi" I laugh softly and my heart flutters and I smile at the thought and preparation that must have gone into making my stay here overly comfortable. I reach over to the windshield and grab the key and remote that's planted there and run back into the house in excitement. I find Ziyanda ready and waiting, looking cute in a two piece denim shorts and crop top.

Me- "One day soon"

I say as I poke her abs and she laughs until she snorts.

Her- "I've called the cab."

Me- "Cancel and follow me madam!"

I say as I leap around in excitement.

She runs after me and as soon as her eyes land on the car, her excitement doubles mine.

When we're both calm enough, we make our way to Gateway. The air is filled with eagerness and anticipation, seeing people other than on TV brings about exhilaration into my already happy mood.

Ziyanda- "Did someone say retail therapy?"

She says as she swirls me around in the mall.

Hours later, I feel dizzy from the shopping bags hanging from just seeing Ziyanda push our shopping bags in a trolley so we eventually decide to take a breather. We choose a

restaurant to rest my feet and feed these hungry munchkins. We order our food and Ziyanda's cocktail arrives, I salivate at how refreshing it looks and take a long sip of my orange juice. Midway through our meal, our heads jolt up when someone clears their throat. Ziyanda almost chokes on her food when she sees two men towering over us flashing their smiles. They're both dark, and although aren't handsome, they ooze charisma.

Man1- "Good day ladies, I'm Andile and this is my friend Ntobeko."

Ntobeko waves in a goofy manner and his smile grows wider.

Andile- "We just wanted to personally greet and admire your beauty."

He says gesturing to Ziyanda and I. Ziyanda takes a seductive sip of her cocktail and flutters her long eyelashes.

Ziyanda- "Thank you."

Ntobeko- "Well how about another round of drinks and lets make this a party, join us or we'll join you?"

Ziyanda and I look at each other in a panic.

Andile- "We promise we don't bite, the second you feel uncomfortable, you ladies cab just walk away."

Before we can react, they grab some chairs and seat themselves at our table. I shift from Andile to create more space between us and Ziyanda does the same.

Before we know it, it's dark outside and I'm on my second helping of dessert. We've learnt a lot about each other, and we're thoroughly enjoying each other's company. Apparently Andile and Ntobeko work on Wall Street, that explains their slight accent, and they're in the country for some "business". They're also cousins, so their little inside jokes are cute. They both are

chocolate skinned, dark brown eyes and masculine features. Their personalities are warm and kind, and they've been decent the whole day. There have been no awkward touches or glances and I'm relieved with that.

Me- "This has been fun, but I think we should leave."

Andile- "Well they do say, all good things come to an end."

We all laugh softly while he signals for the bill, he settles it and they both open our chairs for us.

Andile pushes the trolley with our shopping bags and they accompany us to the car.

Me- "Well this is us."

I say gesturing to the car and I open the boot. Ntobeko helps load the bags in the boot.

Ntobeko- "Your credit cards must be bleeding from the abuse of today."

We all laugh and he walks to Ziyanda while Andile pulls me to the side.

Him- "I had a really good time tonight. Maybe we could do it again?"

I look at him and narrow my eyes as I point to my belly.

Him- "Well he or she is also invited."

I smile.

Me- "Maybe."

He hands me his card and pulls me in for a lengthily hug. I feel myself floating with every passing second and I finally pull away.

Me- "Goodbye."

I jump in the car and hoot for Ziyanda to come in and she runs and jumps in as well.

Me- "Let's go home."

I wink at her and she giggles.

Instead of going to the penthouse, I decide to go to my mom's place. We bought her a few goodies and we both miss her immensely so we decide to see her a few minutes.

Unfortunately neither of us has our keys to open up, so we have to knock. Mom finally opens wearing a short robe.

Mom- "My girls!"

She holds us both in an embrace. I try to push through and head inside, but she blocks the entrance. I give her an inquisitive look and she gives us a mischievous smile.

Mom- "Ask no questions, you'll hear no lies!"

She tightens the belt of her robe.

Mom- "Girls, next time call okay!"

She blows kisses to us and shuts the door in our faces. Yanda and I look at each other and burst out in laughter.

[04/18, 16:43] Wdz: [69]

****ZINHLE****

We drive home in high spirits and offload our bags from the car, I only take a few, because I'm so tired I can literally feel my head spin. I open the door leading into the house with Ziyanda on my heels. I make my way towards the lounge area and come to a halt when I see the dining table with three place settings, a large centerpiece, sparkling apple juice on melted ice and candles down the middle of the table. I turn to Ziyanda who's loudly chewing on some of the food on the table.

Me- "Sssh."

I place my finger on my lips and tiptoe to the lounge where I find Siya curled up into a large ball with a mink throw barely covering him. I crouch down and I gently tap his shoulder but he doesn't flinch. I shake him gently again and he grabs my hand and kisses it all over while

eyes are still closed.

Him- "You're back."

He gently tugs my hand and I lean towards him.

Me- "Let's go to bed." I whisper to him. He nods and opens his eyelids to reveal his hypnotic eyes. I gently pull him off the couch and lead him up the stairs. We reach the master bedroom and I pull Siya to the bed, he strokes my butt with his hand, but I swiftly move away. He stands like a statue next to the bed so I walk to him and lift his long Sleeved top over his head and unzip his jeans and help him out of them. He stands with his visible bulge protruding through his underwear. I stare into his eyes while I slowly slip off my dress and turn to ask him to unhook my bra. I feel his warm hands on my back and they send chills down my spine. The bra falls to the floor, and he encircles my waist and makes his way towards my breasts which he begins to slowly caress.

My neck nestles against his chest then I gently remove my hands. I strut to the closet and emerge wearing one of his t-shirts.

I jump into bed and pat the space next to me.

Me- "Are you coming."

He sighs loudly and bites his bottom lip in agony then finally joins me in bed. I reach for his cheek and plant a soft kiss there.

Me- "Goodnight." I shift closer towards him and turn to snuggle my butt against his rock hard erection. He entwines his legs with mine and gently strokes my belly until I doze off.

Him- "I love you."

I hear from a distance and I smile as sleep gets the better of me again.

I wake up and Siya is stuck on me like glue. I shift but he tightens his grip.

Me- "I have to pee!"

He kisses the back of my neck then finally releases me.

I run to the bathroom where I spend almost an hour in, because I decide to wax and take a shower. I open the shower door and find Siya waiting outside in his naked glory. My eyes immediately shoot to his monster that's staring right at me. He hands me a towel and clears his throat. I snap out of it and he brushes against me as I wrap the towel on my damp body. He enters the shower and turns the taps on while I'm still glued in the same position.

Him- "I've got some business to take care of, unless you don't mind witnessing a grown man masturb.."

Me- "Okay okay!"

I say as I frantically make my way out the bathroom.

I wear a simple blush shirt dress and slippers then make my way downstairs. Siya emerges wearing shorts and a vest, smelling divine.

Me- "So you brought the toothpicks out today."

I signal at his legs.

He chuckles as he sips the smoothie I put in front of him. I hand him a plate with his breakfast and walk to the barstool next to his and place my food there. We eat in silence and he eventually clears his throat and grabs my hand.

Him- "Had fun at the mall yesterday?"

I roll my eyes, because if he's looking for a reaction, I won't be giving him one.

Me- "I'm not even going to ask you how you know that."

Him- "I actually wanted to ask you if you'd be my date next weekend? There's a major

conference and dinner with some work people, I'm getting some award for something., and I'd love it if you'd be there."

He says as he gazes deeply into my eyes.

Him- "Please. Even if we're there for a few hours, I'd love your support."

Me- "Siya, I'll be 24/25 weeks pregnant, with twins might I add. My stomach expands by the day, I have no business trying to compete with those rich skinny housewives."

I say as I shove more food into my mouth.

Him- "It wouldn't be a competition! Just please do it for me! Please!"

Me- "Fine! If you want a whale rolling around torpedoing every table, then who am I to argue?"

Him- "Great! Don't worry about anything, I'll have it sorted out, you just try to have a good time."

He winks at me and feeds me a bite of his

omelette.

He stands up and finishes his smoothie.

Him- "Since you won't tell me about your day at the mall, I've got some digging to do. Bye!"

Me- "No Siya! That's not fair."

I whine after him as he makes his way to the door.

He turns on his heels.

Him- "Did you buy the blue paint for the nursery, I want to get that sorted as soon as possible."

Me- "Siya! You said we're having girls!"

Him- "Oops, I lied!"

He covers his mouth with a sarcastic look on his face and he turns and heads for the door.

Him- "Love you three!"

I roll my eyes as the door shuts closed.

I'm on the outdoor couch daydreaming while Ziyanda sips on a cocktail in the pool. My daydream is interrupted by my phone ringing and it's mom.

Me- "Mama."

Mom- "I just got off the phone with your Siyabonga, he wants to pay damages as soon as this weekend."

Me- "Oh."

Her- "I asked to postpone, I have somewhere to be this weekend. Besides, ngeke ngizwe ngaye (I won't hear from him)."

Me- "Let me guess; church?"

She laughs.

Her- "Hhayi Zinhle Khumalo, nobody asks what you do with your time in that building you call home!"

We laugh simultaneously.

Her- "I miss you girls! Send my regards to Yanda. The Lord can take me now that I know you two are okay. Okay, well not yet. Maybe he can take me after I meet my grandchildren."

Me- "Ma, you're not going anywhere young lady. Ma, I know what you did last Summer!"

I say in a grim voice. We both laugh, because that's just one of our many inside jokes.

Her- "Bye. I love you both!"

With that she hangs up.

The following week is filled with nerves and anticipation for the coming weekend. Siya had sent a stylist and seamstress over to the house for my measurements. They didn't ask me what I'd prefer to wear, so I was forced to completely entrust in them.

It's Friday, the day before the big evening and I'm headed to the spa for facials with Ziyanda. After our facials, I decide it's time for a hair switch up and about time I did my nails, so Yanda and I make our way to the salon. Yanda has her hair treated and curled while I decide on a sleek straight 32 inch weave with a middle parting and nude gel nails, I read somewhere that acrylic nails aren't advised for pregnant women. When Yanda and I are done, we look like a million bucks and my nerves are slowly turning into excitement. We pick up some takeaways on our way home and listen to Rihanna until I park the car in the garage of the penthouse.

Yanda- "I think I'm going to go home soon for a few days and then I'll have to go back to work. I'm dreading it, but it's time."

Me- "Please at least stay until after Siya pays damages. I know I'm selfish for asking, but I really need your support."

I say as I flutter my eyelids and she chuckles loudly.

Her- "Very soon, that act won't work and those babies will be using it on you. Fine, I'll leave a few days after the damages ritual."

I clap my hands in excitement and we make our way into the house.

I wake up the following morning and I've barely slept a wink. I make my way downstairs to make a smoothie and I'm surprised to hear a knock at the door. I walk over to the door and find Siya leaning against the door. He smiles as soon as he sees me, picks me up and spins me around as I giggle uncontrollably.

Me- "Stoop!"

He closes the door behind him and makes his way inside, leaving me behind.

Him- "See? I knocked!"

I roll my eyes and follow him into the kitchen. I hand him a glass of the smoothie and slurp down mine.

Him- "I hope these aren't now meal replacements, my babies need proper food!"

He says as he looks at the smoothie and I roll my eyes at his theatrics.

Him- "I just came to make sure you haven't run away."

He inches closer to me and crouches down to kiss my belly.

Him- "Have you two missed me as much as mommy has?"

I lightly slap his head and he chuckles softly.

Me- "Don't get ahead of yourself now."

I say as I push past him. He follows behind me and we sit on one of the couches in the lounge. He pulls my legs and places my feet on his lap and begins to gently rub on every crevice. I

moan at the pleasure that I feel and lay on my back, closing my eyes in the process and drift to a blissful sleep.

I'm woken up by feeling soft tickles on my belly. I look down and I see Siya's face an inch away from my stomach running his fingers along it and whispering.

Him- "Come on, please just kick once for daddy. I'll do anything."

I manage to hear him say. I look around and somehow I'm in the master bedroom on the bed. I have no recollection of how I got here, but I'm not complaining, watching Siya plead with his munchkins is priceless.

Him- "Okay, well just know that I love you two and can't wait to meet you. You two really don't want to kick and say hi to daddy?"

I stroke the back of his head and his eyes shoot

up to meet mine.

Him- "You're up!"

Me- "Yes. Don't worry they'll be cheering you on when you get your award." I wink at him.

Him- "I think the stylists are on their way, could I entice you to take a shower with me to calm me down?"

Me- "An innocent shower Mr Nyathi."

I hold out my hand and he shakes it.

Him- "Deal."

He picks me up and we make our way into the bathroom while I giggle the whole way.

We're in the shower under one of the shower heads and I immediately tense as I look at the water cascade down his torso.

Him- "Like what you see?"

I turn to face my back to him and reach for the

loafer. I feel his breath down my neck and his monster rub against my butt. His hands roam around my upper body and find their way to my breasts that immediately harden and tingle at his touch. His soft lips land on my neck and trail kisses to my shoulder while his other hand traces patterns down my belly to my castle. I arch my back and lay my head on his chest as his fingers slap against my nub. He flicks my nub then traces featherlight circles along my slit while he grazes his teeth on my earlobe. He slowly inserts one finger in and out and I gasp out in pleasure. He swiftly turns me around and attacks my mouth with his succulent lips. He breaks away from the kiss and crouches down until his face is leveled with my castle. He spreads my legs apart and plants my leg on his shoulder then devours my castle alternating between licking, sucking and using his gifted fingers. This goes on until I rain on him and my legs tremble from reaching my peak of ecstasy.

He stands up and he scrubs every inch of our bodies until he's satisfied then carries me to the bedroom. We leave the bedroom wearing our robes, and just on time the slue of stylists are let in by Ziyanda.

Siya and I go our separate ways to prepare for the night ahead. I'm ambushed by hairstylists, makeup artists and seamstresses. A few hours later the stylist buckles my shoe as I gawk at my reflection in the mirror. I'm in a long tight fitting black mermaid dress with a long slit. The dress has a plunging neckline covered with embellished mesh and the back plunges to a low back as well also covered with the embellished mesh which also makes up the long sleeves of the dress. I grab my black studded clutch and take a few pictures. My belly isn't concealed, it's almost the star of the show and I look sexy in a tasteful way, I smile because I'm genuinely happy with my entire

look. I take a deep breath in and then leave the room, a few steps out of the room making my way to the lounge, I hear Siya whistle as he makes his way to me. Just when I thought it would be impossible for him to look any better, here he is looking his best. He's dressed in a dark navy slim fit suit, black shirt and black tie with black lapels on his blazer and black formal shoes.

Him- "You look.. wow!"

He spins me around.

Him- "Here"

He says as he opens a small box revealing a pair of diamond earrings.

Him- "A small token for your support this evening."

He helps me put them on and I feel my cheeks flush.

Me- "Thank you, you didn't have to, but I'm glad

you did."

I say as I kiss him on the cheek.

Him- "Ready?"

Me- "As I'll ever be." We walk hand in hand leaving Ziyanda clicking away taking photos of us and screaming in the process.

Her- "Have fun you two!"

Siya- "Well hopefully this dress doesn't rip."

He says as he chuckles and places his hand over his mouth and pats my butt with his other one.

[04/18, 16:44] Wdz: [70]

****ZINHLE****

We arrive at the exclusive venue and I feel my heart almost leap out of my chest. Siya tightens his grip on my hand and kisses it.

Him- "It'll be okay."

He gives me a reassuring smile, jumps out and opens my door for me. I take a deep breath in and mentally prepare myself for the evening ahead.

Me- "What if they call me your mistress?"

Him- "I'm divorced."

Me- "The elephant in the room? My big round belly?"

Him- "We're here for me to get my award, people will pry, but they're not important. You're my life, forget about everything else."

I nod slightly as the doors open to a lavish interior buzzing with dozens and dozens of people dressed to the nines. I'm overwhelmed by the loud music, camera flashes and loud chatter that fills the room. Siya pulls me inside and we're bombarded by people wanting a word with the man of the hour. An older couple floats towards us and I see Siya flash a smile so I follow suit.

Siya hugs both of them and then turns his attention to me.

Him- "Zi, this is Jacob and his wife Crystal. Guys, this is the love of my life Zinhle. Jacob was my mentor and now he chairs the board that I'm a majority shareholder in."

Siya says with a smirk on his face.

Jacob- "Siya, you son of a gun!"

He says while he chuckles softly and gently punches Siya's arm.

Jacob- "None of what you said does her justice. You look ravishing my dear."

He says as he grabs my hand and kisses it.

Jacob- "Finally, some true beauty not masked in makeup. Tell me, how did you end up with an idiot like Siya?"

I blush and smile like a schoolgirl.

Me- "Well, maybe you should ask him what spell

he cast on me."

I say flashing a smile and stroking Siya's shoulder.

Crystal- "Congratulations, you two are expecting! Siya didn't you just get divorced like last week?"

She raises her eyebrows and takes a long sip of her champagne.

Siya- "I'm sure no one asked you anything during your 10 year affair with Jake. Zinhle wasn't my mistress like in your case."

Jacob laughs softly as Siya pulls me across the room.

Siya- "Are you okay?"

Me- "She was his mistress?"

I say while laughing. Siya kisses my cheek and we walk hand in hand in hand while I eyeball the canapés.

A slender exotic looking woman struts towards us as I shove my third canapés down my throat.

She's carrying an iPad in tow and looks like a woman on a mission.

Her- "Mr Nyathi, there's an unscheduled conference call with China, they need you."

She says this while ogling Siya and not acknowledging me in the slightest. Siya kisses my cheek and walks away from me while this model eyes me from top to toe.

I walk to the open bar and get myself a glass of juice and browse my phone. All the stares and whispers are beginning to get under my skin and I contemplate calling a cab back home when I hear someone clear their throat. I look up and find Andile looking sexy in a traditional tux.

Him- "Fancy seeing you here! Leaving already?"

He says, gesturing to my phone.

Me- "No, of course not. What are you doing here?"

I say smiling at him and taking a sip of my juice.

Him- "I told you that I have business to take care of, so here I am! Might I say, you look absolutely stunning, and you have the best accessory in here."

He says pointing at my belly. I blush and look down as my cheeks heat up.

He pulls the chair next to me and orders himself the same drink as mine. We sit for a few minutes, with me laughing at his hilarious jokes, and I finally feel comfortable again. We're interrupted by him receiving a phonecall, he signals that he'll be right back and I stand to leave to stretch my legs. I roam around the room, smiling and nodding to everyone I pass. Then I finally feel his hands snake around me and his lips kiss my shoulder.

Him- "Missed me?"

Me- "Wouldn't you like to know?"

I spin around and lick my lips.

He ambushes me with a gentle smooch, I pull away when I feel someone's presence merely inches away from us. I look towards them, and it's the exotic model.

Her- "Mr Nyathi there's something that calls for your attention. I wasn't aware that you'd be bringing a plus one, preparations haven't been made for your lady friend."

She says while eyeing me.

Siya shakes his head slightly, and she turns and sways her small butt away.

Me- "Okay, who is that?"

Him- "An employee." He says as he grabs a glass of champagne from one of the waiters.

Me- "What's her name? She's not my fan is

she?"

I say while raising my eyebrows.

Him- "Please not tonight."

I take a deep breath in an attempt to walk away, and he grabs hold of my arm.

Him- "I'm sorry, I'm supposed to have a speech prepared and that's stressful, and my phonecall with my associates in China didn't go well. I'm just a little tense."

I nod and look away.

Him- "She's Pam, my assistant."

I shoot my eyes at him.

Him- "Please don't get like that, please not tonight."

I give him a blank stare.

Me- "So you bring the woman that you almost fucked and have her speak to me and look at me like that, and I should be okay with it? Okay!"

I walk away and hear the Program Director call for everyone to take their seats. Siya nudges me towards one of the front tables, opens my chair and sits beside me, gripping my hand on the table. I look at my place setting and notice my place card written "Pam Mitchells" I roll my eyes and zone out for the rest of the evening. I smile when smiled to and nod when I need to. I hear Siya's name being called and he stands, bends to kiss me and buttons his blazer as he makes his way to the stage. I watch him accept his award, snap a few photos then look away. He's busy with his speech when I hear my name, at first I think I'm dreaming that I hear it again. I finally look at him again and see all eyes on me, including his.

Him- "Zinhle my love, thank you for being an amazing partner. Without you, I'd have nothing to work so hard for. You're my inspiration, my heart, my love and my life. None of this is worth

it without you by my side." He says while not breaking eye contact with me. He blows a kiss and bows to leave the stage while everyone gives him a standing ovation. I'm too tired and shocked to stand so I remain in my seat and he plants himself next to me grabbing hold of my hand again. The formalities are finally over and Siya pulls me to meet more business associates, we come to a halt when we bump into Pam.

Her- "Mr Nyathi, a few associates want to talk business and are complaining that you've been scarce this evening."

I huff and roll my eyes then snatch my hand away from Siya's to walk away from the humiliation when Siya tightens his grip.

Siya- "Pamela, I don't think I remember you acknowledging my partner this evening. You know? Zinhle, the mother of my kids, my woman?"

He says as he raises his eyebrows.

Her- "It's a pleasure to meet you Miss Khumalo."

She mumbles under her breath.

Siya- "We're not going to have a problem are we Pam? Regarding the other night, Zinhle knows about my foolish mistake, and I thought I was clear in my position. Acting like a jealous lover is unbecoming, especially when Zinhle holds the keys to your future as an employee. If I were you, I'd be asking to wipe her ass if she needs it. If she says the word, you're gone."

Siya says with a grin on his face. I look at Pam and her face is red from embarrassment and anger.

Siya- "So?"

Pam- "My apologies Miss Khumalo, it won't happen again."

I laugh sarcastically then smile at her.

Siya- "Thank you for your hard work, I'll write

you an excellent letter of recommendation." He flashes his smile, strokes her shoulder then pulls me away.

Siya is pulled away by some older business associates and I'm left to my own devices again, then Andile smiles at me from across the room as he glides towards me.

Him- "So you're with the man of the hour!"

I smile shyly.

Him- "I guess you're really taken in that case."

I just smile at him and we have a light chat about the evening when Siya comes to stand beside me.

Siya- "Andile."

Andile- "Siyabonga."

They both say in a grim voice. Andile smiles briefly then leaves.

Siya- "Did you tell him that you're off limits?"

Me- "Why? Am I?"

He chuckles softly.

Him- "I released my PA to remove anyone that could try to come between us."

Me- "Yeah, but I didn't ask you to."

I say as I wink at him and make my way to the restroom.

[04/18, 16:45] Wdz: Good morning everyone!
Have a fabulous week ahead!

[71]

****ZINHLE****

I take precaution while I do my business in one of the cubicles, and my bladder feels lighter once I'm done. I fix my dress then walk to the sink area. I look at myself in the mirror and

decide to touch up my gloss and powder my nose. I look at my reflection one last time in the mirror and smile to myself as I say "You're one lucky man Siyabonga Nyathi" in a whisper. My little inside joke is interrupted when I see Pam behind me looking at me in the mirror. She winds around and stands beside me with a smirk on her exotic face.

Her- "Just so you know, Siya is amazing in bed!"

Me- "I know right?"

I say with a sarcastic smile plastered on my face.

Me- "So good in fact, I got pregnant by him! I've got nothing to do with your little relationship or lack thereof, you most definitely have nothing to do with mine. I'm looking for a nanny, know of anyone who just got fired?"

I smile and walk away leaving her stunned.

I bump into Andile on my way to look for Siya and he walks away looking at me with contempt.

Me- "Andile!"

He stops and turns and eyes me up and down.

Me- "Call me crazy, but bumping into a pregnant lady calls for an apology?"

He walks towards me with a smug look on his face.

Him- "Lady? That's almost laughable. I'm sorry Zinhle, but I never figured you for the gold digging side mistress type, but I've been proven wrong. You're pregnant and the father of your baby's ink on his divorce papers is barely dry. Go home, stop this charade of yours. You think everyone is gawking at you because you're gorgeous? No! It's because they see a young girl that single handedly destroyed a family. You don't think Siya has said the exact same speech about Yvette? The men in here are lustful over you, and that's because they all want a piece of

fresh meat with no morals, the women won't let go of their husbands and fiancés because they don't know your capabilities. Take the little dignity you have left and go home." With that he turns on his heel.

Me- "Andile!"

I say gasping for air.

He turns around and narrows his eyebrows at me.

Me- "Did Siya say something? Did he tell you to say this? Did he tell you to find a way to stay away from me? Why are you being so malicious?"

Him- "Siya? I actually don't have time for this."

He marches away and disappears into the crowd.

I take a few minutes to regulate my breathing and my beating heart, when I feel normal again I make the agonizing walk into the crowd in

search of Siya.

I see him from afar and he signals for me to come to him. The dance floor is officially open and I see couples dancing around the ballroom. Siya brings me closer to him and tangles my hands around his neck while he rests his just above my butt. He crouches down and our foreheads touch, he closes his eyes and I see him drift off to his own little world. At that moment the munchkins decide to play football in my belly and I see Siya's mouth curve into a smile. He opens his eyes and places his hands on my tummy.

Him- "Are you two proud of daddy?"

He says in a baby voice and I want to laugh, but my heart is heavy. He turns me around and holds my stomach from behind. He shifts my hair to the side and nibbles on my earlobe. I gasp in arousal and travel my hand behind me to grab hold of his monster. I massage it

applying pressure, until I hear him grunt under his breath.

Him- "Zi.."

Me- "Don't start something you can't finish. We're in a room full of people." I let go of his member and spin myself around until I face him.

His eyes look dark and dangerous.

Him- "Well let us finish then."

He says as he pulls me across the room. I stop in my tracks and pull away firmly.

Me- "Did you tell him?"

He looks at me in confusion.

Me- "Siya please just be honest. Did you tell Andile to stay away from me?"

Him- "As much as I don't want you hanging around with the likes of that, I don't have time to entertain what he does in his spare time. This is the last time I'm talking about him and the last

time you bring him up, especially when I had plans of making you cum at least three times. Excuse me."

He says with anger filled eyes and his face turning slightly red with fury. He walks past me disappearing back in the crowd and I stand in the same position for a few minutes, thinking about Andile and Siya. I shrug my shoulders in frustration. I'm frustrated with Andile for ruining my evening, but I decide that I'm done with giving people the power to hold the reigns of my happiness. I slept with a married man and got pregnant, now what? I'm in the situation that I'm in and there's no turning back now. Andile doesn't know me and has no right to pass judgement on my life, and I'm partially glad that he's decided to be an asshole, at least I won't have to think of ways to curve him down the line.

I make my way back inside and I spot Siya

downing a gulp of whiskey. He's in a crowd and he seems distant. I walk towards him and his associates and snake my arm around his waist. He doesn't even look at me when I touch him, but I feel his body tense as he drinks the last sip of his drink.

I flutter my eyelids and bite on my bottom lip when he eventually looks at me.

Me- "Can I steal you for a second?" He looks away and I slowly stroke my hand on his back.

Me- "Please."

I whisper in his ears. He sighs heavily and leads me away from the crowd. I tug on his blazer.

Me- "Dance with me. Please."

He stands still so I press my body against his and away our bodies slowly to the music. I reach for his neck and nudge his head closer to mine.

Me- "Thank you for inviting me tonight, I truly

appreciate it. I'm sorry about bringing up that guy to you, I was.."

Siya looks at me intently.

Him- "What? Did you just apologize without being coerced?"

I laugh slightly then muster up the courage to look him in the eye.

Me- "I'm sorry Bab' Nyathi, I really am. This evening is about you, no one else. I'm still hurt about your little side dish Pam, but I'm glad you handled it. I'm proud of you and that little award you received, but there's an even bigger award waiting at home. I'm sure I'll be able to properly show you just how proud I am of you once we get home."

I smash my lips onto his and lose my inhibitions in our passionate kiss, I pull away when I hear myself moaning beneath my breath and my lady parts leak with warmth and desire.

Me- "I'll leave you to network, I need to rest my feet, I have a marathon to run later." I wink at him and walk away.

I find a free couch and I plonk my heavy body on it, stretching my legs on it as well. As I'm about to reach for my right foot to massage it a little, large masculine hands cover my foot, I look up and find Siya staring at me.

Him- "Time to call it a night."

Me- "It's still early, I don't mind waiting trust me. I don't want to smother you, this place is still buzzing, what will everyone say if you decide to up and leave?"

Him- "Frankly, I don't care. I accepted my award, the rest can wait, I've got an incredibly sexy woman that I want to make scream all night long. If that's the case, we'd better go get started."

I raise my body off the couch and place my feet on the floor in preparation to stand. Siya

crouches down and swoops me up in his arms bridal style.

Me- "Put me down!" I shout as i giggle.

Him- "I saw those feet and those ankles as well as those skyscrapers you call shoes. Not taking any chances." He says as he walks briskly towards the entrance.

I snuggle my face in his chest, trying to avoid the dozens of people asking Siya if I'm okay. He doesn't stop for anyone, instead he holds onto me tighter and jogs the few steps left to the car that's already been brought to the front by the valet.

On the car ride home, he takes my shoes off and works his magic on my feet.

Him- "Whatever you do, don't sleep." He says as he suckles on my toes.

Me- "Eeeuuw Siya!"

I try to snatch my foot away, but he has a tight hold on it, so I let him be. He reaches under my dress with his warm hands and then inserts his head between my legs. The driver clears his throat numerous times, and my cheeks flush with embarrassment.

We finally arrive at the penthouse after an embarrassing car ride and Siya carries me all the way to the master bedroom. He helps me out of my dress and I'm left in in my lace undergarments. He strips to his briefs and runs to the bathroom. I hear the water running in the bathroom and I try fight the thief of the night, but I'm more drowsy than I thought. I can barely keep my eyes open, my feet hurt and I start to get cold. I get under the covers and snuggle next to his pillow and before I know it, it's lights out for me.

I hear Siya call my name from the other side of

the bed and gently nudge my shoulder, but my eyes are too heavy. I manage to tap on the space next me and after a few minutes I feel him cuddle me from behind.

Me- "I love you."

Then I fall into a peaceful sleep.

In the middle of the night, I'm woken up by a cold shiver. i feel Siya's hand squeeze mine, and I open my eyes and find Siya on his laptop. He's using one hand to type while the other alternates between stroking my belly and holding my hand. I get up and straddle his lap while I take his laptop and gently place it on the table next to the bed.

Me- "How about that marathon?"

I whisper into his ear while lightly licking his earlobe.

[04/18, 16:46] Wdz: Morning, let's work on being

better today than we were yesterday,

Lots of love

[72]

****ZINHLE****

Siya looks at me with eyes filled with intensity. I grab my phone and connect it to the bedroom speakers, and play Usher "Nice & Slow."

Him- "Remember, it's not a race, it's a marathon."

Me- "Shut up and kiss me!"

I smash my lips onto his and shift my pelvis closer to his. He grabs hold of my back and my neck and closes any gap between us. I feel his monster grow by the second and that immediately sends chills down my spine. I grind against his crotch while intensifying the kiss

and using one hand to gently massage his member. I move my lips from his mouth and trace long wet kisses along his jawline and down to his masculine neck. I lick his collar bone as I shift my body and land on my knees. I graze my teeth down his torso and my tongue lingers on his navel while my hands lower his briefs. His monster springs freely and I grab hold of it with one hand, making gentle up and down motions. I finally lower my head and lick his leaking head. I graze my teeth gently on his head and I feel him grow even more. I look him dead in the eye as I lick my lips and open my mouth wide then slide all of him inside. My gag reflexes try to fail me, but when I feel his hands on the back of my head, I grin and bear it. I eventually take his member out and I hear him gasp for air. I slightly nibble every inch of his shaft while my nails dig into his bare abs. I trail my mouth even lower and take one of his sperm sacks in my mouth while my hand caresses his

hard shaft, going up and down alternating between the pressure. His moans and groans make my heart smile and I lose my inhibitions at that point. I graze my teeth on both his sacks and he nudges my lower body towards his upper body. My face is inches away from his member, I'm on my knees and his face is inches from my covered castle. I feel him tug on my underwear and snatch it with his teeth, that's when I hear him rip it apart with his bare hands and shove it down my legs. He uses the palm of his hand to stroke my castle and I see veins bulge through his monster when he meets my wetness. He prods my butt up and licks my slit with the side of his tongue. I gasp for air and shift, but he holds my body in position, so I decide to give him a run for his money as well. I swirl my tongue around his head making my way lower and lower, then shove all of him inside my mouth, I feel my throat constrict and he inserts his tongue while grazing his teeth

against my throbbing nub. I stroke his sacks and apply pressure, while I feel my throat give in, but I refuse to give up on his monster. I finally take his member out and graze my teeth below his sacks, my moans are louder and his groans are deeper. I move my lower body from his face when I feel myself caving in. I lead his monster into my entrance slowly preparing myself, my back still facing him, then I feel his hands around my waist, he gently pushes me down and I feel aches and arousal tingle through my entire body. I bounce on his large monster then he wraps my legs around his waist and stands up with him still snuggled deep inside me, he walks to the balcony across the room and continues to enter me from behind while I use one hand to hold onto the steel rail and my other to caress his balls between my legs. I lick on a finger and circle it around his anus opening, then the thrusts grow deeper and more intense when he pinches my nub with his two fingers I

almost topple over, then he lets go. I regulate my breathing thinking he's giving me a break, then I feel his palm of his hand slap against my nub, sending vibrations through my body, while I apply pressure on the area between his anus and his sack, pressing on his button. He tugs on my hair in the final push and I scream his name in ecstasy. He doesn't stop though, he flips me around to face him throwing one of my legs over his shoulder while balancing with my other one while he thrusts through his shattering peak.

After what seems like forever later, we're both panting on the bathroom floor. I can't feel my legs and Siya looks like he's passed out. After my fourth orgasm, if I wasn't sure of my love for this man, well now I have no doubt in my mind. The balcony, bedroom floor, couch, just to name a few have all been great fun, but I'm tired to my core. Siya finally gets up and fills the

bathtub with water and my favorite oils while I lay lifeless on the floor. He picks me up, places me in the tub and snuggles behind me and I nestle my head against his chest.

Him- "This is it for me. This is all I need."

He says and kisses the top of my head once he's done tying my weave into a messy bun.

I wake up much later wrapped in Siya's arms. My mouth curves into a smile and I trail kisses along his jawline. He pulls me closer smiling while his eyes are closed?

Him- "Again?"

I laugh and pull away then I hear my name being called from downstairs. I cover my head with a pillow and scream.

Me- "No no no no, not again!"

Siya- "I think that's your mom, you should go."
He says as he turns to face his back towards

me. I sigh heavily and grab a simple dress and underwear from the closet. I get dressed in lightning speed and run down the stairs. I miss the last step and see the room spin as I anticipate my fall, then I feel Siya scoop me up and gently place me on my feet.

Mom- "Zinhle Khumalo! Are you okay?"

Me- "Yes ma, it was a close call." I chuckle softly, but the three faces in front of me seem unimpressed.

I clear my throat and turn my attention to my mother.

Me- "Ma, did we have an appointment? I forget so easily these days."

Her- "Well that's pregnancy, you should only get pregnant once you're ready for all these changes, you'll just have to deal."

Ziyanda- "Deal? Mom come on!"

She laughs making her way towards me to

stroke my belly and greet her nephews/ nieces, she does this everyday.

Mom- "Well this boyfriend of yours called me to come over, surprise surprise, he's already here. Oops, I forget you two are cohabiting."

Ziyanda laughs and breathes in heavily, gesturing for mom to do the same.

Ziyanda- "I also got a text from Siya to meet you in the lounge now."

I look at Siya in confusion.

Siya- "Thank you for making yourselves available ladies. Please follow me."

Mom folds her arms over her chest in agitation and Ziyanda nudges her to follow Siya, I quickly follow behind him too. He walks towards the pool outside and I start to get anxious.

Me- "Siya."

He turns around and holds out his hand, I ignore it and walk beside him, I'm not sure what mood mom is in, and I don't want her to get even angrier on my account.

We finally make our way outside and I see white gazebos on the far side of the pool. Siya comes to a halt.

Him- "The reason why I've invited you all here today is because I thought that you three haven't been together in a while, I'm constantly occupying Zinhle's time, and I know that she has a life outside of me. So I figured why not have some downtime together? I'll be gone for the day, the staff is here to pamper you, whatever you need. Do enjoy." He flashes a smile and kisses me on the cheek, disappearing back in the house, leaving us all stunned.

Ziyanda- "Thank you brother in law!" She shouts after Siya.

Mom- "No! I don't remember receiving even a

leg quarter from that man, he's far from being anyone's in law."

Ziyanda rolls her eyes at mom and runs towards the spa setup. I stare at mom and she walks towards me holding me in a tight embrace.

Mom- "That man may love you, but I'm not about to admit it to anyone, especially not him. He must do right by you, but let's enjoy this so long." She kisses me cheek. Mom and I follow behind Ziyanda and I'm in awe of the setup. The massage beds, the friendly staff, the effortless elegance of the setup. My Siya really did it this time, I see mom involuntarily smile as she receives a back massage. Ziyanda is sipping on a Bellini while she gets a new pedicure. I smile and think that this is what happiness must look and feel like.

[04/18, 16:47] Wdz: [73]

****BRANDON****

I'm lying on my bed, with my hands supporting the back of my head as I stare at the ceiling, with Luther Vandross playing softly in the background. It's amusing how, as soon as I come back into the country, my mannerisms change, my preferences change, overseas I'm more of a classical music type of guy, music with soft instrumentals and little to no lyrics. I'm more relaxed on this side of the world, and I've been realizing more and more everyday that Ziyanda helped me be more comfortable with the shift in personalities that comes about when I'm surrounded by my people.

I have everything that I've shed blood sweat and tears for, and I thought that once I reached my pinnacle, I'd be content, but I'm more confused than ever. These few weeks with Eve have been a revelation to say the least, so much has

occurred in the years that we've been apart, that I'm at a crossroads deciding whether the damage is still repairable. Our relationship resembles a broken glass vase, regardless of being pieced back together, the cracks and shards are difficult to ignore, and we can no longer serve our purpose, because the positive steps we take don't have depth and therefore merely deep through the cracks.

It's safe to say that Eve and I are no longer the same people we once were, she's merely a shell of the woman that owned my heart, and it's like mourning a death all over again. The day I left with Eve at the hospital, I didn't have a preconceived idea of what the best step would be, I only knew that I had to keep her safe for the time being, at least until our questions were answered, and the one person that seemed to hold the key to finding closure was my father; Patrick. Needless to say, he's been less than

impressed by the fact that Eve has been staying with me in my loft, especially since I know how he craves to end her life. If I wasn't his son, he would have probably bombed my loft by now , so I guess he's been lenient in that at least he hasn't acted on any of his threats yet. I've procrastinated confronting him about Eve and what happened years ago, because as much as I need to hear the truth, I'm skeptical of what will be revealed, my father and I have forged an incredible bond and I admire him, he's helped mold me into the man I am today, but I fear the contempt I'll feel towards him if I hear that he decided my fate for me.

Eve is in the bathroom taking one of her long showers; I've grown accustomed to calling her that because apparently it's the name she prefers now, I used to call her Khanyisile, I felt that her second name resonated through her personality, at that time she really did light up everything she touched.

Me- "Eve, I'm going out for a few hours, I won't be long." I shout from the bedroom while I look for my wallet and keys.

I hear the doorknob turn and she emerges wrapped in a towel, her skin still damp from the shower, her facial expression lets me know that she's beyond annoyed.

Her- "Where? With who? Most importantly, why?" She says as she folds her arms across her chest.

Me- "I've been cooped up in here for too long, I have businesses to run and some answers to get."

Her- "Well I'll come with." She says as she makes her way to the closet.

Me- "It's business, you can't. We'll have dinner together later on."

Her- "So you want to leave me again, like all those years ago? You're just the same, you

haven't changed! You're selfish and could care less about me and my feelings! You don't get it, I'm all alone! I feel you drift away from me every minute of everyday, and I know that soon you'll be handing me over to your father and then what? I die?"

Me- "Yvette, calm down! Haven't I protected you thus far?"

Her- "Yes, but what happens when you grow bored of me again?" She says with tears running down her face.

This has been the norm lately, she doesn't want me to leave the loft or to speak to my father on the phone. I can't be too critical of her whining, because the last time I left her, we ended up not seeing each other for years, but we're having trouble connecting again.

I stand up and walk towards Eve and hold her in a tight embrace.

Me- "Calm down Eve, let's deal with everything as it comes." She turns around to face me and stands on her toes to reach my face with her hands. She gazes into my eyes, and that look alerts me to what's coming next, so I look away and pull away from her to escape, but not soon enough because she drops her towel, revealing her amazing body. She pushes me towards the bed and I bounce on the bed with my back. Eve world my buckle and unzips my jeans, taking out my little man. She looks at me in confusion when my package doesn't reciprocate the desire that's so evident in her eyes, with it barely standing to attention. She attempts to caress me, but my body just won't respond. My mind is clogged with our current situation and is flooded with Ziyanda.

Eve- "What the hell?" She asks while holding my now limp member in her hand.

Me- "I'm sorry, work stress." I say as I jump off the bed and buckle my belt and get ready to

leave.

Eve- "Who is she? Just tell me!" She shouts after me while I grab my keys and leave the room.

I decide to drive to my father's place to settle this once and for all.

I arrive at my father's beach house and I find him on the patio sipping on scotch. I take a deep breath, bracing myself for the conversation I'm about to have with the most ruthless man I know.

Patrick- "Have a drink, son."

He says without looking at me, while concentrating on the crashing waves of the sea from a short distance. I walk towards him and sit beside him, gazing at the beach trying to unravel my thoughts and emotions.

Me- "Dad, I..."

Him- "No! Can you hear that?"

I look at him in confusion.

Him- "It's silence. Peace and tranquility, do you want to ruin this moment for me as well?"

I signal for the butler to bring me a drink, and I recline on the couch and bask in the view.

After moments of silence, dad finally turns his attention to me.

Him- "I know why you're here, but before you pass judgement on me, follow me." He says as he grabs the bottle of scotch and makes his way inside the house, I gulp my drink and follow swiftly behind him.

He walks into the study and hands me a folder.

Me- "Dad, please can we have a father and son conversation without the technicalities and you treating me like an associate."

Him- "I've never been good with words when it came to you boys, just read it then we can talk."

I sigh heavily, then sit down and open the folder while dad pours himself another drink. My eyes open wider as I read every word on the first page and shock consumes my mind.

Dad- "That's your little girlfriend for you, and there's more. Carry on reading."

I turn the page and bury my head in my hands. Dad pushes the bottle of scotch towards me.

Him- "Maybe this will help."

****ZIYANDA****

Watching Siya dote over Zinhle over the past few weeks is heartwarming. Their love for each other can resonate from across the room without them even touching each other. The way they look at each other with adoration and their random smiles, tell a fairytale. I couldn't be

happier for my sister, but I can't help but feel envy for the life that Siya has created for her. He would do anything for her, and that's really just what I want. I've tried to reprogram my mind to being happy and comfortable without a man in my life, but I do have those moments where I feel lonely and that sets me back to feeling unwanted. I don't want to spiral into a dark hole where my harmless envy of Zinhle and her man turns into green jealousy, so the sooner I remove myself from the situation the better.

I haven't been able to stop myself from thinking about Brandon, and I despise myself for it. When I'm in my bed alone, craving a man's touch, he's the first person that comes to mind, I guess I hadn't realized how much of an impact he had on my life until he abruptly left me. I've replayed every conversation we've ever had in my head and I have to sometimes stop myself

from wondering if he thinks about me as much as I think of him.

I'm embarrassed to say that one evening I had a moment of weakness. I had a few glasses of wine, and by the time I had crawled into bed, my emotions were all over the place. Buried deep in my suitcase was my little rubber friend; my vibrator. I downloaded a bunch of Brandon's photos and pleased myself with one hand while I stared at his pictures in the other. When my legs shivered from my peak, I missed him even more and almost swallowed my pride and called him, luckily the alcohol got the better of me, and I drifted to sleep.

Today is the damages ceremony and that means I'm leaving the country in just two days. I have to go back to reality, and there's nothing I dread more. I'm in my room with a nervous

Zinhle when she turns to face me.

Her- "Brandon just sent you a text asking to talk." She says while waving my phone in my face.

I look at the screen that's illuminated by an influx of texts from the same number.

Her- "Is there something you want to tell me?"

I laugh as I read the texts and feel my heart leap out of my chest when I read the last one "I'm outside."

Me- "I'll be right back." I say in a panic.

[04/18, 16:48] Wdz: [74]

****BRANDON****

I scrutinize every page in the folder and throw it on across the desk in Patrick's office. I take the bottle of scotch and gulp down a few sips then recline back on the chair.

Me- "Patrick, what the hell is this?"

Him- "Well firstly, its dad. What that is, is the truth about your supposed love of your life."

Me- "This is probably not even true. Is this one of your stunts to keep me away from Yvette again? When will it stop? When will you stop controlling my life?" I scream as I throw the bottle against the room.

Patrick maintains his composure and that frustrates and aggravates me even more.

Him- "I hope you still have enough left in your accounts to pay for that bottle." He says in a calm tone.

I take a seat as everything I saw in the folder races through my mind.

Patrick- "You think that I'm the monster for removing her from your life years ago? I wasn't about to let my son marry a gold digging whore!"

The same week that you left, she was sleeping with someone else, then all of a sudden she's pregnant? I made an executive decision, and I still stand by it, she's a destructive force and you were on your way to securing your future, as a father I couldn't watch that all go to waste."

Me- "It wasn't your decision to make!"

Him- "Unbelievable!"

Me- "Must you constantly live vicariously through me?"

He chuckles loudly then looks at me intently.

Him- "You're channeling your anger in the wrong way, the person you should be throwing things at is that whore that you're evidently still in denial about."

Me- "I don't know if any of what I read is true, I think it's understandable that I be wary of your credibility. Besides, everything that Khanyisile has done stems from you!"

Him- "Me? The fact that she shares a bed with you and yet is still draining funds from your accounts, tell me son does that stem from me as well? The fact that she lies to you on a daily basis, begging you to stay at the loft with her because she's lonely, meanwhile she's hacking into your devices stealing your hard earned money and sending it to HER offshore accounts, that all stems from me? She almost killed that poor girl in the hospital, she slept with your brother, I even had a pass at her and.."

Me- "Wait, what? You did what?"

Him- "You should probably calm down first, but yes, I bent her over once. Remember when you brought her to the house to formally introduce us and I was vocal about how you could do better and so on?"

Me- "Patrick get to the damn point!"

Him- "Okay! Well you had an emergency conference call and I retired to my study

because I had nothing to say to the girl. Well she followed me, asking about what she could do to get into my good books, before I could answer, she stripped naked and bent over. I don't think I need to go into detail about the rest."

Me- "Dad, what the fuck?"

Him- "it's one of my greatest regrets, if that means anything."

Me- "I'm leaving."

Him- "Son, I'm sorry but you should know about the devil you're sleeping with. She knows that you killed her father and that I helped cover it up."

Me- "Whhhaaat?!"

Him- "Whatever she's planning, its big."

I sit back on the chair as I feel my whole body shiver, I bury my head in the palms of my hands.

Me- "Dad, I.."

Him- "It's okay son, I think this calls for another bottle of the good stuff. I'll be back." He says as he disappears out of the study.

Me- "Shit."

****SIYA****

I'm sitting reclining in the drivers seat of my car outside Zinhle's home while some distant relatives negotiate damages inside. I sent them in with a suitcase full of cash, but knowing them, some of it landed in their pockets, but it's a small price to pay for doing right by Zinhle and her family.

I'm reading some emails when I come across an email from Pam, it's probably her begging for her job back, like the past few days. Nothing could prepare me for what I see. A bunch of pictures of Pam sprawled on the floor naked, in different lingerie pieces. I narrow my eyes as a short video of her pops up with her pleasuring

herself. I shift uncomfortably on my seat as sweat droplets form on my forehead, I gawk at the pictures because she's undeniably sexy, and I succumb to weakness.

I decide to give Pam a call and set things straight once and for all, she answers on the second ring.

Pam- "Hi, got my little preview?"

Me- "Pam, what are you playing at?"

Pam- "Look Siya, I know there was conflict of interest while I was working for you, but now that I'm no longer working for you, all bets are off."

Me- "Pam, I tried being nice to you. Now I guess I should be frank. I don't want you, you have nothing that I'd risk my family for."

Her- "I get it, you're with that fat ball, but I'll make you feel good, and.."

Me- "Shut up, I don't want to have to blacklist you. I'm not buying what you're selling, goodbye!" I hang up and delete the soft porn from Pam and continue to anxiously wait.

I see Ziyanda walk out the gate of their house and look around as if she's expecting someone and that's when I notice a car flicking it's lights behind me. I adjust my rear view mirror and spot Eve in oversized sunglasses, I look ahead and see Ziyanda slowly jogging towards us. I jump out of the car and run to Eve's car, but before I reach it, she turns on the engine and speeds off in Ziyanda's direction.

Me- "Ziyanda! Ruuuuun!" I shout as I run after the car. Ziyanda looks at me in confusion, then looks at the speeding vehicle. She jumps out of the way just in time, rolling onto the floor on the side of the road. I run to her side as Eve speeds off. I pull Ziyanda into my arms and hold her as she shakes and sobs uncontrollably.

Me- "It's okay, you're okay."

I say as I inspect her trembling body. Zinhle's mom comes running out towards us, swiftly followed by my family members and a waddling Zinhle.

Zamokuhle- "What happened? Who was that?" She screams as she scoops Ziyanda into her arms.

Ziyanda- "I'm fine ma, it was just a drunk driver." She manages to say through her tears.

Zamokuhle- "Surprise surprise, Siyabonga Nyathi is in the midst of all of this." She says with a smirk on her face.

Ziyanda- "Ma, he's the one who saved me." Zinhle finally reaches us with worry written on her face.

Zinhle- "Yanda, kwenzenjani (what happened?)

Me- "Nothing, shouldn't you be resting?" I gesture to her swollen feet. She rolls her eyes at

me and attempts to crouch down to Ziyanda, but she yelps out in pain. I rush to her side and she pushes me away.

Zinhle- "I'm fine. Let's get Yanda in the house."

The elders help Ziyanda up and carry her into the house while Zinhle comes to a halt and walks towards me.

Her- "What really happened? She was supposed to meet with Brandon."

Me- "It wasn't Brandon, it was Eve."

She closes the gap between us and looks at me intently.

Her- "I don't care what you have to do anymore, kill the bitch if you have to. I'm not giving birth with her running around with all this power over us. Handle this Siyabonga Nyathi." She turns her heels and sways her large butt towards the house.

[04/18, 16:49] Wdz: So, we're in the final month

of the year. Let's make it count!

[75]

****BRANDON****

I narrow my eyes gazing at the wall ahead of me as I gulp down my fourth glass of scotch.

Patrick- "Take it easy son." He says as he walks towards me and pats my shoulder.

Me- "Everything is a whirlwind right now, I need a minute to figure things out."

Him- "Well time waits for no man, nip this in the bud immediately before she sucks you completely dry. I don't think I need to spell out what needs to be done."

Me- "Dad, I'm not that guy. Khanyisile's father was a mistake, I was young and stupid."

Him- "Yes, but it happened and the reason this

girl won't leave you alone is because of that mistake you made."

Me- "I never wanted any of this to happen, it was a mistake!"

Him- "Yes, but you were just to ensure that she and her family were taken care of after her father died, but you fell for her! What did you think was going to happen?"

Me- "It wasn't my intention! You know that I was consumed by guilt after I crashed into that man! I couldn't eat or sleep for weeks! The images of his lifeless body sprawled on the road still haunts me today. It was a juvenile drunken mistake, the least I could do was ensure that she was taken care of as well as her family. Falling in love with her was never part of the plan, it just happened. It alleviated some of my stress knowing that I was taking care of her after I took the most precious thing from her, it gave me a sense of relief. I constantly debated

over telling her, but it was pointless after she left me, or at least I thought she did. Now I've put the lives of so many people in danger." I say as tears flood my eyes.

Patrick- "Man up son. I can help get your money back, but you have to promise me that you'll handle this Yvette issue, permanently." He looks at me intently and I look away as a tear runs down my cheek.

Me- "Dad, I.."

Him- "No, this must be done. Otherwise we'll never have peace."

I get up to leave the room, and I take the bottle of scotch with me. I retire to one of the guest rooms on the first floor and spring onto the bed as a bunch of thoughts race through my mind, and I trace my memory back to the fateful evening that turned me into a murderer.

I went out with a bunch of friends celebrating my birthday, I had a few too many drinks and made the worst decision of getting behind the wheel. I was heavily intoxicated, arrogant because of my new set of wheels and I had done a few lines of cocaine. I was invincible that evening/early morning. I remember driving around in circles, getting lost on my way to one of the women I was shagging at the time. I closed my eyes just for a minute, and before I knew it, I hit something and rode over it. That didn't sober me up, because I reversed onto the same object. I jumped out of my car and stumbled to the rear end of the car, and that's when I realized that what I had crashed into was a person. His lifeless body with blood spewing from every inch of it sent chills through my body. I stood there shellshocked for minutes on end until I snapped back to my senses. My first phonecall was to my father, my

speech was slurred and my vision was hazy. Within minutes, Patrick had arrived with his entourage and I was escorted home. I lay in bed for over a week, unable to eat or sleep. I watched the news constantly, as news about a hit and run made a daily appearance on every channel. He was a middle aged man on his way to work when I took his life. He was survived by an Yvette Khanyisile, his daughter and his wife Bridgette.

At first my intentions regarding Khanyisile were to come into her life as a concerned party, give her a lump sum of money, then move on with my life. Unfortunately, fate had other plans and I fell hard for her, and I assume she felt the same about me. Once our relationship developed and my feelings for her grew deeper, I made a decision to take my secret to the grave. Khanyi was my everything, and life without her would be bleak, I decided to change for the better and

live for her and our future and try to release the past.

Now, years later my buried past has resurrected to bite me in the ass. I know that if I don't eliminate her, she'll destruct my life slowly but surely. However how do I justify killing someone again? How will I live with myself? I know that Patrick prefers me to take care of the problem, because he's always been my fixer and for closure, I need to do this myself, I just have to come to terms with my reality and head back to my life overseas, my life and the lives of the people I care about depend on it.

****ZINHLE****

I'm 28 weeks pregnant and extremely uncomfortable. I'm on Siya's laptop completing one of my first few quizzes for one of my modules when an influx of emails disturb me.

The emails automatically pop open and I see a clear view of Pam's lady parts plastered on the screen. By the time I'm done browsing through his emails, I'm well acquainted with every inch of Pam's body. I roll off the bed and make my way outside to the pool area, I slide his laptop in the pool and waddle back inside where I go into Ziyanda's room and cuddle with her on her bed. She runs her hands through my hair and kisses my cheek.

Her- "I leave tomorrow evening, remember?"

Me- "Do you have to go?"

Her- "Those puppy eyes won't work again." I laugh softly.

Me- "What about Brandon? I see how you stalk him on social media."

Her- "Lets not talk about him. So you're really going to let me go back overseas without me knowing whether I'm having nieces or nephews?"

Me- "Well, I told Siya that I'm ready to find out. It's only practical that I know the gender of my munchkins so I can prepare. Yanda, I'm going to be a mother!" I say as I pinch her arm.

We stay cuddled in each other's arms until we both doze off. Our blissful sleep is interrupted by a loud knock on the door. Ziyanda doesn't flinch so I shift off the bed and open to find an angry looking Siya.

Him- "So you thought my laptop would work better in the pool? Zinhle, sometimes I just don't know with you. Anyway, before you try to be smart and justify your actions, please go with Ziyanda to the birthing class tomorrow, I have a shareholders meeting. Oh and please pick up my suits from the cleaners, because it'll be on your way, and take Ziyanda out for brunch just as a farewell from the both of us. Are you spending the night here?"

Me- "I'll be right up Bab' Nyathi. Have you eaten

sir?"

Him- "No, stay here. That'll probably be best. Goodnight." He jogs up the stairs and leaves me rolling my eyes at the conversation that just took place.

I wake up in the morning to a snoring Ziyanda and shake her vigorously to wake up. It takes a lot of willpower for her to finally open her eyes and understand the words that are coming out of my mouth. Two hours later, we're both ready to leave. I look at her in envy in her short jumpsuit and heels then look at myself in a white maxi dress that seems to be tighter than it should be, and simple slops because of my swollen feet.

Me- "I don't even know why we're driving to this prenatal class, you should just roll me around."

Ziyanda rolls her eyes and picks an apple and makes her way to the garage. Siya finally jogs

down the stairs concentrated on a phone call while vigorously typing on his iPad. I wave at him and he nods then walks in the opposite direction, I take that as my cue to leave and walk briskly to the garage. I'm zoned out during the class and Ziyanda's excitement is frankly annoying. She's engaged and enjoying the class and I'm counting every second that passes.

We finally make it to brunch and my mood is even more somber when I realize that Ziyanda is leaving soon. She seems anxious to leave, but I want to squeeze in more time with her so I keep ordering appetizer after appetizer, much to her agitation.

Ziyanda- "Zinhle, we have to leave. We've been out for hours, I'm not finished packing and I still have to see mom before I leave."

Me- "So there's no way I can change your mind about leaving?"

She gives me a bored look and I gulp down the last of my milkshake. I can feel the kilograms pile on all over my body by the time we leave the restaurant, I'm so uncomfortable that Ziyanda drives us home.

We make our way inside and before I can stop myself, I pass wind.

Ziyanda- "Zinhle! Eeeuuuw and it stinks!" She shouts while covering her mouth.

Me- "It's the munchkins, I swear." I say while laughing. I take a few steps into the lounge and I'm bombarded by a bunch of people yelling "Surprise!" simultaneously. I see Siya laughing from a distance while holding onto his stomach and covering his mouth. Ziyanda rushes to my side.

Her- "So this is your baby shower." She whispers in my ear.

Me- "Did I really just fart in front of all these people?"

Yanda- "I'm sure no one heard."

Me- "The look on Siya's face and mom's says something different." I say as I run to one of the guest rooms in tears.

[04/18, 16:49] Wdz: [76]

****ZINHLE****

I pace up and down the room as I cover my face with my hands in embarrassment and I'm swiftly followed by deafening knocks on the door. My phone rings for the fifth time and it's obviously Siya. I sit down on the bed and laugh at myself until I get stitches, yes I'm humiliated, but there's no time machine to turn back the hands of time, and I'm partially not even surprised that I've managed to embarrass

myself yet again.

Me- "You two literally always have the worst timing! You'd better get it right when it's time to come into the world, okay?" I say as I stroke my belly. I walk to the door and slowly turn the knob and it immediately swings open. Siya looks at me with concern and marches into the room, locking the door behind him and locking mom and Ziyanda outside.

Him- "Are you good?"

I look at him and as soon as our eyes lock, we both burst into laughter.

Him- "Can I ask what that was about?" He says in between chuckles.

Me- "Do I really have to go into detail about what happened? It's bad enough that I had to live through it once already, don't make me replay it please. What you can do is tell me what's going on out there?" I look up into his captivating eyes.

He leads me to the large full length mirror on the opposite side of the room and stands behind me while staring at me through the mirror.

Him- "Well, see this?" He says as he strokes my belly.

Him- "I wanted us to celebrate this time in our lives thoroughly. I wanted to capture these moments of you glowing because you're carrying our creations, and since you're so incredibly fussy and annoyed at everything I do, I decided to take hold of the reigns on this one. I want you to enjoy yourself, I'll be out of your way, but just have fun." He says while gently massaging my neck.

Me- "What if I don't want you to leave?" I say as I flutter my eyelashes.

Him- "Are you saying that you don't want me to leave?"

I turn around to face him and intertwine my fingers

around his neck.

Me- "Stay please. I don't think I want to do this without you."

He crouches down and kisses my cheek.

Him- "I got a stylist to pick a few outfit options for you, she'll bring them in just now." He winks at me then makes his way to the door.

Him- "I'm sure no one heard you let it rip, they probably think it was just a really loud burp." He says as he laughs even louder while opening the bedroom door. I pick up a cushion from the floor and throw it in his direction.

Him- "I love you too!" He shouts from outside the room while laughing uncontrollably.

An hour later, I'm gazing at my reflection in the mirror mentally preparing myself for the crowd that awaits me outside. I'm in a white and gold long Grecian inspired creation, gold sandals and

an elegant white flower crown. I rush out of the room and float to the living room where I'm met by dozens of people screaming their "oooh's" and "aaah's" while clapping and flashing their smiles. The warmth in the room allows me to genuinely smile and I feel tears threaten to escape my eyes. My eyes wander around the room in search of my Siya, and then I spot him, looking effortlessly sexy in faded jeans and crisp white shirt, folded at the sleeves. When he spots me, he blows a kiss at me then fades off into the background. The room is filled with distant cousins, some girls I went to high school with and a few acquaintances. I don't have a close relationship with any of these women, but I'm glad they cleared their schedules nonetheless. I'm surrounded by women stroking my belly and throwing compliments my way, I'm beaming and I'm loving every second of it, I see a few photographers snap away and I feel a sense of

contentment.

I take a step back and to absorb my surroundings, and I'm in awe of them. The house in no way resembles the same house I woke up in just a few hours prior. The living room is ordained with an assortment of flowers, white roses dominating though. There are elegant dainty decorations scattered all over the room, tables with treats and goodies, pink and blue mocktails, and part favors. I make my way outside and I'm captivated by the sight before me. The terrace is intricately decorated with blush and white flowers and furniture to match. There's a large sign on the entrance to the terrace which reads "Mommy's corner" and a smaller sign below which reads "Daddy too, if he's invited." My mouth automatically curves into a smile when I notice the detail. There's a rectangular long table on the lawn beside the pool with blush and white undertones taking

over, and light blue hints on the table and chair decorations. It all looks like something from a fairytale, and it's my reality.

I head back inside where the living room is filled with chatter and laughter. Ziyanda announces that its time for some games, and everyone gathers around.

Siya surprisingly participates in every game, from the baby bottle drink off to the diaper changing challenge and he seems to have been thoroughly enjoying himself. He's in his element as the women compliment him on being such a hands on partner while stroking his broad shoulders and gazing into his mesmerizing eyes.

Ziyanda- "Okay, last game everyone! We have a few questions from the unborn babies, that they wanted to ask their parents. You two will be given boards to write your answers and

whoever gets the most answers right, gets a special prize!"

Siya takes a seat beside me and gets his marker ready.

Ziyanda- "Okay mommy, first question. Does daddy Siya want little girls or baby boys?"

Siya writes on his board and I stare at him seeking a clue, but he's not giving anything away.

Me- "Baby Boys, definitely."

Siya reveals his board and he's written "princesses" on it.

A few questions later, it's obvious that Siya has won the game, I guess he knows me better than I thought he did.

Lunch is served and we all make our way outside, I take my seat on the terrace and Siya sits almost on top of me. Mom and Ziyanda sit

on the two free seats on the terrace while the rest of the guests take their seats on the long rectangular table. I stuff my face with some canapés then I notice mom grab hold of the mic.

Mom- "Zinhle my child, I won't be long but I wanted to say a few words. The Lord has blessed you with these two little lives, which means he's entrusted you and Siyabonga to take responsibility of them and raise them the best way you can. Both of you remember to pray for these little lives, there will be tears, sleepless nights and arguing, but trust in Him and instill in them faith in Christ. Don't let anyone other than Him dictate your parenting, and trust me, you'll never be fully prepared for the hurricane that a baby brings into your life, but that's the joy in life, embracing the unknown. Siyabonga, I'm trusting you with my daughter and my grand babies, be a father that you will be proud of. Thanks."

When she's done I immediately attack her with

a hug, she wipes my tears when she pulls away and as I make my way to my seat again, I hear Siya on the mic.

Him- "Firstly, thank you all for coming, we appreciate it so much. Zinhle, my love, you know that our relationship hasn't been a conventional one, but I feel that our love has managed to surpass everything that we've encountered.

I'm sure you're wondering where your gifts are, well there aren't any. I asked that our guests don't buy any gifts, because I wanted to gift you with a greater gift and I didn't want to outshine anyone." He chuckles softly.

Him- "So, there's a question that I've been meaning to ask you." He reaches in his back pocket and I see a small black velvet box resting on his trembling hands. I hear the crowd scream in excitement and Ziyanda shout something from a distance. My vision gets

blurred from the tears that form in my eyes and I hold out my left hand towards him as my heart leaps out of my chest in exhilaration.

[04/18, 16:50] Wdz: [77]

****ZINHLE****

Siya grabs my hand and puts the velvet box on my palm and helps me open it. I close my eyes in anticipation and finally open them to peep inside the dainty box. I see a shimmering gold key. I look up at Siya and he narrows his eyes in confusion when he sees my facial expression change from excitement to disappointment. Our eyes lock and none of us blink as we examine each other's facial expressions. We eventually snap out of the alternate world we've both traveled to when we hear the crowd shout "what is it?"

I raise an eyebrow at Siya and give him a bored look.

Me- "Yeah, Siya; what is it?"

Siya holds onto the microphone and clears his throat in preparation to speak.

Him- "Well, I was saying that there's a question that I've been meaning to ask the mother of my kids here. I was wondering Zinhle Khumalo if you'd do me the honor of building a home with me? This is a key to our new house that I was hoping you'd turn into a home. This space isn't the best environment for our little munchkins, so are you up to moving once more?" He says with a smile plastered on his face. My mom claps once and looks away after shouting "hheh!" Ziyanda on the other hand looks elated along with the other guests. I nod slightly and Siya scoops me and my fat body up in a warm embrace as I give everyone a blank expression.

Now that the games and speeches are over, everyone can officially indulge in the delectable four course meal. I'm genuinely disappointed in Siya for not popping the question, because although our relationship is a high speed rollercoaster, I still can't imagine anyone I'd rather be on this crazy ride with other than him. I really thought he felt the same, and maybe my vision for us tying the knot and spending the rest of our lives together is premature, considering the underlying issues that we are still currently dealing with. As hard as it is to ignore, I'm going to choose to bury this non-proposal for now, I don't want to push Siya away any more than I already have and so I'll push my feelings aside for now. I just feel that I've allowed myself to be people's doormat over the years, and when I met Siya, I resurrected my confidence and in turn I realized that I'd never willingly allow anyone to mistreat me, physically and emotionally. I love the way in which Siya

treats me and makes me feel, so when I no longer feel that sense of warmth and contentment, feelings from my past are triggered. I stare at Siya as he converses with the guests, making sure they're okay and I realize that if one of my deepest desires is to be one with Siya, I will have to let him in on my internal demons that I battle from time to time.

I swore to myself that when I moved on from Thabi, it would be for good and I would never pay reference to him ever again, unfortunately that's one of those things that are much easier said than done. When you're in a relationship with someone who becomes a virus within your soul, slowly eating away at it every chance they get, that has long lasting effects even on the purest of souls I'm sure. When your flaws are magnified and you're constantly reminded of being unworthy, You begin to believe that the life you've grown accustomed to is the only life

that you're destined for.

When you've been living under a dark cloud for even the shortest time, it's difficult to believe that the rainbow that appears afterwards is real. I'm slowly beginning to realize that my irrational behavior regarding Siya and our mishaps is due to fear. I'm fearful that one day I'll wake up, and he'll no longer want me or his kids, or he'll disappoint me and reveal himself as an abusive womanizer or worse.

I smile at Siya as I come to the conclusion that I'm glad he didn't propose today. I need to be a better version of my half before we conjoin to become one. As he said, our relationship was never a conventional one. My smile grows wider when Siya finally notices me staring and he blows a kiss in my direction. He glides towards me and nibbles on my ear, which he stops doing when we hear mom clear her throat louder than

necessary.

Mom- "I hope you two don't mind, but I've invited someone over, it'll only be after the festivities though."

Siya smiles widely and excuses himself while I give mom an inquisitive look.

Mom- "That's all I'm willing to say about that, now leave me alone." She says as she swiftly walks away.

The rest of the day is filled with a fun yet calm ambience and it seems that everyone is enjoying themselves even more than myself. I steal Siya away from these horny women and pull him to the side.

Me- "Siyabonga, so not even one gift?"

He chuckles softly and pulls up my chin.

Him- "Our munchkins aren't anyone else's responsibility besides our own. Besides, I've

seen you and your voodoo holistic lifestyle, I don't want the nursery smelling like a jungle because what if your friends and family share the same sentiments? No thank you! I'll take care of everything. Is there anything else?" He says as he raises an eyebrow.

Me- "I miss you." I say as I tug onto his shirt and reach up to plant a soft kiss on his lips. He grabs my hands and gently pushes them away.

Him- "We'll talk about this later."

He says as he turns and walks away.

I briskly walk to the treat table and grab a small milkshake and make my way to the guests. The party is in full swing, and the adult beverages are taking its toll on the guests. Siya seems to be having a blast, after downing a few doubles of whiskey and I see him basking in the attention he's getting from the ladies. I see him walk to one of the guest bathrooms, but he's tripping over his own feet. On his heels, I see

one of my high school "friends" briskly follow him while pushing up her breasts and fixing her dress. My cheeks heat up with anger and my feet can't carry me to the bathroom fast enough. I swing the door open just as she's about to plant her plump lips on my Siya, who seems to be out of it, sitting on the bath tub. I push the girl away until her back is against the wall.

Me- "Not today sweetie! Leave my house now!"

I shout in her face and I see her shake in fear. She jogs her petite body out of the bathroom and I tend to Siya, whose speech is slurred and barely audible.

Me- "Baby, stand up and let's go to the bedroom okay?" He nods with his head bowed and tries to stand but levels himself on me. I make the agonizing journey to a guest bedroom and push him onto the bed. He begins to perspire and shake profusely, while his eyes are closed shut. I open his eye with my trembling fingers and

see his pupils dilate. I scream out for my mom and Ziyanda and they come running within seconds.

Me- "Yanda, call the doctor. The number is on my phone. Mom, help!"

Ziyanda leaves the room frantically while mom runs to the bathroom and re emerges with a cold wet towel which she places on Siya's forehead. I hold onto Siya's hand and try to fan him with my vacant one. Mom shoves off Siya's shoes and rips of his shirt.

A few minutes later Steven barges into the room with his bag and Ziyanda following behind him. He stops in his tracks as he stares at mom.

Me- "Steven, really? Checking out my mom at a time like this?" Ziyanda softly chuckles.

Him- "Your mom? Zama, what's going on?"

Ziyanda- "Wait, how do you know our mom?"

Mom- "No! How do you two know Steven?"

Mom shouts as she throws her hands in the air.

Me- "Guys, Siya? Hello?" I shout frantically.

Steven- "Zama we'll talk about this later!" He says as he runs towards the bed to tend to Siya.

Me- "Mom, don't tell me.."

Mom- "You're right, I won't tell you anything."

She says as she marches out of the room and bangs the door closed behind her.

[04/18, 16:50] Wdz: [78]

****ZINHLE****

The living room is filled with silence as Steven tends to Siya and the staff clear the mess from the party. The guests have finally departed and I wish that the staff would leave as well, but the mess is unbearable and with my swollen feet, I'm not up for standing or walking around. We're

all eyeing each other, and the tension in the room could be cut with a knife. I can distinguish from the couch that I'm sitting on, that Ziyanda is holding in a laugh, mom on the other hand is visibly uncomfortable as her eyes wander across the room and her fingers fiddle with each other.

Ziyanda- "Is anyone going to address the pink elephant in the room?" Mom shoots her eyes at Ziyanda, but Ziyanda doesn't seem fazed.

Me- "Maybe we should wait until we know what's going on with Siya."

I say as I stare at Ziyanda.

Ziyanda- "Fine, but as soon as we know he's fine, we're having this conversation. No running away ma!"

Mom rolls her eyes and heads for the kitchen while I wait impatiently in the lounge and

Ziyanda shakes her head in defeat.

A few minutes later Steven emerges in the living room, and I can't decipher anything from his facial expression so I jump off the couch and charge towards him.

Steven- "He's fine, it seems as if he was drugged with a typical date rape drug. He just needs to remain hydrated, and he'll be good as new."

Me- "Are you sure Steven? He looked pretty bad."

Steven- "Trust me, you know I know my stuff, and I haven't disappointed you before."

I roll my eyes at him.

Me- "Are you sure you want to open that can of worms?" I ask as I cross my arms on my chest.

He softly chuckles then gives me a reassuring look.

Him- "He'll be fine. I probably shouldn't ask you what happened, because there's always drama with the two of you, but I've given him something to flush the toxins out."

Me- "I think I know who did this, and she's as good as dead to me."

Him- "Good. Where's Zama?"

Ziyanda- "Really? Steven, I feel you owe Zinhle and I some sort of explanation. After all this time we've spent together under this roof, and you've never let it slip that you're our mother's mystery mother?" Ziyanda claps once.

Steven- "Well, I had no clue that Zama is your mother. I'm waiting for an explanation from her as well, so join the club."

Mom walks into the living room with a bored look on her face.

Mom- "Steven, can I have a moment alone with my daughters please?"

Steven- "I think you and I should probably talk as well, don't you think?"

Ziyanda- "Is this our first fight as a family?"
Ziyanda says with a wide grin on her face.

Me- "Steven and your lies! My mom invited you over today so you must have known that I'm her daughter."

Mom- "That's enough!" The room falls into a deafening silence.

Mom- "Steven isn't the man I asked to come over today. Steven, please leave."

She narrows her eyes at him and gestures him to the door. Ziyanda and I are shellshocked, Yanda's facial expression makes me laugh softly, but I stop when mom gives me a death stare. The door finally slams shut and mom turns her attention to the both of us.

Mom- "Zinhle, go take care of your man! And you, Ziyanda go pack or something!" She says

as she turns on her heels and marches to the front door. Ziyanda and I look at each other with confusion written all over our faces. I shrug my shoulders and walk towards the room that Siya is in. I bid her goodnight and gear Ziyanda sigh heavily and walk towards the bar.

I cuddle up next to Siya once I've stripped off my dress and am left in my underwear. He's sound asleep as I stare at his face and wrap my leg around his.

Me- "I love you."

I whisper to him and his luscious lips curve into a smile and he pulls me closer.

Him- "Marry me." He says and it barely comes out as a whisper.

Me- "What?" Silence fills the room, and that's shortly followed by Siya's soft snoring. I huff and shrug my shoulders then close my eyes,

anticipating for sleep to take over.

The following morning, I'm woken up by soft classical music playing in the background. I narrow my eyes as I stretch my even larger body and I spot Siya lying on his back next to me with his eyes closed and head and fingers moving along to the gentle instrumentals.

Me- "Siyabonga"

Him- "Ssshhh this is supposed to help relax the munchkins and help them distinguish different sounds." He says while keeping his eyes closed.

Me- "Okay. How are you feeling now? Do you need anything? Water? Have you eaten?"

Siya- "Which question should I answer first?"

I pinch his arm and he squirms a little.

Him- "Zinhle, I woke up hours ago. If I didn't know better, I'd think that you were the patient here."

Me- "I'm sorry, I guess I was just drained from the party yesterday. I was really worried about you though love."

I inch closer to him and he turns to his side to face me.

Him- "I'm fine, let's not talk about it okay? It's a huge knock to my ego knowing that I let woman drug me in my own house. So how are you and the babies feeling?"

He asks as he strokes my belly.

Me- "I think I'm scrapping the whole natural delivery thing. As soon as it's safe, Steven can cut me open. I'm tired!"

He chuckles softly and pecks my navel with his succulent lips.

Him- "You made me sweat not to agree to that remember? You made me swear on the Bible that no matter how uncomfortable you get, I'd ensure that you stuck to the original plan of a

natural birth. So, you'll just have to suck it up hey."

Me- "What about a water birth here in the house?"

Him- "That doesn't even sound right." He says as he scrunches his nose.

I laugh at his reaction and climb on top of him.

Me- "Let's at least consider it. We could have a bunch of diffusers around the room, and it would be a more intimate way of bringing the munchkins into the world."

Him- "I just don't think it would be the safest option, what if something goes wrong? I just don't want to take that kind of risk."

Me- "But there's no harm in researching more about it right?"

Him- "We'll see." I give him a long smooch and stop when I feel his monster slowly grow beneath me.

Me- "You know that very soon this peace and quiet will be a very distant dream?" He holds onto my waist and gazes into my eyes.

Him- "I wouldn't want it any other way."

Me- "Yes, but with school it could be a little difficult. So I was wondering if we could get a part time nanny for them? I don't want them being raised by anyone other than us, but it would help."

Him- "I understand babe. I know that every decision you make will be the best possible ones for the munchkins." I smile at him and plant soft kisses on his jawline and lick his earlobe.

Me- "Thank you for the baby shower yesterday. You're the best baby daddy ever." I graze my teeth on his earlobe and his grip around my waist lowers down to my butt.

Me- "Do you remember what you said last night when I got into bed with you?"

Him- "I want to be inside you?"

Me- "No! Eeeuw!"

Him- "Well that's the only statement that really matters right?" He says through his soft laugh. He unclasps my bra and it falls on the bed beside us, revealing my two watermelons. I jump off Siya when I hear a loud knock on the door and I hear Ziyanda calling my name on the other side of the door.

Siya- "Saved by the knock hey?"

I roll my eyes and head to the bathroom to take a quick shower.

Once I'm done with my shower, I cover myself with a fluffy gown and walk out in search of Ziyanda. I'm startled when I spot mom and Ziyanda sipping on tea in the living room. I tug on my gown and tighten the belt then walk into the living room to greet the both of them.

Ziyanda- "Tea? I'm already having some in preparation for the real tea I'm about to hear." She says with a mischievous look plastered on her face as I shake my head at her.

Mom- "Ziyanda shut up! Zinhle, I came here today because I thought it was time I opened up to the both of you. You're no longer little girls, Zinhle is shacking up and expecting kids with a divorcée and Ziyanda has chosen to go AWOL from her lucrative job aboard, so I'm sure what I'm about to tell you shouldn't surprise you too much."

I shift on my seat and Ziyanda places her teacup on the table beside her as we both narrow our eyes in anticipation for what we're about to hear.

[04/18, 16:50] Wdz: [79]

****ZINHLE****

Silence fills the room once again, the noise from outside is exaggerated by the tranquility in the living room. I stretch my legs on the space beside me on the couch and shift my body to get comfortable. Ziyanda is relentless in her quest to find out what mom plans on telling us, as she taps her long nails on the table next to her.

Mom sighs out heavily as she looks at the both of us as if she's still piecing together whatever she plans in telling us.

Me- "Mom, I guess you don't have to tell us today if it makes you so uncomfortable. We can.."

Ziyanda- "No, I'm leaving tonight. There's no time like the present, I'm all ears Mrs Khumalo." She says as she sits back on her couch and crosses her arms on her chest.

Mom- "What is this? Good cop, bad cop? Can the two of you just shut up and give me longer

than a second to speak?"

Ziyanda and I narrow our eyes at her in confusion.

Mom- "So, as you two probably know, I'm well acquainted with Steven, whom you know pretty well. I guess I should give you both some background information regarding Steve and I?"

I nod while Ziyanda rolls her eyes.

Ziyanda- "Obviously."

I throw a cushion at her and she swerves it away with her hand while laughing loudly, much to the annoyance of mom, who stands up and walks away.

Ziyanda- "Okay, okay. We're sorry. From now on, we'll listen without interrupting."

She pleads with mom once she's on her feet and holding onto mom's hand.

After what feels like forever, we're finally all settled in the living room, waiting for mom to continue,

Mom- "Okay, well after your father and I split, it was an extremely emotional time for me, as you may remember. It wasn't just my emotional state that was cause for concern, but my physical state started to deteriorate. I was losing weight, my hair, I had migraines and that's just a few of the things I was experiencing. The next natural thing was to see a doctor, and as luck would have it, I went to see Steven. I didn't want to go to our family GP because I wanted a fresh perspective without judgement. As soon as I took off my clothes and he examined me, I wailed into his arms. I couldn't help it, I just let go of all my hurt in that consultation room, and he pulled me into his warm arms and comforted me. He set me free that day."

She says with a nostalgic look written on her

face as she stares at the ceiling.

Mom- "We couldn't continue with the consultation, I was too hysterical, instead he prescribed some meds to help me sleep and that was that. Until one day I bumped into him at a grocery store, he helped me with my plastic bags and begged to take me to lunch afterwards and I obliged. Those few hours with him were liberating, we talked about the most trivial of things, but I thoroughly enjoyed myself. He wanted to show me a place that he had recently purchased, and my head was in the clouds so I tagged along. Needless to say, one thing led to another and I'm sure I don't need to go into detail about what happened the rest of the evening. I left as soon as I came to my senses, consumed by guilt. The thing is, my divorce with your father wasn't exactly finalized at that point, and although we were already legally separated, I'd never acted in such debauchery. I changed doctors after that, and

ignored the many attempts that Steve made to get hold of me even though I hadn't given him my number. It wasn't until a few months ago that I bumped into him yet again. Ironically enough, it was at a grocery store yet again, I couldn't reach for something, and there he was.."

She says with a smile on her face and as she looks away shyly.

Mom- "When his hand stroked mine, I felt an electric current pulsate through my entire body and I knew it was him. There he was, looking better than ever and surprised to see me. That day, he forced me to give him my number, and from that day on was the beginning of our childish affair, but there was a problem. At that point, I wasn't necessarily single? There had been someone in my life for months, so basically I two-timed him."

Me- "Mom, no one uses that phrase anymore." I

say through my laughter.

Ziyanda- "Aah shame, bare with her, she's been out of the game for too long." She joins in my laughing fest.

Mom- "Okay, well whatever you call it; bottom line is that I cheated on that poor man. I was guilt wrenched every time I'd leave Steven's house in the morning, or walk out of a hotel room, it's just always been difficult for me to resist his charms. With Steven in my life, my relationship seemed so dull and lifeless, I became a lovesick teenager and I wasn't proud of it."

Me- "Have you broken things off with the boyfriend?"

Mom shakes her head with it bowed in embarrassment.

Mom- "It's hard to just leave that relationship, he's a man from church who told the pastor of his intentions to marry me. I'm already a

divorced woman, that already brings me shame. If I just up and leave this man, can you imagine the stares and whispers? I'll be shunned yet again." She says with concern written on her face as she sighs out heavily.

Ziyanda- "Mom, imagine how much worse it will be if the church people see you at a restaurant or at a hotel with Steven?"

Mom- "I know, I'll be the divorced whore who can't be trusted around men. That's why I've taken a break from Steven."

Me- "How does he feel about that?"

Mom- "I don't think he fully comprehends the concept of one, because he calls even more and brings me lunch at work, if he knew where I lived, he'd probably camp outside every night. However, I can't ruin the very same reputation that I've worked so hard at rebuilding."

Me- "Mom, I think I speak for the both of us when I say we're not willing to standby and

watch you sacrifice your happiness for a second longer, yoo deserve more."

Ziyanda- "Exactly, change churches if you have to, but ma you have to put yourself first for once."

Me- "I just want to know who it was at your house the night we came by."

Mom's cheeks flush with embarrassment.

Mom- "The man from church. We don't participate in penetration, but he takes care of me in other ways."

She says as she covers her face with her hands.

Ziyanda- "Maaaaa!"

Mom- "I'm sorry! That just spewed out."

Me- "Ma, are you in love with any of these men?"

Mom- "Yes, one of them. I think I can finally admit to myself that I'm inlove with Steven, but

I'm scared to pursue that relationship, I feel like disappointment is right around the corner regarding him. I'm just not sure if there would be the stability that I crave, in that relationship. I want to have a life partner that I'll grow even older with, travel the world, and revel in our grand babies."

Ziyanda- "And you deserve that mommy." She says as she walks towards mom and plonks herself next to her.

Mom- "I need some time to figure a few things out, Mr Ngcobo from church really hasn't done anything wrong, I just think I plunged myself into a relationship with him because I was lonely, and he was romantic in his approach, I also knew that he could be trusted. On paper, he was everything I thought I've wanted; he's God fearing, kind hearted and thoughtful, so I really have to weigh out everything before making this life altering decision."

Me- "So, ma. The person we were supposed to meet last night?"

She jumps up off the couch and grabs her phone.

Her- "I almost forgot, he's here actually. He's in the car, give me a second." She calls the mystery guy on her phone and walks out the door. Ziyanda and I stare at each other in confusion.

Ziyanda- "Don't tell me our mother is involved with three men! This woman has a more active social life than mine and yours combined!"

I roll my eyes and recline on the couch, trying to get comfortable.

Ziyanda- "I can't be trusted with what I'm going to say when I meet this man, I think I'm still tipsy from last night." She says in a raspy voice.

Me- "You think?"

Our conversation is interrupted by mom opening the door. Ziyanda and I stand up instantaneously and walk towards her, while the mystery man lingers behind her walking slowly. Mom eventually shifts to the side revealing a man with an overly familiar face.

Ziyanda- "Bhekumuzi." She says in what comes out as a whisper as tears free fall down her face.

Mom- "I know, isn't it crazy? I know you're leaving soon, and since you and him were inseparable when you were a kid, well you spent more time with him than your own father, so I thought I'd give you one last surprise." She says looking oblivious with the widest smile spread across her face.

[04/18, 16:50] Wdz: [80]

****ZINHLE****

I feel like I'm in the twilight zone when I assess

the room and everyone's emotions. Pasted on Ziyanda's face is the look of fear and astonishment, her feet look cemented on the floor, as she makes no attempt of advancing towards mom and her unwanted guest. Mom on the other hand is oblivious to the dilemma that she's submerged us all into. I can't even bare to breathe the same air as this monster in front of me, inturn I can't bring myself to look at him, although I know that I have to diffuse the situation, I'm having a difficult time with convincing myself to stay calm in the midst of this storm that's been slowly brewing for years.

Bhekumuzi- "My girls, you've both grown up so much! Ziyanda, you've grown to be as radiant as your mother here, and I see congratulations are in order for you Zinhle." He says with a smile beaming from ear to ear. I'm genuinely concerned for this man's mental stability, for thinking that he could just abruptly ease into my house, being the demon that he is. Ziyanda

seems to have planted roots into the floor, as her feet remain bolted to the ceramic tiles. I edge closer to mom and her companion until I'm merely inches away from Bhekumuzi. I look up at his harsh features and sniff along his chest.

Me- "I smell shit. Please leave."

Mom- "Zinhle Khumalo!"

Before I can help myself and listen to my voice of reason, my hand lands hard against his left cheek, followed by another slap again. Before my third meeting with his cheek, mom grabs hold of my arm and gently pushes me to the side.

Mom- "Zinhle! What the hell? Wenzani? (What are you doing)"

She shouts as she tends to Bhekumuzi's cheek, while he has a grin plastered on his face.

Bhekumuzi- "It's okay Zamo." He says while

stroking mom's shoulders; at that point in time, my soul leaves my body. I grab the large glass vase on the table beside me and take a few short steps towards Bhekumuzi and strike his head with the heavy ornament. Blood drips from the temple of his head, traveling South, swiftly followed by his body descending on the tiled floor. Mom drops to her knees as I take a few steps back in shock, my entire body trembling. I'm startled to hear Ziyanda step closer to Bhekumuzi's lifeless body sprawled on the floor. Ziyanda- "Is he dead?" She asks with a hoarse voice.

Mom scrambles for her phone and unexpectedly, Ziyanda drifts into another persona, kicking, punching and scratching Bhekumuzi with all her might.

Ziyanda- "Die! Die! Diiiiieeee!!" She screams frantically until she pants, out of breath. Siya emerges out of nowhere and carries Ziyanda

away and gently places her on the couch as she cradles up next to him in fetus position while gently sobbing.

Siya runs towards me as I slide onto the floor, because my legs can no longer carry me. I sit on the hard floor with my legs stretched out in front of me, as I attempt to regulate my breathing. Siya kneels in front of me, and I can't decipher the words coming out of his mouth as I stare at the distance ahead. I feel Siya's hand leave my arms as he walks away towards my mom and Bhekumuzi. I blink away the tears, and hear Siya on the phone with someone making arrangements. Within minutes, the house is flooded with people cleaning the blood from the floor and transporting the body out through the front door. I look at the stretcher and to my surprise, Bhekumuzi isn't in a body bag, instead he's connected to a machine and has an oxygen mask covering his face.

I finally muster up the strength to stand up, and at that moment I'm bombarded by my mom with a furious expression smeared on her face.

Mom- "Zinhle, what the hell is going on? Uyahlanya? (Are you crazy?) Do you realize that you nearly murdered your uncle?"

I have a blank look on my face, as I stare at a space behind her. Mom roughly pats my shoulder and claps her hands in my face.

Mom- "I don't even know you anymore! Who are you two?"

She shouts while pointing at an emotionless Ziyanda and I.

Me- "Ma, I'm going to bed. Just know that if I were given an opportunity, I'd do it again, I'd just choose a heavier vase." I push past her and make my way to my bedroom on the first floor, with mom shouting and screaming behind me

and hot on my heels. I come to a halt and come to the realization that the house is now empty and looks as good as new. The glass shards on the floor have been cleared away and the blood spurts have vanished, Siya runs down the stairs in a pair of dark jeans and a sweater swinging his keys between his fingers. I notice the veins bulging from his forehead and that suggests that he's furious and has a bible of questions he wants to ask.

Mom- "Zinhle, you will not walk away from me when I speak to you. You may be the woman of this house, but you are still my daughter!" She shouts as she spins me around to face her.

Me- "Ma, do you not see that I don't want to talk to you right now? Why can't you just respect that? Go to your house, we'll talk tomorrow, and next time, can I have a name and surname of whichever evil guests you wish to bring to my house?" Before I know it, mom's hand lands hard against my cheek.

Siya- "Whoah whoah!" He says as he stands between us.

Him- "Zinhle, address your mother with respect when you're in my presence. Ma, maybe you should go, emotions are high right now, I doubt we'd be able to come to any resolve right now."

Ziyanda- "No, let's do this now." She says as she sits up on the couch and stares at the floor. I rush to her side and hold her hand while gently stroking her back.

Me- "Ziyanda, we don't have to do this now. Go rest."

Her- "No!" She shouts as she breaths heavily.

Mom and Siya slowly make their way towards us and mom crosses her quivering hands across her chest, while Siya looks perplexed standing close to her.

Ziyanda- "I think you two should sit down for this." She says in a hoarse voice. Mom sits on

the nearest couch while Siya leans against the wall.

Ziyanda- "This is the last time I'll be repeating this, so listen carefully."

She says as she inhales a deep breath of air.

Ziyanda- "That man ruined my childhood and took a piece of me that I'll never be able to replace nor repair. At the tender age of fourteen, I lost my purity to Bhekumuzi in Zinhle's bedroom while your husband lay unconscious due to severe intoxication. I was merely four feet away from Zinhle, and she slept peacefully oblivious to reality. Bhekumuzi's plan was to victimize Zinhle while she slept, but I couldn't let my baby sister experience being molested at such a young age so I offered myself instead. He molested me every time he came over to the house after that incident. Whenever I'd come home with bruises on my legs I'd lie about falling at netball practice, but that was from his

jealous rants because of some young boy having a crush on me. When you'd send him to fetch me from school, he'd park in an alley or a bush somewhere then he'd teach me how to pleasure him with my mouth. All of those braai's that we had at the house and he was there, he'd follow me into the bathroom and bend me over the bathtub. He'd be livid whenever I was on my period, but it got to a point where that no longer was a factor, he'd force himself inside me with trickles of blood on him. I told Zinhle about one abortion, but in actuality, there were two. I remember once, he fucked me until I literally couldn't walk just a few meters from your room mom. You and uKhumalo had an hour long screaming match, Zinhle was outside running around, and I was in my room with him. I crawled to mom's room and sat outside trying to find the strength to knock and open the door, but there he was with his gun in his hand, pointing it at the door then

at me. He carried me and threw me on my bed then abruptly left." She sniffs away her streaming tears and squeezes my hand.

Ziyanda- "I remember being twenty one weeks pregnant, and being in denial of carrying my cousin/daughter in my belly. By the time I had mustered up the courage to go to an abortion clinic, I was a week overdue the legal duration. I missed a day of school to meet with a black market abortion drug dealer. I got home, ingested the pills, shoved the rest up my nuna and a few hours later in the bathroom I was crouched on the floor pushing out a dead baby. That image still haunts me to this day. I threw her into a shoebox and black plastic bag and watched the garbage service throw her in the grinder the following day in the truck. That's why that man doesn't deserve to breathe the air that we do. He's the worst kind of evil, the devil incarnate. He turned me into a monster and a murderer and no matter how hard I try to run

away, that's what I will always be and who I am. I resented all of you for my misfortune, especially since the majority of my abuse was right under your noses. I was so brainwashed that telling anyone wasn't an option. He molded me into his puppet and pulled the strings as he wished." She raises her head and looks at all of us.

Her- "I'm sorry, I can't do this. I'm leaving now." She says as she jogs out the room and bangs her bedroom door closed behind her. Siya rubs his head harshly with his hands and mom holds onto her chest as tears stream down her face, she lets out a loud wail as she slides onto the floor and sobs hysterically.

[04/19, 05:59] Wdz: [81]

****ZAMOKUHLE****

I flutter my heavy eyelids open slowly and analyze my foreign surroundings. I catch sight

of a crying Zinhle, her cheeks are flushed and her loud hiccups startle me so much so that I shift on the bed. I hear footsteps rush towards me, and I find a concerned Siyabonga towering over me.

Me- "Ziyanda?" I manage to ask. Siyabonga frowns at me and sighs heavily.

Him- "Ma, are you okay?"

Zinhle rolls over on the bed to inch towards me and I see her struggle, but I don't have the strength to help her.

Me- "Where's Ziyanda?" I ask as I attempt to sit up, but my body fails me and the room spins as I experience a dizzy spell.

Siya- "She's fine, she's asked for some time to herself. She wouldn't let us in, but Steven did manage to convince her to let him in. He's sedated her and also just injected you with something as well."

I feel my vision blur and my surroundings appear hazy as I rest my head against the cushioned headboard.

Me- "Need. To. Talk. To. My . Daughter." I pant out loud as tears flow down my face. Zinhle crawls closer to me and wipes my tears with her warm hand.

Her- "Sssh, we'll talk later."

Me- "No! Need to see her, please." Zinhle rolls closer to to me and gently strokes my leg.

Her- "Ma, please rest. Emotions are too high right now."

Me- "You knew? This whole time?" She turns her head away and I see her cheeks get soaked from her tears as she slightly nods.

Me-"Why?" I pant.

Her- "Mom, I can't right now. Please."

She says as she blows me a kiss and shifts off the bed, waddling to the door, swiftly followed

by Siyabonga, who turns when he reaches the door and walks to my bed again.

Him- "Ma, don't worry. I'll have this handled, rest for now." He says as he winks at me and rushes out. I attempt to shift my body off the bed, but I can barely feel my limbs, I land on the floor and crawl to the door.

Me- "Ziyanda!" Which comes out as a whisper. I sit on the floor, hopeless and lost until I eventually crawl back into bed and stare at the ceiling as tears trail down my face and soak the pillow.

Steven must have given me something strong, because I wake up to a dark room, and my eyelids are still heavy, almost as heavy as my aching heart. I let out a loud sigh as I attempt to move my body, but fail dismally when I can barely feel it. I feel so helpless, that all I manage to do is allow my tears to run down the sides of

my face and flood my ears. I want to muster up the strength to stand up and walk out of this room, because my ultimate concern is Ziyanda, but I'm also fearful of seeing her. I know that there's nothing I could ever do or say to reverse the years of abuse my baby endured right under my nose. I feel as if the rug has been snatched from right beneath me, I had not even the slightest idea that any of this could have been happening. I have always thought of myself as the one that sacrificed years of my life to witness my family together, my kids growing up in a somewhat stable environment, little did I know that my sacrifice was merely a drop in the ocean.

This leaves me with the worst possible questions that I have to ask myself as a mother. How could I be so oblivious? How could I not know for so many years? I thought that my only failure pertaining to my children was being

unable to provide them with a calm and loving home, that's why as soon as I left, I ensured that I cared for them and closed the gap they may feel regarding a father figure. All of those years that I relentlessly prayed, fasted for my children's wellbeing, was it all for nothing? Was God just looking down and laughing at me, because my daughter's childhood had already been tarnished in the most despicable way possible. I failed.

In my feeling so hurt, I also have thoughts that linger at the back of my head; I guess I feel that my hurt and pain isn't warranted, how I feel shouldn't matter. I can't begin to fathom or dissect the feelings, thoughts and emotions that my baby experienced. I want to hate Bhekumuzi, but I hate myself more. All of those instances where I invited that animal over for lunch, dinner, braai's, swimming gala's, athletics try outs, netball practices, bake sales; I was giving the perpetrator free reign over my

daughter. He was always such an exemplary father figure, and the girls loved him. My ex husband wasn't present, yet Bhekumuzi was. He assisted with homework, taught the girls to ride a bicycle, taught them how to fish, he showered them with gifts so much that I had to reprimand him for spoiling them too much. Zinhle would always ask me why I didn't marry Bhekumuzi instead of their dad, and I admit, that question would spring up in my mind from time to time; he was almost perfect.

Oh God, how could I have been so naive? Was I so clouded in the abuse that I endured from the hands of Khumalo, that I neglected my children? I read them bedtime stories, I'd ask them about their day every evening, I never left them alone without supervision, even with Bhekumuzi around. Yes, he'd fetch them from school from time to time, but how do you anticipate that your daughter is being molested during a fifteen

minute drive back home? I did everything in my power to provide a comfortable and stable home for them. I planned Easter egg hunts for them in the garden, I gave them each quality one on time with me, I'd try open up to them so they'd be comfortable enough to open up to me. I ensured that I instilled in them knowledge of their worth, but in hindsight, this was all hypocritical of me. How could I tell my children that they deserve to be treated like queens, when under the same roof I was someone's punching bag. I'm to blame in all of this. I started a cycle of abuse, that's been assumed by my most precious gifts; my daughters. Zinhle was in an abusive relationship, and she lived under my roof as well. I encouraged her relationship, because at face value Thabi was perfect, in turn my daughter endured abuse from the same man that I approved of and nudged her towards. My babies witnessed me suffer, so they assumed that their pain and

suffering was normal. My daughters have always been my life, and by hurting them I don't have one; Bhekumuzi stole my life away from me.

I feel my heart palpitate from the emotions that flood my soul. After Khumalo's death, Bhekumuzi is the only family member that ensured that we were okay. He sent me a sum of money to open a trust fund for the girls, and he even made a move on me. I always knew that we had underlying feelings for each other, so when he kissed me one evening at my house, I was almost expecting it. I was too guilt ridden to advance on the kiss though so I asked him to leave that evening and I cut off communication with him, until recently. He begged to see the girls, I was reluctant at first because I no longer wanted anything to tie me to Khumalo, but then I remembered the phenomenal relationship he had with the girls, so my reluctance turned into

excitement. This is what has led me to the worst possible act in my entire life. Yet again, I'm responsible for luring in that animal near my Ziyanda.

I can't believe that I was ranting about a stupid love triangle, when my baby was harboring such emotions towards her life. If I could, I'd take the burden from her and be the one to experience all the rape and abuse. I'd take it all in less than a heartbeat, but I can't. I'm an accomplice, I allowed all of this to happen. I clear my throat, because although I have very little to no faith in any inch of my body, but I have to speak to the man upstairs for any hope of gaining clarity.

Me- "God, I.."

My words fall short as I gasp for air while I sob silently. I break into a cold sweat, while I shiver uncontrollably. My mouth turns dry and my

heart thuds through my chest at a fast pace and my vision gets blurred.

Me- "Yanda, I.. I.. I'm soorryy." I say in a whisper before my vision is overcome by darkness and I hold onto my aching chest.

[04/19, 06:02] Wdz: [82]

****ZIYANDA****

Seeing my mother hooked onto so many machines is surreal. My mom barely ever got sick, the flue was rare for her and even though she didn't have wealth, her health was a precious commodity. I haven't been able to do anything else besides fixate my gaze on the woman that gave me life, my lips quiver at the thought of my hand in all of this. I should have prepared her for my past, I could have omitted the details of my abuse, I just let everything flow from my mouth like a running tap, and she just wasn't prepared for it. I have no tears left to

cry, my well of tears has literally dried up and I'm exhausted of relinquishing power over my life.

Zinhle has been shifting uncomfortably on the couch in this hospital suite and her face is now red, not from crying but it seems as if it's due to pain or discomfort. Siya barges in and his eyes immediately glue to his woman, who's now breathing relentlessly. He scoops her up and marches out of the suite with her holding onto his broad shoulders. I inch closer to mom's bed and Steven swings the door open and gestures for me to edge towards him.

He breathes out a loud sigh.

Him- "She suffered a minor heart attack, she's stable now though. She should regain consciousness soon enough, I kept her in a shallow comatose state to regulate her spiked blood pressure. Ziyanda?"

I blink a few times and realize that it wasn't a dream as I attempt to digest every word that I've heard come out of Steven's mouth

Steven nudges me towards a chair close by and helps me take a few sips of water from my trembling hands. Steven simulates some breathing exercises for me to do, and after a few minutes I've collected myself.

Steven- "She'll be fine, I promise. Do you want to talk to someone?"

I analyze Steven's face when he says this and resonate his words with my thoughts. I know that he doesn't have the slightest idea of the depth of what he's asking me. He only has a shallow perception of what's going on, and that's probably just that I'm stressed because of my mother's illness, the depths of the despair in our lives remains a mystery. Telling mom about Bhekumuzi was an abrupt decision and I still maintain that it was the last time I dug that

deep and spoke of my turmoil. I know that after experiencing a travesty, the norm is to release your pain and talk about it, but I'm almost certain that those people who believe that weren't violated for almost a decade at the hands of a family member. I have no interest in meeting a stranger, telling her of my suicide thoughts, reliving the physical and emotional pain that I experienced and seeing pity in their eyes.

Steven- "Ziyanda? Are you okay?"

I give him a brief smile and gaze into his concerned eyes.

Me- "Just fine, thanks."

Him- "I don't know if you want to see your uncle as well? Siya said no one should go in, but since you're here, you can see him. He's in the next room." He gently touches my shoulder, smiles briefly and leaves the room. I stand there bolted

on the floor as I watch my mom from a distance, after a few minutes, I sigh heavily and jolt out of the room and before I can blink to think, I find myself beside his bed staring at his still body. An overwhelming feeling of anger overcomes me as I feel my heart thud through my chest. I take a cushion on the couch close by and hold it a few inches from his face as tears threaten to fall down my overheating cheeks. I gently press the cushion on his face and watch as the numbers on his oxygen machine decline. I snap out of my trance when I feel Bhekumuzi's body fidget beneath me, I throw the cushion across the room and run as fast as my legs can carry me, out of the hospital where I find a cab to transport me home. I vigorously type on my phone, until I'm satisfied and have booked my flight. I grab my suitcases at Zinhle's place and dash back into the cab and try regulate my breathing in the backseat of the cab on my ride to the airport. An influx of emotions overcomes

me, as I realize that I've left my ill mother on a hospital bed, my sister who could possibly be in labor or in danger and when I had a clear opportunity to end the life of the animal who's responsible for my mystery, I couldn't pursue what I had dreamed of doing; ending his life. I couldn't kill the man that killed me years ago, I just couldn't. I stare at my trembling hands and think of the act I almost committed and let out a loud sigh. Bhekumuzi has made me a rape victim, a teen mother, a depressed person, an abuse victim and a pawn; I refuse for him to make me a murderer. I can't go through the rest of my life, guilt ridden and angry so I'm removing myself from this harsh situation, yes I may be running from reality, but I'm emotionally exhausted and hopefully I'll gain a fresher perspective in a different environment.

The cab driver assists me with my luggage and I head into the buzzing airport. I watch people

laugh and smile and I close my eyes as a tear escapes and lands on my chest. After checking in, I sit on a bench close by and realize a dozen missed calls from Siya and Zinhle and my heart aches as I come to terms with being unaware of what's going on with them. I say a silent prayer for their safety and that of the twins and lay back on the hard bench.

I'm startled by someone plonking themselves beside me.

"So you were going to leave without saying goodbye?"

I look in the direction of the masculine voice and find Brandon with a wide smile smeared on his face.

I sigh out loud and look in the opposite direction.

Me- "Why are you here Brandon? If Siya or anyone sent you to change my mind, that's unfortunate, because that's not happening."

He chuckles softly.

Him- "You won't change your mind? Okay then, I can just tag along!"

Me- "Please, I'm begging you, leave!" It comes out as a whisper as my voice unintentionally breaks.

Him- "Ziyanda, what's going on?" H asks, looking overly concerned while stroking my shoulder.

I shake my head and blink away my tears.

Him- "Okay, don't tell me." He says as he pulls me into his hard chest and suffocates me with a warm tight embrace. At this point, my tears flow down my face and soak his cashmere sweater as he rocks me back and forth slowly.

Him- "Okay, you can't travel in such a state. Let's go home, you'll rest and if you still want to leave, I'll drop you off myself." Without waiting for my response, he grabs my luggage and

hands it to a muscular man whom I hadn't paid attention to earlier on.

Me- "I've already checked in some other bags."

Him- "Don't worry, I'll sort it out okay?" He says as he plants a soft kiss on my forehead. The car ride is quiet and calming, Brandon is sitting with me in the backseat stroking my back, while his broad shouldered friend drives.

Me- "I really don't want to be around anyone right now."

Him- "That's fine, I'll book you into a hotel, unless you're comfortable being at my place?"

Me- "A hotel would be great, thanks." I say as I try muster up a smile.

We arrive at the hotel, and I'm momentarily shown to my suite, my mind is scattered everywhere, I don't even pay attention to my lavish surroundings. Once Brandon has helped

me settle in, he pulls the covers and nudges me to the bed, where I jump in and breathe out loudly. Brandon gets on top of the covers and cuddles me from behind and my mouth involuntarily curves into a smile. He snakes his arms around my still body and lunges his heavy leg on top of mine and we fall into a calming silence.

Brandon's phone rings and he slowly shifts off the bed and answers it.

Him- "Siya!"

Siya- "...."

Him- "What happened?"

Siya- "..."

Him- "I'll be there in 15. Cool."

Brandon turns his attention to me and rushes to my side.

Him- "I'll be back." He crouches down to kiss my cheek.

Me- "Is my family okay? What's wrong?"

Brandon- "They're fine, I promise."

I open my mouth, but no words come out. Brandon gives me a reassuring smile and dashes out the suite, leaving me alone in bed, frantically pacing up and down.

****BRANDON****

I arrive at the unknown location as according to Siya's instructions and coordinates. I walk into the run down building that's seen better days and I'm met by a heavily perspiring Siya.

Me- "What's going on?"

He jerks his head for me to follow him and so I do. Siya turns around to face me and nudges his head in the opposite direction.

Him- "This is what's going on." He says as he moves out of my way, providing me with a clear view of what he's pointing at.

[04/19, 06:04] Wdz: [83]

****BRANDON****

I take a few steps back and breathe out a loud sigh.

Me- "Nyathi, what the hell?"

Siya- "Don't you dare! What is this witch still doing alive?" He says pointing to a battered and bruised Eve.

Me- "I thought you handed her over to me Nyathi, what is she doing here looking like this?"

Him- "Don't tell me that shit wena! Brandon, do you need a quick recap? Sure, I'll give it to you. This woman has left you pretty much bankrupt, almost landed your father in jail, attempted to murder a woman you genuinely care for, and that's just the half of it! Tell me how you justify her roaming around town?"

Me- "You don't get it!"

Him- "You're right, I don't!"

Me- "Siya, what is this? We're not gangsters!"

Him- "You're right, we're not. We're men! As a man, you do whatever it takes!" Sweat droplets form on Siya's face, as on mine. We're pacing the abandoned building while yelling at each other in frustration.

Me- "Who's that?" I ask pointing to a man chained besides Eve.

Him- "Don't worry your inefficient self about that. You were telling me how you decided to give it a chance to ruin your life again?" He says pointing at Eve.

Me- "I couldn't man, I wanted to but I couldn't. I've still been trying to figure out what to do with her, that's why I had her locked up. I killed her father, killing her would make me a genuine murderer. Than what man can I be to Ziyanda?"

Siya gives me a smirk and turns his attention to

the injured bodies in front of us. Eve seems to be slipping out of consciousness and the blood spurting from her head has my stomach doing somersaults.

I've been trying to handle the Eve situation, and I've failed dismally, so after a few days of a gruesome witch hunt, I found her and kept her in a basement. I knew that it wouldn't be a permanent solution to the problem, but I needed time to make a sound decision and come to terms with possibly ending her life. Following Ziyanda around helped in forming a solid distraction and before I knew it, I had forgotten about Eve. I stopped giving her food and water, because she had officially dissipated from my system, the feelings that I had been holding onto were that of pity and empathy otherwise my heart and soul wouldn't have been so fixated on Ziyanda. She became my drug, and I needed a dose everyday, and I probably

deserve to be prosecuted for my undeterred persistence in stalking her. I dreamt of her infectious laugh that leaves her with her tongue hanging out of her succulent lips, I looked forward to her complex and multitudinous facial expressions that she'd make whilst listening to her favorite song or eating her favorite ice cream or even sipping on a cocktail. I'm a walking encyclopedia on everything about Ziyanda at this point. My mouth suddenly curves into a smile as I reminisce on the moments that solidified Ziyanda's place in my heart, but my thoughts are interrupted by a light punch on the chest from Siya.

Him- "As entertaining as it is watching you salivate over your day dream, I want this over and done with." He hands me a handsaw while he grabs a large pair of pliers.

I open my mouth to protest, but his stern look of disapproval tells me to keep my words at a minimum.

Siya- "Let me spell this out to you. The love of my life and her family have suffered at the hands of these two. I've brought you in here today to do your part with that witch and I'll work my magic on him. Just to ensure that you fully understand, I'll start." He says with a harsh grin on his face and as he marches towards the shallow breathing and barely conscious man alongside Eve. I stand in my same position, gazing as Siya towers over this lifeless body and empty the contents of a small water bottle. He crouches down and rips apart this man's sweat shorts, leaving him stark naked and slightly quivering. Without hesitation, Siya clamps the oversized pliers on the man's dangling member, which sets me back as he screeches and jerks in pain.

Me- "What the?" I manage to say through the screams and shrieks in the background.

Siya stands and walks towards me with a grin on his face.

Him- "That man molested and raped your girlfriend Ziyanda for years and years and then he had the audacity to come to my house unannounced and pretended to play happy family. Ziyanda's mom had a heart attack, my woman almost went into premature labor and I can't even imagine what Ziyanda is going through." Siya clenches his jaw and ignored the shrieks escaping the man's mouth. I take a few steps backwards, stumbling from astonishment as my heart paces at an alarming rate.

Me- "What?" I screech.

Siya looks at me and nods his head, visibly angry and frustrated. Him- "So tell me I'm over reacting." He says while raising an eyebrow and crossing his arms across his chest. Before I realize it, I'm on top of the man, merciless in the punches that I'm throwing at him until I feel Siya pull me away after a short struggle from me.

Me- "Now, he deserves to die!" I say with anger

bursting from my veins on my forehead.

Siya- "Whoah! You have her to deal with. Leave him to me."

Hours later, I'm sitting in front of Eve who's gasping for air and mumbling apologies beneath her breath. On the other hand Siya looks like he's just begun with this Bhekumuzi character who looks as if is on the verge of taking his last breath. I turn my attention back to Eve who pulls at my heartstrings and makes my heart sink. She gestures for me to come closer to her so that I can hear what she has to say. I crouch down and extend my head towards her.

****SIYA****

I realize that Bhekumuzi is crossing the line over to death, but I can't allow that just yet. I

grab a burner phone and crouch down near Bhekumuzi.

Me- "I know it's almost time, but you're going to do one thing for me, so I can end this officially, otherwise, I'll make this as slow and painful as possible. We're calling Ziyanda now and telling her how sorry you are for ruining her life, and don't forget to tell her that you'll disappear from her life for good." I wink at him and dial Ziyanda's number and analyze his battered body. Ziyanda answers on the third ring and there's silence. I kick Bhekumuzi's leg, nudging him to speak and he painfully clears his throat.

Bhekumuzi- "It.. it's me, please don't drop the phone. I.. i.. I just wanted to say that I'm sorry, you're more of a human than I'll ever be. Don't..." he coughs up blood and I hold him up then punch his shoulder slightly urging him to continue.

Him- "Don't change who you are because of

what I did, you're better than that. I'll be gone from your life.. forever." I hear Ziyanda softly weep on the other end of the line then hang up.

Bhekumuzi- "Pleeeaaase he pleads with me to end his life while I stare at his pathetic self. Before I blink, a gun goes off, leaving a bullet in Bhekumuzi's chest and Eve's forehead. I hear footsteps zero in on a startled Brandon and myself. I turn around and I'm surprised to find Patrick standing with a pistol in tow.

Patrick- "You boys wouldn't have done it anyway. Now that that's done, I'm leaving this forsaken place." With that, he breaths in heavily and grins at us. He turns on his heel and disappears into the darkness.

[04/19, 06:05] Wdz: [84]

****ZINHLE****

I'm lying in bed, fiddling with my thumbs as I try

to complete an overdue assignment. I've fallen asleep at least four times, and it's barely noon. My chances of completing this assignment are pretty bleak, but I'm pleased with the little progress I've made. I'm more than halfway through, and I'm getting more uncomfortable by the second, which is posing a problem. I'm 30 weeks pregnant, and I'm ready for these munchkins to come out. I'm incapable of completing simple tasks, and my schoolwork is definitely suffering. I can barely keep up with my deadlines and complaining seems unwarranted, especially since I put myself in this mess. My mom is in a private recovery center, and I can't visit her as much as I'd like to because I've been ordered to be on temporary bed rest. Siya is a walking zombie, between checking on mom, Ziyanda and work, and then there's my hormonal self, he has his work cut out for him. I pray for my Siya everyday, I pray that our love continues to flourish and that we

continue to be each other's pillar of strength. I can't imagine what I would have done without Mr Nyathi in these past couple of weeks. Everything just came crumbling down so abruptly in my family, and Siya definitely helped in softening the impact. Ziyanda is still in the country, although I haven't seen her in two weeks because she took the initiative to get some help. She enrolled into a wellness center to navigate through her flood of emotions and face her past once and for all. I miss her so much, it hurts, but I know in the depths of my heart that this step is necessary for her to live a fulfilled life. She's not allowed having guests, but I guess no one can say no to Mr Nyathi because he manages to secure a five minute visit every few days.

Siya has been the epitome of a perfect partner, although we haven't been intimate with each other in a while. I crave him within the depths of

my soul, but I'm so exhausted that a night of passion isn't practical. Siya isn't putting in much of an effort regarding us reconnecting with our bodies either, he's officially moved into another guest bedroom a few feet from mine so I don't even get to sleep in his arms anymore. One evening he came home and cuddled behind me and we both drifted off to a blissful sleep. However a few minutes later, Siya broke into a cold sweat and without warning he stormed out of the room. I looked for him everywhere around the house, but he had already left so I waddled my fat posterior back to bed.

I soon come to realize that I will have to submit my assignment via post tomorrow, because sitting in front of this laptop screen is proving to be a futile exercise for now. I type a few paragraphs before officially calling it a night. I make a silent promise to myself to wake up first thing in the morning to complete this

damned assignment and to brace myself for a fail. I don't know how I'm going to be able to manage my time between the babies and my schoolwork, since I'm already struggling, but I know that I'll complete this degree even if it's the last thing I do on this planet earth.

I hear the main door bang shut and my heart dances in excitement to see Siya, I feel as if I haven't spent some quality time with him in a while. I slowly shift off the bed and contemplate concealing my massive belly because I'm uncertain whether it's my pregnant body that's turning Siya off. I'm wearing a crop top and a maxi skirt, leaving my bump completely exposed. I realize that my feet are swollen and that I'm just too lazy to walk over to the closet so I decide to make my way to Siya looking like this and deal with his wrath as it comes. I walk barefooted to the lounge area and notice him lying on a couch facing the ceiling with a glass of brown liquor in one hand. I make my way

towards the couch and gently lower my body onto it. I lift Siya's head off the couch and place it on my lap and I plant a gentle kiss on his cold lips. Siya places his glass on the floor and turns to have his face a few inches from my belly with a curve on his lips. We sit in peaceful silence for a while until I feel my eyelids get heavy again.

Me- "Siya."

Him- "Hmmm?"

Me- "I don't know what it is you're going through, and I don't know if I'll even be able to help you, but I'll continue to pray for you." I say as I stroke his bald head.

He holds onto my waist and takes a deep breath in, then its silence again.

Me- "Want a massage?" He continues to ignore me and just holds onto me tighter instead.

Me- "I was thinking that we should have a maternity shoot soon, are you game?"

Me- "Oh! And you should take me to the new house so we can get it organized and ready in time for the bambino's." Siya's soft snores fill the room so I gently shift off the couch and fetch a fluffy throw from my room to place over Siya's sexy body. I plant a soft kiss on his cheek and walk back to my room where I decide to plough through the night and complete my assignment.

The following morning, I'm woken up by the urge to urinate, so I run to the bathroom and I barely make it to the bowl when urine starts escaping my lady parts. I decide on a quick shower once I'm done doing my business and settle on a simple maxi dress, I breathe heavily when I realize that the dress is a little too snug and accentuates my protruding belly. I head out of the bedroom and realize that Siya isn't in the house, but he's left a small surprise for me; a greasy breakfast accompanied by a note that

reads "I love you." I smile to myself and immediately dig in to my hearty breakfast. Once I'm done piling on even more kilo's I grab my bag and my assignment and head for the garage. After my third attempt at getting comfortable behind the wheel, I sigh heavily in defeat and make my way back inside the house to wait for a cab.

I post my overdue assignment and haul a cab to a restaurant, I'm famished and I need to sit down and elevate my swollen feet. After ordering two entrees, I place my feet on the seat beside me and take a long sip of my mocktail. I look up when I hear someone clear their throat. I look up and see a familiar face; it's Andile.

I roll my eyes and look away.

Him- "Is this seat taken?" He points at the vacant seat opposite me.

Me- "Yes." I say without looking at him.

Andile ignores my answer as he pulls the chair and sits comfortably on it.

Me- "You've got to be kidding me. Please leave."

Him- "Zinhle, please.." he says as he narrows his eyes at me.

Me- "I'm suddenly not so hungry anymore." I grab my bag and take a few notes out of my purse. Andile gently holds onto my hand and pulls up my chin with his thumb and before I know it, he plants an aggressive kiss on my lips. I try to push him away but I fail, so I gently bite his lip and he jumps a few feet back.

Me- "Never do that shit again!" I shout at him while poking his hard chest. He chuckles softly and smiles at me.

Him- "You really think Siya loves you? You think because he throws money at you, that means this is love? I feel sorry for you." He says while

shaking his head.

Him- "Very soon you'll be in the same position as Yvette, then what?"

Me- "Mxim." I say as I push through him and walk away. Andile is hot on my heels and calls after me.

Him- "You took Yvette's place and now Pam has taken yours!" He screams and walks in the opposite direction.

I call a cab and on the way home, Andile's words ring in my ears. I want nothing more than to forget about what he said, but he has my mind running overdrive with thoughts about Siya's sudden distance towards me, how else would Andile know about Siya and Pam?

I arrive at home and I'm welcomed by an inviting aroma escaping through the kitchen, and my anger begins to boil inside of me again. Siya is

probably cooking to alleviate himself from the guilt of cheating on me.

Me- "Siyabonga Nyathi, I thought I had nothing to worry about regarding that bitch Pam. What am I supposed to do to stop you from whoring around? Should I cut your balls?" I shout as I make my way to the kitchen. An unfamiliar female voice responds to me.

Her- "Hmmm what colourful language." The Middle aged woman says as she wipes her hands on her apron.

I narrow my eyes in confusion and see Siya appear from the lounge.

Siya- "Zinhle, this is my mother." He says and my mouth immediately drops to the floor and my cheeks flush in embarrassment.

[04/19, 06:06] Wdz: [85]

****ZINHLE****

We're seated around the casual dining table and a deafening silence has filled the room. The snares from Siya's mom are making me even more uncomfortable by the second and her endless loud huffs are urging me to excuse myself from the table and go to bed, but I've already come across as a belligerent and I'll mannered little girl, I don't want to humiliate Siya even further.

The tantalizing spread of food made by Mam'Nyathi has me drooling, the munchkins are doing somersaults in excitement to eat as well, but I'm uncertain of what my next move should be, perhaps dishing up the mound that I want to will bring about even more trouble.

We haven't addressed the issue of my "colorful language" and I'm partially glad that Siya's mom

hasn't brought it up because I'm dumbfounded as to what I would say. While I fiddle with my fingers, Siya's mother stands and dishes up for herself and I jump to my feet.

Me- "Let me do that ma" I say while holding out my hand for her plate.

She looks at me stark in the eye and places one hand on her hip, I take a deep breath in as I prepare myself for what's to come.

Her- "Uphekile (did you cook?)" She asks while raising her eyebrows. I stare at the floor in dismay and at a loss for words.

Her- "Hlala phansi ke! (Sit down then!)" She barks at Me, and so I do as I'm told and sit my fat derrier back down. I look over at Siya and he looks away much to my disappointment.

Once Siya's mom is settled back down on her seat the room is filled with silence yet again. My

mind wanders off to another dimension as I count every second that passes. My thoughts are interrupted by Mam'Nyathi's nails clinking against the glass table so I turn to face her.

Her- "So, now you won't even dish up for my son madam?"

I look over at Siya and he barely twitches as he looks ahead. I spring up to my feet and dish up for Siya and dish up a salad and piece of chicken for myself. I don't feel comfortable dishing up my usual plateful in front of this woman, so I'll just have to suck it up.

I would love nothing more than to vacuum my meal in just a few bites, but Siya and his mother are barely eating in between their conversation and I don't want to seem like the fat pig I already feel I am.

My mind wanders off once again when Mam'Nyathi begins a conversation about Siya's childhood and varsity girlfriends. I attempt to

distract myself with my meal in front of me, and I even grab a bread roll when I feel even hungrier than before. I choke on my bread roll when Siya's mom clears her throat to speak.

Her- "Are you sure they're his?"

She asks while gesturing towards my protruding belly. I cough uncontrollably as the bread travels down the wrong pipe. I take a long sip of the water in front of me. I while Siya springs to his feet beside me with concern written all over his face. He hits my back and I yelp out in pain. Once the coughing has subsided, I clear my throat vigorously.

Me- "What. On. Earth?" I ask Siya as I wriggle in pain from my burning back.

Siya- "Shit, I'm sorry babe." I stroke his arm and sit back down.

Me- "It's fine love."

Siya turns his attention back to his mother and his emerald eyes suddenly turn dark.

Him- "Ma, No!"

Me- "It's fine my love." I say as I wink at him.

Me- "Yes, I'm certain that these munchkins have Nyathi blood running through their veins. I'm.."

Mrs Nyathi- "How can we be sure?"

Siya- "If you must know, Zinhle was pure and untouched when we decided to be intimate, the details of which are none of your business."

Mam'Nyathi claps once and laughs sarcastically.

Her- "You lost your virginity to a married man?"

Siya, my son I watched a show once about a woman that gave birth to twins that had two different fathers. For all we know, maybe one of those are yours or none for that.."

Siya- "Enough Ma! Zinhle is the mother of your grandchildren that you've been hounding me about my entire life! If you can't at least respect

that, I'm sure you remember the door you came in through."

I shift uncomfortably on my seat as my stomach growls and my throat starts to close up. Siya reaches for me and helps me up, he leads me out of the dining area and I waddle to my room. I enter my room alone and strip until I'm left in my underwear. I switch on the A.C. as I feel sweat droplets form on my forehead and I jump into bed. I shift around in bed when I feel my stomach harden and an uncomfortable sensation in my abdomen. I fall asleep to the sound of a shouting match in the dining area.

Siya snuggles up from behind me and cuddles and strokes my belly. I feel his member snuggle in between my butt cheeks and my mouth curves into a smile. I shift as my stomach continues to feel odd and my body shivers from a cold sweat.

Siya hold onto me tighter and nibbles on my ear,

but stops abruptly.

Him- "Zi.."

Me- "Hmmm?"

Him- "Babe, why is the bed wet?"

I yelp out in pain as a sharp pain travels through my abdomen and us swiftly followed by another one.

Me- "There's something wrong!" I manage to whisper in between my screeches.

I'm breathing through the pain while Siya barks orders over the phone.

Me- "Babies, please stay in there a little longer. Please my munchkins."

I say while I stroke my belly. Within a few moments, Siya runs back into the room with a fleece throw in tow. He wraps me in it and carries me out of the room and into the garage,

while his mother runs behind him hysterically. Siya places me in the back seat of his car, his mother jumps into the passenger seat and Siya sighs in frustration, but he drives off anyway. We arrive at the hospital and before I know it, I'm in a suite with Steven hovering over me looking confused as ever.

Me- "Is it time?"

I ask in a trembling voice as sweat covers my body.

Steven- "Well, ummm.."

Mrs Nyathi barges into the room looking lost.

Her- "Makoti.." she says while fiddling with her fingers.

Siya- "Ma, not now!"

I glance over at her and I see tears trickle down her face as she runs towards my side. She grabs my hands and clings onto them.

Her- "I'm sorry! I'm so so soooooorryy!" She cries

out loudly.

[04/19, 06:07] Wdz: [86]

****ZINHLE****

Siya jumps to his feet while I stare at a terrified Mrs Nyathi and her trembling hands that cover mine. The pain in my abdomen is slowly subsiding, but nausea has now overcome me. Within a flash Siya is standing behind his mother and tugging at her arm with anger so visibly written all over his face. As soon as the door shuts closed behind Siya and his mom as he practically drags her out of the suite, my dinner contents land on the floor beside my bed. I look at the floor and notice how dark my waste looks, Steven looks perplexed as well and his frown is the last thing I see before my head hits the pillow and it's lights out for me.

My eyelids flutter open and I see his eyes gazing at me that feel like home. He holds onto my hand as I turn to his side to face him.

He immediately engulfs my face with his masculine hands seeking reassurance in my eyes and so I manage to slightly curve my dry lips into a quivering smile. I notice a tear threaten to leave his left eye, which he manages to blink away. Our moment is interrupted by Steven clearing his throat in the background.

He makes his way towards us and I gaze at the ceiling in fear of what he's about to inform me. I slowly snake my hands around my belly and feel that it's still intact, I breathe out a slow sigh of relief but try to remind myself to still expect the worst.

Steven gives me one of his warm sincere smiles and I look at him in anticipation.

Steven- "So you've finally decided to join us in

the land of the living?" I can only muster up a few blinks to acknowledge his statement because I feel beyond fatigued.

Steven- "Okay, so would you like to hear the good news or bad news first?"

Siya&me- "Bad."

Steven inhales a deep breath and I clench on to Siya's hand for dear life.

Steven- "I still don't know what happened earlier, it's a true medical mystery. You were showing signs of preterm Labour, however this situation is complex. Your water broke but only halfway through, the babies were in a little distress due to your peaked blood pressure, I almost performed an emergency C-section on you, but when you regurgitated that vile looking dark stuff, your vitals were back to normal, the babies settled comfortably and are doing better than ever. You are going to have to stay here though, no questions please!"

I nod like a little school girl and he reciprocates with a soft smile.

I look over at Siya and he looks uncomfortable as he can barely look at me all of a sudden.

Me- "Where's your mom?" After a long pause he clears his throat.

Siya- "She had to leave, there was an emergency with my sister as well."

I try to sit up, but my body fails me and so I hold onto his hand instead.

Me- "Is she Okay?" He nods slightly and immediately changes the subject.

Him- "Love, I'll have to go sort out a few things at work so that I can take a few weeks off."

Me- "Weeks? You don't have to do that

Him- "This isn't up for discussion so save your breath. Any thing in particular that you want from the house?"

I open my mouth to speak, but he immediately interjects again.

Him- "Don't answer that; I'll sort it out."

He leans down towards the bed and plants a soft peck on my crusty lips.

Him- "I'll definitely bring some lip balm." He says and softly chuckles while u look at him with a bored expression. He plants two kisses on either side of my belly and the munchkins immediately respond by kicking, he always has that effect on them. He makes his way to the door and blows one final kiss before he leaves. Once Siya is gone, I close my eyes and pray to the most High and give thanks.

****SIYA****

I'm racing home because I need to have a stern conversation with my mother regarding this

entire hospital escapade. When i dragged her out of Zinhle's suite, I was trying to neutralize the situation, and I also wanted her to tell me what she was so apologetic for. Unfortunately once we were outside the suite, she became even more hysterical and couldn't utter a word so Steven gave her something to help her calm down and I sent her home with a driver which I instructed to keep guard until I arrive.

I'm anxious to know what my mother has to say because I have a very strong feeling that it could have an extremely negative impact on our relationship forever. I'm trying to be optimistic, but seeing the love of my life and my little princes almost snatched away from me by the angel of death, there's no apology that would suffice if anyone had a hand in this.

I arrive at the house and see my mother rocking

herself back and forth on the couch in a daze. I pat her shoulder and after a while she looks up at me in fear and with tears free falling down her red cheeks. I sigh out heavily and plant myself on the couch beside her.

Me- "Mama, what happened?"

I stroke her shoulder and pat her back and after a few minutes of silence, she turns to look at me.

Her- "My son, I'm sorry. I didn't know. I thought I was helping you."

Me- "You didn't know what? Mama speak!" I say in frustration, my patience is wearing thin.

Her- "As a parent, when your child hurts you also hurt. When that devil Yvette was still in your heart she hurt you and yet you stayed with her, an outsider would have thought that it was the product of black magic the way you were so infatuated. Now, you've fallen head over heels over this child and I wasn't certain whether her intentions were genuine so I took matters into

my own hands." I frown at her and breathe out in anticipation for what ages about to say.

Her- "So I consulted with a traditional healer and asked that he give me something to cleanse you from Any thing that these women have implanted in you."

Me- "WWHHHAAATTT?" I shout and she squeals on the couch.

Her- "But he assured me that it wouldn't have any effect on Zinhle even though she's pregnant. It was just to work on you as a detox. I swear I didn't plan on any of this to happen!" She pleads with me while tears floor her cheeks.

I stand up and pace the room in an attempt to cool down, but before I know it, I'm throwing a vase across the room. I turn to face my mother with fury overcoming me.

Me- "My kids! You put my kids life in danger all

because you think ngidlisiwe? What fuckery is this? Since when do you even believe in traditional healers? You're on the committee at church! How do you trust some one that throws bones and claims to know your future? I send you fucking money every few weeks so you can let a stranger dictate what you should do with your son?"

Her- "I'm sorr.. I'm sorrrryyyy!" She crawls towards me and kneels before me.

Me- "You thought you were helping your son? Whay if you lost your grandkids in the process? Don't worry yourself about that, because you've just lost a son as well."

As soon as those words escape my lips, she screams hysterically and the sight before breaks my heart. I harshly wipe away tears that threaten to fall down my face and snatch my mother's trembling hands off of my legs.

Me- "Please don't make this harder than it

already is mama. Goodbye." I run upstairs and make my way to my study, I slam the door shut and head for the liquor cabinet.

[04/19, 06:08] Wdz: [87]

****SIYA****

I blink a few times and realized that I'm sprawled on the floor with a bottle of Brian liquor in hand. I try to sit up, but the throbbing pain from my head makes it virtually impossible. My head isn't the only part of my body that aches, my heart is physically painful and heavy.

Nothing can prepare you in life for handling such a dilemma. I've judged people and shunned them for abandoning their single mother's and never in a million years did I think that I'd be in this position. My mother was my

light and my life for the bulk of my existence, yet my light has singlehandedly brought such darkness and gloom into my life. The mere thought of how I almost lost my loves, is enough to send me to an asylum, so I stand behind my decision of no longer associating myself with the woman that birthed me. My heart palpitates at the realization that I no longer have a mother, but I'm a father and it's time I started making stern decisions as one.

After a few minutes of mustering up the strength to get my body off the floor, I eventually succeed. I sigh out loud and reach for the ceiling in a well needed stretch. I take a long sip of the small contents in the whiskey bottle and head for the door. I realize that it's still early morning and my heart sinks as my mind wanders to Zinhle being alone in the hospital, feeling helpless. I rush to the master bedroom and strip on my way to the shower. I

resort to a cold shower, I need anything to keep me alert. After a thirty minute ice cold shower, I head for the closet and get dressed in casual clothes and dash downstairs for Zinhle's room.

Upon reaching my last step on the staircase, I come to a halt, followed by my heart. My eyes land on my mother, softly sobbing on the couch with her suitcase beside her. I glance over at her, and my first instinct is to rush to her side and comfort her, but I muster up my willpower and head the opposite direction to Zinhle's room.

I ball up my hands into fists when I reach Zinhle's room and I'm immediately welcomed by her scent. I scan the room and there's no doubting that it's Zinhle's, "hippie chic" as she likes to refer to herself. Her diffusers, sage, dreamcatchers, photo's of us and of our babies

and notes for school scattered on her desk. Anger boils up inside of me when I think of how this would have been my only memory of her and the babies, had things turned left, her room would have been my only place of refuge. I head for her closet and pack everything I set my eyes on, including her revealing underwear, which puzzles me because our intimacy has been put on the back burner, the mere thought of her in any of these lace garments has my member rising to attention but I continue with the task at hand. Once I'm done packing for her, I have two suitcases in tow, I pray that she won't need everything because she'll be sent back home, but I'd rather be safe and Zinhle's temper is too unpredictable to test these days.

In the grand scheme of things, the drama with Pam seems futile and although I've been debating on whether to tell Zinhle about the saga regarding Pam, but I need her healthy so

I'll have to keep this in for a while longer.

I leave Zinhle's room and my mother runs to me, holding onto me for dear life while I stand in front of her like a statue.

I snatch her quivering hands off of me and push past her, dragging the suitcases behind me. After a few steps, I turn to look at her.

Me- "Ma, just leave before things get worse."

Her- "How? How do I leave my son knowing that he hates me?" She screams in between her sobs.

Me- "Fine, I'll have you thrown out then." I say without emotion and head for my car then head to the hospital.

I enter Zinhle's suite and my heart melts at the sight before me. She's in one of her bra's that she calls crop shirts or tops and sweat pants, snoozing like a baby. I see her flinch and hold

onto her stomach when one of the munchkins kicks her and she dozes off soon after that again. I smile to myself and make my way to the bed and climb in behind Zinhle. She moans and shifts to make room for me then wraps my arms around her belly.

Her- "Nyathi."

Me- "MaKhumalo."

My mouth curves into a smile when I feel my babies kicking as a sign of reassurance that they're okay. A few moments later I drift off to a blissful sleep.

****ZINHLE****

I've been couped up in this hospital suite for over 2 weeks and I can safely say that I'm sick of it. The staff and my baby daddy have gone out of their way to make my stay more

comfortable, but regardless of the five star treatment, I want to go home.

My sister is still in her recovery program and therefore hadn't been able to visit, and my mother isn't aware of my hospitalization, we decided to keep her in the dark because of her heart. I'm completing an assignment that's due soon, and at this point in time, I'm grateful for the fact that I only have year modules, I can't imagine myself studying and writing exams in the next few months. As I wrap up my assignment, Siya comes barging in with a bouquet of flowers; he brings me one everyday without fail.

Me- "Baby daddy!" I say as I stand up with struggle.

He crouches down and kisses my belly then finally turns his attention to me and plants a long smooch on my wet lips, leaving me with

tingly sensations on every inch of my whole body.

At that moment, Steven enters; barely knocking.

Him- "How are my favorite parents?" He asks with an animated expression on his face. Siya walks towards the bed and I stay put in the same spot, rolling my eyes.

Steven- "Zinhle, I'm sending you home. I've monitored you and I'm happy with where we're at. I'll come by the house every day or every other day just to check on you, but other than that, you're good to go."

I attempt to jump up in excitement, but my feet barely lift off the floor, so I settle for clapping my hands in excitement.

I see Siya smile slightly, but he doesn't seem surprised so I'm sure he already knew.

After almost an hour of watching Siya pack our belongings into our suitcases, I jump up when he's finally done. He made me change into a dress, I guess he's tired of the sweatpants, so I even applied some mascara and lip gloss.

We're in the car, on our way home and Siya and I are stealing glances from each other. I can't wait to get home so that I can act on the feelings that have been lingering on in my lady parts for weeks now. My eyes feel heavy suddenly, so I succumb to my fatigue and close them for a few moments.

I'm woken up by Siya's gentle yet muscular hands patting my shoulder. I open my eyes and look at him with confusion while I try to familiarize myself with the sight ahead of Me. Siya helps me out of the car and I stand beside him admiring the mansion that stares back at Me.

Siya- "Pick your jaw up from the floor." He says as he nudges me towards the immaculate entrance. I float behind him while in the twilight zone, until he pushes the double doors of the entrance open. I step in, and I stop in my tracks when I'm welcomed by familiar faces that tell out "SURPRISE!" In unison. I look over at Siya, and he scoops me up and engulfs me in a warm embrace.

[04/19, 06:09] Wdz: [88]

****ZINHLE****

Siya eventually let's go of Me, and I take a few seconds to recuperate from the dizzy spell that he's enduced. Once I've gathered myself, I raise my head and see my mother beaming in the small crowd, although she's seated and doesn't look like her healthy self, I'm elated. Steven towers behind her, gently stroking her shoulder

nonchalantly. I scan the room and see a few faces that I can't recognize and assume that they're Siya's guests. While I exchange pleasantries with the guests, Siya whisks me away to a small corner in the grand foyer and I immediately pounce on him, he's taken aback from my actions as he takes a few moments to meet my hunger for him. When I feel myself dripping from desire, I stop and pull away. I inhale a few deep breaths with my eyes shut closed then I eventually gaze up at his mesmerizing eyes.

Me- "You were saying?"

He softly chuckles and licks his succulent lips, almost urging me to pounce on him again, but I practice restraint.

Him- "So do you like it?"

Me- "I always like it." I say while biting my bottom lip and brushing my hand over his hard member.

Siya's face immediately flushes and he suddenly can't maintain eye contact with me.

Him- "I was talking about the house love."

My cheeks heat up from embarrassment, because the only thing that consumes my thoughts and emotions is sex. Steamy, sweaty, dirty sex.

Me- "I know, but I wasn't." I say as I wink at him.

I see his face turn into a slight frown so I decide to humor him.

Me- "I love it baby daddy! Whose is it?"

He looks at Me, perplexed.

Him- "I thought this part would kind of be obvious. It's yours; well ours."

Me- "Ours? So we're going to do this cohabiting thing for how long?" I say as I cross my arms across my chest.

Siya is visibly uncomfortable, and I want to

laugh, but I know that it won't end well.

Me- "Sorry; hormones." I say with a slight smile.

Me- "Its incredible! When you said you bought us a house, I wasn't expecting a palace! The munchkins will make many memories here." I say and reach up to give him a hug. My protruding belly makes it impossible for us to be in an embrace so I settle for a kiss on the cheek.

After our moment together, we decide to go back to our guests and I jog straight to my mother. As soon as she holds my hand, tears involuntarily stream down my face. Concern is overcomes her face and I smile at her, reassuring her that I'm happy.

Me- "I've missed you ma."

Her- "I've missed you too baby." She says as she rests my head on her chest.

My "Welcome home" party is in full swing and I've been glued to my mother's hip. Siya has been sticking out like sore thumb, sitting alone and not interacting with anyone so I make my way towards him.

Me- "Thank you for this amazing party baby daddy, you're the best."

He frowns then fazed deep into my eyes until I eventually look away.

Him- "Zinhle, are you happy? Think about this before you answer me. Are you happy with me and with our relationship? Do you think I love you less because we're not married."

I roll my eyes at him and sigh loudly.

Me- "Can we talk about this later?" I kiss his cheek and return to my mother.

The catering staff pass around the canapés and

my mom stands to make a toast.

Mom- "Evening all, thank you for availing yourselves for this final celebration before my grandbabies are born. Zinhle's sister Ziyanda couldn't be with us because of work obligations, but she sent her baby sister something special. If we could all go down the hall and take a right, there will be people to point us in the right direction then well all be able to see what Ziyanda has in store for her baby sister." I spring up and waddle behind everyone and I feel Siya support my arm as I go down the few steps that lead to a magnificent indoor theatre. My eyes and mouth open widely in awe and I pinch Siya in excitement.

Once were all settled, the white screen emerges between two maroon vintage curtains, and soon after Ziyanda's face on the screen which immediately starts the waterworks.

Her- "My baby sister, I couldn't be more proud of

the woman that you've become, you've inspired me to be better and taught me that I deserve better as well. God gives his hardest battles to his toughest shoulders, and I'm certain that we can overcome anything now." As she continued to speak, tears spew out of my eyes and my emotions take the better of me. I barely hear the remainder of the clip because of my tears, but my heart feels warm, seeing that she's okay.

The "aaaaaaaw's" that fill the room make my cheeks flush from contentment. While we're all enjoying our stay in the theatre, reclining on the couches and taking selfies, I hear some one from the intimate crowd blurt "who's that?" I turn around and realize that a few people are staring at the screen and so I follow suit and I immediately regret my decision.

I see a slideshow of photos of Pam and Siya on a couch. Pam is lying on his chest and is in her

lingerie and Siya has a few buttons in his shirt unbuttoned. Picture after picture pops on to the screen, the next proving to be more provocative than the previous. I swiftly make my way out of the theatre and waddle in search for a guest bedroom where I can sit down and try to call myself down. I hear Siya bark orders from the theatre to shut down the system, and by then I finally find a door, which I attempt to push open, but needless to say it requires a code. I resort to an open glass door leading to the back patio, leading to the out of this world pool.

I plonk myself on one of the recliner chairs and focus on my breathing, sgirtkg after I hear footsteps. His cologne tantalize my nostrils and I know that it's him. He gently sits at the edge of the chair and places my swollen feet on his lap. He clears his throat while gently stroking my feet, Steven prohibited me from getting any massages, apparently by touching a particular pressure point I could go into labor, so no

massages for me.

Siya looks petrified and his expression helps calm me down.

Siya- "It's not what it looked like."

Me- "It never is."

[04/19, 06:10] Wdz: [89]

****ZINHLE****

We've fallen into a calming silence and I'm relieved that he's not trying to fill my head with his web of lies. I notice the veins bulge from either side of his forehead as he clenches his jaw and stares at the floor. I'm unfazed by anything Syabonga Nyathi has to say at this point, and I'm proud of myself for being able to maintain my composure.

I finally decide to break the silence when I remember that we have guests to entertain.

Me- "Nyathi, our guests are probably confused and lost, I think it's our responsibility to entertain them for the remainder of the evening, then I'd like to retire. I think you'd agree that today has been rather eventful." I attempt to shift my feet off of his lap, but he tightens his grip on them.

Him- "Zinhle, let me explain please."

Me- " We don't have time for this."

Him- "I sent everyone home and they'll get a care package tomorrow morning, so lets only worry about ourselves."

Me- "Worry? You think I'm worried about you and your little slut?" I chuckle softly.

Me- "Wang'gcina kudala bhuti (that was the old me brother) the only thing I'm worried about is

bringing my munchkins into a calm and peaceful world. If that means you and your whore move in with me here and film sex tapes until kingdom comes, then so be it." I move my feet off his lap and stand up with a struggle. Siya holds onto my waist and pulls me towards him. His face rests on my belly and the munchkins deceive me and kick to their father's gesture. I roll my eyes and just when my mind begins to conjure up excuses for him, I snatch his hands from my body and march back into the house and find my mother cuddled up on a couch beside Steven. She seems to have dozed off and he has his eyes shut while brushing her hair with his fingers. I tiptoe past them and go in search of a bedroom. The staircase is monstrous and I can't imagine my fat self making it all the way to the top. After attempting to open at least twelve doors, I finally manage to gain entry into one.

I'm disoriented, because I don't even notice the detailing of the room. I turn the lights and strip as I make my way towards the bed. I finally reach it and I'm left in my undergarments. I reach for the covers and slide inside, holding my belly.

Me- "Goodnight munchkins, mommy loves you." I say as I gently stroke my belly, drifting off into a dreamless sleep.

I'm woken up by the urgent need to urinate so I jump up and make my way to the bathroom. Once I'm done, I head back into the bedroom, but I'm overwhelmed by heartburn, so I grab a towel to wrap around my body and make the agonizing trip to the kitchen. I spend a few minutes looking for a glass or a mug and after some thorough searching, I find one and drink some milk from.

I'm startled by heavy breathing down my neck

and the glass shatters into pieces on the ceramic floor. His hands hold onto my shoulders and he spins me around to face him.

Him- "Zinhle, I didn't do it."

Me- "We went over this already, I'm not interested." I say as I attempt to walk past him, but he grasps onto my waist and whisks me into the air, gently placing me on the kitchen counter.

Me- "Let me down Syabonga Nyathi before I scream!"

I say in a stern voice.

Him- "Who will hear you?" He says as he inches closer, until our noses virtually touch.

Him- "I didn't do it."

I roll my eyes and breathe out a heavy sigh.

Me- "Okay, you didn't do it. You were drugged by

Pam and she took pictures of the both of you to make me jealous. That's it right?"

Him- " Zinhle, No!" I grab his cheeks so that our eyes engage.

Me- "It's Okay, I'm okay, please believe me. Maybe we'll find our way back to each other if we're meant to be, but we have a greater responsibility ahead of us. In the next few weeks, we'll become parents, let's focus on that."

Him- "Zinhle, I love you. I love you so much, I wouldn't do that to you, trust me."

Me- "I love you too Nyathi, more than I should, but our love has brought such turmoil into our lives. I believe that there's an explanation for this whole Pam thing, but there's always something to fight for, and all I'm saying is that I'm tired of fighting for now, Okay?" I give him a soft peck on his succulent lips, and within a second, he transforms the kiss into a more

sultry one as he inserts his lustful tongue between my quivering lips. My body deceives me as I snake my arms around his firm neck and allow him more access by clenching onto the nape of his neck and encircling my legs around his torso. That slight move affirms hunger in both of us as he opens my towel, revealing my hardened nipples through my blush pink lace bra. My nether regions drip from thrill and yearning as he licks on his thumb and inserts it beneath my underwear and finds my pulsating nub. He gently rubs it without breaking our kiss and I instinctively stroke his rock hard member. In a flash, he has me in his arms and opens a door that leads to a bedroom. He gently places me on the bed and rips apart my flimsy underwear. He devours every inch of my womanhood with his talented tongue until my legs spasm from the peak of ecstasy released from my body. Siya lowers his jeans along with his briefs and his monster springs up.

He inches towards me and I shift backwards.

Me- "Please dim the lights." I say and he looks at Me with confusion.

Me- "Please." I plead with him and he replaces his jean and goes in search for the remote. I dive in the covers and close my eyes for a moment. I suddenly feel insecure as Pam's body in those pictures flashes in my mind. I hear footsteps draw closer and I emulate a soft snore. He sighs heavily and cuddles behind Me. Shortly afterwards I hear his prominent snore and I finally breathe a sigh of relief.

****ZIYANDA****

I've been in this facility for a while now, and I can finally say that I've begun my journey to healing. The pain and the hatred that I've been carrying for the bulk of my life isn't healthy, not

emotionally, physically nor mentally. I've always viewed myself as a strong black woman because I experienced such a harsh tragedy that became my reality, not realizing that as much power as my situation had over me back then, it has resonated into my adulthood as well. I had deemed myself unlovable, because I was so damaged and so even in my relationships and friendships I always felt that I had to prove my worth.

I've had to delve deep into my past and evoke emotions that I thought I had buried and I'm proud of my commitment to the program. My support system has also been incredible, my family, Brandon and my unfortunate encounter with Patrick is now another load that I have to carry on my back. However I can't wait to go back home and meet my nephews or nieces.

I'm lying on my bed and trying to fall asleep after a long day of group activities and I hear his footsteps draw closer to the bed.

Me- "Brandon" I say with my back still facing him. I hear him rid his shoes and slide into bed beside me.

Brandon- "How did you know?"

I softly chuckle as he encircles my waist with his warm hands.

Me- "You're the only one that visits me in my room."

Him- "Really? Then what was Patrick doing in here the other day?"

[04/19, 06:11] Wdz: [90]

****ZIYANDA****

My heart palpitates as Brandon's hand grips

onto my neck, at first with a featherlite touch, which soon turns into an aggressive one. I shift my upper body away from him, but his grip tightens.

Me- "Braaann...Brandon, you're hurting me." I say while panting for air. He seems to snap out of his trance as he snakes his leg around mine and removes his now trembling hand from my neck. He snuggles me from behind as he attempts to gain composure.

Brandon- "Yanda, I'm so sorry. I've just grown so fond of you and I wouldn't survive betrayal from you, especially if it has anything to do with my father."

A tear escapes my eye as he speaks and I know how it feels to be deceived by someone you trust, and I've never wanted to inflict pain of that magnitude on anyone, but I already have. I've betrayed Brandon, and as I release secrets I've buried for years, this particular secret will most

probably be the one to hinder my progress.

Me- "Hold me." I whisper to him and he closes the inch gap between us. I turn my body around to face him and rest my head on his chest. I trace patterns on his torso, until he falls asleep, then I drift off to sleep with a heavy heart.

I'm woken up by the alarm in the morning, alone in bed. Brandon usually leaves at the crack of dawn to prevent any discrimination against me by the staff and other patients during morning checks. Morning checks are compulsory and intense at times. They entail a doctor or nurse (depending on the severity of one's situation) performing a thorough check through our suites, to ensure that we were "safe" during the night. This is followed by a thirty minute "talk" about any dream or nightmare we could have experienced and then some meditation. Therefore, if Brandon were to be found in bed

with me, I'd probably be sent to solitary confinement or something similar.

After my morning check, I'm excited to begin with the activities ahead, I feel myself slowly become the woman I've yearned to be for years, and it's primarily due to full schedule at this facility.

The rest of the day goes as expected, and after dinner, I retire to my room where I take a scorching shower. I wrap a fluffy white towel around my body and walk towards my bed. I plonk myself on it and stare at the ceiling deep in thought about the other night with Patrick, and the worst part is being in the dark as to what really happened that evening. I close my eyes to delve deeper in an attempt to remember, but my moment is interrupted by someone clearing their throat. My eyes shoot open and when I see him tower over me at the foot of My

bed, I clench onto my towel and shift my body backwards.

Patrick: "Ziyanda." He says in his voice that commands attention.

Me- "What are you doing here?" I ask as my voice betrays me and comes out as a whisper.

Him- "Round two?" He says as he unbuckles his belt. I spring off the bed and head for the door, but he grabs hold of my towel and throws it across the room. I'm left shellshocked and stark naked in front of an amused Patrick who inches closer towards me.

I decide to conceal any glimmer of fear and close the gap between us.

Me- "What do you want Patrick?" I ask through gritted teeth.

Him- "Darling, why so shy now? You were screaming from pleasure when I was balls deep in you the other night." He says without

breaking eye contact.

I take a few steps backwards in shock and gasp at what I just heard.

Me- "What are you talking about?"

Him- "Now you're going to tell me that you don't remember? You were a woman possessed that night, who knew you had such a wild side?" He says as he strokes the side of my cheek. I wince and take a few short steps backwards as I feel the walls cave in on me. Patrick marches towards me and looks at me in confusion.

Him- " I'm leaving now, call me when the other Ziyanda is back." With that he leaves my room and bangs the door shut behind him. I slide onto the floor and try to regulate my breathing as I quiver uncontrollably on the floor.

I wake up in the morning, in my bed and dressed in long fluffy pyjamas, clenched onto

my knees that are touching my chest. I stretch my body and head to the bathroom for a shower. I stay in the shower as the scorching hot water cascades down my back while I attempt to piece together the mystery puzzle regarding Patrick. The truth is that I don't remember anything that night, I only remember waking up in the middle of the night to Patrick sitting at the foot of My bed, staring at me. I remember him standing up, picking up his coat and winking at me before leaving my room. That's all the recollection I have from that night. I leave the shower and walk to my bedroom to get dressed. After the usual morning check I decide to head to one of the female doctors that I've grown close to.

Over an hour later I re emerge from the doctor's room and March towards mine. As soon as I close the door behind me, I I slide onto the floor against it, covering my face with my trembling

hands. I inhale a few deep breaths and crawl to my bed. I replay in my head what the doctor said and a tear escapes as I think of the possibilities.

Hypnosis is one of the methods used at this facility to delve deeper into a patient's emotions, and so tapping into one's subconscious to fully treat the fears we aren't even aware of. These hypnotherapy sessions usually occur in our rooms, as that's where we feel the most comfortable.

So in the mid afternoon, the doctor came and we started with our hypnotherapy, I fell into a hypnosis trance and the doctor struggled bringing me back from it. I eventually did come to and continued with the rest of my day. The doctor just informed me that my reluctance to come out of my hypnosis trance would make it easier for me to be triggered back into one, simply by one trigger word.

My best guess is that I heard a trigger word and fell back into a trance, that's probably when Patrick came over and did Lord knows what to me, hence why I have no recollection of what happened between Patrick and I. All of the filth that I've worked so hard on on scrubbing off myself, has just crept back on me, tenfold. I've betrayed the man that i think I love and I've slept with his father, and I can't even remember it.

[04/19, 06:11] Wdz: [91]

****ZIYANDA****

I wake up the following morning, with the weight of the world on my shoulders. The aching pain that I feel in my heart, alerts me

that the Patrick saga is my reality and unfortunately it wasn't just a terrifying nightmare. Tears well up in my eyes as an image of Brandon surfaces in my mind and I think of the hatred that he will soon possess towards me.

After a few minutes of staring at the ceiling, I end my pity party and get started on my morning routine.

During the day, I try to occupy myself with as many activities and conversations as possible, in an attempt to minimize thinking about Brandon. I know that seeing him is inevitable and as part of my healing process, keeping secrets should be a thing of the past.

As bedtime looms closer, my mood changes to a sombre one as I brace myself for Brandon's reaction to my devastating news. I'm done with habdubg over the reigns to my life to another

person, I did that with Bhekumuzi, and I'll be damned if I give Patrick that magnitude of power over me. Patrick has a perverse nature to him and I'm not anyone's puppet.

I'm the last patient to retreat to their room and if I could stay longer in the communal living room, I would however I'm not spoiled for choice currently. After a short shower, I change into a onesie, I'm not in the mood for any man to ogle my body, and that includes Brandon. I curl my body once I'm in bed and my knees rest on my chest.

Me- "Give me strength Lord." I whisper as I hear my door knob turn, indicating someone's entry. I know immediately that it's him as soon as I get a whiff of his seductive cologne. My eyes are tightly shut as I hear his shoes land on the floor, swiftly followed by other items of clothing. He slides in and wraps his arms and legs around

my body, while my back still faces him. He gives me a soft kiss on the cheek and tightens his hold on me.

Him- "Yanda!" He says as his breath tickles the hairs on the nape of my neck.

Me- "Brandon I whisper back.

Him- "I need to see your face babe." I sigh heavily and slowly turn my body to face him. I can't bare to gaze into his eyes, so I rest my face on his chest instead. He holds onto the back of my head and I hear him inhale my scent.

Him- "As soon as you're in my arms, all of the stress just melts away. You're my calm place and I feel myself falling deeper for you every day." He says in my ear. My heart immediately pounds through my chest and I swallow a growing lump in my throat.

Me- "Brandon, I.."

Him- "Sssshhh, please I need to say this." He

says as he strokes my hair with his fingers.

Him- "I thought I knew what love is, but you came a long and incinerated any ideas of what I thought love is. Unbeknownst to you, you be taught me so much about myself and life in general. You truly have no inkling idea what a phenomenal woman you are. Your smile lights up a room, and seeing you laugh brings tears of joy to my eyes. I fell in love with your soul, and I've heard people say this and I figured that it was just gibberish, but I know now that there's no greater feeling. I guess what I'm trying to say is that I love you, and the love I have for you is frightening. I've been betrayed and deceived in the past, but I trust you with my life and I know that your soul is too pure. I give you my heart, it's fragile and in need of some extra care, but it's yours. Completely yours. I know that this is a lot to digest and this is selfish of Me, but if you'll have me, I'd love to be your partner exclusively."

Me- "Brandon.." I say as a tear escapes my right eye. He lifts my chin with his forefinger and kisses my cheek.

Him- "I'm sorry for springing this on you. Shit, I'm sorry. Let's just sleep." He says as he pulls me even closer to him. I feel his heart thudding against his muscular chest. I decide that it's time, but I'd rather have him be comfortable when he hears the news at least.

Me- "Massage?" He moans and turns to lay on his stomach.

Him- "And you continue to make me fall in love with you."

I straddle his back and begin with my amateur Massage. He moans and I take that as a positive sign and so I continue.

A few moments later I inhale a deep breath and clear my dry throat.

Me- "Brandon, your father and I slept together.

I'm so sorry, I wasn't fully conscious when it happened, but I don't want our relationship to be built on lies. Please tell me that we can move past this." I say in a hurry. I take a few deep breaths in and anticipate his response, but nothing.

I jump off him and pat his shoulder and come to the realization that Brandon is fast asleep. His lips pout slightly as his soft snores echo. I jump back into bed and snuggle beside him.

****BRANDON****

After a blissful evening with Ziyanda, I head back home in jovial spirits. I'm surprised to find my father in my kitchen, helping himself to a cup of coffee. I greet and make my way upstairs, but my father tugs on my shoulder.

Him- "How's our girlfriend doing?" He asks with

a smirk.

Me- "Patrick, I don't have time for this."

He chuckles sarcastically.

Him- "I'm guessing tonight is my night, since you were with her last night." I charge for him and grab hold of his neck.

Me- "Ziyanda is mine and mine alone." I say through gritted teeth.

Him- "I wish one day to be as nice as you son." He pats my cheek and whistles his way out.

I take a quick shower and lotion in my room, at that moment I notice an envelope positioned on my bed. I grab the envelope and notice a photo inside. I take a few steps back when I see Ziyanda liplocking my father in the photo. My hands start to tremble and my body perspired while my heart rate increases. I let out a loud scream as I tear the photo into shreds.

[04/19, 06:11] Wdz: [92]

****BRANDON****

I've been pacing my room for almost an hour now in an attempt to stabilize my anger and frustration, but I've failed dismally. My heart physically aches and I don't think I'll survive this heartbreak. I want to give Ziyanda the benefit of the doubt, but there's no fathomable explanation to explain what was happening in the photo. I get dressed in sweatpants and a loose sweater and head for my liquor cabinet, where I drink a long sip from a bottle of cognac.

I grab my car keys and make the painstaking journey to Ziyanda's facility. I stop on the side of the road on my way there, because I feel my heart giving in as the road becomes a blur from the tears that have welled up in my eyes.

Me- "Not Ziyanda." I whisper to myself, but I'm unable to convince my mind that.

I jump back into my jaguar and speed to the facility. Once I'm in the parking lot, I try to convince myself to turn around and confront Ziyanda only when my anger has subsided, but before I can stop myself, I find myself barging into her room. She's startled to see me as she's wrapped in a short towel, but her frown soon turns to excitement as she jogs towards me and attacks me with one of her warm hugs.

Her- "Brandy" she says; that's one of her nicknames for me. Her happy mood adds fuel to the fire as she wraps my arms around her petite waist.

Her- "To what do I owe the pleasure?" She whispers in my ear and I feel myself get aroused. I snatch her arms from around my neck and push her against the nearest wall. She yells out in pain and looks at me in confusion, her sweet face brings tears to my eyes.

Her- "Brandon?" She inches towards me with

concern written on her face as she cups my face in her gentle hands.

I wring my right hand around her neck as she gasps for air.

Me- "How could you? How could you?"

Her- "Whaa...whaaat?" She says while gasping for air and holding onto my hand.

Me- "You slept with Him, you slept with my father!" I see her eyes lose contact with me and feel her tears soak my hand.

Me- "Deny it! Ziyanda, just tell me you didn't do it! Please!" I plead with her. My worst fear comes true as she speaks.

Her- "I...I'm...soooooorrrryyyy!" She cries out. I release her neck from my grip and she topples onto the floor panting for air. I take a few steps back as she coughs uncontrollably and her towel flies off of her body, leaving her naked body revealed.

She crawls towards me and I sit on her bed. She kneels before me and grips my knees.

Her- "i can.."

Me- "Explain?"

She nods slowly as I notice her body become limp. I scoop her up and gently place her on the bed.

Me- "Save it! You're just like Yvette and every other bitch running around. Hope they treat that shit here too." She cries louder with every word that leaves my mouth.

Her- "Please. Let's go to the doctor, she'll explain. Hypno..me..him..."

I straddle her and stroke the side of her face with my thumb.

Me- "So you were laughing at everything I said to you last night? In your little puppet? I wanted to give you the world, but you fuck my father before we were even intimate? That's what you

care about? Sex? That's what you respond to? You're a cheap slut! Fuck me then whore!" I shout as I place her trembling hand on my hard member.

Me- "Do what you do best." She gazes into my eyes and sobs silently. I jump off the bed and punch into the wall.

Me- "Fuck this." I say as I open the door and bang is closed behind me.

****ZIYANDA****

Brandon leaves, although I try to call out for Him, my voice falls short of leaving my vocal cords. I'm left, gripping onto the sheets as I try to stabilize my breathing. Brandon was undoubtedly furious, but above anything else, he was disappointed and hurt.

After gathering myself, I get dressed and march

to Doctor Sarah's office.

I barge in without knocking and lock the door behind me.

Sarah is about my mother's age, half Caucasian and half Italian. She's the doctor that I've been able to fully confide in and she's also assumed the role of caregiver when it comes to me. She has children that are in my age group, so she saw me as an honorary daughter. She's technically Dr Sarah Dolores Esposito, but I settle with Sarah.

Sarah- "Ziyanda, what's wrong my baby?"

Before I can speak, my emotions get the better of me and I sob into Sarah's arms. After what feels like hours of crying, I finally feel ready to articulate what I need from Sarah.

Me- "Sarah, I need to ask for a favor please."

Her- "Anything baby."

Me- "Someone took advantage of me when I

slipped into a hypnosis trance after I had come to."

Her- "Dio Mio! What happened?"

Me- "I'd prefer not to go into detail about what happened, but I was wondering if you could put me under again so that I can tap into my subconscious and remember."

Her- "Ziyanda, I.."

Me- "Please, I need to do this." I plead while gripping onto her hand.

Her- "When?"

Me- "Now please." She sighs heavily and nudges me towards the door. We arrive at my room and I lay on my bed while Sarah pulls a chair and sits beside me.

Her- "Ready?"

I nod with my eyes tightly shut.

After a gruelling hour, Sarah and I hug goodbye as she leaves my room. I'm left to my own thoughts as my mind races with memories of the night with Patrick. I retreat to my bed after locking the door.

I jump into bed and pull the covers over my head.

Me- "Brandon, I'm so so sorry." I whisper as I soak my pillow with my river of tears.

After an agonizing few days of attempting to get hold of Brandon, to no avail, he finally answers his phone. I've had to bribe the security guards everyday just to use their phones.

Brandon- "What?"

Me- "Hi, it's me." I say in a soft voice. My heart thuds through my chest as soon as I hear his silky voice.

Him- "Ziyanda, what do you want?"

Me- "Please come over today, I need to talk to you. Then you can turn your back on me and never look back." He such a heavily and clears his throat.

Him- "Fine." He says finally, then hangs up.

I'm anxious the rest of the day and as bedtime approaches, my body perspires so I take another shower to cool off. I wrap my wet body in a towel and walk towards my bed. I'm stopped in my tracks when I see Brandon sitting at the foot of my bed.

Me- "Brandon." I say as I inch closer.

He tilts his head to face me and I realize that there's no emotion on his face.

Him- "I'm here, talk." He says with raised eyebrows.

[04/19, 06:12] Wdz: [93]

****ZINHLE****

I can safely say that I'm exhausted, both physically and emotionally. Carrying around the weight of two human beings in my abdomen gets more difficult and uncomfortable by the day. I've become an invalid and it's no longer cute. Basic tasks are virtually impossible to perform and unfortunately I know that the following stage is being a full time mom, sleeping and relaxing will be a very distant memory.

My mother has moved into the guest house here in the new house. Siya worked hard at convincing her to move in, and after realizing that it would be a more practical solution, she obliged. Siya hired a fulltime nurse for her, Steven is always around so she's well taken care of. Mom was also swayed when Siya told

her that I'd need her around since he'd be moving out, a conversation which he didn't have with me prior. So Siya moved back into the penthouse and I'm stuck in this palace. I can't lie and say that I was pleased with his decision to leave, because I assumed that we'd have a lengthy conversation regarding our next step as a family, but as always Siya's opinion is the only one that matters. It's his world and I just live in it.

I'm glad that my mother hasn't confronted me about the filth that everyone saw in the movie theatre the other day. I think she senses my sombre spirit, and doesn't want to add fuel to the fire and I'm grateful for that.

While Siya is away, I've decided to occupy my time fully so as to not dwell on the negative aspects of my life. Last night, I cried myself to sleep because I just missed my sister, I've tried

contacting her but to no avail, so I'm holding onto hope and faith that she'll come back renewed and happy. I'm sprawled on the couch half naked while I get my pregnancy bump mould done. The solution is cold and uncomfortable, but I'm excited to see the end product.

As the solution dries, the lady assisting me, wriggles it off gently. I look around for my robe that I had placed on a nearby couch, but I don't find it. I'm interrupted by someone clearing their throat. I close my eyes in embarrassment and make a dismal attempt to conceal my breasts and my flabby thighs.

Siya- "Looking for this?" He whispers into my ear while standing closely behind me. Without looking at him, I grab the robe from his grasp and throw onto my half naked body. I eventually turn to face him when I feel that I'm decent to do so and he stares back at me in amusement.

Me- "Siyabonga, what are you doing here?"

I ask as I place my hand on my wide hip.

Him- "Hi Zinhle, I'm fine thanks for asking. I got a report that some stranger was in our house so I rushed over." I raise my eyebrows at him and push past to see the lady out. I walk back into the lounge to admire my mould to find Siya inspecting it.

Him- "What is this now?" He says with a humorous confused expression on his face.

Me- "It's my belly mould." I say with a smile. He chuckles loudly and narrows his eyes.

Him- "Why is it so big?" He says in between laughing.

I feel my heart rate increase as I feel a dagger pierce through it. Tears well up in my eyes as his statement reminds me of Pam and her incredible body.

Me- "Well, I'm sure that's what happens when

you're carrying two human bodies implanted by you." I say as I wipe a tear that has escaped. I snatch my mould and march towards my room, leaving Siya calling after me.

After knocking on my bedroom door for almost an hour, he finally gives up and I hear his footsteps as he leaves. I huff loudly as I replay Siya's foolish statement and I decide to play some music on my laptop in an attempt to zone out all negative thoughts, and so I play some old Rihanna; "pon de replay". I bob my head to the music until I come across an email regarding a practical that seems to be today. I look at the time, and it starts in fifteen minutes. I jump off my bed and grab a short sleeved jersey dress and slip it on. I grab my bag and phone and call a cab.

I arrive at my practical, a few minutes late and everyone's eyes are immediately glued to me, the whale. I wouldn't have otherwise attended, but I'm on a fast track to failing this module, so

I need all the help I can get. The practical continues with a few glances from my fellow classmates, but I brush it off. A few moments into the practical, a short cramp pierces through my abdomen and I manage to breathe through it while continuing with my work at hand. After a while of sitting, I decide to stand and stretch my legs, when another cramp strikes. I decide not to risk it this time around, so I excuse myself from the rest of the practical and haul a cab. I notice almost a dozen missed calls from Siya and I decide to head to his office when I call him to no avail. I arrive at his office complex and punch in one of the numerous codes on my phone. I land on the top floor where his office is and I waddle towards his door. I ball my hand up into a fist to knock on Siya's door, but another sharp pain pierces through and I accidentally push through the door, losing my balance.

Siya- "Zinhle!" I hear him shout from across the

room. I raise my head and realize a few men dressed in suits seated across from him. I see countless pairs of eyes stare at me as I pant for air. I straighten myself and clear my throat, while I curve my lips into a fake smile.

Me- "Sorry.. I'm sorry to disturb. Siyabonga, a moment please?" I say through gritted teeth. I turn on my heel and walk towards the door where I wait for him outside. I stand against the door and hear Siya excuse himself, at that moment I hear screeching on the tiled floor from a pair of heels. I raise my head and see none other than Pam in the shortest dress known to man.

She eyes me, unimpressed and I feel insecure without any makeup and being the size of an eighteenwheeler, while she has immaculately applied makeup.

Pam- "Is Siya in? He asked to see me today." She says with a smug look on her face.

I push past her and waddle in the opposite direction. I head for the elevator, but before I reach it, I feel liquid splash onto the floor and I realize that my thighs are soaked.

Me- "Shit!" I say in a panic. I turn and I see Siya running towards me. He looks at me with concern written in his eyes and u burst into tears.

Me- "You just had to choose today? I'm going to remember my babies birth date as the day I caught you for the umpteenth time with your whore!" I say as I hit his chest.

Siya- "You have the wrong end of the stick here! What's going on?" He asks as He holds my belly. I turn and march towards the elevator and another sharp cramp pierces through my abdomen.

Siya- "Is it time?" Siya asks frantically.

Me- "No, it's too soon! I don't have a bag packed, my birthplan isn't here. Call Steven!" I bark at

him. The elevator opens and Siya and I frantically walk in, he barks orders on the phone while I hold onto my belly.

Siya- "You're okay, everything is going to be fine." He says in a calm voice, although the sweat droplets on his forehead tell a different story. I stop my bag onto the floor, leaving Siya to pick it up while I pace around the spacious elevator. The elevator doors open to the basement and Siya helps me out. His car is just a few feet away, but I'm perspiring heavily by the time I reach it. Siya opens the door for me and I slowly slide in. I spread my legs apart as the contractions are closer together and clench onto Siya's hand as he speeds away.

Me- "I'm not ready! I can't do this Siya. I need a few more weeks, I'll be fine in a few weeks!" I shout as another contraction hits.

Him- "Breathe baby, breathe." He says in a calm

voice.

Me- "Shut up you cheater!" I shout.

Me- "This is all your fault! You enjoy hurting me every chance you get, now you've passed it onto your children. They're hurting meeeeeeee!" I tighten my grip on Siya's hand and he clears his throat.

Me- "Tell Steven to get the theatre ready, I was joking about a natural birth, I don't want it." I cry as the pain escalates.

Siya- "You can do this my love, we're almost there." I huff as I inhale deep breaths and within a blink of an eye, we arrive at the hospital. We're met by Steven and a squad of nurses who help me in a wheelchair. A male nurse gets ready to wheel me into the hospital, when Siya pushes him to the side and pushes the wheelchair himself. We arrive at a blocked off corner of a floor and I'm transported to a suite. I crawl onto the bed and star at the ceiling as the pain

subsides. Siya rolls up his sleeves and continues to make phone calls while pacing the room.

Me- "Siyabonga, please. You're making me dizzy." I say as I fan myself.

Steven barges in and quickly performs an examination.

Once He's done I nudge him towards me.

Me- "So?" I ask as I breathe through a contraction.

Him- "Good news, you'll probably be parents by the end of today." Siya's face beams with excitement.

Me- "That soon? Are you sure? My contractions aren't even that bad. Can't we wait?" I say frantically. Siya looks at me in confusion while Steven seems amused.

Steven- "Yes, I'm sure. Zinhle, you have nothing to worry about, all first time mothers get

anxious, you'll be fine."

Tears travel down my cheeks as the reality dawns on me.

Me- "I want to go under. I want a C-section, cut me open please!"

Steven- "Remember you made me promise that I'd do everything in my power for you to deliver naturally? Besides, your labor is progressing nicely." He says with a smile.

Me- "Steven, I need an epidural at least. Screw pinky promises, listen to me!"

I scream as a contraction pierces through my entire body.

Steven- "But Zinhle..." I grab onto his shirt.

Me- "Give me the juice!" I scream in his face then lay back down on the bed.

Steven runs off and I'm left alone with Siya. He

inches towards me and grabs my hand and kisses my forehead.

Him- " I'm here." He says sincerely.

Me- "Save it Nyathi. You want to be in your office filming porno with your little sex kitten." I say while staring into his eyes. Siya's face immediately turns red and he leaves my bedside.

Siya- "I guess I'm not needed here, I'll be outside." He says as he marches towards the door.

Me- "Siya, wait!" He turns to look at me.

Me- "I'm scared okay? I'm absolutely petrified! I'm about to be responsible for two human lives and my life isn't even in order. I'm not done growing up, but.." I take a deep breath in as I'm interrupted by a contraction.

Siya rushes to my side and plants a soft kiss on my wet lips.

Him- "We can do this. Stop stressing, you're about to give birth to the most precious things on earth. God trusted you with this, who are you to deny it?" I smile slightly and before I can stop myself i speak.

Me- "I love you so much." I blurt out.

Me- "Uhhh, please call my family." I say in an attempt to change the topic. Siya moves away and after a few steps he turns back.

Him- "I love you more."

****ZIYANDA****

I try to muster up the courage to tell Brandon everything, but he's violently tapping his foot on the tiled floor. I walk towards the bed and sit beside Brandon and grasp his shaking knee. He gently removes my hand and stands. I sigh heavily and decide that it's better to get this conversation over and done with, I'll accept my

fate as it comes.

Me- "Firstly, thank you for coming. I appreciate you being open to hearing me out.

Him- "Ziyanda, get to the point please."

Me- "The other night I was alone in my room after a hectic day of activities, one of them being hypnotherapy..."

Him- "Are you serious right now?"

I nod slowly.

Me- "So I was in bed when a knock on the door woke me up, when I opened, it was Patrick.."

I'm interrupted by Brandon's phone vigorously ringing and vibrating.

Him- "excuse Me." He says as he answers.

A few minutes later, Brandon looks at me and I can't read the expression on his face.

Him- "Get dressed." He says sternly.

Him- "Your sister is in Labour."

Without asking any questions I grab a warm maxi dress and some underwear then get dressed in the bathroom. Within seconds I'm ready, and following behind Brandon. He gives the security a wad of cash and grabs my hand as we jog to the parking lot. A jolt of electricity pierces through my body, and Brandon seems to feel it too as he gazes deep into my eyes for a few moments.

[04/19, 06:12] Wdz: [94]

****ZINHLE****

I'm staring at the ceiling as reality kicks in with every shattering contraction. Siya hasn't been able to sit down, and at least I find humour in his somehow calm panic.

I clench onto the bedsheets as another

contraction drills through my lower back. I grit my teeth while I inhale and exhale through the pain.

Me- "Siyabonga Nyathi, what the fuck are you doing standing there? Call Steven now damnit!" I shout as I roll over to my side. Siya seems startled as he stands in the same position ogling me.

Me- "Now! Do you want me to die? Do you?"

Siya wipes sweat droplets on his forehead with the sleeve of his shirt, and I notice his face turning red. The cibtractuin subsides, and I can see that Siya isn't taking this labor process well.

Me- "Siya, please come here."

I say to him in a soft voice. He stares at me for a few moments then eventually inches closer towards me.

I grab his hand and gaze into his eyes.

Me- "Whether we're ready or not, we're about to

be parents. I'm going to need you in the next few hours, more than ever and you have to step up okay?" He nods his head slightly.

Him- "I just.. You're in so much pain Zinhle, I can't bare it." He says as tears well up in his eyes.

Me- "Which is why you need to get Steven here to drug the shit out of me. I can't deliver two babies on faith alone right now. Baby daddy, we've got this." I say as I wink at him. His succulent lips curve into a slight smile and we share a moment where our souls connect and communicate. A few moments later, he leaves and returns with Steven and his entourage of nurses.

After performing an examination, Steven clears his throat in preparation to deliver some news.

Me- "Oh God, are they okay?" I ask frantically.

Steven- "They're fine, but your Labour is progressing fast, I don't know if the epidural will

have time to take effect."

Me- "What? No! I'll suck them back in, they won't come out until it starts working. Steven, please!" I cry out loud. Siya grips my hands and strokes my hair that is now glued onto my wet face.

Siya- "Shit man Steven, do something!" He shouts, and I jerk in fear.

Steven huffs and shrugs his shoulders then instructs the nurses. A few moments later, I'm lying on my back, waiting for the epidural to kick in when Ziyanda and Brandon barge in.

Ziyanda rushes to my side while Siya and Brandon exchange handshakes. Ziyanda attacks me with a hug, and I eventually tap on her shoulder for her to let me go.

Her- "I'm so sorry, this is just so exciting! My baby sister is about to become a mother of two and I'm about to be aunty."

She says with glassy eyes.

Me- "And a God mother as well." She beams from excitement and attacks me with another bear hug. I see Siya watch uncomfortably from a distance and mime "Are you okay?" I nod and Ziyanda finally breaks the hug.

Brandon acknowledges me with a simple nod, he looks uncomfortable, but I'm too drained to dwell on that, I appreciate the support.

On one side, I have Siya hovering, fluffing up my pillows and holding a small fan in my face. The other side, Ziyanda is timing my contractions and excitedly jotting them down on a notepad.

I feel the drugs slowly kick in as my lower body becomes numb, and I smile as the pain subsides.

My mom is later wheeled in on a wheelchair by Steven, and as soon as our eyes meet, I can tell

that she's elated. My heart overflows with love at that very moment, and I say a silent prayer thanking God for the love and mercy that he's shown me.

I could get used to the attention that I'm receiving, and I'm going to milk it for all that it's worth.

My mom is at the foot of my bed, stroking my feet although I can barely feel anything, Siya is asking me every five seconds whether I'm okay or need anything, Brandon has Steven on speed dial in case of any changes and Ziyanda is burning sage and cleansing my suite. I make a slight twitch and everyone's eyes bore into me with concern.

Me- "I'm fine guys." I say in a soft chuckle.

Mom- "I trust that lobola negotiations will be underway soon Siyabonga?" My mother asks I'm a calm tone.

Me- "Mama! We can talk about this later

please."

Her- "No, we need to know. Are the birth certificates going to have Nyathi or Khumalo printed on them?"

Siya- "Nyathi of course." Siya says sternly.

Mom- "Of course kwani? Did you pay lobola for the babies?"

Siya- "That can be arranged within a few days."

Ziyanda- "Well until then, the munchkins can be Khumalo's"

Brandon- "Babies always assume their father's surname. This is obvious"

My head is bobbing from person to person as each says their piece.

Me- "Enough! We'll just hyphenate, perfect compromise!" I say, and everyone looks at me as though I've spoken some alien language.

Mom- "Are you white? Don't speak nonsense

ke." My mom looks annoyed and I don't want this energy around me when we welcome the munchkins into the room.

Siya- "I'm a Zulu man and this double barrel rubbish won't happen, and I won't be coerced into marrying someone just to give my kids my last name." His last statement feels like a dagger through my chest.

Steven barges in, analyzing the machines that are now making alarming sounds.

Steven- "Your blood pressure Zinhle!" He draws the curtains and examines me.

Him- "The twins are a little in distress, I'll try to stabilize them, you're not fully dialated yet."

Steven leaves the suite and silence fills the room.

Me- "That's enough! Leave my room! My babies have been through enough and I won't have them go through harmful labour, so leave!"

Siya- "Guys, we appreciate the support but I guess we'll let you know once they've arrived."

I huff and roll my eyes as Siya gestures for Brandon to wheel my mom out.

Me- "You too Nyathi. I've felt alone most of this pregnancy anyway so going through Labour alone won't be a trainsmash." I say in almost a whisper.

Him- "Zinhle.."

Me- "Please leave." Siya stands beside me for a few minutes then finally drags his feet towards the door. After giving me one final pleading look, he leaves and I breathe out a heavy sigh.

A few moments later, I fall into a blissful lumber.

I'm woken up by a slight pain and I realize someone gripping onto my hand.

I look down and I see Siya resting his head on the bed, his lips slightly pouted as he snores

quietly.

I press the button for Steven and punch Siya.

Me- "I think the drugs are Waring off, I just felt a pain." He yawns and stretches then jumps to his feet preparing to call Steven, but Steven emerges and performs another examination.

Him- "It's time."

Within a flash, my legs are probed into stirrups, a team of medical professionals have filled the room and reality dawns on me.

Siya is standing at the foot of My bed staring between my legs, with his jaw on the floor.

Me- "Siyabonga, get your ass here now!" I shout. I don't want him witnessing the crime scene that my cookie will now become. He slowly walks towards Me with a look of horror plastered on his face.

Me- "Don't faint and erase that image from your mind forever." I say as I grip into his hand. I feel

a contraction creep in and I'm instructed to push.

Me- "Lord give me strength!" I scream as I apply all my might into pushing.

Siya- "You can do this babe, come on!"

Me- "Siyabonga Nyathi shut up man!" I shout as I push through another contraction.

A few minutes later I hear a nurse say "The head is out!"

My heart palpitates with excitement and I continue pushing.

Moments later I hear Steven at a distance.

Steven- "Congratulations, you've given birth to a beautiful baby." I smile slightly as everything becomes a blur and my head hits the pillow. I feel my body shake vigorously and my eyes roll back involuntarily.

The machines beep as Siya grips hold of my shoulders and shamed my clammy body.

Steven's voice is further away as he barks orders to his nurses.

Steven- "The second baby is crowning and in distress! Siya, we need to make a decision. We're losing both of them, it's either Zinhle or the baby! Who do we focus on?"

Siya- "Zinhle! Please!" I hear him cry as I slip into unconsciousness.

Me- "Baby.. save munch.. munchkin." I say as I try to fight the urge to fall asleep.

Siya- "Baby, I love you. Stay awake please. I can't do this alone."

Me- "You'll be amazing. Don't spoil them too much."

The last thing I hear is a loud beeping sound then it's lights out for me.

[04/19, 06:12] Wdz: [95]

****SIYA****

I've been a walking zombie for a week, and I'm losing myself. I may as well be dead, because how do you continue living when your heart is no more? I'm merely a vessel performing my obligations and duties, but I'm dead inside.

It's been a week; an entire week but the pain I've been feeling within the depths of my soul hasn't dissipated.

I'm sitting on the couch, waiting for my little babies to be wheeled in so I can see them. They are the only glimmer of hope and happiness in this dark pit of emotions. The nurse wheels them in their incubators and my heart is resuscitated. The nurse excuses herself and I'm given some time alone with my reason for breathing.

Me- "Hello baby boy!" I say as I knock softly on the illuminated glass of the incubator.

Me- "Baby girl!" I say as I knock on the other.

Tears threaten to fall when I look beside me and I see a lifeless Zinhle hooked onto machines. She looks so peaceful and almost as if the slightest movement will wake her, but she's been in a comatose state for a week.

Me- "Zinhle.. my love here are our munchkins. They are more beautiful then you could have ever imagined. Our daughter is a fighter like her mother, the odds were against her, but she's persevering and progressing day by day because she wants to meet her mommy. I know that you're still in there, I know in my heart of hearts thatch you're fighting. Please don't stop. Our family needs you. You need to be around to play dress up with our daughter and get your favorite bear hugs from our son. I need you."

sniff

Me- "I hadn't even started loving you and I know you weren't done making me a better man.

Come back, this can't be our full stop. We have a lifetime of memories left to create, please just come back." I say while gripping onto her hand, waiting for her to respond.

After a few moments, I stand and kiss Zinhle's forehead then turn my attention back to the munchkins.

Me- "What are going to call you two? Should we wait until mommy has had enough beauty sleep? Or should we just go with munchkin 1 and munchkin 2?" I chuckle softly then smile at their little bodies. I open a window in each incubator and gently stroke their stomachs.

Me- "I love you so much."

I'm smiling like an idiot at their slightest movement, but my moment is soon interrupted by the nurse.

Me- "I guess knocking is asking too much then." I say sternly.

Nurse- "I'm so sorry Mr Nyathi, I just thought that you'd be overwhelmed with the babies so I came to assist you." She says with a wide smile.

Me- "Don't."

Her- "Help?"

Me- "No, don't think. It's definitely not your strongest suit. If I need help I'll ask. Thanks sisi." She remains in the same spot and slowly inches towards me.

Her- "If you need anything, anything at all; please don't hesitate to call me." She says while licking her bottom lip and holding a small note in my face. I chuckle sarcastically then grip hold of her hand and look at her intently.

Me- "Little girl, I'm the wrong one!"

I say through gritted teeth.

Me- "Now run along, I don't want to see you around this floor again, and of course you'll listen if you still wish to be employed."

I let go of her now trembling hand and turn on my heel to face my angels while she scurries out of the room.

I kiss Zinhle goodbye then wheel my babies out.

This has been the reality of my life for a week. I wake up in the early hours of the morning everyday on the couch beside Zinhle's bed; kiss her, watch my babies sleep for a few minutes then head home to shower and change and distract myself with work at my office, when I feel myself suffocating emotionally I head back to the hospital and the cycle begins all over again.

I head home and find Zinhle's mom busy in the kitchen, preparing a hearty breakfast.

Me- "Sawubona ma, I just came to grab a shower and leave. Have a good day."

Her- "Siyabonga!" She tells as I jog out of the kitchen. I slowly make my way back inside and she pulls my hand, leading me to the breakfast nook where I reluctantly sit down.

Her- "Those babies in that hospital need their father just as much as they need their mother." She says while dishing a hefty plate of everything imaginable.

Me- "Ma, I'm.."

Her- "Fine? Kahle bo! Whay did you eat yesterday?" She asks with her hand on her hip.

Me- "I had.."

Her- "A bottle of whiskey? The day before? Another one?" She asks with such authority, I feel like an intimidated school boy.

She sits down beside me and sighs heavily.

Her- "Siyabonga, I know it's difficult, trust me I do. Zinhle is my daughter and I'm in physical pain when my children aren't okay, but we can't

be selfish. What will happen if we all drown ourselves in alcohol? The babies will be discharged soon, with or without Zinhle and we need to be prepared for that."

She says while fighting the tears that have welled up in her eyes and turned them glossy.

Her- "Zinhle will wake up, but she needs to be welcomed by a healthy man. Now is not the time to spiral out of control, use that love that you have for Zinhle to have faith that it will be fine. All you need is faith as small as a mustard seed and you can move mountains." She says as tears roll down her face. She grabs my hands and covers them with hers then pulls me in for a warm hug. I can no longer control my emotions and so I sob into her apron.

Her- "Sssshhhh."

Me- "I can't.. What if?" I say between my cries.

Her- " What if she makes it and you raise a beautiful family together? God himself said that

we should throw our burdens at his feet, but you want to carry them alone? Siya, it's darkest before dawn." She says while giving me a tight hug.

She springs onto her feet and disappears into the kitchen again. My mouth involuntarily curves into a smile as my heart warms to the love that Zinhle's mom is showing me. An image of my mother pops up in my head, but I swiftly move onto the breakfast spread in front of me and decide to occupy myself with it.

It's been 10 days since Zinhle slipped into a coma and it's been the longest ten days of my entire existence. I'm in her suite, waiting for our babies to arrive and I'm trying to work Zinhle's diffuser. I position the large vases of flowers, attempt to burn her sage, but decide to stop before I die of an asthma attack. I sit on the chair beside her bed and grab her hands,

engulfing them in mine.

Me- "My love, I tried burning your voodoo shit so you could remember home and fight to come back sooner, I was less than successful though. Anyways, the munchkins are coming home soon and we need to name them so we can finish on the nursery. I was thinking of powerful Zulu names like Ntombikayise for munchkin 2 and Sphamandla for munchkin 1." I say then softly chuckle as I imagine her feisty response.

I feel her finger twitch while I stroke it then I spring to my feet. I see her lips move slightly then I move my head towards hers.

Her- "Nnnn... nnnn..nooo" she says.

I'm elated when I hear her croaky voice, so much so that I attack her pals face with wet kisses all over.

She points towards the jug of water on the

bedside table and I help her drink through a straw.

Her- "Who. Are. You?" She says in a whisper. I feel my heart shatter into a million pieces and the room spinning in all directions. I try to speak but my words fail me, then I see her sweet smile that soon turns into a feint chuckle.

The nurse wheels in the munchkins and at this moment I'm elated.

Me- "Thank You." I say as o close my eyes and a tear runs down my face.

[04/19, 13:24] Wdz: [96]

****ZINHLE****

After the umpteenth attempt at opening my eyes, my eyelids finally flutter open. The blinding lights, Siya's kisses all over my body and the soft cries of a baby is all extremely

overwhelming for me. I feel the walls cave in on me and my dry throat constrict. I'm internally in a state of panic as I feel tears well up in my eyes and vivid memories of my labor surface in my mind. I shut my eyes tightly closed then I hear Steven's voice in the background.

Steven- "Everybody out! Now!" A few moments later, I hear the door bang closed and I feel Steven's warm hands on my body as he examines me. He probes my eyelids open and after a thorough examination he looks at me with concern.

Him- "Welcome back to the land of the living!" He says in a sarcastic manner

I smile slightly and attempt to shift my body, but it feels numb. Steven must notice my frown as he chuckles quietly.

Him- "You're still heavily sedated, your body went through a lot of trauma so take it easy and enjoy the drugs while they last in your system."

He says then winks at me.

Me- "How long?"

Him- "It's almost been two weeks since you went under. Zinhle, that man outside absolutely loves you, if there was any doubting it before, those thoughts need to be erased. Let him spoil you during your recovery process."

Me- "A few things are a blur, is the other baby okay?"

Him- "They're both striving and should be released soon. Soon the whole Nyathi family will be good to go and that's including you." He says as he pats my shoulder.

Me- "I think I should go to a recovery centre perhaps so I heal properly?"

Him- "I don't think we need to take drastic measures, you'll be fine at home if you take it easy. Besides, I'm sure you're ready to start bonding with your babies."

Me- "It wouldn't be for a long time, please."

Steven stares at me with a look of confusion on his face.

Him- "Okay." He eventually says after releasing a loud sigh.

Me- "Just tell Siya that I absolutely have to go and don't let him talk you out of it." As soon as I say that, like on cue Siya barges in.

Siya- "What's taking so long? The munchkins are dying to meet you babe." He says as his face beams in excitement.

Me- "Babe, I'll meet them later, I'm exhausted." Steven and Siya look at me as if I'm speaking an alien language.

I have an overwhelming influx of emotions and thoughts racing through my mind and I can't decipher what they mean, I just think that I need time alone.

Me- "Steven informed me that I need to go to a

recovery facility, so I'll be away for a few weeks."

Siya- "Okay, we can turn the pool house into one and you can recover there. We'll get nurses and machines and whatever else you may need okay? I'll start making the arrangements." He says as he whips out his phone.

Me- "No, I don't want my progress to be hindered by anything. It'll be a few days."

Him- "The munchkins?"

Me- "I'm sure you and mom will manage."

After a few moments of staring at me, he shrugs his shoulders.

Him- "Zinhle, are you okay?"

Me- "I'm fine, just need some rest." I say with a slight smile. I pull the covers over my head and face the opposite direction.

In the morning I'm woken up by a slue of nurses. I try to fall back asleep, but then I hear one mention Siya's name.

Nurse1- "So I slipped him my number!"

Nurse2- "Don't lie!"

Nurse1- "I think he's definitely interested. I may just be the next Mrs Nyathi!"

Nurse2- "Sssshhh his wife is sleeping right there!"

Nurse1- "Oh please, she's just a girlfriend. She was practically dead a few days ago, do you really think she'd hear me? Besides, I'm doing her a favor taking care of her man in her absence."

Nurse2- "Tell me how he is in bed."

Nurse1- "I Will." They giggle and go about their business. I huff and roll my eyes then pray for the strength to not allow my emotions to take reign over me.

Siya barges in and the nurses drool over him. He jogs towards me and gives me a soft kiss on my chapped lips.

Siya- "Please excuse us." He says to the staff and they scurry out.

Siya- "They're bringing the munchkins just now." He says as he beams from excitement.

Me- "Do you know that nurse? The one that was just in here?"

Him- "Yeah, I know all of them."

Me- "Did she give you her number?"

Him- "Yes, but.."

Me- "I was just asking. I'd like to shower first."

Him- "You can't do that on your own, besides the munchkins won't notice."

At that very moment, a nurse wheels in the babies and Siya stands then dismisses her.

Him- "Look at how beautiful they are." He says

while pushing the incubators towards me.

Me- "I can see them from here! You can take them back now."

Him- "What? Don't you want to touch them and see them?"

Me- "I said take them away!" I scream.

Siya stares at me as I sob then turns on his heel and leaves with the babies.

The following days are brutal, both physically and emotionally. I'm in a tremendous amount of pain from my stitches and the probing that's been done to my body. I still look pregnant with at least another baby, because my stomach hasn't retracted. My breasts are the size of watermelons and are also causing me pain. I'm being pressurised into breastfeeding but I've boldly declined. I haven't seen the babies since Siya bombarded me with them and I haven't

tried to either. I wish I could explain the way I feel, but I can't put it into words. I thought becoming a mother to the munchkins would make me feel elated and content, but I don't feel that way. I feel lost and I just don't belong. My body looks like a train wreck on the inside and out and I have no emotional connection to my babies. I have no desire to hold them, kiss them or even feed them. I hate myself for feeling this way, but it's out of my control. I'm ashamed, angry and deeply saddened, what kind of a mother experiences such harsh feelings for their own flesh? I've prayed about this, meditated and still nothing. As soon as I can walk, I need to get out of here before I inflict any pain on my own children. I have to leave and tomorrow is the day.

[04/19, 13:23] Wdz: [97]

****SIYA****

I'm in Zinhle's room in the new house, basking in Zinhle's scent as I lay on her bed. I'm resting on her pregnancy pillow, and I must say, it's incredibly comfortable; no wonder she didn't mind that I wasn't around to give her those cuddles that she loved so much. I stare at the ceiling as I think of my current state of confusion. I'm elated that Zinhle came to, my faith in God has been restored, my prayers were answered, but it's as if her body is Zinhle's but not her soul. When i gaze into her eyes, I see nothing, no zest for life, no adoration and love for any thing all I see is emptiness. I'm perplexed, because she was more than eager to meet our kids while she was pregnant, she even broke up with me multiple times to focus on her pregnancy and now she can't stand the sight of Me, but worst of all, she can't stand the sight of her kids.

During Zinhle's pregnancy, she was obsessed with aligning everything perfectly so that the babies were born into a comfortable environment and healthy. She applied so much effort and discipline during her pregnancy and now she seems so disconnected from reality, it's frightening. I thought that once she woke up, the pieces of our puzzle would align themselves, but it seems we have another problem on our hands, the worst part is that my hands are tied and I don't know where to begin in trying to resolve this.

I wake up on Zinhle's bed after falling asleep for a while and I go freshen up. I decide to head back to the hospital even though I'm well aware of the brawl that Zinhle will most probably start as soon as she lays her eyes on me. In the car ride to the hospital I have a conversation with God and as Zinhle's mom would say; I throw my burdens at his feet. I park my car in the private

parking lot and brace myself for the volcano that's about to erupt when I push my way through ignoring Zinhle's orders of blocking me from visiting her. I make my way inside and the nurses ogle me from the time i walk through the entrance until I enter the elevator. I roll my eyes in annoyance, some women have no shame. Not a single staff member isn't aware of my relationship with Zinhle; hell I had her suite specially constructed for her, I slept on a hard still every night for almost two weeks while she was in a coma, and these women honestly think that I'd give them even a second glance. I would get a male only staff to tend to Zinhle so that I wouldn't deal with thirsty vultures, but I'm not having random men prod and examine Zinhle's body like that. I make my way to Zinhle's room once I leave the elevator and notice the security guards dozing and my guards on alert. I acknowledge them and make my way inside Zinhle's suite. I enter and I'm thankful for my

fast reflexes when she throws a vase towards the door. It smashes against the wall close to me and shatters into pieces on the floor, while the fresh roses scatter around my feet. I raise my head and notice that her face is red, her hair is messy and she's sobbing quietly.

My heart sinks when I see this sight and I slowly inch towards her.

Her- "No! Leave! Leave me alone! Leave now!" She screams hysterically while punching the bed with her small fists. I rush by her side and engulf her body with mine. She punches my chest, but I hold onto her even tighter. I feel her tears soak my shirt and my heart feels heavy as I rock her back and forth.

Me- "Sssshhhh baby, it's okay. It's all okay."

She stops fighting and holds onto me as well.

Me- "What's wrong my love? Whatever it is; it's okay."

She pulls away and stares into my eyes. Her puffy eyes and swollen face make me want to cuddle her into she has no more tears left to cry.

Her- "Okay? It's not Okay! Is it okay for a mother to dislike her children? Is this Okay?" She shouts as she rips off her hospital gown, revealing her naked body.

Her- "What is this? Tina the talking tummy? It looks like I'm still pregnant! I went through nine months of this for what? I don't have a connection with human beings that were growing inside of me. How is that possible? I sang to them, conversed everyday with them, made them listen to my favorite artists but I can't stand to see them Now? If i were to go to the nursery and the nurses were to ask which are mine, I wouldn't even know!" She sobs in my arms and I feel a tear threaten to fall down my cheek.

Me- "Zinhle, please."

Her- "Siya, when will these hurdles stop? When will I enjoy my life again without concerns? The nurses are ranting and raving about you, then there's Pam. I can't compete with any of these women, look at me!"

I tighten my grip around her and pull her closer to me, but she yelps in pain.

Her- "My breasts!" She screams as she pushes me away.

I shift her body on the bed and climb in beside her. I open her gown and trace patterns on her body.

I trail my finger along her ribcage then on her stomach.

Me- "This was our munchkin's home for nine months. You housed our babies inside of you. They called your beautiful stomach their home. Regardless of what you're going through,

there's nothing that anyone could ever do to change that. You are those babies mother, and I know that you have an unfathomable amount of love for them, just unlock it my love. If only you could see yourself through my eyes, you'd walk around naked around this hospital I'm sure. I thought it wasn't possible to love you even more, but after giving birth to our babies, there's no doubt that I do. You're phenomenal, and I'm going to spend the rest of my life proving my love for you."

Her- "The rest of your life as boyfriend and girlfriend?" She says while sulking.

Me- "I don't want you to remember me proposing to you as me having pity or when you were in hospital, so I won't do it today; but nothing would make me happier than accepting me as your life partner and husband and you being my queen and wife. We'll get the best help we can" I say then kiss her forehead.

Her- "Please bring my babies in." She says while sniffing through her tears.

[04/19, 13:26] Wdz: [98]

****ZINHLE****

Siya's words revive a love in me that I thought had died. Although my emotions are still scattered everywhere and I don't have certainty regarding a few facets of my life, I'm certain that in the depths of my heart and soul, I possess a love deeper than the oceans for my family and Siya is right; I just need to tap into it and fully immerse myself in it. Siya leaves to go fetch the munchkins and I assess the mess I've created as well as my torn night gown.

I spring off the bed in a panic and experience a dizzy spell as soon as my feet make contact with the floor, these drugs are taking longer to wear off than anticipated. I feel tension in my stitches and I guess it's the pain I'll have to

suffer for asking Steven to make me look as good as new down there. I hold onto the furniture and slowly make my way to the bathroom. I freshen up to the best of my abilities and change into a fresh nightgown. I make my way back to my bed and notice the shattered glass of the vase on the floor and crawl to pick the pieces up. I hear the door knob turn and my heart beat increases drastically as I close my eyes in anticipation of what is to occur. I smell Siya's scent and I know that he's with the munchkins, but I'm overwhelmed by my emotions. I continue to focus my attention on the floor and picking up the broken glass.

Siya- "I have two of the most adorable humans that want to meet their mother!" He says in an animated voice. I ignore him and continue to focus on the glass pieces on the floor.

Him- "Zinhle?"

Me- "I'm just cleaning this up quickly. Maybe

you should bring them back when I'm done." I say with my back faced towards him.

I hear his footsteps inch closer towards me and come to a halt when he's merely an inch away from me. He crouches down behind me and holds me from behind. He grabs my trembling hands and throws the pieces of glass cradled in my hand onto the floor. He plants a few wet kisses on the nape of my neck and breathes in my scent.

Him- "Zinhle, we'll do this together. You'll be fine." He whispers in my ear. He gently helps me stand and after a few moments, he spins me around to face him. He raises my chin with his thumb and cups my face with his masculine hands.

Him- "Baby, I'm not going to force you to hold them, I'm just asking that you meet them okay?" He pleads while gazing into my eyes.

I nod slightly and he grips my hand as w3 walk

towards the incubators. They're placed side by side and my heart races the closer I get to them. After a slow journey to my munchkins, we're finally looking down on them, I look at Siya and he nods in reassurance so I release a sigh and look at them. As soon as I set my eyes on their miniature bodies, tears fall down my cheeks.

I bite my fingernails as I get lost in my family. I gaze up at Siya and his face is beaming from happiness, I think I notice a tear that threatens to fall.

Me- "Siya, they're perfect!" I say as I hold onto Siya's muscular arm and rest my head on his torso. I move even closer to them and tap on each incubator while my lips curve into a prominent smile.

Me- "I'm your mommy! I'm the voice you've been listening to for almost nine months. I'm sorry that I haven't been the mother that I've always wanted to be, but I promise that I'll work hard at

being even better than that. You're our perfect little humans." I say while wiping the stream of tears flowing down my face.

Siya- "Yes you are, Ntombikay.."

Me- "No! Not happening!" I say while covering Siya's mouth with my hand. We both chuckle softly and he rests his heavy arm on my shoulder.

Him- "This is it for me. This is what it means to be wealthy." He says then kisses my wet cheek.

Siya and I have spoken to Steven regarding my condition and he's helped in referring a renown psychologist. It's great that the doctor is a female, because Siya blankly refused for me to be "emotionally naked" for another man. I've attended a few sessions with my psychologist and she officially diagnosed me as having a mild case of postpartum depression. The title made my condition so much more realistic and

frightening, but I've had to think of my family and so I've welcomed the help with open arms. I haven't seen my mother or my sister since I have birth, because I don't want sympathy or pity from anyone. I don't want this condition to be my identity, so the fewer people know about it the better. I don't want to be supervised when I'm with my babies nor do I want the responsibility of taking care of them to fall on anyone else other than Siya and myself.

Siya has been a dream during this phase, and sometimes I have to pinch myself to make sure that I'm not day dreaming. He's stepped up and become the man that I've always known he is. He's been patient, understanding and incredibly supportive and I honestly don't think I would have been able to make the amount of progress that I've made in this short period of time.

I breastfed the munchkins for the first time yesterday and I feel even closer to them now. Siya insisted on skipping his meetings to watch and take a few photos of the precious moment. We still haven't named the babies, so we still refer to them as munchkin 1 and 2; anything is better than the hideous names that Siya came up with.

We're packing my belongings, because we're heading home today. I'm a ball of nerves, because the munchkins will be discharged within a few days, and I just hope and pray that I'll be prepared for the next step.

Steven barges in as Siya zips the last of my bags.

Steven- "So this is it, it's been one hell of a journey Zinhle!" He inches closer to give me a hug, but is intercepted by Siya.

Siya- "That won't be happening, especially in my presence." Steven softly chuckles while shaking

his head.

Steven- "Well, I just wanted to give you this prescription and wish you well on the next phase of your journey. Oh and no humping each other like rabbits until I say so."

Siya- "So I need to ask another man for permission to make love to the mother of my children?"

Me- "Steven, don't worry, we'll be abstaining for a while."

Siya- "A while? How long is that? A month, a year?"

Me- "We can talk about this later." Siya seems annoyed, I notice his face turn red and his veins bulge from his forehead.

Steven- "Well you both have my number, good day." With that he leaves. I notice Siya's frustrations so I walk up to him.

Me- "Nyathi, we have to follow doctor's orders,

and besides you know that I'm dealing with some issues I can't even think of being naked and intimate right now." I say while gazing into his eyes.

Him- "I get it babe, but discussing my sex life with another man is even more frustrating especially when i practically have blue balls." He says in a whining voice. He grips my hand and places it on his monstrous bulge.

Me- "Great things come to those who wait." I say as I reach up and plant a soft kiss on his lips.

Me- "Please do wait Siya." I plead with him.

Him- "Even if it takes forever. My balls will probably fall off, but who needs them?" He says sarcastically.

Me- "Siya!" I say as I gently punch him.

Him- "Let's go home baby mama."

Me- "I'm ready baby daddy!"

[04/19, 13:27] Wdz: [99]

****ZIYANDA****

I've been stuck between a rock and a hard place for about the past two weeks. I've suffered from a whirlwind of emotions within a short space of time, and so I've delved back into my activities at the facilities and tried to ignore the outside world. I wish it was as easy as it sounds, but it's far from it. The day that Zinhle slipped into a coma was probably the most difficult day of my entire existence. Everything happened so fast; we were chased out of her suite then what felt like a minute later, screams of the first baby were heard through the door. I had my ear glued against the door, and my heart was racing in anticipation for the next baby to join us in the world. Everything after that was a blur, the second baby wouldn't cry and I could hear heartwrenching cries from Siya as he pleaded

with Zinhle to wake up. The sight of my mother crouched in the passageway on the floor praying relentlessly to God still floods my eyes with tears til this day. I remember barging into Zinhle's suite and seeing her laying lifeless on the bed, with Siya hovering over her barking orders to anyone who would listen. I remember holding my breath as they took the second baby away and focused on reviving Zinhle. Brandon whisked me away and before I knew it, I was in my bed at the facility with Brandon's arms wrapped tightly around my quivering body. The following morning, I woke up to him staring at me and smiling, I think the only reason why I was able to get some rest was because I was in his embrace. That was the last time I saw him.

Brandon has tried day and night to see me since that day, but I've been actively avoiding him. I ignore his signature knock on my door in the mornings and his cat calling outside my

window in the evenings. I ensure that my door and windows are locked at all times, and that I don't wander off without a group of people surrounding me. I tried contacting Siya the day after Zinhle slipped into a coma, but to no avail. My mother gave me sound advice and I decided to take it; she told me to give Siya space and focus on being a hundred percent healthy so that I can return to Zinhle being of sound mind. Slipping back into depression wouldn't be beneficial to anyone, so I've been tackling my recovery more aggressively. Brandon would be just a step backwards in terms of my emotional healing journey, because whenever I gaze into his eyes, I notice scepticism and a lack of trust, which is obviously attributed to my incident with his father. I'm terrified that he'll reject me once I tell him what happened and I don't know if I'll survive that, so I'd rather hold the reigns and navigate us through this tumultuous journey.

I just received word that Zinhle is being discharged and almost on her way home, she's been distant without a single phone call from her, but I assume that's what happens when you give birth to twins, time for anything and anybody else drastically diminishes. I'm so happy, especially since my programme ends tomorrow, I just want to drown myself in my nephew and niece. I'm celebrating by watching a series on my laptop in the communal lounge alone with a glass of sparkling grape juice and butter flavored popcorn. Doctor Sarah bought me the goodies and I can safely say that I'm happy. I hear footsteps draw closer behind me and I assume that it's just another patient, but I'm surprised to see another familiar face sit beside me.

Me- "Ntobeko! How? When?" He softly chuckles and shakes his head.

Him- "Hey babe!" He says as he smothers me in a hug.

Ntobeko is the guy I met while having lunch with Zinhle a few months ago. We forged a great friendship over the months, and after I disappeared off the radar, I decided to let him in on where I've been when I noticed a flood of emails and texts from him when I finally got access to my laptop. He sent me a large parcel yesterday with a life-sized teddy bear and a bouquet of flowers.

Me- "How did you get in here?" I ask as I punch him gently.

Him- "I told the security guards that I'm your relative from overseas, I had to pull off my best American accent. I guess they believed me because of your slight accent as well, so here I am." He says shrugging his shoulders. We hug for a while then I finally pull away.

Him- So what are we watching?"

Me- "That series that you've been ranting and raving about!" I say. He pulls me in and I lay my

head on his shoulder as we both watch attentively. Our moment is interrupted when someone clears their throat behind us.

Brandon- "Mind if I join?"

He says in a deep voice that commands attention. He walks around to face us with his hands in his pockets and one eyebrow raised. I roll my eyes because I realize that my taste of relaxation has officially been ruined.

Brandon- "Ziyanda, a word?"

Me- "Brandon can we talk some other time please? I have company." I say without looking at his suddenly intimidating face.

Brandon- "Really? Shall we talk in front of your guest then? Hey man, I hope you don't have a father, otherwise I'd advise you to keep him and her separated." He says to Ntobeko.

Me- "That's it! Ntobeko, let's go to my room." Ntobeko obliges as he jumps to his feet and

helps me up. Brandon comes in between us and snatches my hand from Ntobeko's grip.

Brandon- "So this is why you've been avoiding me for two full weeks? You're sleeping with him?"

Ntobeko- "So what if she is? You might want to loosen that grip." He says while pointing at my wrist that's being suffocated by Brandon's hand.

Me- "Ntobeko, you can wait in my room. Brandon, let's talk."

Brandon- "I think you should leave."

Ntobeko looks at me seeking reassurance so I nod and he sighs.

Ntobeko- "Call me babe." I smile at him and he disappears towards the exit.

Me- "What do you want?"

Brandon- "You sure as hell move on fast, from Me, my father and now it's him, all in a matter of a few weeks."

Me- "Please leave, I don't have the energy for this." I say in a calm voice.

Brandon- "Tell me. Please. I've been cracking my head for the past two weeks and I find you here with another man. What's going on?"

Me- "If you think I'm sleeping with half of the world, then why do you care? Why are you here?"

Brandon- "I love you Ziyanda."

Me- "Is this love? Gripping onto my wrist violently until I get a bruise? Is love insulting my character in front of another man? Isn't love patient and kind? Brandon, this is why I didn't want to see you, you make me question my character and doubt my self worth. I feel like scum for what happened with your father, but I told myself that I never want to feel this way again."

Brandon- "Ziyanda, how does one react yo news like this?"

Me- "I don't know, but you don't even know what happened! I've lived my whole life thinking and believing that I'm a whore, a slut, loose but I'm done. I'm putting my happiness first. I'm a new aunt, I've got so much to be happy and grateful for and.."

Before I can complete my sentence, Brandon smashes his soft lips onto mine.

Me- "Bran.." He silences me with her another sultry kiss. He closes the small gap between us and holds me in a tight embrace. My throat releases soft moans and I hear him grunt beneath his breath. His soft kisses turn into aggressive ones and I feel my lips swell from the attack of his. He finally pulls away and I grip onto his shoulder to maintain my balance.

Him- "I'm sorry, I just had to." He says while staring deep into my eyes. I nod slightly, as I try to recover from the exhilarating moment we just shared.

Brandon- "Ziyanda, I know that you feel what we have is special. So why are you entertaining other men? Are you two together?"

Me- "Brandon, firstly of all you need to reel in your temper and aggression, otherwise I'll make sure that you never see me again. Ntobeko is my friend and that's it, don't make it seem like you own Me, I'm not anyone's property."

Him- "I know, I'm usually a calm person, but with you.. I just want you to myself, is that so bad?"

Me- "We aren't even an item Brandon."

Him- "That's why I'm here, I thought I could walk away and with time is forget about you, but it's not happening. It's been weeks and you're still in my head Ziyanda. Your infectious laugh, your smile, the way you make me feel when I'm around you; I can't live without That, I can't live without you!"

He pulls me closer until we're skin to skin.

Me- "Your father? Us?"

Him- "I want to forget about whatever happened, I don't need you to tell me about it. I know that you feel the same way about me." He says as he cups my face with his soft hands.

Him- "I know your heart, and I know your purity, you would never hurt me intentionally, so I'll cut my father out of our lives and let's just focus on us. Please Yanda." I see the sincerity in his eyes and I feel the love within the depths of my soul.

I blink and a tear travels down my cheek. I gaze deep into his eyes and nod while smiling like a school girl.

Brandon- "So it's official? We're a thing? Is that even what it's called?" I chuckle softly and bite on my bottom lip.

Me- "Shut up and kiss Me!" I say as I reach for his face and engulf his lips with my own.

It's almost dawn, and Brandon and I are laying beside each other on my bed. We've enjoyed our silent moments where we'd just listen to each other's breathing, we've laughed and we've definitely allowed our lips to make contact and now I'm just basking in this moment.

Brandon- "Please promise you'll keep your friendship with that guy Ntobeko; and any other guy at a distance. I'm just not comfortable."

Me- "Ntobeko isn't entirely straight. He'll probably email me tomorrow about your good looks. He bats for both teams, so no thanks." I see his mouth curve into a slight smile.

Him- "Oh!" says as he suddenly lifts me off the bed and places me ontop of him in a straddling position.

I feel his member snuggle between my thighs and I shift while he grips onto my waist.

Him- "I just want to feel closer to you, I'll wait for however long, I promise."

Me- "Closer like this?" I crouch down and nibble on his ear then lower my lips to his neck. I gently massage his bulge through his pants then lick my lips and groan.

Me- "Mmmh?"

Him- "Ziyanda Don't start something you won't be able to finish." He says through gritted teeth as he inhales deep breaths.

Me- "Who says I won't?" I whisper in his ear while blowing hot air into it.

[04/19, 13:28] Wdz: ****BONUS****

****ZIYANDA****

I wake up in the morning, draped in Brandon's arms. I take in his scent and smile as I plant a soft kiss on his cheek. He twitches slightly then purrs his lips as he snores softly. I attack his face with soft kisses until he eventually opens

his eyes.

Him- "Ziyanda!" He says as he yawns and stretches. I stare at his bare ripped physique and lick my lips as I think of how magical our first night of intimacy would be. Last night, we both had to practice some restraint as Brandon decided that it would be best if we waited to be intimate rather. I feel myself even more attracted to him, because I know that it wasn't easy but he prioritized my raw emotions over his own personal desire.

My eyes scan his sexy body then land on his morning erection. I clear my throat and when he looks at me in confusion I gesture to his member with my eyes. He smiles mischievously and springs off the bed, making his way to the bathroom.

Him- "Stop staring at my ass, this is sexual harassment! If you continue to eye me like this, I'll be forced to make you rain like a hurricane." I

throw a pillow at him and giggle to myself softly.

I decide to join him in the shower when i hear the water running. I swallow a small lump in my throat when I see him in his naked glory as the water cascades down his torso.

He smiles and pushes me against the door as he attacks my lips with his. I let out a silent murmur as he nibbles on my neck then engulfs my breast with his mouth.

I feel his member grow by the second and within a flash, he stops and turns his back to me.

Him- "No, we can't. Please scrub my back."

I sigh heavily and gather myself then grab the loofer.

Me- "Brandy, I think we should address the pink elephant in the room. I think that once we decide to be intimate, this will be at the back of

your mind so I want us to be frank." He shrugs his shoulders and rests his arm on the wall.

Me- "Patrick came into my room after my hypnotherapy session. He said something that triggered me back into hypnosis so when I spoke to him I wasn't of conscious mind. I was getting ready for bed so I was just in my underwear and a loosely tied nightgown. He crept up behind me and my subconscious assumed it was you, I even called him by your name. He threw me on my bed and snuggle himself between my legs.. "

Brandon- "Ziyanda, don't.."

Me- "I have to. My eyes were closed as they are during a session and my mind was elsewhere. He planted gentle kisses on my thighs leading up to my cookie then ripped off my underwear. His aggression resembled that of my uncle as he inserted two fingers inside of me violently. My mind turned to the memories of my rapist

and I tried to ward him off of Me, but he became an animal possessed. I called him Bhekumuzi because of my unstable mental state and it annoyed him to the point where he wrapped his hand around my neck and ordered me to comply. The insults flooded in, he said I was a distraction for you and he needed you back in the states, but with me around you wouldn't leave. He said that he's apparently done it before and it worked and barked on about how every woman is the same. This went on for a while until I slipped out of hypnosis and fell asleep. I woke up to find him staring at me, he then eluded that I was an animal in bed the previous night and that's all I can say about it because that's all I know." I breathe out a sigh of relief as I feel like a weight has been lifted off my shoulders.

Me- "I'm sorry. I'm so sorry." I whisper.

Brandon turns around and cups my face with his hands while gazing deep into my eyes.

Him- "I never want to hear you apologize for that night. There's nothing to apologize for, I'm the one with an animal for a father." He kisses my cheek and walks out of the shower.

Me- "Where are you going?"

Him- "Since he wants to behave like a wild animal, he should be killed or caged like one." He disappears off into the bedroom and I hear the door bang closed shortly afterwards.

Me- "Lord, please don't let him do anything stupid."

****ZINHLE****

I've just spent my first day back in my new home and my comfortable bed. Siya is wrapped around me like ivy and I feel his morning erection slowly rise to attention. I shift off the bed after some struggle of untangling his heavy

arms off of me.

He groans loudly, but soon falls asleep again. I make my way to the bathroom and decide to take a bath. I lock the door because I don't want Siya barging in and I need some time alone. I relax in the bath while playing Kenny G in the background. I hear Siya's knocks from a distance but I block them and focus on my relaxation. After a while in the tub, I carefully get out and clean the tub then head to the vanity mirror. I lotion then apply minimal makeup and make my way to the bedroom to find a breakfast tray on the bed with all my favorite goodies. I dig in, but I'm soon interrupted by a violent knock on the door. I open and find my mom who looks less than pleased to see me.

Me- "Ma

Her- "I'm surprised you even remember what to call me. Your first day from the hospital and you don't come out of your nest to greet your

mother? You're already sleeping with uSiya? Married couples don't even share a bed for at least three months after having a baby. Most women move back to their mother's homes, and here you are playing sex kitten."

Me- "Ma! We are not intimate."

Her- "Girly, as of now you two will not share a room, let alone share a bed! Take this." She shoved a long thick piece of cloth with a belt into my arms.

Her- "Tie your stomach, you don't want to look pregnant after you've already given birth. That white chocolate twig is already chasing after your man. Let's go to the kitchen, you need to pump some milk to take to the babies today. I hope that blank expression means you're doing kegalls right now." She says with her raised eyebrows.

Her- "I've got the perfect names for the munchkins! Whay about if we named the girl

after me?"

Me- "Ma, I'll think about it. Let me finish my food."

Her- "I think not. Follow me. Now!"

I follow behind her while she shows me how to tie the belt, I see Siya approaching and plead with my eyes for him to rescue me but he walks in the opposite direction.

Mom- "I hope you're going to Zinhle's room to take all of your stuff out Mr Nyathi!" She says in an authoritative tone.

Siya- "Yebo Ma."

[04/19, 13:29] Wdz: [100]

****ZINHLE****

It's been a week since I've been discharged from the hospital and I've slowly become accustomed to a new routine. It's helped with

my new mommy anxiety and dealing with the stress of juggling the various aspects of my life such as school and the daily hospital visits. My routine is as follows: my alarm sounds at 03:30am, I head to the bathroom to freshen up and change into my gym gear and at 04:00 am I head out for a 4km jog. Of course Siya would never allow me to jog alone, so he always has one of his goons driving behind me. I'm ashamed to say that my first morning of jogging was a dismal fail, after arguing with Siya the previous night for imposing his men on Me, I was extremely relieved that he did because I barely made it to 1km, needless to say that I was panting breathless in the backseat on my way home hardly 20 minutes later. I'm glad with the progress that I've made though now, okay perhaps the word "jogging" was a strong choice of word, the correct terminology would probably be brisk walking. Upon my return from my "jog" I usually head to

the kitchen and prepare a smoothie for myself then head to the patio where I immerse myself in a 45 minute yoga session. By the time I'm done with my morning workout, the rest of the house is awake. At this time usually, the aroma of a full breakfast fills the air outside and the loud chuckles from my mom and Siya resonate through the bustle of the trees and the chirping birds.

They've become quite the duo, with their little inside jokes and unspoken language. Although Siya hired even more staff once I came back from the hospital, my mother insists on making breakfast herself. She wants to ensure that the head of the household is fuelled and energized for the day so since I don't bother with breakfast she's assumed that responsibility herself. The rest of my day is also usually monotonous as I pump milk for the munchkins, shower then spend the rest of the day at the hospital. Siya usually joins me from midday

until the evening so I really am confused as to who's running his businesses, but I'm not complaining. It's been awkward between us since he moved out of my room, we act like schoolkids afraid to get caught by their parents and the principles. We don't want to jinx our relationship by stepping outside of our boundaries which we aren't even fully aware of. So we've resorted to short hugs and a short kiss here and there ever so often.

I stretch my body on my monstrosity of a bed and yawn in the process as I search the sheets for my phone. My hand lands on a muscular thigh and I jump back in confusion. My eyes shoot open as I slowly turn my body around to face this intruder. I find an amused Siya staring back at me, with a cheeky smile plastered on his handsome face.

Me- "What are you doing here?" I whisper to him.

He prods his upper body up and yanks my
towards him in one effortless tug.

Me- "Siya!" I say as my body slams against his.

Him- "Ssshhhh." He whispers as he covers my
mouth with his. I lay still as I'm mesmerized by
his hazel eyes that eventually close as he
introduced his tongue to my shy and quivering
lips and separates them in a single movement.
His tongue swiftly brushes against every
crevice of my mouth like an artist applying
gentle strokes to his canvas. The kiss
intensifies as he raises my arms and wraps
them around his broad neck. I'm in a state of
euphoria as I feel our souls connect once again
and his desire for me is evident from the deep
groans beneath his breath and his monster that
seems eager to join the party. His hands roam
from my legs and make their way upwards as
he strokes my thighs then traces gentle circles
over my underwear. I know that we have
boundaries, but for now I want to enjoy this

moment so I don't protest yet. His hand travels upwards and makes contact with my stomach, however it's sinched by that hideous belt that my mother gave me. My cheeks flush in embarrassment and I quickly nudge his body ontop of mine in an attempt to distract him. I yelp out in pain as his weight presses against my heavy chest. He jumps off of me and stands beside the bed with a look of horror on his face.

Him- "Babe, did I hurt you?"

Me- "Yes, no! I'm fine. Come back." I sound a little more desperate than I'd wish to, but I do need him right now, pride aside. Siya looks horrified so I crawl towards him and nudge his arm.

Me- " Please." I plead with him while batting my eyelashes. He shrugs his shoulders and eventually joins me in bed.

Me- "I'll be back." I kiss him on the cheek, grab my breastpump on the corner table then jog

towards the bathroom. I sit on the edge of the bathtub and lower my nightie as I set up the pump machine. I apply the pads and watch as the milk expels from my enlarged breasts. A few moments later I hear the doorknob turn and Siya barges in. I turn my back to him as fast as I can and close my eyes as I brace myself for what's to happen.

Siya- "Why did you have to come in here to do that?" He says as he crouches behind me.

Me- "Siya, I'll be out in a minute okay? "

Him- "No, not okay. What are you doing in here? I know you breastfeed so why are you hiding in here?"

Me- "Please don't make this uncomfortable for me."

Him- "You don't think it's uncomfortable for me? You have to leave me in your bed so you can pump food for our munchkins in the bathroom? What's going on?"

Me- "Siya Please."

Him- "No, tell Me!" He says in an aggravated tone.

Me- "You wouldn't get it. You're a sex symbol, ripped abs and muscles even on your ears. You don't know what it's like to look in the mirror and not recognize your body. Guess what? Once you've given birth, you still look pregnant afterwards. I have to wear a girdle or whatever the hell this thing is. My breasts are heavy and painful and the size of watermelons so you want me to whip them out and pump in front of the world?"

Him- "Not the world, the father of your kids. The man who's tirelessly professed his undying love for you. The man who plans on having more kids with you and spending the rest of his life with you!" He says as he holds onto my shoulder.

He sits in front of me cross legged and strokes

my legs.

Him- "This is normal." He says while gesturing to us.

Me- "I don't want you to look at me differently. I know the women that constantly throw themselves at you including your little twig Pam."

He rolls his eyes then sighs heavily.

Him- "Why do you doubt my love for you?" He inches closer and gives me a long smooch that leaves me feeling dizzy. He grabs my hand and places it on his large bulge over his briefs.

Him- "Feel that? Girdle or not, pump or not, something yearns for you."

He whispers in my ear. I smile at him and finally switch off the pump then wipe my breasts while he packs the machine and closes the bottles.

He turns me around and closes the small gap between us.

Him- "Come here you." He says as he picks me up and walks towards the bedroom.

A few days later, I'm beaming from excitement. The twins are being discharged and I'm about to be a full time mother. I'm elated that they're healthy enough to come home, but I'm also anxious about the near future. I'm waiting for Siya to arrive at the hospital, but I haven't told him the good news. The twins are all packed and ready and in their car seats beside me. Every time I look at them a tear threatens to escape my eyes because of the love that's blossomed in my heart for them. They're soundly asleep in their car seats and look tiny.

After a few moments of waiting, Siya runs towards me panting.

Him- "What's wrong?" He asks in a panic.

Me- "Look!" I say as I point to our munchkins. His face beams with happiness as he covers

my mouth with his then soon turns his attention to the munchkins.

Him- "They're coming home?"

Me- "Yes baby"

After our moment as a family, Siya carries both car seats to the parking lot.

Me- "My car is on the other side."

Him- "Don't you think our trip home should be as a family? I'll get some one to fetch the car." I smile and follow him.

We're at home and Siya managed to get two cribs installed in my room. I'm not ready for the babies to stay in the nursery just yet.

Siya- "We still haven't named them."

Me- "Can't we call them munchkins forever?"

He chuckles softly.

Him- "So my business portfolio will read

"Siyabonga Nyathi, business mogul, father to two munchkins?"

We both chuckle but are interrupted by a horrific odor.

Siya- "Daddy duty!" He picks the munchkins up and heads for my room while I warm up some milk.

Siya emerges with a foul look on his face.

Him- "How does something so atrocious come from such adorable beings?"

Me- "I've smelled your fart bombs, the babies definitely take after their father." He laughs sarcastically then walks towards me and places the baby monitor on the counter.

Me- "Want a snack?"

Him- "You?"

I punch him gently then walk away.

Me- "Let me go watch my babies sleep in their

matching outfits." I walk into my room and inch towards the cribs and notice that they're no longer wearing the outfits from earlier.

Me- "Siyabonga." I whisper to myself.

Siya- " Yes?"

Me- "You changed them?"

Him- "Into even cuter outfits. Read them."

Me- "Will you?" I turn to look at him confused as I hold the munchkin reading his onesie. Siya picks up the other munchkin and turns her around to face me so I can read her onesie.

Me- "Marry daddy?" I read as a tear trickles down my cheek. Siya takes the munchkin from me and holds them side by side.

Siya- " So we were wondering. Will you marry daddy?"

He asks with a bright smile on his face and the munchkins resting on their father's chest.

[04/19, 13:29] Wdz: [101]

****ZINHLE****

The walls slowly begin to cave in on me and I feel my temperature rapidly rise. Siya is now on his knee, holding both of the munchkins in his arms as they rest blissfully on his broad chest. His wide smile soon turns into a frown as his eyebrows narrow in confusion and his hypnotic hazel eyes turn dark in disorientation and disappointment. I attempt to regulate my breathing by inhaling a few deep breaths through my widened nostrils. Siya looks at me sternly and bites on his inviting bottom lip while I blink away the tears that threaten to fall down my now warm face.

Me- "Sssiii... Siya.."

Him- "No, don't do it Zinhle. Don't reject me." He

pleads with me as he rises to stand on his feet and tower over me. I take a step back as a flood of emotions overcomes me and my tears start streaming down my face. I shake my head when Siya attempts to close the gap between us and I hear him release a loud sigh. His footsteps are slow and that of a man defeated as he walks to each crib to lay the babies down.

Him- "So you don't love me? You want us to co parent for the rest of our lives? Zinhle don't do this, Please."

His voice breaks at the end of his sentence and my heart breaks at the suddenly sombre mood in the room.

Me- "I don't think this energy is good for the babies. Let's take this conversation elsewhere. We're messing up their energy balance and..."

Him- "Would you stop with your alternate universe shit right now!" He says in a loud whisper. I look at him startled and I notice his

him clench his fists into a ball.

Him- "Zinhle, just answer me. I'm a man, I can handle it."

Me- "Siya, you know that the love I have for you runs deeper than the oceans and I've rehearsed my answer to this question probably a million times."

Him- "But?"

Me- "I feel like I'm in the twilight zone. I'm ecstatic that you want me to be your wife, but we have so many unresolved issues that can't just be swept under the carpet. I want my first time getting married to also be my last time. I know I sound redundant, but I'm not fully content and happy with myself currently, so making you happy will be virtually impossible."

Him- "Marriage isn't perfect, but we focus on our love and conquer."

Me- "Marriage should be built on a foundation

that is trust, and we don't have it. Siyabonga, I don't trust you and nor do you me. I wonder every time you're at the office if you're frolicking there with the blinds closed with Pam or any other slut. I can't even get mad at that, because that's how our relationship began, I knew you were married but I still fell for you. Who's to say that it won't happen again? I don't want to be married and have to spy on my husband."

Him- "Great, Pam again!"

Me- "No, it's not just her and you know it."

Him- "It's either you love me or you don't. It's either you want to be my wife or you don't and I move out tomorrow. I'm too old for this cat and mouse game Zinhle. Tell me by tonight what you want, I'll be in my study." With that, he turns on his heel and marches out of the room, leaving me behind, biting on my trembling bottom lip and clenching onto the cribs that the babies look so peaceful in.

I head to the kitchen to grab a quick snack with the baby monitor in tow and realize that the house is unusually quiet so I decide to call my mother and soon come to the realization that she won't be in the house for the next two days. I walk to the touch pad with the staff roster, but it's evident that the staff has the next two days off. I sigh heavily as I walk to the fridge and take out everything I can get my hands on. My heart sinks as I think about how Siya had his proposal all panned out, he probably released the staff so that we could get some alone celebratory time together.

I'm so conflicted, I feel my insides churn because of the influx of emotions that are overwhelming me. I've been waiting for Siya to make our relationship official and claim me as his life partner, but now that it's happening, there are so many other minute details that come into play. Do I really want to be a new

mother of two and a new wife all in one breath? Do I want to constantly look over my shoulder because of my lack of trust in Him? What about being a student? Would that have to take a back seat when I perform my wifely duties? Then there's also the excruciating pain I'd feel if I were to lose him completely. I don't want to just be cordial with him and co parent, him and our children have a permanent residency in my heart and I don't foresee myself loving any other man with such depth and intensity. I don't want my children to have a step mother nor a step father anytime soon, but Siya is right we can't chase after each other forever, it's not fair to neither of us. So I have to make a decision by tonight, and since the way to a man's heart is through his stomach, I'll get started on a scrumptious dinner and hopefully we arrive at a resolve by the end of this evening.

I get started on dinner, checking in on my

munchkins ever so often and I get into a rhythm. I've decided to make prawn gratin for our starter, steak with mushroom sauce, Caesar salad, dauphinoise potatoes, then a simple peppermint crisp tart for dessert. After slaving away behind the stove, I'm pleased with my end result. I check in on the munchkins and they're sound asleep, I want to wake them up but I decide to let them be so we can have mommy and daddy time and so I call Siya's study; he picks up after the third ring.

Me- "Dinner is ready Nyathi."

Him- "Leave it in the oven." He says briefly then hangs up on me. I breathe out a loud sigh then decide to take my plan up a notch. I head for my room and slip on a short black negligee paired with a short black silk nightgown. In the kitchen, I dish up for the both of us then head for the elevator where I click on Siya's floor.

I knock on the door and there's no response so I

place my finger on the scanner and enter. The room is dark and gloomy, and Siya doesn't even raise his head to acknowledge my presence. I slowly make my way towards Him with the tray in tow and gently place it on the oak desk.

Siya- "Later." He says in a raspy voice while focussing his attention on computer.

Me- "I made something special for you. Just try it." I say as I lift the plate cover. He looks at the plate then at me.

Him- "A piece of paper. That's special?"

Me- "Now it's your turn to read." I say in a seductive voice.

Him- "Yes, a million times yes!" He reads the paper over and over again then stands as he gazes at me without blinking.

Him- "Does this mean?"

Me- "Yes, the answer to your question is yes Mr Nyathi!" I exclaim as a tear escapes my eye.

Within seconds, he's merely inches from me and has my face cupped in his masculine yet gentle hands. Moments later, my night gown is on the floor and I'm pushing him back to sit on his seat. I unbuckle his belt and relieve him of his pants and briefs as his monster stares back at me.

Him- "You don't have to.." he says while stroking the back of my head.

I barely give him an opportunity to complete his sentence, as my mouth covers his member and starts pleasuring him with my eager tongue. I slightly graze my teeth along the length of his member while gently tugging onto his manly sacks. I nibble on his head and he starts moving his lower region according to my rhythm. The groans and moans have me smiling from within and I take all of him in a single movement. I choke slightly, but maintain my composure as I pleasure him as if my life depends on it. His luscious silky liquid releases in my mouth and

drips onto my exposed chest. I swallow and use my index finger to wipe the remnants off my chest then suck on it as he gazes in awe.

His eyes are barely open and I see his member still twitching just a few inches from my face.

Siya- "Mrs Nyathi!"

Me- "Soon to be, but I have a few conditions." I say with a seductive smile on my relaxed face.

[04/19, 13:29] Wdz: [102]

****ZIYANDA****

I've been officially discharged from the facility for all of a few hours and I'm an emulsification of emotions. I'm elated to regain my freedom again, but I'm wary of the direction that my life will take from here onwards. I've dealt with my demons and worked hard everyday at slaying them one at a time, I just hope and pray that they aren't just dormant, but dead and buried

and decomposed now. I want a fair chance at being happy in all facets of my life, and although genuine happiness was something foreign to me, I can feel it brewing and sprouting within the depths of my soul more and more everyday. I zip the last of my luggage and take in one last glance of the place I've called home for what seems like forever, I breathe out a heavy sigh and notice my mouth curl into a slight smile as reality strikes; I'm free!

Him- "Well you seem pleased with yourself!" I hear Brandon's deep voice command the now lifeless room. I turn around and unashamedly stare at the handsome specimen before me. Within a few strides, he's merely inches away from me and his cologne permeates through my nostrils and sends shivers down my spine.

Me- "Brandon, what are you doing here?" I ask as I attempt to play coy and conceal the effect

that he has on me.

Him- "I'm taking you home, let's go." He says as he brushes his soft lips against my cheek and leaves a featherlite kiss. He walks towards my bed and grabs my luggage and reaches for my hand.

Him- "Ready?"

I nod and place my hand in his, and intertwine our fingers as our hands mould into each other. Our ride in the car is peaceful and relaxing as we steal glances of each other. His hand is resting on my thigh and I'm clinging onto his arm for dear life. It all seems surreal, our unspoken connection, the fluttering sensation that I constantly feel when I'm around Him, the manner in which he looks at me and the undeniable love I possess for him. For the first time in forever, I feel like more than just a walking vagina, I feel like a woman.

Brandon- "My place?"

Me- "I need to meet my niece and nephew and remember we spoke about going at a slow pace?"

Brandon- "I'm sorry, I know. I just can't get enough of being around you, but I respect your wishes. The Nyathi household it is then." He clenches his jaw in disappointment, but this is for the best, I don't trust that I'll be able to practice much restraint sharing a confined space with Brandon, and I really just want our emotional connection to blossom and to associate sex with romance and love not an act of violence.

We arrive at the Nyathi mansion in silence, and fortunately I still have the mounds of codes for the house because neither Zinhle nor Siya is answering their phones. Brandon grabs my luggage and follows swiftly behind me as I make my way to the immaculate entrance. I

punch in the code for the front entrance and make my way inside. There's a deafening silence as my shoes echo through the grand foyer. I feel a gentle breeze coming in through the opened patio glass doors so I walk towards it and nothing could prepare me for the sight before me, Zinhle ontop of a very aroused Siya bobbing her head up and down his erect shaft. I guess that's what happens when you come unannounced. I swiftly turn on my heel and bump into a confused Brandon on my way out the door.

Brandon- "What's wrong? Where are you going?"

Me- "Your place it is!" I say as I grab a bag from him and jog out of the front entrance, with him hot on my heels.

****ZINHLE****

The twins are two months old, on a fast track to three and it amazes me how time flies and yet

remains stagnant in the same token. Siya has been marking everyday as one day closer to us doing the "deed" and I can attest to this because his calendars in his room, study and Phone have been clearly marked for all to see. For the first time in a while, it's safe to say that I'm happy. I fall more in love with my family everyday and I'm doing better than I ever anticipated in terms of juggling my hectic lifestyle now, my schoolwork hasn't been my only priority and it's showing in my grades, but I'm glad that I'm not failing any modules, I'm barely scraping through, but I'm not failing. My maternal instincts eventually kicked in and I'm on mama bear mode constantly.

We finally named the munchkins after much deliberation and arguments, we reached an amicable agreement. Our beautiful baby boy is called "Anesu" and our baby girl is "Anelisa". Siya insisted on an elaborate naming ceremony,

and I obliged. He wants to give his kids the best of everything he can, who am I to stand in the way of that. The ceremony was filled with unfamiliar faces of his distant family and the only reason I assume he invited them was to boast and brag the whole day about his munchkins, because his family probably thought his swimmers couldn't swim. I was called "Eve" quite a few times by his aunts and uncles, because apparently they were under the impression that he was still married to her, the snares showed me though that these were just intentional jabs at me. I'm glad that stressful day is done and dusted and we can now focus on the next event; Siya paying lobola for his kids so they can carry the Nyathi surname.

It's dawn on Saturday and the lobola ceremony for the children is today. I'm at my mom's house with my munchkins and we're cooking and cleaning in preparation for the Nyathi family

arrival. Ziyanda is playing with her niece and nephew while I perspire profusely over taking orders from mom. I'm slightly more annoyed at Ziyanda than usual, because she haphazardly decided to no longer stay with me and find herself a studio apartment instead.

A few hours later, the preparations are done and mom is anxiously awaiting the arrival of Siya and his family. I've excused myself for the rest of the day to attend some much needed tutorials on campus. Ziyanda has willingly agreed to babysit and my mother understands the pressure I'm feeling regarding my schoolwork so she has also obliged for me to attend. I retreat to what used to be my bedroom and change into a short long sleeved black dress, sneakers and grab my purse and books. I realise once I'm on my way to campus that I forgot my ring in my room while I was lotioning. Siya gave me an exquisite cushion cut white

gold ring as a symbol of our engagement, my mother thinks it's a promise ring because we're still working on our relationship and he's agreed to slowly transition into an engaged couple, although he asks everyday when he can send his uncles over.

I arrive on campus and sit next to some of the people I've forged a friendship of sorts with as we wait for the tutorial to commence.

Four hours later, I'm famished and exhausted and my classmates seem to share the same sentiments. They somehow convince me to go to a lounge located near the beach for some food and sundowners, and since I'm tired as being viewed as the stuck up housewife, I oblige, a few hours won't hurt. I check in on my munchkins and they're fine so I call the man of the house as well.

Me- "Baby daddy!"

Siya- "Oh no, did you crash the car? Where are

you I'll get someone to fetch you."

Me- "Siya, kahle! I just wanted to tell you that I'm headed to lunch with a few classmates."
There's a long pause before I hear a huff through the phone.

Me- "Baby da.."

Siya- "I heard Zinhle. By the way, the lobola ceremony went well, they can officially be Nyathi's in case you were wondering."

I roll my eyes and inhale a deep breath.

Me- "That's wonderful! Yanda will be with the babies so you can also get some work done. I'll be out for a few hours."

Him- "Do you have to though?"

Me- "Siya, I've been enrolled here for months, yet I barely know anyone's first name. I'm tired of being an island, I need to mingle, not just for my sanity but it could improve my performance as well. Remember what we agreed on?"

Him- "Yes!" He says with aggression as he sighs heavily.

Me- "What did we agree on?"

Him- "I won't have you followed okay? Just behave like a wife. You won't drink right?"

Me- "Just a glass of wine or something, I think I need it."

Him- "What the? You are a mother to infants, you want our kids to get drunk on your milk?"

I chuckle gently as I imagine the frustration on his face.

Me- "I'll pump and dump and I have more than enough milk for them stored at home. Don't worry so much, you'll get wrinkles. I'll behave and I'll be home soon, love you!" With that I drop the phone and head to the lounge. There's a sense of liberation that overcomes Me as I walk into the lounge and join my peers, I feel my age again and excited to be Zinhle again, not just a

mother or fiancé.

I'm on my second glass of wine, and I'm more tipsy than I'd like to admit, the people I'm with are downing tequila shots like they're water and I can barely survive two glasses of wine. I decide to head to the loo to call Ziyanda and check on the munchkins and splash some water on my face. My conversation with Ziyanda ends with me promising to call a cab to her place and sleep over, because she can tell from the sound of my voice that I'm intoxicated and Siya will be less than pleased. I head out of the loo and bump into a broad shouldered man, the collision has me feeling dizzy as the room spins.

I wake up in bed with a throbbing headache and with the urge to urinate. I spring up and that's when I realize that I'm in unfamiliar territory. A

bedroom I don't recognise, my dress hiked up above my chest and I enter into full panic mode. The bedroom door swings open and a man barges through. I jump up, pull my dress down, grab my purse and sneakers on the floor beside me and run without looking back. It turns out, that it's a boutique hotel so I request a cab at reception as my phone is dead.

The cab ride is agonizing as I try to recollect my memory from the previous afternoon, but nothing comes to me. I head straight for Ziyanda's apartment and as soon as she opens her front door, I burst into tears.

Ziyanda- "Zinhle, what the heck? Where have you been?" She asks with aggression.

I shake my head vigorously as shame overcomes me.

Ziyanda closes the gap between us and squeezes me in an embrace.

Her- "Ssshhhh, get up and pull yourself together. Whatever happened, happened. I told Siya that you slept over here. Grab a shower and I'll make breakfast then we'll talk."

I nod like a lost puppy and head for the bathroom where I take a scorching hot shower after checking in on my babies. Tears stream down my face as I stand beneath the shower head and my mind turns blank over the events of the previous day. My thoughts are interrupted by a loud knock on the door.

Ziyanda- "Zinhle, Siya is here and he wants to talk to you. Get out!"

My heart palpitates and I clench onto my body. The door swings open and I hear his footsteps and know it's him.

Siya- "Ziyanda please excuse us." He says with authority. My heart sinks as my body shivers thinking about what's to occur.

[04/19, 13:30] Wdz: [103]

****ZINHLE****

The cascading water from the showerhead echoes through the silence that fills the bathroom. My heart palpitates as I brace myself for the agonizing conversation that is about to transpire. The water turns cold, but I can brave the cold shivers that I begin to experience over seeing Siya's rage.

Siya eventually bangs violently with his masculine fists on the glass shower door, jolting my heartbeat yo race even faster.

Him- "Zinhle Khumalo, a word please." His voice commands authority and obedience and by the manner in which he's referred to me, I may as well be dead. I slowly open the shower door, avoiding eye contact with him and he immediately holds up a bath towel without even looking at the body I've worked so hard on. I

grab the bath towel and wrap my wet body while he holds out his hand to help me out of the confines and safety of the shower. He turns his back to me then paces at the foot of the bath tub, I edge towards the far side of the tub and gently seat myself on the edge while staring at the floor that I'm praying will swallow me.

Siya- "Do you want to tell me what happened yesterday?" He asks in a low voice that has a calm undertone.

I don't answer, because frankly I don't know what to say or how to say it.

Siya- "Zinhle damnit!" He shouts as he punches into the tiled wall, cracking a few times in the process.

Him- "Shit!" He exclaims as blood drizzles from his knuckles. I spring up, grab a towel in an attempt to wrap it around his now wounded

hand, but he stops me in my tracks.

Him- "Don't."

Me- "Siya, I'm sorry."

Him- "For? What exactly are you sorry For?"

Me- "Siya, come on."

Him- "I asked you a question, what happened yesterday?"

I swallow a lump in my throat and inhale a few deep breaths much to his annoyance.

Siya grabs my arm with force and doesn't let go. I yelp in pain at the harsh contact and gaze into his eyes with tears flooding mine.

Me- "Siya, ouch!"

He let's go of my now bruised arm and stares at me with rage.

Him- "You want to be coerced into answering a simple fucking question?" He shouts.

Ziyanda knocks on the door, and as much as

I'm tempted to unlock the door and run to my sister for help, I know that this is my mess and I shouldn't drag her into it.

Me- "I'll be out just now Yanda!" I yell from inside the bathroom and I hear her footsteps as she slowly walks away.

Me- "I don't know." I say in what comes out as a whisper.

Siya- "Say that louder."

Me- "I said, I don't know."

Siya- "A mother of two and a fiance doesn't know what she did while she was out? You should be ashamed of yourself man! What kind of disgrace are you?"

Me- "Siya please." I say as a tear streams down my face.

Him- "No, you didn't want to talk so allow Me! How is anyone going to respect you if you're out fraternizing and can't even handle your liquor?"

This is the life you want to live, you want to get piss drunk with every Tom, Dick and Harry out there and be taken advantage of? What about your children? What kind of a mother does this shit? Tell me Zinhle!"

Me- "Siya..."

Him- "I don't even know how to look at you right now, the way you behave doesn't only reflect badly on you, but on me as well. Siyabonga Nyathi is whipped by a young girl that still wants to club? You were right when you said that you're not ready to be a wife, because there's no way that my wife would do this shit and live to tell the tale. We have a decked out bar in our house, why don't you drink yourself silly there with your friends? The thing is, you're an immature, ungrateful little brat!"

Me- "Siya, stop!"

Him- "Truth hurts doesn't it? Let me tell you what happened, when I promised that I wouldn't

have you followed, I lied. You drank two large glasses of wine, and since you haven't had a drink in over a year, you got wasted out of your mind. What did you think would happen if you fill your glass to the brim? I had a guy follow you to the loo and I told him to book you into a hotel, because I didn't trust that I wouldn't kill you had you come home. Since you've proven that you're not ready to be responsible, I'm taking my children, it'll give you all the time in the world to party it up. What do you kids call it? Turn up?" He turns on his heel and walks to the door, I run and block his way.

Him- "Zinhle, I'm practicing all kinds of restraint here. I don't want to do something I'll regret, so please move." He says through gritted teeth.

Me- "Siya, not my kids! I fucked up, I know I did. I just wanted to have a little fun, I had no intentions of going home with anyone or behaving in a debaucherous manner. Please believe me! I've been a walking zombie over the

past months, I just wanted to relax."

Him- "Zinhle, I'm giving you the freedom that you so desire, now move!"

He shoves me to the side and marches out, leaving me on the floor sobbing. Ziyanda runs in and kneels before me.

Ziyanda- "He just took Lisa and Anesu, I couldn't stop him. Zinhle?"

I stare at her blankly, lifeless as I feel my heart ache and sink to the pit of my stomach.

Ziyanda holds me in a tight embrace and rocks me back and forth like a baby.

Me- "My babies Ziyanda." I say breathless.

I wake up on Ziyanda's bed, a few hours after drinking some sleeping pills and I hear voices whispering in the kitchen so I jump off and decide to eavesdrop and hear Ziyanda's voice.

Ziyanda- "I can't just leave her, she's going through some stuff she needs my support."

Brandon- " But Ziyanda, we've planned this for ages, your sister will understand."

Ziyanda- "I can't go on some vacation at such a critical time in my sister's life, she needs me. I was looking forward to it, but I can't. I'm sorry Brandy."

My heart sinks when I hear their conversation, because the one thing my sister deserves is happiness and I won't live with myself knowing that I stood between her and that. I browse through Ziyanda's wardrobe and wear one of her dresses and luckily I find a new pair of underwear with tags and squeeze my ass into it. I search through my bag and find my car keys then find my phone charging on the bedside table and track my car on my phone. It's still parked at the lounge from yesterday so I immediately call a cab and walk out of the

bedroom.

Ziyanda- "You're up!"

Me- "Yip! Thanks for everything Yanda, I'm headed home now."

Her- "But Zi..." she says with concern written in her face.

Me- "I'm good, don't worry. I'll call you, and Brandon, treat my sister well."

Brandon- "Always and forever." After pulling off one last fake smile, I dash out and head for the cab that's already waiting for me.

It's been over a week since the incident and it still seems fresh in Siya's mind because he's not budging in the slightest. The day I came home, I found him waiting for me and he asked for the ring back, it was heartwrenching, but keeping it would have been meaningless so I obliged after begging and pleading with him

without much success.

It took two days for the alcohol to be undetected in my milk and that just amplified Siya's snide remarks and huffing and puffing. Pumping for two full days just to spill milk down the sink was a wake up call and I doubt I'll be whiffing any alcoholic beverage anytime soon.

I've been more sexually frustrated than ever, especially since I heard the alarms for "deed day" sound off this morning on Siya's devices. The twins are officially three months old and that means that mommy and daddy can get frisky.

I'm baking a cake for the twins and preparing a small feast to celebrate their milestone, however Ziyanda is in Zanzibar with Brandon and my mother is Lord knows where with her man so that leaves me and my munchkins and hopefully Siya.

It's midday and I've set up a picnic for the

munchkins outside, while they blabber I'm reading up on a few notes for school.

Siya arrives unannounced looking sexier than ever and lounges beside me then plays with his children without saying a word to me. I ignore him as well and focus on my task at hand until he stands up to leave.

Me- "I made cake for them, so I was thinking we'd cut it tonight for dessert."

Him- "I'm going out with the gents, so I won't be here. Save me a slice." He says without looking at me. He kisses the twins and leaves me annoyed and shaking my head in frustration.

Evening fast approaches and Siya is ready to go. He looks at his reflection through the mirror in the foyer and I salivate at how sexy he looks. My heart fills with rage as I think about the

vultures preying on him tonight.

Me- "When should I expect you to be back?"

Him- "Don't wait up."

Me- "But you always kiss the twins goodnight."

Him- "Well I guess I'll kiss them good morning."

With that he grabs his keys and heads out the door.

A few minutes after Siya's departure, I feel my emotions spiralling, and i call one of our on call nannies to come and look after the munchkins. I head for the shower and pace my closet in search of something to wear.

I finally settle on a slinky backless silver dress with matching heels and clutch, and then focus on my makeup.

I admire my reflection in the mirror and track Siya's phone then call a cab to take me to his location. The closer I get to where Siya is, the

more my nerves begin to kick in, but there's no turning back now.

Before I know it, I've arrived at the location and it's an evening lounge with a dark and intriguing ambience. I head inside and immediately spot Siya seated in what seems is the VIP area. I discreetly make my way to him and breathe a sigh of relief when I realize that he's sitting on the corner of a couch alone, while his buddies are coupled up. I brace myself and charge towards him, I reach in my clutch and clench onto my little present then intentionally bump into him. I slip my little piece of fabric in his hand, wink at him then walk to the loo.

As I close the door behind Me, Siya barges in and locks behind me. He pushes me against a corner and dangles my thong in my face. I bite my bottom lip without breaking eye contact and see some sweat droplets begin to form on his forehead.

Me- "Oops, that's where they went. Let me put it on." I say as I bend over and my dress hikes up, revealing my bare derrier. Within one motion, Siya grabs hold of me and straddles my legs around his waist, pushing me against the wall as he attacks my lips with his succulent ones. I feel his growing erection snuggled beneath me and my lady parts drip from excitement of what's to come.

[04/19, 13:30] Wdz: [104]

****ZINHLE****

I clench onto Siya's shoulders as I recover from another earth shattering explosion of ecstasy. Siya has a firm grip on my buttocks as he breathes heavily on my damp neck whilst recovering from his intense pleasure peak. My legs begin to fail me as they turn limp and become noodles, just when I think I'm going to

fall, Siya wraps them tightly around his waist, walks across the room with his member still snuggled inside of me and gently places me on the bench across the room. He plonks himself beside me and closes his eyes as He regulates his breathing and strokes my leg that's now resting on his lap.

We fall into a blissful silence and I notice his mouth curve into a smile. Our moment is interrupted by harsh banging on the door and loud women wanting to gain entry. We gaze at each other and burst into laughter, then decide it's time to leave this place. We clean ourselves up and Siya grabs hold of my hand as he prepares to walk out the door, but he suddenly comes to a halt.

Him- "That dress." He says with a look that I'm unable to read.

Me- "Like It?"

Him- "Never wear it again if you're going to

leave the house." He says with a stern look, then kisses me briefly on the cheek.

Siya and I push through the crowd of women waiting outside and head for the exit, where we're ambushed by his friends who somehow convince Siya to stay.

Siya orders me champagne much to my surprise and sips on his whiskey. At first, I drink a few glasses of water, because I'm uncertain of whether he's testing me or even whether I want to drink.

Siya- "Babe, relax. Let's have some fun." He says as he pours me a glass of champagne, hands it to Me, reclines on the couch and rests his hand on my bare thigh. A few drinks in, and everyone is thoroughly enjoying himself, Siya is letting loose and so are his friends. I'm grinding on him and he's visibly pleased. His friends are also staring at Me, so I decide to sit down on

Siya's lap instead. The unfriendly snares I'm receiving from the ladies in this circle are threatening to ruin my night, so I just focus on my man and us having a good time. Our tongues are down each other's throats every couple of minutes and his hand doesn't leave my thigh or butt. At this moment we're young, wild and free and it's great to know that I'm safe and where I'm supposed to be.

A few hours later, Siya and I are on the brink of intoxication, his friends are falling over and it's definitely time to call it a night. Siya calls for his driver to take his friends home and we take an uber home.

As soon as we're inside the cab, Siya rests his heavy head on my lap and closes his eyes.

Siya- "I love you mother of my kids." He says then dozes off and snores gently.

I also fall asleep and I'm woken up by the cab

driver gently tapping my shoulder once we've arrived.

Waking Siya up is more of a mission, but with some help from the cab driver, he's finally awake and two stepping to our front door. He crawls up the long staircase while I take small steps beside him being cautious to falling as well. We arrive at his room and I call the nanny to check on the munchkins who seem to fine and sleeping. Siya is sleeping and snoring loudly on the bed and I attempt to leave but Siya calls for me and begs me to say, it's been a while since I've been cuddled so I oblige. I crawl onto the bed and he closes the gap between us, then we both fall into a blissful sleep.

I wake up in the morning and stretch across the bed while my hand reaches for Siya, but nothing. I painfully open one eye and realize that I'm in bed alone. The throbbing pain from my head

makes it an agonizing process just to sit up. I reach for the baby monitor and realize something different on my hand; my ring on my finger. I shake my head in disbelief and cover my head with the covers, before I know it I've dozed off again.

I wake up to the sounds of blabber and Siya having a conversation, I open my eyes to find the munchkins on his bare chest grabbing his face and pulling it in all directions. I smile unconsciously at the sight before me and take a moment to bask in it.

Siya- "Stop staring and grab a shower so you can help me with these gremlins." He says with his eyes tightly shut as Anesu grabs his eyelid.

After a quick shower and change into sweatpants and a vest, I'm on the bed, rolling around with my babies and their father.

Siya- "It doesn't get any better than this." He

says with a wide smile gleaming on his face.

Me- "Can't imagine it getting any better."

Him- "Zinhle, babe let's make it official."

Me- "I was going to ask you about that, the ring that you slipped onto my finger? I've earned it back?" I say and raise an eyebrow at him.

Him- "It was always yours, and you know that. I can't stand the thought of something happening to you, and you putting yourself into a situation where I'd lose you frustrates Me, and it's selfish of you." I roll my eyes and he crawls towards me and gazes deeply into my eyes.

Siya- "I know you thinks it's controlling, but it's just being protective over my heart and my life. So let's make this official."

Me- "We are pretty official, we live under the same roof, have two kids together and I guess we're engaged again."

Him- "I can't live another day without having you

fully a part of my life, you're still a Khumalo and it's time we changed that. Let's go get married today."

[04/19, 13:36] Wdz: [105] [PART ONE]

****ZINHLE****

I stare blankly at him as if he's spoken an alien language, and before I can stop myself, my head jerks up and down as I nod to his request. He leaps across the bed and attacks me with a tight embrace, then scoops the drowsy munchkins and jumps off the bed with them snuggled on his torso.

Him- "We have to get ready, we're getting married!" Within a flash, he's out of the room and he's left me alone with my thoughts. My heart palpitates in an over exertion of joy and excitement, but as I mentally try to prepare for

the day ahead, reality strikes like a violent lightning bolt piercing through my body.

My mom and my sister won't be there to witness one of the most important days of my life, Siya hasn't even paid lobola. What will his family think? Am I selling myself short for going through with this? I stare at my reflection through the mirror, and I notice Siya towering over me and gazing into the mirror as well.

Him- "I know what you're thinking." He says in a whisper as he snakes his arms around my shrinking waist.

Me- "Siya, I.."

Him- "Ssshhh, I don't want you to feel obligated to take this step. If you aren't ready, I'll understand. I personally can't wait months before we have the same surname. I'll pay whatever damages I have to, I just need my family to be complete, officially." I hold on tighter to his hands around my waist and

snuggle my head on his chest.

Me- "I want nothing more than to be your wife, I just can't help but feel a sense of guilt. I feel like I'm getting married on the sly, I never wanted to get married on those terms."

Him- "It's fine, we'll wait." He says then leaves a featherlite kiss on my cheek. He untangles his hands from my waist, and I turn to face him. I snake my arms around his neck and gaze into his mesmerizing eyes that always leave my knees weak.

Me- "Our entire relationship hasn't been by the book and conventional. I want to be Mrs Nyathi by the end of today, we'll worry about everything and everyone else later. For now, it's just us."

Siya's gaze into my glossy eyes is intensifies as I feel our souls connect, our heartbeats become one and i know I'm home.

Him- "Have I told you how amazing you are?"

Me- "Not today." I say with a mischievous grin and attempt to walk away, but Siya has other plans as he scoops me up with one arm and throws me onto the bed, and soon follows as he rests on me.

Me- "Have I told you how heavy you are?" He shuts me up with a long sultry kiss and as my lower region prepares itself for the next step, Siya stops and jumps off the bed.

Him- "Sorry, I'm holding out until after marriage. I'm not ready." He says in a sarcastic voice as he dashes for the bathroom and I hear the door lock shortly afterwards.

I shake my head and head downstairs to find the most understated yet elegant item of clothing I can; I'm getting married!

I decide on a tight fitting ivory silk number that sits below my knees, gold Loubotin courts and a clutch. I tie my hair in a messy bun, take my

time with my makeup applying gold undertones and a nude lip and I complete my look with my favorite pair of diamond earrings that Siya once surprised me with. I stare at my reflection in the mirror and I smile at what I see. I'm interrupted by my phone vibrating in the clutch and it's Siya calling.

Me- "Siya, why couldn't you just come to my room?"

Him- "That's because I left the house love. It's bad luck to see the bride before the wedding." I roll my eyes, typical Siya and his dramatics.

Him- "I know you're rolling your eyes at Me, but I'm not taking any chances. I took the munchkins with me so all you have to worry about is getting your sexy ass in the car outside and meet me at the courthouse."

Me- "I guess I'll see you in a few!"

Him- "God, I can't wait to make you Mrs Nyathi!"

Me- "And I can't wait to be Mrs Nyathi!"

We hang up and I inhale a deep breath then head outside where the driver leads me into the car. I recline in the back seat and notice an ice bucket on the far end with a bottle of French champagne and a note stuck onto it that reads "For the nerves." I smile to myself and thank my lucky stars for a man like Siya.

I take a short sip just for a dash of liquid courage and sit back thinking about our rollercoaster of a relationship.

I only realize that I've dozed off when I feel a light tap on my shoulder and open my eyes to find the driver staring back at me with a wide smile.

Him- "Mrs Nyathi, if you wouldn't mind following me Please?" I catch a glimpse outside and I sit back in confusion.

Me- "This isn't the courthouse, excuse me." I snatch my phone and call Siya and he answers on the second ring.

Me- "Nyathi, I think there's a misunderstanding here..."

Siya- " Zinhle, just do as you're told please love." With that he hangs up and the driver holds out his hand for me and so I grab hold of it as he helps me out the car.

Me- "Excuse Me, where are we going?" I ask as I lay behind the driver because of the cobble stone pathway he leads us on, making it uncomfortable to walk in my 6 inch heels.

Driver- "Mr Nyathi requested that I drop you off here, he wanted to meet you here first."

Me- "sure" I say reluctantly as he leads me to a quaint isolated building, surrounded by greenery. This would be the perfect backdrop for a

wedding I think to myself, but soon shake the thought as the door opens and my mother appears.

Me- "Ma, what are you?.."

Mom- "Stop with the questions and come in will you?" She says as she yanks my arm and I stumble into the old building. I look up and see Ziyanda pacing the room while barking orders on the phone. My mom leads me inside the spacious room ordained in white and gold furnishings.

Me- "Uhhh ma, what's.."

Mom- "Zinhle bakithi, we don't have time!"

She shouts as she pushes me onto a chair and I'm immediately attacked by a swarm of strangers pulling at my hair and crowd my face with a variety of brushes.

Me- "Okay, stop!" I shout with my hands in the

hair. I seem to startle a few people as they take a few steps backwards in shock and confusion.

Me- "Ma, please tell me what's going on?"

I ask in a more calm tone.

My mother sits beside me and covers my trembling hands with hers as she gazes into my glossy eyes.

Mom- "You're getting married my baby! You said yes to that man, so here we are." She says while stroking my hands.

Me- "But this isn't the courthouse, you're supposed to be somewhere with Steven and Yanda said she was in Zanzibar."

My mom cups my face with her warm hands and focuses her eyes on mine.

Mom- "Siya had us all on standby the past week, including the best vendors he could find. He spoke to me and expressed his love for you and I felt it. He couldn't wait for months on end

to make you his wife so he told me to be prepared to give you away any day now. Our customs and traditions will be seen to afterwards I guess, but I couldn't stand between this electrifying love. This morning he called and told me that you finally agreed to marrying him and that you thought you were going to the courthouse so we had to be nonchalant about everything. He said he knew in his heart that you deserved more than just signing some documents in front of some strangers and that something would be missing without your family. I assume that since that conversation, he's been going crazy making phone calls to make his plan come together. This us all him, Ziyanda had to force him to help and well I've just been busy trying on outfits from the four stylists that he's hired for the day. So, you're about to be someone's wife and I'm about to gain a son." She says as a tear trickles down her flawless cheek that has immaculate

makeup on.

I analyse the room and I'm overwhelmed with emotions as i come to realize how blessed I am. I really am about to marry the man of my dreams.

I sit back as I'm handed a Bellini and people get to work on my hair and makeup.

[04/19, 13:36] Wdz: [105] [PART TWO]

****ZINHLE****

After what seems like forever, my hair and make up is done and the time to view my wedding dress for the first time has officially arrived. Ziyanda is standing beside the large white bag that contains my dress and my mom is clenching onto my trembling hand while my other hand is placed over my palpitating heart

that feels as if will jump out of my chest any second from now.

Ziyanda- "Ready?" She asks with incontainable excitement. I nod slightly and inhale a deep breath in anticipation of what's to come as Ziyanda slowly unzips the bag ahead of me. She unmaskes the dress and I'm in awe of the masterpiece that's displayed in front of me. I inch closer to it to have a better view of the dress and stretch out my hand to touch the delicate fabric.

Me- "Did you two choose this?" I ask as I admire the intricate detail.

Ziyanda- "I wish I had such impeccable taste! And no, our mother doesn't have it either. This is all Siyabonga Nyathi for you!"

Me- "It's.. it's.." I try to finish my sentence, but a tear threatens to fall so I blink it away.

Mom- "Magnificent! It's perfect!" She exclaims with a wide smile on her face.

Ziyanda- "It's so you! Understated elegance, just the way you like it."

Me- "Siyabonga is one sneaky man! I've been looking up wedding gowns online in between my busy schedule of taking care of the kids and school, and there was always one dress that I'd admire longer than the rest, and well it's ridiculously similar to this one here. I knew that for whenever my wedding ceremony would be, I'd want to look and feel like a princess. This is the perfect princess dress!" I say as I clap my hands together in excitement.

The exaggerated tulle skirt is perfect for the princess effect, with its delicate embellishments and dramatic volume. The bodice has intricate beading with sparse lace appliques all over. The low sweetheart neckline provides an appropriate amount of sexy as well as the mesh on the sides. There's ruching on

the back that forms a pattern leading to the miniature white fabric covered buttons.

Me- "Okay, let's put it on!"

I'm assisted by countless hands and Ziyanda finally ties the last button. My mother sweeps in and helps in placing my immaculate and never ending cathedral veil on my head, adding another element of grandeur to my look.

Ziyanda and mom disappear to get dressed and I stand in front of the wall length mirror as I attempt to calm my nerves. I admire my reflection and admit to myself that I look nothing short of ravishing. My hair tied into a high bun, embellished with a Swarovski crystal head piece is perfect to reveal my made up face. Pink and gold undertoned makeup accentuates all of my facial features.; Siya is going to drop dead.

Mom and Ziyanda finally make their grand

entrance, revealing their jawdropping ensembles.

Me- "Thank God, they didn't choose a two piece for you." I gesture to my mother and she chuckles softly.

Me- "You both look unbelievable!"

Ziyanda- "I know right?" She says as she twirls a few times.

Ziyanda is wearing a white floor length halterneck beaded dress and my mother is wearing a white mid sleeved gown with embellishments.

Mom- "Okay, I think it's time!"

After huddling together and saying a quick prayer, the three of us head out of the quaint building onto the courtyard, with the photographers capturing every step. We walk down the ancient steps and head for a vineyardesque scenery. I hear an orchestra play

tranquil tunes from a distance and Brandon appears out of nowhere and takes Ziyanda's hand after dishing a few compliments.

Ziyanda- "I'll see you on the other side!" She says and blows a kiss at me then heads in the opposite direction.

My mother tries to tug at my hand, but I don't budge.

Me- "Mama, what if?.."

Mom- "Nonsense. I couldn't have picked a better man for you even if I tried! ZINHLE, you are walking down this aisle even if I have to pull you by your hair. This is the beginning of the rest of your life my baby, now come."

My mouth curves into a smile as I think if my soul mate waiting for me at the end of the aisle and I swiftly follow behind my mom and stand beside her under a beautifully decorated white arch with an embellished white curtain marking the beginning of the aisle.

The music soon changes and I hear a vocalist begin to sing Christina Perri's "A Thousand Years" and my heart melts.

"I have died everyday, waiting for you.

Darling, don't be afraid, I have loved you

For a thousand years

I'll love you for a thousand more

Time stands still

Beauty in all she is

I will be brave

I will not let anything, take away

What's standing in front of me

Every breath, every hour has come to this

One step closer"

Mom clenches onto my hand and the white curtain is drawn back revealing a jaw dropping sight ahead. An intimate number of guests all in white attire, apart from the black tux's worn by the men, the white seating, the row of shrubs on either side of the aisle that's ordained with a long white fluffy carpet with our initials so elegantly conjoined into a monogram. I catch a glimpse of my Siya, with our munchkins dressed in white resting in either side of his broad chest. Our eyes interlock and I float down the aisle paying no attention to anything and anyone else besides Mr Nyathi. I finally reach Siya, and I see a tear trickles down his cheek as we're lost in each other. My mom takes the munchkins from Siya and takes her seat, leaving Siya to grab my hand with his sweaty and masculine one.

Siya- "You look breathtaking." He whispers.

Me- " You're one sneaky man! A handsome one at that." I say as I pinch his hand.

The priest welcomes the guests and after a short sermon, I'm brought back to my senses when he instructs Siya and I to face each other and say our own vows.

Me- "What?" I whisper in a panic.

Siya- "Don't worry, I'm not prepared either and I'll start." He whispers back then winks at me.

He inhales a deep breath then grabs hold of both of my trembling and perspiring hands.

Siya- "MaKhumalo, where do I begin? My love, all of this that you see here before you doesn't suffice in showing you the magnitude of love I possess for you. They always say that actions speak louder than words, but I don't believe that anymore. Nothing speaks to the volume of love that I have. Even if I were to worship the ground

that you walk on, you still wouldn't have an idea of the depth of love that I have for you and our little family. You came into my life like a hurricane, destructed it within seconds and yet were still the rainbow that I yearned for at the end and you've made me lose sleep thinking how I was surviving before I met you. Today, I don't only give you my surname, but I give you everything else that is me, for there is no me without you. I vow to honour You, protect you, be sensitive when I need to be and make it easier for you to fall in love with me everyday. I dedicate the rest of my existence to you and our family and I vow to choose you every morning and every evening without doubt or hesitation for infinity. Oh, and beyond." Tears stream down my face and Siya rubs my cheeks with his soft thumbs. I reach up to kiss him, but the priest clears his throat.

Priest- "We're not there yet. It's your turn now."

I inhale a deep breath in and gaze into Siya's

eyes for a moment then I'm immediately calm.

Me- "Well that's a tough act to follow." I say and the guests chuckle.

Me- "Bab' Nyathi, our relationship has been such a rollercoaster with its peaks and lows, and just like a rollercoaster, I've never wanted to let go or jump off. You've become my lifeline and I never want to imagine a life without you. You've helped me realize my worth and want to be a better woman, not just for myself, but for the amazing man that you are. I may not have your millions and your prized possessions, but I vow to give to you something that is priceless; me. I give you all of me, my mind, body and soul is yours and forever will be. Even when you're on the other side of the world and my body isn't with You, you'll have my soul. I vow that the only entity that will be in this union is our Father God. I vow to be the best mother I can possibly be, to be kind with my words even when My thoughts aren't. I vow to encourage You, be your strength

if ever you're weak, be submissive and fall in love with you over and over again everyday."

Siya blinks and tears trickle down his face as he mouths " I love you so much"

Priest- "Well, there's nothing more for me to say. What God has put together, let no man put asunder. Mr Nyathi, seal your union with Mrs Nyathi with a kiss." The crowd cheers as Siya closes the gap between us and attacks me with a kiss that leaves me weak at the knees.

Siya- "Mrs Nyathi, are you ready for the rest of our lives?"

Me- "I was born ready Mr Nyathi!"

The End