

Dead Rose

Chapter 1.

I woke with a killer headache. I looked around and yes I was at home. How did I get home? Did I drive? But I don't remember driving. I was fully dressed except for the shoes. Slowly I got out of bed and went to the bathroom but stopped when I heard a sound coming from the kitchen. Ngazi kahle ukuthi ngihlala ngedwa futhi anginakati. Quietly I picked up the vase in the passage and made my way to the kitchen.

"Great. You up. Ay uyalala mtanomuntu" he said engangibhekile kwakona.

"Who are you? And what are you doing in my house?" I was still holding the vase.

He turned around wangibuka up and down. He had a disgusted look in his face engathi ubona into efile.

"My name is Joshua Cebekhulu, I made you some breakfast. Where do you keep your plates?" he didn't wait for an answer.

"Leave my plates alone. Awukakaphenduli. Ufunani kwami?" My head was pounding.

"You invited me" He found the plates waphaka wabeka phezu kwe-counter.

"Why would I invite a total stranger in my house?" I didn't make sense. Kwakona nje ukuqophisana nendoda engingayazi endlini yami kwakuwubulima.

"Because you were to drunk to drive yourself. Sit down and eat"

"Get out" I pointed at the door.

He didn't argue. Wavele wathatha ifoni yakhe waqonda emnyango.

"Wait" I said before he walked out.

He turned and looked at me. Walinda ukuthi ngikhulume.

"Nothing happened last night?" Yes I was fully dressed but I wasn't sure.

"Trust me. If bekukhona obekwenzekile ngabe uyakhumbula futh ngabe usalele" with that he opened the door and walked out. I stood there for a while umqondo usazula. Ngathuswa ukukhala kwefoni in the bedroom. Ngahamba nayoyibamba. It was my friend Bongeka.

"Yah" I answered.

"Aw wangezwakala nje unomdlandla Gloria."

"I have a hangover from hell oe" I sat down in the bed.

"So how was he? I hope he is good otherwise his good looks are a total waste"

"Who?"

"The guy from the club." she sounded confused.

"You saw him too?"

"Ofcoz we did. Ukuthi nje sengikhohlwe igama"

"How could you? What kind of a friends are you?" ngavele ngaphoxeka. Izinyembezi zagcwala amehlo.

"What do you mean?" she asked.

"Ningangiyeka kanjani ngihambe nendoda engingayazi? What if he was a serial killer?"

"Don't be so dramatic." she laughed. Ngavele ngadinwa kakhulu ngavala nefoni.

I was hungry but ngisaba ukudla i-breakfast yendoda. What if khona ayekufakile. Ngabuye ngazikhuza. If he wanted to do something wayezoyenza last night. I was still standing there debating with myself when I realised that I didn't even say thank you. My phone rang again. Ngabheka i-screen it was Neliswa. Kwake kwathi angimzibe ngabuye ngazikhuza ngayiphendula.

"Gloria oe unjani?" she was breathing hard.

"I'm still alive. If thats what you wondering"

"I just got a call from Bongeka ethi udiniwe about last night"

"Mxm" ngasho ngavala ifoni. To avoid being more pissed ngavele ngayicisha ngakhipha i-battery.

I went to the bathroom ngaxubha ngeza nobuso. I looked in the mirror and almost didn't recognise myself.

I took my clothes of ngangena kwi-shower ngeza. I couldn't wash yesterday off. I hated myself. I hated my friends for convincing me to join them for drinks. I stood there ngayeka izinyembezi zehla zihlangene namanzi. After an hour I switched of the water ngaphuma ngayogcoba ngagqoka and than went to make myself a bowl of kelloqs ngadla. Ukudla kwendoda ngakuchitha ngeza i-plate qede ngayolala.

I woke up later sengithuswa i-knock enzima emnyango. I woke up and dragged myself to the door ngayovula.

Bongeka, Lindiwe and Neliswa walked in.

"Nifunani" I asked before they even sat down.

"Yini wamuncu nje?" asked Lindiwe.

"Why don't you ask your friends. They gave me away to some guy nje abangamazi"

"Hau girl he offered to take you home" said Neliswa.

"Nani navuma nibe ningibona ukuthi ngidakiwe?"

"He didn't do anything" said Bongeka.

"That's not the point. I thought friends look out for each other." I gave them a cold stare.

"Beniphuza kephi?" asked Lindiwe.

"In town" answered Neliswa.

"Nashiya omunye edakiwe e-town?" Lindiwe asked.

"We didn't leave her. She left us there" Neliswa answered.

"I was so drunk, I don't even remember what happened. Ngivuke namhlanje kukhona indoda engingayaz layindlini." I explained to her.

"I hope nothing happened" she looked at me.

"Ngivuke ngigqokile so I hope so too" I went to the bedroom ngabashiya kanjalo. I was angry but not at them. I was angry at myself for drinking. I was angry at me for letting myself down.

I sat down and told myself that I was never going to drink again. I kept repeating it over and over.

"Gloria Memela will never drink again"

Chapter 2.

Ngahlala ekhaya i-weekend yonke. On Monday morning ngavuka ngageza ngagqoka. My house keeper was already there making breakfast.

"Morning sisi" I greeted her.

"Unjani mtanami?" She dish up ngadla.

"Great. Kunenqwaba yomsebenzi engilindile at work" I ate fast.

"Uzomiwa uma udla kanje" she warned.

"Okay sengihambile" I took my things and left but before ngiphume emnyango she stopped me.

"Mtanami impilo ayiphela emsebenzini kuphela" she said.

I nodded and left. I knew what she meant. Mrs Zulu was old enough to be my mother. I called her sisi because I didn't want to call her my mother. She was nothing like my mother. Just thinking about her

made me angry.

Ngafika emsebenzini uBongeka esengilindile.

"Can we talk?" she asked.

"About what?" I opened the door sangena.

"I'm sorry about Friday night" she apologised.

"Its fine. Kodwa just for the record. I'm never going out with you again."

"Hau oe. Don't say that."

"For real. Imagine waking up at home with a stranger. What if he raped me?"

"Ubengeke oe. Ubebukeka ethembekile"

"As if the serial killers walk around with a stamp in the forehead. Mxm" I wasn't angry anymore.

"Anyway how was he?" She asked.

"We didn't sleep together. I kicked him out" and I didn't even say thank you. I thought to myself.

"He was fine though."

"And you are in a serious relationship" I reminded her.

"Nobody said I shouldn't stare" she diffended herself.

"Imfebo idla lubi lapha kuwe"

"Don't tell me you didn't like the guy. Gloria oe kanti unjani nje?" she stood up wazoma eduze kwami sabuka ngaphandle kwewindi.

"I didn't notice anything. I was too angry to even care" my phone rang ngayibamba ngayifaka on loud speaker.

"And" Neliswa said on the other end.

"She didn't like him" answered Bongeka.

"What? Are you serious? Gloria oe kanti yini ngawe?" Neliswa was almost shouting.

"I don't want anyone. I'm fine on my own." I told Neliswa.

"Ay Neli oe you wasting your time. UGloria useze walalela ubulwembu ne-dust downstairs. " said Bongeka.

We all laughed wavalelisa uNeliswa wavala ifoni nami ngaxosha uBongeka ukuze ngenze engikuphumele

ekhaya.

I was busy with my work when my boss walked in.

"Mr Ndlela" I closed my laptop ngayibeka eceleni.

"Miss Memela. Kunento engicela ungenzela yona" he handed me a piece of paper. Ngelibuka, it had directions.

"Yini leyo?"

"A meeting. Can you please attend it on my behalf. Awuzukusho lutho. Just sit in ulalele and than come back" he instructed.

"Why can't you go?"

"My son is coming home from the UK. I want to be at home. Please." he begged.

"Iqala nini leyo meeting?" I got up ngaqoqa izinto zami.

"In two hours. You need to leave now just incase you get lost"

"You owe me. Big time"

"I know. Thank you" he walked out.

I called Bongeka ngamtshela ukuthi sengiyahamba and I doubt ngangizobuyela e-office. After that I left.

It wasn't hard ukuthola indawo engangiya kuyo i-Hillcrest ngangiyazi vele. I parked the car and went inside.

"Sawubona sisi" I greeted the lady in the front desk.

"Yebo sisi. Ngingakusiza?" she looked at me up and down.

"I'm here for the meeting on mr Ndlela's behalf." It was my turn to look at her up and down.

"You the lawyer?" she seemed to be surprised.

"No. I'm the auditor. I'm just standing in for him." two gentlemen walked in babingelela.

"Is there any problem Rose?" one of them asked.

"No sir. This lady came for the meeting" she pointed at me.

"Miss Memela" he said, only then I looked up ngabuka indoda ebikwami on Saturday morning.

"You know her?" asked Rose.

"Yes." he said. We were staring at each other.

"I'm here for the meeting on Mr Ndlela's behalf." I told him.

"Come with me" he turned and walked away. Ngalandela nami. Saze safika e-boardroom. There was nobody inside. Sangena wavala.

"Would you like some tea?" he asked.

"No thank you. Where is everybody?" I didn't want to be there anymore. Ngase ngizisola nanokuthi ngivumeleni.

"You early. Awusho ugatile?" he sat on the table.

"Not that its any of your business but cha angatile." he nodded.

"That's where you're wrong. It is my business as a single man." I didn't say anything.

"How old are you" he asked.

"Old enough to be here"

"But not old enough to know that you shouldn't talk to strangers" he said.

"What's your point?" I was losing my cool.

"You shouldn't drink like that." he said.

"Don't talk like you know me. Yes I drank that day but angisona isdakwa"

"Angishongo ukth uyiso."

"Than don't talk like you know me. You don't know me at all" kwase kujuluke ikhala ukudinwa.

"I'm sorry" he got up and left ngasala ngedwa. Few minutes later kwangena osisi ababili bahlala phansi. Benza engathi abangiboni nami ngazithulela. More people kept coming in saze sagcwala.

I don't know why ngangilokhu ngibuka emnyango ngilinde ukuthi uMr Cebekhulu angene but he never did. The meeting began and I brought my attention to it. It didn't take long yaphela sahamba.

Chapter 3.

Ngafika ekhaya kukhona imoto engilindile. I didn't recognise it. But I knew I lived alone and had no family so I was curious. Ngafika ngehla ngaya kuyo nga-knocker ewindini. My heart almost stopped when I saw my brother Sizwe.

Sizwe: "You changed your name?" he opened the door waphuma.

Me: "Ufunani?" I didn't wait for him to answer ngavele ngaqonda endlini ngavula. The passenger door

opened kwaphuma uThandiwe. Beza bobabili bazongena.

Ngalinda nje bahla phansi and then went to the kitchen ngafaka amanzi eketeleni ngalibasa and then went upstairs ngagqoka i-raincoat ngaphezulu before going back to them.

Sizwe: "Yazi I had to hire a private investigator just to track you down kanti ukhona la usuwaba uGloria"

Thandiwe: "Aw wangakhetha ngisho elincono. Elesalukazi pho" she clapped her hands loudly.

I didn't answer ngahlala nje ngalinda amanzi abile.

Sizwe: "Why you wearing a raincoat?"

Me: "Its not just a raincoat. Its heat resistant. Ngenzela ukth ngingashi uma sekubila amanzi" the kettle boiled ngasukuma ngalilanda ngabuya.

Ngafica besahleli benganake lutho.

Me: "I'll count to 5 ngicela ningiphumele"

Sizwe: "Aybo uyahlanya yini?" he didn't move. UThandiwe yena wayesengasemnyango already.

Me: "I live on my own benizongihlasela. Its self diffence"

Sizwe: "I'm your brother"

Me: "And it took you 10 years to realise that? Ungangihlekisi wena Sizwe. Ngicela uphume." he still didn't move.

Sizwe: "Umama uyagula ekhaya"

Me: "And thats my business because?"

Sizwe: "She is your mother"

Me: "5" i held a finger up.

Sizwe: "You being"

Me: "4"

Sizwe: "She could die"

Me: "3."

He got up wayengasemnyango. Thandiwe was already outside.

Sizwe: "Here is my card. Ungifonele. " he threw it on the floor qede waphuma wahamba.

I watched them drive off ngathatha i-number leyo ngayicuca ngayiphonsa emgqonyeni.

My phone rang ngayiphendula, it was Lindiwe.

Me: " Girl"

Lindiwe: " Ngingena ukupheka oe. Can we go out for dinner?"

Me: "Great idea. Keph?"

Lindiwe: "At Jojos. Will take my car"

Me: "Impela. Ngoba angiyazi leyondawo"

Lindiwe: "Lungisa. I'll be there just now" she hung up.

I went to change quickly ngagqoka ingubo emfishane emnyama nama pumps amnyama. Ngakama kancane i-brazilian hair engangiyifakile ngafaka amacici amakhulu. I did a turn around in the mirror and I was satisfied with my looks.

ULindiwe wafika after 20 minutes. She was wearing a black skinny jean neskitabha esimhlophe ne all star.

Lindiwe: "Ready to go?"

Me: "Yes" ngathatha iskhwama nefoni sahamba.

Sasithule sobabili. My mind was far away. I kept thinking about my mother. After all these years namhlanje useyangifuna. I was angry at her. Inhliziyo yami yayimzonda.

Lindiwe: "We here" she stopped my train of thought.

We went inside. It was such a small and cosy place. Our table was in the corner. We sat down and looked at the menu.

Me: "I-steak for me"

Lindiwe: "A chicken salad for me"

the waiter wrote down and than left.

Me: "How did you find this place?"

Lindiwe: "Syabonga brought me here for our second date"

Syabonga was her ex boyfriend.

Me: "Its lovely"

Lindiwe: "Don't look but kulabobhuti abasemvakwakho omuny wabo is staring at you"

Me: "How do you know babuka mina? Maybe babuka wena nje."

Lindiwe: "Uza lana." she blushed wabheka eceleni. Ngahlala ngathula ngalinda ukth aze afike. Ngathi uma ngivusa amehlo ngimbheka kanti naye ubheke ngakimi.

I was Joshua Cebekhulu.

Joshua: "Ladies" he extended a hand waxhawula kuLindiwe. "My name is Joshua"

Lindiwe: "I'm Lindiwe Myeza and this is my friend Gloria Memela" she pointed at me.

Joshua: "Ngiyajabula ukunazi. Ew manje sisi yazi ubafo uyafisa ukuxoxa nawe kancane" he waved and the other guy got up weza kithi.

Guy: "Ninjani"

Me: "Siyaphila wena unjani?"

Guy: "Ngiyaphila sisi." he looked so nervous.

Me: "I'm Gloria and this is my friend Lindiwe" I gave him a firm handshake.

Guy: "Mlungisi Vilakazi."

Me: "Lovely name. So what do you do for a living?"

Mlungisi: "I'm an accountant."

Me: "Wow. Ubukeka umncane yazi"

Mlungisi: "Kanti lutho." he laughed kwangathi uba-relaxed kancane.

Lindiwe and Joshua were both quiet bebuka thina sikhuluma.

The waiter brought our food base bahamba oJoshua saqhubeka sadla.

Lindiwe: "What was that all about?"

Me: "What?"

Lindiwe: "Don't play dumb oe. Obviously theres a vibe between you and nobhuti we-dread."

Me: "You seeing things"

Lindiwe: "Uyamazi?"

Me: "Uyena lo owangi godukisa that day ngidakiwe."

Lindiwe: "You lie."

Me: "I wish I was."

Lindiwe: "He is fine. Naleli dread lakhe liyamfanela" she was staring at them.

Me: "I thought you not ready to move on just yet"

Lindiwe: "Not for me. For you."

Me: "I'm not interest."

Lindiwe: "Hau oe. Uyeka indoda ezilahlela kuwe kanje?"

Me: "I don't want any man to ruin my life. I'm fine on my own"

Lindiwe: "Hau kodwa oe." she didn't believe me at all.

Me: "Angidlali oe. No match making for me. I'm okay on my own"

Lindiwe: "If you say so"

Chapter 4.

Lindiwe dropped me at home qede wagoduka. I decided to take a shower before ngilale. I kept thinking about Sizwe and my family. I didn't need them. After 10 years on my own namhlanje sebeyangifuna. Ngangizibuzwa ukth kazi wayefunani umama. Ngoba esefa useyangilandela. I pushed the thoughts away ngasula ngaphuma ngagcoba ngaphuza amaphilisi okulala ngangena engubeni ngalala.

I woke up the next day sekuphume ngisho ilanga. I checked the time and it was almost 10am. Ngathatha ifoni ngafonela emsebenzini ngathi angiphilanga so I'll work at home. My body was heavy so i took a hot bath ngeza kuqala before making breakfast. I was still eating when someone knocked on my door. I went to open. Ngake ngama nje ngandwaza when I saw who was knocking.

Him: "Hellow" he snapped his fingers on my face.

Me: "Sorry. Hai" I swear I blushed.

Him: "I'm S'busiso Ndlela."

Me: "Mr Ndlela's son?"

Him: "Impela. My friends call me Sbu"

Me: "Uwena ophuma e-UK?"

S'bu: "Yep. I brought this for you. My dad said you will need it for the meeting" he handed me a file.

Me: "Hau I did call nje ngathi I'm not going in today."

S'bu: "Maybe he didn't get the messege because mina ngiphuma e-office and your secretary gave me

your adress."

Me: "Well I guess I should go in, ngiyofela khona."

S'bu: "Can I come in?"

Me: "Gosh. I'm sorry. Sesiziqedele phandle. Come in"

S'bu: "Can I have a cup of coffee?" he made his way to the kitchen.

Me: "Help yourself. Ngisayogqoka" I went to the bedroom ngakhumula i-gown ngagqoka isketi no-bra. I was still looking for a top when the door opened kwangena uS'bu ne coffee lakhe. Ngathuka ngafihla amabele.

Me: "Don't you knock?"

S'bu: "Sorry bad habit" he stood there wangibuka.

Me: "Aybo phuma phela"

S'bu: "Aw kahle bo. Its not like unqunu. I can't even see your boobs." he sat down and sipped his coffee.

It was clear ukth vele akaphumi so ngaqhubeka ngagqoka i-top. Ngabopha ikhanda ngafaka amacici.

S'bu: "My dad say you single. You look fine"

Me: "Thank you"

S'bu: "Pho ushimiswe yini?" ngavele ngahleka eskhundleni sokudinwa.

Me: "I'm single by choice...." my phone rang. I checked the caller Id. It was Bongeka.

Bongeka: "Ungangiphazami. Thula ulalele" she sounded so excited.

Me: "Okay"

Bongeka: "Umpofu ibala, izinwele zimnyama, ama-lips makhulu a-pink, unehwanqa elihlangene nentshebe namadevu. Umzimba u-fit. Mude kodwa hhayi kakhulu. He is perfect oe" she paused.

Me: "I know" I looked at S'bu owaye-busy echofa i-phone yakhe.

Bongeka: "Wazi ngani?"

Me: "Ngoba nangu ephambi kwami."

Bongeka: "USbusiso Ndlela?"

Me: "Yep."

Bongeka: "Ayike kanti ku-right. Atleast now I don't have to play a match maker. Mthathe oe"

Me: "Ngimenzeni? I told you I'm not interested."

Bongeka: "You know how to burst my bubbles." she hung up.

S'bu: "Ubani lowo?"

Me: "Uthanda izindaba. Asambe"

He got up wavula iscabha saphuma.

S'bu: "Can I drive you."

Me: "No. I have my own car thank you"

S'bu: "I promise I won't annoy you" he begged.

Me: "Ngiyemsebenzini mina. Wena uyaph?"

S'bu: "At work with you. Please"

Me: "Will take my car and I'll drive"

S'bu: "No problem"

I packed my things sahamba.

Safika e-office i-meeting isiqalile. I wasn't even prepared for it since ngangingazi ngisho nokuthi ikhona.

S'bu: "I'm going in with you"

Me: "Why?"

S'bu: "Just to sit in. I need to know how things work." I honestly didn't have time to argue with him so ngavele ngahamba wangilandela.

We walked in sayohlala phansi. I didn't look up at all. I knew all eyes were on me or should I say us because S'busiso was hot and the ladies I worked with loved eye candy.

The meeting went on. Joshua was there ebheke phansi. Ngabaqhathanisa. They were both handsome in thier own way. Joshua was a bit dark, tall, ene-dread elide elimnyama. Engena ntshebe futh engena hwanqa. Ngathuka umqondo wami usukude kakhulu. I told myself to focus ngoba amadoda ngeke angisendawo instead aletha ukuhlupheka kuphela.

Joshua: "Miss Memela? Can you join us please?" He stopped my dirty thoughts.

Me: "Sorry angizwanga. You were saying"

Joshua: "The file Mr Ndlela gave you. Can I have it?" he sounded irritated.

Me: "Oh sorry. Nayi" I gave it to him.

Joshua: "Thank you." he took the file waphuma. Only than I realised that the meeting was over. I got up nami sengiphoxekile. S'bu was talking to a lady next to him. I left him there ngayozivalela e-office lami. I was loosing control and I didn't like it. Ukuvela koJoshua noSizwe kwakungiphazamisa kakhulu. I didn't want to think about my mother but I couldn't help it. Ngangizibuza ukth what was wrong with her? Was she dying or even dead already? What about my dad? Was he still alive? I didn't want to go back to my past. I wasn't going back. If my mum was dying than hopefully she will rest in peace and if not then it was her problem.

Chapter 5.

I was still pacing up and down when I heard a soft knock qede kwavuleka iscabha kwangena uJoshua.

Joshua: "You need to sign this for me" he gave me a file.

Me: "I don't sign without reading first."

Joshua: "Read them, sign them and then sent the driver to drop them off." washo waphenduka wahamba.

Me: "Drop them where?"

Joshua: "At work. La ekusebenza khona mina."

Me: "Okay. I'm sorry about the meeting" I was trying to keep this conversation going.

Joshua: "Its cool" he opened the door to leave but wahlehla wabuya kwangena uBongeka noSizwe.

Bongeka: "Gloria. This gentleman says he is your brother" she looked at me with questioning eyes. Joshua walked out.

Me: "Ufunani Sizwe?"

He didn't answer wavele wabuka uBongeka.

Bongeka: "I'll leave you to it" she walked out.

Sizwe: "You work here?"

Me: "Cha. Ithuna lami."

Sizwe: "Why did you change your name?"

Me: "Because Thandeka died and Gloria was born."

Sizwe: "They say you should forgive so you could be able to move on"

Gloria: "That's where you're wrong. I don't need anything. I need you and your family to leave me alone."

Sizwe: "Mum needs" he didn't finish. The door opened kwangena uThulani elandelwa ama-security u-Theo noMandla.

Theo: "Miss Memela he demands to see you"

Sizwe: "He is with me."

Me: "Thank you Theo. It's okay." they nodded and left. Kwasale kwangena uBongeka noJoshua bezobona ukuth kwenzekani.

Thulani: "I just want to see my son. Thandeka uphi umfana wami?" he was staring at me with cold eyes.

Joshua: "Ubani uThandeka?" he looked at me.

Me: "Ngicela ningiphumele nonke" izinyembezi zase zigcwele amehlo but I was going to give my brother the satisfaction.

Thulani: "I'm not leaving without my son"

Bongeka: "Should I call security?"

Me: "No. I'll do it myself." I picked up the phone and called.

Theo: "Yes"

Me: "Can you come to my office. I need you to take out trash for me" ngasho ngabeka phansi ifoni.

Sizwe: "You weren't this cold."

Me: "Jump for joy. You made me like this. And do me a favour. Next time don't tell people you are my brother. You died 10 years ago to me"

Thulani: "What about my son?"

ngavele ngathula ngangaphendula. Kwangena uTheo noS'bu.

S'bu: "Kwenzakalani lana?" nobody answered him.

Theo: "I need you to come with me"

Thulani: "I'll be back. I want my son" he got up and left. Kwalandela uSizwe.

Bongeka: "You have a kid?"

Me: "I don't"

Bongeka: "Pho ukhuluma ngani lobhuti?"

Me: "I'm going home now. Excuse me guys."

Joshua: "The file?"

Me: "I'll drop it off tomorrow morning"

S'bu: "Are you crying?" he pulled me closer to him and held my chin up.

Me: "I'm fine"

S'bu: "You don't look fine." he kissed my lips. I pushed him away.

Me: "What are you doing?"

S'bu: "Trying to comfort you."

Joshua walked out wagaklaza iscabha kwanyakaza amawindi.

Me: "Don't ever do that again."

Bongeka: "Can I take you home?" I knew she was dying to find out what happened.

Me: "Its fine. I'll drive myself. S'bu kuzomele ugibele i-taxi"

He nodded. UBongeka waphuma.

I collected my things ngavalelisa kuSbu ngahamba. It felt like everybody knew what had happened. I didn't look up until I was outside. Joshua was talking to Theo. I pretended not to see them but I knew they were talking about me. I got into my car and drove home. For the past 10years ngangikwazile ukucasha but now it was obvious that I couldn't do it anymore. I thought about leaving the country. I had enough money to start over somewhere but where? Germany? Russia?. But running away would mean I'm hiding something. I had so much hate for my family and Thulani. After so many years uqhamuka esezofuna ingane. Just thinking about it brought me so much pain. Ngethuka sengikhala nomgwaqo ungasabonakali. I wiped the tears away and packed on the side of the road ngaphuma emotweni kancane. I wanted to calm down ngingaze ngilimaze abantu. After a while I went back in ngaqhubeka nohambo lwami. Ngezwa inhliziyo yami ingath iyazika when I saw Sizwe and Thulani waiting outside my home.

Thulani looked older, as if umhlaba wawusuke wamkhandla kancane. He was younger than Sizwe but uSizwe looked fine. Ngafika ngaphuma emotweni ngayovula iscabha beza bazongena bahlala phansi.

Thulani: "You have a lovely home Thandeka"

Me: "Gloria. My name is Gloria."

Thulani: "Why did you change your name?"

Me: "You asking a wrong question. You should be asking me how did I survive after you tried to kill me?"

Thulani: "I didn't try to kill you."

Me: "Ofcourse you didn't. You were trying to get rid of the baby that was about to ruin your life. Well it worked. Akukho ngane. Usungangiphumela"

Sizwe: "Thandeka....."

Me: "Gloria. My name is Gloria."

Thulani: "My son died?"

Me: "You killed him. Don't act surprised."

Sizwe: "When are you going home?"

Me: "I'm not. This is my home."

Sizwe: "But mum"

Me: "Are you slow or what? Kanti ikona kuphi ongakuzwa uma ngithi ANGIHAMBI NAWE."

Sizwe: "But mum is dying."

Me: "I was dying then and she didn't care. Its her turn to die. We all die, let her die"

Chapter 6.

Finally Sizwe and Thulani left but I knew they were coming back. I didn't want to see my mother but I always knew that one day I'll have to face her and maybe that day was sooner than I thought. Just to avoid thinking I decided to do what I always did. Bury myself with work. Ngaqeda lapho ngayopheka. I was still busy with it when someone knocked on my door qede wangena.

S'bu: "Honey, I'm home" he had a gift bag and a bunch of red roses.

Me: "You won't bribe me with flowers. Next time knock and wait for me to let you in"

S'bu: "I'm sorry. What you cooking?"

Me: "Beef and rice"

S'bu: "What was happening in the office today?"

Me: "Can we not talk about it." he nodded.

S'bu: "I like you. A lot. " he held my hands.

Me: "I don't think I can be in a relationship Sbusiso"

S'bu: "Why not? UCebekhulu?"

Me: "Ungenaph uJoshua manje?"

S'bu: "Ngibone indlela akubuka ngayo."

Me: "You seeing things. Whats in the bag?" I changed the topic.

S'bu: "Well bengize lana ngoba ngithi you may need a shoulder to cry on and something to make you better so I bought us a bottle of wine"

Me: "Thank you. I'll get the glasses"

We drank the whole bottle. Sadlulela kugologo. Smoked some dagga.

Ngaphaphama sekuphume ilanga ngaksasa. S'bu had his hands wrapped around me. I woke him up.

Me: "What happened last night?"

S'bu: "Ah ah girl. Don't do that" he sat up.

Me: "Did we have sex?" we were both naked.

S'bu: "We used a condom. Don't panic"

I got up and ran to the bathroom to throw up. Wawungathi ngidle into ebolile.

S'bu: "You okay?"

Me: "I have a headache."

S'bu: "I'll make you something to help you" he went to the kitchen.

I decided to take a cold shower quickly. I didn't like what I was becoming. I was losing control. I was still showering when I had voices in the lounge. I got up ngabhinca ithawula ngaphuma ngayobheka ngafica uJoshua noS'bu bebukana emehlweni.

Me: "Morning"

Joshua: "I need the file. Le ebekumele uyilethe today"

Me: "I'll go get it" I went to get it ngabuya ngamnika. Wayithatha waphuma wahamba.

Me: "Nibanga ini?"

S'bu: "Its not important."

Me: "Okay. About last night....."

S'bu: "We used a condom. Relax"

Me: "I don't do one night stands. Thats not me. Bekungamele siphuze kanje."

S'bu: "I'm not a one night stand Gloria. I love you."

Me: "Ey S'bu I don't think I'm ready to date yet. I have a lot to deal with."

S'bu: "I want to be here for you. Let me be here for you" he begged.

Me: "Awulambanga?" I changed the topic.

Sbu: "Don't change the topic."

Me: "Ey S'bu I don't even know you that well."

S'bu: "You making an excuse."

Me: "I'm not making excuses, I'm telling you the truth"

S'bu: "Is it Joshua?"

Me: "Ungenaphi uJoshua manje?"

S'bu: "Bengibuza nje."

Me: "Theres nothing between Joshua and me"

S'bu: "Phele ngineskhwele"

Me: "Theres no need for it."

S'bu went to shower ngasala ngenza i-coffee ngaphuza. Ngangingamkholwa uma ethi we used protection. Kwakungenzeka kanjani ukth mina ngingakhumbuli kodwa yena akhumbule. Ngalinda wahamba ngasale ngagqoka ngaya ku-doctor. I got the morning after pill ngabuyela ekhaya ngayolala. Ngaphaphama late sekuyoshona ilanga. I had few missed calls from my friends. I called them back bath bayeza.

I wasn't ready to tell them anything. 30 minutes later bafika.

Lindiwe: "You look strange" she said after the greeting and hugging part was over.

Me: "I didn't sleep well last night"

Bongeka: "What did you do to Joshua? Ufike eqhuma namhlanje emini"

Me: "Aw ay angazi. Why usola mina?"

Bongeka: "Ubuze kimi ukth wena noS'bu benivele nazana or niqale manje ukwazana"

Me: "And you told him what?"

Bongeka: "Ngimtshela ukthi angazi."

Me: "Okay."

Bongeka: "Who were those guys?"

Me: "My brother Sizwe and my baby daddy Thulani"

Lindiwe: "Unengane?"

Me: "He didn't make it."

Neliswa: "Phephisa oe" she gave me a hug.

Me: "Thank you"

Bongeka: "Pho who is Thandeka?"

Me: "Ngicela ukubuye nginitshele girls. I'm sorry"

Lindiwe: "Its okay girl."

there was an awkward silent. I knew someday I'll have to tell them but I wasn't ready yet. Ngangingazi nanokuthi ngoke ngibe ready to go back to Thandeka again. I was used to being Gloria but I knew that Thandeka wasn't resting at piece.

Chapter 7.

I woke up early the next day. Ngageza ngagqoka had breakfast quickly and then left for work. Judy was already in her desk.

Judy: "Morning Miss Memela"

Me: "Morning. Any messages?"

Judy: "Yes. Mr Cebekhulu asked me to call him the moment you walk in. He would like to talk to you"

Me: "Okay."

Judy: "Mr Ndlela also said he would like to see you in his office first thing in the morning. But he is not here yet"

Me: "Thank you Judy"

Judy: "Would you like some coffee?"

Me: "Yes thank you." I went to my office. And began doing what they pay me to do. I didn't know why

Joshua wanted to talk to me. But I could guess why Mr Ndlela wanted to see me.

Judy brought the coffee washo ukth uMr Ndlela usefikile. I took the coffee ngakhiya i-office ngaya kuye. I knocked on the door kwavula uJoshua.

Me: "Is Mr Ndlela in?"

Joshua: "Come in"

I went ngafika ngahlala phansi.

Mr Ndlela: "Morning Gloria"

Me: "Morning sir"

Mr Ndlela: "I'll go straight to the point. Whats going Miss Memela?"

Me: "About what?"

Mr Ndlela: "You drinking, you missing work, you don't pay attention in meetings. Are you in some kind of trouble?"

Me: "No" Joshua was staring at me. I didn't even know why he was there because he didn't work with us. Yes the companies had a close relationship but lately he was always there.

Mr Ndlela: "And the two gentlemen who came here demanding to see you?"

Me: "It sorted sir"

Joshua: "Ubani uThandeka?"

Me: "Thats a personal info"

Joshua: "I guess smoking dagga is a personal thing"

Me: "I don't smoke"

Joshua: "I saw it in your house. You missed work yesterday because you were busy being high with Sbusiso"

Mr Ndlela: "USbusiso wami?"

Joshua: "The one and only."

Mr Ndlela: "Gloria I'm disappointed."

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "What ever it is thats eating you away, alcohol won't solve it"

Me: "Okay"

Mr Ndlela: "If you need sometime off just say so."

Me: "Thank you sir"

Mr Ndlela: "You can go"

I got up and left ngiphoxeke ngiphelile. The moment I got in my office I went to stand near the window and looked down. I couldn't stop the tears so I allowed them to fall. Ngethuswa umuntu ongithinta ehlonbe. It was Joshua. I didn't even hear him come in. He pulled me closer to him and wrapped his arms around me. I cried harder and he kept brushing my back engasho lutho.

We heard a cough sathuka sobabili.

S'bu: "I hope I'm not interropting."

Joshua: "Ube right yezwa"

Me: "Thank you" he nodded and walked out.

S'bu: "What was that all about?"

Me: "Nothing"

S'bu: "You cheating on me Gloria?"

Me: "Cha."

S'bu: "I want you to stay away from him. Don't look at him, don't touch and ever let me see what I just saw."

Me: "I work with him"

S'bu: "Angisona islima Gloria. Don't make me repeat myself"

Me: "Aybo Sbusiso nakhu usungishayela imthetho. I told you I'm not ready to be in a relationship."

S'bu: "But you ready to let him touch you"

Me: "Don't insult me. Just because I let you touch me doesn't mean I'm and idiot."

S'bu: "I didn't say that."

Me: "You don't have to. Get out"

S'bu: "I'm sorry sthandwa sami. Ukuth nje ngineskhwele ngawe"

Me: "If you act like an idiot I'll treat you like one."

S'bu: "I'm sorry" he kissed my lips and left.

I sat down on my desk and tried to work. I needed to solve my problem. I had to take that step and go see my mother. I wasn't sure about forgiving her. Maybe i would feel different when I see her. Ngethuka sekumi uBongeka phambi kwami.

Me: "I didn't hear you come in" she sat down.

Bongeka: "You were talking to yourself."

Me: "I was just thinking"

Bongeka: "About your mother. I thought you grew up in the streets"

Me: "I did but I do have a family. Sizwe is my brother."

Bongeka: "Why do you hate them so much?"

Me: "Yibo abangizonda kuqala, and now they say my mother is dying and she wants to see me"

Bongeka: "Then go see her."

Me: "I'm not ready yet."

Bongeka: "You will never be ready. You can't let her die engakubonanga. Go see her and who knows maybe you will forgive her."

Me: "I don't think I can. I lost my son because of her. When I needed her the most she threw me in the streets." I was crying again.

Bongeka: "I don't know what happened but what I know is that carrying so much will hurt you and only you. Gloria you are my friend. I love you. But you 28 years old, single, no kid no nothing. All you do is work and thats not healthy. You need to deal with your past before its distroy your future." she adviced. I cried harder because I knew she was right. I was killing my self.

Bongeka: "Go see her and who knows maybe it will make you feel better."

I got up and hugged Bongeka.

Me: "Thank you my friend"

Bongeka: "Thats what friends are for. We don't only match make but we also zap you to reality. And the reality is you need to face your past so you can control your future"

Me: "Thank you my friend"

Bongeka: "I still think Joshua is better than S'bu. He is hot but iso lakhe liyazula kant uJoshua is focused and he has eyes only for you"

Me: "I told you. You seeing things" we laughed out loud.

Chapter 9.

I knew I wasn't dead because I was in pain. I'm sure when you are dead you can't feel any pain at all. When I tried to move, a hand touched my shoulder. I looked up and it was Joshua.

Joshua: "Unganyakazi. I'll call the doctor" he went out wabuya ngokushesha nodokotela.

Dr: "Miss Memela. I'm doctor Shabalala. How are you feeling?"

Me: "I'm in pain."

Dr: "Where does it hurt the most?"

Me: "Isingezansi sibuhlungu sonke."

Dr: "Do you remember what happened?"

Me: "There was an accident"

Dr: "Okay. Your medical history shows ukuthi uke wahlinzwa."

Me: "Yes. I had a miscarriage few years ago"

Dr: "Okay. I need you to rest. Mr Cebekhulu I'm sure you tired as well"

Joshua: "Yes I am."

Dr: "The nurse will come and give you something for the pain. Mr Cebekhulu you have 15 minutes" he said and walked out.

Joshua: "What were you thinking?"

Me: "About what?"

Joshua: "Driving like that. You could have died Gloria."

Me: "Ukuba uyazi ukth ngifisa kanjani."

Joshua: "Uyahlanya."

Me: "How did you know I was here?"

Joshua: "I saw the accident. Ungene erobhotini elivalile Gloria."

Me: "Ukuba ngifile nje kengiphumule ukuhlupheka"

Joshua: "Don't talk like that. Your parents were here yesterday."

Me: "Bezofunani?"

Joshua: "To see you. Bakubiza ngoThandeka"

Me: "Can I ask you a question" I changed the subject.

Joshua: "You changing the topic. But ask"

Me: "That night, you had a chance to do anything to me but you didn't. Instead you stayed the whole night"

Joshua: "Was I wrong to do that?"

Me: "Cha. But I know most people would take an advantage."

Joshua: "I'm not most people Gloria. Angizithatheli ezintweni zabantu. But for the record ukba ngenza something ngabe namanje usakhumbula. Ngabe njalo uma ungibona uvele ukhumbule yonke into engayenza kuwe." he smiled.

Me: "Blowing your own horn, I see"

Joshua: "Ukuthi vele ngiyazi ukuthi ngalapho ngiphiwe. Umsebenzi ngiwenza ngendlela."

Me: "Aw ay angazi-ke ngalapho." i smiled

Joshua: "What eating you Gloria?"

Me: "My real name is Thandeka Memela. Ngazishintshela mina ngazibiza ngo-Gloria"

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Its a long story"

Joshua: "You not going anywhere. I have time"

I knew I had to tell Joshua the truth. Maybe that will ease my burden.

Me: "When I was 18 ngakhulelwa. My parents were well known in our community so you can imagine the scandal. My mother suggested abortion and my dad agreed. They told Thulani's parents ubaba wakhona wavuma umama wakhe wanqaba nami nganqaba. My parents kicked me out, ngayohlala noSizwe and his wife. Ngahlala kancane and my father told my brother to kick me out aswel and uma engafuni uzomphuca ifa lakhe lonke. So my brother and his wife started abusing me. Sometimes they locked me in my room without food or water. Bethi angikhiphe isisu. Ngathola ithuba lokweqa ngaya kumama kaThulani and she took me in. Sent me to university kanti uzodlula emhlabeni. Ngaleyonkathi I was 6 months pregnant. I couldn't have an abortion anymore so Thulani and his father abused me ngoba benzela ukth ingane ishone. Thulani would bring different girls alale nawo phambi kwami. His father

would hit me whenever he wanted to. I tried to go home but my parents didn't want me. My mum called me names and my dad just stood there ephethe imvubu. I had no choice but to go back to Thulani and his father. They abused me but atleast they allowed me to sleep inside. So one night Thulani beat me up. I actually thought I was dying. His father walked in and I thought he would stop him but he didn't instead he joined in. Babesho ukth kuncono ngife kanye nalomlanjwana wami engangingafuni ukhishwe. I don't know when they stopped but I remember waking up in a dark place. I thought i was buried alive kanti my eyes were swollen evalekile. I forced them to open and they did. Ngabona izinkanyezi and thats why I decided to crawl ngaze ngafika emgwaqeni. A car stopped kwaphuma isalukazi somlungu. I remember this because she had white fluffy hair. She spoke words I didn't understand engibambe ngesandla." Joshua was in tears so was I.

Joshua: "Don't tell me anymore" he begged holding my hand.

Me: "Please, I want to" he nodded.

Me: "I woke up in the hospital. She was there sitting next to my bed. Amagama awasho wathi 'YOUR NEW NAME IS GLORIA. GOD IS GREAT' almost every nurse and every doctor came to see me that day. They didn't think I was going to make it. But she didn't give up. She hired someone to find my parents but they wanted nothing to do with me. I even called my father wangiphika. So I stayed with Mrs Russel. I lost the baby. Ngahlinzwa bayikhipha. She sent me back to school. Wangiphoqa ukth ngisebenze part time futh ngifune indawo yokuhlala eskoleni. I didn't want to leave but she forced me wathi I can visit ngama-weekend. I got the job e-call centre yakwa MTN ngasebenza. I used to visit her every weekend. She didn't want me spend my money on her ethi angiyibeke. I noticed that she was lossing weight mengimbuza athi she is fine, I shouldidn't worry about her."

Chapter 10

Me: "Can I have some water?" Joshua got up wawathatha wangiphuzisa.

Joshua: "You can stop."

Me: "Please. I want to tell you"

Joshua: "Okay"

Me: "So one day I come ngifice indlu i-empty kusele izingubo zami zifakw ku-plastic omnyama. She was dead. All this time she was forcing me to work and study she knew she was dying but she didn't tell me. She left me a letter explaining that she didn't tell me she had cancer because she knew I had to much to deal with. Once again I was homeless."

Joshua: "Pho wahlalaph?"

Me: "Kwadingeka ukuth ngithole umqasho. Atleast I had a job so ngangingalali ngingadlile. Angazi ukuth ubani owathatha izimpahla zakhe, ngathi ngiya ngelinye ilanga ngafica sekuhlala abany bathi they bought

the house bangafuna ukush ukth ubani obadayisele. I was broken Joshua. Ngangimthanda. She was like a mother but wahamba wangishiya. I wish she had told me atleast ngivalelise."

Joshua: "Eskoleni?"

Me: "Ngaqhubeka ngafunda. The student funding scheme helped me a lot. Ngafunda ngaze ngaqeda. I didn't have a graduation part. Ngosuku engagqoka ngalo ijazi was the saddest day of my life. I had no one to celebrate with. It was just me. All along bengisebenzela ukuba nemali. To have everything that I want but It can't buy me happiness. I'm lonely. Sometimes I end up drinking ngoba I'm trying to forget"

Joshua: "Why didn't you date someone? Ngiyazi ukth uyashelwa."

Me: "I'm afraid. Ngivele ngibone engathi ngizohlukomezeka"

Joshua: "What about S'busiso. Anijoli?"

Me: "I was drunk."

Joshua: "You should rest. Lala uzovuka ngikhona"

Me: "Izinhlungu sezithe ukuthula."

Joshua: "Awulambile?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "I'll get that nurse to give you something for the pain."

Me: "Thank you" he got up waphuma.

For the first time in my life I felt lighter. Wawungath ngenze into enkulu ngokutshela uJoshua. I wasn't ready to forgive my family just yet. Joshua walked in again. Ephethe ukudla.

Joshua: "Before you shoot me. You need to eat before you take pills. So open up"

Me: "Ngafika nini lana?"

Joshua: "Kuthangi."

Me: "And you been here since than?"

Joshua: "I couldn't leave"

Me: "What about your family?"

Joshua: "My parents died in car accident. Thats why that night I didn't want you to drive drunk. The driver was drunk"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "Thanks. Now eat."

I ate few spoons wafika unesi ngaphuza amaphilisi.

Joshua: "You rest now"

Me: "Nawe uhambe uyophumula"

Joshua: "I will, but ngohamba usuzumekile"

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "What for?"

Me: "For being here for me. For listening."

Joshua: "You welcome"

We talked some more ngaze ngazumeka.

Ngaphamama later. My friends were there. I was glad to see them.

Lindiwe: "Yazi unesi obe lana uthe kunendoda engapheli nje lana. Ine-dread, yazi uma eyichaza ngath uJoshuwa" she rolled her eyes.

Bongeka: "Aybo uJoshuwa akasapheli lana? Gloria oe is there something we should know?"

Me: "Kodwa yini nize nimbize ngoJoshuwa engath izalukazi"

Neliswa: "Simbiza ngesizulu nje. Don't change the subject."

Me: "Cishe ngafa kodw nina nijah ezoJoshua. Aycha nikhona bo." I pretended to be angry.

Lindiwe: "Don't guilt trip us. Wena uyamthanda uJoshua. Sbu is fine too but uJoshua is perfect for you"

Me: "You seeing things" we all laughed. Sathuliswa ukuvuleka kwescabha kwangena uS'busiso.

S'bu: "Sanibona."

Me: "Yebo" he kissed my lips.

S'bu: "Nangavuma nje bosisi yini?"

Bongeka: "Ncese. Ukth usuke wangena sisahleka."

S'bu: "Ay ngiyezwa. Anyway usunjani kodwa mtakwethu?" uLindiwe wavele wazikhwehlelisa kakhulu. UNeliswa noBongeka baphela ihlaya. I gave them an evil look bathula same time.

Me: "I'm better thanks"

S'bu: "Kuhle uma usuncono."

As much as I appreciated being visited by Sbu but the truth was I realised that I liked Joshua more than Sbu. Joshua had a chance but didn't take an advantage while Sbu introduced me to dagga and then slept with me while I was totally out of it. The fact that yena wayekhumbula kusho khona ukth into ayenza ngenhloso. UJoshua saw the accident, wahlala nami esbhedlela walinda ukth ngiphaphame kodwa uSbu wafika sengiphapheme.

S'bu: "Ucabanga ini?"

Me: "Work" I lied. I needed to tell him to leave me alone but ngangingafuni ukumphoxa phambi kwabangani bami.

The door opened again kwangena uJoshua with a bunch of flowers.

Joshua: "I didn't know you had visitors"

Me: "You are suppose to be resting"

Joshua: "And I did."

Me: "Thank you for the flowers"

S'bu: "Besingekho isdingo sazo kodwa."

Joshua ignored him wazibeka duze kombhede.

Neliswa: "Engathi sesiyahamba Gloria"

Me: "Aw kahleni bo. Akenihlale kancane" ngangingafuni kusale uSbu noJoshua bodwa.

Bongeka: "Sobuya kusasa"

Joshua: "I'll walk with you. Ube-right Gloria" he walked out. My friends said goodbye aswel bahamba ngasala noSbu.

S'bu: "Kwenzekani phakath kwakho noJoshua?"

Me: "Nothing."

S'bu: "Unamanga. Niyajola"

Me: "It wouldn't be such a bad thing if sijola"

S'bu: "What about us?"

Me: "Theres no us Sbu. That night was a mistake. I was drunk I don't even remember what happened" I explained.

Chapter 11

The next day I was feeling better. I couldn't wait to leave but they wanted me to stay just for few days.

Joshua: "Morning" he walked in.

Me: "Its not visiting hours yet"

Joshua: "What is with women and chocolate? You can never go wrong"

Me: "You will never understand. since she got chocolates, what did you bring me?"

Joshua: "Food. Its rice and chicken." he sat down wakhapha isintsha.

Me: "You cooked?"

Joshua: "Ibhodwe ngiyalishaya mina. Khamisa" I did as told and it tasted great.

The nurse walked in with food.

Joshua: "I'm afraid its too late. Useyadla already"

Nurse: "Mr Cebekhulu you trying to take over my job?"

Joshua: "Just this once."

Nurse: "Okay but don't let the others see that lunch box. By the way your chocolate taste great." she walked out.

Me: "Uyinkinga yesoka"

Joshua: "Aw udlala ngami. Ngathi ungangithandi wena"

Me: "I never said I don't"

Joshua: "So you do love me?" he smiled.

I was yet to answer when the door opened kwangena uSizwe noThulani.

Joshua: "Its not visiting hours yet"

Sizwe: "Can we talk Thandeka?"

Joshua: "She is sick. Can't you atleast wait until she is better?"

Thulani: "Wena uyini lana?" he looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "A real man. Something that you not." he was looking down at Thulani.

Sizwe: "That's between Thandeka and us."

Joshua: "And right now she is with me and I'm telling you she is not well." Joshua sounded so calm even his face was relaxed.

Sizwe: "Ndoda angikwazi futhi anginendaba nawe. Thandeka is my sister and if I want to talk to her I will. You can't stop me."

Joshua: "Don't make me laugh. You don't even know what being a brother really means. Awundoda yalutho wena"

Thulani: "Watch the tongue" he warned.

Joshua: "Or what?"

As much as I was enjoying this free show but I had to stop it before it got out of hand.

Me: "Stop it."

Sizwe: "We just want to talk Thandeka"

Me: "Not now. Ngisesibhedlela niyabona angithi"

Joshua: "Hambani-ke."

Thulani: "Kazi ucabanga ukuthi uwubani" he looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "A man and I can prove it for you. Asphume phandle ngikukhombise ukth ngiyini mina"

Me: "Joshua please."

he looked at me qede wahlala phansi. Sizwe and Thulani left.

Joshua: "Bayabuya."

I nodded. I was having strange pains in my lower body.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Kubuhlungu Joshua." I was sweating.

Joshua: "I'll call a doctor" he ran out wabuya nonesi nodokotela.

Nurse: "Mr Cebekhulu please wait outside" she ordered.

Joshua: "I'll be back. Uzoba right Gloria" he held my hand for a moment qede waphuma.

I was dizzy. I couldn't not focus. I heard the noise around me get louder and louder and then suddenly it stopped and everything went blank.

I woke up later. I knew it was a new day because Joshua was wearing different clothes.

Me: "Hai"

Joshua: "I'm glad you back" he avoided looking at me.

Me: "What happened?"

Joshua: "I'll go get a nurse" he got up.

Me: "I don't need a nurse. I need you to tell me whats wrong"

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka"

Me: "Just tell me."

Joshua: "Ulimale isbeletho. Actually salimala ngaleyankathi ulimala. Uthunukele and the damage was too much this time. So they had to remove it" tears rolled down his face.

Me: "So I'll never have kids again?".

Joshua: "I'm sorry Gloria"

It felt like my heart was in pieces and those pieces were poking everything else in my body.

Kanti ngangenzeni le engaka engaxolelwa. Ngokukhulelwa nje ngingashadile sengingathwala icala impilo yami yonke.

Me: "I wish I died that night. Atleast ngabe angibuzwa ubuhlungu engibuzwa namhlanje."

Joshua: "Don't say that. I love you"

Me: "Ungamthanda kanjani umuntu ongazali? I'm sure you want kids."

Joshua: "I want you"

Me: "You just saying that. I need some time alone."

Joshua: "I'm not leaving. I want to be here for you and I'll be here."

Inhliziyo yam yayingamkholw uJoshua uma ethi akahambi. Bonke abantu ababefika like knights babengishiya ekugcineni. Naye wayezoduba angishiye.

Joshua: "I'll get a nurse to give you something to help you sleep." he got up and left. I didn't stop him. I wanted to sleep and hopefully never wake up..

Chapter 12.

I didn't hear Joshua leave. Ngathuka engasekho. The nurse brought me food. I didn't want to eat but she forced me to eat before taking the medication. But it was only for physical pain not for emotional pain I was feeling inside. Angingizoba nani kanti mina engothi eyami beside my money since yayingeke ingithengele ingane yami or inzalo. The hate I had for my parents came back. It was their fault.

I don't remember when I slept ngethuka sengivuka. The nurse brought me breakfast ngadla and then she helped me bath. I was waiting for Joshua to come but he didn't. The nurse brought me lunch.

Me: "Can you borrow me your phone, please?"

Nurse: "Okay." she handed it to me qede waphuma.

I didn't know Joshua's number so I called Bongeka.

Bongeka: "Hello"

Me: "Uyifunani indoda yami?"

Bongeka: "Ubani yona leyondoda yakho?"

Me: "Le olala nayo"

Bongeka: "Where did you get my number?"

Me: "Uyigwala. Imina uGloria. Ngifuna i-number kaJoshua"

Bongeka: "Waze wangithusa oe."

Me: "Ngiyibolekile ifoni."

Bongeka: "Ey yazi mngani wami siyeza ntambama. I'm sure you bored"

Me: "Sengijwayezwe uJoshua nje and namhlanje akakaz afike."

Bongeka: "Okay, I will get you the number."

Me: "Okay. Call me back" I hung up.

She called back after few minutes wanginika i-number. I called. Yakhala yaze yangena ku-voicemail. I tried again and again ngaze ngayeka. The nurse came back ngacela angibhalele i-number in a piece of paper.

Nurse: "I know its none of my business but I just saw your man outside" Ngezwa inhliziyoyami ithi cosololo.

Me: "Thank you"

Nurse: "You welcome" she walked out.

Ngahlala amehlo ejamele emnyango kwaphela ama-hour engangeni uJoshua.

Another nurse walked in just to check up on me. I asked to use her phone aswel. Wanginika. I dialed Joshua's number yakhala kancane yaphendulwa umuntu wesfazane. I didn't know whether to hang up or talk to her.

Her: "You there?"

Me: "Can I talk to Joshua?"

Her: "U-Joshua akekho sisi. Usesibhedlela nomama wengane yakhe"

I don't remember hanging up. It felt like my heart stopped for a moment.

I don't know what was more painful. Knowing that Joshua was a liar or knowing that there was no end to this dark tunnel I called my life.

I was stupid. I should have known that Joshua was too good to be true. Just like most women I was dumb enough to believe that a man could get rid of all my problems. It was time I accept that I was on my own.

The nurse walked in ngamnika ifoni yakhe ngacela angilahlele ne-number. She looked at me with questioning eyes but said nothing. I tried to sleep since I had nothing else to do. Izinyembezi zazi zehlela nje. I heard the door open kwangena uSizwe noThulani. I wasn't in the mood to deal with them.

Me: "Not now"

Thulani: "You crying?"

Me: "Leave me alone"

Sizwe: "Where is your boyfriend?"

Me: "If ningahambi I'll call the nurse niphume senikhishw amaphoyisa" I warned them.

Thulani: "Maybe we should leave"

They follow each other out ngasala ngazama ukulala.

The nurse woke me up wathi angidle and take my medication. I did that and then slept again.

The next day the doctor said I was heal fast futh ngangingakwazi ukugoduka soon. I was excited. Atleast I was going home. My friends came to visit.

Neliswa: "Kodwa kuthiwe uphuma nini kulendawo?"

Me: "Soon"

Lindiwe: "Uphi uJoshuwa bakithi?"

Me: "As you can see he is not here. Angazi nami uphi"

Bongeka: "Ubengekho ngisho emsebenzini. Ngamgcina kuthangi. Yazi ngenkath ngimbona wayengekho right at all"

Me: "Meaning?"

Bongeka: "Amehlo akhe ebomvu engathi kade ekhala. Ngath uma ngimbuza ukth whats wrong wavele wanikina ikhanda wahamba"

Neliswa: "Did you guys have a fight?"

Me: "No" I was trying not to cry.

Lindiwe: "Uke wafika kodwa lana?"

Me: "Cha"

Bongeka: "Aybo Gloria kanti kwenzekeni?"

Me: "I don't want to talk about it"

Lindiwe: "Hhayi Gloria. We are your friends and buka nje uyakhala. Did he dump you?"

Me: "No. He did nothing wrong."

Bongeka: "Pho yini?"

Me: "They say I'll never be able to have kids again"

Lindiwe: "What? Why?"

Angikwazanga ukukhala ngenxa yesibithwane. My friends were crying too. The nurse walked in and told them visiting hour was over kumele behambe. We said our goodbye in tears.

Lindiwe: "Ngizobuya later after work" she hugged me.

Bongeka: "Nami ngiyabuya"

Neliswa: "I'll come tomorrow. Uzoba right Gloria. Soba nawe" she said and than they left.

I was grateful to have them but the truth was, they couldn't give me a baby or someone to hold me and tell me its okay. Thats what love does to you. If you single and not looking for it, it comes and turn your world upside down only to leave you when you need it most. Joshua had a family, something I could never have.

Chapter 13

Ngakhishwa esbhedlela on friday afternoon. It was cold and raining. Lindiwe came to pick me up sagoduka. My friends organised a welcome home tea party. It was just us four. I didn't hear from Joshua, infact I was busy teaching my mind to ignore my heart when it was longing for him.

Neliswa: "Gloria"

Me: "Yes"

Neliswa: "Would you like another cup of tea?"

Me: "Yes please"

Lindiwe: "Have you heard from Joshua?"

Me: "Nope. And I don't blame him. Ubani ongafuna inyumba?"

Bongeka: "Ay Gloria don't insult yourself"

Me: "But its true. I'll never be a mother. And I can't blame Joshua for wanting more to life. I hate my parents, i hate my brother and I hate Thulani"

Neliswa: "Who is Thulani?" she gave me the tea.

Me: "My baby daddy."

Lindiwe: "Bakwenzani?"

I knew it was time to tell the truth so I told them the whole story. Just like Joshua and I, we were all in tears.

Lindiwe: "Abantu abanjani abenza lento enganeni yabo?"

Bongiwe: "To think I told you to go see your mother kanti ubole kanje. I'm so sorry girl"

Me: "So yeah. Next time someone ask for Thandeka Memela nazi ukuthi yimi."

Neliswa got up and ran to the bathroom to throw up wabuya emva kweskhashana.

Neliswa: "Sorry about that guys" she sat down.

Me: "Whats wrong with you?"

Neliswa: "Nothing. I'm okay"

Lindiwe: "You throwing up and you say nothing is wrong?"

Neliswa: "Yes nothing is wrong" she went again.

Me: "Maybe she is pregnant"

Bongeka: "Pho why hide it?"

Lindiwe: "Angazi nami"

Sahlala samlinda wabuya.

Me: "Have you visited to a doctor?"

Neliswa: "Cha."

Bongeka: "Umithi oe"

Neliswa: "Wazi ngani?"

Bongeka: "Awuphiki"

Neliswa: "You right. I am pregnant"

Me: "Congrats. Manje awusho ngani?"

Neliswa: "Its not easy to talk about it kanti wena usaneking enje"

Me: "Don't worry about me. I'll be fine. So how far are you?"

Neliswa: "Just few weeks. I wanted to surprise you esbhedlela nakho-ke sesifika ususitshela ukth you can't have kids"

Me: "Its okay. Its not your fault. So I don't expect you guys to always feel sorry for me. You should enjoy what God is giving you."

Neliswa: "Thank you my friend"

We talked about her pregnancy and other things until It was really late.

I woke up early the next day ngaye khishini ngafica uBongeka esevukile.

Me: "Morning"

Bongeka: "Morning. You slept well?"

Me: "Yes. Wena?"

Bongeka: "Yeah"

sathuswa i-knock wahamba uBongeka wayobheka. Ngezwa ngezwi ukth it was Joshua.

Bongeka: "Yebo, sawbona"

Joshua: "Ninjani?"

Bongeka: "Fine, wena?"

Joshua: "I'm okay. Can I see Gloria"

Bongeka: "Usekhishini"

Joshua: "Thank you"

Bongeka: "Ngizobe ngisekameleni weGloria"

Me: "Okay"

Joshua walked in.

Joshua: "Hai"

Me: "Yebo"

Joshua: "Ngizwile kuthiwa uphumile"

Me: "Yep. Izolo"

Joshua: "How are you feeling?"

Me: "Fine"

Joshua: "Can I make you some tea?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "Can we atleast go sit in the lounge?"

Me: "No. I'm making breakfast for my friends."

Joshua: "Okay" he went quiet. Nami ngaqhubeka nokunye. He kept looking at me as If khona impikiswano eyayenzeka kuye ngaphakathi but esaba ukuyisho.

Me: "So, Who is sick? The kid or the mother?"

Joshua: "The mother."

Me: "Pho ufunani lana. You should be with her."

Joshua: "I'll go later"

Me: "Its fine Joshua. You can go back to your family. They need you"

Joshua: "Its not like that Thandeka"

Me: "Its exactly like that. I don't want to keep you away from them."

Joshua: "I can explain"

Me: "You don't have too. She need you"

Joshua: "How did you know about her?"

Me: "After you didn't come I got worried and than I borrowed the phone to call you. usisi ophendulile uthe usesibhedlela nomama wengane yakho. So yeah thats how I know. Go to her Joshua"

Joshua: "You won't give me a chance to explain, are you?"

Me: "Theres nothing to explain."

Joshua: "Okay" he got up and left. I stood there and told myself that I will not cry for him. Ngethuswa ukungena kukaLindiwe.

Lindiwe: "You should have listened to what he wanted to say"

Me: "There was nothing to explain. I don't want to break thier family up"

Lindiwe: "Maybe kade bahlukana"

Me: "The fact that uvele wanyamalala nje should tell you that they are still together. Maybe abajoli but I don't want to be that woman owenza ukth bagcine bengabuyelananga."

Lindiwe: "Ngiyakuzwa girl but I still think you should have gave him a chance to explain." she walked out.

I went on with the breakfast ngaqeda ngashiya kanjalo ngayogeza.

I didn't want to think about Joshua but I couldn't stop myself. Seeing him again made me long for him even though I knew he wasn't mine anymore. After bathing ngaphuma ngayogqoka. It was still cold so I wore a dress ngasengabhinca u-blanket around my weist ngafaka namasokisi and slippers.

My friends were already eating so I went to eat aswel. Sadla saqeda uNeliswa did the dishes while Bongeka and Lindiwe offered to clean. They ordered me to sit and relax. To avoid thinking about Joshua I decided to catch up with my work

Neliswa: "You shouldn't be working"

Me: "I'm not. I'm just browsing" I lied

Neliswa: "You need to rest."

Chapter 14

After my friends left I decided to watch movies and stuff myself with food. Ngethuswa i-knock. At first I thought It was Sizwe and Thulani but when I opened the door it was a woman I've never seen before.

Me: "Sawubona"

Her: "Hai. Can I come in?"

Me: "Sure" I moved aside wangena.

Her: "This global warming business is bad. Durban was hardly ever this cold. Now its like London" she complained.

I stood there njenge slima ngilinde ukuth athule or atleast azichaze ukuthi uwubani.

Her: "Where are my manners, I'm Jo-Anne Hadebe Walcot. You must be Gloria Memela"

Me: "Yes, I am. Can I help you?"

Her: "Joshua was right. You go straight to the point."

Me: "Joshua Cebekhulu?"

Her: "Yes."

Me: "Uwumama wengane kaJoshua?"

Her: "Yes."

Me: "Would you like some tea?"

Her: "No. But theres something I'd like us talk about"

Ngahlala phansi ngalinda ukth abike udaba lwakhe.

Her: "You have a beautiful house."

Me: "Thank you"

Her: "I talked to Joshua. He say you angry at him for having a baby with me."

Me: "I'm not angry. I was just surprised thats all"

Her: "He didn't know about her. He didn't lie to you."

Me: "But now he does"

Her: "Do you love him?"

Me: "Thats not important."

Her: "If you love him than don't let him go."

Me: "I don't mean to be rude but I still don't understand why you here beside telling me that I should

talk to Joshua"

Her: "Our daughter is 12 years old."

Me: "Wow"

Her: "I'm dying Gloria."

Me: "What do you mean?"

Her: "Theres nothing they can do for me. Thats why I came back so that Julia can be with her father and her family. Joshua told me that you are his family, so that means you also Julia's family"

I didn't know what to say. What do you do when a woman you don't know drop such news to your doorstep.

Me: "You do know that God is the only one who gets to decide when and how we die not doctors"

Her: "I know but I also know that doctors also kneel to God before they begin thier jobs. My time is up Gloria and I will be okay if I know that my daughter is fine aswel"

Me: "Why didn't you tell Joshua about Julia?"

Her: "I got a bursary to study overseas Gloria. I was young and going to London was my dream so when they accepted me I was excited. I didn't tell Joshua about it because I was afraid he would try to change my mind. On my last night in SA we slept together ngavuka ngaksasa ngahamba ngangavalelisa. I left him a letter and told him to move on. I only realised I was pregnant after 2 months in the UK and I couldn't come back. So my uncle said they would help me raise the baby."

Me: "I understand"

Her: "Thank you for understanding"

Me: "So you got married to Mr Walcot?"

Her: "I met him when Julia was 5 years old."

Me: "Where is your husband?"

Her: "He died last year. Heart attack"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Her: "Its okay. Thats why I came back. She need a father and I think Joshua is ready to be a father"

Me: "Yeah. "

Her: "So you ready to hear what Joshua wants to say?"

Me: "I guess so."

Her: "Ey nami kuzomele ngihambe manje." she got up.

Me: "I believe in miracles"

Her: "So do I. And right now you my miracle. I'll see you" she walked out

I sat down and thought about what Jo-Anne told me. Did she really want me to help raise her daughter or was she being smart, trying to prove some point to Joshua. I was now more confused than ever..

Chapter 15.

After Jo-Anne left I didn't know what to do or even think. Yes ngangimthanda uJoshua but was I ready to raise a teenage?. Kwa-Julia lowo ngangingamazazi ukuth uyingane enjani. I was still sitting there thinking about this when I heard a knock. Ngahamba ngayovula kwangena uJoshua.

Joshua: "Hai"

Me: "Unjani?"

Joshua: "I'm not okay. I miss you"

Me: "I miss you too"

Joshua: "Usunjani?"

Me: "Kubuhlungu but I've seen worse"

Joshua: "And you survived. Usudlile?"

Me: "Yes. Infact besengith ngiyolala manje"

Joshua: "Can I join you?" he raised an eyebrow.

Me: "No."

Joshua: "I won't touch. I promise"

Me: "I think we need to talk."

Joshua: "About Jo-Anne and Julia. I know"

Me: "So you know that she came to see me?"

Joshua: "Yes, she told me."

Me: "I'm sorry. Bekungamele ngivele ngi-assume nje"

Joshua: "I don't blame you."

Me: "How is Julia?"

Joshua: "Ew ungabuzi mtaka Memela. I don't even know what to say to her. Uvele angibuke nje angasho lutho."

Me: "You will be just fine. They don't come with a manual."

Joshua: "I hate Jo-Anne for doing what she did. Ungiphuce ithuba lokuba umzali"

Me: "You have a chance now. Make it work"

Joshua: "You right. So miss Memela when do I get my first kiss. Kunini ngangihalela ukuzwa" he pulled me closer and kissed my lips. We kissed for a while.

Joshua: "Wow" he spoke as we stopped.

Me: "Goduka ke manje. Usukutholile obukufuna"

Joshua: "Angikakutholi. I want more"

Me: "You not getting more."

Joshua: "Can we atleast cuddle. The weather isn't helping" washo wakhipha isixubho ephaketheni.

Me: "Aw kant ubusuvele uhlelile"

Joshua: "I was hoping."

Me: "Ithawula lona uliphethe? I hope awucabangi ukuthi uzolithola lana"

Joshua: "Is that a yes?"

Me: "Kind of"

Joshua: "Thank you."

Me: "Uziphathe kahle otherwise I'll make you sleep in the garage."

Joshua: "Wangikhumbuza yazi. What will you do about your car?"

Me: "It was insured. Kumele ngiyofuna imali yami."

Joshua: "Thats great. Ifoni?"

Me: "Ngoyithenga Monday"

Joshua: "I love you Gloria."

Me: "I love you too Mr Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "Uphi uSbusiso?"

Me: "Lokhu ngamgcina ngaleya day esbhedlela."

Joshua: "I'm glad. Engathi engahambela kude impela."

Me: "Mxm. You acting like a guy."

Joshua: "I am a guy and I am your guy so kumele ngenze like a guy"

Me: "Ay okay. Lets go to bed"

Joshua: "I thought you would never ask." we got up saqoqa and than went to bed.

Joshua: "Does it hurt?"

Me: "Yes but kubuhlungu kakhulu emoyeni. Just knowing what it means is more painful."

Joshua: "I can imagine."

Me: "Can I ask you something Joshua?"

Joshua: "Shoot"

Me: "About Jo-Anne."

Joshua: "If you wondering if I still love her. The answer is no."

Me: "Uthe kimi theres nothing they could do for her but I believe in miracles. She may not die and if she doesn't do you think engakufuna back?"

Joshua: "Even if she does, i wouldn't want her back. She is my past and you my future Gloria."

Me: "But you share a bond that will break."

Joshua: "That bond is 12 years old Gloria. It doesn't have the power to bring us back together."

Me: "Ngiyakuzwa. Ukth nje I don't want to get hurt Joshua. I don't think I can survive pain again"

Joshua: "I get where you come from but I swear to you. I'll never break your heart."

Me: "Thats what Thulani said but in the end he broke more than just bones"

Joshua: "I'm not Thulani."

Me: "I know"

Joshua: "Than don't compare us."

Me: "I'm not compering you. I'm just saying."

Joshua: "Why didn't you report them to the police?"

Me: "Kwakungeke kwenze mehluko."

Joshua: "But babezoboshwa"

Me: "And than hire people to kill me. Ay"

Joshua: "Cha uzalwa zilwane."

Me: "No. Imali eyabenza izilwane."

Joshua: "Ngiyafisa ukubabona. Kakhulukazi umama wakho"

Me: "One day ngokukhombisa"

Joshua: "Awunabo omkhulu nomalume?"

Me: "Nginobaba omncane. But akungenelwana"

Joshua: "Aw why?"

Me: "Amanyala akwaMemela mtakaCebekhulu" I was sleepy.

Joshua: "Asilale manje. Sondela, usho uma uthunukala" he wrapped his hands around me.

Me: "I'm fine. Goodnight Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "Goodnight my future wife"

I didn't reply. For the first time ever inhliziyo yami yayijabule. I didn't know what the future had instore for us but I wasn't afraid to find out. With Joshua as my shield, I was the happiest woman. Hopefully Julia was going to complete us. Sibe umndeni ohleli ngokuthula nokuzwana.

Chapter 16.

A ringing phone woke me up. Ngavusa uJoshua wayiphendula. I went to pee just to give him some privacy. Ngabuya eseqedile.

Me: "Ulale kahle?"

Joshua: "Bengilele eduze komuntu engimthandayo. Ngilale kahle kakhulu. Wena?"

Me: "Ngilale kahle."

Joshua: "That was my sister Zinhle uthi uJulia usele naye. UJo-Anne usayebhedlela. Can I go fetch her?"

Me: "Ofcoz you can. I'd love to meet her"

Joshua: "I'll bring you some breakfast aswel"

Me: "Ok. Ngisayogeza ke"

Joshua: "Ngizogeza endlini yami. I'll see you just now" he walked out.

I decided to make the bed but wabuya uJoshua.

Me: "Did you forget something?"

Joshua: "Yah. This" he kissed my lips. "Thats a proper goodmorning"

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "I'll see you" he walked out ngasala ngihleka ngedwa. Ngandlula ngaqeda ngayogeza. Ngagqoka ngalungisa nendlu. I don't know why I was so nervious about meeting a 12 years old. But I knew that my relationship with Joshua was strong.

Bafika after two hours. Julia was nothing like I imagined and she looked nothing like a 12 years old. She looked like a 21 years old. Egqoke i-mini dress, a flat ankle boots, wearing tons of make up, umlomo umnyama nezinzipho.

Joshua: "Here is your breakfast"

Me: "Burgers?"

Joshua: "Julia likes them"

Me: "Okay."

Joshua: "I'll go make us some tea nibe nixoxa" he went to the kitchen. I sat down opposite Julia.

Me: "How are you?"

Julia: "Great"

Me: "How do you like SA so far?"

Julia: "I don't" washo wakhapha ifoni wachofa.

Me: "Have you decided about school?"

Julia: "No"

Me: "Kumele ufunde nje"

Julia: "Ngiyazi"

Me: "Kanti uyakwazi ukukhuluma isiZulu?"

Julia: "I am Zulu nje"

Kwakucaca ukuth akathandi ukukhuluma nam so nami ngakhetha ukuzithulela.

Joshua brought our breakfast sadla saqeda.

Joshua: "Julia is going to clean up and do the dishes"

Me: "No. I'll do it"

Joshua: "No. You shouldn't even be on your feet. Kusamele uphole. Julia qoqa" she didn't look happy at all but wazithatha egqishazela enjalo wayoziwasha.

Joshua: "I'm sure you shocked. She doesn't look 12 at all"

Me: "Yah ey. But wenziwa ithambo"

Joshua: "I doubt khona iskole esizomthatha manje. Its almost June."

Me: "Akhona ama-private schools angamthatha. Uzohlala enzeni for the whole year"

Joshua: "You right. But I doubt they will take her seriously ebukeka kanje."

Me: "Vele i-make up ayivumelekile eskoleni."

We stopped talking when she walked in.

Joshua: "Can you borrow me your laptop. Kunento okumele ngiyenze"

Me: "Yeah sure. I'll go get it" I went to the bedroom ngabuya nayo.

Joshua: "Ngidlale ngawe mtakaMemela. The documents I need to fix asemsebenzini. I'll go get them." he got up.

Julia: "Can I come too?"

Joshua: "No sweetheart. Sala lana noncane wakho" he walked out.

Sahlala kuthulekile nje kungekho okhulumayo. My house phone rang ngayoyiphendula.

Me: "Memela resident hellow"

Caller: "Hai, its Jo-Anne. Is Joshua there? Angimtholi kwi-cellphone yakhe"

Me: "Usaphumile uyabuya kodwa"

Caller: "Can you get him to call me back when he gets back"

Me: "I'll tell him"

Caller: "Thanks. Bye" she hung up nami ngabeka phansi ifoni and went back to Julia.

Julia: "They belong together"

Me: "Who?"

Julia: "My parents. My dad is using you to get to my mum" this surprised me.

Me: "Really?"

Julia: "Yes. You too stupid to think he loves you"

Me: "And you know this how?"

Julia: "I'm the prove of thier love"

Me: "Yeah, right. And you are 12 years old."

Julia: "I don't even like you"

Me: "And you don't have too, since I don't like you either. You here because I love your dad not you"

Julia: "You are so mean. No wonder you can't have kids. No kid would want to have a bitch like you for a mother." ngavele ngezwa kujuluka ikhala but I forced myself to remain calm.

Me: "And I'm not complaining. I wouldn't want to have a monster like you for a kid"

Julia: "I hate you"

Me: "Don't make me laugh. I hate you too."

Julia: "I want you to stay away from my father"

Me: "To bad I cannot"

Julia: "Mxm golddigger"

Me: "Ukuba uyazi ngabe awukhulumi"

I couldn't wait for Joshua to come back. My relationship with Julia wasn't going to be what I thought it would be. She was rude and I didn't help it at all, but I wasn't going to allow her to insult me in my own house. As much as I wanted her to like me but I wasn't going to beg for her love. I didn't blame her for hoping that her parents get back together. Most kids in these kinds of situations hope for such to happen. Its not wrong but however its wrong if they attack the other person like she was doing. It wasn't my fault that her mother ran off to the UK and never looked back. Ngoba kwakona ukubuya kwakhe

ingoba she was dying esezama ukwakha into ayona kwasekuqaleni. Inhliziyo yam yayimzwela uJulia ngoba she wasn't facing her reality. But then again the truth was, Julia was only 12 years old. She was a kid who needed guidance and I was going to give it to her as soon as she stop insulting me and hating me for loving her father. Ngoba yena uJoshua kwakowami and I was planning on keeping him.

Chapter 17.

Joshua came back later esehamba noJo-Anne bathi they are going out for lunch. And they didn't ask me to come with them so I didn't tag along. I decided to call my friends over and give them an update.

Bongeka: "Yazi ubeyoyifika phandle shwele"

Lindiwe: "Mina bengizoyiklinya shame"

Me: "Tjo and risk losing Joshua? I don't think so. Julia needs guidance. I'm not saying Jo-Anne is a bad mother but Its wrong for her to allow a 12 year old wear make up. Even I don't wear it."

Neliswa: "Pho uzokwenzenjani?"

Me: "Nothing dear. Mina ngithanda uJoshua. Angeke ngincenge ukuthandwa ingane eluhlaza cwe"

Neliswa: "Kodwa uqaphele oe. Ukhumbule ukth uJoshua will try to impress her aswel and for that he may be a bit blinded when it comes to her."

Me: "Uqinisile oe"

We talked some more baze bahamba nami ngaziphekela.

Ngasengiphekile ngageza when I had a knock ngahamba ngayovula kwangena uJo-Anne elandelwa uJoshua noJulia owayekhala.

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Julia said you insulted her. Called her a slut" everything in my body went cold.

Me: "Aw. Why would I call her a slut?"

Jo-Anne: "Thats what I'm trying to find out. Why would you call my daughter a whore? Telling her that you hate her and that she is a monster." ngavele ngangazi ukth ngithini.

Me: "I never called her that"

Joshua: "She recorded you Gloria."

Me: "Did she also record what she said to me?"

Jo-Anne: "It doesn't matter what she said. You are an adult Gloria. You shouldn't be exchanging such hate speech with a kid."

Me: "No. She shouldn't be talking to elders like that. I'll not be insulted by a kid, worse in my own home. Kwasawena uyangidina." I kept hoping that Joshua would come at my defence but wayethule umtakaCebekhulu ethulisa ingane yakhe.

Jo-Anne: "You will not treat my daughter like that."

Me: "So you saying it's fine if ethuka mina?"

Jo-Anne: "She is a kid"

Me: "And she should be behaving like a kid. Hhayi ukuthukana nabantu abadala."

Jo-Anne: "You are supposed to guide her."

Me: "No. You were supposed to guide her. Not to allow her to wear make up. Where I'm standing, it seems like she lacks the basics"

Jo-Anne: "Are you saying I'm a bad mother?"

Me: "You said it, not me"

Jo-Anne: "How dare you? Do you know how hard it is to be a single mother?"

Me: "That was your choice Jo-Anne. It's not like Joshua dumped you. You ran off to the UK."

Jo-Anne: "I can't believe I felt sorry for you because you will never be a mother, because you deserve it." ababuhlungu amazwi kaJo-Anne, i expected Joshua to come to my defence but he didn't. Wavale wathula nje wabukela umama wengane yakhe engiqhoshela ngokuzala.

Me: "Thank you. Now I want all of you out of my house."

Jo-Anne: "Let's go." they all got up and left ngisho uJoshua. I locked the door behind them and went straight to bed. But kwangalaleka. I was angry at Joshua for telling them that I cannot have kids. If Jo-Anne thinks I was going to allow her daughter to insult me like that then she didn't know me at all. Angithukwa mina ingane. Ngathukwa ngenela ekhaya ngithukwa abazali bami. Ngethuka sengizwa i-knock kanti besengilele. I went to open, it was Joshua.

Me: "Would you like something to drink?"

Joshua: "No thanks. I'm not staying. Can we talk"

Me: "Yah sure." I went to sit down.

Joshua: "It's about Julia. I didn't like what you said to her Gloria. You are an adult, you should know better"

Me: "So its fine if she insult me? I should give her a reward for it?"

Joshua: "I didn't say that. What I mean is you shouldn't have insulted her."

Me: "Why did you tell them I can't have kids?"

Joshua: "I only told Jo-Anne because she was asking ukth uphethwe yini njengoba ubungekho right."

Me: "Than she told her daughter. Now they are busy throwing it to my face."

Joshua: "Bebengakuthuki kodwa. Its a fact."

Me: "So you think I deserve what happened to me?"

Joshua: "I didn't say that. What I mean is Julia is your only chance to experience motherhood."

Me: "Wow Joshua. Thank you for telling me ukthi kumele ngamukele ukuthukwa ingane yakho ngob nakhu ngincenge ukub umzali. I want you out of my house Joshua." I got up and went to open the door.

Joshua: "I didn't mean it like that"

Me: "Out Joshua." he got up and left, ngakhiya ngabuyela embhedeni. I was heart broken. UJoshua wayewubaba for few days but already he was taking her side. Reminding me that I cannot be a mother. I didn't need that kind of negativity in my life. Ngalala inhliziyu yami iqaqamba injalo.

The next day I woke up early ngegeza ngagqoka. I was too nervious to eat breakfast. Lindiwe came to pick me up sayobheka imoto.

Lindiwe: "So ufuna yiph?"

Me: "An audi"

Lindiwe: "Okay. I know just a place. Awuyifuni BMW?"

Me: "No."

Lindiwe: "So Audi it is. Are you okay?"

Me: "Yes I'm fine. Ubuziswa yini?"

Lindiwe: "Ngathi uke wakhala. Amehlo akho"

I told her what happened.

Lindiwe: "Hawu kanti uJoshua unjani nje."

Me: "I guess its true what they say. Theres no such thing as a good man"

Lindiwe: "Manje uthini nge-relationship yenu?"

Me: "I think we are over."

Chapter 18.

3 Weeks later.

I was back to work. Doing what I always did to escape my reality. UJoshua wayengezi ngisho ukuza e-office and I tried not to care.

Sbu: "I just saw your car. Nice"

Me: "Thank you"

Sbu: "Can I take it for a spin?"

Me: "I don't think so."

Sbu: "What happened Gloria?"

Me: "I went to the garage."

Sbu: "You know I don't mean that. I mean you and Joshua"

Me: "Yazi I have a meeting to get to." I got up and started collecting my things.

Sbu: "Let me take you out"

Me: "Out where?"

Sbu: "Elokshini. Soya eMlazi. Will have fun."

Me: "Yeah right. So you can drug me again? I don't think so"

Sbu: "No drinking I promise"

Me: "Thanks for offer but I'd rather stay home."

Sbu: "Ay okay. I'll see you tomorrow" he walked out nami ngalandela. I drove straight home ngafica kukhona uThulani engilindile. For the change I decided to hear him out.

Me: "Would you like something to drink?"

Thulani: "Coffee would be nice"

Me: "I don't have it. I have water, juice and green tea"

Thulani: "Juice then"

Me: "Okay. So what brings you here?"

Thulani: "Karma I guess"

Me: "What?" I brought the juice ngahlala opposite him.

Thulani: "What goes around, comes back around."

Me: "I know what karma means, but mina ngingenaphi?"

Thulani: "Its what I did to you. Akulungi lutho empilweni yami"

Me: "You look okay to me"

Thulani: "If only you could see inside me."

Me: "Manje mina ngizokusiza ngani?"

Thulani: "Forgiveness."

Me: "Aw."

Thulani: "Impela Thandeka."

Me: "I don't think I can."

Thulani: "Please" he begged

Me: "You don't understand umonakalo enawenza. You could have kicked me out instead of trying to kill me. Its not easy to forget all those nights when you forced yourself on me. The pain I went through day after day ngenxa yakho" I was crying.

Thulani: "I understand that its not easy but please Thandeka."

Me: "Why did you do it?"

Thulani: "I was young. Ubaba wath uzongiphuca ifa uma ungayikhiph ingane."

Me: "Do you still have the money?"

Thulani: "Nope"

Me: "Usuyahlupheka?"

Thulani: "Ungabeka kanjalo."

Me: "Why can't your dad help you?"

Thulani: "I want to be my own man."

Me: "Manje mina ngizokusiza kanjani?"

Thulani: "Kumele siyiqambe igama ngendlela okuyiyo"

Me: "Ngiyakuzwa."

Thulani: "But kumele ungixolele kuqala otherwise It will be a waste of time and money"

Me: "Ay Thulani Angazi noma ngizokwazi yini. I need time."

Thulani: "Okay. I guess when you ready you can call me." he wrote his number down qede wasukuma.

Thulani: "Thank you Thandeka"

Me: "What for?"

Thulani: "For hearing what I had to say."

Me: "You welcome"

Thulani: "I guess I'll see you. Bye" he walked out wangena emotweni yakhe wahamba. Ngayibuka ihamba ngacabanga amazwi athi "karma is a nasty bitch" noThulani never thought this day would come.

Chapter 19.

After Thulani left I decided to take a shower and then go out for dinner. I didn't know where I was going so I ended up at Spur. Ngadla and than drove back home. As much as I enjoyed my independency but I was lonely. Infact I had only two things to keep me from going crazy and that was my work and my crazy friends.

Ngafika ekhaya ngalala embhedeni and thought about everything that had happened in my life. Falling pregnant at 18, my parents suggesting abortion, Thulani becoming a monster, his father doing what he did, Mrs Russell finding me and sending me to school. I never dealt with any of it. Konke ngangivele ngikuphose emgodini omude emqondweni wami. Ngeshwa lomgodi wawusugcwala and ukugcwala kwawo kwakuzochithela kuyo yonke indawo. I was like a dying rose.

I don't remember falling asleep but ngathuswa i-phone. It was a text messege from Lindiwe saying we going to the beach kusasa. I texted her back ngathi okay and goodnight qede ngavuka ngakhumula ngagqoka i-nightdress. My hand touched the scar on my tummy. I was never going to lose my figure and bring a new person in this world. I didn't blame Joshua for changing his mind about me, after all Jo-Anne gave him what I was never going to be able to give him. Tears filled my eyes but I blinked them away ngafaka ama earphones ngalalela umculo ngazengazumeka.

Ngaphaphama ngaksasa seksile. I got up and went to shower ngagqoka i-bikini nesikibha ne short ngaphezulu ngathatha isgqoko. Bongeka was coming to pick me up since sasizohamba ngemoto yakhe. I

made myself a bowl of cereal ngisabalindile. Bafika after an hour.

Bongeka: "Ready to go?"

Me: "I was born ready"

Lindiwe: "Ugqokeleni pho?"

Me: "Aybo I feel naked already."

Neliswa: "Just get your bag sambe"

I went to take my phone nemali and left.

Me: "I hope niyiphethe i-sunscreen"

Neliswa: "Relax ikhona."

We drove to Ballito.

Me: "Do we really have to travel this far?"

Bongeka: "Stop complaining"

Neliswa: "We are going to have fun oe."

Me: "And thats great but besingaya ngisho eShaka Marine"

Lindiwe: "Who are you? And what have you done with Gloria."

Me: "What do you mean?"

Neliswa: "Wena wonke usunqena ukuya e-Ballito?"

Me: "Sengikhulile aw"

Bongeka: "Or you afraid to bump to Joshua"

Me: "In Ballito?"

Bongeka: "Why not Ballito? He could be there"

Me: "Than I'm going home."

Lindiwe: "Vele vele kwaphela kanjalo?"

Me: "Yep"

Neliswa: "Ngase nginethemba yazi."

Me: "Khathi uyogcina ukuthemba."

Lindiwe: "Don't tell me ukth wawungathembi ukth yilo ubambo."

Me: "Nope. I always leave a space for disappointment" I lied. Ngangiphoxekile impela.

Lindiwe: "It his loss. You amazing Gloria and any guy would lucky to have you"

Me: "Thank you my friend"

Neliswa: "I agree with Lindiwe. Ew kodwa uJoshua was fine"

Me: "No Sbu is fine nje"

Bongeka: "He is a player kodwa"

Me: "So what?"

Lindiwe: "Ay ay usufuna ukubhaqwa nezingane? Phela uSbu u-busy nezingane."

Me: "How do you know?"

Lindiwe: "I saw him eBerea Centre few days ago nengane ekuhlaza cwe."

Bongeka: "I'm sure awufuni ukuzohlaselwa abantwana beskole bezothi 'hlukana nendoda yami'"

Me: "And I can beat the crap out of her shame"

Lindiwe: "Bese uyaboshwa."

Bongeka: "Yabona-ke ukth uSbu is bad news."

Neliswa: "Uzomthola owakho"

I didn't know whether I should believe Neliswa or not since I was starting to wonder if ngangizomthola ngempela. Maybe I'll never get married at all. I was convinced that Joshua was mine kanti ngiyazikhohlisa.

We got to Ballito and went to sit in the sand saxoxa sahleka. It was fun for a moment I forgot about Joshua, his family, my family and Thulani.

Chapter 20.

We were having so much, laughing out loud, taking lots of pictures.

Neliswa: "Oh My God. Ningabuki but kunensizwa eza lana. Gosh he is so fine"

Me: "And you pregnant"

Neliswa: "Eye candy aw"

Lindiwe: "Akasafiki yini kanti? Tjo kunini ngilindile"

Bongeka: "Sesoze simbheke aw"

Neliswa: "Sh. He is here already" she whispered.

Guy: "Hellow ladies"

Us: "Hai" we said it at the same time as if we were singing.

Guy: "Igama nguSihle Ndlovu. Ngingajabula ukunazi. Starting with you" he pointed Bongeka.

Me: "Thats Bongeka, next to her is Neliswa, eduze kwakho uLindiwe mina nguGloria."

Sihle: "Ngiyajabula ukunazi bosisi. My friends and I we were wondering if we can join you?"

Lindiwe: "Are they fine like you?" we all laughed.

Sihle: "More than me."

Lindiwe: "Than we would love to."

Sihle: "I'll go get them." he walked away.

Me: "Sfebe esimuncu"

Lindiwe: "Call me names but I am going to get laid tonight"

Neliswa: "Uma ungakhohlwanga i-condom."

Bongeka: "Or u-plastic omnyama. Abadlali be-rugby laba" we all looked at them and yes they looked like rugby players. It was four guys. Two blacks, the other one coloured and the other white.

Sihle: "This is Mark, Musa and Anthony"

Bongeka: "Its lovely to meet you."

Lindiwe: "You play rugby."

Mark: "What gave it away?"

Neliswa: "The body" I couldn't stop myself from laughing. Ngangicabanga u-plastic omnyama.

Lindiwe: "Uhlekani oe?"

Me: "U-plastic omnyama oe"

Bongeka: "You so nasty."

Lindiwe: "Wena ubusho u-plastic wani? As if awazi ukth the bigger you are, the smaller it is" we laughed harder.

Anthony: "Share the joke please"

Me: "I'm sorry its a woman thing"

Anthony: "Okay. So what do you do for a living?"

Me: "I'm an auditor, Bongeka is a lawyer, Lindiwe is owns her own company and Neliswa is a lecturer"

Musa: "Tjo nonke nibhukuda emalini."

Bongeka: "Hard work."

Sihle: "Manje amasoka enu ayaniyeka nje nihambe nondwa kanje?"

Lindiwe: "Asnawo"

Neliswa: "Speak for yourself. I'm taken"

Bongeka: "Me too."

Anthony: "So you not taken?" he looked at me.

Me: "Well I-"

Neliswa: "She is single"

Anthony: "Wow."

I gave Neliswa a look but said nothing.

Musa: "So what are you guys drinking?"

Bongeka: "Juice. Would you like some?"

Musa: "Yes thank you" Bongeka handed them the juice kwasala mina no-Anthony.

Bongeka: "Kuphele yona."

Anthony: "Meaning?"

Me: "Its finished."

Anthony: "Theres some left in the car. We can go get it" he looked at me nami ngabheka abanye.

Mark: "He won't harm you."

Me: "I didn't say he would. But I don't trust strangers."

Anthony: "And I like you for that. Its not safe out there"

Musa: "Aw sisi umfwethu ufuna ukushela. Unamahloni okudalwa"

Me: "Angishelisi"

Anthony: "Can you guys switch to english. Please Gloria. Lets go" he held my hand sahamba.

Anthony: "You pretty. How come you single?"

Me: "Its a choice"

Anthony: "Can you change your choice? Be taken by me"

Me: "I don't even know you. You look fine too, are you sure you not taken?"

Anthony: "I'm sure."

Me: "Why not?"

Anthony: "I only met you few minutes ago. Who was going to take me?"

Me: "I'm serious"

Anthony: "So am I. Want me to show you?"

Me: "How?"

He didn't answer. Instead he grabbed me and kissed my lips. His lips were warm and soft. They didn't taste like Joshua. I don't even know why I was thinking about Joshua while I was being kissed by this handsome stranger.

He stopped after a while sabukana nje.

Anthony: "I think I'm inlove with you"

Me: "Please don't"

Anthony: "Why not?"

Me: "I don't think I deserve to be loved"

Anthony: "Don't be silly. Everyone deserve to be loved."

Me: "You don't understand."

Anthony: "Than make me understand. I love you"

Me: "Can we go back to my friends?"

Anthony: "Can I have your number atleast" he gave me his phone. I saved my number.

Me: "Can we go now?"

Anthony: "Okay."

We walked back sesithule singakhulumisani. Saze safika kubo.

Bongeka: "Where are the drinks?"

Me: "Can we go home now?"

Lindiwe: "Dude what did you do to my friend?"

Anthony: "Nothing, I swear"

Musa: "Why are you holding hands."

Ngabheka and yes we were holding hands. Sadedela at the same time.

Anthony: "We didn't notice."

Me: "Can I have the car keys? I'll wait for you there."

Neliswa: "I'm coming with you" she got up wathatha ukhiye sahamba.

Neliswa: "What happened?"

Me: "Nothing"

Neliswa: "I know you Gloria. Did he try something?"

Me: "He kissed me"

Neliswa: "Wow. Manje uphethw kabi ilokho?"

Me: "And I was thinking about Joshua during that kiss."

Neliswa: "Tjo. So you still love him?"

Me: "It doesn't metter. Joshua doesn't love me."

Neliswa: "Do you want me to talk to him? Maybe knock some sense into his head."

Me: "Thanks for the offer but its fine. I just need to teach my heart to forget him"

Neliswa: "Ey girl usenkingeni shame."

Me: "I hate loving someone."

Neliswa: "I understand. So u-Anthony yena?"

Me: "Ey angazi oe. Hardly know him"

Neliswa: "Yet you were holding hands like that."

Me: "Benginganakile yazi" and I wasn't lying. Deep down I was longing for Joshua though.

Chapter 21.

By the time I got home ngangikhathele ngiyimvithi. I went straight to the shower ngageza ngaqeda ngayogcoba then I heard a loud knock. Who ever was knocking was pissed. I wrapped a towel around my body and went to check. It was Joshua and yes he looked angry.

Joshua: "Awuvule Gloria. Ngiyakubona"

I opened the door wangena.

Joshua: "What were you thinking?"

Me: "About what?"

Joshua: "Usuqabula amakhaladi manje? Uyahlany Thandeka?"

Me: "Ay Joshua, who do you think you are? Telling me who I should kiss and who I shouldn't." He was pacing up and down. Looking gorgeous.

Joshua: "Niyajola vele?"

Me: "Its non of your business. You left me Joshua"

He stopped pacing weza kimi. I had my back against the wall. Wabeka izandla emaceleni wangibuka. I kissed him first and then stopped because he didn't kiss me back.

Joshua: "Ngidinwe kakhulu ukth ngingacabanga lokho right now." he didn't move at all.

Me: "Well sorry ukukuphaphela"

Joshua: "Ay Gloria don't go around kissing any frog. Phambi kwami nokwenza"

Me: "I didn't see you"

Joshua: "I was there."

Me: "So what should I do?"

Joshua: "Hambo gqoka."

Me: "I mean between us. Angisazi manje. If I try to move on uyangilwisa kodwa awungifuni futhi."

Joshua: "I never said angikufuni Gloria."

Me: "So ukungiziba kwakho is part of the relationship?"

Joshua: "Cha. Ukth benginamahloni okuza kuwe after lento engayenza."

Me: "Asephelile manje amahloni?"

Joshua: "I saw you kissing another man Gloria. Do you know how painful that is?"

Me: "Just like it was painful for me ngenkathi uyekela umndeni wakho ungithuka."

Joshua: "I'm sorry."

Me: "That's not enough. Ngicela usuke ngiyogqoka" he didn't move instead waqaqa ithawula engangilibhincile lawela phansi. His hand touched my nipple ngezwa amadolo eba-weak.

Me: "Joshua please" My head was saying No while my heart was saying yes. His hand stopped playing with my nipple and went straight to my womanhood. I wrapped my arms around his neck to stop myself from falling.

I imagined how this would if someone walked in. I was naked while Joshua was fully dressed.

His finger touched my g-spot ngezwa umzimba wam uqhaqhazela wonke.

Joshua: "I think I found your g-spot." he whispered. I didn't have the strength to respond.

Joshua: "Come for me." he begged.

I think my heart stopped for a moment, i held him tight before letting out a long moan. He removed his hand.

Joshua: "Can you stand on your own?" I nodded. He picked up the towel wanginika.

Joshua: "Go get dressed. Angifuni ungenwe umkhuhlane" he kissed my cheek qede wathatha okhiye bakhe waphuma wahamba. I stood there for a while umqondo usacabanga okade kwenzeka. Few minutes later I went to shower again. I wanted to call one of my friends and share but then again I stopped myself. It sounded stupid anyway. What was I going to say, 'Joshua came and gave me a mind blowing orgasm with his hand.' it sounded stupid and I sounded like a cheap whore. Joshua wasn't treating me right and nami ngangimvumela. He disappeared for weeks and la abuya khona ubuya esezozenzela nje kimi, nami ngobulima ngiyamvumela. But it felt so good shame.

Ngathuswa ukukhala kwefoni. I checked the caller ID and It was Joshua.

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Ngithi usulele yazi."

Me: "I'm about to"

Joshua: "Can I take you out for breakfast tomorrow?"

Me: "I don't think thats a good idea"

Joshua: "Why not?"

Me: "I don't even know whats going on between us. You here today, gone tomorrow"

Joshua: "I love you Thandeka. It should be clear by now."

Me: "Its not."

Joshua: "Then let me make it clear tomorrow morning"

Me: "Ey angazi Joshua"

Joshua: "Do you have plans with your coloured guy?"

Me: "No and he is not my coloured guy."

Joshua: "Kusale kancane ngimfake iqupha yazi."

Me: "Uzoboshwa"

Joshua: "Anginendaba. So are we on tomorrow?"

Me: "You not giving up?"

Joshua: "I never give up Gloria."

Me: "Why did you do that. Make me lose my self qede uhambe?"

Joshua: "I was afraid I was going to hurt you."

Me: "Hurt me how?"

Joshua: "Umthungo wakho. I don't think usuphole ngokwanele ukth usungenza ucansi. If I stayed besizolala so thats why I left."

Me: "Okay. Ngiyakuzwa."

Joshua: "I love you and please stop kissing other men. You've already got your prince"

Me: "And thats you?"

Joshua: "Akubuzwa. Ey ungibiza kamnandi yazi. Next time I'll make you speak french and beg me to go

faster and faster"

Me: "Theres no such thing"

Joshua: "Ngoku khombisa. Lala manje uphumule. I need you fresh tomorrow"

Me: "Goodnight Joshua"

Joshua: "Goodnight Thandeka" he hung up.

Ngabeka ifoni laphaya ngagcoba ngagqoka ezokulala. I thought about Anthony. Yes he was handsome but Joshua had my heart. I needed to focus on him otherwise ngangizolahlekelwa okukhona ngento engekho. I was smiling thinking about Joshua when my mind reminded me Julia and Jo-Anne. Kwaphela nya ukujabula.

Chapter 22.

I woke up early the next day. Nga-cleaner indlu ngenza ne-washing. My house keeper was coming back the following week. I was about to take a shower when I heard a knock. I thought It was Joshua ngayovula kwangena uNeliswa.

Me: "Early kanje."

Neliswa: "Indoda ayikho nje so I brought you breakfast."

Me: "Pho iphi?"

Neliswa: "I meant we going out. Get dressed"

Me: "I think I love this pregnancy" I went to shower quickly ngayogqoka. Ngezwa kukhona okhuluma noNeliswa. I went to check ngafica uJoshua.

Me: "Morning"

Joshua: "Morning to you to. UNeliswa uthi we going out for breakfast."

Me: "We?"

Neliswa: "Sobathathu"

Joshua: "Asambeni"

Me: "I'm not done yet." I went to finish up. I was wearing jeans, amateku e-All Star neskibha esimnyama. Ngabopha ikhanda.

Joshua: "Wow you look great"

Me: "Thank you"

Neliswa: "Asambeni phela."

Joshua: "I'm driving"

Me: "Okay"

Saphuma sahamba. Joshua drove us to Wimpy.

Neliswa: "Angisalambile kanje"

Joshua: "It must be the pregnancy"

Neliswa: "Wazi ngani?"

Joshua: "Uyabonakala. Amehlo akho ayasho"

I was staring at Joshua as he spoke. He was handsome. Ama-dreads akhe a-neat, ubuso bakhe busulekile. Amehlo akhe amhlophe. The way his lips moved as he spoke and the way his tounge kept popping out in each corner of his mouth.

Neliswa: "Join us" she snapped her fingers.

Me: "Ngiyacabanga yazi"

Joshua: "And lento oyicabangayo ikimi?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Pho ungibukani?"

Me: "Awungiyeka." I ate my food.

He stopped eating wabuka emva kwami nami ngaphenduka ngabuka kwangena uJulia nabafana abathathu.

Joshua: "Excuse me" he got up and went to them before they sat down.

Neliswa: "Obani laba?"

Me: "Julia"

Neliswa: "Unamanga Gloria. You said she is 12."

Me: "She is"

Neliswa: "Thats not 12."

It was clear that Julia and Joshua were arguing. I-body language yaJoshua was scary even for me but Julia

looked so calm as ever.

Me: "Maybe we should go"

Neliswa: "Good Idea. I'll pay" she paid sasukuma ngaya kuJoshua.

Me: "Maybe you guys should talk outside" everybody was staring.

Julia: "Bitch mind your own business."

Joshua: "Thats it. Asambe" washo wamdonsa ngengalo nami ngalandela. Neliswa was already waiting outside. Safika emotweni sangena.

Neliswa: "Hai. You must be Julia" washo walula isandla. Julia said nothing.

Joshua: "Aunt Neliswa is talking to you"

Julia: "She is not my aunt"

Joshua: "Aybo Julia." he turned to Neliswa "I'm sorry"

Neliswa: "Its okay."

We drove in silent saze safika.

Joshua got out wadonsa uJulia.

Joshua: "Can I have your keys Gloria" ngamnika bangena ngaphakathi.

Neliswa: "Aycha iluhlaza nayi ingane shame"

Me: "I know."

Neliswa: "Awuth ngihambe engaz ngiyifake isbhakela ngiboshwe" she got into her car.

Me: "Thanks for breakfast"

Neliswa: "You welcome. I'll call you later oe." she drove away nami ngabuyela endlini. Ngangena uJulia ehleli phansi ekhala uJoshua emile ephethe ibhande.

Joshua: "Is there something you want to say to Aunt Gloria?"

Julia: "I'm sorry for being rude to you"

Me: "Its okay." I went to help her up.

Joshua: "Ngikhathele ukuphathwa ingane. Kunini ngikukhuza ngokwedelela. Ungibukanisa nabantu."

Julia: "I'm sorry daddy"

Joshua: "Uke uphinde nje ukhulume ngalendlela ophendula ngayo ngokulimaza"

Me: "Uyaxolisa Joshua. Mxolele"

Joshua: "Waphinda nje ngokulimaza. Go wash your face. I want all this make up gone. You are a child Julia and you will look like a child."

Me: "The bathroom is the 3rd door on your left."

Julia: "Thank you" she walked away.

Me: "Ngebhande Joshua?"

Joshua: "Imvubu anginayo nje"

Me: "Angidlali. Ubungamphuca ifoni, ground her or something"

Joshua: "Thats why enje. Akashayiwe. Angeke mina ngidelelwe ingane Gloria. Yena uzoqonda."

Me: "What if ulimele?"

Joshua: "Ibhande alilimazi Gloria. Liyaqondisa."

Me: "I'll go check on her"

Joshua: "Don't. Uzoba right."

I sat down ngalinda ukth abuye. 15 minutes later she walked in.

Joshua: "Usu-right manje. Buka nje umuhle kanjani."

She sat down wangasho lutho.

Joshua: "I love you Julia. You are my daughter. I love Gloria too and I want her in my life. I don't want to choose between the two of you and thats why I want you both to get along. I need you to treat her with respect and you will see just how special she really is. I know she likes you so you need to like her too."

Julia nodded but said nothing.

As much as I appreciated hearing Joshua speak openly about his feelings kwakungiphatha kabi ukuth umshayele kwami uJulia. Komunye umuntu kwakungab sengathi nami ngangijabula ekushayweni kwakhe, kanti cha. I wasn't that happy. I was glad he took charge like a father should but there was no need to involve me. I didn't think it was going to make me and Julia get along instead she was going to resent me even more because in her eyes, I was the reason why her dad decided to beat the stage out of her.

A ringing phone brought me back to reality. It was mine and I didn't recognise the number.

Me: "Hellow"

Caller: "Hellow Beautiful. Its Anthony"

I looked at Joshua ngathola engibuka ngeso elibi.

Chapter 23.

Me: "Oh hai"

Anthony: "You sound busy or you not excited to get my call?"

Me: "Sorry, I'm a bit busy"

Anthony: "Give me a buzz when you free"

Me: "Will do. Bye" I hung up. Joshua got up walula ibhande lakhe before alibuyisele back in his pants.

Me: "Would you like something to drink?"

Joshua: "No. Who was that?"

Me: "A friend"

Joshua: "Umngani?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Why do you look so guilty pho?"

Me: "I'm not."

Joshua: "Letha la ngibone ifoni yakho."

I didn't hesitate ngamnika.

Joshua: "Aw ngiyadlala" he gave it back to me. "Do you have plans for today?"

Me: "Yep. Ngiyosusa lento esekhanda."

Julia was asleep encela nesthupha. She looked so young, so innocent shame.

Joshua: "Can I come too?"

Me: "Uzoba nesizungu"

Joshua: "Okay. Anyway ngisahambisa uJulia ekhaya. I'll call you later" he picked her up baphuma ngavala iscabha behind them. Ngalinda imoto yahamba before calling Anthony back.

Anthony: "Hellow gorgeous"

Me: "Hai, I'm sorry about earlier."

Anthony: "Its cool. Can I take you out for lunch?"

Me: "I'd love too."

Anthony: "So where do you live?"

Me: "I'll meet you there."

Anthony: "Hillcrest. At Gregory's."

Me: "Okay. I'll see you there." I hung up and went to change. Ngagqoka ingubo emnyama engibambayo emfishane, showing curves in the right places, stilettos, pearls around my neck and diamond earrings. Ngaphazamiswa i-knock ngahamba ngayobheka praying it wasn't Joshua. It was Thulani and Sizwe.

Thulani: "Wow" he said the moment I opened the door.

Sizwe: "Engathi uyahamba nje"

Me: "I'm going out for lunch"

Thulani: "Dressed like that?"

Me: "Yes. So you guys can't stay."

Sizwe: "Uzobuya nini?" I looked at him. Sasesadlula kudala lesiskhathi ngisabika kuye izinto zami.

Me: "Nibuye next week or so."

Sizwe: "Kodwa Thandeka" he complained.

Me: "Next month?"

Sizwe: "Aw kahle boh."

Me: "Lets make it next year than."

Sizwe: "Will come back next week."

Me: "Great. Bye bye" I closed the door and went back to the mirror to check if I was looking good. I was satisfied. Ngathatha i-bag yami and the keys ngaphuma ngahamba.

Ngafika esekhona u-Anthony waiting for me in the parking lot. Looking drop dead gorgeous. He was wearing black formal pants, a white shirt, formal black shoes.

Anthony: "Wow" he said as I got out of the car.

Me: "Hai"

Anthony: "How are you?"

Me: "Great and you?"

Anthony: "Good. You look amazing."

Me: "Thank you"

Anthony: "Shall we?"

Me: "Yes"

We went inside. Got our table in the quiet corner.

Anthony: "What would you like to drink? Wine?"

Me: "No. Just juice. Orange juice" the waiter wrote it down.

Anthony: "For me too" the waiter nodded and left. I wasn't hungry and the reason I agreed was to get a chance to tell him to forget me.

The waiter brought our juice.

Waiter: "Ready to order?"

Anthony: "A fully cooked steak and vegetables but please make sure theres no potato" the waiter wrote down qede wabuka mina.

Me: "I'll have a green salad"

Waiter: "Okay" he walked away.

Anthony: "You beautiful"

Me: "Thank you"

Anthony: "You keep staring at the door as if you waiting for someone to walk in."

Me: "Sorry"

Anthony: "Its fine. So tell me Gloria. What do you do for fun?"

Me: "Chill with my friends. You?"

Anthony: "Play rugby with my guys."

Me: "When did you start playing rugby?"

Anthony: "I grew up playing it and its the only sport that I enjoy playing. But I've decided to retire now. My knee is messed up."

Me: "I'm sorry to hear that"

Anthony: "Its fine. I had a back up plan."

Me: "Thats smart. "

Anthony: "I knew that the sport career can end at anytime."

Me: "How come you single?"

Anthony: "After my nasty divorce, lets just say. I decided to stay on my own."

Me: "Aw I'm sorry"

Anthony: "Don't stress. So tell me about Gloria. What she likes and dislike"

Me: "Theres nothing to tell. I'm boring"

Anthony: "I'll decide that."

Me: "Rather you ask a question and I answer."

Anthony: "Okay. Are you seriously single?"

Me: "No. Actually I'm seeing some. Thats why I came so I can explain to you face to face"

The waiter brought our food sadla.

Anthony: "Wow. Your man is one lucky dude"

Me: "You think so?"

Anthony: "Yes. I hope he treats you well."

I was yet to answer when Joshua walked in ngavele ngagodola emini. I thought about hiding under the table but It was a dumb idea futh ukucasha kwami would mean something so I stayed praying for him not to see me.

Anthony: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes I'm okay" I whispered.

Anthony: "Why you suddenly white as a sheet?"

Me: "Its nothing"

Anthony: "And the whispering?"

I looked at Joshua again ngathola engibuka nqo. Eseze wafaka izandla emaphaketheni.

Chapter 24.

The waiter gave Joshua a parcel qede waphuma wahamba. I couldn't let him walk away without an explanation.

Me: "I'm really sorry but I have to go" I didn't wait for him to answer ngavele ngathatha iskhwama ngaphuma ngalandela uJoshua. Ngamfica sangena emotweni.

Me: "Its not what you think" thats all I managed to say.

Joshua: "Okay" washo wadumisa imoto. I went to stand infront of the car.

Me: "Let me explain. Please"

Joshua: "Get in."

Me: "What about my car?"

Joshua: "Sobuya sizoyilanda." nganginakho ukungabaza kodwa ngangena, sengithandaza ngenhliziyo.

He didn't say anything after that yahamba imoto. I was thinking about a lot of things, like the fact that I didn't know where Joshua lived yet he knew my home in and out. I was careless.

Me: "Where are we going?" I tried to sound calm

Joshua: "Ekhaya."

Me: "I'm sorry Joshua" he didn't say anything.

Me: "Why were you there?"

Joshua: "Where?"

Me: "At the restaurant. Are you following me?"

Joshua: "No. Gregory is a friend of mine. We go way back so I always eat there. Ukuba bengazi bengineke ngiye namhlanje"

Me: "I'm sorry Cebekhulu"

He went quet saze sayofika eMount Edgecombe. I was shocked to see Joshua's place.

Me: "You live here?"

Joshua: "Yes. Woza" he opened the door waphuma nami ngaphuma. Sayongena endlini. It was huge and beautiful. Ngake ngama nje ngasemnyango afraid to go in.

Joshua: "Ngena uhlale phansi" he went upstairs. I went to sit down ngabuka ubuhle bendlu. Ngangazi ukuthi uyasebenza enkampanini yabameli but I didn't expect him to be swimming in money like that. You would think you rich because your annual salary is almost 5 digits kant khona ababamba more. I was still admiring the place when he walked down esegqoke i-vest.

Joshua: "Would you like something to drink?"

Me: "No" he nodded and sat down opposite me.

Me: "You have a beautiful home"

Joshua: "Thank you"

Me: "You live on your own?"

Joshua: "No. Julia lives here, my sister sometimes lives here abuye ahambe-ke eye ekhaya. Its too big."

Me: "Yeah inkulu"

Joshua: "I bought it for my parents. Sadly bahamba bengakahlali kuyo"

Me: "I'm sure bayjabula la bekhona."

Joshua: "I hope so too ngoba ey bahlupheka kakhulu ngenkath besaphila"

Me: "Behlushwa yini?"

Joshua: "My mum worked as a maid. My father didn't work. Wagula wanqunywa umlenze. So my grandparents forced my mother to leave him but wanqaba. So they disowned her. Wahhlala nobaba wami behlupheka benjalo. Nathi sakhula usizi luthe bhe. Ngangithwalela abantu izinto edolobheni bengipha abanakho. Sometimes ngingayitholi imali yokugibela ngilale emgwaqeni. Ngazitshela ukth once i make it in life ngothenga umuzi omkhulu for my parents and I did sadly abahlalanga kuyo" I noticed that he was crying.

Me: "Kodwa namhlanje udadewenu uyahlala ajabule. I'm sure nabo bajabule la bekhona."

Joshua: "Ngethemba kanjalo nami."

We both went quiet. Side sitshotshana nje kodwa kungekho okhulumayo.

After a while he said.

Joshua: "You wanted to explain"

Me: "Explain what?"

Joshua: "Ukuth why ungijolela."

Me: "I'm not."

Joshua: "Angisona islima Gloria. Look at you bese uzoth kimi it wasn't a date"

Me: "I know the way it looks. Ukth nje bengifuna ukumtshela ukth angikho available."

Joshua: "Dressed like that?"

Me: "I am sorry Joshua."

Joshua: "Why did you lie? Uth uyosusa lento esekhanda kanti uyendodeni obuyiqabula?"

Me: "I knew you wouldn't understand" kwaba engath ngiyambasa. He got up walked to the kitchen wabuye wabuya.

Joshua: "Awuphinde futhi. Uthini Thandeka?"

Me: "I'm sorry."

Joshua: "What are you sorry for? Ukth you got caught on a date or the fact that you lied to my face? Uyamthanda lomjita?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "So you kissed him for fun?"

Me: "It was a mistake"

Joshua: "If ngingakungena ngebhande right now qede ngith 'i am sorry' ungajabula?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Uyangilinga Thandeka?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Ufuna ukungibona ukth ngidinwa kangakanani?"

Me: "Cha" he sat down next to me.

Joshua: "Look, I know I was wrong to just disappear for weeks just like that. I don't blame you for trying to get on with your life. What I don't like is how you allow men to just kiss you. NoSbu wamvumela kalula nje. I love you Gloria and I will not share you with random strangers. Stop doing this. Namanga uwayeke ungisize."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "I'm sorry for shouting"

Me: "And I'm sorry for lying."

Joshua: "And going on a date with another man"

Me: "Yes. For that too" He gave me a tight hug and then kissed my lips. We kissed for a while sathuswa ukukhala kwe-phone. He went to answer wakhuluma kancane qede wabeka phansi ifoni.

Joshua: "Julia" he called upstairs. Wavela uJulia.

Julia: "Yes dad"

Joshua: "Get you jacket we going to the hospital" she nodded and went back to get it.

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Its Jo-Anne. Please come too"

Me: "Okay"

Julia came down esegqokile sahamba. Nobody was talking in the car saze safika. Sehla sangena ngaphakathi. Joshua went to ask ukth ukephi watshelwa sahamba saya kuye. Sangena and it was not looking good at all.

Chapter 25.

Isimo sikaJo-Anne sasisibi shame. We stayed with her for two hours. After we left the hospital Joshua drove us to Gregory's safika sathenga ama-take aways and went our different ways. As much as I wanted to be there for them but I wanted to give them sometime alone. Ngafika ekhaya ngageza ngangena kwezam zokulala before eating. I was still eating when someone knocked. Kwake kwathi angimzibe nje but decided against it ngayovula. KwakuwuSbu ebanjwe amadoda amabili.

Man: "Sawbona sisi. Uthi uhlala lana."

Me: "He doesn't. Whats wrong with him?"

Man: "He is drunk."

Me: "Aybo uSbu akahlali lana."

Man: "You know his family?"

Me: "Yes"

Man: "Ngicela ubafonele bazomthatha la kuwe ngoba ay uzodlala izigebengu." they brought him in bambeka kusofa and left.

Me: "Sbusiso" I tried to wake him up but wangavuka. Ngayobheka i-number yakubo ngafona lakhala langabanjwa. Mr Ndlela's phone was off aswel. So kwaphoqa ukth ngimyeke alale kusofa kanjalo.

Ngambeka u-blanket nami ngayozilalela ngakhiya iscabha sekamelo since I didn't trust Sbu. Kwakona nje ukth athi uhlala kwami kwaku ngukungeyisa nje.

The next day ngavuswa i-alarm. I went to check on Sbu ngamfica esalele ngamvusa.

S'bu: "Ngafa ikhanda" he complained.

Me: "Ucabanga kanjani vele? Telling your friends ukuth uhlala lana. Aycha Sbu uyangidina"

S'bu: "Not so loud."

Me: "Ungangihlanyeli wena. Awuvuke uhambe."

S'bu: "Can I atleast get a cup of coffee?"

Me: "Kuph khona. Awugo-" ngaphazanyiswa ukukhala kwefoni. Ngayoyibamba.

Me: "Memela resident hellow"

Caller: "Wow so formal. Its Joshua. Ngicela ukukusa emsebenzini today"

Me: "Thank you. Angikagezi kodwa"

Joshua: "Its cool. I don't mind waiting"

S'bu: "Where do you keep your sugar?" ngavele ngambuka ngeso elibi. Praying ukth uJoshua akezwanga. Fighting with him wasn't my idea of fun.

S'bu: "Sorry. " he whispered.

Joshua: "Who is that?"

Me: "Who?"

Joshua: "Don't play dumb with me Gloria. Ubani lo onaye lapho?"

Me: "Before you jump to conclusion. Its not what you think."

Joshua: "Ubani Gloria?"

Me: "Its Sbu. He was drunk and__"

Joshua: "Mxm" washo wavala ifoni. Ngayibeka phansi nami and went to get my cellphone and tried to call him back but it went straight to voicemail. Ngavele ngadinelwa uSbu.

Me: "Get out" I went to open the door.

S'bu: "Can't I atleast finish my coffee?"

Me: "Awuphume S'bu ngingaze ngidinwe"

S'bu: "Ngizohamba ngani kodwa Gloria?"

Me: "And thats my business because?"

S'bu: "Musa ukuba nje Gloria. Atleast ngicela ungibizele uThemba azongilanda" he begged.

Me: "Use the landline. You have exactly 30minutes to get out otherwise I'm calling the police"

He didn't argue. Wasukuma same time wayofona. I was still trying to call Joshua and yayingangeni.

Sbu made the call and who ever he called came to get him ngokushesha wahamba. Nami ngalungela ukuya emsebenzini. Sengiqedile ngahlala ngalinda uJoshua but he didn't come ngaze ngazihambela.

Bongeka: "You look tired. Are you okay?" she followed me to the office.

Me: "Yeah I'm good." I lied. There was nothing good at all.

Bongeka: "I can see that you lying. Tell me whats wrong"

I sat down and told her what happened.

Bongeka: "We can't blame him for being angry. Akuzwakali kahle ukth ngo 5:30am sekukhona indoda kwakho."

Me: "Why can't he trust me?"

Bongeka: "Thats because usuke wawaqamba amanga kuye."

Me: "He won't even let me explain ay"

Bongeka: "He is angry and we can't blame him. Nawe mngani wami hlukana noS'bu."

Me: "I didn't invite him. Uzifikele edakiwe nje"

Bongeka: "KuJoshua its not like that. Khumbula ukthi uJoshua useke wamfica uS'bu kwakho. Emehlweni akhe wena umenza islima."

Me: "I don't know what to do."

Bongeka: "Go to him right now. "

Me: "And work?"

Bongeka: "Awubaleki umsebenzi. Hamba"

I got up right there and left. In my head I had a speech ready.

Me: "I'm here to see Joshua Cebekhulu." I told Rose at the front desk.

Rose: "He asked not to be disturbed."

Me: "Can you call him and let him know I'm here." i had no energy to deal with her and her drama.

She dialed the number wakhuluma kancane qede wabeka phansi ifoni.

Me: "And?"

Rose: "3rd Door on your right. "

Me: "Thank you." ngaphenduka ngahamba. Ngafica uJoshua emi phambi komnyango efake izandla ephaketheni.

Me: "Hai"

Joshua: "Ngena" he moved aside ngangena naye walandela. My heart almost stopped when I heard him turn the lock wakhiya.

Me: "I'm sorry Joshua"

Joshua: "The wall is a bit thin so umuntu ongale uyayizwa yonke into eyenzekaya. Thats why kumele ungawubangi umsindo"

Me: "Umsindo wani manje lo okhuluma ngawo"

Joshua: "I'll show you just now." he removed his laptop wayibeka phezulu kwesihlalo kanye namaphepha ayephezulu kwetafula. I didn't know what he planned to do, ngiziduduza ngokuth ngeke angishaye endaweni yomsebenzi.

Joshua: "Ubefunani uSbu kwakho ekseni Gloria?"

Me: "He was drunk manje__"

Joshua: "Usune half way house?"

Me: "Cha."

Joshua: "How am I suppose to trust you when day after day you wenza izinto ezingiphoxayo?"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Chapter 26.

Joshua: "Yini e-wrong engiyenzayo Thandeka?"

Me: "Ayikho"

Joshua: "Pho why do you act like a stupid bitch all the time? Is it because I respect you? Ufuna laba abafuna ukukulala nje kuphela?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Pho yini?"

Me: "Kube iphutha."

Joshua: "Did you sleep with him again?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Wenzelani ukth ngigcine sengingakuthembi?"

I didn't answer.

Joshua: "Is it because we haven't had sex? Is that why you have no respect for me as indoda yakho?"

Again I didn't answer. Vele its not like wayengikholwa.

Joshua: "Everytime I do something for you ungibonga ngamanyala. Uzama ukuba isfebe vele?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Pho yini?"

Me: "I didn't invite Sbu. He was drunk and ___"

Joshua: "You making excuses for him. Take off your shoes uhlale phezulu"

Me: "Joshua please I can ___"

Joshua: "Take them off Gloria"

I did as told. Ngahlala phezulu. He stood between my legs and kissed my lips.

I was a bit scared to kiss him back but I did. His hands cupped my breasts. After a while he stopped.

Joshua: "I never imagined us making love like this. But indlela owenza ngayo iyangiphoqa. Take this off" he held my underwear. I didn't move wabona ukth I'm not moving at all wavele wafaka umunwe eceleni and touched my womanhood. I gasped out loud and tried to remove his hand.

Joshua: "Don't make a sound Thandeka. Angith wena uma ngikuhlonipha ungenza islima."

Me: "I'm sorry Joshua"

He didn't reply instead he pushed his finger further. Esinye isandla wasfaka ephaketheni wakhipha i-condom. Wanginika ngayithatha ngayibeka eceleni.

Joshua: "Ivule otherwise I'll go on without it." he warned. With shaking hands ngayivula and gave it to him.

Joshua: "Yehlika" ngehla and avoided looking at him as we put the rubber on. When he was done he took off my under wear and bend me over.

Joshua: "No sound remember." he inserted himself slowly. I bit my hand trying not to scream.

Joshua: "Does it hurt?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "Than thambisa umzimba." he moved in a slow pace. I could feel the wave of pleasure building up. It felt so good for a punishment. If Joshua does this for punishment than messing up everynow and then wouldn't be such a bad idea.

Joshua: "Don't make a sound Gloria" he went faster and faster until my whole body tensed up, eyes rolled in the back of my head and a hot liquid ran down my legs.

Joshua: "Don't move" he pulled out. I stayed like that ngezwa ngaye esengisula.

Joshua: "Sengiqedile. Usungama."

I stood up ngehliisa ingubo ngagqoka izicathulo. Joshua walked out. I stood there for a moment and thought about what had happened. Ngethuswa ukungena kukaJoshua.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "I'm okay"

Joshua: "Just for the record, don't think thats a way I solve problems. Awuhlukane nokuba lula Gloria. Musa ukuvumela amadoda azingenele nje kwakho. USbu akumele ajwayele kwakho ngalendlela. Have boundries Gloria ngoba ngempela angeke ngiyimele mina le oyenzayo. I respect you and I expect you to respect yourself."

Me: "Ngiyaxolisa Joshua. Angeke ngiphinde."

Joshua: "I'm not saying don't talk to men but make sure that they don't cross the line."

I nodded sengiphoxekile. UJoshua wayengikhuza ngobufebe ebeka ngendlela enganakekile.

Joshua: "How about I take you out for lunch."

Me: "Right now?"

Joshua: "Sogoduka kuqala siyogeza."

Me: "Okay, let me call Bongeka"

Joshua: "Uzomfonela emotweni. Get your bag sambe" i took my bag and walked out. Kwakungathi wonke umuntu uyazi ukuthi senzeni worse I wasn't wearing an underwear anymore. Ngahamba

ngashesha ngaze ngayofika emotweni yami ngalinda uJoshua waze wafika.

Me: "Ngizokufika kephi?"

Joshua: "We eating lunch at home. Drive behind me." he went to his car nami ngangena kweyami.

I knew Joshua was right uma ethi I'm easy. Nami angazi why I allowed Anthony to kiss me, to go out with him, nanokthi uSbu ajwayele kwami aze alale khona. I was starting to slowly go back to my past. LoThandeka engangithi ufile was starting to come out and distroy what Gloria had built up and I wasn't going to allow that to happen.

Chapter 27.

We went to Joshua's place.

Joshua: "Come." we went upstairs sangena ekameleni lakhe. It was breath taking.

Joshua: "The bathroom is the second door. But the towels are in the closet, the 1st door."

Me: "Wow you have a really nice place"

Joshua: "Thanks. And please relax." he held my weist and kissed my lips. Before long we were rolling on the bed ingaged in a seriously hot and steamy love making. It was nothing like what had happened at the office.

After we finished salala embhedeni naked and totally exhausted.

Joshua: "Sondela." he said pulling me closer and wrapped his arms around me. I was enjoying this so much infact I was falling a sleep.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "I'm sorry. For what happed earlier at work. Kube iphutha. I feel like I forced myself on you."

Me: "Its okay."

Joshua: "No, its not okay. What I did was wrong. I took an advantage. Thats not who I am. Ngiyaxolisa MaMemela"

Me: "Its fine. You were angry and I don't blame you. Can I rest for a bit?"

Joshua: "Okay. I'll wake you up later"

I nodded ngavala amehlo ngalala.

Ngathuswa umuntu ongiphendula kabuhlungu.

Me: "Wenzani?" I tried to wake up but ngezwa ngempama kwangathi isihlathi siyadabuka. Someone held my hands above my head and I couldn't fight them off me. He forced my legs apart and forced himself in. I couldn't scream because his hand covered my mouth as he went on. I was in pain and tears rolled down each side of my face. He kept going and going until i felt his body tense and then he stopped wasuka phezulu kwami. I touched my downstairs and my hand came back stained with blood. I wanted to die. I couldn't move my legs. I kept asking God to take me until I heard foot steps and covered my self with a blanket. They tried to remove the blanket but I held it tight. We kept fighting for it until they won. I turned over and opened my eyes ngabheka ukth ubani and it was Joshua. I scream out loud. Until I couldn't scream anymore.

Joshua: "Wake up" he ordered and only than ngathuka ngavula amehlo.

Joshua: "Vuka"

Me: "Please don't hurt me" tears rolled down my face.

Joshua: "Why would I hurt you? You were crying in yoursleep."

I was to shaken you respond. I held the blanket tight around me.

Joshua: "What were you dreaming about?"

My hand travelled all the way down and touched myself. I was afraid to check just incase it turns out I was really bleeding.

Joshua: "Thandeka please talk to me." he begged.

I couldn't speak. Each time I tried to talk but the words wouldn't come out.

He got up and left. I sat like that until he came back with a glass of water.

Joshua: "Amanzi anoshukela lawa. They will help you to relax. Phuza" he handed me the glass. With shaking hands I took a sip. I looked at my hands as I held the glass and realised I wasn't bleeding. After I finished drinking I gave Joshua the glass wayibeka eceleni kombhede and then opened his arms. I didn't hesitate I threw myself at him and held him tight.

Joshua: "Its okay. It was just a dream. Woza uzogeza" he helped me up sangena e-bathroom.

Joshua: "Uzoba right or should I stay?"

Me: "Its okay. You can wait in the bedroom."

Joshua: "Its okay. I'll bring the towels." he walked out wabuya after few minutes.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "I'll wait outside" he walked out nami ngasala ngangena kwi-shower ngageza ngaqeda ngaphuma. Ngafica uJoshua ehleli embhedeni usulungisiwe. Wanginika lotion ngagcoba and then gave me his t-shirt and short ngagqoka.

Joshua: "Kuyakufanela yabo"

Me: "Yes but the pants are a bit large."

Joshua: "Uma likuhlupha uzobopha ibhande. I'm sure you hungry. Asambe sodla" he held my hand saphuma saya downstairs.

Joshua: "Sit there. I'll bring the food."

I sat down ngathatha iphepha elaliphezulu kwetafula ngalifunda just to avoid thinking about my dream.

Joshua: "Lunch is served" he handed me a tray. It was a pie and it was clear that he didn't cook it.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "You welcome my love"

Me: "So who does the cooking?"

Joshua: "My sister Zinhle. She cooks for me once in a while."

Me: "Aycha uyakwazi ukupheka"

Joshua: "Nami ngiyakwazi. I can boil an egg"

Me: "Yeah right." we ate in silence saze saqeda. I went to wash the dishes wazisula uJoshua.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Ubuphupha ini?" Just thinking about it brought tears back to my eyes. I blinked them away before Joshua noticed.

Me: "It was just a scary dream thats all"

Joshua: "Ukuth indlela obukhala ngayo ingithusile"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "Don't apologise. I love you"

Me: "I love you too"

Joshua: "Kuzomele ufonele uBongeka."

Me: "Ofcourse. Thank you for reminding me."

The door opened. Sayobheka kwangena uJulia nosisi engingamazi.

Julia: "Hey Anti Gloria" she looked different and she wasn't wearing any make up.

Me: "Unjani sisi"

Julia: "Ngiyaphila. U-anti wami uZinhle lona. Udadewabo kababa"

Me: "Its nice to meet you"

Zinhle: "Nami ngiyajabula ukukubona. Kunini ubhuti ekhuluma ngawe. I hope you staying for dinner. Julia and I will cook." she sounded so friendly.

Chapter 28.

I had such a great time with Joshua's family. Ngaze ngahamba ntambama. After spending an evening with Joshua and the girls ngafika ekhaya kwanesizungu. I didn't cook since I wasn't hungry instead I decided to do my work. Two hours later I was done. Ngahlala ngabuka i-tv until I was sleepy. Ngacisha ngayolala. The memory of making love to Joshua was still fresh in my mind. I kept thinking about how he held me and how he kept asking if I was okay. My mind was wondering off thinking about lots of things until the dream crept in. Suddenly I was afraid to sleep. My heart was beating so hard kwaphela nobuthongo. I got up ngakhanyisa and went to the kitchen to warm a glass of milk. I was still waiting for the milk to be warm enough when I heard foot steps running towards the back door and someone trying to open the door. I ran to the bedroom ngangena ngakhiya and crawled under the bed to hide. I could hear that someone was inside and trying to get into the bedroom. I dialed Joshua's number and it went straight to voicemail. I tried Bongeka neyakhe yangangena. A gun went off and the door opened. I held my breath trying to be quiet as possible. They went to check the bathroom and the closet. I could see the feet. Some walked in.

Voice1: "Akekho"

Voice2: "Check under the bed"

Voice1: "Asikho i-space la"

Voice2: "But I know she is here. Check the other rooms"

They both walked out. I inhaled slowly and kept still even though my heart was pounding with fear. My phone vibrated and I knew It was going to ring out loud. I tried to get it before it gave me but ngeshwa it rang before I could get it. By the time I managed to get it they were already inside pointing a gun at me.

Voice1: "Come out" he ordered. The other one grabbed my hair and began pulling me out.

Me: "Please don't hurt me. Take anything you want" I begged.

Voice2: "Yamuzwa uthi asthathe esikufunayo." he laughed and pull out a knife.

Me: "Please"

He pressed the knife in my chest before dragging it down towards my belly. I was bleeding and in pain. I screamed and tried to fight but they were stronger than me.

I was weak and I couldn't cry anymore. They were laughing as they watched my chest bleed from an open wound.

I heard foot steps and gun shoots. I forced my eyes to open ngabuka ukth ubani owayedubula it was Joshua. He shoot the other guy aswel and came to kneel next to me.

Joshua: "Don't close your eyes."

I wanted to tell him it was okay and that I wasn't in pain anymore.

He kept shaking me and calling my name until I opened my eyes.

Joshua: "Vuka" I sat up and looked around. I was in Joshua's bed. I touched my chest and it wasn't opened.

Joshua: "What are you dreaming about?"

Me: "Just a scary dream."

Joshua: "Scary how?"

Me: "What time is it?"

Joshua: "2:15 am. Don't change the subject Gloria."

Me: "I'll tell you when the sun is up"

Joshua: "You do know that I love you and I'll be there when ever you need me"

Me: "Thank you and I love you too"

Joshua: "Lets sleep for a bit vele sekusile" he wrapped his arms around me. I couldn't sleep anymore. It felt so real.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Mhmm"

Joshua: "Ukhalelani?"

Me: "I'm scared Joshua."

Joshua: "Is it because of the nightmare?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "What is it about?"

Me: "Men breaking into my house. They cut my chest open and enjoy watching me in pain."

Joshua: "Liyafana nelasemini?"

Me: "No. Emini it was someone raping me."

Joshua: "Tjo. Thats hectic."

Me: "I know and I'm so scared"

Joshua: "I don't know what they mean. Do you recognise them? I mean the men"

Me: "No but in my second dream you rescue me. Ungena nesbhamu ubadubule"

Joshua: "And I don't even own a gun."

Me: "Maybe they don't mean anything. Ukth nje sengiyesaba ukulala"

Joshua: "Lets stay up until sunrise than."

Me: "Kumele usebenze nje."

Joshua: "I'll be fine."

We talked some more until I feel asleep.

Joshua woke me up sekusile nelanga seliphumile.

Joshua: "You slept"

Me: "And ngenhlanhla angiphuphanga futhi"

Joshua: "Thats good. I made you some breakfast but I'm sure you want shower first.

Me: " Yes thank you." I got up and went to the bathroom ngafike ngachama and than wiped but before I could flush I noticed blood. I wiped again and yes I was bleeding. I went to check the bed ngafica uJoshua endlula. He removed the blanket and there was blood in the sheet.

Joshua: "You are not suppose to get your periods, right?"

Me: "I thought so too"

Joshua: "Are you feeling any pain?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "Asambe siye esibhedlela. Ima ngikubhekele something warm to wear"

Me: "I'm not cold."

He didn't answer he went in the closet wabuya ne-tracksuit. Ngayigqoka sahamba. I was so scared. The dreams and the bleeding was too much for me.

Chapter 29.

Safika esibhedlela salinda for our turn.

Joshua: "You scared?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "I'm here for you." he held my hand.

The nurse called us in sangena sahlala phansi. Sabingelela udokotela.

Dr Mbatha: "What seems to be a problem Miss Memela?"

Me: "I had an operation weeks ago and today I woke up and noticed that I was bleeding. I'm not supposed to get my periods"

Mr Mbatha: "Was this the first time you bleed after the operation?"

Me: "I did bleed after the operation and I was told that I won't bleed again."

Mr Mbatha: "Are you experiencing any pain?"

Me: "No"

Mr Mbatha: "I'm going to check you. So please change into a gown behind that door."

I got up and went to change ngabuya ngagibela embhedeni.

Dr Mbatha: "This can be a bit uncomfortable Mr Cebekhulu. If you want to wait outside it's okay. It will only take two minutes"

Joshua: "Uzoba right?"

Me: "Yes"

He got up and left. The doctor did his business down there and told me to get up and go get dressed.

Ngahamba ngayogqoka ngabuya uJoshua esebuyile udokotela esaphumile.

Me: "I'm so scared."

Joshua: "Kuzoba right my love"

The doctor walked in wahlala phansi.

Mr Mbatha: "You not bleeding anymore. In most cases like this the bleeding can be caused by the wounds not fully healed. In your case its just a delayed bleeding thats why its stopped."

Me: "So its nothing wrong?"

Dr Mbatha: "Yes. But I still need you to take it slowly. Don't over work the body."

Me: "Thank you doctor."

Dr Mbatha: "Did you recieve counselling after the operation?"

Me: "No"

Dr Mbatha: "Your medical history shows that you had a miscarriage before"

Me: "Yes. 10 years ago"

Dr Mbatha: "Did you recieve counselling then?"

Me: "No"

Dr Mbatha: "Its not an easy situation to deal with."

Me: "Yes. But I'm fine doctor"

Dr Mbatha: "But still I'd like to refer you to someone" he handed me a card.

Me: "Thank You"

Dr Mbatha: "Take it slow Miss. Allow the body to heal first"

Me: "Okay doctor"

After we left the hospital I asked Joshua to take me home.

Joshua: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "When are you going for counselling?"

Me: "I'm not."

Joshua: "You need it Thandeka"

Me: "I don't. I don't want to remind myself everything I worked so hard to forget"

Joshua: "Are you sure you forgot?"

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "The dream about rape is a sign that you haven't dealt with your past."

Me: "Really doctor Cebekhulu?"

Joshua: "Don't be like that. I'm trying to help you."

Me: "By acting like an expert in my business. You not helping at all."

Joshua: "I wasn't trying to be an expert. I was just worried about you."

I decided to keep quiet. Sahamba saze safika endlini yami, ngehla ngayongena ngaphakathi. Joshua followed me in.

Me: "Thank you for being there but I need time alone"

Joshua: "To do what?"

Me: "To think and decide whether I want to bring up my past or not."

Joshua: "You not being fair Thandeka. You know I want to be there for you but you are prepared to shut me out." washo wathath okhiye bakhe wahamba. I went to change ngagqoka ezami izimpahla. Sadly izinto zami zazisale kwaJoshua. I called Bongeka and asked her to come to my place after work and she said yes. While waiting for her I decided to clean and cook. I realised I wasn't being fair to Joshua but I was trying to protect him. It was best when he only knew about the abuse not everything that happened.

Bongeka came earlier than I had expected. We drove to Joshua's place samfica ebhukuda yedwa.

Bongeka: "Hai Mr Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "Washo boh. Unjani kodwa?"

Bongeka: "Great wena unjani?"

Joshua: "Ngi-right. I'm sure nizolanda imoto yaGloria"

Me: "Yes."

Joshua: "Ask Julia inside. Your bag is upstairs"

Me: "Okay" I went inside.

Julia was watching tv.

Me: "Hai"

Julia: "Hai."

Me: "I'm looking for my car keys."

Julia: "I'll go get it for you." she went to the kitchen wabuya nabo.

Me: "Thank you" I went upstairs to take my other things. Ngabuya ngavalelisa ngaphuma. Bongeka and Joshua went quiet when they saw me walk towards them. I knew they were talking about me.

Joshua: "Got everything?"

Me: "Yes thank you. Asambe Bongeka"

Bongeka: "Ngizokubona Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "No problem, nihambe kahle" we left. Sayakwami.

Bongeka: "Gloria. Are you okay?"

Me: "Yeah I'm great."

Bongeka: "What happened between you and Joshua?"

Me: "Why you ask. Did he tell you something?"

Bongeka: "No. But bekubonakala ukth something is wrong between you."

Me: "Its nothing girl"

Bongeka: "You know you can tell me anything. Right?"

Me: "I know and thank you my friend."

Bongeka: "So you 100% okay?"

Me: "Yes"

Bongeka: "Okay. Let me leave you to it then. I'll see you tomorrow at work" I nodded and watched her leave. After i heard the car drive off I went to the bathroom ngavula ikhabethe lemithi ngathatha amaphilisi and then went to the kitchen ngakha amanzi ngayohlala embhedeni and began taking them. I was tired of living like this. There was no end to this nightmare I called life. People make bad choices in thier lives but those choices don't haunt them like mine did.

Chapter 30.

I woke up at the hospital. Bongeka was sitting next to me.

Bongeka: "You awake"

I just nodded.

Bongeka: "Let me go get a doctor" she walked out wabuya emva kweskhashana nodokotela.

DR: "Miss Memela. How are you feeling?"

Me: "My chest is burning"

DR: "Beside that?"

Me: "I'm tired"

DR: "Do you remember what happened?"

Me: "Yes"

DR: "Okay. Someone will come and talk to you about that. For the chest pain, the nurse will give you something for the pain."

Me: "Thank you doctor" he looked at me for a moment and than walked out. Ngasala noBongeka.

Bongeka: "How could you be so selfish Gloria? Trying to kill your self?"

Me: "You the one who found me?"

Bongeka: "No. Joshua did. Do you have any idea what you doing to the man? He cried Gloria. Real tears."

Me: "I'm sorry"

Bongeka: "Yini kanti ngempela? Uhlushwa yini le engaka?"

Me: "Its complicated."

Bongeka: "Gloria, I've known you for years now. All this time you were single and lonely. Now you find a great guy who actually loves you for real and you messing him up. Ay oe. What ever it is thats eating you away can be solved without you taking drastic measures."

Me: "Where is Joshua?"

Bongeka: "I sent him home to rest. He stayed the whole night here"

Me: "I didn't mean to hurt anyone"

Bongeka: "Well you did. The girls and I are ready to give you a piece of mind for trying to take an easy

way out on us"

Me: "You told them?"

Bongeka: "Yes. Neliswa is going to Italy and she bought us tickets. Manje wena uma wenza nje usiphatha kabi oe." she cried and I started crying too.

Joshua, Neliswa and Lindiwe walked in.

Joshua: "Thank God you awake" he kissed my forehead and wiped my tears with his hand.

Neliswa: "Kuvele kuthi angikufake impama shame. How could you? Gloria."

Me: "I'm sorry"

Lindiwe: "I thought we were your bestfriends."

Me: "You are."

Joshua: "It doesn't show. You have a group of people who loves you and you try to take your own life, why can't you talk to us and tell us whats wrong?"

Me: "It was a mistake"

Joshua: "That mistake almost took you away from us. Ukuba nje I didn't get this strange feeling each time I thought about ngabe awukho lana."

Me: "Thank you for saving my life"

Joshua: "I didn't do it for you. I did it for me and your friends. Since you tired of living for you, now you will live for us."

Neliswa: "And you not allowed to try and do this again."

Me: "I won't"

They stayed for two hours and than left kwasala uJoshua.

Me: "Thank you for saving me"

Joshua: "Tell me why. Why did you try to kill yourself."

Me: "I wasn't thinking"

Joshua: "Yeah you weren't thinking. Do you know how much I love you? I haven't loved a woman like this for every long time Thandeka. But you always find away to break my heart."

Me: "Ngiyaxolisa Joshua. Ukth nje ngisuke ngaphatheka kabi ngangabe ngisacabanga."

Joshua: "Yini le ekuphatha kabi kangaka?"

Me: "I'll never be a mother Joshua and its all my fault"

Joshua: "Its not. You can't blame yourself for amaphutha abanye. You didn't choose this"

Me: "Yes I did Joshua. I killed my own baby." I was crying.

Joshua: "No Thandeka. Awuzicelelanga ukuhlukumezeka. They killed your baby not you."

Me: "I had an abortion Joshua"

He went quiet wangibuka ngaze ngazisola ukth bengisholani.

Me: "Please say something"

Joshua: "You lied about the abuse?"

Me: "No. I didn't lie. But that wasn't my first pregnancy"

Joshua: "Why did you do it? Abort your first pregnancy."

Me: "I was 16. My parents were hardly ever home. So I was a wild kid. Go to parties every weekend. Get drunk. So this one time we went to Clairwood nakhona saphuza sadakwa. I don't remember what happened but I woke up the next day near the train tracks, naked. Umama nje owayezijahela istimela saw me and offer her scarf for me to cover up and R20 rand to get home. I called my brother Sizwe and told him where I was weza wazongithatha. My dad beat me up pretty bad and since that day I told myself no more drinking. Than I began getting these dreams. Men ripping off my clothes and raping me. I wasn't sleeping and I was sick all the time until a friend of mine came with a pregnancy test and it said positive. My parents were already hating me for going out all night so the pregnancy would destroy them. So I went to this place in town and had an abortion."

Joshua: "So the men you were dreaming about raped you?"

Me: "Yes. And I never told my parents because it was my fault that I got drunk."

Joshua: "But you didn't ask to be raped."

Me: "Ukuba nje angiyikhiphanga ngabe angiyona inyumba namhlanje"

Joshua: "Don't talk like that."

Me: "Thats why nganginqaba ukukhipha isisu, i had already made the first mistake and I didn't want to make another one."

Joshua: "Why didn't you tell them. Maybe ukub washo ngabe bakuyeka wayithola le yesbili."

Me: "I did tell my mum. Do you know what she said? She said, kanti pho ngoba ngiwumpetha"

ekuhushuleni nale kumele ngiyikhiphe"

Joshua: "Hawu"

Me: "She insulted me with that each and everyday."

Joshua: "I'm so sorry my love."

Chapter 31

We were still talking when Joshua received a call asking him to come home. He left with uzobuya. I was left on my own. For the first time ever I can say I was happy. Joshua was one of a kind. Not many men would know all this about you but still be willing to love you. God was with me even though at times I felt like kwasayena wayesekhathele yimi. It wasn't easy knowing that I will never experience labour pains and long to hold my baby. But I was grateful to be alive. If it wasn't for him ngabe ngifile.

Ngethuswa ukuvuleka kwescabha kwangena unesi with food.

Nurse: "You need to eat before taking the pills."

Me: "Okay. Thank you" I took the plate and ate.

Nurse: "Waze wangangisokolisa. Yaz bengithi uzokwenqaba ukudla."

Me: "Why?"

Nurse: "Iningi akuve lisokolisa uma kumele bedle."

Me: "Kanti khululeka angisokolisi"

Nurse: "It's none of my business but sisi trying to kill yourself is not good. Engasadabukisi ubhuti wakho when they brought you in. I imagined what your parents must feel when your brother felt like that. Don't do it again."

Me: "I won't and he is not my brother."

Nurse: "Ow. I thought he was. Ukuth I saw him in the other room visiting another lady and I assumed she is the wife."

Me: "No. That's his baby mama"

Nurse: "Hawu. Awunankinga nje uma ezombona?"

Me: "Not really. She is married, sadly her husband passed on. Their kid is 12 years old."

Nurse: "Nginyaqala ukuzwa umuntu ozethemba njengawe. In most cases omama bezingane bayathukwa. Bahlale njalo besolwa ngokufuna indoda."

Me: "Sometimes basuke besukelwa. When you insecure you always find someone to blame for your own insecurities, ngeshwa umama wengane is the victim."

Nurse: "I know. Mina ngasala nengane indoda yaqonywa. Wawungabona koFacebook kubizwana ngo my love, baby phambi kwami. Mina ngingaphendulwa ngisho ku-inbox, ifake i-photo indoda, income intombi. Ngith mengincoma mina kungaphendulwa. Uma ifona indoda iphendule ngokth ihleli nobaba wayo ekubeni ihleli nami."

Me: "Tjo wabekezela kodwa"

Nurse: "I was an idiot. Ngilokhu ngiziduduza ngokuthi ngiyamthanda until one day khona kuFacebook usisi wakhe nentombi yakhe bambiza ngomkhwenyana wentombi nendoda yajabula. Thats the day I told myself its enough. I blocked him."

Me: "And than?" I was dying to find out what happened next.

Nurse: "Waxolisa. Islima esiyimi saxola. Saqhubeka sathandana. Wafika endlini ngenye i-day nje salala. Kwathi ebsuku esehambile ngambuza ku-Whatsapp ukth kodwa usangithanda nje, wavele wangaphendula. Ngathatha isinqumo that very same night. Ngazitshela ukth ngiyamkhipha enhliziyweni yami."

Me: "Waphuma kodwa?"

Nurse: "It takes time. It took me two years to be ready to move on. Ngathola lomsebenzi, fixed myself up and made sure that mina nengane yami siyaphila."

Me: "Yagcina kephi indoda?"

Nurse: "Ikhona. Yazi intombi leyo yayivele ithi ngiyayifonela ngiyithuke ekbeni ngingakaze ngiyithuke. Nendoda nayo ilwise mina."

Me: "Shame ngangizoyicinga ngiyithole ngiyishayele isizukulwane esizayo" we laughed out loud as If we been friends for years.

Nurse: "I didn't want to risk jail. Umntwana wam akhule ngaphandle kwami."

Me: "Yeah you right."

Nurse: "Yep. Ngasebenza sisi. Ngazitshela ukth angisaqomi manje kodwa sengikhulisa ingane yami. Vele ubaba wakhe wayengasamnaki. Kanti kuzothi ngelinye ilanga ngihlangane nensizwa yakwaMchunu yazibika. Yathandeka kodwa ngesaba. Kwath emva kwezinyanga ezintathu yacela umshado ngavuma. Kwenziwa konke. Kwathi sekusele amaviki ngishade wabuya ubaba wengane. Waqala washo khona ukth uyazisola ngokudlala ngami. Wathi nengane idinga abazali bobabili ngeshwa kweyami inhliziyo kwase kuhleli uMchunu. Ngamkhumbuza konke ayekwenza kimi ngalengkath ngisamthanda. Waqala wathi ngingenhliziyo embi enamagqubu. Ngath kulungile. Ngashada sisi. Umkhwenyana wami wangithengela umuzi as a wedding present. Walanda ingane ekhaya kumama sahlala nayo. Usuku nosuku ngizizwa

ngiphelele. Ingakho ngiphatheke kabi uma ngibona wena ulele uthule uthe du. Ngazibuza ukth kodwa losisi usengaze afune ukufa ngoba yini."

Me: "Ey mtakababa ukuxakeka."

Nurse: "Ingasadabukisi indoda yakho. Mina ngithi ubhuti wakho ngibona engath niyefana. Kuqinisiwe mekthiwa uma nithandana nigcina senifana ngempela. You have a good man."

Me: "You don't have to tell me. I know."

Nurse: "So I trust you won't do it again."

Me: "Never"

Nurse: "Thats good. Ngaze ngahlala bo nami sengize ngakhohlwa nawumsebenzi. Angihambe sisi ngizobuya ngizokubheka ntambama"

Me: "And thank you so much for the talk."

Nurse: "You welcome" she walked out. Ngasala ngicabanga impilo yakhe. Wabuzwa ubunzima ebuzwiswa umuntu ayemthanda but now she was happy. I was going to be happy aswel. I had Joshua and my friends.

Another nurse walked in with food.

Me: "Sengidlile sisi"

Nurse: "Aw. Ukulethelwe ubani lokho kudla ngoba nakh ukudla kwakho."

Me: "Mrs Mchunu"

She stopped and looked at me as if I'm crazy.

Nurse: "Thats impossible. Sisi anginaskhathi sokudlala. Kumele udle"

Me: "Nami angidlali. Why don't you call her?"

Chapter 32.

Nurse: "Mrs Mchunu died last week." ngavele ngagodola nezindlebe zaduma. I just saw a ghost.

Nurse: "You okay?" she waved her hand on my face.

Me: "She was a ghost?" I was whispering.

Nurse: "I'm not sure what you saw but ngiyazi ukuth she passed on."

Me: "Am I going to die?"

Nurse: "Uzobulawa yini?"

Me: "Maybe usezongilanda."

Nurse: "You not dying."

Me: "Manje why epokela mina?"

Nurse: "Angazi nami. But she loved her job. Ngisho esegula ubeza asebenze"

Me: "Ubenani?"

Nurse: "She had heart problems."

Me: "Aw shame. Kwaze kwabuhlungu."

Nurse: "Yebo. Anyway enough talking. You have to eat"

Me: "I ate her food"

Nurse: "Was it really food? Usuthi nje kumanje"

Me: "I remember eating." but I wasn't full.

Nurse: "I really don't know much about ghosts and all but I won't denie that they exist. Mrs Mchunu was a kind woman. Ubehlale exoxa ehleka. I doubt usengashintsha manje abe umuntu omubi ngoba nakhu eseshonile."

Me: "I doubt that too."

Nurse: "Eat khathi uzophuza amaphilisi ulale. "

I ate as instructed ngaqeda ngaphuza amaphilisi. The nurse left. Ngasala ngathi ukulala ngisacabanga lendaba kaMrs Mchunu.

I woke up later kukhona uJoshua. He looked so sad but he smiled when he saw that I was awake.

Joshua: "Hai"

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Nothing. Don't worry"

Me: "Joshua I am allowed to worry about you"

Joshua: "Jo-Anne died this afternoon"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "Thank you. I guess we knew that this day would come"

Me: "But you can never be prepared. How is Julia?"

Joshua: "Broken."

Me: "She needs you. You should be with her."

Joshua: "I know but I didn't know what to say to her. Worse abakubo nabala ashadele khona bayabanga manje. Bafuna abuyiselwe phesheya"

Me: "Aybo kade eshona nje already sebeyabanga."

Joshua: "You can imagine how this will affect Julia. Lapho-ke mina angingeni."

Me: "Kwaze kwanzima"

Joshua: "Anyway wena unjani?"

I told him about the ghost.

Joshua: "Maybe kumele uphume lana"

Me: "I think so too. Hopefully the doctor will think so too."

Joshua: "I need to ask you something"

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "Can you move in with me?" I didn't expect this at all.

Me: "Now?"

Joshua: "No. I don't plan on living here." we laughed

Joshua: "Ngisho kwami"

Me: "You afraid that I'm going to try again?"

Joshua: "Yes manje ngiyesaba ukuthi I won't be there next time kanti I love you"

Me: "I won't Joshua."

Joshua: "I'm scared Thandeka. I can still see you laying there not moving at all. I don't know what I would do if I lost you"

Me: "I'm sorry Joshua"

Joshua: "Its okay."

Me: "What time is it?"

Joshua: "11:15pm. Why?"

Me: "Aybo kanti isebusuku kanje. Manje wena ungene kanjani?"

Joshua: "I had bridged the nurse. Bengeke kulaleke ngingakubonanga."

Me: "Thank you" I was sleepy again but kwakumnandi ukuhlala noJoshua.

Joshua: "What if they want to take Julia away?"

Me: "Who?"

Joshua: "Her grandparents. Already balwela ukth akafundi uhleli noZinhle"

Me: "UZinhle akafundi yini?"

Joshua: "Ufunda e-UNISA uZinhle."

Me: "Manje ikuphi inkinga uma ehleli noZinhle?"

Joshua: "Bathi kumele aye eskoleni. Manje inkinga ukuthi izikole azimvumi. Kuthiwa kumele aqale next year. I can't bribe the department of education"

Me: "Bayakubhedela labo. UJulia owakho. Already you missed out on her life. Take them to court if you have too."

Joshua: "You think it can go that far?"

Me: "I don't know but you know how some people are."

Joshua: "I hope they don't. Already Julia is broken and fighting over her will destroy her even more."

I was having a hard time keeping my eyes open. Joshua's voice wasn't helping at all.

Chapter 33.

I woke up the next day uJoshua engekho. I went to bath before the nurse brought breakfast. I was praying that the doctor can finally discharge me since I was feeling well. Ngageza nqaqeda ngabuyela embhedeni ngafica uJulia.

Me: "What are you doing here?"

She didn't answer wavele wakhala. I held her ngangabuza lutho. After a while she stopped crying.

Julia: "Can you marry my dad. Please anti Gloria" I seriously didn't expect such request.

Me: "What happened?"

Julia: "They want to take me away. I don't want to go to Free State. I want to stay with my dad."

Me: "They won't take you."

Julia: "I heard them say it."

Me: "Your dad will make sure of it."

Julia: "I miss my mum." she cried.

I didn't know how to comfort her so I just held her again. Kwavuleka iscabha kwangena uZinhle.

Zinhle: "Morning"

Me: "Unjani sisi"

Zinhle: "Syaphila sisi wena usunjani?"

Me: "Ngiyaphila nami"

Zinhle: "Eminye imizi iyaxaka nje. Mina angisiboni nje isdingo sokubanga ingane."

Me: "Nam ngiyaxakeka nje ukth yini."

Zinhle: "Bayangicika. Ngicikwa nawulo omithi. NoJo__" she stopped talking.

Me: "Who is pregnant?"

Zinhle: "A friend of mine" she avoided looking at me.

I just nodded. The nurse brought breakfast kwaphoqa ukth oJulia bahambe since it wasn't visiting hours yet. I ate. I was touched by Julia's request and disappointed by Jo-Anne's parents. Ngathuswa ukuvuleka kwescabha kwangena inkosikazi.

Her: "Gloria Memela"

Me: "Yes"

Her: "I'm doctor Dlamini." she sat down.

Me: "Nice to meet you doctor"

Her: "How are you feeling?"

Me: "I'm fine"

Her: "And how are things at home?"

Me: "They are fine"

Her: "You tried to kill yourself Miss Memela."

Me: "And I won't try again."

Her: "How can you be so sure?"

Me: "I just know. I don't think I need counseling at all"

Her: "I won't force you but if you need to talk can I offer my card. You can call me anytime." she handed me a card.

Me: "Thank you." she nodded and left. I didn't want counselling. I wanted to go home. Joshua walked in after she left.

Me: "Awusasebenzi phela wena"

Joshua: "Kyafana nje. I can't focus."

Me: "Indaba kaJulia?"

Joshua: "Nayo but khona okunye okungihluphayo."

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "I love you Gloria"

Me: "You freaking me out"

Joshua: "Sorry. Ukth nje angazi kumele ngikutshele kanjani lento."

Me: "Just say it."

Joshua: "My ex is pregnant and she says I'm the father"

Me: "Congratulations"

Joshua: "For real?" he seemed surprised.

Me: "Yes for real."

Joshua: "I didn't mean for it to happen. It was before I met you. I swear"

Me: "Its okay. You don't have to explain."

Joshua: "I never meant to hurt you. I didn't even know she was pregnant."

Me: "How far is she?"

Joshua: "6 Months"

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "I love you Thandeka"

Me: "I know"

Saqhubeka saxoxa noJoshua waze wahamba emva kweskhathi. I won't lie and say I wasn't hurt. I was heartbroken. I was never going to be a mother and those who can were busy giving Joshua what I couldn't. Ngazisola ukuth ngingqabeleni ukukhuluma noDr Dlamini.

The doctor came ngamcela ukth ngigoduke since I was feeling better. After convincing him wagcina esevuma. Ngacela unesi angiboleke ifoni yakhe ngafonela uLindiwe ngamcela azongilanda. She came sagoduka.

Lindiwe: "Your mind is not here. Whats up?"

Me: "I think I'm going to lose Joshua"

Lindiwe: "Aw kahle boh. Why?"

Me: "Umithisile."

Lindiwe: "Who, when, where?"

Me: "I don't know."

Lindiwe: "He told you?"

Me: "Yes."

Lindiwe: "Kodwa Gloria, Joshua loves you."

Me: "And I love him too but who am I fooling oe. She will give him a child and I can't."

Lindiwe: "Okubalulekile ukth uyakthanda oe. Talk to him about your fears."

Me: "I will." But I wasn't sure about that. As much as I love Joshua but I wasn't sure about dealing with baby mama drama.

Chapter 34.

Being in my own home was lovely. I decided to clean first. Changed the bedding aswel qede ngayogeza ngaqeda ngagqoka ezokulala ne-gown ngaphezulu. I didn't cook so I orded pizza qede ngahlala phansi ngaphumula. 25 minutes later yafika i-pizza ngadla ngaqeda ngabeka esele and then watched tv. I heard a car stops and then footsteps followed by a knock. I went to check and it was Joshua. Ngavula wangena.

Joshua: "Sengiphuma esbhedlela."

Me: "Sorry I forgot to tell you"

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes I am"

Joshua: "Usugqokele ukulala vele?"

Me: "Yep. But angikalali."

Joshua: "You look beautiful."

Me: "I'm wearing a gown."

Joshua: "So what? Emehlweni ami umuhle nje ngisho ungagqoka isaka uyobamuhle" he kissed my lips and wrapped his arms around me. It felt so right.

Me: "I love you Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "I love you too MaMemela wami."

We kissed slowly. His hands brushed against my breast and then he stopped.

Joshua: "I don't think you ready to go all the way."

Me: "I am"

Joshua: "Theres no rush baby. I don't mind waiting."

Me: "Joshua look at my nipples. Are you honestly going to let me sleep like this?"

He didn't answer. He stood up, took my hand and led me to the bedroom.

Joshua: "You okay?" he said after we finished making love.

Me: "Tired but okay. I think your phone was ringing or I was hearing things"

Joshua: "Yeah ike yakhala but I was so busy." he kissed my lips. I kissed him back allowing his tounge to massage mine. His phone rang again.

Me: "Ibambe"

Joshua: "We are not done." picked up his pants wayikhipha wayiphendula.

Joshua: "Yes"

I got up and went to the bathroom to give him some privacy. Ngaphuma after a while. Ngafica esegqokile.

Joshua: "Something came up my love. I'll be back" he kissed my lips and left.

Ngangingafuni ukudlinza so I went to lock the door qede ngayozilalela. My phone rang ngayiphendula.

Me: "Girlfriend"

Bongeka: "Unjani?"

Me: "Great. you?"

Bongeka: "Lindiwe told me. I'm sorry hey"

Me: "Thank you. Yazi angazi noma sizokwazi yini. Yazi we been together for such a short time but already izinkinga zivela ndawo zonke."

Bongeka: "And kuza enkulu mngani wami"

Me: "Eyani?"

Bongeka: "Veronica Gumede."

Me: "Leso spoki usivusaph kodwa?"

Bongeka: "She is the baby mama"

Me: "Aw kodw Jesu ngehlelwa yini. Are you sure?"

Bongeka: "100% sure."

Me: "Ey oe angazi."

Bongeka: "Joshua loves you Gloria. And I know you love him so ungazokhishwa umuntu endodeni yakho."

Me: "You right but uyamazi uVeronica ukth unjani."

Bongeka: "We are no longer unniversity students oe. If Joshua loved her ngabe akayona i-ex. She she is the past and you are his future."

Me: "You right."

Bongeka: "I know I am. Anyway I have to go. Goodnight"

Me: "Thanks. Goodnight" I hung up.

I couldn't sleep after talking to Bongeka. Veronica Gumede was the girl we met at university. She was tall, slim, too die for figure and beautiful sexy eyes. Equisweni uVeronica was beautiful and she knew it. Men went deaf around her. We liked her at first until we realised she was a snake. She was a golddigger. People change but I didn't picture Veronica being a changed woman. I decided to call Joshua. It rang for

a while before iphendulwe umuntu wesfazane.

Me: "Is Joshua there?"

Her: "Yes but he is busy. Try again tomorrow morning" she hung up. I called again and again she answered.

Me: "I want to talk to Joshua right now."

Her: "Akekho."

Me: "Uyephi? I know he wouldn't leave his phone behind."

Her: "He went to the garage."

Me: "To do what?"

Her: "Kanti wena ufunani kuJoshua kangaka"

Me: "Ayifuni wena leyo. Wena umfunani?"

Her: "Nawe ayifuni wena leyo. Uyazi ukth uJoshua unentombi."

Me: "Ofcouse I know. I'm his girlfriend."

Her: "Really? If uyintombi yaJoshua pho why e__" the line went dead. I wanted to call again but I decided against that. If Joshua was with his baby mama then there was nothing I could do. Ngabeka laphaya ifoni ngazama ukulala. My phone rang ngabheka ukuth ubani and it was Joshua. Kwake kwath angimzibe ngabuye ngazikhuza ngamphendula.

Me: "Mhmm"

Joshua: "Ngisendleleni eza lapho."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "To see you, please open up for me" he hung up.

I got up and went to wait in the lounge. After 5 minutes I heard the car stops. Wehla wazonqonqoza ngamvulela wangena wakhiya.

Joshua: "I'm sorry about earlier"

Me: "Its cool. Your baby mama needed you"

Joshua: "You not angry?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "Can we sit down and talk?"

Me: "Its very late Joshua. We need to sleep"

Joshua: "Please. Just for 5 minutes"

I nodded and sat down. Naye wahlala eduze kwami.

Joshua: "I love you Thandeka. I know it can't be easy for you to know that theres someone carrying my baby but I want you to know that I love you and that will not change. I told Onica that I'm with you now and yes I'm going to be a father to my baby but I'm sharing my life with you" I was so touched by these words. Tears filled my eyes.

Joshua: "Don't cry. Come here" he wrapped his arms around me.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "Lets go to bed" we got up sacisha and went to bed.

Chapter 35.

Onica: "Don't get all worked up. Ngiyadlala angimfuni uJoshua"

Bongeka: "Why did you get pregnant pho?"

Onica: "The condom burst. The pill didn't work so kwacaca ukuthi uyeza ngempela lomuntu."

Me: "So what you do for a living?"

Onica: "Ngisebenza kaspala oe."

Bongeka: "Akukhombisi kodwa"

Onica: "Thats because you hate me. Kanti I grew up Bongeka. I have my own place, my own money. I'm doing well"

Me: "Wena ushintshe? Ay angikholwa"

Onica: "Ukujola noJoshua made me realise that I'm not growing backwards and I didn't want to wake up at 52 and wish I was still 25"

Me: "Kumele sibonge uJoshua than. Pho nahlukaniswa yini?"

Onica: "Ukujola ne-gangster is not always fun. Nawe uzobona"

Me: "What? Joshua is not a gangster"

Onica: "Don't tell me, you don't know."

I looked at Bongeka naye wangibuka.

Bongeka: "Don't tell me you believe her. Uyamazi uVeronica wonakele oe"

Onica: "Ask him yourself."

Me: "Ubezongitshela kodwa" I comforted myself.

Judy walked in with the tea qede waphuma. Wathela u-Onica waphuza.

Bongeka: "She is trying to ruin your relationship"

Me: "For what ngoba uJoshua akamfuni?"

Bongeka: "Thats who she is."

Onica: "I'm still in the room. Vele angimfuni uJoshua. I want to be my own woman now ukth nje bekumele azi about the pregnancy."

I didn't know what to say or even think. Veronica was a lying snake but nganginakho ukumkholwa. But Joshua was too perfect to be a thug.

Onica left after a while noBongeka wahamba. She had a case to deal with. Nami ngasebenza. I stopped myself several times sekuthi angifonele uJoshua and ask him. I didn't even know how to ask him. He didn't look like it, but then again they don't have a stamp on the forehead.

I worked the whole day and skipped lunch because I didn't want to risk running into Joshua out there even though I knew that I was going to see him.

At 4pm I collected my things and went home. UMaZulu was already gone. Washiya engiphekele istambu nemince. Ngathi wayazi ukth ngizobuya ngifa indlala. I went to shower first ngaqeda ngabhinca ithawula ngayophaka ngabuya ngahlala phansi ngadla. It tasted so good. Ngadla ngaqeda. Ngahlala ngaphumula ngethuswa i-knock. Ngayobheka ngathola ukth uJoshua ngamvulela wangena. He kissed my lips first.

Joshua: "Unjani?"

Me: "Great. Wena?"

Joshua: "Ngi-right. Pho wama lapho engathi uyangisaba nje."

Me: "And why would I be afraid of you?" I went to sit down leaving a space between us.

Joshua: "Angazi. Thats why ngibuza" he moved closer.

Me: "Would you like some juice?" I stood up.

Joshua: "No" he held the towel lavela lawa leaving me completely naked. He picked it up wanginika.

Joshua: "Sorry about that" he held my hand pulling me into his lap.

Me: "Its okay. I need to get dressed anyway"

Joshua: "Is there something wrong Gloria?"

Me: "No. Why you ask?"

Joshua: "You behaving a little strange."

Me: "You seeing things"

Joshua: "Am I?" his hand touched my inner thigh.

Me: "Yes you are"

Joshua: "Than relax for me" he removed the towel and kissed my nipple. I held my breath as the sensation spread all over my body.

Joshua: "Are you sure everything is okay" he bit the other one.

Me: "Mhmm" I managed to say.

Joshua: "Okay" his hand touched my sensitive spot making me fall forward resting my head on his forehead. He kissed my lips slowly.

Joshua: "It will be more fun in the bed room"

I got up naye wasukuma saya embhedeni.

Joshua: "Ucabanga ini?"

Me: "A condom"

Joshua: "Nayi" he opened the drawer wayikhipha.

As much as I wanted to make love to Joshua in my mind I wanted to ask him if he was a gangster. But how does one ask such a question without offending that person.

I gasped in shock when Joshua's tongue touched down there. It felt so good but I needed to know. I could ask Zinhle, my mind suggested. And ruin the trust, my heart warned. I had to do something. Gosh was doing so great down there I wanted to scream. I was ready to climax when he stopped and came up to my face.

Joshua: "Look at me" he demanded.

I opened my eyes and looked at him. He lifted my leg up and pushed himself in. I held my breath waiting for him to move but he didn't.

Joshua: "What you thinking?"

Me: "Nothing" I moved my lower body.

Joshua: "Angiyona ingane Gloria. I can see theres something in your mind." he moved back and fourth and then stopped.

Me: "Please Joshua" I begged.

Joshua: "Not until you tell me whats on your mind."

Me: "Come on."

Joshua: "It feels so good. I can just come right now"

Me: "You wouldidn't dare"

He looked at me and than pushed himself deeper while his body tensed up.

Me: "Okay. Okay. Onica said you are a gangster" I whispered.

Joshua: "Do you believe her?" he moved slowly.

Me: "I don't know. Are you?"

Joshua: "Do I look like one to you?" he picked up the pace. It felt so good. I closed my eyes and held him tight.

Joshua: "Do I?"

I didn't answer. How was I suppose to think when my orgasm was building up so good and so fast.

Joshua: "Thandeka ngiyabuza" he went faster and harder.

Me: "Yes" I came.

A Dead Rose.

Chapter 36.

Joshua: "There. You got your answer" he pulled out and went to the bathroom. I laid there just thinking about it. Veronica wasn't lying. Joshua was a thug in a suit. He didn't look like it though.

Joshua: "You look worried." he sat next to me.

Me: "Why didn't you tell me?"

Joshua: "If bewazi ubuzongiqoma yini?"

Me: "That's not important"

Joshua: "I think it is. Already usuyangingabaza"

Me: "Do you kill people?" his face changed.

Joshua: "Ay ay do I look like a killer to you?"

Me: "I don't know."

Joshua: "I don't kill people Gloria. I'm not that kind of a gangster."

Me: "Kindly explain it to me"

Joshua: "You freaking out for nothing Gloria."

Me: "Nothing? Uyisgebengu Joshua"

Joshua: "I was. Not anymore."

Me: "Oh. I'm sorry bengithi usayiso."

Joshua: "You can't quit. That's the thing."

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "It's like a tattoo Gloria. Into engasuki."

Me: "I don't understand."

Joshua: "Can we not talk about it."

Me: "We can't exactly skip it Joshua. I have a right to know."

Joshua: "Get dressed" he picked up his clothes naye wagqoka. I got up and ngabheka okokugqoka nami ngagqoka.

Me: "I'm done"

Joshua: "Let's go" he took my hand.

Me: "Syaphi?"

Joshua: "Trust me. I won't kill you"

I followed him saphuma sakhiya sangena emotweni yakhe sahamba.

He drove to his place safika sehla sangena.

Joshua: "Let's go upstairs"

I followed him sangena ekameleni lakhe. He locked the door behind him. Ngama ngezinyawo sengithuke ngifile.

Joshua: "Uyigwala aw" he went to the wall wasusa isthombe wasbeka phansi qede wabeka isandla edongeni kwavuleka iskhala esanele ukth kudlule umuntu.

Joshua: "Come"

Me: "I'll wait here"

Joshua: "Awuze Thandeka" he came to get me wangibamba ngesandla sangena.

It was a small passege and a door. Wavula sangena. My heart almost stopped. Kwakugcwele imali ematafuleni. Not just few notes, real money.

Me: "Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes Gloria"

Me: "Is it yours?"

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "And you can't bank it"

Joshua: "Not an option"

Me: "Can we leave?"

Joshua: "Sure"

We walked out wavala ngahlala phezulu kombhede.

You would think you know someone kanti uyazikhohlisa.

Joshua: "I'm not that man anymore Gloria. Yes I'm still a gangster but sekwasala igama kuphela." he sat next to me.

Me: "Do you know what scares me the most?"

Joshua: "Whats that?"

Me: "You calm Joshua. You always calm. You just showed me a room full of cash and you are not even worried ukth I'll report you"

Joshua: "I know you won't"

Me: "Wazingani?"

He didn't answer. Instead he got up wavula saphuma saya downstairs.

Joshua: "Would you like some juice"

Me: "No thank you."

Joshua: "Okay"

Me: "Will you beat me up?"

Joshua: "What for?"

Me: "Thats what gangsters do nje"

Joshua: "Aybo ayikho leyonto. Mina anginalo udlame"

Me: "Kuthiwa akuhlukanwa nje. Pho why uhlukeno no-Onica?"

Joshua: "Ubani owathi akwehlukanwa? Angeke ujole nomuntu uthando lungasekho."

Me: "So all these stories we hear aint true?"

Joshua: "Angeke ngazi. Kodwa mina angishayani, fth angiphoqani. Empeleni udlame anginalo"

Me: "Why did you join?"

Joshua: "Its a long story"

Me: "We have time"

Joshua: "Ay ngokuchazela some day."

Me: "If Onica didn't tell me. Ubuzongtshela nini?"

Joshua: "When the time is right"

Me: "And when is that?"

Joshua: "We should go." he stood up nami ngasukuma saphuma sangena emotweni and drove back to my place. I was quiet indlela yonke saze safika sehla sangena.

Joshua: "Come sit"

Me: "You don't want coffee?"

Joshua: "No. I want us to talk."

I sat down opposite him.

Joshua: "Usuyangisaba?"

Me: "A bit"

Joshua: "You don't have to. I love you"

Me: "Really?"

Joshua: "Yes. Yazi Gloria angiyona le-type oyicabangayo. I'm just a driver"

Me: "For who?"

Joshua: "My friends. They rob the banks and I help them get away."

Me: "So you stay in the car while they kill people?"

Joshua: "They don't kill people. They take the cash and run."

Me: "What happens when the cops get there?"

Joshua: "Run. Thats where I come in. I just drive"

Me: "Gosh I don't know what to say yazi"

Joshua: "Don't say anything"

Me: "Ufundile Joshua. You work. Why do this?"

Joshua: "Vele sengayeka. Sengiyasiza nje uma kuwumsebenzi omkhulu"

Me: "And you not afraid?"

Joshua: "I'm not"

Me: "Engath ngidinga ukulala manje"

Joshua: "Okay. Nami ngiyolala"

Me: "I'll see you tomorrow"

Joshua: "Goodnight" he stood up wathatha okhiye bakhe.

Me: "Goodnight"

He walked to the door wavula waphuma nami ngakhiya behind him and than went to sit heavily on the sofa.

Masimba mani lawa engangizifake kuwo?

A Dead Rose.

Chapter 37

The next day I woke up early ngalungisela ukuhamba vele uMaZulu wayengezi so I skipped breakfast ngahamba. Everything eyayikhulunywe uJoshua izolo yayihleli nje some where in the back of my mind. Each time it surfaced inhliziyoyami yayivele ishaye ngamandla.

Ngafika e-office uBongeka esefikile.

Judy: "You don't look well. As if you never slept"

Me: "A cup of coffee would wake me up. Ninjani?"

Bongeka: "Si-right. Wena?"

Me: "Ngi-right nami."

Judy: "I'll bring your coffee"

Me: "Thank you."

Bongeka and I went into my office.

Bongeka: "Its true?"

Me: "Yes"

Bongeka: "Hawu!! Njengoba ebukeka ethembekile"

Me: "Never judge a book by its cover."

Bongeka: "Manje utheni?"

Me: "I asked him and you never going to believe what he did to me"

Bongeka: "Did he beat you up?"

Me: "No."

Bongeka: "Do I have to milk it out of you?"

Me: "I can't say he fucked me but tjo I was begging for it. Just imagine."

Bongeka: "So let me get this straight. Joshua told you the truth while you were busy making love?"

Me: "Kind off. Gosh I'm so scared"

Bongeka: "Why? He doesn't look violent at all"

Me: "He doesn't look like a criminal at all but he is. So he may not look violent kanti alifakwa."

Bongeka: "Did you tell him?"

Me: "Not in so many words"

Bongeka: "Do you love him?"

Me: "I'm not sure anymore"

Bongeka: "Because he is a gangster?"

Me: "Yes. I can't live my life like that. Njalo ngihlale ngikhathazekile. Izoma lenhliziyo"

Sathuswa ukuvuleka kwescabha kwangena uJoshua dressed in black.

Joshua: "Ladies"

Bongeka: "Unjani?"

Joshua: "Ngiyaphila. I hope nawe u-right"

Bongeka: "I'm great. Gloria we will catch up later" she walked out.

Joshua: "I tried to call you but your phone is off."

Me: "The battery is low. Sorry"

Joshua: "For a moment I though you were ignoring me"

Me: "Why would I?"

He didn't answer instead he pulled me closer and kissed my lips.

Joshua: "I'm sorry about last night. I didn't mean to freak you out. Angazi ukth u-Onica ubengenwe yini aze akutshele."

Me: "I'm glad she did. Obviously wena ubungeke ungtshele"

Joshua: "I was but not the way she did."

Me: "How? When you been shot or in jail?"

Joshua: "So you are angry?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Pho uthethisa bani?"

Me: "Bengingathethi"

Joshua: "Thats good. Akuve ecika umunt othethayo. Siyakhuluma kahle asilwi so asikho isdingo"

sokuphakamisa izwi"

I nodded.

Joshua: "I'm sure you have tons of questions, let me take you out for dinner. Around 7." It didn't sound like a request more like an order.

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "I'll pick you up" he kissed my forehead and left. I took a deep breath and went to check ukth wayehambe ngempela yini. He was already talking to Mr Ndlela. Ngavala iscabha ngakhiya and then made the call to the Municipality offices. The lady answered ngacela ukukhuluma noVeronica. After few seconds waphendula.

Onica: "Yes"

Me: "Its Gloria. Can we meet?"

Onica: "You buying me breakfast at Gregory's."

Me: "Can't you choose another place?"

Onica: "You rich Gloria." she hung up.

That bitch, I thought to myself. Ngabeka ifoni phansi ngathatha iskhwama ngaphuma locking the office behind me.

Judy: "I'm sorry. I forgot your coffee"

Me: "Its fine. I'll be back" I rushed out before anyone else saw me.

I drove to Gregory's ngingajahile since I knew it will take Onica a while to get there. Deep down I was praying ukth uJoshua angaqhamuki. I decided to eat ngenkath ngisamlindile. Wafika after 45 minutes. I don't know why I expected her to pitch wearing a really short shorts and a hugging top with sneakers. Kanti uzofika egqoke kahle. A knee length skirt, a white shirt and stilettos.

Onica: "I'm starving. This pregnancy is turning me into a pig"

Me: "I didn't order for you"

Onica: "Its okay." she called the waiter wa-order.

Me: "Why did you break up with Joshua?"

Onica: "You don't waste time, do you?"

Me: "I don't have time. So start talking"

Onica: "Kwaphela lona"

Me: "You obviously don't expect me to believe that"

Onica: "Thats your problem than"

Me: "What do you want me to do? Beg on my knees?"

Onica: "Can you?"

Me: "Damn Veronica. Angidlali" I smacked the table naye wathuka.

Onica: "Okay, okay. Tjo who would have thought ukth nawe uke udinwe"

Me: "And right now I'm really pissed. Awukhulume oe"

Onica: "He gets angry Gloria. Not just angry but really angry. Like he is going to burst." she laughed.

Me: "Mxm"

Onica: "On a serious note. Joshua is like an elephant Gloria. Keep him happy all the time. He doesn't forget. Akadinwa into encane but when he does get angry, kuyanyiwa" ngezwa umzimba ushona phansi.

Me: "Pho nahlukaniswa yini?"

Onica: "Elephants are huge, always calm, they like everybody but once you piss them off. Death is your only solution. In short, i pissed him off a couple of times so the relationship ended." The waiter brought her food wadla.

Me: "He beat you up?"

Onica: "Few times. But I cheated, wangibamba and gave me a necessary punishment."

Me: "Meaning?"

Onica: "Orgasm after orgasm."

Me: "Thats your punishment?"

Onica: "Yes and its so good" she laughed.

Chapter 38.

Onica: "It makes you want to mess up more and more and before you know it, Joshua is holding you against the wall by the neck"

Me: "He beat you up?"

Onica: "Few times"

Me: "Wangambopha?" she stopped eating and looked at me.

Onica: "You obviously don't know what its like to date a criminal. You involve the cops, you dead"

My heart almost stopped. Joshua told me he wasn't that kind of a gangster. Maybe Onica was lying, why did I even trust her.

Me: "How do I know you are not lying to me?"

Onica: "Ask him yourself Gloria."

Me: "Maybe I should. Sorry for wasting your time" I got up ngakhipha iskhwama.

Onica: "I'll pay. Run, I just hope you will run away from Joshua instead of running straight into his arms"

Me: "You love him. Thats why you trying to scare me? Ufuna ngimyeke kungene wena?"

Onica: "Believe what ever you want to believe dear. But If I were you, I'd run while I still can"

Arguing with Onica was pointless, ngavele ngahamba ngabuyela emsebenzini.

Judy: "Mr Ndlela and Mr Cebekhulu would like to see you in Mr Ndlela's office"

Me: "Did they tell you what its about?" I was so nervous and I wasn't ready to face Joshua.

Judy: "No."

Me: "Thank you" I went to them. Joshua was standing near the window starring outside. I knocked waphenduka wangibheka wabuye wabheka le.

Mr Ndlela: "Come in Miss Memela"

I walked in ngafike ngahlala phansi.

Me: "You wanted to see me"

Mr Ndlela: "Yes. I'll get straight to the point. You seem to be losing focus MaMemela. I understand that you going through a hard time in your personal life but its starting to affect your work."

Me: "I'm sorry sir" I didn't understand why Joshua was there. Infact kwakungicika ukuba khona kwakhe.

Mr Ndlela: "Njengoba wazi nawe ukuthi layikhaya nakwa MH Lawyers sinobudlelwano obuhle we have decide to outsource you for a while." I was so shocked. I looked at Joshua ngathola elokhu ebuka phandle.

Me: "You can't do that."

Mr Ndlela: "Its for your own good Miss Memela. A new environment."

Me: "Angivumi. We never agreed to such change"

Joshua: "Its in your contract Gloria." His voice sounded so low engathi ukhuluma emgodini.

Me: "Excuse me. Wena uhlangana keph ne-contract yami? Kwakona nje ukth ube lana as If ngaqashwa wuwe."

Mr Ndlela: "Calm down Miss Memela."

Me: "How can I calm down uma uJoshua esezokwenza engath ngaqashwa wuye."

He looked at me wangasho lutho.

Mr Ndlela: "Maybe you should go to your office Gloria. I'll call you just now"

I got up and walked out slamming the door behind me.

Ngafika e-office ngavula ngangena ngakhiya ngaphakathi. Ngangijuluka ngenxa yokudinwa. I didn't know what was really pissing me off. Learning that Joshua wasn't a saint or realising just how deep I really was. Joshua was already controlling my life. Working for them meant having him around me the whole day.

After walking up and down for what seemed like hours I made a decision. He wasn't going to control me. I went to the door ngavula ngaphuma and went straight to Mr Ndlela's office ngangena without knocking.

Me: "Since my work is no longer needed in this company then I quit"

Mr Ndlela stopped typing in his laptop wangibuka.

Mr Ndlela: "You can't be serious"

Me: "I am. I will clear my office this afternoon" I walked out before they tried to make me change my mind.

Ngafika e-office lami ngaqoqa izinto zami. Ngabeka wonke ama-files enkampani. I was still busy packing when Joshua walked in.

Joshua: "You obviously made a wrong decision about quitting."

Me: "And you know this because?"

Joshua: "Ubuyofunani ku-Onica?" I tried to sound relaxed but deep down I was mad at Onica for running to him.

Me: "She ran to you aswel?"

Joshua: "No. You ran to her. So ubuyofunani?"

Me: "I'm afraid its none of your business"

Joshua: "I think it is." he took few steps towards me ngahlehla.

Me: "How?"

Joshua: "Do you know why abanye abantu bezithola beshayeka?" he took another and again I stepped back.

Me: "Beshawa yini?"

Joshua: "If benenhlanhla bashaywa yibhande. If beneshwa bathola i-punch or two"

Me: "Uzama ukungethusa?"

Joshua: "Is it working?"

Me: "No. You don't scare me. You maybe a thug Joshua but I've been around and I sort problems like you very easy." My voice was shaking but I tried my best.

Joshua: "So you can sort me out?" he took another step and before I could back away he was already holding my hand.

Me: "Let go Joshua"

Joshua: "Or what?" he cupped my chin making me face him.

Me: "I'll scream"

Joshua: "That can be arranged" he kissed my lips. I pushed him away and slapped him across the face.

Me: "Don't you dare touch me. Nx"

Joshua: "I'm sure you don't want me to show you how to slap someone for real"

Me: "Get out of my office. Angiyena mina u-Onica obumhlukumeza akuxolele."

Joshua: "Is that what she told you?"

Me: "She told me enough to make me decide that I don't want to be in a relationship with you."

Joshua: "Ungangihlekisi wena Gloria. Ungafuni wena ngidinwe. Kuzomele ngihambe manje. I'll pick you up at 6:30"

Me: "I'm not going out with you."

Chapter 39.

Joshua: "Yes you are. Even if I have to drag you there by hair" washo waphuma wahamba. I stood there

not knowing what to do at all. Ngathuswa ukungena kuka Mr Ndlela.

Mr Ndlela: "Yazi bengithi uyadlala mewuth uyayeka. Kanti uhamba ngempela."

Me: "I won't work for Joshua"

Mr Ndlela: "Why not?"

Me: "I don't want to"

Mr Ndlela: "Because he is a gangster?"

Me: "Kanti nawe uyazi."

Mr Ndlela: "Everybody has a secret Gloria. Some darker than the other but they are there."

Me: "I don't want to be part of that life."

Mr Ndlela: "What life?"

Me: "I-cherri yegintsa"

Mr Ndlela: "Come on. Joshua is not that kind of gangster"

Me: "Naye usho kanjalo kodwa kade ngisongela manje"

Mr Ndlela: "He was just trying to scare you. Angeke akwenze lutho."

Me: "I don't trust him anymore. Izinto u-Onica azishoyo ngaye ziyathusa."

Mr Ndlela: "You talked to his ex?"

Me: "Yes. She knows him better than everyone else"

Mr Ndlela: "You can't trust a bitter ex. If you have a question. Ask Joshua otherwise uzodlala abantu. Go home Gloria ubuye ksasa. Angifuni ukulahlekelwa wuwe." he walked out.

I took my things ngakhiya ngaya kuBongeka. She was getting ready for court.

Bongeka: "You look like you just saw a ghost"

Me: "You can say that"

Bongeka: "My friend I'll call you later."

Me: "Sharp." we walked out together sangena ezimotweni zethu and went our different ways.

Ngafika ekhaya ngavula ngangena ngaqonda embhedeni ngaziphosa kuwo ngiqoke nezicathulo. I knew it wasn't a good idear to ask Onica but I had no one else to ask. I didn't even know Joshua's friends.

Kwasayena ngangingamthembi even though my heart was inlove with him. I don't even know when I

slept ngathuka sengiphaphama kumnyama endlini. I checked the time and It was 8:30pm. I had 12 missed calls from Joshua. I missed the date. I called him back yakhala yaze yathula. I tried again yaphinda futhi yakhala ngaze ngayeka. I got up ngakhumula ngagqoka ezokulala ngaya nasekhisini ngenza ukudla ngadla. Ngethuswa i-knock ngayobheka and It was Sbu. Ngamvulela wangena.

Me: "Ufunani?"

Sbu: "Akukho sawubona"

Me: "I'm not playing Sbu. Ufunani?"

Sbu: "My dad mfethu. He kicked me out. Took my car and my wallet. Ngicela ukulala kusofa wakho"

Me: "Don't you have friends you can call?"

Sbu: "Aw mfethu ungayenzi leyonto. You the only one ongangisiza."

Me: "I can't. I'm sorry" Joshua was going to kill me if ngimlalisa.

Sbu: "Ay okay ngiyezwa" he got up wavula iscabha.

Me: "Uzohamba ngani ebusuku?"

Sizwe: "I'll walk. I don't have a choice."

Me: "Mxm you can stay but you can not keep on treating my house like a half way house."

Sbu: "Thank you"

Me: "Ngidla istambu sayizolo. If you want, help yourself."

Sbu: "Okay" he went to the kitchen.

I tried to call Joshua again ngenhlanhla this time wayibamba.

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "I'm sorry I missed our date"

Joshua: "Ubuvele ungathandi nje"

Me: "I was angry."

Joshua: "Its fine. Pho wenzani lapho?"

Me: "I just ate. Actually the reason why I'm calling is because I want to tell you something."

Joshua: "Okay."

Me: "Please don't be mad. USbu is sleeping over. Unenkinga kubo."

Joshua: "I'll be there now" he hung up.

Sbu: "You look worried"

Me: "Joshua is coming over"

Sbu: "Right now?"

Me: "Yes"

Sbu: "What for?"

Me: "He is my boyfriend and this is my house."

Sbu: "Owja. Sorry for asking" he sat down and ate nami ngayozenzela itiyе ngabuya ngahlala phansi ngaliphuza. Wafika uJoshua after awhile ngamvulela wangena.

Joshua: "Here. Take my car and go book yourself into a hotel" he gave him the keys and cash.

Sbu looked at me nami ngabheka le. Wabona ukth akana-choice wahamba.

Joshua: "What happened to you? Ngafika lana ungekho."

Me: "Ngibuye emsebenzini ngavele ngalala kanti ngizozumeka ngilale ngize ngiphaphame after 8."

Joshua: "Really?"

Me: "Ngempela"

Joshua: "Ugcine ungashongo ukth ubuyofunani ku-Onica."

Me: "She use to be my friend"

Joshua: "Okay."

Me: "Are you stalking me Joshua?"

Joshua: "No."

Me: "Pho how do you know every thing that I do?"

Joshua: "I don't"

Me: "But you knew about my meeting with Onica"

Joshua: "Because she told me. I'm surprised that you trust my ex more then me."

Me: "I don't"

Joshua: "Pho why uhambe waya kuye instead of coming to me?"

Me: "I don't know Joshua."

Joshua: "This is your chance. Ask me anything."

Me: "Do you love me?"

Joshua: "More than you realise"

Me: "Why do you want to control my life?"

Joshua: "I don't. I just want what's best for you."

Me: "And you think me working for you is best?"

Joshua: "I don't think. I know."

Me: "I want to love and respect you Joshua but I can't if you don't respect me. I'm a grown woman Joshua. I want to make my own decisions"

Joshua: "Okay cool."

Me: "Just like that?"

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "Onica said you are like an elephant. You don't want to be pissed ___" I stopped myself.

Joshua: "So that's what you were talking about with her. Ningibiza ngendlovu" he laughed at least he wasn't angry.

Me: "Are you?"

Joshua: "Cha."

Me: "You freak me out yazi. Indlela ovele ube-calm ngayo iyathusa."

Chapter 40.

Joshua: "I want to be in control and akulula ukwenzenjalo uma uthathela izinto phezulu."

Me: "You scare me"

Joshua: "I didn't mean to." he bit his lips and looked at me. How can I not fall in love when I have this greek god in my living room.

Me: "Why do you hate Sbu?"

Joshua: "I don't, I hate it when he is around you. You are mine Gloria and I don't want someone else"

looking at you" He got up, went to check the door wabuya wacisha and took my hand sayekameleni.

Kwakungavumi ngisho ngivuse ikhanda the next day. Joshua was already dressed and full of energy.

Joshua: "Theres a woman in your kitchen."

Me: "Mrs Zulu. She helps me around the house"

Joshua: "Okay. Anyway unjani?"

Me: "Ngikhathele."

Joshua: "Are you sore?"

Me: "I'm not sure. I can't feel my legs."

Joshua: "I'm sorry I lost control." he sat down and removed the blanket exposing my naked body. I felt his warm hand brush the bruises left when he held me tight.

Joshua: "Maybe you should stay home today. I'll tell Mr Ndlela"

Me: "No. I'll take some pain killers and go"

Joshua: "For once nje awungilalele ungangiphikisi."

I nodded and pulled the blanket over my head. I heard him leave the room. Ngazama ukulala futhi. Ngethuswa ukuvuleka kwescabha futh.

Joshua: "Your breakfast"

Me: "I'll eat later."

Joshua: "Sit up and eat Thandeka" he demanded.

I woke up ngahlala ngezinqe and winced in pain. Who knew that spanking could hurt like this.

Me: "Thank you" I took the tray.

Joshua: "I have to go. I have a meeting" he kissed my forehead and left.

Ngasusa i-tray ngasukuma ngaye bathroom. Ngazibuka esbukweni. I almost didn't recognise myself. I was a mess. My mind filled with memories of the night before. That wasn't sex. I don't even know what to call it. The way Joshua held me, the way he looked at me as if he wanted to leave a permanent mark as a reminder for later. Or was that punishment? Was that what Onica meant when she said orgasm after orgasm. But I didn't cheat. It wasn't my fault that Sbu dropped in.

I went to pee ngaqeda ngasula gentle before stepping into the shower ngegeza ngaqeda ngaphuma ngayogcoba ngagqoka i-gown kuphela and then took the tray to the kitchen.

MaZulu: "Unjani mtanami?" she gave me that look.

Me: "Syaphila mam nina ninjani?"

MaZulu: "Syaphila nathi. Muhle umkhwenyana" she smiled and looked at me.

Me: "Ngiyabonga mah" I tried to hide the bruises in my neck. Its bad enough that she met him, I don't want to disturb her mind aswel.

MaZulu: "Ubethe angibokuphoqa ukth ulale uphumule."

Me: "Ngi-right kodwa" she nodded and left. I made myself a cup of coffee. Ngabuyela embhedeni. I could still smell Joshua on my blankets. The strange smell of his hair as it brushed against me.

I had to call someone and share this otherwise I was going crazy. I called Bongeka. It rang twice before she answered.

Bongeka: "Ngisemnyango wakwakho" she hung up. Ngezwa i-knock and then her high pitched voice filled the room before she opened my bedroom door.

Bongeka: "Gosh, are you sick? You look sick"

Me: "Morning to you too"

Bongeka: "Forget morning. What happened?"

Me: "Joshua Cebekhulu" I held the blanket tight and hugged my knees.

Bongeka: "Did he hit you?"

Me: "No. Unless spanking is regarded as hitting"

Bongeka: "He spanked you?"

Me: "Several times. Joshua is a freak."

Bongeka: "You don't say."

Me: "He went on for hours. I honestly don't know whether it was fucking or punishment"

Bongeka: "Punishment for what?"

Me: "Sbu was here, i told Joshua because he gets angry when I don't tell him"

Bongeka: "Ubezofunani uSbu?"

Me: "A place to sleep. Ubexabene noNdlela"

Bongeka: "So Joshua was mad at you?"

Me: "Well he didn't look mad at all. We were fine until we got in the bed. He changed. Imagine being told to keep still while you reach your orgasm."

Bongeka: "Tjo mngani wami. I don't know what to say."

Me: "I think he use sex as a weapon"

Bongeka: "Like Christian Grey?"

Me: "Who?"

Bongeka: "Fifty Shades of Grey. I gave you the book."

Me: "I forgot to read it"

Bongeka: "I suggest you do so. But I hope he is nothing like that. That man was crazy"

Me: "So is Joshua"

Bongeka: "Did he tie you up?"

Me: "Not really but he held my hands above my head. I couldn't move."

Bongeka: "Can I ask you a strange question?"

Me: "Sure"

Bongeka: "Did you enjoy?"

Me: "Is it wrong to enjoy such strange pleasure?"

Bongeka: "I doubt. She enjoyed it too"

Me: "Who?"

Bongeka: "Read the book girl."

Me: "You not helping"

Bongeka: "I don't know how to. Maybe you should ask him if he read the book."

Me: "I will. I have to."

Bongeka: "What if he did and he is acting out on you?"

Me: "You think so?"

Bongeka: "I don't know. But Mr Grey was all about fucking. Joshua loves you."

Me: "I don't know ey. I think he is all about owning and controlling."

Bongeka: "Sisalapho nje kwezokuphatha. I suspect that Joshua is actually our boss. Have you noticed just how he walks around like he owns the place."

Me: "Maybe he does. How did I end up here?"

Bongeka: "You fell inlove Gloria."

Chapter 41.

Bongeka: "Any way bengize lana ukuzokutshela ukth get your visa ready. We are going to Italy in two weeks."

Me: "Why?"

Bongeka: "For the fashion show. Phela uNeliswa umithi and we need to go now kusa early."

Me: "Is she allowed to travel?"

Bongeka: "Did Joshua fuck your mind aswel?"

Me: "Awungiyeka ay"

Bongeka: "Just get your things ready uyeke konke kithi."

Me: "Yes boss"

Bongeka: "Anyway I have to go. I'll call you later" she walked out. Ngasala ngavuka ngayocinga lencwadi. Ngayithola and went back to bed ngayifunda. It was such a nice read, ingabekeki phansi. Hours later I was still glued to it. Ngethuka when the corner of my eyes caught a movement on the doorway. Ngavusa ikhanda and Joshua was standing there staring at me.

Me: "Wangithusa" I closed the book ngayifihla ngaphansi kwengubo.

Joshua: "What are you reading?" he walked closer wahlala phansi.

Me: "Its just a book nje"

Joshua: "Pho uyifihlelani?"

Me: "I wasn't" he looked at me wafaka isandla wayikhipha.

Joshua: "Fifty shades of grey. What is it about?"

Me: "Awuyazi?"

Joshua: "No. Bengeke ngibuze ngiyazi."

Me: "Its about a guy nje"

Joshua: "So I walk in and you don't hear or see me because you reading a book about some guy nje?"

Me: "Yes."

Joshua: "Okay. I got you something" he gave me the book "Close your eyes ubambe izinwele"

I did as told. His warm hand touched my neck before it was replaced something cool.

Joshua: "Usungawavula"

Ngawavula ngazibuka esbukweni. He bought me pearls.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "I love you and I'm sorry about last night. I lost control."

Me: "Its okay."

Joshua: "Can I see?"

Me: "See what?"

Joshua: "Down there?"

Me: "I'm fine Joshua." he didn't argue instead he kissed my lips slowly. It felt so good until he stopped.

Me: "Can I ask you something?"

Joshua: "Buza"

Me: "Last night. Is that how you punish women?" the question caught him offguard.

Joshua: "Did it feel like punishment to you?"

Me: "I don't know."

Joshua: "I wasn't trying to hurt you. Yes I admit that it pisses me off to see Sbu in your house but no, I wasn't trying to hurt you."

Me: "Okay."

He held my chin and kissed me again. His hand touched my inner thigh and travelled all the way there. I winced and tried to push him away but his other hand held me in place.

Me: "We can't Joshua. Khona umuntu layindlini."

Joshua: "I'll be quiet." he took off the gown leaving me naked. Then he got up and took off his clothes, taking a condom in a drawer.

Joshua: "I'll be gentle. I promise" he kissed me again. I was wet and ready. Trust your body to betray you like that.

Joshua: "Ulimalile?" he asked after we finished.

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "I love you too"

Joshua: "Why didn't you tell me that Julia proposed?"

Me: "She was hurting. Vele yena unjani?"

Joshua: "She is fine and bayahamba noZinhle baya eLondon. UJo-Anne uzofihlwa khona."

Me: "So far?"

Joshua: "Yep. Bekumele ngoba ubeshadele khona."

Me: "Yah but what about Julia?"

Joshua: "She is my daughter and she is staying with me."

Me: "I hope ngeke belokhu bekulwisa."

Joshua: "They won't. I fight for what I want my love and I take whats rightfully mine."

Me: "Thats good."

Joshua: "By the way we are going to Spain in two weeks"

Me: "Who?"

Joshua: "Us. Me and you"

Me: "But I'm going to Italy with my friends."

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Fashion my love"

Joshua: "You not going"

Me: "Aybo I wasn't asking for permission." I tried to get up but he held me down.

Joshua: "Pho uthethisa bani?"

Me: "Bengingathethi."

Joshua: "Thats good ngoba mina angifuni ukuthethiswa. Vele awuyi lapho and thats final."

Me: "Aybo Joshua you don't tell me what to do. You are not my father"

Joshua: "And I don't wish to be."

Me: "Angiyi e-Spain."

Joshua: "Uyaya"

Me: "Over my dead body."

His phone rang wayiphendula. I got up ngagqoka i-gown and went to the kitchen ngathuka when I saw two men pointing a gun at Mrs Zulu. I opened my mouth to scream but someone held me from behind.

Joshua: "Don't scream" he whispered. I nodded as tears filled my eyes.

Joshua: "Go to your bedroom and lock the door behind you" he ordered before releasing me. I looked at the gun in his hand. He told me he didn't own a gun.

Joshua: "Go" he snapped.

I went in and locked the door behind me as quietly as possible but I could hear voices in the lounge.

Joshua: "Nenzani?" joshua's voice sounded calm as usual.

Voice 1: "Ungasondeli Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "Stop pointing that thing kumuntu omdala."

Voice 2: "Or what?" this voice sounded familiar as if I've heard it before but I couldn't remember.

Joshua: "Hamba mah uyeku-Gloria." he ordered.

Voice 1: "Is that her name? The woman who is making you weak?"

Joshua: "Fuck you"

Ngathuswa umuntu othintwa iscabha kanti uMaZulu. Ngamvulela wangena. She looked pale as if she can pass out any minute, seeing tears in her eyes broke my heart into pieces.

Voice 2: "Then Gloria needs to visit her forefathers"

Joshua: "I swear. If you touch her I'll kill you."

Voice 1: "Jason wants to see you. Theres a job for you"

Chapter 42.

The argument went on in the lounge but I couldn't hear what they were saying. Ngathuswa ukuthinteka kwescabha.

Joshua: "Vula Gloria"

I went to open wangen a esaphethe isbhamu.

Joshua: "Pack few things. Uzohamba nami" he ordered as if it was the most natural thing.

Me: "I'm not going"

Joshua: "This is no time to be stubborn Thandeka."

Me: "This is my house Joshua."

Joshua: "Mama ngicela ukukugodukisa. Wena Gloria ukhiye, ngizobuya manje" Mrs Zulu didn't move at all amehlo akhe ayejamele isbhamu esandleni sikaJoshua. He noticed as well was ifaka kuye ngemumva and took her hand baphuma. I went to lock the door.

It's strange how life can change. Never in my wildest dreams have I ever thought something like this would happen.

Joshua came back after two hours.

Joshua: "You ready to go?"

Me: "I'm not going."

Joshua: "You don't have a choice. Shall I pack for you?"

Me: "It's not your past, is it?"

Joshua: "I told you. You can't quit."

Me: "But I can quit you."

Joshua: "Meaning?"

Me: "Obviously Joshua you enjoy living this kind of life and I don't. I don't want to live like this."

Joshua: "You just angry for now. I'll pack for you" he got up and went to the bedroom. I went to pick up the phone and dialed the police.

Joshua: "Don't even think about it." he took the phone.

Me: "I want you out of my house"

He looked at me as if I was crazy.

Joshua: "Maybe you don't understand how things work. People will hurt you to get to me. I don't want that to happen that's why you will pack few things and come with me" he explained. I stood there ngagoqa izandla.

Joshua: "Awusemuhle usadaza inkanyana." he laughed and went to the bedroom again wabuya after 10 minutes with a bag.

Joshua: "Asambe"

Me: "Angihambi"

Joshua: "Uyahamba. The question is, uzozihambela or uzothwalwa ngoba khona ukuhamba iyonanto ozoyenza"

Me: "I hate you"

Joshua: "Just get in the damn car."

We went to Joshua's place.

Joshua: "Come upstairs" I followed him.

Joshua: "Awulambanga?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Woza silale kancane"

Me: "You said you don't own a gun."

Joshua: "I'm sorry"

Me: "You lied Joshua. Wangibuka emehlweni and lied"

Joshua: "I was trying to protect you."

Me: "How?"

He didn't answer instead he held my chin up and kissed my lips. I pulled away and tried to slap him but he held my hand.

Joshua: "Not again. Try to sleep"

Me: "I want to go home"

Joshua: "You know you can't."

Me: "You can't keep me here against my will."

Joshua: "You already here and against your will. Awulale Gloria"

Ngangena embhedeni ngigqokile nginjalo. Naye wangena.

We lay there kuthulekile until his hand touched my breast, playing with the nipple.

Me: "Don't touch me"

Joshua: "Can you take your pants off"

Me: "What for?"

Joshua: "I want to help you sleep."

Me: "Forget it Joshua. You are not having sex with me."

Joshua: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Uma ungibamba ngenkani ngizokubopha."

Joshua: "Uyawathanda amaphoyisa."

Me: "Angidlali"

Joshua: "Nami angidlali."

Me: "Umenzenjani uMrs Zulu?"

Joshua: "I drove her home. And don't worry she is safe"

Me: "She will need counselling."

Joshua: "Nawe uyayidinga, not just for today but for everything else you went through"

Me: "How do you do that?"

Joshua: "Do what?"

Me: "Be a criminal but be caring."

Joshua: "Who said gangsters don't care?"

Me: "Yazi izwi lo munye walababantu ngiyalazi."

Joshua: "Ulazelaph?"

Me: "I don't remember. But ngiyalazi. Awunazo izithombe zabo?" he looked at me first before taking his phone and showed me a picture of 8 guys.

Joshua: "Ukhona omaziyo kulaba?" I looked at them one by one until I saw a familiar face.

Me: "Him. I've seen him before."

Joshua: "Ubekhona naye"

Me: "No. He is the one who brought Sbu in my house edakiwe." Joshua's face changed.

Joshua: "Lala Gloria"

Me: "Angizeli nje. Uyingozi kakhulu yini?"

Joshua: "Who?"

Me: "That man"

Joshua: "Cha"

Me: "Pho udinwe yini?"

He didn't answer instead he kissed my lips slowly while his hand brushed my inner thigh.

Joshua: "Take it off" he whispered between the kiss"

Me: "But I'm not in the mood."

Joshua: "It will make you sleep and forget about what happened today" he got up wasusa izingubo and took off my pants.

Me: "What if I can't?"

Joshua: "You will" he got up wakhumula naye wafaka i-condom and then positioned himself between my legs.

Me: "I don't think I'm wet enough" he didn't answer instead he pushed himself in. I gasped in surprise. He moved slowly.

Joshua: "Does it hurt?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "You got up and then what?"

Me: "Up where?" I was having a hard time breathing.

Joshua: "In your house. Before you saw them. What did you do?"

Me: "I..." I held the sheet. Joshua kept going.

Joshua: "Gloria. Don't close your eyes"

Me: "I think I'm coming"

Joshua: "Try to remember what happened."

Me: "I...." I didn't want to think. I didn't want to remember. I wanted to focus on my orgasm. And it was happening. I think I went deaf and blind at the same time as something was exploding inside me. Joshua held me tight.

Joshua: "That's how it works. Now rest" he ordered.

Chapter 43.

I woke up later. Joshua was asleep next to me. I moved carefully. Checked the time and it was just after 7pm. I got dressed quickly ngathatha iskhwama sami nokhiye ngahamba. I was starving so I drove to Spurs ngathenga ukudla. Ngenhlanhla uJoshua wayethathe no-wallet wami wawupakisha. After eating I drove to my place. The moment I got out of the car someone grabbed me from behind.

Guy: "Don't scream, don't turn around. Hamba straight uyongena endlini." I nodded. Tears rolled down my cheeks. I did as told ngayovula. The key didn't work.

Guy: "Akukhiyiwe" he pushed the handle kwavuleka and pushed me in.

Guy: "Khanyisa" I was still walking towards the switch when the lights came on. Ngethuka when I saw Joshua nendoda engingayazi bekhombene ngezibhamu.

Guy: "Wow kanti kunje lana."

Joshua: "Let her go"

Guy: "Why should I?"

Joshua: "I'll do it."

Guy: "Really? Wow unenhlanhla Thandeka."

Joshua: "Get out"

Guy: "Asambe Menzi" he told the other guy before pushing me to the floor ngayowela le kude.

Joshua: "What were you thinking?"

I sat on the floor and said nothing as tears rolled down my face.

Joshua: "Risking your life like this. Do you have a death wish Gloria?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Which part of its not safe didn't you understand?"

Me: "I wasn't thinking"

Joshua: "Impela awucabangi. Ingoba unenkani. Uma utshelwa awuzwa. Are you hurt?"

Me: "No"

He went to the kitchen wabuya ne-glass yamanzi wanginika.

Joshua: "Phuza".

Ngaphuza and handed him the glass. He went back to the kitchen wabuya wangisukumisa ngahlala kusofa.

Joshua: "Why did you leave?"

Me: "I am not part of the gang Joshua. Mina ngingenaphi ezintweni zakho?"

Joshua: "If you can't beat them, join them."

Me: "I can beat you"

Joshua: "You and what army? You obviously don't know who you dealing with"

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "You won't understand."

Me: "Oh" suddenly I was sleepy amehlo esezivalekela.

Joshua: "Don't fight it. Just sleep my love." he whispered.

Me: "Did you drug me Joshua?"

Joshua: "No. You need to rest."

I tried to get up but I was dizzy and my body wouldn't move. I felt lighter and calm before everything went blank.

I woke up in bed uJoshua engibuka.

Joshua: "Morning"

Me: "Where am I?"

Joshua: "In my place."

Me: "I want to go home."

Joshua: "You can't go. Its safe here."

Me: "You can't force me to stay."

Joshua: "Why do you argue all the time?"

Me: "Ngoba uyangihlupha Joshua. You treat me like a sex slave."

Joshua: "Ngisuke ngizama ukukuthulisa. The more you keep talking, the harder I want to fuck you"

Me: "You crazy. You need help."

Joshua: "I am not crazy."

Me: "You were never the driver?"

Joshua: "Awulambanga?"

Me: "Don't change the subject"

Joshua: "You angry Thandeka. Whatever I tell you now won't metter."

Me: "I think thats for me to decide."

Joshua: "We will talk in Spain."

Me: "I'm not going"

Joshua: "Nayoke leyonkani yakho. Yazi Gloria, uJason is heartless. He will hurt you just to prove a point to me."

Me: "Uyena lo obekwami?"

Joshua: "Lo obekukhombile. Yabo lo obesendlini ngimfice ekulinde ngaphakathi. Kusizile ukudlula kwakho la odlule khona other wise ngabe ufile."

Me: "Why hurt me?"

Joshua: "Ingoba uyinja, thats why. But don't stress. I will deal with him. Wena nje kuzomele ulalele, uyeke inkani."

Me: "Ngazalwa nayo"

Joshua: "Then learn to control yourself. Kuzolunga uzobona nawe."

Me: "Maybe I should just die"

Joshua: "Uyadakwa"

Me: "Vele nje ngizofa."

Joshua: "Kofa mina kuqala before kube khona olimaza wena, and I don't intend on dying anytime soon."

Chapter 44

Me: "Can I go to work?"

Joshua: "Ofcourse you can. You will be safe there"

Me: "How do you know?"

Joshua: "I knew what I was doing when I.... I just know, okay"

Me: "What were you going to say?"

Joshua: "Nothing. Lunga sizohamba. I'll drop you off"

I went to shower ngegeza ngaqeda ngabuya ngagcoba ngagqoka.

Me: "Where did you get my clothes?"

Joshua: "Ngibuye nazo izolo."

Me: "After you dragged me?"

Joshua: "I didn't drug you. I helped you relax"

Me: "Kazi yini ongakwazi ukuyenza."

Joshua: "Turn back the time. Kumele ufake i-leave application today"

Me: "Aybo Joshua kanti uqinisile yini ngendaba yeSpain?"

Joshua: "Like a heart attack. Asambe siyodla"

I followed him downstairs to have breakfast saqeda sahamba.

Joshua dropped me at the parking lot ngayongena ngaphakathi. Everybody was staring at me and It didn't surprise me. After the events I had gone through in two days, i was allowed to look like a zombie.

Bongeka: "You look sick."

Me: "I feel sick."

Bongeka: "Whats wrong?"

Me: "Lets talk in my office"

Bongeka: "Actually theres a meeting for everyone so we will talk after lunch"

Me: "Okay dear." I went to my office. Ngafika ngahlala nje ngathula. My mind was all over the place.

What did I do to God to punish me like this? It was clear that Joshua was no small town gangster but he was a real deal. Never ever judge a book by its colour. Ngethuswa i-knock.

Me: "Ngena" Sbu walked in.

Sbu: "Theres a meeting for everyone in 5 minutes."

Me: "Okay I'll be there."

Sbu: "Are you okay?"

Me: "I'm okay." I got up and followed him to the boardroom. Everyone was there.

Mr Ndlela: "Ladies and gentlemen. I'm sure you guys have noticed the changes and you worried about your own jobs. Well I want to assure you that you are all safe. However we will outsource some to MH Lawyers."

Joshua walked in wahlala phansi looking as calm as ever.

Mr Ndlela: "As you can see that Mr Cebekhulu is familiar here, thats a sign of a strong relation between two companies. I hope this will restore trust between all of us." As Mr Ndlela spoke ngangizibuza ukuth yena wayemthemba yini uJoshua. Did he know that Joshua was still a hardcore criminal or did he believe him when he said it was his past. It was clear that nobody should be trusted since noSbu ngase ngingasamthembi. Mhlampe naye wayeyisgebengu nje, nakhu noJoshua wayengamfuni.

Joshua: "The meeting is over."

Me: "I see"

Joshua: "Lets go to your office"

Me: "What for?"

Joshua: "Privacy."

I got up and followed him.

Me: "How do you do it?"

Joshua: "Do what?"

Me: "To look calm and collected while I'm falling apart"

Joshua: "Why are you falling apart?"

Me: "Ubuza ngoba uzenza islima or you being funny?"

Joshua: "I'm being serious. Why are you falling apart ngoba ngishilo ukth you are safe."

Me: "And I should trust you? You forget that it's your fault I'm even in this mess"

Joshua: "I didn't do anything. Falling in love is natural."

Me: "And that will mean nothing if I'm dead."

Joshua: "I told you. Nobody will touch you. Kuzomele uye eSpain next week."

Me: "I thought you said in two weeks."

Joshua: "Well the battle lines have been drawn already so kumele uhambe. You have to be safe. Jason is heartless."

Me: "What about Onica and your unborn baby?"

Joshua: "They are safe. Kanjalo noJulia and Zinhle. But you the target."

Me: "Why me?"

Joshua: "That's because you are mine and they know that if they hurt you, they hurt me."

Me: "Is that how my life will be like from now on? Your enemies coming after me?"

Joshua: "No. This is the last time."

Me: "Nibe nibanga ini vele?"

Joshua: "I want to quit and they won't let me do it. So now was either I do this job or fight Jason."

Me: "And?"

Joshua: "The answer is obvious."

Me: "You fighting Jason?"

Joshua: "Akekho osongela umuntu wami kuthuleke kanjalo. Angadlali ngezinto ezingadlali."

Me: "We can run away Joshua. Start over somewhere. You don't have to fight and risk your life."

Joshua: "Relax my love. I'll be fine. Wena uzohamba uye eSpain."

Me: "What if they follow me there?"

Joshua: "Angeke uhambe wedwa. Njengamanje I want you to relax otherwise I'll help you relax"

Me: "I'm afraid to ask how."

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Because I know you just being horny."

Joshua: "You make it sound like its a bad thing"

Me: "It is"

Joshua: "Its not. Sex helps"

Me: "How?"

Joshua: "Clears the mind and makes you relax and stay calm"

Me: "Khohlwa. You are not fucking me"

Joshua: "Like I would ask you."

Me: "If I don't agree, its rape"

Joshua: "Really? Let me see" he came towards me.

Me: "Angidlali Joshua" I stepped back.

Joshua: "I'm just kidding. You look really cute when you panicking"

Me: "Mxm"

He stood infront of me and held my hands.

Joshua: "I love you."

Me: "You scary but I love you."

Joshua: "After this, i want you to go home and talk to your parents. Will all have to confront our past at some point"

Me: "I know but I'm not sure if I'm ready."

Joshua: "You will never know my love. Kumele uzame. I'll support you"

Me: "Thank you."

Chapter 45.

Bongeka and I left the office early and went for drink at 21 Century with Lindiwe and Neliswa. I didn't see the need to tell Joshua since it was still early and in public.

Neliswa: "Kodwa oe ukwenzani uJoshua. We hardly see you lately"

Me: "I've been busy ey"

Lindiwe: "Doing what? You don't even answer your phone anymore."

Me: "I'm sorry girls."

Neliswa: "You owe us these drinks."

Me: "Okay, okay. I'll pay. I need a refill anyway" I called the waiter and asked for another drink.

Bongeka: "Lets talk about the trip. Nonke ni-right?"

Neliswa: "I'm ready."

Lindiwe: "Me as well. Wena Gloria?"

Me: "I'm not ready yet but I will be." I looked at Bongeka. The waiter brought my drink ngaphuza.

Neliswa: "Kusele ini?"

Me: "Work. Nikhumbule ukth ngike ngahlala esbhedlela guys."

Bongeka: "Aw u-Mr Ndlela will agree."

Me: "I hope so. I need a ladies room girls ngiyabuya" I got up and left.

Ngafika ngachama ngasula and went to wash my hands. I was feeling dizzy and sleepy out of the blue. I washed my face and looked in the mirror. I was seeing double. The feeling I use to have everytime Joshua drugged me. Thats when I realised that I have been drugged. My knees were becoming weaker and weaker. I held the sink and looked for my phone to call Joshua. Ngenhlanhla ngayithola and dailed his number. It rang once wayiphendula.

Joshua: "Where are you?"

Me: "Please, help me"

Joshua: "Ukuphi?"

Me: "21 Century"

Joshua: "I'll be there now. Don't hang up"

Me: "I want to sleep." my eyes were closing.

Joshua: "Don't close your eyes."

Me: "I can't."

Joshua: "Keep your eyes open. Please my love." he sounded so far away.

Me: "Mhmmmm" some grabbed me from behind wathatha naleyo foni. I felt calm as if I was floating and

then everything went blank.

I woke up in Joshua's bed alone. Ngavuka ngaya downstairs ngayombheka ngamfica ehleli kusofa ebheke phansi.

Joshua: "You should be asleep" he didn't look at me.

Me: "I'm hungry."

Joshua: "I'll go get your food" he got up wafihla isbhamu.

Me: "Are you angry?"

Joshua: "Why would I be angry?"

Me: "I don't know. You avoiding my eyes."

Joshua: "Sit I'll go get your food" he walked away. Ngahlala phansi. He came back few seconds later nokudla wanginika.

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "For what?"

Me: "For risking my life."

Joshua: "You leaving tomorrow"

Me: "Hau why?"

Joshua: "Usabuza? After what happened today? What if I was few minutes late? Do you have any idea how dangerous this is?" he was pacing up and down.

Me: "I didn't think It was"

Joshua: "You didn't think nje at all. Awucabangi Gloria."

Me: "I said I'm sorry Joshua" I snapped.

Joshua: "Don't you dare shout at me. Dlana uyolala ngingaze ngikulimaze"

Me: "Sengisuthi" I got up and took the food to the kitchen ngakubeka.

Joshua: "I'm sorry for shouting. Ukth nje ngithukile. I almost lost you." he held me tight.

Me: "How did you find me?"

Joshua: "You told me where you were. Awukhumbuli?"

Me: "I don't remember much."

Joshua: "You don't remember the guy who gave you the drink?"

Me: "The waiter."

Joshua: "He wasn't the waiter. The waiter was found dead." Tears filled my eyes.

Me: "I was going to be next?"

Joshua: "Yes, but I got there just in time. Its not safe and Jason isn't playing safe. Kumele uhambe kusasa."

Me: "What if they find me in Spain?"

Joshua: "They won't. Relax."

Me: "I'm so scared Joshua"

Joshua: "I'm scared too my love. I'm afraid to turn my back on you even for a minute but I have to. After this, things will be okay again."

Me: "What if one of us doesn't make it?"

Joshua: "Will talk about that after sunrise. Your flight is in the afternoon" he took my hand sayolala.

Ngavuka sekuphume ilanga. Joshua was busy in his laptop.

Me: "Morning"

Joshua: "Ulale kahle?"

Me: "Yes, wena?"

Joshua: "Akfani. Please listen very carefully."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "You remember the room behind that wall?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "If I don't make it."

Me: "Please don't"

Joshua: "Anything can happen Gloria. I'll give you a number kaMr King. If kuphela u 2 weeks ngingaveli umfonele, he will know what to do. Wena uzobuya ufike lana uvule laphayana uthathe imali umfonele bese niyahamba. Wena noJulia noZinhle."

Me: "Go where?"

Joshua: "Angazi. Kukini ukth niyaphi but ningahlali la. Ningikhulisele ingane yami. Ngiyanithanda MaMemela" His eyes filled with tears but he blinked them away quickly.

Me: "I love you too. Maybe If I disappear, they will stop bothering you"

Joshua: "No. Its fine like this. Kukini ukth nihamba for good or nizocasha for few years bese niyabuya. As long nizoba safe and together" his phone rang wayiphendula. I got up and went to pee. Ngafike ngachama ngasula ngase ngahlala nje kwi-seat and cried. There was a huge possibility that I'd never see Joshua again. I didn't want to live without him. I couldn't imagine waking up without him or not hearing him shout at me. It was hard. I didn't think being inlove with a hardcore criminal meant having to go through this. If someone had told me that loving him would mean this, ngangizobaleka

Chapter 46.

Joshua: "You have to get ready Gloria" he knocked on the door. Ngasukuma ngasula ubuso ngaphuma. He was done making the bed.

Joshua: "Please don't cry my love." he hugged me, kwavele kwangathi ungikhalisa kakhulu.

Joshua: "Look at me" he lifted my chin up. I couldn't look at him. It felt like my heart was in pieces and those pieces were poking everything else in my chest. He lowered his head and kissed my lips. He was warm and comforting but the thought of not seeing him again was bigger then any comfort.

Joshua: "I'm sorry. Please my love don't cry." he kissed me again and I kissed him back. We kissed for a while before letting go.

Joshua: "I love you."

Me: "I love you too"

Joshua: "Lets go shower uzodla bese uyahamba"

Me: "Kanti iskhathi sini?"

Joshua: "Its after 12. Uvuke emini vele." we went to shower saqeda saphuma.

Joshua: "Gloria"

Me: "Mhmm"

Joshua: "Look after yourself there."

Me: "I will."

Joshua: "I'll come and get you as soon as I can."

Me: "I'll wait for you." tears filled my eyes again.

Joshua: "Ungabe usakhala phela sthandwa sami." he wiped them with his thumb. His phone rang.

Joshua: "uThizo. Gqoka."

I nodded ngagqoka yena wakhuluma nefoni yakhe. Ngagqoka ngaqeda ngaphuma ngaya downstairs. Ngafica indoda ikhuluma nefoni. I turned to run back upstairs.

Man: "Ngabaleki sisi. I'm Thizo. Kade ngikhuluma noJoshua nje manje."

NoJoshua wavela egqoke ibhulukwe kuphela ngenhla eqimbile ephethe iskhwama.

Joshua: "Thandeka uThizo lo. Uzohamba naye."

Me: "Sawbona"

Thizo: "Unjani sisi?"

Me: "Ngi-right."

Joshua: "Umphathe kahle umunt wami ndoda."

Thizo: "Khululeka."

Joshua: "You remember everything we talked about?"

Thizo: "Yes."

Joshua: "You warm enough? Kuyabanda phandle"

Me: "Yes ngi-right."

Joshua: "Kumele udle"

Me: "I'm not hungry"

Joshua: "I'll make you a sandwich" he walked to the kitchen. Ngabona ukth kanti ufake isbhamu ngemumva.

Thizo: "You don't like guns?"

Me: "No"

Thizo: "Nami angizithandi."

Me: "Awunaso nje?"

Thizo: "Nginazo. Isimo siyaphoqa sisi"

Me: "Do you have a family?"

Thizo: "Yes. My girl and I silindele umfana in few months."

Me: "Congrats"

Thizo: "Thank you"

Joshua came back with a tray wanginika ngahlala phansi ngadla.

Joshua: "Uphi uZaza"

Thizo: "She is waiting in the car."

Joshua: "Okay. Woza ngikunike leyanto" they walked upstairs ngasala ngedwa.

Ngadla ngaqeda ngahambisa izintsha ekhishini. I heard someone walk in ngathula ngathi du. The sound of her shoes told me it was a woman and she was wearing hills. Ngahamba ngayolunguza. Kanti she looking my way wangibona.

Her: "Hai"

Me: "Hai" I came out.

Her: "You must be Gloria. I'm Zaza."

Me: "Thizo's girlfriend"

Her: "Yes. Uphi yena?"

Me: "They went upstairs"

Her: "I need to use the ladies room"

Me: "I have no idea ukth ikuphi."

Her: "Don't you live here?"

Me: "No. I have my own place."

Her: "Uvumela uJoshua ahlale la yedwa?"

Me: "Yes, ikwakhe nje."

Her: "Tjo mina ngeke ngavuma. Uma sekungena omunye-ke?"

Me: "I trust him"

Joshua: "Just like I trust her. Unjani Zaza" he walked down.

Her: "Ngiyaphila bhuti."

Joshua: "You okay?" he stood in front of me.

Me: "I'm okay." the tears came back.

Joshua: "Don't. Everything will be okay." he gave me a hug, making me cry harder.

Joshua: "Uzocina usugula" he whispered in my ear.

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "It's okay my love. Just try to be strong."

I nodded. And held him tight before letting go.

Thizo: "We should go"

Joshua: "Nginilandele or nizozihambela?"

Thizo: "UMusa noZakhe bazosilandela."

Joshua: "That bag has everything you will need Thandeka. Okushodayo usuyokuthenga phambili."

Me: "Okay thank you"

Joshua: "Ngizokubona maduze nje. I love you." he kissed my lips.

Me: "I love you too and please be careful."

He held my chin and kissed me again. This time it wasn't just a kiss in the lips but his tongue was massaging my tongue making my knees weak and my emotions go higher. Just thinking about the fact that it could be our last kiss made me want to hold him and never let him go.

Joshua: "It's not goodbye my love. It's see you later"

Me: "I'll see you later."

Zaza: "Can I use the ladies room?"

Joshua: "Upstairs. The last door on your left."

Zaza: "Thank you" she walked away.

Joshua: "There's a new phone in that bag. I saved the numbers you may need. Nami ngizokufonela kuyo"

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "You are not allowed to contact anyone until 2 weeks uphela. Uma uphela ngingakakuthinti then usungafona nawe."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "Nihambe kahle. I made you something to drink. But uzoyiphuza uma suyongena kwi-plane ukuze uzolala."

Me: "I don't want it"

Joshua: "You need it so you can sleep. Ungalokhu ukhala phambi kwabantu." he went to the kitchen wabuya nesgubhu esincane.

Joshua: "Uphuze uma usuyongena bese ulahla isgubhu."

Me: "Okay I will. Thank you."

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "I love you too."

Zaza and Thizo came back. Joshua took the bags wazifaka emotweni. We hugged once more before getting in the car.

Sangena yahamba. I waved at him and he waved back. Tears rolled down my cheeks.

Chapter 47.

UThizo noZaza babexoxa engathi akwenzekanga lutho. I didn't feel like talking at all. My heart wasn't there. Ikhanda lingibulala. My eyes were swollen from the crying. Saze safika e-airport nje ngithule. Sehla sangena. We got there jst in time sangalinda. I drank the drug Joshua gave me ngalahla isgubhu. I was sitting near the window but akuvumanga ngibuke ngaphandle. I sat like that until the drug kicked in ngalala.

Zaza woke me up later wathi we are about to land.

Zaza: "Aycha uyalala sisi. 10 hours straight. Ngathi umithi" ngavele ngangamphendula nje. Sehla. Thizo went to get our bags kwenziw nayo yonk eminye imidanti saqeda sahamba sayogibela. The taxi took us to Babel Guesthouse. Sehla sangena ngaphakathi. They showed us the rooms. Thizo and Zaza were sharing mina ngineyami. I was still sitting on the bed when Zaza knocked once qede wangena.

Zaza: "Thizo went to buy KFC. I'm sure you hungry."

Me: "Not really."

Zaza: "So how far are you?"

Me: "Meaning?"

Zaza: "The pregnancy."

Me: "I'm not pregnant."

Zaza: "Aw girl theres nothing to hide. I know its no easy to deal with everything. You should enjoy the pregnancy."

Me: "I'm not pregnant and right now I would like to rest please"

Zaza: "Sorry" she got up esejabhile. I felt bad.

Me: "No. I'm sorry. Ukth nje I am not good company."

Zaza: "Akunanking sisi. I understand. It can't be easy to know that Joshua is risking his life for you. Uyakthanda oe"

Me: "What do you mean for me? He wanted to quit on his own. Its not my fault"

Zaza: "I'm not saying it is, but your brother knew what he was doing when he slept with Didi and then wath akahiphe isisu" this was knew to me. I didn't know any Didi or even the fact that my brother was cheating on his wife. UJoshua yena wayengena ngaphi kulendaba.

Me: "I am not following. Who is Didi?"

Zaza: "Jason's sister. She died few months ago ethi ukhipha isisu. Kanti awazi ukth indaba isuka keph?" she looked surprised.

Me: "Manje uJoshua ungena keph lapho?"

Zaza: "Girl kanti wena wazi ini?"

Me: "That Joshua wants to quit crime and Jason won't let him thats why Jason is blackmailing him."

Zaza: "Aw ay angikwazi mina lokho."

Me: "Tell me what you know then"

Zaza: "I don't think I should. If uJoshua decided not to tell you then its not my place."

Me: "I want to know"

Zaza: "Ay girl I think I've said enough already." she got up to leave.

Me: "Please tell. Ngiyakuncenga oe"

She sat down again nami ngahlala next to her.

Zaza: "Your brother Sizwe had an affair with Jason's younger sister. When she felt pregnant, your brother told her to have an abortion wamthengela nephilisi kanti uzoshona. Then Jason swore to revenge his

sister's death by killing you."

Me: "Ebe engazelaph mina?"

Zaza: "I have no idea. But I was there when Jason showed Joshua your pic and asked him for help to track you down. Wavuma uJoshua. After few weeks Joshua found you wathola nanokuth you changed your name. I don't know what happened but ngazwa nje oThizo sebethi i-friendship yaJoshua noJason isiphelile ngenxa yakho."

Me: "Are you sure about this?"

Zaza: "100%. Almost every girl ojola ne-gang uyayazi lendaba. I-group yavele yahlukana phakathi when Joshua told Jason that he can't hurt you since you know nothing about your brother's sins."

Me: "So Joshua isn't quitting the gang?"

Zaza: "Ayke angazi nami. But I don't see him quitting."

I didn't know what to say or even who to trust. Zaza had no reason to lie to me but why would Joshua hide all this from me.

Zaza: "Kanti wena wamazi kanjani uJoshua?"

Me: "He knows my boss."

Zaza: "Mr Ndlela is your boss?"

Me: "You know him?"

Zaza: "Yes. Wamazi ngaye uJoshua?"

Me: "Cha. Ngamazi ngidakiwe uJoshua"

Zaza: "Yena wayesekwazi ngaleyonkathi."

Me: "Hawu kanti kunjani la phandle."

Zaza: "Kubi sisi. But be grateful that Joshua is fighting to keep you alive. Ukuba omuny ubezokulaxaza."

I nodded. My head was spinning. Ngethuswa i-knock kwangena uThizo neKFC.

Thizo: "I brought you guys something to eat."

Me: "Thank you but I'm not hungry."

Thizo: "You worried about Joshua. I understand but kumele udle. Take a piece atleast"

I took a piece and ate.

Me: "Usumaze kangakanani uJoshua?"

Thizo: "We grew up together."

Me: "uJason yena nimazelaph?"

Thizo: "Naye. Sakhula sonke."

Me: "Uyamazi ubhuti wami?"

Thizo: "Yebo ngiyamazi. Whats with the questions?"

Me: "UJoshua noJason babanga ini?"

Thizo: "Maybe you should wait for Joshua to explain."

Me: "I want to know now."

Thizo: "You. Jason wants to kill you for revenge and Joshua won't let him."

Ngezwa umoya wam ushona phansi. Joshua was risking his life for me.

Me: "How did this all start?"

Thizo: "Kodwa yazi sisi mina ngith asilinde uJoshua kube wuye okuchazelayo."

Me: "I would like to know the truth now. Please"

Thizo: "Your brother had an affair with Didi. When she got pregnant wathi akasikhiphe. Kant uzoshona. For revenge Jason wanted to kill you."

Me: "How did Jason know me because I left home years ago?"

Thizo: "Angazi sisi but he had pictures of you usakhula."

Chapter 48.

Me: "UJason wayenasiph isthombe sami?"

Thizo: "Wawusakhula. I'm sure wawuse-high school when it was taken."

Me: "Naningazi vele or naqala ukungibona esthombeni?"

Thizo: "Saqala ukukubona esthombeni."

Me: "And you managed to recognise me?"

Thizo: "Joshua did and he told me ukth useyakwazi ukth ukuph but akafuni ukutshela uJason. Then we followed you around, but ingekho indlela yokungena kwakho until that day in the club."

Me: "Joshua drugged me?"

Thizo: "I did. Jason was there and ready to kill you. Kwakumele sithole indlela yokukubalekisa. After drugging you Joshua acted like a hero, saving a drunk lady. Not only we saved you but wathola nendlela yokungena kwakho."

Me: "To do what?"

Thiza: "Bug your house."

Me: "You were spying on me all this time?"

Thiza: "Yes, safaka emnyango kuphela. Just to see who goes in and out."

Me: "I don't understand. Why would you guys do all this to protect me nibe ningangazi?"

Thizo: "I think you should ask Joshua that question. Mina bengimsiza nje."

Me: "And you trust him?"

Thizo: "More then you realise."

Me: "Ey mpilo unzima. "

Zaza: "You can say that again. Amehlo akho abomvu"

Me: "I have a headache."

Zaza: "I have pain killers. I'll go get you one."

Thizo: "Akumele uwaphuze. If you take any medication now you will be addicted. Kumele uphuze amanzi kuphela."

Me: "Yini yona le uJoshua alokhu engihlohla yona?"

Thizo: "Its medication for pain. I'll go get you that glass of water" he got up and left.

Zaza: "You strong kodwa."

Me: "Don't you mean dead? I think I'm dead ukth nje umzimba awufuni ukuwa"

Zaza: "Don't talk like that aw"

Me: "Ngempela sisi. If you knew what I've gone through, you would understand."

Zaza: "But the fact that you still standing means you strong."

Me: "Ey angazi. Eyam impilo inzima nje. Njalo mengith kuyalunga kuvela okunye."

Thizo walked in with bottled water. Ngathatha ngaphuza.

Thizo: "Lala kancane uphumule."

Me: "You sound like Joshua"

Thizo: "Usuke eqinisile. Kumele uphumule."

They both walked out. Ngasukuma ngavula iskhwama ngakhipha okuphakathi. There was a laptop, a phone and earphones, clothes, sneakers and cash. I took out the phone and the earphones ngavala iskhwama ngasibeka. Ngayivula.

Deep down something told me that there was more to Joshua than everybody was telling me. What was he? A gangster or a killer? Did he know Sizwe? And if he did why didn't he tell me? I didn't know who to trust anymore. I was in Spain with strangers, running away from strangers, inlove with a stranger. I was one fucked up woman. Ukth ngangiphilelani was a mistery to me.

Ngethuswa ukukhala kwefoni. It was a private number.

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "I thought you would be asleep."

Me: "I'm not."

Joshua: "How was your flight?"

Me: "I was heavily drugged so I don't know."

Joshua: "I miss you."

Me: "You lied to me."

Joshua: "Thizo told you?"

Me: "What exactly are you?"

Joshua: "Meaning?"

Me: "You said you are a driver. Now I find out that you are a hardcore gangster. Are you planning on killing me?"

Joshua: "Uphi uThizo?"

Me: "In his room. Please don't change the subject. Are you going to kill me?"

Joshua: "You being selfish Thandeka. Here I am risking my life to protect you, wena uzongitshela lento

oyishoyo."

Me: "Do you blame me for not trusting you? After lamanga osungifunze wona. Yazi angisazi manje ukth who should I believe."

Joshua: "I'm sorry then."

Me: "I'm sorry too. Ungazelaphi uJason?"

Joshua: "What do mean?"

Me: "He knew me ngisakhula. Ungazelaph Joshua. And please don't lie."

Joshua: "I think Sizwe can answer that question for you."

Me: "Do you even love me Joshua?"

Joshua: "I wouldn't not be here if I didn't. You angry Gloria and I understand but you have to trust me. Please."

Me: "How? How do I trust you Joshua when you lie to my face."

There was a loud bang and the phone got cut off.

Tears filled my eyes. Did Joshua got shot? Was he dead? I dialed his number and it didn't even ring.

Ngavele ngazisola ukth bengimlwiselani. Uyena owayekhombisa ukuba nendaba nami.

Someone knocked.

Me: "Ngena" Kwangena uThizo ephethe ifoni.

Thizo: "Joshua wants to talk to you" he handed me the phone.

Me: "Hellow"

Joshua: "Sorry we got cut off."

Me: "You okay?"

Joshua: "I'm fine. Wena u-right?"

Me: "Angazi. I wish I was dead yazi. I'm tired of living this life Joshua"

Joshua: "Don't talk like that. Please."

Me: "Vele ngiphilelani? Ukuhlukomezeka?"

Joshua: "Ay Thandeka I love you and that should be enough."

Me: "You should let Jason kill me."

Joshua: "Over my dead body. I love you. I have to go now. I'll try to call again."

Me: "Bye."

Joshua: "Don't do anything stupid there. Ucebekhulu uyakuthanda."

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "Thank me by removing all those negative thoughts in your head. You deserve to live and I'll make sure of it."

Me: "I will try"

Joshua: "Try to rest. I'll contact you again soon."

Me: "I love you."

Joshua: "I love you more. Bye my love" he hung up.

I got up ngahambisa ifoni kumnikazi wayo. Ngabuyela embhedeni and tried to sleep.

Chapter 49.

Inhliziyo yam yayishaya engathi izophuma eshubeni. The forrest was endless and seemed to be getting more thicker and thicker. The running footsteps got louder and louder. I kept checking behind me ngingaboni muntu then decided to pick up the pace which changed into a fast run. I ran and ran but didn't reach the end of the forrest but instead ngathuka sengizwa amazwi. The laughter got louder until I was covering my ears. Someone grabbed me from behind wangivala umlomo. I kept fighting until he held a gun against my head.

Man1: "You scream, I shoot." another man appeared.

Man2: "You can't run." he pulled out a knife and came towards me. Joshua was calling my name from a distance. He kept calling and calling ngaze ngathuka ngavula amehlo.

Zaza: "You having a nightmare."

I sat up ngabheka iskhathi. It was after 11pm.

Me: "It felt so real. Thank you for waking me up."

Zaza: "Uphupha ini?"

Me: "Men chasing me."

Zaza: "Uzokwaz ukulala futhi?"

Me: "Yeah. Thank you sisi"

Zaza: "Awulambanga?"

Me: "Cha. Goodnight sisi"

Zaza: "Night" she got up and left. Ngayochama nami ngabuya ngalala futhi. I was missing home so bad. I didn't even get a chance to say goodbye to my friends. I'm sure they were worried about me. I didn't want to think about Sizwe. Selling me out to a ruthless gangster just like that. The fact that he came to see me claiming bayangidinga ekhaya kwakuyindlela nje yokuzobheka ukth uJason akakangibulali yini. But what was the link between Jason and Sizwe beside that Didi woman. If Jason knew me while growing up means he knew Sizwe before the affair, but how? Yena uJoshua wayengena ngaphi? I needed to know the truth because I was now caught in this web of lies and killing ekubeni mina ngangingazi lutho.

I don't know when I slept again but ngaphaphama sekusile. I went to shower ngaqeda ngazogqoka. Trust a man to pack for you avele apakish umbhedo wodwa. I wore a sweatpant ne-vest. Zaza walked in with food.

Zaza: "I don't even remember what its called but kumnandi."

Me: "And you pregnant. Most pregnant women eat anything."

Zaza: "Uyahlekisa. I see, yizwa i-taste."

I took a fork ngakha and she was right. It tasted so good shame plus kwase kuyiskhathi ngagcina ukudla.

We ate saqeda sase saxoxa nje. Zaza was outspoken and I planned to use that to my advantage. Obviously she knew Joshua more than me.

Me: "So what shall we do today?"

Zaza: "Une-energy today?"

Me: "I'm in Spain so I might aswel use this opportunity."

Zaza: "Well angazi ukth sizoyaphi. We can go shopping. But you have to change those clothes."

Me: "Why?"

Zaza: "It doesn't do you any justice at all. Wear jeans atleast"

Me: "Anginawo. I only have these."

Zaza: "Then we are seriously going shopping." she got up wayoshintsha wabuya.

Thizo: "Niyaphi?"

Zaza: "Shopping."

Thizo: "With what money? Did you exchange the currency?"

Zaza: "Not really."

Thizo: "Yimi ngedwa owayecabanga lokho. Here." wakhipha imali wamnika. "That should be enough."

Me: "Thank you"

Thizo: "Ningahambi phela kakhulu."

Zaza: "We won't" She kissed him sahamba.

We went to few shops. The fact that we didn't understand the language made it difficult for us to enjoy. After shopping we went to eat.

Me: "So, How did you end up with Thizo?"

Zaza: "We don't choose who we love"

Me: "I know ey. Najola esevele eseyigintsha?"

Zaza: "No. Sajola sisafunda. Ngake ngamyeka for a while nami ngixakwa ilempilo but I went back again"

Me: "Why?"

Zaza: "Uthando aluboni dade."

Me: "Awusabi kodwa?"

Zaza: "Kuyajwayeleka. Ngaqale ngamsaba nami ngenkath esaqala but ngabuye ngamjwayela."

Me: "They say gangsters are violent towards the ladies in thier lives. How true is that?"

Zaza: "Some pastors rape women in thier churchs but we don't assume all pastors are bad people. Same applies to gangsters.

Me: "I guess you right."

Zaza: "I am. Mina uThizo akakaze angishaye. Yes uyadinwa but akangishayi."

Me: "What about Joshua? Is he violent towards women?"

Zaza: "I can't say much about that. What I know is that Joshua gets angry. I've seen him. Nawe nje ngikunika i-tip. Avoid unnecessary fights."

Me: "I will keep that in mind."

Zaza: "Impela wenzenjalo."

Me: "Ukuth nje I don't think our relationship will last."

Zaza: "Why?"

Me: "Lies. Angisakwazi okuyiqiniso nokwamanga. Its like impilo yam yonke nje yakhelwe phezulu kwamanga."

Zaza: "Kwanzima sis"

Me: "You have no idea."

Zaza: "Manje uzokwenzenjani?"

Me: "Try to find the truth."

Zaza: "And if you don't like what you find?"

Me: "Atleast I would know."

Zaza: "Thats brave."

Me: "More like stupid but kuncon ngazi kunalokhu kuvelelwa izinto ezinzima zodwa."

Zaza: "Do you love Joshua?"

Me: "I think so."

Zaza: "Gloria, that guy really loves you. What man would want to kill his best friend for a woman he doesn't know. I admit that wayezekuwe ngobugebengu but now he is fighting for your survival. Don't hurt him. I don't think he can survive that kind of pain."

Me: "Okay."

Well things weren't exactly going my way but I had two weeks to dig her for more info.

Chapter 50.

We went back to the guest house safica uThizo ehleli nje ebuka i-tv.

Zaza: "Ubukani?"

Thizo: "Angazi. Ngiyabuka nje. So bekunjani out there?"

Me: "Great, ukth nje ngikhathele. I'll go shower and rest a bit."

Thizo: "What shall we buy for supper?"

Me: "I don't know. Mina ngisuthi guys."

Zaza: "Usuyolala?"

Me: "Impela. I know its early but ngikhathele."

Zaza: "Goodnight then"

Me: "Night guys." I went to my room ngakhumula ngayogeza ngaqeda ngagqoka ezokulala ngangena embhedeni. I was sleepy but I wanted to give them some privacy. Angazi ngazumeka nini ngathuswa ukunyakaza phansi komqamelo kanti ifoni. It was a call from a private number.

Me: "Hellow"

Joshua: "Ulele yini?"

Me: "Yes. Unjani?"

Joshua: "I'm okay. Wena unjani?"

Me: "I'm okay."

Joshua: "I miss you."

Me: "I miss you too."

Joshua: "I saw Bongeka. She was worried about you but I told her that you decided to take a break for few days."

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "You welcome. I really have to go my love. Sobuye sixoxe"

Me: "Okay bye"

Joshua: "I love you Thandeka"

Me: "Me too" he hung up ngazama ukulala futhi.

Ngaphaphama ebsuku when I heard a strange noise. Ngalalelisisa ngezwa ukuth it was Thizo and Zaza doing thier business. I was missing Joshua, making love kwakungekhona engangikujwayele kwazise I didn't allow men to cross that boundry but uJoshua yena wayengifundisile ukth having sex isn't just about pleasing a man but rather pleasing yourself aswel. After the rape I didn't think I would ever have sex again but I did and I had hoped it will remove that memory but it didn't. Instead it brought me more problems. Tears filled my eyes as I thought about the abortion. The pain I felt and the sense of lost for someone I was meant to keep.

Ngaze ngazumeka ngalala besa-busy.

Ngavuka ngakusasa izulu linetha kubanda. Zaza knocked once wangena.

Me: "Morning"

Zaza: "Unjani sisi"

Me: "Ngi-right wena?"

Zaza: "Ngikhathele. Awuhlehle ngizolala"

Ngahlehla wangena walala.

Me: "Uphi uThizo?"

Zaza: "He went to get breakfast"

Me: "Okay. Manje wena ukhathazwe yini ekseni kusa?"

Zaza: "Ilesisisu oe."

Me: "Okay"

Zaza: "Usuke wakhuluma noJoshua?"

Me: "Last night"

Zaza: "I'm sure you miss him"

Me: "You have no idea."

Zaza: "U-Onica wayemduba njalo kodwa kuphele usuku olulodwa esebuyele."

Me: "Why?"

Zaza: "Wayemjolela. Amshaye uJoshua. Ngelinye ilanga we were having a party. Kumnandi nje impela. Sezwa ngempama isingena ku-Onica qede wakhapha ibhande wamenzani. Tjo ngasho ngalelo langa ngath uJoshua unolaka shame."

Me: "Manje bengakhuzi ngani abanye?"

Zaza: "Akakhuzwa uJoshua uma esediniwe. Nawe ngikunika i-tip. Yabo uma ethi 'NO' don't push it."

Me: "We ay ngeke engath mina ngeke ngilunge shame"

Zaza: "Meaning?"

Me: "Nginenkani yokudalwa."

Zaza: "Nam nganginayo. Sasike sixabane noThizo kubenzima. Kugcine mina kusakhulunywa kodwa la angithola khona ngangiqala ngikhale ngaye ngigcine sengikhala ngogogo."

Me: "Do you ever think about leaving him?"

Zaza: "That's not an option. Once you in, you in."

Me: "Meaning?"

Zaza: "You can't leave."

Me: "But u-Onica wahlukana noJoshua nje"

Zaza: "And Onica wasn't directly involved."

Me: "And I am?"

Zaza: "Yes. Your brother Sizwe basically offered you to Jason. Futh ukuba uJoshua akekh ngabe kade wafa. Ngisho uSbusiso Ndlela naye wa....." she stopped.

Me: "What do you mean offered?"

Zaza: "Shit. Me and my big mouth. Forget I said anything."

Me: "No. We can't forget. Please tell me."

Zaza: "I'm sorry oe. But I can't tell you. Joshua will explain to you."

Me: "My brother is a gangster aswel?"

Zaza: "Please don't try to make me talk. If the guys find out that I told you, Thizo will never forgive me. Kumele kube uJoshua okutshelayo."

Me: "Am I going to be killed?"

Zaza: "By who?"

Me: "My brother's friends. Kwakona nje who offers his own sister to a heartless gangster." tears filled my eyes ngaziyeka zaziphumela.

Zaza: "Ngiyaxolisa sisi. Yimi osekubuyisela usizi obeselwedlule. Don't panic. Joshua will never let anyone harm you."

Me: "What if he wants to hurt me himself?"

Zaza: "He will never hurt you. If he wanted to hurt you ngabe kade akulimaza. Relax."

Me: "Bonke abantu bangitshela izinto ezisabisayo qede bathi relax. How does one relax when there are men out there wanting to kill?"

Zaza: "When there are men like Joshua. Who would do anything to protect the ones they love"

Me: "This seems to be getting bigger and bigger and kubuhlungu ngoba yimi ngedwa ongazi lutho."

Thizo: "Wozani nizodla."

Zaza: "Asambe sodla. Ngiyafa indlala"

Me: "You go. I'll join you just now"

Zaza: "Okay" she walked out.

I sat there and just cried. Why did my brother hate me like that. Even if he was the member of the gang pho why offer me aswel. What else was I going to discover? That my parents are criminals too or maybe Thulani is the leader.

Ngase ngikufisa ukufa ngoba vele ngangiphila ngokhlukomezeka. Being raped at 16, having an abortion, falling pregnant at 18, being raped several times during pregnancy, be beaten up and left to die. And now this

Chapter 51.

6 Days later.

I was still asleep when I felt the bed move as if someone was sitting. I lay there and pretended to be asleep while I debated on my next move. If I scream who ever was there engangibulala quickly. The best option was to wake up and look my killer in the eye before dying. I slowly opened my eyes and couldn't believe what I saw. Joshua was sitting there starring at me. I woke up ngaphuma ngisho embhedeni ngama ngezinyawo. He smiled and stood up too wavula izandla. I threw myself at him and hugged him tight.

Joshua: "Bengikhunjulwa ngempela" he kissed my lips.

Me: "No. Why on earth would I miss you?" I joked.

Joshua: "Nami ngiyabona. Uyalala bo. Yazi liphelile i-hour ngilana ngikubuka ulele."

Me: "Kanti ufike nini?"

Joshua: "About two hours ago. Anyway unjani?"

Me: "I miss home. Wena unjani?"

Joshua: "Bengikhumbule wena but wena ubungangikhumbuli nje" he sulked.

Me: "You know I was joking. Let me brush my teeth and show you how much I've missed you."

Joshua: "Forget brushing. Sondela la" he held my weist and kissed slow but deep. We kissed for a while before letting go.

Me: "You look different."

Joshua: "Angishefanga. Awukaze ungibone nentshebe namadevu before."

Me: "I think I like this version of you"

Joshua: "I love me too." he kissed me again and this time he took my top off.

Me: "Zaza and Thizo?"

Joshua: "Abekho. Basayobona idolobha."

Me: "Okay"

I took his top off. He had a bruise engathi khona okumkwebhile. Seeing it brought back the real reason why we were there even in the first place.

Joshua: "Whats wrong?"

Me: "Jason"

Joshua: "I took care of him. Relax"

Me: "You killed him?" I whispered.

Joshua: "Well it was either him or me and if it was me nawe ubuzolandela soon"

Me: "But I need answers."

Joshua: "To what questions?"

Me: "My brother Sizwe."

Joshua: "Then I suggest you ask Sizwe all your questions."

Me: "He will lie."

Joshua: "He won't." he laid me down in bed and took off my underwear.

Me: "How do you know?"

Joshua: "Can we talk about this after I'm done here?" he slipped a finger inside. I went quiet as my body relaxed to his touch.

Joshua: "I want you take in all of me. I want to be so deep."

Me: "I don't think thats possible. You are large."

Joshua: "Then we will stretch you until I can fit in just fine." he stopped touching me wakhumula and handed me a condom.

Joshua: "Futh kuzomele sihlole igazi. I don't want a rubber between us. I want to come inside. Nawe ungizwe kahle when I do."

I helped him put the rubber on before he eased himself between my legs. It felt so good I threw my head back and held my breath.

Joshua: "Usho uma ngikulimaza."

Me: "Okay."

Joshua: "I want to be deeper than this. Relax your muscles." he rocked back and fourth. I wrapped my arms around his neck.

Joshua: "Lift your leg up for me" I did that and did the same with the other leg. He moved again. A bit faster this time and then stopped.

Me: "Why are you stopping?"

Joshua: "I'm not all in just yet. Put your legs on my shoulders" I did that and gasped as he pushed himself in.

Joshua: "Cross your ankles behind my head." I did that.

He moved slowly. I moved aswel meeting his gentle thrusts.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes." my orgasm was slowly approaching.

Joshua: "You feel so good". I didn't answer. He picked up the pace.

Me: "Mhmmm" I moaned out loud.

Joshua: "Right there my love. Come for me. Come" I didn't need anymore encouragement. My climax ripped right through me making me see the stars. I cried out and fell heavy on the bed.

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "I love you too"

Joshua: "I'll never break your heart. I swear" he kissed my forehead and then kissed my lips slowly allowing his tounge to massage my tounge.

I could feel my orgasm building up again. I made sure that I met his each and every thrust.

Joshua: "I'm about to come. Hold me tight" he went faster and faster until we both came. My whole body was shaking. Joshua fell forward and put his head in the curve between my neck and shoulder. We stayed like that until our breathing went back to normal.

Me: "You weren't lying when you said you were the best."

Joshua: "You obviously didn't believe me"

Me: "I did not"

Joshua: "Awulimalanga kodwa?"

Me: "No. Thank you"

Joshua: "For what?"

Me: "Everything that you did for me"

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "Me too. Can I rest a bit before waking up?"

Joshua: "No problem. Put your head on my chest and rest" I did that as my mind was revising what just happened.

Joshua: "Bakuphathe kahle kodwa oThizo?"

Me: "Yes."

Joshua: "They told you about Jason?"

Me: "Yes. I'm confused. Ungazelaphi uJason? Thizo said he had a picture of me ngisakhula."

Joshua: "Sizwe can answer that question for you."

Me: "Wena awazi?"

Joshua: "Even if I do my love. I think it's best if kuwuye okuchazelayo."

Me: "Okay. Pho wena how did you manage to recognise me ngalenkath uJason esengicinga?"

Joshua: "The birthmark on your arm. Ngayibona mhla ngiqala ukukubona. Ijwayelekile ebukeya njenge afrika or inhliziyi but yours is unique. That's how I recognised you."

Chapter 52.

Joshua: "Your birthmark is shaped like a star. Ngayibona esthombeni kanti ngizoth ngisePick 'n Pay eBerea Centre ngikubone. But you were different. It was obvious that you were well off financially but wawungazithwele."

Me: "And you saw all that uqala ukungibona?"

Joshua: "Yes. You spoke to the cashier and the cleaning lady. I don't know what you said but wabashiya bechazekile. So I left my things there and followed you. I saw your home then told Thizo that I've found the girl that Jason wants to kill. Wacela ukukubona ngamkhombisa. Ngaleyonkath ngase ngazi ukth theres no way I'm handing you over to Jason."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "I may be a criminal MaMemela but I'm still a man."

Me: "You don't say"

Joshua: "Is that a challenge?"

Me: "Maybe" I laughed.

Joshua: "I can take you right now and keep going until you cry and beg for mercy"

Me: "Okay, okay. You are a man Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "Nazo-ke. Anyway I followed you around for few days. Ngabona where you work and your friends. Mr Ndlela needed a serious cash injection and thats how I got in. Qede ngahlanganisa izinkampani zombili ukuz ngizokwaz ukukubona kahle."

Me: "The other day you said that building is safer than any other place. How?"

Joshua: "Ngokukhombisa in SA. Anyway ngase ngidinga indlela yokungena kwakho. Ngangingeke ngivele ngithi 'uxolo sisi mina ngiwuJoshua and my best friend wants to kill you' Nawe wawuzoth ngiyahlanya. After few days Thizo called me wath use 21 Century and Jason is there to take you out. Sasesivele singasezwani naye so wasezokwenzela ephuzwini. Thats why Thizo drugged you and then I acted like a hero."

Me: "What did you do to my house?"

Joshua: "Ngafaka ama-camera emawindini nasemnyango yowu-2 kuphela."

As Joshua spoke echaza imkhuba yakhe I was so calm, infact it was scary even for me. I was inlove with a world class criminal.

Joshua: "What are you thinking?"

Me: "Lento ongithshela yona. Awusho uSbu ungena ngaphi?"

Joshua: "Bajwayelene noJason. I think he sent him to spy on you. Thats why ngingamfuni."

Me: "Does Mr Ndlela know?"

Joshua: "No he doesn't."

Me: "Tjo ay kunzima emhlabeni."

Joshua: "You don't have to tell me."

Me: "When are we going back?"

Joshua: "Anytime you want."

Me: "Tomorrow"

Joshua: "Okay. Awusathandi ukuhlala eSpain?"

Me: "Kyafana nje my body will be here while my everything else will be in SA. I won't enjoy."

Joshua: "I understand."

Me: "Thank you for doing what you did for me. Bengizofa kungabi ndaba yamuntu."

Joshua: "You are safe now." he took my hand and made me touch his manhood.

Me: "You huge"

Joshua: "I'm hungry"

Me: "For?"

Joshua: "You." his hand touched between my legs.

Me: "I'm still wet from the last time."

Joshua: "Thats perfect." he slipped his finger in and went straight to my g-spot.

Me: "Aaaaah" I cried out. He removed his hand.

Jason: "Lala ngesisu"

I turned over ngalala ngesisu. He sat on my butt and gave me a massage.

Me: "You have really soft hands."

Joshua: "Thank you"

The massage lasted for a while and then followed by a series of love making. By the time we finished I was finished too. Joshua ran us a hot bath sageza saqeda sagcoba sagqoka. We were busy making the bed when I heard Zaza scream. Without thinking I ran to thier room ngavula and almost had a heartache. I quickly closed the door and went back to the room.

Joshua: "They are busy with thier business."

Me: "Why didn't you stop me?"

Joshua: "You ran so fast. Ngase ngith awuth ngikuyeke uyozionela."

Me: "Mxm. I'm going to need counselling."

Joshua: "I can do that right here and right now"

Me: "Hha sengingafa phela manje."

Joshua: "Uyigwala"

Me: "Zaza is pregnant. I don't think she should do that."

Joshua: "Its still early aw. Kanti umenzani?"

Me: "Tjo I can't even explain what I just saw"

Joshua: "But you can show me." he bit his lip.

Me: "Khohlwa. I am not doing that."

Joshua: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Yazi I can make you beg for it."

Me: "Please don't"

Joshua's face fell as if he was remembering something painful.

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Nothing my love. I'm just looking at you"

Me: "And that makes you sad because?"

Joshua: "You perfect, into oshoda ngayo nje ingane. When ever I see a pregnant woman I think about you. Its so unfair Thandeka. You have all the qualities to be a great mother" he looked away.

Me: "We can't have it all, can we?" tears filled my eyes.

Joshua: "It makes me hate your family even more."

Me: "Its my fault. If I didn't have an abortion mhlambe ngabe angikho lana."

Joshua: "Its not. Iphuth lalaba abakulimaza. Ukuba awulimalanga nje ngabe sengmbekile uCebekhulu lapho, kodwa-ke I love you more and more each day"

Me: "I love you too."

Joshua: "Maybe we can adopt."

Me: "You already have two kids. "

Joshua: "I know but I'd love to have ours."

Me: "We can decide on that after I've sorted out things with my family."

Joshua: "That's fair enough. I'm starving"

Me: "Let's go out"

Joshua: "Okay. Asambe"

We walked out. I was grateful not to bump into Zaza or Thizo. After what I saw. Tjo.

Chapter 53

We left Spain the next day. 10 hours later we landed in OR Tambo airport and took another flight to Durban. I was half happy about going home but sad because I didn't know what I was about to discover.

Joshua: "You look worried, are you okay?"

Me: "I'm fine. Just tired."

Joshua: "You will rest in my place"

Me: "I was hoping to go home. I miss my place. I hope you don't mind"

Joshua: "I don't."

The guy came to pick us up and dropped me and Joshua at my place before ahambise abanye.

Me: "I'm hungry. How about a pizza?"

Joshua: "I'll order. Wena hamba uyogeza"

I went to shower real quickly ngaphuma ngayogqoka. My bedroom was clean. I expected a bit of dust since kwasekuyiskhathi ngahamba.

Joshua: "Are you dressed?" he knocked.

Me: "Yes. Ngena"

Joshua: "The Pizza is here, but I want to shower first before eating."

Me: "The towels are in the closet."

Joshua: "Thank you" he went to shower.

I went to the kitchen and checked. Everything was in place but clean.

Me: "Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes, sengiyaphuma"

Me: "Did you clean this place?"

Joshua: "Yes. Ngilalelana before ngize kini."

Me: "Thank you. Ungisizile"

Joshua: "You welcome." He came out ebhince ithawula kuphela.

Me: "You go to the gym?"

Joshua: "No. Ubuziswa yini?"

Me: "The muscles."

Joshua: "I used to but not anymore. Sengayeka."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Iskhathi angisasitholi."

Me: "Okay. You look fine though."

Joshua: "I know. So when are you going to see your family?"

Me: "Sometimes next week."

Joshua: "Okay. Anyway ngicela ufonele uBongeka. She was really worried about you."

Me: "Let me call her now. Wena ibe ugqoka ngiyafa indlala" I went to use the land line. Her phone rang twice wayibamba.

Bongeka: "Yes"

Me: "Usuyibamba kanje ifoni?"

Bongeka: "Oh my God. Kodw Gloria uyenza kanjani into enje ngempela?"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Bongeka: "I was worried sick. Futh ukuba angibonanga uJoshua ngabe kade yam inhliziyo yami."

Me: "Kwase kuphuthuma oe"

Bongeka: "Mxm. Can we come see you?"

Me: "Ey love ngikhathele. Ngicela nifike kusasa."

Bongeka: "Okay. By the way i-trip yase Italy ihlehlile."

Me: "Why?"

Bongeka: "Ubungekh nje. Plus uLindiwe ubengasezukuhamba. Besingeke sihambe sodwa"

Me: "Why uLindiwe engasahambi?"

Bongeka: "Family drama. Ubethe uzosichazela when she gets back."

Me: "From where?"

Bongeka: "Home. Ugodukile, but ubezobuya today."

Me: "Gosh, I wonder what happened"

Bongeka: "Sozwa ngaye kusasa."

Me: "Okay girl. Goodnight."

Bongeka: "Goodnight love" we both hung up.

Joshua: "I'm done. Lets eat"

Me: "I'll go get the pizza" I went to the kitchen ngathatha i-pizza noJoshua weza wathatha i-Juice nama-glass sayohlala phansi sadla.

Joshua: "Ungibukani?"

Me: "I was just thinking"

Joshua: "About?"

Me: "You."

Joshua: "Kindly share"

Me: "Its silly"

Joshua: "Okay. Share your silly thoughts with me"

Me: "What do you hate the most?"

Joshua: "Cheating. Ngiyamzonda umuntu ofebayo."

Me: "Wena awu-cheat?"

Joshua: "I don't."

Me: "But all men cheat."

Joshua: "I'm not all men, I'm Joshua."

Me: "Okay. Mr Smooth"

Joshua: "Wena uzo-cheater?"

Me: "Cha. I was just asking nje"

We ate saze saqeda saqoqa and then went to bed salala.

Chapter 54.

Joshua woke me up the next day.

Joshua: "So you do wake up looking like this" he kissed my lips.

Me: "Like what?"

Joshua: "Umuhle. Vuka sambe"

Me: "Syaphi eksen kanje?"

Joshua: "Sjura is having a braai and we are invited."

Me: "Early kanje? Bekwalani nje ukth alinde i-weekend."

Joshua: "Do you have plans?"

Me: "Yeah. My friends are coming"

Joshua: "Bacele bafike later after work. Please." he begged.

Me: "Okay. Lend me your phone ngitshela uBongeka"

He gave me the phone nga-send i-sms.

Me: "Manje iqala nini le-braai?"

Joshua: "Around 10."

Me: "Hau manje mina ungivuselani early kanje?"

Joshua: "Ingoba i-braai iseMlazi. And angifuni sifike late. Zaza will be there too."

I nodded and went to shower, Joshua joined me sageza saqeda sayogqoka.

Joshua: "Uzogqokani?"

Me: "A dress."

Joshua: "No wear jeans ne-All Star"

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Uzobona phambili. Sizqala kwami kodwa senze i-breakfast ngishitshe nami"

Me: "Okay" I wore a black skinny jean neskibha esi-blue namateki amhlophe.

Joshua: "Nazo-ke."

I made the bed quickly saqeda sahamba. Safika endlini kaJoshua kukhona uJulia noZinhle.

Zinhle: "You just in time for breakfast."

Julia: "I'll get you a plate"

Me: "Thank you" I sat down. UJoshua wayogqoka upstairs.

Zinhle: "How was Spain?"

Me: "Bekumnandi. Nina nahamba kahle eLondon?"

Zinhle: "Was sad but wafihlwa kahle. Sabuya ngakusasa kodwa"

Me: "Why?"

Zinhle: "Drama. Some families sisi"

Julia came back with the plates sathula nathi. Joshua came back dressed in jeans neskibha esimhlophe namateki.

Julia: "You look nice dad"

Joshua: "Ngiyabonga sthandwa sami"

He sat down sadla saqeda. Julia offered to do the dishes thina sahamba.

Safika eMlazi sebekhona abanye.

Joshua: "Yabona-ke ukthi bengisholani ukth gqoka u-jean"

Me: "Is it a dress code?"

Joshua: "Cha but we like it."

Zaza came to greet us and took me to the kitchen to meet the other ladies.

Zaza: "Girls, uGloria lo. Gloria uSlie lo, uTumi lo, uZimbili lo, bese kuba uZama lo" she pointed them one by one. I just nodded not knowing what to do.

Slie: "UGloria kaJoshua." I didn't reply since I wasn't sure whether it was a question or a statement.

Zama: "Awumsabi?"

Me: "Why should I be afraid of him?"

Zimbili: "Uyasthela isbhaxu uJoshua shame. Ngiyambonga"

Tumi: "Aysuka manje nimthuselani omunye. UJoshua akahlanyi."

Zaza: "Thank you Tumi. Bayaphapha laba. Gloria would you like something to drink?"

Me: "Juice please"

Slie: "Awuphuzi vele?"

Me: "I do but once after a while."

Zama: "What you do for a living?"

Me: "I'm an Auditor."

Zimbili: "Wow." she went quiet, infact they all went quiet.

Ngavele ngazisola ukth bengiyaphi. Obviously me and the girls sasingeke nje sizwane.

Zama: "UJoshua ngamdela eshaya u-Onica. Wamshaya kwathula wonke umuntu. Ngath kuNjabulo akalamule wanqaba"

Me: "So you watched him beat someone up?"

Zama: "It happened so quickly. Sasixoxa nje no-Onica kwakhala ifoni wayiphendula uJoshua qede weza kuye wamfaka impama. Sath sisathuswe impama kweza enye aybo wadonsa ibhande wamenzani. Yey" she clapped her hands loud.

Zaza: "Kodwa no-Onica wayefeba futh efeba ngesibomu. We can blame Joshua but naye wayeziphethe kabi."

Slie: "Ngisho kungathiwa wayenjani kodwa uJoshua wayemthatha kancane u-Onica. Emthethisa njalo"

Zaza: "Kade ngangisho ukth wena Slie uyamzonda uJoshua"

Slie: "I don't aw."

Tumi: "Ay mina engikushoyo nje ukth mthande umunt wakho ungalaleli izinkulumo zabant ngoba ezinye zine agenda" she looked at Slie.

Joshua walked in elandelwa uThizo.

Joshua: "Ladies"

Tumi: "Unjani bhuti"

Joshua: "I'm not complaining." he sat down next to me.

Thizo: "Seku-right?"

Zama: "Almost"

Joshua: "Aw Slindile ukhona nawe." he looked at her.

Slie: "As you can see."

Joshua: "Impela I see. Iyaphila ingane?"

Slie: "Yeah u-right."

Joshua: "Isafana nami?"

Slie: "Aykaze ifane nawe."

Joshua: "Aw. Okay" he laughed.

I sat there not knowing what to do. Obviously there was something between Slie and Joshua and whatever it was yayimenza uncomfortable uSlie while uJoshua seemed to be enjoying a private joke on his own.

Slie: "Yaz ngavele ngacikeka. Kwath angihambe"

Joshua: "Uhambe kahle"

She took a bag waphuma wahamba.

Joshua: "You okay?" he rested his hand on my thigh.

Me: "Ngi-right"

Joshua: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes I'm sure." I lied. I wasn't okay. I felt like an idiot and way out of place. Infact ngangizisola ukth bengiyaphi.

Chapter 55.

Joshua: "Lets go outside" he got up and took my hand saphuma.

5 guys were joking around the braai stand. I knew Joshua's friends were gangsters but they didn't look like it at all.

Joshua: "Gents nanguke losisi owantshontsha inhliziyi yami."

Thizo: "Futh ungaphinde uyibuyisele sisi." we all laughed.

Joshua: "Gloria, uNjabulo lo, uXolani lo, uNtokozo noThizo." they all took turns to shake my hand.

Xolani: "Syajabula ukukwazi sisi"

Me: "Nami ngiyajabula"

Tumi and Zaza brought the food and drinks kwahlalwa phansi kwadliwa.

Xolani: "Manje Joshua uzwile ukth uDuma uyeza?"

Joshua: "Not now ndoda"

Xolani: "Why not now? Ngiyacabanga ukth uma impilo kaGloria isengozini kumele azi. UDuma uyamsongela kanzima"

I swallowed hard ngabheka uJoshua ngamthola e-relaxed nje engath akwenzekanga lutho.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes" I said without looking up. Joshua's hands cupped my chin lifting my face as he lowered his closer. In my head I kept saying 'Please don't kiss me' until I felt his warm lips touch mine and his tongue invading my mouth. He kissed me for a while and then let go. I was so embarrassed.

Me: "I need the ladies room" I whispered.

Joshua: "Come I'll show you"

Tumi: "No I'll take you. Hlala phansi Joshua" she got up wahlala uJoshua ngahamba noTumi.

Tumi: "Never ever hang your head in shame. You are letting Joshua win"

Me: "Meaning?"

Tumi: "That kiss. You doing exactly what he wants you to do. Be so embarrassed and carry that guilt in your eyes."

Me: "So what should I do?"

Tumi: "You are a woman Gloria. You should know how to control a man's sexual behaviour. Right now Joshua is controlling yours. I saw him earlier. He touched your thigh waphenduka imvu. Men like Joshua and Xolani are about being in control. They don't want someone doing the controlling part."

Me: "And how exactly should I control Joshua?"

Tumi: "When ever he does that, respond. Kiss him for the finals and make sure you turn him on."

Me: "And what if he decided to fuck me in the car? Thats Joshua we talking about."

Tumi: "Say no and tell him it will be better at home and when you get home change into something small and sexy"

Me: "And that will make him stop?"

Tumi: "Yes. He hates being turned on phambi kwabantu."

Me: "How do you know all this?"

Tumi: "I'm married to a gangster oe. Before ngishade noXolani ngabuza uJoshua ngob nami wayengixaka sometimes uXolani. What I'm telling you is what Joshua told me. They hate it when we ladies control the situation."

Me: "Wow wangisiza."

Tumi: "Ngempela yenzenjalo ngoba ay uJoshua ukuphetha. He knows how to shut you up and turn you into a sheep. Before you know it uzobe azini ukuth ucabangani before you even think that thing"

Joshua walked in wasfica simile ekhishini. He stood behind me and wrapped his hands around my waist.

Joshua: "Ngicela ungiphe i-glass Tumi. Leyana isivele yafa"

Tumi took the glass wamnika.

Joshua: "Are you done?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Asambe" he took my hand sahamba.

The braai went on and it wasn't that bad anymore. Talking to Tumi helped me a lot. Joshua was sitting there drinking coke like it was a glass of Vodka. He was calm, infact too calm and I knew there was nothing calm inside him.

After a while he got up wavalelisa wathi asambe. I said goodbye to the ladies and promise to visit again.

Tumi: "Ungakhohlwa ntokazi"

Me: "I won't. Thank you so much"

We got in the car and drove away.

Me: "Wamenzani uSlie?"

Joshua: "Ey lowo. Ngambona uSlie ngamshela wangiqoma. Ngamtshela ukth mina angibhaqwa. Wath okay. Kuyaba ngelinye ilanga ngizombheka ngakubo ngimfica emotweni nomuny nje umfana. Aphike ukth bayajola. Ngith fine. Kwaphela amaviki ambalwa aqale athi akazizwa kahle. Ngimuse kudokotela kuthiwe ukhulelwe. Ngimbuze ukth ubani ubab wengane angaphumi nazwi"

Me: "Wena wawungakaze ulale naye?"

Joshua: "I always use protection Gloria. Nakuye sasiyifaka. Kimi avume ukth ingane akuyona eyami kodw kubant athi eyami mina angisamfuni. Yazalwa ingane bayibona abantu. Amajita athi akuyona. Abangani bakh bath eyami siyafana. Njengob ubumbona nje udliwa unembeza wokuth wayesengipha ingane yakhe."

Me: "She hates you."

Joshua: "Fine by me. You should call Bongeka" he handed me his phone.

Ngayithatha ngamfonela.

Bongeka: "Yes"

Me: "Its me. Senikuphi?"

Bongeka: "I just left work. Ngizekwakho."

Me: "Okay ungilinde ngisayothenga"

Bongeka: "Sharp" she hung up.

Joshua: "So you want to go shopping?"

Me: "Yes please."

He took me to Gateway Mall ngathenga engangikudinga and then drove me home. My friends were all there waiting outside. I went to open bangena while Joshua and I took the things to the kitchen.

Joshua: "I'll see you later." he kissed my forehead and left.

Neliswa: "Is it just me or Joshua looks different"

Me: "He grew a beard."

Lindiwe: "Joshua fucks you real good. Buka nje umhle kanjani."

Me: "Aybo washo engath ngangimubi before?"

Bongeka: "Ngempela kodwa usithuselani?"

Neliswa: "I almost went to early labour ngenxa yakho."

Me: "I'm sorry guys."

Lindiwe: "Its fine oe."

Chapter 55.

We talked about a lot of things but I didn't tell my friends about the real reason why I went to Spain. It was bad enough that there was someone after me again even though Joshua wasn't even that worried or maybe he was but didn't want to panic.

Neliswa: "Wena Lindiwe kwenzekani kuwe?"

Lindiwe: "It turns out I don't know my parents at all"

Me: "Meaning?"

Lindiwe: "My father had a son thina singazi"

Bongeka: "Hau kahleni boh. Manje nina nizwe ngobani?"

Lindiwe: "Sizwe ngoba eseshonile. He was killed in some gang violence."

Neliswa: "Tjo kwaze kwanzima."

Lindiwe: "It gets worse, my cousin Duma is planning this big revenge"

My blood went cold. Jason was Lindiwe's half brother.

Neliswa: "U-right Gloria?"

Me: "I have a headache" I lied.

Lindiwe: "Maybe we should let you rest."

Me: "Its fine. Lizodlula. Manje u-cousin wakh ubazi yini ukth une-half brother?"

Lindiwe: "Ubazi. It seems like we are the only ones who didn't know. Ubaba unesbindi shame, uyifihla kanjani kodw into enje?"

Bongeka: "Maybe wayengafuni ukuniphoxa."

Lindiwe: "I don't even know how to deal with it. Imagine finding out that you had a step brother and he was some hardcore criminal."

Neliswa: "We don't choose family sisi."

Lindiwe: "I know, I feel sorry for who ever that killed him."

Me: "Why?"

Lindiwe: "Because uDuma is crazy. Nami nje nginakh ukumsaba."

My heart was no longer there. It was such a mess and it kept pilling up icindezela mina ngaphansi.

Bongeka: "When is the funeral?"

Lindiwe: "Next week sunday. Kunemidanti emining elandelwayo since kumele azongcwatshelwa ekhaya."

Neliswa: "Tjo kwaze kwanzima."

Me: "You can say that again."

My friends left hours later. The moment the walked out I called Joshua.

Joshua: "MaMemela"

Me: "Can you come over?"

Joshua: "Right now?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Ey yazi ngi-busy kanjani nje. Can you give me an hour or so?"

Me: "Ukuphi kanti?" I could hear the noise behind him.

Joshua: "I'm busy. I'll see you after a hour" he hung up.

I called him again.

Joshua: "Gloria"

Me: "Ukuphi Joshua? Obani laba abakhuluma emva kwakho?"

Joshua: "Ungayenzi lento ocabanga ukuyenza. Please"

Me: "Uliblele amantombazane lapho?" I was losing my patience.

Joshua: "Don't you dare use that tone with me."

Me: "Mxm. You know what, yekela. Nx" I hung up angagqinsila naleyofoni. I went to look for my car keys ngazithola ngagqoka i-jacket. The phone rang ngayiphendula.

Me: "Hellow"

Joshua: "Unxaphela bani?"

Me: "I'm sorry."

Joshua: "Udiniwe?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Okay. I'll be there as soon as I can."

Me: "Don't bother." I hung up ngabeka ifoni eceleni and left.

I drove straight to Westville. Ngafica uSizwe egeza imoto.

Sizwe: "Hau this is a nice surprise."

I stood there ngambuka ngisazibuza ukth what kind of a monster was he. Selling me to a thug behind my back qede aveze izinyo.

Me: "Baphi omama?"

Sizwe: "Ngaphakathi. Awubukeki u-right. Is everything okay?"

Me: "Like you care. Awusho ngempela unhloboni yenza?"

Sizwe: "Aybo Thandeka yini?"

Me: "Jason? Does it ring any bell?" his face changed.

Sizwe: "Angazi ukth ukhuluma ngani."

Me: "Is that why you came looking for me?" I was almost shouting.

Sizwe: "Watch your tone. I am your brother"

Me: "Really? Are you really my brother? Does your wife know that you had an affair with a kid, qede uyawaphika amanyala akho."

My dad walked out.

Dad: "Aybo kwenzenjani? Namemezana phandle?"

Me: "Ask your son"

Dad: "Thandeka ngenani endlini. Musani ukumemezana phandle."

I didn't argue I went inside wangilandela uSizwe.

Mama: "Kwenzekani?" She walked downstairs.

Me: "Buza indodana yakho. Did you know that Sizwe was sleeping with some girl nje wamitha qede uSizwe wamkhiphisa isisu kanti uzoshona and in return her crazy brother wanted to kill me for revenge."

Dad: "Hawu Sizwe, iqiniso leli?"

Sizwe: "Kwaba iphutha."

Me: "Iphutha? Ubufuna ngibulawe Sizwe. Akukho phutha lapho."

Mama: "Esaphi kodwa sona leso sigebengu?"

Me: "UJason Ntombela."

Dad: "Lo okuthiwa ubulewe?"

I didn't answer him. I turned to Sizwe.

Me: "Why? Yini engake ngakwenza yona ukth usungaze udayise ngami?"

He didn't answer.

Mama: "Yehlisa umoya Thandeka. Mnike ithuba achaze."

Me: "Achaze ini mama? Yini azoyichaza ngoba vele akaphiki ukth wavumela inswelaboya ingibulale ngenxa yamacala akhe."

Dad: "Iqiniso leli Sizwe?"

He didn't answer.

Me: "Vele iqiniso naye uyazi."

Dad: "Manje wena uzwa ngobani ukth uSizwe ubese ezokubulalisa?"

Me: "Abangani bakhe uJason."

Ngethuswa i-knock. Sizwe got up wayovula kwangena uJoshua. Inhliziyo kwavele kwangath izoma.

Joshua: "Sanibona"

Dad: "Unjani mtanami?"

Joshua: "Siphilile baba singezwa kini" he looked at me with warning eyes ngavele ngabheka le.

Dad: "Syaphila nathi. Singakusiza ngani ndodana?"

Joshua: "Bengizobheka nangu usisi walayikhaya."

Sizwe: "Awunanhlonipho. Usuyazingenela nje la emzini kababa"

Joshua: "Isn't that the kettle calling the pot black?"

Sizwe: "Uyinja yesigebengu. Angifani nawe"

Joshua: "Impela asifani. Wena waba nesbindi sokudlwengula uThande...." he stopped wangibuka.

Chapter 56.

Dad: "Uthini!!"

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka. USizwe noJason yibo abakudlwengula"

A quickly as lightning my dad punched Sizwe several times before Joshua could manage to stop him. My mother was screaming begging my dad to stop beating him up. I just stood there and listened to the beating of my heart.

Dad: "Umbamba kanjani udadewenu?" he kept fighting Joshua to release him but Joshua held him in place.

Sizwe was bleeding and my mum was trying to stop the bleeding.

Dad: "Ngiyeke ndodana. Ngeke ngisamshaya" he told Joshua and he hesitated first but released him.

Mum: "Umlimazile umtanami." she cried.

Dad: "Ngimshaye kancane. Usthathaphi isbindi sokubamba umtanami? Unjengenja wena. Uluma sona lesisandla esikuphayo."

Joshua stood in front of me and touched my face that's when I realised that I was crying.

Joshua: "Come sit"

Me: "No. I'm going home." i took my car keys.

Joshua: "You can't drive unje."

Me: "Drive behind me please."

Joshua: "I'll call someone to come and get my car. Asambe." he took my hand saphuma.

Dad: "Thandeka"

I turned around ngambheka nje ngangasho lutho.

Joshua: "Sizonibona baba" he opened the door for me ngangena wavala wajikela kwelinye i-side wangena sahamba.

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka."

Me: "Its fine Joshua."

Joshua: "Yazi uDuma owakubo kwamngani wakho uLindiwe"

Me: "I know. She told me."

Joshua: "Does she know more about Jason's death?"

Me: "Only that he was killed and its gangster related."

Joshua: "Okay. It should stay like that."

Me: "Kyafana nje vele uDuma knows so he is coming to take his slice in my pie of life."

Joshua: "Don't talk like that. You not a pie."

Me: "Then what Am I? Wonke umuntu ufuna u-piece wakhe nje. Sizwe was the first."

Joshua: "Nobody is getting you now. KwaloSizwe kuth angimlimaze kanzima"

Me: "How long have you known?"

Joshua: "Jason confessed before dying."

Me: "Is there something else that you know about me mina engingayazi."

Joshua: "Ayikho."

Me: "Okay"

We both went quiet saze sayofika endlini yami sehla sangena.

I went to the garage ngabuya nebhodlela le vodka ngalivula and drank straight from the bottle.

Joshua: "Wenzani lapho?"

Me: "Ngiyapheka." I lied and hid the bottle.

Joshua: "Lets rather go out for dinner."

Me: "I want to go clubbing"

Joshua: "Aw why?"

Me: "For fun. Are you going to take me or should I organise my own transport?"

He didn't answer ngaze ngahamba ngayombheka ngamfica ehleli kusofa ebheke phansi.

Me: "Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "Did you hear what I said. I'm going to the club."

Joshua: "Don't you think we should talk about what happened?"

Me: "I don't want to talk about it."

Joshua: "So you want to drink it way?"

Me: "I guess thats a no. Its fine I'll drive myself."

Joshua: "You want to drive drunk?"

Me: "Even if ngiba nengozi I'll survive. Nawe uyabona ukth angifi." I laughed.

Joshua: "Its not funny"

Me: "I didn't say it was. Ukth nje angifuni ukukhala."

He got up weza kimi wangibamba.

Joshua: "Let me cook for you. Wena uzogeza uhlale uphumule"

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "That was easy"

Me: "I'm any easy person, thats why Sizwe decided to rape me."

Joshua: "Don't talk like that."

Me: "I feel like eating beef. Can you go buy it please"

Joshua: "Yah sure. Go run your bath. Ngiyabuya" he took the keys and left.

I took the bottle and went to the bathroom. Ngafaka amanzi ashisayo ngakhumula ngangena ngahlala and drank. After a while Joshua came back washo ukth usebuyile.

I stayed in the water until it went cold. The bottle was almost half empty by then. I got up real careful ngaphuma emanzin ngakhipha amanzi ngabambelela odongeni ngaze ngayofika ekameleni. Joshua walked in wama wangibuka.

Me: "I'm not drunk if thats what you thinking"

Joshua: "What did you drink?"

Me: "Water. You can't trust the municipality anymore. Imagine being drunk while you only drank water" I

laughed so hard until I just couldn't stop.

Joshua went to the bathroom wabuya nebhodlela seli empty.

Joshua: "Aphi amanye?"

I didn't answer I just laughed.

He walked out wabuya after few minutes with a glass of water.

Joshua: "Phuza"

Me: "You drugging me like Jason did so him and Sizwe could rape me?"

Joshua: "I'm no drugging you. Just drink the damn water"

Me: "Or what? You will beat me up like you did to Onica? Take your piece bra. Thats what people do to me. Take a piece and leave. Pretty soon my body will fall and it will be the end of the free pie"

Joshua grabbed me and forced my jaws to open wangiphuzisa. I managed to spit some but amanye angena.

Me: "I hate you. I hate all of you"

Joshua: "I love you to. Try to sleep."

Me: "I don't want to sleep." I got up and Joshua caught me wangibeka embhedeni.

Joshua: "Just rest my love" he brushed my head making me relax and feel so sleepy.

Chapter 57.

Joshua woke me up the next day. Ngangilindele ukuvuka ngifa ikhanda but ngavuka umzimba ulula ngendlela exakile.

Joshua: "Your laptop and cellphone" he pointed the bag.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "SiyakwaMashu namhlanje. Vuka ugeze" he sounded annoyed.

Me: "I'm sorry about last night"

Joshua: "Please don't. Ngicela ulunge sambe"

Me: "Ngicela ukusala"

Joshua: "So you can drink again? I don't think so. You are still drunk so if uke waphuza even a small sip"

yotshwala uyovele udakwe kakhulu. Ngihamba nawe"

I went to shower ngaqeda ngabuya ngazogqoka ngafica uJoshua endlula umbhede. I choose an outfit nga-decider ukugqoka i-skinny jean esi-pink neskibha esimhlophe and black flat ankle boots.

Joshua: "Wow you look beautiful"

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "I made you some breakfast. Come eat"

Me: "Angilambile. Thank you"

Joshua: "Then we should go." he took the keys sahamba.

Me: "When am I going back to work?"

Joshua: "Maybe next week. Okwamanje ake uhlale nje"

Ngavele ngazithulela-ke nami. Sahamba saze safika kwaMashu. It looked like a car wash because there we lots of cars being washed, loud music, alcohol, meat and lots of people. Kugcwele ngisho izingane ezincane ezibonakalayo nje ukth they shouldn't be there.

Joshua: "Ngizobuya manje. Nampa oZaza noTumi. Uhlale nabo."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "Not even a sip Thandeka." he warned as we got out of the car.

I went to the ladies no Joshua waya kulab ayeya kubo.

Zaza: "Unjani. You look tired"

Me: "Ngi-right. Nina ninjani?"

Tumi: "I'm pissed I don't want to be here. I hate this place."

Me: "Why?"

Tumi: "Kugcwele. Buka nje izingane zidlala ngotshwala. Kumele ngabe abazivumeli ukth zisondele nje."

Zaza: "Kumele ngabe zisesikoleni."

Tumi: "Would you like something to drink?"

Me: "You brought your own drinks?"

Tumi: "Yes. I never go anywhere without it. Its red wine." she picked up her bag wakhipha i-glass nebhodlela wathela and gave it to me. I took a large sip.

Zaza: "Manje awusasebenzi yin?"

Me: "I'm on leave. But ngiyabuyela next week"

Tumi: "Ngath usho mina. Nami ngiyabuyela, lapho lendoda ayisafuni ngibuyele. Uma nje ngike ngaphatha eyomsebenzi uvele adinwe."

Zaza: "Uyakubhedela. Uzohlala wenzeni?"

Me: "Make babies. Day and night." we all laughed.

Tumi: "Futh kuwe izovela maduze nje. Indlela akubuka ngayo uJoshua."

Me: "I doubt it" no doubt, it was never going to happen but I didn't want to tell them.

Tumi: "Mina ngiyesaba. Njengoba umunt ashade nenking nje yomuntu, i don't think I want to bring an innocent soul into this life. Its hard enough for me, how much more for a kid."

Me: "And uqinisile." I drank more wine. And hour later I had already drank 3 glasses. I was seeing double.

Thizo: "Lets go ladies."

Zaza: "Seniqedile?"

Thizo: "Yes"

I got up and held on to Tumi for support. My knees were weak and my head spinning.

Tumi: "Udakwa ubala oe." she walked me to the car safika salinda uJoshua. My stomach was turning and everything wanting to come out.

Tumi: "You okay?"

Me: "I think I'm going to thr....." I threw up and missed Joshua's car by few steps.

I kept going until it felt like I was empty inside. I felt a tight grip on my upper arm and it was Joshua. He gave me a bottle of water nga-rinse umlomo and drank some.

Joshua: "Ngisaya ekhaya madoda ngizonibona." he told Thizo.

Joshua: "Get in the car Thandeka" he opened the door ngangena. Wajikela eceleni wazongena naye.

Me: "I'm sorry Joshua"

He didn't answer. I looked out the window and people were still staring at me. They watched the car until we drove away.

Joshua: "Ulambile?" there was nothing calm in his voice.

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Mina ngilambele ukushaya wena namhlanje. Usuyasangana Thandeka?"

I didn't answer.

Joshua: "Ngikhuluma nawe Thandeka. Usuyahlanya yini?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Pho yini?"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "Ngizokushayela khona lokho ukth I'M SORRY. Uxolisani vele? Usuyisdakwa wena manje?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "OH. Uphuzela ukuhlaza mina?"

Me: "Cha"

His hand reached out and took my hand.

Joshua: "I know it can't be easy to go through what you going through but drinking will not help. It will only damage you further. Before you know it, uzobe usufuna something stronger bese ungena kuma-drugs."

Me: "I won't do it again."

Joshua: "Ofcause you won't. Waphinda nje ngokushaya njengoJulia Thandeka. Musa-ke ukungilinga"

I just nodded. I was feeling sleepy anyway.

Joshua: "Lala ngizokuvusa ekhaya."

I closed my eyes and slept.

Ngaphaphama ngilele embhedeni and Joshua was sitting next to me holding a gun.

Joshua: "You are up. Great" he took the gun away.

Me: "I have a headache"

Joshua: "Thats what happens when you drink like a mindless bimbo. Vuka udle uzophuza amaphilisi" he left.

I woke up ngayoxubha and then went to the kitchen ngafike ngenza ukudla and went to sit in the lounge with Joshua. He was busy in his laptop. I ate my food.

A car stopped outside and running footsteps followed.

Joshua: "Don't make a sound. Woza" he whispered. I got up and followed him. Sangena in a spare bedroom.

Chapter 58.

Joshua had his back against the wall and I was standing in front of him with my head on his chest.

Joshua: "It will be over soon. Then your life will go back to normal."

I just nodded since I didn't want to laugh. What normal was he talking? My life was never normal. Even when growing up it was never normal.

Someone knocked on the door wavula uJoshua.

Thizo: "Its done"

Joshua: "Come" he took my hand saphuma.

In the lounge there were 8 guys standing, Sizwe and some guy i didn't recognise were sitting.

Joshua: "Uyislima ngempela wenaDuma. You fall for the obvious trap. Uyamazi lo?" he pointed at me.

Duma: "Cha"

Joshua: "Uyena-ke lo obumfuna. If ngike ngezwa nje ukth uyamsongela or uyamzingela ngizoqoba ngommese obuthuntu. Angidlali."

I looked at Sizwe. Ukth yini le engaka ayengizondela yona. I needed to talk to my father. Maybe wayezongichazela ukth kwenzekani.

Joshua: "Wena Sizwe angifuni ngisho ukukubona nje. Awuphume"

Sizwe got up and left, two guys followed him out.

Joshua: "Xolani ngicela uthathe uDuma"

They all walked out. Ngasala noJoshua.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes, I'm fine. You knew they were coming?"

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "And you didn't tell me?"

Joshua: "I didn't want you to panic."

Me: "I'm not a child Joshua. You treating me like an idiot." I went to the bedroom ngagaklaza iscabha and sat on the the bed.

Joshua walked in and sat next to me.

Joshua: "I assumed you have enough to deal with. I admit I was wrong not to tell you."

Me: "Okay."

Joshua: "What do you feel like doing?"

Me: "Nothing, you?"

Joshua: "This" he kissed my lips and gentle laying me down until he was on top of me.

Joshua: "Kuzomele unqume izinziphoyey."

Me: "Ulimele?"

Joshua: "I think so."

Me: "Let me see"

Joshua: "Angifuni ukuvuka right now."

Me: "Okay then. Dedela mina ngivuke"

Joshua: "No. Lala kanje wena."

Me: "I'm thirsty and I need to pee."

Joshua: "Hamba."

I got up and went to the bathroom ngachama, ngawasha izandla and then went to drink some juice in the kitchen. Before going back to Joshua.

Me: "Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "Bazomenzani uDuma?"

Joshua: "Angazi and I don't care. Right now I know only one thing."

Me: "Whats that?"

Joshua: "I want to make love to my woman." he pulled me closer to him and then lifted my leg up to his weist.

Me: "Kanje?" we were facing each other side by side.

Joshua: "Yes." he positioned himself between my legs.

Me: "Protection boo"

He didn't protest. He reached under the pillow wayikhapha.

Joshua: "Put in on"

I helped him wear it and then went back to the position.

He went in and began thrusting slowly.

I closed my eyes and wrapped my arms around his neck. My breathing changed.

Joshua: "You comfortable?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "I love you."

Me: "I love you too"

Joshua: "I need to ask you something" he rolled me to my back still inside.

Me: "Okay" my whole body tensed before a wave of pleasure washed over me.

Joshua picked up the pace while lifting my knees up and then reached his own climax.

We lay like that for a while before he pulled out and went to the bathroom wabuya after few seconds.

Joshua: "Gloria"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "I love you too."

Joshua: "Ngicela uzohlala nathi"

Me: "NoZinhle noJulia?"

Joshua: "Yes, angeke sihlalisane"

Me: "Hau kanti sizohlala kanjani?"

Joshua: "We will make it official."

Me: "I really don't follow. Official how?"

Joshua: "Ngicela ungishade maMemela."

I didn't expect such proposal. I didn't know what to say.

Joshua: "I know i should be on my knee fth ngiphethe ne-ring, ukth i-ring ngiyikhohlwe endlini. Please say yes." he begged.

Me: "Can I atleast think about it. A lot has happened Joshua and I need time to process everything."

Joshua: "Okay" he sounded disappointed.

Me: "I love you Joshua."

Joshua: "And I love you too. Lets go shower. Ngilambile"

Me: "Nami ngilambile."

We got up and went to shower. Even though Joshua was wearing his calm and relaxed mask but still wayebukeka ejabhile. I wanted to marry him but i needed to sort out my life first, talk to my parents, fix my relationship with my mother before moving to the next life as Mrs Joshua Cebekhulu. I didn't know what it had instore for me but it only had to get better then everything else I've gone through.

Chapter 59.

On Monday morning I woke up early. I was excited to be going back to work again. Plus the fact that it seem like I was done living in fear. Joshua assured me that I was safe again. I knew I still needed to talk to my parents but I shifted all that in the back of my mind and focused on going to work.

I didn't have a housekeeper anymore since Joshua paid MaZulu a large amount of money and asked her to retire. I didn't complain since I knew that the experience of having a gun pointed at you isn't nice. She deserved to stay home and relax. I made myself a full english breakfast and ate. I needed all the energy to keep me going the whole day. After eating I left and drove straight to the office.

I parked the car as usual and took the lift. The moment I walked in everybody stopped what they were doing and looked at me. Some showing a weak smile while others whispered to each other. Judy was sitting in her desk pretending to be busy with something.

Me: "Whats going on?"

Judy: "You don't know?"

Me: "Well I wouldn't ask if I didn't know."

Judy: "I'm sorry Miss Memela"

Me: "Kwenzekeni?"

Without any further delay she turned the screen of her computer and there it was. A video of me and Joshua engage in a steamy love making. I blinked in shock hoping it was a dream and I was going to wake up but it wasn't. It was real. I wiped the tears with the back of my hand and then walked to my office. Ngafika ngavula ngangena ngakhiya ngaphakathi and went to my desk ngavula i-computer and went to google the video. It was all over Facebook, Twitter and other porn site. I watched it hoping to find at least one clue to say it was fake but there was none. It was us. The sound was clear and the conversation could be heard loud and clear. As each scene ended another one began. Obviously whoever did it was recording everything that was happening in my bedroom. The part where Joshua was admitting being a gangster was mute. I watched the whole thing and read all the comments. Some saying we were cheap, some saying we need a prayer, some ladies saying the man is damn good while most men were explaining how better they were. You may always think that people agree to make porn movies and videos kanti cha some of them were victims just like me.

I heard the key turn kwavuleka iscabha kwangena uJoshua.

Joshua: "Let me take you home."

Me: "Who did it?"

Joshua: "Angazi but ngisola uDuma. Just to hurt us."

I was crying non stop kungasavumi ngithule. Joshua kept rubbing my back telling me it was going to be okay but it didn't feel like that. All over the world they were peeping watching me naked. God knows what else they had. At last the crying stopped.

Me: "How am I going to face people?"

Joshua: "You will face them just fine. If they ask why you did it just tell them it's not you and someone is trying to frame you."

Me: "It's clear that it's me Joshua. Nobody will believe that."

Joshua: "Then just shut up. Ungakhulumi namuntu about this. I will talk to my lawyer."

Someone knocked kwangena uBongeka noNeliswa.

Bongeka: "Sorry we didn't know ukh ni-busy?"

Joshua: "Akunanking sisi. Ngenani. Ngizobuya sigoduke yezwa" he kissed my forehead and walked out.

Neliswa: "Phephisa mngani wami." she gave me a hug.

Bongeka: "Vele kwenzekeni Gloria? Did you take a video or someone took it?"

Me: "Someone bugged my house."

Bongeka: "And they have been watching you all along?"

Me: "Yes."

Bongeka: "Any idea ukth kungaba ubani?"

Me: "It could be anyone."

Neliswa: "Pho nizokwenzenjani?"

Me: "Joshua will speak to his lawyers. Maybe I'll do the same"

Bongeka: "Yep. You can hire a private investigator."

Me: "I'll do so."

Neliswa: "Yazi ngiqala ukuyibona le-video I thought, It can't be Gloria. Then I listened to audio and its you my friend. Who ever did it wanted you hurt you pretty good."

Me: "And I've been hurt enough."

Bongeka: "Kuzodlula love."

Joshua walked in again wathi asihambe. I said goodbye and took my bags sahamba. People watched us leave.

Safika ekhaya kukhona amaphoyisa.

Me: "You called the cops?"

Joshua: "Yes. I want to know who bugged your house and why."

We got out of the car ngavula bangena.

Joshua: "I'll show you where the room is." they followed him to the bedroom. I followed them too.

Police: "Judging from the angle of the video I think the camera is here" He pointed the pictures on the wall.

Police 2: "And there." he pointed the light."

Two other police took down the pictures one by one. The other went to get a chair in the kitchen and checked the light.

Police 1: "Who ever that put these here was in no hurry. It must be someone you know"

Me: "I can't think of anyone right now"

They found two cameras in the pictures and the other camera on the light. After they left I went to sit in

the lounge. I was afraid to go change just incase there was another one left. Joshua walked in and sat next to me.

Joshua: "Maybe you should move in with me."

Me: "Is that why you did this? So you could get me to agree to move in with you?"

His face changed

Chapter 60.

Joshua: "I can't believe you said that. Is that what you think of me?"

Me: "What am I suppose to think? You confessed on installing cameras and now this"

Joshua: "Emnyango nasemawindini. Khona sekuthiwa angisile ngingayenz kanjan nje into enje? You ungreatful Thandeka. After all I've done for you. Nx"

Me: "What am I suppose to believe Joshua? You know everything. If you had cameras on my front door how come you didn't see anyone breaking in?"

Joshua: "Thats because who ever did this knocked on your door and you gladly allowed them in."

Me: "You the only one who spend time here. The confession part about your gangster lifestyle is mute."

Joshua: "And what will I gain for this?"

Me: "Angazi. Kwazi wena wedwa"

Joshua: "Just stop talking Thandeka."

Me: "Why not? Because you can't handle the truth?"

Joshua: "Because uyangisanganela, fth sekusele kancane kuphele ngisondele kuwe."

A car pulled out on the drive way and few minutes later a knock followed wavula uJoshua.

Thiza: "Your car."

Joshua: "Give me 5 minutes"

Thizo: "Sharp" he closed the door.

Joshua: "You coming with me or not?"

Me: "I'm not."

Joshua: "Suit your self. Just for the record. You beautiful Gloria but you are not a porn material. If I

wanted to have a porn video out there, I'd find myself a real porn material kind and fuck her brains out not to make love like I did to you" he walked out. I heard the car drive off.

I was done crying and expecting God to rescue me. Obviously He didn't rescue women like me. The moment Joshua left I got up and went to the bedroom and packed. I didn't pack everything though but enough to last me a month or two. After packing I sent Mr Ndlela my resignation letter but he replied within seconds and refused to accept it. Instead he offered me an unpaid leave for few weeks. I was grateful because after this, the chances of me getting a job were very slim.

After that email I changed, putting on some heavy make up ngagqoka i-track suit namateku ngathwala nesgqoko and then parked my car in the garage before calling the cab. 15 minutes later It was there ngacela u-driver angise e-airport. He drove me there ngamkhokhela. Ngafika ngakhipha imali and then took another cab and came back to the city ngagibela i-taxi to Gauteng. I was sure that If Joshua or anyone else tries to track me down they would assume I took a flight.

The trip to Gauteng was long. Safika seku-late. I booked myself into a hotel and paid in cash again. I took a bath first and then had dinner before trying to sleep. I didn't sleep well, i kept dreaming about people recognising me from that video.

The next day I woke up early. Took a bath, ngabuyisela i-make up and then wore a cap before having breakfast. After eating I went shopping, I bought a new simcard, 4 pair of glasses and then went the salon ngafike ngaluka i-soft dread. Ngaluka ngaqeda and then went to eat lunch at a nearby restaurant. I was still eating when I over head the conversation of two men on the table next to mine. They were arguing about finding a flat mate to share the rent. I listened until I was basically staring at them as they spoke.

Man 1: "Can we help you?" he looked at me.

Me: "No, But I can help you."

Man 2: "Really? How?"

Me: "I need a place to stay and you need a room mate."

Man 1: "When can you move in?"

Man 2: "Shouldn't we talk about this first. Do you even trust her?"

Me: "Stop being so uptight, I just need a room I am not applying to be your sibling."

Man 1: "I'm sure you want to see the place right now?"

Me: "Yes thank you" I paid my bill.

Man 1: "Come, its close by."

They got up ngabalandela. It wasn't that far. We got in and went upstairs.

Man 1: "This is it."

I walked in and it was such a great place. Clean and quiet.

Me: "I like it. By the way I'm Thandeka Memela."

Man 1: "I'm Luke and he is Carlo."

Me: "You french?"

Carlo: "Italian"

Me: "Great. So I can't help noticing that there are two bedrooms."

Luke: "We share"

Only then It hit me, they were gay.

Me: "Wow"

Carlo: "So you changing your mind?"

Me: "Why should I?"

Carlo: "Because thats what people do when they find out that we are gay"

Me: "Not me. I told you, I'm not your sibling. I'm your new room mate."

Carlo: "I think we are going to get along just fine."

Luke: "Its seems so."

Me: "The rent?"

Carlo: "I'll go get you a contract." he went out ngasala noLuke.

Luke: "You look familiar. Its like I've seen you recently."

Me: "I doubt it. I've been in Spain for the last two months" I lied.

Luke: "No no. I've seen you before." he kept snapping his fingers trying to remember until the door opened kwangena uCarlo with an envilope.

Luke: "Carlo, wouldn't you say that Thandeka looks familiar?"

Carlo: "Ofcause she does. She is the girl from that sex video we saw last night." my heart paused a bit.

Me: "You recognise me?"

Luke: "Ofcause its you."

Me: "Maybe I should go"

Carlo: "Don't go. We recognise you because we watched the video more than we should."

It was only a matter of time before I get caught.

Chapter 61

I decided to move in with them. I was a bit afraid but I had to show Joshua that I didn't need him as much as he thought. The first night there I didn't sleep at all. Kwaze kwasa ngibhekile. By the time I woke up they were already gone for work and left a note saying "have a gud day." I made myself some breakfast and ate while watching tv. I was still flipping through the channels when I caught a glimpse of a familiar face. I went back to check and it was Joshua on Morning Live. Wearing a suit and looking gorgeous. I turned up the volume to hear what they were talking about.

Le-Anne: "Still on that video, would you say that who ever leaked it should be punished?"

Joshua: "Yes they deserve to be in jail. Bugging someone else's house is wrong"

Le-Anne: "You are a well known business man Mr Cebekhulu, some people may say you did the video on purpose as a public stunt."

Joshua: "Fame means nothing to me."

Le-Anne: "Can you say the same for your girlfriend?"

Joshua: "Fiance, we are engage. And yes I'm saying the same for my woman. We both don't like fame."

Le-Anne: "I must say we didn't know that you are off the market. Congratulations"

Joshua: "Thank you"

Le-Anne: "We haven't seen or heard from Gloria Memela ever since the video came out. Is she hiding?"

Joshua: "She is laying low for a while. Obviously the video thing hurt her and she needed time out"

Le-Anne: "I understand Mr Cebekhulu and thank you for allowing us to come to your home for this interview."

Joshua: "Thank you for taking time to hear the truth."

Ngathuswa i-knock ngayiziba.

Man: "I know you are in there sisi. Ngilethe iketela laLuke"

I got up and went to open ngathatha iketela.

Man: "Thank you"

I nodded and closed the door ngakhiya.

I was angry at Joshua for telling people that we are engage. Yes I was thinking about marrying him but that was before the video thing.

After eating I washed the bowl and went to shower ngaqeda ngagcoba ngagqoka ngavula ifoni yami to check my email since I didn't expect calls.

I had few emails. 5 from Joshua and 3 from Bongeka and 1 from Neliswa.

Bongeka and Neliswa were asking If I was safe and when I was coming home. I hid the caller Id and called them only telling them I was okay and that they should relax. I wanted to keep the convesation as short as possible. After the call I went back to read Joshua's emails.

1 Email.

Where are you?

2 Email.

You better come home Thandeka. Right now.

3 Email.

I can't believe you ran? Please come home my love.

4 Email.

Don't stop running. I'm closer then you think.

5 Email

Watch Morning Live.

After reading all Joshua emails I wanted to reply so bad but I stopped myself because I wasn't sure if Joshua was going to track me doing with it. I knew he was bluffing about being closer then I thought. Joshua doesn't do closer. He gets there.

I decided to relax and watch a movie. Babenenqwaba yama-movie oLuke including some gay men porn, something I had no desire to see. I chose to watch a comedy instead. Ngayibuka ngazumeka phakathi ngaze ngavuswa oCarlo.

Me: "I was watching a movie and I must have fallen asleep" I sat up. They didn't reply instead they kept staring me.

Me: "You freaking me out guys. Whats wrong?"

Luke: "He is here." he whispered pointing my bedroom.

Me: "Who?" I stood up and looked around.

Joshua: "Me"

He walked out with my bags wazibeka phansi.

Me: "Joshua, what are you doing here?"

Joshua: "I told you to keep running because I was closer then you imagine. We are going home" he smiled making my blood clot a bit.

Luke: "Don't forget your kettle"

Me: "Its not mine. Some guy dropped it off"

Joshua: "You can keep it guys"

Me: "You sent that man"

Joshua: "I must say, you good. I almost went to Spain kanti wena ucashe lana."

Me: "I'm not leaving with you Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes you are."

Carlo: "Shall we call the police"

Joshua: "Bawabize?" he looked at me.

Me: "Its okay guys."

Joshua: "Good ngoba bese ngizoth ababize ne ambulance, asambe Thandeka"

Me: "Can I atleast wash my face first?"

Joshua: "You look fine. Asambe"

The man who brought the kettle walked wathatha izikhwama waphuma.

Me: "Bye guys"

Luke: "Bye girl. Be safe"

I nodded and walked out wangilandela uJoshua.

Me: "How did you do it?"

Joshua: "Find you?"

Me: "This morning you were being interviewed on tv, and now you here."

Joshua: "We did that interview yesterday. Awusho, umdalo wakho amadoda uyazwana nawo?"

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "They maybe gay but they are still men." he raised an eyebrow.

Me: "Maybe ukuba sigibele ibhanoyi besizoshesha."

Joshua: "And risk you running of at the airport? No. I don't think so"

Me: "Why did you lie? I didn't say yes to your marriage proposal."

Joshua: "But you will say yes."

Me: "I won't."

Joshua: "Iyangichaza lenkani yakho."

Me: "You can't force me to marry you."

Joshua: "I won't. By the way uSbu owafaka ama-camera kwakho. That day nidakiwe. Yena wayengadakiwe njengawe, but umuntu okhiphe i-video uDuma."

Me: "Then I owe you an apology"

Joshua: "And you will pay"

Chapter 62.

Me: "Pay how?"

Joshua: "Lets just say there will be lots of sweating, moaning, deep pleasure, squirting and your mouth will be slightly opened as you struggle to scream my name."

Me: "And what if I don't want to?"

Joshua: "Iskweletu asiboli."

Me: "How did you find me?"

Joshua: "Thats my secret. Usufuna ukubaleka futh bese ngingabe ngisakhola?"

Me: "Is there something you can't do?"

Joshua: "Turn back the time."

Me: "I'm not sure I want to be in this relationship anymore"

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Living in fear Joshua. Not knowing what to expect next, its always something shocking and I'm scared"

Joshua: "But you are not scared to live with two gay guys you don't know?"

Me: "They are better then living with you."

Joshua: "You make it difficult. Living with me is easy Thandeka, but inkani yakh yenza kubenzima."

Me: "You ordering me around Joshua."

Joshua: "Okay I admit that I'm guilty of trying to control you. Its not easy dating an independent woman like you. I'm a cave man Gloria. I want to be the one laying the law my love. But I'll try to change. I hate it when we fight."

Me: "I hate it too"

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "Me too"

Joshua: "But you still going to get it."

Me: "Not today though. I'm tired"

Joshua: "Nami ngikhathele but ngophumula eDurban."

Joshua stopped at Engen garage ngayochama wathenga nokudla sadla before siqhubeke nendlela. Safika eThekwini ebsuku. We went to Joshua's place.

Me: "I want to shower"

Joshua: "Asambe siyogeza"

We went to shower saqeda sangena embhedeni salala. I was a bit scared that Joshua would want sex but he didn't. We slept until the next day.

Joshua: "Wake up"

Me: "Is it morning already?"

Joshua: "Yes and I made you some coffee. Open your eyes"

I sat up and took the coffee.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "Usakhumbula ukth ngathini kuwe?"

Me: "About what?"

Joshua: "Not being able to quit?"

Me: "Yes I remember."

Joshua: "Thats good. Next time you think about running always remember that you can't quit. Running is not a solution because when you run, I'll find you and when I do. Lets just leave it like that. I don't want to have to show you what I will do to you if you ever run again. Chasing you across the country is not my idea of fun." he warned.

Me: "What do you mean I can't quit? I'm not part of the gang."

Joshua: "You are. You may not hold the gun Gloria but you are in deeper than you think. Do you really think the guys would let you live if you decide to leave me?"

Me: "But they let Veronica live"

Joshua: "Onica wasn't deep as you are. She only knew that I'm part of the gang. But wena wazi more. You know my secret wall, you know that we killed Jason, well we didn't pull the trigger but you know. Thats what I mean. You one of us now and if you run away they will catch you and hurt you pretty bad."

I felt a cold sweat run down my spine.

Joshua: "I hope you understand." he got up and left.

I sat like that for a while. Ngamuzwa uJoshua egeza waze waqeda waphuma ebhince ithawula.

Joshua: "I hope I didn't scare you."

Me: "You still ask."

Joshua: "I'm sorry then. Okunye engikukholiwe, awuhlukane namadoda Thandeka. NoSbu wamfaka ephaketheni kant uze ngobubi. Angifuni ukukukhuza kaningi."

Me: "So I'm not allowed to have friends?"

Joshua: "OBongeka ba-right hhayi amadoda. Njengoba ngakutshela ukth angizwani nomuntu olula. Ohambe esinekela amadoda. Ngingaxola kokunye but imfebo iqedwa ngenduku kumuntu."

Me: "Angifebi mina"

Joshua: "Awufebi vele ukth nje amadoda uyazwana nawo."

Me: "Are you done insulting me?"

Joshua: "I'm not insulting you. I'm just telling you the truth. Ngifuna uma usuphuma endleleni ngikukhumbuze. Ngenduku futhi"

Me: "Real men don't beat women up"

Joshua: "Umhle ngoba uyakhuluma. Umuntu uyalibeka ulibeke."

Me: "I need to shower"

Joshua: "Need me to wash your back?" he winked.

Me: "No thank you."

Joshua: "I miss you"

Me: "Kade ungisongela just now."

Joshua: "I wasn't my love. I was just laying down some rules. We need those to survive."

Me: "I don't like rules."

Joshua: "You don't say. Can I have my kiss?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "Please" he made a face.

Me: "No"

Joshua: "Ngiyakuncenga sthandwa sami"

Me: "Nope. Ngisayogeza" I walked away but he grabbed my hand and pulled me to his chest.

Joshua: "You drive me crazy. I love you and I can't wait to marry you and then spend my life just making love to you." he kissed my forehead.

In my head i was wondering how can Joshua be this loving but be so cruel and heartless at the same time. How was I ever going to get out of this and still live? Or maybe dying was my only solution.

Chapter 63.

Joshua and I stayed in bed for the day. He told me stories and jokes, for the first time I felt really relaxed around him. He was open and explained everything to details.

Me: "And Onica, wamshaya kanjani?"

Joshua: "I lost control. Ngamshaya ephathini safika layindlini ngaqhubeka la engicine khona."

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "I orded her face down ngamshaya ngebhande ngemumva. She wasn't crying or beging for forgiveness thats why I kept going until she cried."

Me: "Wayenzi le engaka?"

Joshua: "Wayefeba. Hhayi kancane futhi. Emva kokumshaya I told her its over because ngangibona ukth ngogcina ngimbulele."

Me: "You have anger issues?"

Joshua: "No. I hate ubufebe nje qha."

Me: "Ay ngiyezwa."

We both went quiet for a moment until Joshua kissed my lips. We kissed for a while before letting go.

Joshua: "I think I'm going to let you take control today."

Me: "Meaning?"

He didn't answer. With one move I was on top of him.

Joshua: "Like this"

Me: "I think I like this idea." he gave me a rubber ngayifaka and then positioned my self and then slowly filling myself up.

Joshua: "Your hands should hold my chest for support." he held my weist.

I did that and began moving my weist back and fourth.

Joshua had his eyes closed and his face relaxed. I took a moment ngambuka, he was beautiful on the outside, only God knows whats in the inside.

Joshua: "What are you thinking about?"

Me: "Nothing."

I picked up the pace and then came, Joshua held me down and then came.

Joshua: "Awukwazi"

Me: "But you did come"

Joshua: "Only because you came. I really want to come inside you."

Me: "We should get tested first."

Joshua: "Yep. But right now I'm going to teach you how to make love."

Me: "I know how"

Joshua: "Ngiyabuya" he got up and went to the bathroom wabuya after few minutes.

Joshua: "Ukhathele?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Lala ubheke phansi"

Me: "Thats not making love."

Joshua: "I know, I'm giving you a massage."

I turned over and allowed him to massage me all over.

Me: "Whats that smell?"

Joshua: "Baby oil."

Me: "It feels so good."

Joshua: "I know" he went on and on until I was dripping wet.

Me: "I think I'm ready."

Joshua: "For what?"

Me: "To make love."

Joshua: "Give me that pillow" I gave it to him wayifaka below my tummy and then positioned himself between my legs.

Me: "Don't forget protection."

Joshua: "Khululeka." he slowly pushed himself in. I gasped out loud and bit the other pillow.

Joshua: "Be still." he began moving, it felt so good. He picked up the pace until I reached my climax.

Joshua: "We changing positions."

he rolled to his back ngaba ngaphezulu facing his feet. He held my weist guiding my moves. I held his knees and kept bouncing on top of him until I came again and then fell forward but he caught me just in time ngaphakama and lay on my back.

Joshua: "Now I'm about to make love to you." he pushed himself in while we kissed. His hands held my knees up as he went deeper.

Me: "You too deep"

Joshua: "I know. Awungishade phela maMemela. Please"

Me: "You will need to pay lobola and other things ezenziwayo uma kuzoshadwa."

Joshua: "I don't mind" He began moving in and out.

Me: "I need to pee"

Joshua: "You don't. Just say yes and be my wife."

Me: "I think I....."

Joshua: "Don't think just say yes."

Me: "I'm coming Joshua. Gosh I'm coming" he came down to me as if he wanted to swallow my cries.

He kept going, I wrapped my arms around him.

Joshua: "Say yes and be mine. I want you to belong to me."

Me: "Oh Gosh I need to pee"

Joshua: "Say it Gloria. Say you are mine. Tell me you belong to me. Say it"

Me: "I'm yours Joshua."

Joshua: "You belong to me."

Me: "Yes I belong to you."

Joshua: "And you will marry me"

Me: "Yes" I came. Joshua pulled out quickly and a hot liquid came out. He put his finger in and touched my g-spot.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Ngikhathele"

Joshua: "Rest a bit I'll make you something to eat." he got up and went to the bathroom wabuya nethawula wangisula and then pull the blanket over my naked body.

I tried to sleep but kwangavuma. Joshua was going to kill me, one day he was going to fuck me too hard and basically break my spine and my neck. But I had to give it to him, he was the master of his art. I was a bit sore where he held me and I was sure he left a mark. Onica wasn't being a slut when she told me that Joshua fucks for the finals.

He walked in with food.

Me: "Baphi oJulia?"

Joshua: "Out shopping. Phela uZinhle uyazwana nezimpahla."

Me: "I thought you would make me a bowl of cereal or something" I sat up.

Joshua: "You need real food to replace the energy. Eat"

Me: "Wena?"

Joshua: "Ngiyokulanda okwami" he got up and left.

Ngasala ngadla. It was beef and rice and vegetables.

Joshua came back naye wadla.

Joshua: "So uzongishada nini?"

Me: "I haven't said yes"

Joshua: "Kanti utheni?"

Me: "I wasn't thinking straight. What ever I said doesn't count."

Joshua: "Aw. So awungithandi?"

Me: "I do love you"

Joshua: "why ungafuni ukungishada?"

Me: "Because kudingeka umndeni wami and i can't face them.

Chapter 64.

Later Joshua told me we were going out with the guys. I was tired from all that love making but I got up ngezeza ngagqoka sahamba. The video thing wasn't dead, but I guess being in public with Joshua helped me a bit. We went Calluba Lounge. Tumi, Zimbili and Zama were there, atleast I had people to chill with. We sat in our own table and allowed the guys to talk in private. We talked about fashion, movies, sex and parties. The festive season was coming up and the ladies had big plans.

My glass was almost empty when the bar man came over with another drink.

B/Man: "Its from the guy over there."

We all turned to look and one guy raised his glass.

Me: "I can't accept this."

Zimbili: "Joshua is not even looking, just take it. Aw"

I took the drink and the bar man left.

The guy stood up and came over. He was rather cute. Makes you think of Ice Cube.

Guy: "My name is Sipho"

Me: "And I'm taken, thanks for the drink though."

Sipho: "Aw awkahle sisi."

Me: "For real."

Sipho: "Can't we atleast talk in private" he grabbed my upper arm.

Me: "Let go of me"

Sipho: "I just want to talk. Musa ukuphapha aw"

Me: "Angifuni phela mina ukukhuluma nawe."

Sipho: "You like it rough, don't you? And that man did you soft."

Me: "Awungiyeka and take your drink with you."

Sipho: "Sfebe ungakhulumi nami kanje."

It happened in a blink. Ngabona ngendoda isibuya phansi and Joshua being held back by Njabulo.

Joshua: "Nobody talks to my wife like that."

Sipho: "She is a whore"

Joshua grabbed him and held a gun against his head.

Joshua: "Phinda futh uthini?"

Sipho: "Ey man chill okay."

Joshua: "Take your sorry ass out of my face."

The guy walked back to his friends.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes" I had tears in my eyes.

Joshua's hand cupped my chin, lifting my face up and then gently kissed my lips as his tongue began invading my mouth. He kissed me deeply as his hands wrapped around me protectively.

Njabulo: "Asambeni"

Joshua let go of me suddenly.

We drove to Westville. Being there reminded me of my home and my parents.

Joshua: "Woza" he took my hand suddenly. Njabulo and Zimbili owned such a beautiful house.

Zimbili: "Ladies let's go upstairs"

We all followed her leaving the guys on their own.

Tumi: "You have the stuff?"

Zama: "Yes" she opened her bag and took out something in a small plastic.

Zimbili brought the mirror to my face.

Me: "Is that what I think it is?"

Zama: "Yes" she made the lines.

Zimbili: "Want to try?"

Me: "No thanks" I sat down and watched as they took turns.

Zama: "Are you sure?"

Me: "100%"

Joshua walked in suddenly with such disgust in his face.

Joshua: "I hope you not doing this as well."

Me: "I'm not"

Joshua: "Good, ngoba ngokubulala ngempela." and he wasn't joking.

Me: "I won't do it."

Joshua: "Uma usufuna ukuhamba usho." he kissed my forehead and left.

I watched the ladies change their clothes and wearing next to nothing kinky items and then covering up with gowns.

Tumi: "Let's go"

They all walked out nami ngalandela like a sheep.

Downstairs Zimbili pulled back the curtain and revealed 5 dancing poles.

I sat down on the floor between Joshua's legs.

Joshua: "Take notes, I'd like a private show when we get home" he whispered in my ear.

The ladies were dancing without the care in the world. They were high and the guys knew this. They danced until they were basically naked and the guys couldn't take it anymore. They joined in and before long the dance was turning into group sex.

Joshua: "Asambe" he took my hand and led me upstairs. I took one last look and saw that Tumi was in all four, being given behind while Zama was on her back with her legs wide apart and Zimbili was kneeling in front of her husband taking him down her throat. It was going to take me years to forget this.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "What did I just saw Joshua?"

Joshua: "The ladies do this every now and then."

Me: "And wena?"

Joshua: "I'm not into group sex."

Me: "Is this what the gang is all about?"

Joshua: "Sex is part of the gang. Ukth nje they like group sex."

Me: "Bayashintshana?"

Joshua: "Yes. Thats why I don't do it. I can't make love to you after watching you being fucked by someone else. Sharing is not my thing"

Me: "Yoh. Manje why benza phambi kwakho?"

Joshua: "I'm sure the ladies thought you would join in aswel."

Me: "I'm never doing that"

Joshua: "Vele ngeke. Phela lento idinga ukth udle ama-drugs ukuz kuzophela amahloni and mina angimfuni umunt odla ama-drugs. KwaCebekhulu awangeni amanyala."

Me: "Kodw why did you join the gang? Yazi ngendlela onesineke ngayo Joshua. Ukub kulento akukufaneli."

Joshua: "Don't be so sure. I'm not a saint sthandwa sami"

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "I'll explain it to you some day. Asilale" he pulled back the covers sangena embhedeni sigqokile.

The couples can be heard loud and clear. Some were moaning like cats while others with deep voices were cursing 'fuck'.

Joshua: "Angazi, maybe you want to make love?"

Me: "No thank you. I'm still tired from the last time"

Joshua: "Okay. I love you

Chapter 65.

I woke the next day sekuphume nelanga. Joshua was asleep next to me.

Me: "Vuka love"

Joshua: "Iskhathi sini?" he spoke as if kade evukile.

Me: "Its after six"

Joshua: "Kusa early. Ulale kahle?"

Me: "Yes, thank you. Wena?"

Joshua: "Ngilale ngigqokile. Ay angilalanga kahle."

Me: "Can I ask you something?"

Joshua: "Sure"

Me: "Izolo none of them had condoms. Uma umuntu emitha?"

Joshua: "They are on birth control."

Me: "Izifo?"

Joshua: "They get tested. If umunt elingeka e-cheater usebenzisa i-condom"

Me: "Why would they hurt themselves like this?"

Joshua: "Abant abafani dear. Maybe wena you don't that you've the jackpot ngokujola nami but to other people this means more then it should."

Me: "Ngikuthanda impela Cebekhulu but that would be a deal breaker."

Joshua: "Angeke nje kuze kwenzeke. Awusho izolo ubufuna ukuchama ini?"

Me: "Angikaze ngisho ukth ngifuna ukuchama."

Joshua: "When we made love, your screaming that nje"

Me: "Mcm kanti usho lokho. Awungiyeka" we both laughed.

Joshua: "Gloria lento oyibone izolo ayiphumi la. Don't tell anyone."

Me: "I won't. Ukth nje I doubt ngoke ngiyikhohlwe."

Joshua: "I'll help you with that." he bit his lips.

Someone knocked.

Joshua: "Ngena" and Zimbili walked in.

Zimbili: "Breakfast is ready. Gloria we will eat near the pool."

Me: "Okay thank you"

She smiled and walked out.

Me: "Now I really need to pee"

Joshua: "That door is the bathroom. Hamba"

I got up and went to the bathroom ngafike ngachama nga-rinser nomlomo and then chew the gum I had in my pocket.

Joshua made the bed and then went to the bathroom waphuma after few minutes and then we went to join the others. The guys were eating inside mina ngayakosisi ngaphandle.

Zama: "You look tired. Ulale kahle?"

Me: "Yes I did thank you." I sat down. They all looked refreshed as if nothing happened last night. Only visible love bits around thier necks. I was asking myself if they even remember what happened.

They were talking, sharing jokes and laughing out loud. Xolani walked to us wafika wama emva kwaTumi and touched her neck. She looked tense but smiled as he whispered in her ear. His eyes were looking at me as he spoke until his eye blinked as if he was winking at me. I brushed that aside, he wouldn't wink at me. After a while he walked away.

Tumi: "So Gloria, wena noJoshua ni-right?"

Me: "Yes"

Tumi: "Kuhle impela uma kunjalo." she gave me a weak smile ngavele ngangazi nje ukth sekwenzenjani.

Zimbili: "Ngike ngabuka i-video yakho noJoshua. He does you good."

Tumi: "Nami ngiyibonile. Kodwa not even once nje uke ube ngaphezulu. Why?"

Me: "I like the missionary position."

Zama: "Ay girl you need to ride him. Make him speak in tounges otherwise he will get bored."

Me: "Is that why you guys do that?"

Tumi: "Do what?"

Me: "That thing last night"

Zama: "You can say it. Group sex."

Zimbili: "Theres nothing wrong with it. Indoda ayifuni ukudla uphuthu everyday"

Me: "So you rather share in the circle"

Tumi: "Better that way. Nawe uzobona."

Me: "I'm not doing that. If it works for you, great. But not for me"

Zama: "What if Joshua wants it?"

Me: "I know he doesn't"

Zimbili: "Keep telling yourself that. Phela wena usakwi honeymoon stage. Siyeza iskhath lapho kuyophela konke and you won't have a choice."

Me: "Theres always a choice ukth nje some of us choose to ignore it."

Zimbili: "What do you mean?"

Me: "You are sharing men Zimbili. Theres nothing right about that. I'm not judging you I'm just saying you guys have a choice to say NO to such a crap."

Zama: "And you are an expert in choices? Sisakhuluma ngama-choice nje. Nawe ukhetha ukth lawulwa uJoshua kunokuziphatha wena?"

Me: "Akangilawuli mina uJoshua."

Zimbili: "Oh. And udansela isiginci sakhe for fun?"

Me: "Atleast he doesn't expect me to fuck his friends"

Zama: "Vele uthule Gloria ngoba engath awuyaz into oyishoyo."

Me: "Vele sengithule and thanks for breakfast and great porn last night." I got up and walked to the

house.

Me: "Can you take me home" I told Joshua.

Joshua: "Gents sobuye sixoxe. Asambe"

Xolani: "Bye Gloria"

Me: "Nisale kahle." I walked out noJoshua wangilandela sagoduka.

Joshua: "You been very quiet indlela yonke. U-right?"

Me: "Ngi-right."

Joshua: "Shall I take you shopping. Retail therapy as they call it." we both laughed.

Me: "Thanks for the offer but I want to rest."

Joshua: "Lala-ke uphumule."

I got into bed and closed my eyes. But kwakungalaleki. Izinkulumo zoZama zazingihlupha. Ngangizibuza ukth what will happen when Joshua gets bored? Will he force me to do that as well. Will I be treated like a sex pet only kept for pleasure? It seemed like I was sinking deep and deep into something I didn't even know. Beside sex what else were they force to do because they felt they don't have a choice.

That wasn't going to happen to me. Kofa ofayo.

Joshua: "Ebulawa yini?"

Ngavele ngathuka since I wasn't aware that I was speaking out loud.

Joshua: "Uzobulawa yini lo ofayo?"

Me: "I'm just thinking. Sorry"

Joshua: "Ucabanga ini?"

Me: "Nothing important."

Chapter 66.

Joshua: "Khuluma MaMemela. Ubani ofayo?"

Me: "OZimbili bathe nawe uzofuna ukuyenza leyanto and that I won't have a choice."

He stopped what he was doing, putting away his laptop wazohlala eduze kwami.

Joshua: "You smart Gloria?"

Me: "So?"

Joshua: "Why do we have sex?"

Me: "Because you are always horny"

He hit me with a pillow and laughed.

Joshua: "Beside that. What else?"

Me: "I'd like to believe that its because we love each other."

Joshua: "Yes and another reason why people have is lust. Wanting what you know you can't have."

Me: "You mean they all want what they can't have?"

Joshua: "More or less. Xolani wants to fuck Zama and in return he is offering Tumi ukufeza izinkanuko zakhe. Thats what that thing is all about. Thandeka, you the woman I want to have sex with. Theres no way I'd ever offer you to my friends. I love you too much MaMemela."

Me: "So you won't get bored?"

Joshua: "Not in this life time. Ngyakthanda sisi. Ngakthanda ngisabona isthombe nje qha. Ngath uma sengkbona ngazitshela ukth uzoba ngowami."

Me: "Even though I cant do certain things like carrying little Joshua in my womb?"

Joshua: "That doesn't matter. Ngithanda konke okwakho. Ngisho lenkani onay iyangichaza ngoba its wouldn't be such fun without little hiccups."

Me: "I love you too Mr Cebekhulu." we held hands for a moment.

Joshua: "Okunye futh ngicela ungabayeki oBongeka. I'm guilty of dragging you with me instead of allowing you to be with your real friends. Ukth nje its not safe since Duma and Sizwe are still out there. But sekuzolunga. In a mean time call them more often and ask them to visit you here ukuze bezokubona. I'm sure usasaba ukubonakala ku-public after that video."

Me: "Yeah ngisanakho ukusaba."

Joshua: "Then invite them for tea and just chill. I'll give you the privacy."

Me: "And what if Duma comes while you out and hurts me and my friends?"

Joshua: "Its safe here. You see that button next to the light switch?"

Me: "Yes."

Joshua: "Ubociphiza lona uma kukhona ongena nesibhamu or ummese."

Me: "And what if I'm not near the wall?"

Joshua: "I thought you would never ask." he got up and went to the closet wabuya nebhokisi elincane walivula and went down on his knee.

Joshua: "Will you marry me? " he took out a ring.

Me: "How did we switch from safety to marriage?"

Joshua: "Say yes and I will put it in you finger to show you."

Me: "Is that blackmail?"

Joshua: "No. But I can't put it in you finger uma ungafuni ukungishada."

Me: "So it works only if I'm married to you?"

Joshua: "Say yes Gloria aw."

Me: "Will it ever come off?"

Joshua: "Ofcouse it will."

Me: "Okay I will marry you."

Joshua: "Thank you. Now give me your hand"

I gave him my hand wayifaka. It was beautiful.

Joshua: "Buka ke. Iyahlukana ibe wu 2."

He took his laptop wayibeka embhedeni waveza i-map.

Joshua: "Sengikufundisa ubugebengu manje. Buka i-screen." he took my hand and separated the ring into two piece and the map on screen had a red light.

Me: "Its a tracker?"

Joshua: "You could say that. Now I'm going to show you something." he got up and went to the closet wabuya nezibhamu eziwu 3. He put one on the floor and the other on the bed and then hid another under the laptop.

Joshua: "Now watch." he took my hand and took off the ring wabuye wayibuyisela. Waphinda futhi and then the guns flew across the room zanamathela edongeni.

Me: "How did you do that?"

Joshua: "Its magnet. Buka phezulu"

I looked up and the laptop was also stuck nesibhamu sinamathele ngaphansi.

Joshua: "That button next to the switch does this. Manje ngabona ukth what if you are not near the wall ngase ngenza kanje. Atleast now you have a panic button in your hand."

Me: "That means you can track me down anytime you want?"

Joshua: "No. I can only do that if you separate the ring. When ever you feel unsafe just move the ring and I'll know where you are."

Me: "They really want me dead?"

Joshua: "Jason is gone my love. Lab abanye would hurt you to get to me."

Me: "Yanzima nayi impilo"

Joshua: "Kuzodlula sthandwa. But sengizokufundisa ukudubula. Can you hold a gun?"

Me: "I can use pepper spray."

Joshua: "And thats great boo. Pick that gun up"

Me: "Is it loaded?"

Joshua: "No. But don't pull the trigger."

Me: "Why not?"

Joshua: "Take the gun Gloria"

I pick it up and it was heavy. Ungaze ubabone beziphethethe kalula kanti ziyasinda.

Joshua took me the room downstairs. Wafike wavula sangena wavala.

Me: "Unendawo yokudubula endlini?"

Joshua: "Yes. Don't worry its secure"

I sat down in a chair and looked at him.

Joshua: "Why you looking at me like that?"

Me: "You not a gangster Joshua."

Joshua: "If not a gangster then what?"

Me: "A Russian mafia maybe?"

Joshua: "I'm south african Gloria"

Me: "But awuphiki ukth you the mafia."

Joshua: "I'm just a gang member."

Me: "Lutho. Your friends are gangsters wena you are in another level."

Joshua: "Ngenxa yalendawo?"

Me: "Everything. How many guns you have?"

Joshua: "Just these 3 and ngizokunika esisodwa uma usukwazi ukudubula." he smiled.

Chapter 67.

Me: "Ungibukani?"

Joshua: "You look so damn sexy with that gun and my shirt."

Me: "Well, thank you."

Joshua: "Woza la" he sat down in a chair.

Me: "No kinky business." I sat in his lap facing the other way.

Joshua: "Stop playing with that thing."

Me: "Ngifunde kuwe nje."

Joshua: "I-round eyodwa nje?" his hand was travelling down there.

Me: "Not here."

Joshua: "Why not here?"

Me: "Guns and all."

Joshua: "Thats why its sexy. Buka nje u-right." his hand slipped in.

Me: "Like this?"

Joshua: "Yes. You drive me crazy."

Me: "You were crazy before I even came along"

Joshua: "Sizo tester nini?"

Me: "Asambe right now"

Joshua: "Aw ngath nginje. Buka nje."

Me: "Sizogeza. Asambe" I got up but he held my weist.

Joshua: "Sasibabili yazi."

Me: "Wena nobani?"

Joshua: "Nozipho. We were twins."

Me: "What happened to her?"

Joshua: "She was raped and murdered by a gang"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "Thats how I ended up here."

Me: "You wanted revenge?"

Joshua: "And I did get my revenge."

Me: "You killed them?"

Joshua: "No. I made them kill each other."

Me: "How?"

Joshua: "Lets just say I drove them to it. Ngeshwa after I got my revenge I couldn't get out."

Me: "Why did they kill your sister?"

Joshua: "Sukuma siphume lana."

I got up naye wasukuma saphuma sabuyela ekameleni.

Joshua: "We were poor Gloria. After our matric asiyanga e-university. I went to look for a job ethekwini. Kunzima. My sister started dating this gangster. Obviously I was mad but my sister loved her man. He sent her to school with his money. Ngangilokhu ngimlwiswa nje impela kanti kuzoshona abazali bethu sasala sodwa."

Me: "Izihlobo aninazo?"

Joshua: "They didn't want us. So indoda kaNozipho yayibanakekela benoZinhle while I was out there. Then one day I came home ngafica uNozipho elokhu ekhombisa ukudubula. Elokhu edlala ngokuphathw kwesibhamu ngambuza wangitshela ukth indoda yakh imfundisa ukuzivikela. I got angry and went to confront him. Ngath akangamenzi isgebengu sakhe. He stopped teaching her kanti uzobanjwa abafana bamlimaze ashone. Its my fault."

Me: "Its not your fault."

Joshua: "Ukuba ngamyeka wamfundisa ngabe wazilwela Gloria."

Me: "You don't know that."

Joshua: "Thats how I joined."

Me: "Indoda yakhe yashonaphi?"

Joshua: "Wazibulala."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Wayemthanda ngempela uNozipho. After her death his life was never the same again."

Me: "Is that why you doing all this?"

Joshua: "Yes. I don't want to live without you. I love you to much"

Me: "Thank you for telling me."

Joshua: "You deserve to know."

Me: "I love you"

Joshua: "I love you more."

Me: "Sambe siyohlola?"

Joshua: "Ksasa ekseni. Asambe siyopheka"

Me: "Ithi ngigqoke kuqala"

Joshua: "When are you moving in?"

Me: "Angazi ngizobona."

We went downstairs sapheka sobabili kudlala no-music. I wanted the moment to last forever. Atleast now I knew why Joshua was turning me into Bond girl. Deep down I was hoping to never have to use a gun. But I wouldn't mind shooting Sizwe and Thulani.

Zinhle and Julia came home with pizza.

Joshua: "We cooked."

Zinhle: "Soyidla ksasa i-pizza."

Joshua: "Wena Julia uzolungisa itafula."

Julia: "Okay dad." she went to the dining room. Mina no Joshua sayogeza before eating.

Chapter 68.

We went to get tested the next day and the results were negative. We were advised to test again after 3 months. After we left the doctor I wanted to go home but uJoshua wathi asidlule kubangani bakhe. I didn't want to since the memory of thier kinky staff was still fresh in my mind but he promised that we will just pop in for 15 minutes and leave.

Safica behleli having what looked like a party. They offered us drinks and meat.

Zimbili: "I didn't think we would see you again."

Me: "Joshua dragged me"

Tumi: "Maybe we should have warned you"

Me: "About what?"

Tumi: "About that thing"

Me: "Its fine. What you do with your men is none of my business"

Tumi: "And Joshua"

Me: "What about him?"

Tumi: "What if he wants to?"

Me: "I don't mean to offend you but Joshua will never have sex with you" I was now annoyed.

Zimbili: "Gloria, Joshua is a man and they never get enough. Pretty soon he will get bored. Kuncono ukwenza kanje kunokuthola ukth uyakujolela with some girl nje you don't know."

Me: "Better that than this. I need the ladies" I got up.

Zimbili: "Second door on your right."

Me: "Thank you" I went inside the house ngaya e-toilet ngechama ngaqeda and then walked out. Ngathuka when I found Xolani standing in the passage.

Xolani: "Uyaphila sisi?"

Me: "Yes thank you" I walked away and he grabbed my hand.

Xolani: "Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you."

Me: "I don't like to be touched"

Xolani: "Why?"

Me: "Its personal. Can I go now?"

Xolani: "About the other night. I noticed that you were uncomfortable"

Me: "And?"

Xolani: "You think its wrong to share?"

Me: "Izimpilo zenu."

Xolani: "So you would never allow Joshua to share?"

Me: "Share who? I hope you don't think you will have sex with me. I'm not that cheap."

Xolani: "You think my wife is cheap?"

Me: "You said it, not me"

Xolani: "My wife understands this kind of life."

Me: "Really?" I rolled my eyes.

Xolani: "Everything come with a price. The shoes, clothes, diamonds and everything else that makes women happy."

Me: "And there is a name for that. Its called prostitution. Thats why I work for my money. A real job." I turned and walked away ngaphuma without looking back. Ngafica uJoshua ehleli esihlalweni ebengihleli kuso.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes."

Tumi: "Where is my husband?"

I didn't answer her ngoba angazi wayembuzelani kimi.

Joshua: "You want to go?"

Me: "Yes, please"

Tumi: "Gloria umshiyeph uXolani?"

Me: "Ubungibeletshisile yena yini?"

Tumi: "What were you doing in the house with him?"

Me: "Why don't you go look for him?"

Tumi: "You think I don't see what you doing? Trying to act all mighty kanti ufuna indoda yami."

Joshua: "Asambe Gloria" he got up.

Tumi: "You are not leaving until you tell me ukth benenzani noXolani sfebe"

ngezwa kushisa izinzwane kanti vele I was angry. Without thinking I slapped her right across the face. She threw a punch in my jaw line. I threw another ngamshaya iso before Joshua was holding my hands behind me.

Me: "Angifebi mina. Isfebe wuwe. Uhambe ulalwa nje ngenxa yemali. Get a real job and stop being a slut"

Xolani walked out of the house weza kunkosikazi wakhe.

Joshua: "Ndoda khuza unkosikazi wakho, asambe Thandeka" we walked to the car.

Joshua: "Where did you learn to throw a punch like that?"

Me: "Out there."

Joshua: "Ngikuse kadokotela. Maybe ulimele kakhulu"

Me: "I'm okay"

Joshua: "I didn't like what I just saw and I don't wish to see it again."

Me: "She insulted me"

Joshua: "I know I was there."

Me: "Bekumele ngimyeke engibhedela?"

Joshua: "You doing exactly what they want you to do"

Me: "Get mad?"

Joshua: "No. But to act njengesdwedwe sasemgwaqeni."

Me: "What was I suppose to do?"

Joshua: "Next time, walk away like a lady you are."

Me: "She called me a slut Joshua"

Joshua: "And you know very well that you are not a slut. Don't lower your standards by fighting useless people."

Me: "Uma engithuka ngivele ngihleke?"

Joshua: "Walk away."

I decided to shut up because it was clear that Joshua was no longer a gangmember but he was a priest too. Nakhu phela eseshumayeza mina.

Joshua: "Vele benenzani noXolani endlini?"

Me: "You think I slept with him aswel?"

Joshua: "Cha. I'm just curious"

Me: "He felt there was a need to explain that night."

Joshua: "Gloria ngicela ungasondeli kuXolani. Ungamjwayeli nje kwakona"

Me: "I don't even want to"

Joshua: "Good. Nami angimthembi."

Me: "Pho why you friends with him?"

Joshua: "Being friends sometimes don't mean trust."

Me: "So you are just using him?"

Joshua: "I'm not, ukth nami angiyithandi indlela akubuka ngayo. Uvele akubuke engathi yinja ihalela ithambo. Impela ungamjwayeli."

Me: "You scaring me"

Joshua: "I'm sorry. Ngikutshela iqiniso. UXolani umgodoyi woqobo."

Me: "You think he could hurt me?"

Joshua: "Ngingambulala ngezandla"

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "For what?"

Me: "Loving me"

he held my hand and smiled.

Joshua: "And thank you for loving me back."

We both went quiet. I won't lie and say Xolani didn't scare me. Ngangimesaba. There was something cold in his eyes.

Chapter 69.

Safica kukhona uBongeka noLindiwe waiting outside.

Joshua: "Ladies. Ninjani?"

Bongeka: "Siyaphila ninaninjan?"

Lindiwe didn't say anything at all.

Joshua: "Nathi siyaphila. Asingeneni" he opened the door sangena.

Me: "Anything to drink?"

Lindiwe: "Cha. We are not staying, I just had to see for myself."

Me: "See what?"

Lindiwe: "You had my brother killed Gloria. How could you?"

Me: "Its not like that."

Lindiwe: "Its like what? Uphikani ngoba uDuma ungitshelile ukth my best friend is the reason why my brother is dead."

Joshua: "Obviously Duma didn't tell you the whole story."

Lindiwe: "I wasn't talking to you. Ngisakhuluma nalombulali olala naye"

Joshua: "Watch the tone sisi."

Me: "Your brother wanted to kill me first."

Lindiwe: "I hate you Gloria. You no longer my friend."

Bongeka: "You don't mean that. You just angry. Give her a chance to explain."

Lindiwe: "Theres nothing to explain. If you were fearing for your life wawuzoya emaphoyiseni."

Me: "As a piece of paper was going to stop a gangster from killing me"

Joshua got up waya eduze kwe-tv wafaka isandla ngemumva and pulled out a gun wakhomba uLindiwe. She went pale.

Me: "Joshua what are you doing?"

Joshua: "Do you enjoy that feeling?" he asked Lindiwe.

She didn't answer. Her eyes filled with tears.

Joshua: "Akumnandi ukukhonjwa ngesibhamu sisi. Lento ekukhalisayo yayikhalisa uGloria. Awumazi ubhuti wakho ukth ubewumuntu onjani." he lowered the gun wasifaka kuye ngemumva.

Bongeka: "Why didn't you tell us Gloria?"

Me: "The time I was in Spain I was running from Jason."

Lindiwe: "Can I have a glass of water?"

Ngahamba ngayomkhelela ngabuya nawo.

Lindiwe: "I thought we were friends. Why ungashongo ukth khona ozama ukukubulala? Fth nje why would he want to kill you?"

Me: "Duma and Sizwe, my brother they know."

Bongeka: "And that video? They made it?"

Joshua: "The video is real. Sbusiso planted the camera in Gloria's place."

Bongeka: "Sbusiso Ndlela?"

Me: "Yena impela."

Lindiwe: "To think we were match making you with him kanti sikufaka esgebengwini."

Bongeka: "Pho who killed Jason?"

Joshua: "He shot himself."

Lindiwe: "Pho why uDuma ethi uGloria owathenga abantu?"

Joshua: "Uzama ukuniqhatha lowo and by the look of things, engath uzophumelela."

Lindiwe: "Ey angisazi mina manje. UDuma kimi uthe uGloria owabulalisa uJason. He didn't tell me ukth naye ungene kulendaba beside wanting to revenge Jason's death."

Joshua: "Theres a lot he didn't tell you. But ngicela umtshele ukth ngithe akahlukane noGloria."

OBongeka bahamba after a while. Sasala noJoshua.

Me: "Joshua"

Joshua: "Yes"

Me: "Why do you always drag me to your friends if you don't even trust them?"

Joshua: "Because I feel better when I know that you there with me kunokusala wedwa kulendlu. Its not

safe."

Me: "I can visit my friends aswell"

Joshua: "Uma isimo sesigcono you can but for now you can't"

Me: "So I'm stuck with you?"

Joshua: "Pretty much. But theres a lot we can do to pass time"

Me: "We can play with guns"

Joshua: "Or I can teach you the skill of multi-tasking"

Me: "I can multi task thank you"

Joshua: "Hhayi lokhu okwaziyo. Okunye"

Me: "Something tell me ukth i won't like this activity."

Joshua: "You will like it. I promise. Hlala kahle uqonde."

I sat up straight.

He sat on the coffee table facing me.

Joshua: "Take off your pants ne-top"

Me: "Theres no multi tasking. You just being horny."

Joshua: "Wezwa ngobani ukth ucansi kuphela olwenziwa kungagqokiwe? Khumula"

Me: "What if OJulia bayangena?"

Joshua: "Call Zinhle ubuze ukth baphi?" he gave me his phone ngafona yabanjwa uJulia.

Me: "Nikuph?"

Julia: "Sisayongena ethekwini. I'm going to boarding school next year. You should have seen that school. Its the best school mum. I know you and dad wanted me to stay home but mum please, I want to go there."

Me: "Wozani. Sokhuluma kahle uma senifikile" my eyes filled with happy tears. Julia called me mum.

Julia: "Okay ma. Bye" she hung up.

Joshua: "Ukhalelani?"

Me: "Its happy tears"

Joshua: "Please share with me"

Me: "Julia just called me mum."

Joshua: "I had a talk with her last night. She asked if ku-right ukth akubize ngomama ngathi its okay. I know we don't spend much time with her but all that will change soon"

Me: "She wants to go to boarding school next year. If she does then we won't spend enough time with her."

Joshua: "She won't go."

Me: "Uzomvimba ngani?"

Joshua: "Uzobona."

Me: "Please don't ruin the relationship. I really want to enjoy this chance."

Joshua: "I won't. I really want us to be a family. Me and my girls."

Me: "Thank you for giving me this chance. "

Joshua: "No. Thank you for loving Julia even after everything she said to you."

Me: "Uyingane uJulia. She needed guidance and Zinhle is doing fine. They get along so well. I hope I'll be able to do it too. Nami ngibe umama oqotho kuye."

Joshua: "You will. I love you."

Me: "I love you too"

Chapter 70.

Joshua: "You think you can shoot me now? Usunesbindi esingako?"

Me: "Take another step and see" my finger touched the trigger.

Joshua: "Then shoot. Angithi wena usuwumdubuli. Dubula Thandeka" he took another step closer ngahlehla.

Me: "I said don't move"

Joshua: "And I said shoot. Obviously its something you can't do."

Me: "Shut up. Just shut the fuck up."

Joshua: "Or what?" in a blink he grabbed the gun and was now pointing at me.

I took a step back until I was standing near the couch.

Joshua: "Take this shirt off."

Ngaqaqa inkinobho kancane until I was done. My eyes didn't leave the gun.

Joshua: "Take it off."

Slowly I took it off and threw it to him and then grabbed the gun. We fought for it until we both fell on the couch. The gun was now pointing my head and Joshua was between my legs. I could feel him pressed against my stomach.

We looked at each other until he lowered his head and kissed my lips furiously. I held the waist line of his sweatpants and pulled him closer. He threw the gun on the floor and then went to touch down there. I gasped out loud when his finger slipped in and then slipped out.

He got up and took off his pants and then took off my underwear. He went back to his position and pushed himself in. I held my breath as my fingers scratched his back. He pushed my knees against my chest and pushed himself in again touching my g-spot and then started moving. I wrapped my legs around him and my arms around his neck. I could feel my climax building up really quickly and Joshua was thrusting slowly teasing my g-spot.

Me: "Joshua" I moaned out loud. My legs were shaking, my heart beating so fast.

Joshua: "Come. Come for me my love" he thrust harder as the wave of pleasure washed over me. He kissed my lips slowly.

Joshua: "Turn around for me" he whispered and then pulled out.

I got up and went on my hands and knees. He pushed himself in again and began moving fast and harder. I could feel that I was going to climax again.

Joshua: "I'm sorry" he pulled out and turned me over to my back and then went in thrusting fast and harder until we both came.

Me: "What was that all about?"

Joshua: "I don't know. I even forgot the condom."

Me: "And if one of us is sick?"

Joshua: "Then we are now both infected."

Me: "You don't even sound worried."

Joshua: "That's because I'm not. Can we not argue about HIV right now." he got up nami ngavuka.

Ngacoshisa izimpahla zami and then walked out. Ngafika ekameleni ngayongena kwi-shower straight.

Ngageza. Ngaqeda ngaphuma ngafica uJoshua ehleli embhedeni ebhince ithawula.

I didn't say anything. Ngafika ngagcoba ngagqoka i-nightdress ngangena embhedeni.

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka"

Me: "Its not your fault."

Joshua: "But you wanted to talk about it and I shut you down."

Me: "Its fine. Goodnight Joshua"

Joshua: "So you don't want to talk?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "You angry?"

Me: "No. I'm tired and really sleepy."

Joshua: "I thought you angry"

Me: "I'm not."

Joshua: "Goodnight then"

Me: "Goodnight"

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "I love you more. Ugeze kuph?"

Joshua: "Theres a shower in that room. Phela ubusudubile ngangabe ngisakwazi ukukutshela"

Me: "I seriously need a tour in this house."

Joshua: "Tomorrow morning"

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "I didn't hurt you?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Okay. Ukth I lost control for a moment."

Me: "Why did you change your mind about the position?"

Joshua: "I wanted to look into your eyes when I release inside you"

Me: "So you didn't forget the condom. Uyiyeke ngesbomu?"

Joshua: "Ngiyikhumbule usuchamile vele. Ngavele ngaqhubeka without it."

Me: "You should have told me"

Joshua: "Goodnight Gloria"

Me: "You can't dismiss me like a child Joshua."

Joshua: "You behaving like one right now."

Me: "That's because I'm worried about our safety. Something you don't care about."

Joshua: "I don't care? Really Gloria? Do you have any idea how many times I've stopped myself from fucking you without a condom. Ngenxa yaleliphutha nje namhlanje usuth anginendaba?"

I didn't argue further. Ngavele ngadonsa ingubo ngalala.

Joshua woke me up the next day.

Me: "Ngisalele" I complained.

Joshua: "Vuka Gloria. Ubaba wakho usesibhedlela."

Me: "Why? What happened?" I got up and went to wash my face ngaxubha ngabuya ngagqoka.

Joshua: "Sozwa khona. Asambe" he took the car keys sahamba.

Safika esbhedlela basikhombisa ukth ulaliswe kuphi. My mum and Sizwe were there.

We walked in sabukana kungekho okhulumayo. The doctor walked in.

Joshua: "What happened?"

Doctor: "Mr Memela had a heart attack"

I looked at my father. Held his hand.

Doctor: "He needs to rest."

Me: "Just 5 minutes. Please"

He nodded and left. Umama noSizwe baphuma.

Me: "Baba ngikhona nami" tears rolled down my face.

He opened his eyes wangibuka kwaphuma izinyembezi. His eyes looked at Joshua next to me.

Dad: "Ngiyaxolisa mtanami" he whispered.

Me: "Kulungile baba."

Dad: "Umgade umtanami ndodana."

Joshua: "Ngizokwenzenjalo baba"

Dad: "Ungixolisele kumama wakho Thandeka. Ngenza iphutha." the beeping changed.

Chapter 71.

I couldn't believe that my dad was gone. It felt like it was dreaming. All those years ngingamkhulumisi and now he was gone. Just like that.

Joshua: "Lets go home" he took my hand sahamba leaving Sizwe and my mum talking.

Safika ekhaya oZinhle noJulia benza i-breakfast. I went upstairs because I didn't want Julia to see me crying. Joshua brought me breakfast. I wasn't hungry but I ate ngoba he was nagging. After eating I drank the juice.

Me: "I-taste yale-juice i-funny. Did you do something?"

Joshua: "Like what?"

Me: "Angazi. Thats why I'm asking"

Joshua: "Do you feel funny?"

Me: "No. But I need to pee" I got up noJoshua wasukuma.

Joshua: "Let me help you"

Me: "You did. Why did you drug me?"

Joshua: "Woza phela uzochama."

Me: "Angiphiswanga. Bengicuphe wena" I sat down.

Joshua: "Lala uphumule. Sizoyantambam kumama wakho."

Me: "Mucabanga ubesho ukthini ubaba uma ethi ngimxolisele kumama"

Joshua: "Maybe baxabene."

Me: "Pho why engazikhulumeli?"

Joshua: "I don't know. But sozwa ntambama."

Me: "Ngisalala" my body was slowly letting go.

Ngaphaphama uJoshua ehleli embhedeni ebuka something in his laptop.

Me: "What time is it?"

Joshua: "Its after 8."

Me: "Ebusuku?"

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "Why didn't you wake me up?"

Joshua: "You were asleep? Sizoya ekseni ksasa"

Me: "Why do you keep doing that?"

Joshua: "Doing what?"

Me: "Deciding everything and then expecting me to just roll along with you. I'm a grown woman Joshua. You can't do this to me"

Joshua: "I'm sorry. Awulambanga?"

Me: "Cha"

I got up and went to the bathroom ngeza ubuso and then went back to Joshua.

Me: "What ever it is that you made me drink was heavy. I'm still sleepy."

Joshua: "You need a cup of coffee."

Me: "Ngisayoyenza."

Joshua: "No ngizokwenzela" he got up and went downstairs.

I sat on the bed ngabuka ukth wenzani kwi-laptop. There was a bank statement showing that he withdrew R12 000 and another R15 000. I closed the laptop when I heard footsteps. I took my phone and sent my friends an sms ngabatshela ngokushona kukababa.

Joshua walked in with food and coffee. I drank the coffee first and then ate ngaqeda salala.

Ngaksasa ngavuka early ngeza ngaya downstairs ngafica uZinhle e-cleaner.

Me: "Morning"

Zinhle: "Ninjani sisi"

Me: "Akufani sisi."

Zinhle: "Joshua told me what happened. I'm sorry about your dad."

Me: "Ngiyabonga. So what else is left to do?"

Zinhle: "I'm almost done."

Me: "Why doesn't Joshua hire someone. Inkulu phela lendlu for wena wedwa"

Zinhle: "Akathandi. Uvele athi uzosala yedwa kulendlu uma singekho."

Me: "Trust Joshua to act like ikhehla."

Zinhle: "I'm just glad that you and Julia joined us. It was lonely."

Me: "I love the way you and Julia get along."

Zinhle: "I treat her like an important equal. Let her make decision on small things like what to cook. She likes that"

Me: "Thanks for the tip."

Zinhle: "And she really likes you."

Me: "And I'm guilty for not spending enough time with her."

Zinhle: "Yith esingahlali sisi. But sekuzolunga since namaholidi asefikile."

Me: "Impela. We will do something as a family."

Zinhle: "That will be great."

We made breakfast bafika nabanye sadla saqeda ngawasha izintsha and then changed sahamba noJoshua saya e-Westville.

Safica uSizwe nomama behleli nje in the lounge as if nothing happened.

Me: "Manje umncwabo?"

Mum: "Uzoshiswa kusasa"

Me: "What? Nizomshisa? Why?"

Sizwe: "Because we want to. Akundaba yakho"

Me: "You can't burn my father's body. I won't allow you to"

Sizwe: "Uzosivimba ngani?"

Me: "I'll take you to court"

Sizwe: "On what ground? You not even family"

Me: "What do you mean I'm not family?" I looked at my mother.

Mum: "Ake ningiyeke ngomsindo."

Me: "Usho ukthini uma uthi angiyena owalayikhaya?"

Sizwe: "Really Gloria. You need me to spell it out for you? He was not your father."

Ngavele ngezwa ngishiselwa ngabuye ngagodola futhi.

Me: "Unamanga"

Sizwe: "Ey awumtshele mama. Wena awuyena owakwaMemela."

Me: "Ngowaphi?" I looked at my mother.

Mum: "Unyoko uMaDlamini. Uyihlo angimazi ngoba noMemela ubengakwazi."

Me: "Seningaze niqambe amanga angaka ngenxa yefa? Nifuna imali?"

Sizwe: "Ifa vele elethu. Besengitshela wena ungaze uyozihlaza enkantolo ulwela indoda ongayazi"

I don't know what happened but ngethuka nje uJoshua esengisusa kuSizwe.

Mum: "Awungiphumele kwami wenondindwa. Usushaya umtanami manje. " she was screaming on top of her voice.

Joshua: "Asambe"

Me: "I'm not going anywhere. That man was my father"

Mum: "Konje veleinja injalo. Uyipha ukudla qede ikulume. Phuma ntombaze ngingaze ngikulimaze mina"

Joshua: "Asambe Gloria"

Sizwe: "Ungaphinde ubuye"

Joshua and I walked out. Ngafika emotweni ngasikhihla isililo. Inhliziyo yami yayingakholwa ukthini le eqeda kwenzeka. Joshua didn't say anything he drove us home.

Chapter 72.

Safika ekhaya oJulia bengekho. I went to the bedroom and threw myself on the bed. Joshua walked in with a glass of water.

Me: "I don't want to sleep."

Joshua: "Its just plain water."

Me: "I'm not thirsty"

Joshua: "They could be lying Thandeka"

Me: "What if they are not?"

Joshua: "Pho baphi abazali bakho and why wakhuliswa uMemela?"

Me: "Angazi and who is MaDlamini? Why did she give me away?"

Joshua: "It doesn't make sense. Cishe baqamba amanga."

Me: "I don't know what to do"

Joshua: "We could hire a PI."

Me: "And where would that poor guy start? Sazi igama kuphela fth nakhona oMaDlamini bayinqwaba."

Joshua: "Angazi yazi."

Me: "That's why she never loved me. Ngisakhula ngangith she is busy when she had no time for me kanti ingoba wayengangifuni vele engangizali."

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka."

Me: "Can we get married Joshua?"

Joshua: "Right now?"

Me: "Yes. Please let me be Thandeka Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "We can't get married right now."

Me: "Why not?"

Joshua: "Ilobolo ngolikhokha keph? Who will give you away?"

Me: "I'll give myself away. Singashada ilobolo lingekho."

Joshua: "Umkipito phela lowo."

Me: "Awusafuni ukungishada?"

Joshua: "Ngiyafuna aw."

Me: "Pho why you making excuses?"

Joshua: "I'm not. I'm telling you the truth."

Me: "So ngizoba uGloria Memela until when? What if we never find my parents?"

Joshua: "But we will find relatives"

Me: "And if we don't?"

Joshua: "We will. Umama kaSizwe unalo ulwazi"

Me: "What makes you think she will tell you."

Joshua: "Trust me, she will" he got up and walked out.

I decide to call Bongeka and inform her.

Bongeka: "Kahle bo. Bengayenza kanjani nje leyonto?"

Me: "Bazoyenza and theres nothing I could do."

Bongeka: "Manje uMaDlamini uzomthatha kuph?"

Me: "Angazi oe."

Bongeka: "Bavele bakutshela lokh kuphela?"

Me: "Yep and ubaba bazomshisa."

Bongeka: "Hawu yini kangaka?"

Me: "Angazi. Maybe bayazi bona. Can't I stop them?"

Bongeka: "Ey girl chances are way too slim. Umthetho ungakubo."

Me: "What about a DNA test? Can't I force them. Ukuze ngibone uma beqamba amanga"

Bongeka: "Well, that we could beg them for it."

Me: "Ngaze ngahlupheka emhlabeni."

Bongeka: "Kuzolunga sisi. Bekezela"

Me: "I'm not sure if I can survive this. I have so many questions for my real parents"

Bongeka: "When we find them. You will ask them."

Me: "If we do. Ngizokufonela later girl."

Bongeka: "Gloria. Ungakhohlwa ukth you still have us and we love you"

Me: "Thank you so much my friend and I love you too"

After talking to Bongeka I decided to take a shower before making lunch. I showered quickly ngaqeda ngaphuma ngibhince ithawula. The sound of piano got my attention. I didn't know Joshua had one or

that he could play. I went to check it out and it sounded like it was coming from downstairs. I went there ngafika ngavula iscabha ngangena ngafica usisi egqoke esincane isketi lesi.

Her: "Kunini ngikulindile. You owe me" she spoke without looking at me.

Me: "Who are you and what are you doing in my house?"

Her: "Your house? UJoshua akasahlali yini lana?"

Me: "Uyahlala. Nami ngiyahlala. Wena ufunani?"

Her: "UJoshua uphi?"

Me: "How did you get in?"

Her: "Ey sisi ngifuna uJoshua. Wena angikwazi."

Joshua: "Thandeka ukuph?"

Me: "Lana"

He walked in after few moment wama wabuka intombi yakhe.

Joshua: "Zuki ufunani lana?"

Her: "I came to see you. Obvious you replaced me."

Me: "Joshua yini lena?"

Her: "Ungangibizi ngento sisi"

Me: "Or what?"

Her: "Isfebe saphi lesiJoshua?"

Joshua: "Gqoka Zuki"

Her: "Angihambi. Yingakho ungasanginaki Joshua. Usuhlala nonondindwa endlini. Angihambi"

Me: "Vele hlala. Kuhamba mina" I walked out and ran upstairs. Ngafika ngagqoka ngathatha iskhwama sami and began packing. Joshua walked in.

Joshua: "It was just a misunderstanding."

Me: "I know"

Joshua: "Then stop packing"

Me: "Why should I? Your whore said she isn't leaving."

Joshua: "She is leaving. Can you stop that?"

Me: "You cheating Joshua?"

Joshua: "I'm not cheating."

Zuki walked in.

Joshua: "I told you to wait downstairs"

I zipped up my bag.

Zuki: "What for? Its not like I haven't been here before."

I took my bags and walked out ngafonela uBongeka to come get me.

Joshua: "MaMemela wait"

Me: "Don't" I walked out ngavala nescabha. Joshua and Zuki walked out.

I decided to walked further down the street uBongeka wangifica endleleni.

Bongeka: "What happened?"

Me: "I should have known it was too good to be true. He is cheating"

Bongeka: "With who?"

Me: "She has a key."

Bongeka: "I'm sorry my friend. Ukth nje akukholakali, uhlale enawe uJoshua. Engasthathaph nje iskhathi sokufeba?"

Me: "Akaphekanga."

Bongeka: "Did you give him a chance to explain?"

Me: "What for? So he can feed me more lies?"

Bongeka: "Maybe its a misunderstanding."

Me: "She was in the house, playing a piano naked Bongeka"

Bongeka: "Tjo."

Me: "I really thought he was different kanti ngiyazikhohlisa."

Bongeka: "Lets just go home. Things may look better tomorrow."

We drove in silence. I was debating with my heart If I made a right decision by leaving.

Chapter 73.

Bongeka dropped me off wabuyela emsebenzini. I unpacked my staff in the spare room and then made something to eat. Ngadla ngibuka i-tv and then went to wash the plate in the kitchen. Part of me was waiting for Joshua to call and beg me to come home another part expected him to drop in and demand me to go home with him.

I went back to the lounge and almost had a heart attack when I saw Joshua sitting on the couch.

Joshua: "This is becoming a habit Thandeka"

Me: "How did you get in?"

Joshua: "The door. Come and sit. You and I need to have a serious talk."

Me: "About what?"

Joshua: "Hlala phansi."

Me: "I'll stand. How did you get in? The door was locked"

Joshua: "Awuhlale phansi Thandeka"

I took few steps ngabeka ichopho lesinqa kwi-couch.

Me: "Talk"

Joshua: "I'm not going to beat you up. Relax"

Me: "Why are you here then? UZuki umshiye nobani?"

Joshua: "She went home."

Me: "Bengithi uti akahambi nje."

Joshua: "Is that what our home will be like? We fight, you leave."

Me: "We didn't fight Joshua. You cheated."

Joshua: "And that means you should pack up and leave?"

Me: "Stop trying to make me feel bad for your cheating. Why did you cheat? Angikwenelisi?"

Joshua: "Its not like that Gloria."

Me: "It is like that Joshua. Aweneli. You were preaching ngokufeba kodwa nawe awuziphethe kahle."

Joshua: "Obviously ngisho ngingathini manje ngeke ungizwe. Uthathela yonke into phezulu."

Me: "When?"

Joshua: "Please don't. It wasn't like that"

Me: "What was it like then? You slipped and fell between her legs?"

Joshua: "You ran Gloria."

I laughed out loud noJoshua wathuka.

Me: "So you blaming me? Really Joshua? Ngicela uhambe" I got up and went to open the door.

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka"

Me: "Out. Get out"

He got weza emnyango.

Joshua: "Ngiyazi ngikuphoxile sthandwa sami and I'm sorry but ngiyacela ungayikhiphi le-ring. If you feel unsafe, just do what I told you."

I nodded ngalinda waphuma before closing the door ngakhiya.

I don't know ukth yini eyayingicika kakhulu. Ukuth ulale nayo or ukth he was so damn calm about it fth engaphiki like you would expect men to do when they get caught. I didn't want to think too much so I decided to go for a walk. I texted Bongeka just incase ebuya ngingekho and then changed ngaggoka i-tracksuit namateku ngathatha ifoni and left. I went to the beach and walked on the sand just thinking about everything. The pain came back. I had tons of questions for my parents. Why did they give me away? Why did Sizwe's mother take me in ekbeni ayengenyanya. It felt like my chest was closing in. I couldn't breath.

Someone touched my shoulder ngaphenduka ngambheka. It was a man.

Him: "You okay"

Me: "I can't breath." I managed to whisper still holding my chest.

Him: "Ima uqonde sisi and then take a deep breath through your nose"

I did that.

Him: "Slowly release it through your mouth."

I did that again.

Him: "Do it again"

I did it again nami ngazizwa ngibancono.

Me: "Cishe ngafa. Thank you so much"

Him: "You welcome. The name is Maxwel Ximba"

Me: "I'm Gloria Memela."

Him: "So who is he?"

Me: "Who?"

Him: "The guy who is making you cry."

Me: "Who told you its a man?"

Him: "It has to be a man. He deserves a punch"

Me: "Kanti its not even like that"

Him: "So if its not a guy then what is it?"

Me: "Long and complicated family drama"

Him: "How about we buy some ice cream over there and then you share your long complicated drama with me"

Me: "Ice cream, yes. Sharing, no."

Him: "Fair enough."

We went and bought two ice cream qede sahlala phansi esihlabathini.

Maxwel: "Manje beside ukugula olwandle, uGloria wenzani empilweni?"

Me: "I'm an Auditor. Wena uwudokotela?"

Maxwel: "How did you guess?" we both laughed.

Maxwel: "You even more lovely when you laugh."

Me: "And now you sound like a man"

Maxwel: "I am a man. So do you like art?"

Me: "I'm not sure."

Maxwel: "What kind of an answer is that?"

Me: "Maybe if I knew what kind of a question was that, then I could give a clear answer." we laughed again.

Maxwel: "You are a tough woman MaMemela"

Me: "Nami ngiyazizamela"

Maxwel: "Manje awusho-ke. Uthathiwe?"

Me: "By who?"

Maxwel: "The ring in your finger."

Me: "I'm not taken by the ring in my finger."

Maxwel: "Rather by the man who put it there?"

Me: "Yes."

Maxwel: "Unenhlanhla lowo muntu. I hope he realise"

Me: "I'm sure he does."

Maxwel: "So uzoba right or I should take you home?"

Me: "Ngizoba right. Thanks though."

Maxwel: "See you" he smiled and walked away nami ngasukuma ngagoduka. The weather had changed then, from cloudy and warm to cold and rainy. Ngafika endlini uBongeka ekhona ehleli noJoshua.

Bongeka: "Uphumaph emakhazeni oe?"

Me: "I went for a walk"

Joshua: "Where?"

Me: "Out"

Bongeka: "Kunini sikulindile."

Me: "What for?"

Joshua: "We need to talk."

Me: "Talk"

Bongeka: "In private Gloria. Iyani ekameleni"

I walked away wangilandela uJoshua sangena ekameleni wavala iscabha.

Joshua: "Ngathini kuwe ngamadoda?"

Me: "You followed me?"

Joshua: "You didn't answer my question." he held my arms.

Chapter 74.

Me: "Atleast I didn't fuck him. We just talked. So if you want to beat me up for talking to a man then go ahead and do it"

Joshua: "So this was your revenge?"

Me: "If it was revenge bengizohamba naye. Manje cha, i was having some chest pains and he helped me and then we went of Ice cream"

The moment I mentioned Ice cream Joshua's face changed.

Joshua: "Who bought the ice cream?"

Me: "He did."

Joshua: "Shit!!" he let go of me wakhipha ifone and made a call.

Joshua: "Thizo, I need you to hunt Maxwel down. I'm going to kill that dog nx." he hung up.

Me: "How do you know Maxwel?"

Joshua: "Did he touch you?"

Me: "Touch how?"

Joshua: "Awusakwazi manje ukuthinta Thandeka? Uke wasisondeza isandla kuwe?"

Me: "Joshua I think you need help. Usuzohlanya phela wena manje"

Joshua: "Take your clothes off."

Me: "Angifuni. You are not touching me. Iya kuZuki"

Joshua: "You sweating. Take these off ngiyabuya" he walked out.

I sat down on the bed and took my shoes off because I wanted to rest. He walked in with a glass of milk.

Joshua: "I think Maxwel poisoned u. Drink this."

Me: "Can I rest a bit ngizophuza uma ngivuka"

Joshua: "Angidlali Thandeka. Just drink the milk."

I got up and took the glass ngaphuza and then gave him the glass.

Me: "See, there's nothing wrong with me. You are so uptight du...." I felt a sharp pain in my stomach.

Joshua: "What is it?"

Me: "It hurts Joshua" I couldn't breathe.

Joshua: "Breathe through your nose. I know it hurts but you have to."

Bongeka walked in with a glass of milk.

Joshua: "Thank you. Phuzela Gloria"

Bongeka: "Kwenzekani? Why amehlo kaGloria ebomvu?"

Joshua: "Try to drink my love. Please"

I took a large sip and swallowed.

Joshua: "Phuzela futhi uze uqede"

I drank the whole glass and then my stomach turned. Joshua picked me up and took me to the toilet. I vomited and flushed. When I rinsed my mouth I noticed that I was throwing up blood.

Bongeka: "Let me go call an ambulance"

Joshua: "Don't. Esbhedlela uzoshona."

Bongeka: "She is throwing up blood Joshua. Akusona iskhathi senkani lesi"

Joshua: "I know what I'm doing. Uma sike samusa bazomjova angene kwi-coma for good."

I was dizzy and sweating.

Me: "I need to lie down" I whispered.

Joshua: "No. You need to stay awake. Drink some water"

I drank from the tap but before I could swallow I threw up again all over the sink. It was blood.

Joshua: "Do it again"

I threw up again and again until I couldn't do it anymore.

Bongeka: "If my friend dies, I swear Joshua. I will kill myself."

Joshua: "She won't die. Take her back to bed I'll clean up"

Bongeka help me save her. I'll clean up.

Bongeka: "Kubuhlungu kaph?"

Me: "Isisu nesfuba"

Bongeka: "Thats it. I'm calling an ambulance"

Joshua: "She will die. Let her rest. I think kuphumile okuncolile."

Bongeka: "Usuwudokotela nini Joshua?"

Joshua: "Angiyena but I know this and I don't want to lose my wife."

Bongeka: "She is falling asleep"

Joshua: "Let her be."

I closed my eyes and slept.

When I woke up Bongeka and Joshua were sitting next to me.

Bongeka: "Thank God you awake. How are you feeling?"

Me: "Like I was hit by a train and my throat is burning"

Joshua: "Move your legs and arms"

I did that.

Joshua: "I need you to think. What did Maxwel say to you?"

Me: "About what?"

Joshua: "Anything nje"

Me: "He asked if I like art"

Joshua: "Wena wathini?"

Me: "I said I don't know"

Bongeka: "What kind of an answer is that?"

Me: "He said the same thing and I said the question wasn't clear"

Joshua: "Where did he touch you?"

Me: "The shoulder."

Joshua: "Okay. Awulambanga?"

Me: "No."

Bongeka: "Who is trying to kill my friend?"

Joshua: "His name is Maxwel Ximba, Jason's best friend. Kade eboshiwe shuth usephumile."

Bongeka: "How did he know where to find her?"

Joshua: "Maybe he followe..... Zukiswa did it."

Me: "Your slut?"

Joshua: "It was a set up. That bitch."

Bongeka: "What are you talking about?"

Joshua: "To get Gloria out of the house. Thats why she came to my house."

He got up and made a call.

Joshua: "I'm going to send you an address. Come right now." he hung up and sent a text.

Bongeka: "If he was watching the house then what if he comes after me?"

Joshua: "You coming home with us tonight. The guys will watch the house."

Bongeka: "For how long? I have a life"

Joshua: "As soon as we get him you will come back. But you need to change your locks. It took me few seconds to open your front door."

Me: "Thats how you got in?"

Joshua: "Doors can't keep me away"

Someone knocked wahamba wayobheka uJoshua.

Bongeka: "I thought Joshua was a gang member, but this? Ngeke oe."

Me: "And I can't get out"

Bongeka: "What do you mean?"

Me: "Someone will kill me. If Joshua doesn't do it out of anger then someone will get me. I don't even know how I got into such a mess."

Bongeka: "You fell inlove"

Me: "And if I didn't fall inlove I'll be dead by now. Jason and Sizwe would have killed me long time ago."

Bongeka: "Your brother Sizwe?"

Me: "He sold me to the devil years ago."

Bongeka: "We need to find your real parents."

Chapter 75

The next day was Christmas. Joshua offered to cook us lunch and he did. Sahlala together kwamnandi the whole day. Later we went to see his friends and I didn't want to go but he didn't want to leave me behind saying it will look really rude if I don't come. Zinhle and Julia stayed and watched tv.

Safica bene-braai and the ladies wearing sexy swim wear.

Me: "Now I feel out of place"

Joshua: "You perfectly fine. Please don't drink."

Me: "I won't"

Joshua: "Good. I have plans for us later."

Me: "Wow. Please share"

Joshua: "Nope. Go chill with the girls and try not to fight."

Me: "Mxm. Hurry up I don't like this place."

I went to sit near the pool.

Tumi: "I owe you an apology"

Me: "Yes"

Tumi: "I'm sorry I behaved like a high school teen"

Me: "Apology accepted"

Tumi: "So we are good?"

Me: "We are not friends but we are good"

Tumi: "Okay"

Zimbili brought me some food and drinks. I ate the food but drank juice.

Joshua sent me a text message with a clip attached to it. I went to view the clip and my cheeks went red. It was a kamasutra clip.

Another text followed. "YOU LOOK SO CUTE RIGHT NOW"

I sent a reply "THANK YOU. HURRY UP"

He replied: "I'M DONE NOW." He got up and said goodbye nami ngavalelisa sahamba.

Me: "Usheshisile"

Joshua: "I know. Ngijahe ekhaya"

Me: "Ujaheni?"

Joshua: "I have a gift to unwrap" he smiled.

Me: "Can I ask you something?"

Joshua: "Buza"

Me: "What did you mean when you said uma kungathiwa we are related kungafa umuntu?"

Joshua: "I will kill us both"

I looked at him surprised by such an easy response.

Me: "Something tells me that you are not joking."

Joshua: "Vele angidlali. Just image nje sengikubuka usunenye indoda after what we been through and all the love that we made. Angeke nje Gloria ngiphile."

Me: "Manje mina ungangibulalelani?"

Joshua: "I don't want you to leave without me. Futh asiyiyeke le topic. Did you watch the clip I sent you?"

Me: "No. Bebezothini abantu ngibuka i-porn?"

Joshua: "Thats not porn, thats the art of love making."

Me: "Its still porn."

The moment we got home Joshua ran me a hot bath and told me to relax. I sat in the bath for an hour, when I come out ngafica i-shirt ne-rose embhedeni with a note attached to it. It said "WEAR THIS AND FOLLOW THE ROSES" there was another rose on the handle.

I wore the shirt and took the rose on the handle ngaphuma. There was another in the passage. I picked it up again and looked for another and found it on the handle ngavula ngangena.

Joshua was standing in the middle of the room, wearing white pants and holding a red rose. The room had candles all over. The roses on the floor and cushions.

I walked up to him and stood in front of him.

Me: "Its beautiful."

Joshua: "And you look beautiful."

We stood like that just staring at each other and smiling.

Joshua: "Whats on your mind?"

Me: "Lo-carpet walendlu u-soft ngenye indlela. Yazi ngathi ngimi phezulu kwe-sponge."

Joshua: "You standing in a room half naked with a half naked man who is about to make love to you and thinking about the floor?"

Me: "I'm a woman and I'm allowed to think like that."

Joshua: "I love you and I'm sorry about Zukiswa. I promise I won't do it again"

Me: "Ngiyezwa."

Joshua: "So you forgive me?"

Me: "Did you use protection?"

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "I forgive you but if you do it again I will take your gun and shoot you between the eyes"

Joshua: "Thank God you won't have to because I won't do it again."

Me: "Good."

His hand cupped my chin as he lowered his lips and kissed my lips. We kissed for a while before we sat on the floor.

Just like Joshua promised. We made love on the floor. By the time we finishe I was so tired.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yeah I'm fine. Just tired. Awusho, where did you learn to make love like that?"

Joshua: "I watched the kamasutra."

Me: "You watched porn."

Joshua: "And it worked. I know how to satisfy you."

Me: "And who told you I'm satisfied?"

Joshua: "Is that a request for another round of pleasure?"

Me: "I'm just kidding. I'm more than satisfied."

Joshua: "You were shaking"

Me: "That's because ubungibambe izandla."

Joshua: "Bese kuthiwa owakithi wena, after what I've done to you I don't think I can live."

Me: "Uneskhwele"

Joshua: "I love you too much"

Me: "But you would kill me?"

Joshua: "It's the only choice. But ngingenza sure that you die quickly so you won't feel the pain."

Me: "You make it sound so easy"

Joshua: "That's because I know that you are not my sister."

Me: "And I don't wish to be."

Joshua: "Good because I don't want you as well. I want you to be my wife."

Me: "I want that too."

Joshua: "As soon as we find your parents ngiyakulobola siyashada."

Me: "Kazi so bathola yini?"

Joshua: "We will" his hand touched my downstairs.

Me: "What time is it?"

Joshua: "It's early." his phone rang wayicinga wayithola.

Joshua: "Yes"

He listened for a moment and then his face changed wajikijela nefoni le.

Me: "What's wrong?"

Joshua: "Zinhle has been shot."

Me: "But bengithi balayindlini nje?"

Joshua: "Bebehambe noMsizi beyobona ingane."

Chapter 76

Safica uZinhle esbhedlela engalimele kakhulu. Infact wayethinteki kancane ingalo. They allowed her to go home sabuya naye. We ordered pizza but Julia is the only one who ate it. Afterwards we all went to bed.

Joshua and I were still talking when Njabulo called and said they found the guy. Joshua woke up right there and got dressed wahamba. I was too tired to bother. He didn't come back the whole night. Ngakusasa ngavuka ngandlula ngegeza and went downstairs to make breakfast. Ngayenza nqaqeda and went to check the girls. Babesalele bobabili. I decided to do the laundry. I took all the clothes ngaziyisa downstairs and then remembered the shirt I was wearing the night before. I went to the room ngavula and got the shock of my life. Joshua was holding a gun pointing to a man who was covered in blood. I was still standing there when he pulled trigger and the guy fell on the floor.

Thizo: "Joshua"

Joshua: "What?" He turned around and looked at me. I stepped back and ran upstairs. Joshua ran after me. Ngafika ekameleni and ran to the bathroom to throw up.

Joshua walked in, wa-flash i-toilet and then pushed me against the seat.

Me: "What are you doing?"

Joshua: "Keep still"

I felt something sting my arm and then Joshua withdraw the needle.

Me: "What did you do?"

He didn't answer instead he picked me up wayongibeka embhedeni.

Joshua: "Close your eyes and sleep"

Me: "You killed him." I felt calm and then slept.

When I woke up I was hungry. I went downstairs to get something to eat ngadla. Joshua and Thizo babedlala i-game in the lounge.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Yes"

They looked at each other.

Me: "Where is Julia?"

Joshua: "They are outside in the pool."

Me: "I think I will go swim aswel." I went upstairs to change and then went to swim.

Julia and I played in water while Zinhle watched. We had a great time but I couldn't help thinking about a horrible dream I had.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "I had a dream. A really bad dream."

Joshua: "About what?"

Me: "You. Ubukhomba umuntu ngesbhamu"

Joshua: "Aw. Maybe inyongo since vele ubulele emini."

Me: "I guess so. What do you want to have for supper?"

Joshua: "You will cook?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Awukhathele yini?"

Me: "Akaze ngenze lutho nje. I will cook." I went to the kitchen ngapheka.

Joshua kept coming in and pretending to be looking for something.

Me: "You freaking me out"

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Ufunani? Kunini ungena uphuma."

Joshua: "Its nothing." he looked at me and then walked out.

I finished cooking ngayogeza ngaqeda uJoshua ehleli embhedeni.

Me: "You acting strange"

Joshua: "Strange how?"

Me: "You been staring at me the whole day."

Joshua: "I'm worried about the dream you had."

Me: "The one where you killed a man?"

Joshua: "Yes. Awulichaze."

Me: "Ubungathi silayindlini and mina ngivule iscabha ngafica wena umkhombe ngesbhamu and then you

shot him."

Joshua: "Uphuphe kabi ngempela yazi. Atleast it was a dream."

Me: "Yah ey. Kungithusile kodwa. I can't picture you doing that."

Joshua: "Bekuyinyongo love" he got up and walked out.

I decided to do the laundry since the washing was piling up. I took the clothes downstairs and sorted them out according to thier colours. The stains in Joshua's shirt caught my attention. It looked like blood. I brushed away the thought of my dream. It was just a dream and Joshua wouldn't kill a man right under our roof.

Joshua: "What are you doing here?"

Me: "The laundry."

Joshua: "Need help?"

Me: "It wasn't a dream, was it?"

Joshua: "Gloria I can explain."

Me: "What did you do to me?"

Joshua: "Nothing"

Me: "I'm not stupid. You did something to make me think it was a dream. Did you drug me?"

Joshua: "I had to. You were throwing up."

Me: "Are you trying to turn me into an addict?"

Joshua: "Cha. Ukth nje I want....."

Me: "Don't bother." I walked out and he followed me.

Joshua: "Lets talk about this in private."

Me: "What for? So you can do it again? When will you stop?"

Joshua: "Lower your voice."

Me: "What for? You afraid that Julia will hear what you...." I felt a hot slap on my cheek.

I held my cheek as the tears filled my eyes.

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka"

Me: "Don't" I tried to walk away but he held my hand.

Joshua: "Ngiyaxolisa MaMemela"

Me: "Let go off me"

Joshua: "Don't walk away please"

I didn't answer. He let go of my hand ngahamba ngaya upstairs to the bedroom and began packing my bags. I didn't know where I was going but I was leaving.

When I was done packing and ready to go when Joshua walked in.

Joshua: "Where do you think you going?"

Me: "Anywhere but here."

Joshua: "You not going anywhere. Stop acting like a kid and then maybe I will treat you like an adult." he went to the closet and took out a small gold gun wasiphosa embhedeni.

Joshua: "You have 5 minutes to unpack. I suggest you start now." he walked out and left the gun there.

I looked at it and debated with my mind whether to do it or not.

Chapter 77.

Before I could reach for the gun Joshua walked in again.

Joshua: "I hope you not planning on using that gun. Unpack Thandeka or should I do it for you?"

I didn't answer instead I sat down.

Joshua took the bags back to the closet.

Joshua: "Come eat"

Me: "I'm not hungry"

Joshua: "Okay." He walked out.

I got up and went to the closet ngabheka ama-tracksuit ngagqoka and then went to the other room ngangena ngakhiya ngangena embhedeni and tried to sleep. Ngasengizumeka when I heard the door open. Ngavuka ngabheka and it was Joshua. He walked up to the other side of the bed wakhumula.

Me: "What are you doing?"

Joshua: "Joining you in bed. What does it look like?"

Me: "I need time alone"

Joshua: "What for?"

Me: "You want us to pretend it didn't happen?"

Joshua: "I'm sorry Gloria"

I turned the other way and covered myself with a blanket.

I heard him gets in and then wrapped his arms around me.

Joshua: "What are you wearing?"

Me: "Clothes. What does it look like?"

Joshua: "Well take them off. Wake wezwa kephi umunt elala egqoke kanje?"

I pretended not to hear him until he got up wadonsa ingubo wayijikijela lapha.

Joshua: "I said take the damn thing off."

I got up and took them off wanginika ishibha sakhe ngagqoka ngabuyela embhedeni.

I was trying so hard to cry silently because I didn't know what he would do.

Joshua: "Turn around and look at me"

I turned around ngambheka.

He put his knee between my legs.

Me: "Not today"

His hand touched my downstairs.

Joshua: "That's not what your body says." he got up and took my underwear off.

Me: "Please Joshua" I tried to get up but he pushed me down.

Joshua: "Keep still." He lowered his head and kissed below my stomach and went further down until he kissed it. I cried harder and tried to back away but he held my body in place until he was done.

He came up and then pushed himself in. I don't know what was more painful, the fact that Joshua was raping me or that my body was betraying me in the worse possible way. Each thrust felt like a sharp knife in my heart. He kept going until my body was shaking.

Joshua: "Just let go and come" his hand touched the sensitive place and a quiet moan of emotional pain blended with body pleasure. He came soon after and then got off me. I got up.

Joshua: "Where are you going?"

I didn't answer I wore my pants and walked out but he grabbed me before I could close the door wangibuyisela ngaphakathi and pushed me against the wall.

Joshua: "Awusakhulumi?"

Me: "Ngiyakhuluma."

Joshua: "Uyaphi?"

Me: "To take a shower"

Joshua: "Why? Awubuyele embhedeni wena"

I stood there and didn't move at all.

Joshua: "Inkani ngizoyiqeda laph kuwe"

Me: "Why don't you kill me."

He didn't answer, instead he slapped me so hard I saw the stars and it felt like someone just threw a cup of boiling water to my face.

Joshua: "Just get into the damn bed ulale."

I didn't want to be slapped again so I went to bed and covered myself with a blanket.

Joshua got in behind me and held me. I went stiff but he didn't let go. I don't know when I slept but I did because when I woke up I was it was the next day.

Joshua: "Morning"

Me: "Morning"

Joshua: "Did you sleep well?"

I wanted to say fuck you but that was a bad idea so instead I said.

Me: "Yes, thank you."

Joshua: "Lets go shower and then go downstairs for breakfast." he took my hand. I followed him sayogeza and then went to eat. Julia and Zinhle were already done making breakfast. We sat down and ate. Joshua kept looking at me and smiling.

Julia: "Daddy can we go shopping"

Joshua: "Yes dear sizohamba sonke"

Me: "I can stay."

Zinhle: "Me too. Hambani noJulia"

Joshua: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes I'm sure."

Joshua: "Aniding lutho?"

Zinhle: "We did a shopping list." she got up and gave him a paper.

Joshua: "Wena Gloria?"

Me: "Nothing"

Joshua: "Okay. Lets go Julia."

they got up and left. I got up and cleared the table aswel.

Zinhle: "He beat you up too?"

Me: "Who?"

Zinhle: "My brother. I know he did."

Me: "You heard?"

Zinhle: "No but the marks on your cheek. I don't know what went wrong. He use to be so kind, but now he is this ruthless man even I don't recognise."

Me: "I thought he was kind aswel"

Zinhle: "I'm sorry."

Me: "Is he controlling to you aswel?"

Zinhle: "I'm 25 sisi. I should be in my own place but he won't let me leave. Uvele abhoke athi its not safe."

Me: "Manje uzohlala kube nini lana? You should be dating."

Zinhle: "Nami angazi. I miss my old brother. Not this monster and I believe he is still in there somewhere."

Amazwi kaOnica ngawakhumbula when she said.

"Run while you still can" but i didn't listen.

Chapter 78.

They came back after midday. I was busy searching the internet when he came in.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Mhmm"

Joshua: "I bought you something"

Me: "A shut up gift?"

Joshua: "Don't be like that."

Me: "Like what? You expect me to act like everything is fine and its not. What you did is unforgivable and no gold will ever make it alright."

Joshua: "So you won't give me a chance to explain?"

Me: "Theres nothing to explain. You just want to make excuses for your behaviour."

Joshua: "Izimo ezinjengalezi ezikwenza ngigcine sengikushaya."

Me: "Then go ahead and punch your punching bag"

I didn't even see it coming ngezwa ngempama nje igcwala isihlathi.

Instead of crying and holding my cheek I got up and threw a punch and made sure I was aiming for the nose.

He held his nose totally surprised.

Joshua: "So you want to fight?"

I took a step back and tried to reach for the door but he grabbed me and threw me on the bed.

Joshua: "Usunesbindi sokubuyisela Thandeka?" he opened the drawer and then reached for my hands. I tried to fight him but it didn't help. I heard a clicking sound and my hands were cuffed on the bed.

Joshua: "If you keep doing that you will hurt yourself." he got up and took my pants off.

Me: "Please Joshua don't. I'm begging you."

Joshua: "I'll be real quick." he got up and took his clothes off aswel.

After he was done he went to shower wabuya wangiqaqqa.

Joshua: "Hamba uyogeza"

I got up and went to the bathroom ngavulela amanzi ngenza engath ngiyageza. After a while ngaphuma ngagqoka ngaqeda.

Me: "Can I go out for a little while?"

Joshua: "Uyaphi?"

Me: "I need to go get my car and few things in my place."

Joshua: "Shall I drive you?"

Me: "I'll call a taxi."

Joshua: "Okay"

I took my bag and walked out. The taxi came ngacela angise to the nearest police station. He said okay wangisa. Ngehla ngabonga and went inside. There was a lady on the front desk, I walked up to her.

Me: "Hai. I'd like to report a crime."

Her: "Okay what kind of crime" she kept looking at me up and down.

Another policeman walked in.

Him: "Woza ngapha Mrs Cebekhulu"

I followed him sangena e-office. I sat down in the chair naye wahlala opposite me. Suddenly I didn't feel comfortable. And he knew me.

Me: "How do you know me?"

Him: "Joshua called. He said you maybe coming here and he was right. Here you are"

Me: "So you won't help me because he got to you first?"

Him: "No. I'll help you. Uyangazi mina?"

Me: "Cha angikwazi"

Him: "Let me refresh your memory. I saw you when we set up a trap for Duma kanti sobamba noSizwe. I was there Mrs Cebekhulu and if you talk someone will listen and trust me. What Joshua did to you will be nothing compare to what I will do to you and the rest of the guys."

I got up and took my bag before I could walk out he spoke.

Him: "Go home to Joshua and sort this out. I'll drive you" he got up.

Me: "No thank you. I'll take a taxi." I walked out ngangabheka emumva but I knew he was following me.

Him: "Washo wathi unenkani. Just a word of advice. Shiya inkani otherwise Joshua will hurt you pretty bad. Thats my car."

Me: "I'm not going to Joshua. I need to go get my car"

Him: "I'll take you there."

I got into the car sahamba. He knew the direction to my house. Ngafika ngehla ngavula ngangena. I went to the freezer ngakhipha ama-ice ngawafaka kwi-bowl ngafaka amanzi and then ngafaka isandla. It was really cold but ngabekezela. After 15 minutes i took the ring off yasala emanzini. I went to the bedroom ngavula ngathatha iskhwama esincane and packed 2 jeans and two tops and underwear ngaqeda ngavala ngaphuma ngangena egarage ngadumisa imoto and check everything. It was fine. Ngavula i-garage and drove out qede ngehla ngavala ngakhiya before driving off.

I didn't know where I was going but I kept driving.

Two hours later I was tired and hungry. I went to the garage eShowe ngehla ngangena ngaphakathi ngathenga something to drink and eat.

A voice caught my attention. I knew it was Joshua. I turned around slowly ngambheka kanti naye uyangibuka. He was dressed in white eduze kwakhe kumi uThizo uNjabula was standing near my car looking inside.

Joshua: "You sure can drive."

I didn't answer. He stepped closer to me and smiled in a cold smile.

Joshua: "Where are you going?"

Me: "To Vryhied"

Joshua: "To do what?"

Me: "To visit a friend."

Joshua: "Okay. So why did you freeze my ring?"

I didn't answer.

Joshua: "Lets go home. Thizo will drive your car. And no that wasn't a question. Its an order." he took the keys waziphosela uThizo.

Joshua: "Lets go."

Me: "I'll scream."

Joshua: "Go ahead. Vele usazomemeza so you may aswel practise now."

I followed him to the car. Ngangena ngemumva naye wangena ngemumva. UNjabulo was already inside.

He drove back. Akekho owayekhuluma endleleni. I kept looking at Joshua. He was looking outside the

window and looking calm. Ngangizibuza ukth what went wrong. Where was that Joshua I met and loved and who was this man sitting next to me. I missed all the signs and it was too late.

Chapter 79.

Saze safika ekhaya kungekho okhulumayo. Ngehla kuqala and went inside and then went upstairs. Joshua followed me wangena wama ngasemnyango. I sat down waiting for him to attack me.

Joshua: "Julia and Zinhle went to the beach."

Me: "I thought it wasn't safe."

Joshua: "Its safe. I have someone watching them."

I nodded.

Joshua: "Awulambanga?"

Me: "Cha"

He took few steps towards me ngavele ngathuka ngaze ngayowela phansi.

Joshua: "I won't hurt you" he picked me wangibeka embhedeni.

I was shaking with fear.

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka" he didn't wait for me to respond wawele waphuma wahamba. I got up and went to the shower ngegeza nqaqeda ngagqoka and went downstairs. Joshua was in the kitchen cooking.

Joshua: "Sengiyaqeda. I'm sure you hungry."

Me: "Not really."

He nodded. Waqhubeka nokupheka. It was awkward but part of me wanted to talk about what happened but the other was scared.

In the end I decided to shut up.

Wapheka waze waqeda bafika noJulia sadla sonke qeda sageza izitsha. I went to bed early ngabashiya besahleli. Ngasheshe ngazumeka even though ngangesaba ukth uJoshua and rape me again. Ngalala kwaze kwasa. When I woke up the next day Joshua wasn't in bed instead there was a rose and a letter. I took the later ngayivula.

"THANDEKA

I DON'T KNOW WHERE TO START. I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I DID. IT WAS WRONG AND I KNOW.

I TOOK A MOMENT AND WATCHED YOU NGENKATHI ULELE AND I REALISED THAT ALL ALONG I DIDN'T WANT YOU TO GO OUT THERE BECAUSE I WAS AFRAID THAT YOU WILL GET HURT KANTI YIMI OZOKUZWISA UBUHLUNGU MORE THAN EVERYONE ELSE.

I HOPE YOU WILL FIND IT IN YOUR HEART TO FORGIVE ME. I'VE GONE AWAY FOR A WHILE AND HOPEFULLY WHEN I RETURN I'LL BE ABLE TO LOVE YOU THE WAY THAT YOU DESERVE. THIZO AND NJABULO WILL WATCH THE HOUSE, IF ANYTHING HAPPEN UFONELE OYEDWA WABO NOT ANYONE ELSE.

I'M NOT SURE WHAT WILL HAPPEN BUT I HOPE THAT SOMETIME APART WILL DO US GOOD EVEN THOUGH IT WON'T TAKE THE PAIN AWAY BUT I HOPE SOME DAY YOU WILL BE ABLE TO FORGIVE ME.

NINGENE KAHLE ENYAKENI OMUSHA AND PLEASE TAKE CARE OF MY OTHER GIRLS.

I LOVE YOU.

JOSHUA"

I read it over and over qede ngayigoqa ngayifaka phansi komqamelo. The ring was back in my finger.

I made the bed qede ngayogeza ngaqeda ngaya downstairs to make breakfast. I didn't want to think about Joshua but I couldn't help wondering ukth wayekuph and with who.

Zinhle joined me and she offered to make the eggs. The moment she began making them inhliziyoyam yavele yashona phansi ngezwa kuth angiphalaze. I ran to the bathroom to throw up.

Zinhle: "Uright?"

I rinsed my mouth first.

Me: "Ngi-right sis" we went back to the kitchen safika saqhubeka nokudla. I went to throw up again.

Me: "Maybe kumele ngingawadli amaqanda."

Zinhle: "Great idea."

We ate saqeda sawasha izintsha and then cleaned the house.

Zinhle knew that Joshua was gone naye wayemshiyele incwadi.

Zinhle: "Maybe uzobuya esencono."

Me: "You think so?"

Zinhle: "I hope so. I miss my old brother not this control freak."

Me: "Vele uma ucabanga washintshwa yini?"

Zinhle: "Ukushona kukaNozipho kwamshintsha kakhulu. Yazi he use to laugh a lot but now akasahleki nje at all. Even nami ngiyamsaba."

Me: "Akakaze akushaye?"

Zinhle: "Not really but wake washaya u-Onica phambi kwami. Ngabuya eskoleni ngalala ngethuswa ukuzwa umsindo nje ongajwayelekile. I woke up ngazobheka ngafica la embambe ngomqala u-Onica. Her nose was bleeding iso livalekile. I couldn't believe it."

Me: "Tjo."

Zinhle: "He wasn't like that at all. Ukth kwashintsha ini nami angazi."

Me: "Atleast uyabona ukth u-wrong."

Zinhle: "Maybe uzobuya eshintshile."

Me: "How? Where?"

Zinhle: "Nami angazi-ke."

Me: "What if he doesn't change?"

Zinhle: "Have faith."

Me: "Manje wena uyohlala lana kuze kube nini? You have to grow up at some point. Nawe uke ubone umhlaba"

Zinhle: "I know but for now I have to be here with you and Julia."

Me: "And I'm grateful."

I didn't want to show Zinhle that I didn't have much faith in Joshua changing. In my eyes he was a coward who decided to run after damaging me further but atleast I was going to get a break from the abuse.

Chapter 80.

On New Years Eve we cleaned the house, sapheka, watched tv and then just chilled nje waiting for midnight. I was still throwing up and sometimes became dizzy but I was fine. Kwashaya u-12 uJulia eselele. We woke her up saphumela emnyango and watched the fire works. At 00:30 I said goodnight to the girls and went back inside and got ready for bed. I was still changing when my phone rang. Ngayiphendula without checking the caller ID.

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Happy New Year"

Ngavele ngathuka and began panicking.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Why are you breathing like that?"

Me: "Kuthi angiphalaze" I threw the phone on the bed and went to throw up. Ngaqeda ngaxubha and then went back to the bedroom. I checked ukth wayesakhona yini uJoshua.

Me: "Hellow"

Joshua: "Have you been to a doctor?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "Ulindeni? Kumele uye"

Me: "Where are you?"

Joshua: "I'm in Moscow"

Me: "To do what?"

Joshua: "To get help. I want to be a better man for you and kids."

Me: "Oh"

Joshua: "You don't sound convinced"

Me: "No I'm just surprised that you had to go to Russia for that."

Joshua: "I didn't like what I became, its my job to protect you and I failed to do my job."

Me: "When did you decide to go?"

Joshua: "Endleleni ngenkathi sibuya eShowe."

Me: "Why ungashongo?"

Joshua: "I was a coward."

Me: "When are you coming back?"

Joshua: "The programme is 6 weeks but ngizobuya maduze."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Uyagula nje. I have to be there for you."

Me: "But I'm fine nje"

Joshua: "You not fine. Njabulo called last night wathi uyagula."

Me: "I'm just throwing up not dying."

Joshua: "Go to the doctor Thandeka."

Me: "I'm scared."

Joshua: "Then I'm coming home"

Me: "Okay fine ngizoya. Wena hlala lapho and finish that programme."

Joshua: "Ngiyaxolisa MaMemela. Into engiyenzile inobulwane."

Me: "Just get help Joshua. You need it."

Joshua: "I know. I did a reseach and they say throwing up could be a sign of pregnancy."

Me: "But I can't get pregnant"

Joshua: "Well kungenzeka Gloria. Take your laptop and google it uzobona."

Me: "I don't need Google to tell me what I already know."

Joshua: "Take your laptop right now and see"

Me: "Okay yima kancane." I got up ngayobheka i-laptop ngangayithola.

Me: "Ayikho lana. Maybe ikuZinhle. Ubeke wafuna i-charger."

Joshua: "But promise me that you will go see a doctor."

Me: "I will but tomorrow."

Joshua: "Why not today?"

Me: "Its a holiday."

Joshua: "Okay."

Me: "Even if i do get pregnant I don't think I want that baby."

Joshua: "Why not?"

Me: "Umphefumulo ongenacala ngiwulethele usizi lolu oluququda mina."

Joshua: "Don't talk like that."

Me: "Ngiqinisile kodwa. Phela mina akazengikuthole ukujabula empilweni yami. Leyongane ingakhula kanjani nje ihlukumezeka"

Joshua: "Aze angiphatha kabuhlungu amazwi akho. Ngiyaxolisa Thandeka"

Me: "Its okay."

Joshua: "Lala uphumule. Ngizobuye ngikufonele."

Me: "Sharp"

Joshua: "I love you." he hung up and I was grateful because I don't think ngangizokwazi ukth I love you too.

Julia woke me up with a bowl of cereal sekusemini.

Me: "Thank you sweetheart."

Julia: "Mama uyephi ubaba?"

Me: "Khona asayokulungisa sisi."

Julia: "Uzobuya nini?"

Me: "Uzobuya eseqedile."

Julia: "Okay. Ngiyamkhumbula"

Me: "Nami ngiyamkhumbula sisi."

Julia: "Can we go visit aunt Onica?"

Me: "Usugezile?"

Julia: "Yebo."

Me: "Imake nami ngigeze sambeni"

I ate ngaqeda ngayogeza ngandlula then sahamba. Zinhle knew the directions.

Safica u-Onica ehleli nengane yakhe.

Onica: "Wow this is a surprise."

Me: "Happy New Year Veronica"

Onica: "Thank you. Ninjani kodwa?"

Me: "Siyaphila wena unjani?"

Onica: "Ngikhathele. He won't sleep and once he start crying he never stops."

Me: "Welcome to motherhood."

Onica: "Nakuwe kuyeza"

Me: "Meaning?"

Onica: "Umithi wena."

Zinhle: "Can we take the baby to the bedroom. Tender ears"

Onica: "Akunanking sisi"

They took the baby and left.

Me: "I can't fall pregnant even if I wanted to."

Onica: "Why not?"

Me: "My womb was removed after the accident."

Onica: "Hau oe ngaze ngajabha."

Me: "Its okay."

Onica: "Kodwa amehlo akho awomuntu okhulelwe. Nawami ayenje ngenkathi ngingakazazi. Ngathi ngifika ekhaya umama wangibuza ukth ubani ubaba. Ngaphika, wangisa kudokotela and she was right."

Me: "Ey mina angiphilile nje not that I'm pregnant."

Onica: "Awcha kodwa impilo i-unfair phela wena noJoshua ningenza omuhle uGloshua"

we both laughed.

Me: "Ngisho usuzele kodwa usabheda namanje."

Onica: "We don't really grow up oe. We just adjust to the present situation."

Me: "And uqinisile oe."

Onica: "Manje senenzani noJoshua senikhipha i-video yocansi?"

Me: "Ungangikhumbuzi leyo. Eya-last year aw"

Onica: "But its different yazi."

Me: "Ini leyo?"

Onica: "Sex. Phela mina wangidla uJoshua. Wayeke angivuse ngilele angidle hardcore but kuwena its different. He is gentle"

Me: "And how many times have you watched the video?"

Onica: "More then I should have. But ngiyaxakwa ukth wavumiswa yini uJoshua. Kimi wayengafuni ngisho si-join oTumi"

Me: "Someone bugged my house. We didn't make it."

Chapter 81.

After we left Onica's place we went to Gateway for few junk food that Julia wanted. I didn't want to think I was pregnant. I knew that Joshua was hoping for a miracle but I knew that the chances of me falling pregnant we like trying to force indlovu ukth ingene emgodini wentuthwane which was impossible.

We bought few things and then went to pay. Someone touched my shoulder ngaphenduka ngambheka and it was Sbusiso Ndlela.

Me: "Ufunani?"

Sbu: "Can we talk outside?"

Me: "I have nothing to say to you."

Sbu: "Okay then you will listen."

Me: "I don't want to. Ayikho into ongayisho kimi ngikukholwe. Leave me alone"

Sbu: "I just want a chance to tell you something"

Me: "And what makes you think I will believe anything that you say. You lied to me. Acted like my friend kanti you were just waiting for a chance to strike and hurt me. I hate you Sbu."

Sbu: "I'm sorry Gloria. Kwaba iphutha."

Me: "Drugging someone is not a mistake. Wawazi ukth wenzani."

Sbu: "Sizwe didn't tell me that you are his sister and that you were still a virgin. Sabona sekwenzeka nje."

Me: "What do you mean I was a virgin?"

His face changed when he realised that we were talking about different things.

Sbu: "He didn't tell you?"

Me: "It was you?"

Sbu: "I thought Joshua told you. Bengizoxolisa"

I wanted to laugh out loud, just imagine nje umdlwenguli wakho ezothi uyaxolisa after years later fth azoxolisa estolo phambi kwabantu. I gave Zinhle the money ngaphuma ngahamba.

Njabulo was standing near my car talking on his phone. He ended the call when he saw me approach.

Njabulo: "You don't look okay"

Me: "Joshua trust you?"

Njabulo: "I'd like to think so."

Me: "Who else was there?"

Njabulo: "Kuphi?"

Me: "When Jason and Sizwe forced themselves on me?"

Njabulo: "Honestly I don't know and Joshua doesn't know either. What makes you think khona abanye?"

Me: "Because Sbu just confessed and he says Joshua knows."

Njabulo: "Kade ekuph uSbu?"

Me: "At Pick 'n Pay"

Njabulo: "Baphi oZinhle?"

Me: "Ngibashiyile."

He nodded wafaka izandla emaphaketheni. Njabulo was like Joshua. He didn't look even a bit like a thug.

Njabulo: "I don't like you reaction."

Me: "Why not?"

Njabulo: "A guy just told you that he raped you and wena umile la phambi kwami awukhali. You should be crying."

Me: "It doesn't help"

Njabulo: "Thats even more scary."

Me: "If you know what I've been through you would understand."

Njabulo: "And you been through a lot. Joshua told me."

OJulia bafika yaphela kanjalo ingxoxo phakath kwam noNjabulo.

We got into the car and drove back home.

Endleleni ngezwa inhliziyo iba ncane. I pulled up on the side of the road and got out but that throwing up feeling was long gone. I stood there for a while ngalinda. Njabulo parked in front of us and Thizo parked behind us.

Thizo: "You okay?"

Me: "Yeah" i walked back to the car but before I could get to the side I saw Njabulo get out of his car running towards me. A red BMW drove past us real slow. I didn't understand what was happening until Njabulo jumped to me sayowela phansi before a loud bang went off.

Njabulo landed first ngawela phezulu kwakhe.

Njabulo: "That was close, you okay?"

I nodded because I was shaking.

Njabulo: "Akukho la ekubuhlungu khona?"

Me: "Cha" I got up.

Thizo: "Zinhle will drive now."

Njabulo: "Woza Thandeka usuzohamb nami"

Zinhle got out and hugged me. Atleast Julia had her ipod in full blast. I'm not sure if she heard the gun or even saw anything. But still kwakuzomele ngikhulume naye.

Njabulo: "Asambeni guys."

We got into the cars sahamba. Saze safika ekhaya. Sehla sangena endlini.

Thizo: "Usisi omncane akabonanga lutho?"

Zinhle: "I doubt it."

Njabulo: "Thats better. But I think uThandeka should rest a bit."

Me: "I'm fine."

Thizo: "You look pale."

Me: "Okay-ke ngizoyolala."

Njabulo: "Keep the doors locked. If kukhna ozama ukungena the alarm will go off."

Zinhle: "Okay. And thank you guys"

Thizo: "Akunankinga sisi."

They left.

Zinhle: "That was close."

Me: "Cishe ngafa."

Zinhle: "Futh ukuba uNjabulo ubengekho ngabe ulimele. Usheshe wabona."

Me: "Never thought I would say this but I miss Joshua"

Zinhle: "Me too. I know he is too much at times but usuke evikela thina. Nalabantu abavele bazohlasela umndeni nje bakhombisa ukungasi. Thina singenaph nje empini."

Me: "Nami ngidinwa ilokho. Asisakwazi ngisho ukuphuma nje phandle. Aycha."

Zinhle: "Kazi uphe yena uJoshua"

Me: "Uthe use-Moscow"

Zinhle: "To do what?"

Me: "To deal with his anger problems"

Zinhle: "A Russia? Awcha ismanga nje lesi"

Me: "You don't think he is there to get help?"

Zinhle: "I-Russia izwe engingalethembi nje. I don't think the good way to stop someone from taking drugs is locking him in a drug store and pray that they resist."

Me: "Maybe he is there to learn more about organised crime."

Zinhle: "And if thats the case then I feel sorry for the other team."

She went to the kitchen nami ngaya-upstairs. Zinhle felt sorry for the other team mina ngangikhathazekile ngami. Its not easy living with an anaconda.

Chapter 82.

The next day my mind was made up. Sizwe and Sbu were going to pay. Ngavuka ngaqonda kwi-secret room yaJoshua. There was cash but I wasn't interested in that ngangifuna isbhamu. I opened a bag on the corner kwavela izibhamu ezahlukeni. I picked each ngezwa i-weight. I was still doing that when my phone rang in the bedroom ngahamba ngayoyibheka.

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "What are you doing with my guns?"

Me: "Theres a camera?"

Joshua: "Wonke ama-bank anama-camera. Did you lock the door?"

Me: "Yes" I lied. I went to lock.

Joshua: "Uzosenzani isbhamu?"

Me: "Ngiya kuSizwe. He owns me an explanation."

Joshua: "Thats it. I'm coming home."

Me: "Ngisho ungabuya. Vele uzobuya sengiqedile ukuxoxa naye."

Joshua: "Thizo told me what happened. You angry, I know but Its not a good idea to confront him."

Me: "Why not?"

Joshua: "You are not a fighter, let alone a killer."

Me: "You won't change my mind Joshua. After Sizwe ngiya kuSbu."

Joshua: "Khona nomunye osele Gloria."

Me: "Ubani?"

Joshua: "Angazi. UJason wanqaba ukusho."

Me: "Why ubungangitsheli?"

Joshua: "Because I've been trying to find the 4th guy and angimtholi. Jason only said the 4th guy is closer than I think. Thats why bengingasuki kuwe ngoba angaz ukth ubani."

Me: "Maybe its Njabulo?"

Joshua: "Nah. UJason noNjabulo bebengazwani. Futh its not Thizo."

Me: "Thats why sigadwe yibo?"

Joshua: "I trust them."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "Buyela ngaphakath ngifuna ukukubona."

I went to the room.

Me: "Where is the camera?"

Joshua: "Turn around."

I turned around ngaqalaza but ngangayibona.

Joshua: "Buka ekhoneni. Those flowers"

I walked to the vase and looked closer ngayibona.

Joshua: "Aiyodwa but angeke ngikukhombise enye."

Me: "Why not?"

Joshua: "Theres a bag under the table. Vula sona"

I went to the table ngagoba ngakhipha iskhwama ngasbeka etafuleni.

Joshua: "Sivule ukhiphe okuphakathi."

I opened the bag ngakhipha isibhamu esincane.

Me: "Ngath itoyizi leli."

Joshua: "Thatha sona. Its from indonesia so even if you end up using it ngeke sibuye kuwe."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "Angiyithandi lento oyenzayo. Wait for me. I'll fly tomorrow"

Me: "No. I can't wait that long."

Joshua: "Please Thandeka."

Me: "Sengiyaphuma kulendlu. Bye Joshua"

Joshua: "Don't hang up. Uzohamba noNjabulo."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Ngoba kuyingozi. Yazi if you attack Sizwe and S'bu lo wokugcina uzozwa bese ekuhlasela kuqala."

Me: "What do you suggest I do?"

Joshua: "Linda sithole ukth ubani kuqala."

Me: "Use-Moscow nje wena"

Joshua: "Ngiyabuya"

Me: "Awukayiqedi i-programme nje."

Joshua: "It doesn't metter. I'm coming home tomorrow."

Me: "I want to deal with them today."

Joshua: "Ngiyakuncenga MaMemela."

Me: "You killing it dude"

Joshua: "I love you."

Me: "I know"

Joshua: "Iya ku-doctor namhlanje."

Me: "But I'm fine"

Joshua: "Let him be the judge. Please."

Me: "I'm not pregnant."

Joshua: "Okay but uyagula."

Me: "I'm fine aw"

Joshua: "Okwenzeke izolo?"

Me: "I'd rather not talk about it."

Joshua: "But you have to."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Ukuvalela yonke into ngaphakathi kuyingozi."

Me: "What if I don't want to talk?"

Joshua: "You don't trust me, i know and I don't blame you. But I care for you."

Me: "But you still hurt me."

Joshua: "And ngiyazisola sthandwa sami. Thats why I came here. To get help."

Me: "In Russia"

Joshua: "Whats wrong with Russia?"

Me: "Nothing"

Joshua: "Go to the doctor Thandeka. Mengibuya solungisa lento kaSbu."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "I love you. Let me know how it went."

Me: "I will. Bye"

Joshua: "Bye my love" he hung up.

I left the room ngavala ngayogeza ngaqeda ngagqoka and went downstairs. Zinhle was watching tv, uJulia edla. I made my self some breakfast ngadla. Sahlala saxoxa until uNjabulo afike sahamba saya ku-doctor.

Njabulo: "Joshua says you want to confront Sbu and Sizwe"

Me: "Yes."

Njabulo: "I don't blame you."

Me: "Atleast you understand. Joshua thinks it a bad idea."

Njabulo: "Vele its a bad idea. Never make a decision when you angry. Calm down and then plan your revenge."

Me: "I had 12 years to calm down."

Njabulo: "You not calm. You ignored the issue for 12 years."

Me: "So kumele ngilinde omunye u-15 years."

Njabulo: "6 weeks. Uma ebuya uJoshua, we will deal with this together."

Me: "Manje ngenzenjani until then? Ngivike izibhamu?"

Njabulo: "We will protect you."

Me: "What about your wife? UZaza ukhulelwe, she needs Thizo"

Njabulo: "Angishadile mina. UZaza usekhaya. Kubo bafuna azobelethela ekhaya."

Me: "But wena noZimbili? Nihlala together"

Njabulo: "She doesn't love me."

Me: "Aw"

Njabulo: "Ngempela. Akangithandi Thandeka"

Me: "Wazi ngani?"

Njabulo: "Ngabe akalali nabangani bami."

Me: "But I thought you guys wanted it that way."

Njabulo: "Cha. She wanted to fuck my friends. Vele ukuba nganginqaba wayezofeba so ngavuma."

Me: "Nawe awumthandi. If umthanda you wouldn't fuck her friends."

Njabulo: "I only did it because she wanted it like that. Mina nje ngangingeke ngimcele ukth alale nabangani bam but yena wangicela ngoba evele engangithandi."

Chapter 83.

Safika kadokotela ngangena ngedwa. He did the test and the scan kwangavela lutho. Then took some blood to have it tested. As much as it was possible for some women to fall pregnant after having thier womb removed that wasn't the case for me. I wasn't interested in the explanation. He told me to come back for the results after 3 days and then I left. Ngafica uNjabula esahleli engilindile.

Me: "I'm done."

Njabulo: "You don't look okay."

Me: "I knew that I can't have kids but having people telling me that I have pregnant eyes planted a seed of hope." tears filled my eyes.

Njabulo: "I'm sorry Thandeka."

Me: "Its not your fault."

Njabulo: "What can I do to cheer you up?"

Me: "Can you take me back to the crime scene?"

Njabulo: "I said cheer not put you down further."

He took out his phone , made a call then wayifaka ku-loud speaker.

Joshua: "Yes"

Njabulo: "Talk to her. Usefuna ngimuse kuleyandawo."

Me: "Maybe I will remember the fourth guy"

Joshua: "Theres nothing there. Ihlathi nje Thandeka. We been there, mtshela Njabulo. Saya laphaya ngenkath uJason seshilo and we found nothing."

Njabulo: "Uqinisile Thandeka. Saya."

Me: "What about a memory. My brain has been there. Maybe ngizokhumbula."

Joshua: "Akukhona la owavuka khona. Kule ngaseNdwedwe."

Njabulo: "Ngimuse?"

Joshua: "I hate this, but muhambise."

Me: "Thank you."

Njabula: "Sharp. I have another call coming."

Joshua: "Okay" he hung up.

Njabulo answered his phone.

Njabulo: "Sisaya eNdwedwe ngizonibona mengibuya" he hung up.

Me: "Your wife"

Njabulo: "Nah, OXolani."

We both went quiet.

Njabulo pulled up in the middle of nowhere.

Me: "Ilana?"

Njabulo: "Yes. Kuleziya zihlahla eziphezulu. Asambe."

Me: "They drugged me Clairwood bazongilimaza lana and then drove back all the way to Clairwood to dump me?"

Njabulo: "Maybe babona ukth lana ngeke utholwe muntu kant they didn't want to kill you."

Me: "Pho what changed? Why befuna ukungibulala manje?"

Njabulo: "Ngizokuxoxela kahle uma sesibuya. Asambe"

he locked the car sahamba.

We got to the place and I didn't remember anything.

Njabulo: "Anything yet?"

Me: "No. Its like I've never been here"

We heard a movement near the trees saphenduka sabheka kwaqhamuka uXolani with a gun.

Xolani: "Thats because you looking in a wrong place. It was there" he pointed few feet away.

Njabulo: "How do you know?"

Xolani: "Because I was there" he pointed the gun to Njabulo and laughed.

Xolani: "Give me your phone."

Njabulo: "Uzoyenzani?"

Xolani: "We are going to call Joshua. Yazi ngenkath uth niza eNdwedwe ngivele ngabona ukth uhamba noThandeka."

Me: "When Jason said the fourth guy is closer then we think he meant you."

Xolani: "Its all about keeping friends close and enemies closer. I want to talk to Joshua. Call him."

I took out my phone ngamfonela.

Xolani: "Letha lana" he took the phone wayifaka ku-load speaker.

Joshua: "MaMemela"

Xolani: "How is Russia?"

Joshua: "Uyenzani ifoni ka-Thandeka?"

Xolani: "You should be worried about what I will do to her."

Njabulo: "It was him. He is the fourth guy."

Joshua: "You bastard. If you touch her I swear I will burn you alive."

Xolani: "Relax. I'll be gentle. Unlike the first time. Ngase ngijahe kakhulu kanti usavalekile. It took me 5 minutes to break her. Talk about tough."

I was in tears. Njabulo held my hand.

Xolani: "Why don't you just hug her. I know you dying to feel her arms around you."

Njabulo didn't protest. He pulled me to him and hug me tight while his hand slipped something in my back pocket.

Joshua: "I thought you were my friend."

Xolani: "Nawe futhi. Friends close, enemies closer."

Joshua: "You are a coward. Attacking a woman like that."

Xolani: "Don't even try to do that. Vele I'm going to finish what I started. I'm going to fuck her right her, right now and wena Njabulo uzobukela just like you do when I fuck Zimbili. Uyakhala umntwana wabantu. Uthi you not doing her right. Thats why she prefers me."

Njabulo jumped to him kwaqhasha isbhamu nefoni. I ran to pick up the gun ngakhomba uXolani.

Joshua: "Whats going on there?"

Njabulo: "Shoot him"

Joshua: "Thandeka!"

Njabulo went to pick up the phone.

Joshua: "Can someone say something."

Njabulo: "Sikhona."

Xolani: "You can't shoot me. Nawe uyazi."

Me: "Ayikho into ongambopha ngayo?"

Njabulo took out the handcuffs wambopha.

Me: "You walk around with that on your pockets?"

Njabulo: "For things like this" we laughed.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "I'm okay."

Joshua: "Njabulo call Msizi and take care of him."

Njabulo: "Okay I will."

Me: "I want answers. Who is trying to kill me?"

Xolani: "You don't expect me to answer that."

Joshua: "She is going to shoot you. If I were you bengizomphendula."

Xolani: "And what makes you think I'm scared"

Njabulo: "You should be. Akuve eyingozi umuntu wesfazane odiniwe."

Me: "Who is trying to kill me?"

Xolani: "You look even more sexier than you did those years ago."

I pulled the trigger wadubuleka onyaweni.

Xolani: "Bitch" he tried to get up but Njabulo held him down.

Me: "Lets try again."

Chapter 84.

I was having some burning pains in my chest but I didn't want to show Xolani that.

Me: "This is how its going to work. If you don't tell me the truth I will shoot your other leg and if you still refuse I will shoot your arms. I hope thats clear enough."

Xolani: "When did you become such a hardcore killer?"

Me: "When you and your friends decided to rape me."

Xolani: "I was paid to do it."

Me: "By who?"

He went quiet.

Njabulo: "Awukhulume ndoda. Iskhathi sihambile."

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "You okay? Wakhuluma engathi uphethwe umphimbo nje."

Me: "I'm angry Joshua. Awukhulume Xolani, I have other people to kill."

Xolani: "It was your mother. I don't know why she wanted us to rape you then."

Njabulo looked at me.

Me: "And who paid you to kill me?"

Xolani: "Her again."

Me: "Did she say why?"

Xolani: "She didn't"

Me: "And Jason? Why did he want to kill me?"

Xolani: "Because Sizwe killed his sister."

Me: "How much did she offer you?"

Xolani: "Half a million."

Me: "I cost that much to her?"

Joshua: "Unenhlanhla Xolani. Yaz unenhlanhla. Ukub ngilapho ubuzongitshela ukth lomama ufunani kuThandeka. Ngiyazi ukth uyazi."

Njabulo: "Vele uyazi"

Me: "Kanti ungenza islima." i shot the other leg.

Xolani: "Okay, okay. She saw the will and yena noSizwe abekho kuyo. She is angry because wena

awuzalwa kaMemela. In her words, your mother is some woman wase Nkandla"

Me: "And my father?"

Xolani: "Wathi akuyena uMemela but she didn't say who."

Me: "She is killing me for money? After everything she put me through. Now she is killing me for money. Why doesn't she just take the damn money and leave me alone."

Xolani: "Angazi. I've told you all I know. Let me go."

Me: "So you can kill me? No, I don't think so. After you. I'm going to kill your wife and Zimbili."

Xolani: "Please don't kill my wife."

Me: "I have to. La oya khona uzobadinga. Angithi wena you like fucking women, well ke, take them with you."

Xolani: "Why did you do it Joshua?"

Joshua: "I didn't teach her anything. Yini enamenza wabanje."

Njabulo: "And I like this woman."

Joshua: "Don't touch my woman Njabulo."

Xolani: "Wena Joshua unomona. Why did you refuse to share? I got her first."

Without hesitation I pulled the trigger and shoot him between the legs.

Me: "So you will never rape again."

Njabulo: "Damn woman."

Joshua: "What did you do?"

Njabulo: "She shoot him between the legs."

Joshua: "I didn't teach you to do that Thandeka."

Me: "I know."

Joshua: "Your voice sounds different. Njabulo awumbuke uThandeka. Does she look okay?"

Njabulo: "She just shot a man dude"

Joshua: "Ay ngeke. Ngiyalazi izwi lomuntu wami and leli akulona"

Me: "Okay. Isifuba sam sibuhlungu."

Joshua: "Did you eat anything?"

Me: "I had breakfast at home."

Joshua: "Sigale nini?"

Me: "A while ago."

Njabulo: "Your nose is now bleeding"

I wiped the nose with the back of my hand and yes it was bleeding.

Xolani: "Sbu got you first" he laughed weakly.

Njabulo put his hand in my back pocket wakhapha isbhamu wamdubula ekhanda.

Joshua: "When did you see Sbu?"

Me: "Yesterday"

Joshua: "Take her to the hospital. I will call Msizi and update him."

Me: "Am I going to die Joshua?"

Joshua: "No. You will be fine."

Njabulo picked me sehla sabuyela emotweni.

Njabulo: "I have purples under the seat."

Joshua: "Give her a shot."

Njabulo: "Two shots. She doesn't look so good"

Joshua: "Thandeka"

I couldn't breath. It felt like I was breathing fire and each breath was burning my insides.

I felt a sting in my arm and another followed soon after.

Joshua: "Thandeka." his voice sounded strange.

I wanted to respond but I was too weak and my nose was bleeding more.

Njabulo: "Please don't die on me. Please"

Me: "I love you" I whispered to Joshua.

Joshua: "I love you MaMemela wami."

I managed to smile ngabuka uNjabulo and he smiled back. It was getting darker and darker. I held his hand before it was completely dark. Something was pulling me away painfully. I kept fighting until I didn't have the strength to fight and more. So I let go and only then the pain stopped. I was in a dark place but there was a light in the distance. I began walking towards it.

Chapter 85.

I tried to move but kwangavuma. I tried my hands but zangavuma so I tried my eyes. They were heavy but I wasn't going to give up. Atlast avuleka. I looked around and saw that I was at the hospital. My friends were there expect for Neliswa. Kwakukhona nabanye ababili engingabazi.

Lindiwe: "Oh My God you are awake" her eyes filled with tears.

Bongeka: "I will get a doctor" she walked out.

Me: "Can I have some water?" my voice sounded like a whisper.

Lindiwe: "Asilinde udokotela kuqala"

I nodded and looked at the two ladies I didn't know. Lo omunye wayeyingane kodwa enethambo ungathi mdala uma umbuka.

Bongeka walked in elandelwa udokotela who asked them to wait outside.

Dr: "Miss Memela. I'm doctor Mchunu. Are you feeling any pain?"

Me: "No but I'm stiff."

Dr: "Do you remember what happened?"

Me: "Cha"

Dr: "Okay. Do you know what year it is?"

Me: "Not really. 2005 or 2006."

The doctor looked at me and then wrote down in his note pad.

Dr: "Can you try to move your legs and toes for me."

I did and it was painfully stiff.

Dr: "Okay, Thank you."

Me: "Sekuyiskhathi esingakanani ngilapha?"

Dr: "12 weeks. Whats your name?"

Me: "Gloria Memela."

Dr: "What do you do for a living?"

Me: "I'm a qualified auditor"

Dr: "Do you know someone named Joshua Cebekhulu?"

Me: "Cha angimazi."

Dr: "Okay. Kuzomele uphumule. The swelling will go down in few days."

I just nodded. I was totally confused because Dr Mchunu kept looking at me like he felt sorry for me.

He walked out. After few minutes Bongeka and the other girls walked in again followed by two men. The other one kissed my forehead and the other kissed my hand.

Bongeka: "Ayike uke wasithusa oe."

Me: "I'm sorry. Uphi uNeliswa?"

Lindiwe: "She lives in New York now. Wahamba kuqala unyaka."

Me: "Wow."

Bongeka: "You don't remember what happened?"

Me: "No. Can I ask you something. Please don't be offended." I looked at the other two ladies.

Lindiwe: "Buza oe"

Me: "I know Lindiwe and Bongeka but the rest of you anginazi."

Everybody went quiet.

Bongeka: "This is Zinhle, Julia, Njabulo and Joshua." she pointed at them.

I looked at Joshua. He was handsome. Had long neat dreadlocks, enentshebe nehwanqa okugundwe kancane. Njabulo was handsome aswel. He had a face that makes you think of Morris Chestnut from the Best Men Movie.

Me: "I'm sorry that I don't remember you guys."

Joshua: "Its okay." he smiled.

Julia: "I'm just glad that you are awake mum" she came to give me a hug. I didn't hug her back.

Me: "I have a daughter?" I looked at Bongeka.

Bongeka: "She is your step daughter."

She let go off me wayohlala phansi eduze kwaJoshua.

Me: "I'm sorry. How old are you?"

Julia: "13"

I looked at them. Babefana shame.

Me: "Wena sisi uwumama kaJulia yini?" I looked at Zinhle. She smiled first.

Zinhle: "No. I'm Joshua's sister."

Me: "Wow. Why do I feel like I've missed more than 12 weeks. Am I married?"

Njabulo: "You are engage to my bestfriend."

I looked at Joshua and he looked back at me.

The doctor walked in and told everybody that I needed to rest. I was grateful but ngangisafisa ukuzwa more since I didn't remember much.

They all said thier goodbyes and wished me a speedy recovery. Joshua kissed my forehead and then kissed my lips.

Joshua: "I will see you later." he smiled and walked out.

Dr: "I know lots of things don't make sense to you but uzolulama Miss Memela."

Me: "What happened?"

Dr: "You tried to commit suicide."

Me: "Why would I want to kill myself?"

Dr: "Everybody is asking that question. We found some heavy chemicals in your blood."

Me: "It doesn't make sense."

Dr: "You need to get enough rest. Its not permanetly. In time uzokhumbula."

Me: "Thank you doctor."

Why on earth would I try to kill myself. It didn't make sense at all. I had a good job, i know I owned a house, a car, They say I'm engage to Joshua who happened to be such a beautiful man. I had great friends even though Neliswa moved to New York but uBongeka noLindiwe were great. Why would a woman like me try to take her own life. I knew I needed to talk to my parents and try to make peace and I knew I wouldn't want to die before I talked to my father. Something just didn't add up. I needed to remember what happened.

Angimuzwanga ngisho ephuma udokotela. Ngethuka sengisele ngedwa fth sengiqala ukuzela. I tried to relax hoping that by the time I woke up ngobe sengikhumbula ukth kwenzekani.

Chapter 86.

Me: "Something just doesn't add up."

Bongeka: "Whats that?"

Me: "Did I really try to kill myself?"

Bongeka: "Angazi oe. Nami ngathuka nje uJoshua esengitshela ukth usesibhedlela."

Me: "It doesn't make sense. Kwasayena loJoshua freak me out. Am I really engage to him?"

Bongeka: "He freak me out aswel but yeah you are."

Me: "How did we meet?"

Bongeka: "We were at the club and you were drunk, he offered to take you home. After that he never left your side."

Me: "Uyangazi oe. Did I really look like I was inlove?"

Bongeka: "You moved in with him."

Me: "I hate this. Not knowing things."

Bongeka: "Kuzolunga oe."

Me: "Muhle kodwa uJoshua. Yazi njalo uma ngimbuka I ask myself ukth how did I catch this one."

We laughed.

Bongeka: "He loves you Thandeka. Awamaning amadoda angakhetha intombi over umngani."

Me: "Meaning?"

Bongeka: "Joshua chose you over his crazy gangster friend."

Me: "I don't understand."

Bongeka: "Maybe you should ask Joshua."

Me: "He withdraws. Everytime he begins opening up uvele ayeke nje eskhaleni. I've tried so many times."

Bongeka: "Maybe he thinks you not ready."

Me: "Kanti yini le engaka ekumele ngingayazi?"

Bongeka: "A lot happened Thandeka"

Me: "Such as?"

Bongeka: "You were in car accident, you tried to commit suicide, Joshua took you to Spain and you almost died when that Maxwel guy tried to kill you."

Me: "All that happened to me?"

Bongeka: "Yep girl. And there was a sex video"

Me: "Please don't say it was me."

Bongeka: "Sbu bugged your house."

Me: "Sbu who?"

Bongeka: "Ingane kaMr Ndlela."

Me: "Why bengehlelwa yikho konke lokhu?"

Bongeka: "Your evil step mother."

Me: "My dad has a new wife?"

Bongeka: "No. Awukhathele? When are you leaving this place anyway?" she crossed her legs.

Me: "You hiding something"

Bongeka: "I'm not. Ukth nje I have to go oe. I have a meeting"

The door opened kwangena uJoshua.

Bongeka: "Hai and bye" She rushed out.

Joshua: "It looks like uyabaleka"

Me: "She is. Akafuni ukungitshela iqiniso."

Joshua: "Okay." he kissed my forehead.

Me: "Why do you do that?"

Joshua: "Do what? Kiss your forehead?"

Me: "No. Everytime I want to know something you change."

Joshua: "What do you want to know?"

Me: "My dad has a new wife?" I looked at him in the eyes just to see if he was all serious and calm, yet scary at the same time. And just as I expected, he changed. From a laughing Joshua to something I didn't like seeing.

Joshua: "Your dad died last year."

Me: "No." amehlo avele agcwala izinyembezi.

Joshua: "I'm sorry"

Me: "Did I go to his funeral? We never made peace."

Joshua: "Akancwatshwanga. Washiswa. Your step mother and your brother bamshisa bodwa"

Me: "Umama yena esekuph ngenkathi umfazi omusha eshisa umkhwenyana wakhe?"

Joshua: "Uyena owamshisa"

Me: "You confussing me Joshua. Ubani kanti owashisa ubaba? Umama or i-step mother?"

Joshua: "Maybe we should wait i-memory yakho ibuye. The doctors are very positive."

Me: "I would like to know now."

Joshua: "I love you Thandeka."

Me: "Wow. You will not change the subject"

Joshua: "UMrs Memela was not your mother. She said your mother is MaDlamini and we don't know where to find her."

Me: "Is this a joke? Because if you joking then you have a real bad taste"

Joshua: "If it was a joke I will be laughing."

Me: "Thats not possible. I know she doesn't like me but angeke aqambe amanga angaka."

Joshua: "She had no reason to lie"

Me: "No. Ngokholwa ngokumuzwa esho yena"

Joshua: "She died aswel."

I cried harder. Joshua wiped my tears.

Joshua: "They deserve what happened to them."

Me: "How could you say that?"

Joshua: "Because its true. She paid people to rape you, sent Max to kill you, you here right now because

of her."

Me: "So I didn't try to kill myself?"

Joshua: "Of course not."

Me: "Where is my brother?"

Joshua: "He killed him self."

Me: "So I have no family?"

Joshua: "We will find your mother."

Me: "How? People who knew about her are dead."

Joshua looked at me but said nothing.

I don't know when I slept but ngaphaphama uJoshua esehambile. The nurse came to help me take a bath qede ngadla. UNjabulo wafika sengiqedile.

Njabulo: "Unjani?"

Me: "I can't wait to get out of here."

Njabulo: "Uzululeme ngempela."

Me: "I'm sorry that I don't remember you."

Njabulo: "Its cool. Maybe its for the best."

Me: "Why?"

Njabulo: "You can start over and create new memories."

Me: "But there will that big question mark somewhere in my head."

Njabulo: "You right."

Me: "Joshua said I didn't try to kill myself."

Njabulo: "We had to tell the hospital something and kwakungelula ukth ngithi I gave you two shots."

Me: "You gave me shots"

Njabulo: "Joshua said I should give you one but I gave you two because you were in a bad shape."

Me: "Joshua was there too?"

Njabulo: "Cha. He was in Russia. We talked on the phone."

Me: "Wayevakashe eRussia?"

Njabulo: "No went there to deal with his anger."

Me: "Joshua has anger problems?"

Njabulo: "Angeke uhlale ungabi nayo in this kind of life."

Me: "What life?"

Njabulo: "When are you going home?"

Chapter 87.

3 weeks later my mind was back nasesibhedlela ngakhishwa. I was at home living on my own because ngangikhumbula ukth uJoshua wenzani and I didn't trust him. Wayephatheke kabi but he understood. It was nice to be able to enjoy freedom again. Zinhle was already dating and working. I was glad that even though I was no longer living with them but she still loved me like a sister and I felt the same. Julia didn't go to boarding school. And I was glad because it seemed like her relationship with her father was growing strong. But my relationship with Joshua took a heavy knock and I wasn't sure about it survival. Ngangimthanda but ngimsaba futh ngingamthembi. It was even worse when he confessed that he killed Mrs Memela and Sizwe. USbu wamyeka ngoba he is Mr Ndlela's son, noDuma wamyeka ngoba ewu-cousin kaLindiwe. Not that I was afraid that he will kill me but I was afraid that he will loose control and hurt me again. Killing people can't be easy. Ngathi mina unembeza wami wawungidla ngokudubula uXolani even though it was self diffence, how much more for him.

On Friday evening my friends and I went to Calluba Lounge for drinks. We went to the VIP section sahlala kwamnandi saxoxa. I was drinking juice while Lindiwe and Bongeka drank wine.

Lindiwe: "You have to admit oe. Joshua is fine."

Me: "And you are in a relationship"

Lindiwe: "But I have eyes. Mbuke nje oe."

Me: "Hau kant ukhuluma ngomuntu ombonayo." I followed her eyes and saw him too. Wayehleli nabangani bakhe.

Bongeka: "And I bet that girl is going to ask him out"

Me: "Yiphi?"

Bongeka: "Le egqoke ingubo emnyama. Ibuke oe. Iya kuye"

This was serious pissing me off but I kept calm. We watched the girl walk up to them yafika yahlala eduze

kwakhe. Ngase ngifisa ngisho ukuba impukane and fly there ngizwe ukth ithini. She touched his thigh wavele wahlala waqonda uJoshua wasusa isandla sayo. His friends laughed.

Lindiwe: "Just go there already."

Me: "Why? Joshua can date any girl he wants" I sipped my drink.

Bongeka: "Is that why ujuluke ikhala?"

Me: "Ngiyashiselwa." I looked at Joshua again. He whispered something in her ears and she smiled yasukuma naye wasukuma. His friends raised thier glasses as the walked away.

Me: "I need the ladies" I got up.

Bongeka: "Hamba girl."

I went towards the ladies room but ngabheka ukth bayangibuka yini oLindiwe before running towards where Joshua and the girl disappeared to. It was a dim passage with doors each side. I walked down the passage until someone grabbed me from behind wangivala umlomo.

When I turned around I met Joshua's handsome face.

Joshua: "What are you doing here?"

Me: "Bengidinga i-toilet."

Joshua: "Aw really?" he smiled and raised an eyebrow.

Me: "You think I followed you here just to check ukth wenzani nentombi yakho."

Joshua: "I didn't say that. But now I'm curious. Did you?"

Me: "No. I got lost. Can I go now."

Joshua: "Angie"

The girl came out and laughed.

Angie: "She is mad about you."

Joshua: "And I'm mad about her aswel. Thank you."

Angie: "You welcome. Thandeka uyathandwa kaCebekhulu." she walked away.

Me: "I never felt so stupid. You set me up"

Joshua: "Bengifuna ukubona ukth usangithanda yini. I miss you"

Me: "What if I had gone crazy and attacked her?"

Joshua: "You love me that much?" he held my chin up and kissed my lips. I didn't protest, I kissed him back. We kissed for a while and then went back to our friends.

By the time we got there the girls were already sitting in the guys table.

Njabulo: "It worked."

Lindiwe: "I told you it would. Phela mina ngiyamazi uGloria."

Me: "So who was the master in this plan?"

Bongeka: "Njabulo and Lindiwe came up with an idea mina ngacela u-Angie asisize. By the way u-Angie is our secretary."

Me: "It's nice to meet you"

Angie: "Nami ngiyajabula ukukwazi."

Joshua: "Thank you so much guys. Kuyangijabulisa ukubona ukth ngisathandwa."

Lindiwe: "I told you. Every time someone mentions your name Gloria blushed."

Bongeka: "Nami bengimbona. Bese ephika ukth uyakhumbula"

Me: "Okay, okay. It's not my fault that sometimes my pride gets in the way."

Joshua: "Sometimes?"

Me: "Okay, always"

We all laughed.

Joshua: "I won't hurt you ever again. I'm sorry." he whispered in my ear.

Me: "We will work it out together" I whispered back.

Njabulo: "Just get out of here already."

Joshua: "Shall we?"

Me: "Yes" I took his hand savalelisa sahamba.

Me: "Where are we going?"

Joshua: "To the beach."

Me: "Ebusuku?"

Joshua: "You and I we are going to talk."

Me: "About what?"

Joshua: "About us and our future. I finished my anger problem program and they say communication is the key and we can rebuild trust. I want us to start afresh. I want to be a man that you deserve. A man you are proud to call your own."

Me: "Kungangijabulisa nami lokho."

Joshua: "I love you."

Me: "I love you too" My heart filled new hope. Maybe there was light in the end of the tunnel. And maybe I was about to get my happy ending even though I still needed to find that woman who gave birth to me.

Chapter 88.

Ngahlala noJoshua i-weekend yonke. On Monday morning I woke up early ngavusa uJulia walungela ukuya eskoleni. I made her a lunchbox and breakfast wadla and then left with Zinhle. Ngasala noJoshua.

Me: "Awusebenzi today?"

Joshua: "No."

Me: "What is purples?"

He looked at me before answering.

Joshua: "Its a drug created by Njabulo."

Me: "The drug that he used on me that day?"

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "Elani?"

Joshua: "Elokhu control ukuvuleka kwe-private part yomuntu wesifazane"

Me: "I don't understand."

Joshua: "Njabulo was approached by Mr Wong. Mr Wong works in a porn industry. He asked him to create something that will make it easier for the business." I could tell that this conversation was making Joshua uncomfortable.

Me: "Easier how?"

Joshua: "It makes a woman be able to accomodate different sizes and shapes including a fist or a foot."

Me: "Hawu!!"

Joshua: "So the drug is used for that purpose."

Me: "That's just abuse. Manje why did he inject it to me?"

Joshua: "After uNjabulo eselenzile we found out that Mr Wong was into human trafficking. He wanted to use the drug on little girls. We told him the deal was off. He got mean and then we set him up waboshwa and they killed him inside. So uNjabulo worked on it again and now it works like a first aid. If someone gets injured out there we give him a shot and then it takes out the bad stuff and seals the wound."

Me: "Wow. That's great. At least you guys put it into good use."

Joshua: "Yeah but it still does what it was created to do." he looked at me.

Me: "Meaning? You still sell it to others out there?"

Joshua: "No. To you."

Me: "You will use it to me?" I was now freaked out.

Joshua: "You are not making this easy for me. What I mean Thandeka, ukth yes Njabulo injected you with the drug ukuze kuphume lento ebikugulisa and yaphuma but it also did its original purpose."

Me: "Meaning now my private part can fit a head?"

Joshua: "Cha. Rather the opposite."

Me: "What?"

Joshua: "After the drug took out the poison it also sealed that certain space."

Me: "So I don't have a vagina anymore?"

He blushed harder and looked down.

Joshua: "You do, What I mean is that sex won't be comfortable for you for a little while."

Me: "So now I'm a virgin?"

Joshua: "Not exactly. Kuzoba engathi uthungiwe ngaphakathi and each time we try to make love koba engathi ngigqashula umthungo."

I was shocked. I could imagine that pain.

Me: "Is that why we didn't do it this weekend?"

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "And we are never doing it again."

We both laughed.

Joshua: "Such an uncomfortable topic for monday morning."

Me: "Atleast I'm an adult. Just imagine nje having to explain the birds and the bees to Julia."

Joshua: "I'm leaving that part to your lovely hands sthandwa sami."

Me: "You such a coward."

Joshua: "Your coward you mean." he kissed my forehead.

Me: "I still don't understand ukth yayizosiza ngani in making porn? If it seals then that mean women who use it get hurt everyday. Just imagine nje that pain everyday."

Joshua: "Iyakalwa. A drop is enough fth nakhona you use it after the performance. If the tool is extremely large you can use it to bring it back to its original size. And again after the fisting you use it."

Me: "So uNjabulo can create any drug?"

Joshua: "Pretty much."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "So uzungivumela nini ngiqaqe izitishi?"

Me: "We are never doing it again."

Joshua: "Don't be so sure."

Saphazamiswa i-knock. Joshua went to check mina ngaqoqa izitsha. After few minutes Joshua call me to the lounge.

Joshua: "Thandeka, this is Mr Mdlalose. He is a lawyer."

Me: "Sawbona baba"

Mr Mdlalose: "Yebo mtanami. Kunjengoba echaza undodana. Ngingummeli. Yimi obebheke izinto zikababa wakho."

Me: "Yebo"

Mr Mdlalose: "Sekuyisikhathi ngikufuna mtanami. You are not that easy to track down." he smiled.

Me: "Bengingaphilanga."

Mr Mdlalose: "Kwakubi lokho. Usu-right kodwa manje?"

Me: "Impela sengi-right."

Mr Mdlalose: "Kuncono-ke. Impeleni mtanami ngiphethe i-will kababa wakho."

Joshua: "I will give you guys some privacy."

Mr Mdlalose: "Mr Cebekhulu please stay."

Joshua sat down next to me.

Mr Mdlalose opened his bag wakhapha amaphepha and began reading it. I wasn't even listening. In my head I was wondering ukth ubaba wami wayefake uJoshua kwi-will yakhe.

Joshua: "Uzwile?"

Me: "Sorry, angizwanga."

Mr Mdlalose: "Your father gave you both an equal share. Its estimated to R3 000 000."

Me: "Why?"

Mr Mdlalose: "Thats a strange question. Most people just take the money and never ask why."

Me: "I'm sorry. Its just that I'm surprised especially because they said he wasn't my father."

Mr Mdlalose: "Theres another thing left." he opened his bag again wakhapha i-letter and gave it to me.

Mr Mdlalose: "I hope it will answer your questions."

Me: "Thank you."

Mr Mdlalose: "Sengicela indlela. Here is my card. Ne-address ikhona. Ngozwa ngani." he got up waxhawula.

Me: "Thank you Mr Mdlalose"

Joshua: "Sibonga kakhulu."

he walked him to the door. Ngasala ngihleli phansi and thinking about what just happened.

Chapter 89.

With shaking hands I tore the envelope kwaphuma isthombe esidala esiwu-black and white. It was a woman.

Me: "You think this is my mother?"

Joshua: "Could be." he took the picture wasibuka.

Me: "I'm scared to read it."

Joshua: "She looks familiar. Ngathi ngike ngambona ezinsukwini."

Me: "Umbona keph?"

Joshua: "I'm not sure, but ukhona umuntu onje engike ngambona. Read the letter Thandeka"

Me: "We are related Joshua."

Joshua: "Wazi ngani?"

Me: "Why would he leave us an equal share if singabona abandawonye?"

Joshua: "Maybe uchazile encwadini. But I doubt ukth singabandawonye. You are not my sister."

Me: "Kuncono ifundwe wuwe."

Joshua: "Okay lethu." i gave it to him.

Dear Thandeka.

Angazi kumele ngiqale ngithini mtanami. Ngiyazi kuningi kakhulu okwenzeka kusuka ekuzalekeni kwakho. Kwaba iphutha mtanami. Ngiyacela ungamzondi umama wakho. Yimi owenza iphutha. Ngahlangana nomama wakho siseGoli. Wayesamncane ebambe itoho efemini engangisebenza kuyo. Ngalingeka mtanami ngamshela wangithanda. Ngamfihlela ukth ngiganiwe. Kuthe uma kuvela wabe esekhulelwe. Wabe esengitshela ukth naye unalo isoka elase limethembisile umshado. Ngokwesaba ihlazo sasifihla isisu waze wabeletha. Emva kokuzalwa kwakho ngakuthatha ngoba unkosikazi wami wath uzokwamukela akukhulise. Usuzelwe umama wakho wabuyela ekhaya nami ngakusa ekhaya kumkami.

Uthe uma ukhula sase sifisa ukuba nabanye abantwana kwazise wena noSizwe sasinithole ngaphandle. Sizamile kodwa kwangalunga ngaze ngaya kudokotela wafike wathi anginayo inzalo. Kwangethusa lokho ngoba ngangazi ukth uzalwa yimi. Ngamtshela umkami wangitshela ukth angikubuyisele kumama wakho. Ngamfuna ngangamthola la eyethe ungowakhona. Saxabana nonkosikazi ngoba wayethi angikuse ezintandaneni kodwa ngenqaba. Wabuye washintsha wath uzokukhulisa. Ngiyaxolisa mtanami. Kwaba iphutha. Igama likamama wakho uNomalanga Dlamini. Wayethe kimi ungowaseNkandla.

Ngiyazi ukuthi unayo imali futhi lena engizokupha yona awuyidingi kodwa ngiyacela mtanami uyithathe njengesipho sami kuwe. Ngehluleka ukuba ubaba oqotho kuwe. Ngasuke ngathemba umkami kakhulu ngangabona ngisho esekuhlupha. Angizithetheleli kodwa ngiyethemba ngelinye ilanga uyongixolela. Ungibongele nakumkhwenyana ngokuba khona kwakhe empilweni yakho....."

Joshua paused wangibuka. I wiped the tears away with the back of my hand.

Joshua: "ULindiwe."

Me: "Owenzeni?"

Joshua: "The woman in the picture unetshwebu kaLindiwe."

I took the picture ngasibuka. I tried to imagine my friend.

Me: "It can't be. Maybe bayafana nje."

Joshua: "Look at that smile. She looks like her."

Me: "Lo uNomalanga Dlamini and uLindiwe owakwaMyeza."

Joshua: "Uzalwa umabani? Wake wambona umama wakhe?"

Me: "Akaze ngiye kubo. I never asked ukth uzalwa umabani."

Joshua: "Call her and ask."

Me: "No."

Joshua: "Give me her number ngimfonele mina."

Me: "Its fine. I will call her and ask but I doubt its true."

I took out my phone and dialled her number. It rang twice before aphendule.

Lindiwe: "Ntokazi"

Me: "Unjani?"

Lindiwe: "Ngi-right wena?"

Me: "Ngi-right. Awusho oe. Ukhona umuntu omaziyo owuNomalanga Dlamini?"

Lindiwe: "Beside my mother futhi naye sewaba uMrs Myeza. Cha akekho. Why you asking?"

Me: "I'm trying to track down someone."

Lindiwe: "Uhlala kuph yena lowo?"

Me: "Wayehlala eNkandla or wathi uhlala khona ukuze engatholakali."

Lindiwe: "Ukuph?"

Me: "At Joshua's place"

Lindiwe: "I'm on my way." she hung up.

Joshua: "You want to hear the rest of the letter?"

Me: "Then who is my father? Maybe naye akamazi. What if wayehambe elala nje?"

Joshua: "Don't think like that."

Me: "What am I suppose to think? She gave birth to me qede wangaphinde wabheka emumva. What kind of a mother is that?"

Joshua: "Maybe she lost contact like your father did"

Me: "Or maybe she never wanted me."

Joshua: "I will make you some coffee." he went to the kitchen.

I took the picture ngasibuka. Now that Joshua mentioned it nami ngase ngiyibona inswebu. 5 minutes later Lindiwe knocked ngamngenisa ehamba noBongeka.

Lindiwe: "Unjani?" She gave me a hug.

Me: "I'm okay." my eyes filled with tears.

Bongeka: "Ungakhali girl. Kuzolunga."

Lindiwe: "She is right. Kuzolunga. Do you have a picture of that woman?"

I nodded and went to the lounge. I took the picture and gave it to her.

Lindiwe: "This is my mother." her eyes filled with tears.

Bongeka: "Hau kanti kunjani nje emhlabeni."

I was felling dizzy. I held the chair and tried to sit. My whole body shaking.

Lindiwe: "Thandeka" she sounded far.

There was a sound in my ears.

Bongeka: "Call an ambulance"

Joshua: "Thandeka can you hear me?" his voice sounded loud and slow. I wanted to laugh but kwangavuma ngasala ngisinekile nje. In a second everything went blank.

When I came around I was in bed and there was a man staring at me.

Man: "I'm doctor Mdluli. Can you hear me?"

Me: "Yes. Where is Joshua?"

Joshua: "I'm here." he came to the view.

Me: "What happened?"

Joshua: "Uqulekile."

Me: "It wasn't a dream?"

Joshua: "No my love."

Me: "I hate her"

Chapter 90.

Joshua thanked the doctor wahamba sasala sobabili.

Me: "Baphi oBongeka?"

Joshua: "Lindiwe went home to confront your mother, uBongeka usemsebenzini." something vibrated under the pillow.

Joshua: "Its my phone." he took it wayibuka with a big frown.

Me: "Is there something wrong?"

Joshua: "Yes and you will have to come with me because I can't leave you here on your own."

Me: "Siyaphi?"

Joshua: "Emlazi. Vuka ugqoke. Ngisafonela uThizo."

I got up and went to wash my face, ngakama izinwele and then went to change ngagqoka ingubo nje epholile.

Joshua: "Wow you look sexy." he kissed my forehead.

Me: "Thank you. Where is the letter?"

Joshua: "Its in the safe nesthombé. Soyifunda ntambama"

Me: "Okay."

Joshua: "Asambe"

We drove to uMlazi kuthulekile. I kept thinking about my mother. The monster that left me and never looked back. ULindiwe wayethi uma exoxa ngabazali bakhe kube abantu aba-right abanothando but now I was doubting her mother or should I say my mother. How can she live happily ekubeni mina engangazi nanokuth ngikuphi.

Ngethuswa uJoshua esethi sesifikile asehle. Thizo and Njabulo were already there waiting outside.

Joshua: "30 minutes tops."

Me: "Okay." we went inside the yard.

Two guys were sitting under the tree drinking beer.

Man1: "The lady stays" he pointed the chair next to him.

Joshua: "And if you touch her in anyway I will take your eyes out."

Man2: "Angeke simenze lutho. Woza uzohlala sisi."

Joshua: "Sizoshesha."

Me: "Okay" I went to sit and played with my phone. Joshua and his friends went inside.

Man1: "Angikaze ngikubone before."

Me: "Nami angikwazi"

Man2: "Umhle kodwa"

Me: "Thank you"

Man2: "Uyathula vele?"

Me: "Yes"

Man1: "Okay" He got up and left.

Ngasala nalo omunye. I was grateful when he didn't talk because I didn't feel like talking.

30 minutes went by fast but lutho ukuphuma oJoshua. I waited another 30 minutes but still bangaphuma. The other guy got up and left aswel. I waited another 15 minutes but bangaphuma abantu and thier phones were off. In the end I decided to go in and check.

It was a big room ene-curtain elikhulu phakath nendawo. Kukhona amazwi akhulumayo behind it. I was still debating when someone grabbed me from behind wabheka something cold in my neck.

Man: "What are you doing?" he pushed me forward waphenya i-curtain. Everybody went quiet. Joshua was sitting on the couch kukhona intombazane grinding on his lap. He sat up wasusa nosisi lowo.

Man: "I caught her sneaking in."

Joshua: "Stop pointing that thing to my wife.Jay tell him" he looked at the other guy.

Jay: "You heard the man." his voice had a heavy french escent.

Man: "But boss she heard everything."

Jay: "Joshua, are you double crossing me?"

Joshua: "Ofcourse not. She is my wife and she got tired of waiting."

Jay: "Search her"

Joshua: "Over my dead body. Nobody touches my wife" He pulled out a gun and pointed the man.

Almost everybody was pointing at someone.

Jay: "You know the rules Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "Even if she heard something, she is my wife and I trust her."

Jay: "But she is nothing to me."

Joshua: "But your family is everything to you. If you hurt my wife. I will fly to Canada and wipe out everybody and then fly to Brazil to get your daughter. You don't want to know what I will do to her." he smiled.

Jay: "You wouldn't dare."

Joshua: "Try me. And I will make you watch while I work on her. In the end you will beg me to kill you both."

Jay: "Let her go. And I want all of you out of my house."

Joshua: "Lets go." he took my hand saphuma nabanye balandela.

Thizo: "Ngizokuthinta later"

Joshua: "Okay. Asambe" he opened the door ngangena wavala wajikela kwelinye i-side wangena sahamba.

We drove quietly saze safika e-city centre.

Joshua: "You don't need anything?"

Me: "Cha."

Joshua: "I trust you know that you can't share what you saw?"

Me: "Even the part where you were cheating on me?"

Joshua: "I wasn't cheating."

Me: "She was grinding your leg"

Joshua: "Why are you shouting?"

Me: "Its because I am angry Joshua. You cheating on me and you expect me to be okay with it."

Joshua: "She was just playing. Khona sekuthiwa I'm cheating sengingakwenza phambi kwabantu?"

Me: "Why was she there? I wasn't allowed in because you already invited your slut inside."

Joshua: "Watch the tone Thandeka."

Me: "Or what? Vele uyafeba Joshua. Dragging me along ukuze ngizobona manyala. If you wanted a lap dance ngabe ungitshelile."

Joshua: "Uthe awulambile?"

Me: "Don't change the subject. I'm not stupid"

Joshua: "I didn't say you are, but right now you making me angry"

Me: "So I should just smile while ngenziwa islima? Ngihlale ngilinde phandle while you busy with someone else"

he didn't say anything. I opened the door ngaphuma. I stood outside and tried to calm down but kwangavuma. Another car parked next to us kwaphuma amadoda amathathu. I held my breath and went to the driver. I knew Joshua was watching. Ngafika kuye ngambamba ngamqabula. His friends cheered. At first he didn't kiss me back but I kept going.

Chapter 91.

The guy pulled away shocked.

Joshua: "Ngiyamxolisela mfwethu."

Guy: "Akunankinga"

Joshua: "Asambe" he pulled me towards the car.

I had the other guy whisper to the other saying "uzomxebula." they all looked at us.

Joshua: "Get in the car Thandeka" he opened the door ngangena naye wayongena in the other side and drove away.

Saze safika endlini kuthulekile. Julia and Zinhle were already home. Ngangena endlini and went straight to the kitchen ngafica uZinhle epheka.

Me: "Need help?"

Zinhle: "I bought takeaways besengifudumeza nje thats all."

Me: "Okay, thanks" I went to the lounge ngafica uJulia enza i-homework uJoshua ehleli eduze kwakhe. I was about to go upstairs when he spoke.

Joshua: "Beyinjani i-taste yakhe?"

Julia: "Angizwanga baba"

Joshua: "Not you angel, I'm talking to your mother."

Me: "Mint"

Joshua: "So you like mint?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Nami ngiyabona."

Me: "Can I have my letter?"

Joshua: "Ngiyeza ngizokunika." he got up, ngavele ngajika and sat down.

Joshua: "Woza sizoyifunda upstairs".

Me: "Its okay. Sizoyifunda later."

Joshua: "No I want to read it now. Come" he gave me warming smile. The kind that says don't make me ask you twice.

I got up and followed him but sangaya ekamelweni instead we went to the spareroom.

Joshua: "Lock the door behind you."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "I'm about to teach you something and angifuni ukuphazanyiswa."

Me: "About earlier. I'm"

Joshua: "Don't. Just lock that door."

Me: "You going to beat me up nje"

Joshua: "I can beat you up ngisho kungavaliwe."

Me: "I was angry and I wanted to get back at you."

Joshua: "And you did." He came towards the door wafika wakhiya.

Me: "Please don't hurt me"

He sat down in the bed wakhumula izicathulo.

Joshua: "I would like a private dance."

Me: "What do you mean?"

Joshua: "You said if I want a dance I should ask you. Well, I'm asking you now."

Me: "I was angry Joshua."

Joshua: "Come sit on my lap"

Me: "You going to hurt me"

Joshua: "No. I'm going to teach you something. Woza"

I took a step ngasondela. Inhliziyo yam yayishaya ngamandla engathi zothi bhodlo esfubeni iphume ngaphandle.

Joshua: "Phenduka ubheke le. Uhlale nje u-relax" I sat down as instructed.

Joshua: "Relax" he held my waist ngesinye isandla wabamba izinwele.

Me: "Ah." I cried out and tried to move but he held me down.

Joshua: "Sit."

Me: "You hurting me."

Joshua: "What were you thinking?"

Me: "I was angry" he held tighter and his nails sank into my skin.

Joshua: "And you had every right to be angry. Yazi ngidinwa yini? Ngicikwa ukth njalo uma udinwa you do something stupid. Why can't you be angry ngendlela ejwayelekile? Give me a silent treatment, make me sleep in the couch or do other things that women do when they are angry instead of running straight to the other men? Are you trying to be a slut Thandeka?"

I didn't answer and I didn't want to cry and give him the satisfaction.

Joshua: "Awusakhulumi?"

Me: "Ngiyakhuluma."

Joshua: "Oh, usaphethwe inkani?"

Me: "Why was she there while I wasn't allowed in?"

Joshua: "You weren't allowed in because you panic and when you do you react and your reactions do

more harm than good."

Me: "So, her doing a sexual act towards you is part of the deal?"

Joshua: "Yes. "

Me: "I'm not stupid"

Joshua: "She is part of the private dancers abazofakwa eCalluba Lounge. Njengoba ebelaphayana she was showing the guys what to expect."

Me: "Really? And your lap was the only stage she could find?"

Joshua: "Wena ungene eshleli kimi. Not that she was performing for me."

Me: "How come you didn't tell me this earlier?"

Joshua: "You mean before you behaved like a slut?"

Me: "I didn't behave like a slut"

Joshua: "What do you call what you did?" he pulled the hair tighter.

Me: "Uyangilimaza"

Joshua: "Uyaphila kahle ekhanda. Kissing a man you don't even know."

Me: "You didn't change Joshua. You still the abusive monster you were before."

He didn't answer instead he let go off me ngawela phansi.

Joshua: "And you have no idea how hard it is for me not to beat the childish crap out of you." with that he got up wavula wahamba.

I got up and went to look myself in the mirror. My hair was a mess. I lifted my dress up and looked where his other hand held. I was bruised but not bleeding. I decided to go take a shower. Joshua was not in the room and I was grateful. I took my clothes off and went to the shower quickly. Ngageza ngaqeda ngaphuma and almost had a heart attack when I found Joshua sitting on the bed.

Joshua: "Your letter" He pointed the envelope next to him.

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "I'm sorry for what you saw eMlazi."

Me: "But you not sorry for what you just did?"

Joshua: "Don't start"

Me: "Mxm"

Joshua: "Uhlushwa inkani Thandeka. Indlela onenkani ngayo yenza umuntu agcine engasakwazi ukuzi-controller. Next time think before you act."

Me: "Next time rather leave me here kunokungenza islima."

Joshua: "You know I can't do that. I can't relax when you not with me."

Me: "You need help. You obsessed and thats not good."

Joshua: "I'm not"

Chapter 92.

I read the rest of the letter and there was nothing much except the same apology in different ways. Certain lines caught my attention. Its said "I know Joshua will keep you safe. Ukhala ngenkani kodwa. Ngimtshelile ukth ngasenkani wafuza umama wakho. Ngiyazi naye unolaka kodwa umlalele mtanami, uyayazi into ayenzayo. Uzokuvikela kukho konke. Ngamqasha ngokwazi. Ngiyazi uzophatheka kabi uma uzwa ukth waqashwa yimi, cha mtanami angimqashelanga ukuthi akuthande ngamqashela ukuthi akuvikele. Uyena owakuthanda futhi nalapho ngiyajabula ngoba ngiyazi ukuthi uhleli nendoda ekuthandayo futh ezokuvikela." I read these lines over and over again. I don't know what was more pain. Finding out that Joshua was being paid to risk his life for me not that he did it because he loved me.

I was still sitting there and crying when Joshua walked in.

Joshua: "I'm sorry"

Me: "You knew everything but you still pretended not to know."

Joshua: "Ngakhetha ukungakutsheli Thandeka because I didn't want you to think I'm doing all this because of the money."

Me: "What else then if its not money? You don't expect me to believe its out of love, we both know its not."

Joshua: "Then its out of what? Its not for cash because I have enough money."

Me: "How much did he offer you?"

Joshua: "Its not important."

Me: "I want to know."

Joshua: "I didn't take it. By the time he approached me I was already looking out for you."

Me: "And that will be when?"

Joshua: "Your first car accident. He came to see you wafica mina. Thats when we talked."

Me: "Thats when he hired you to pretend that you love me kanti all along its just a job."

Joshua: "No. Thats when he asked me if I knew someone who could be your guard and I offered my services. Not because I wanted the money but simple because I'd rather have you with me kunokuth kubekhona indoda enye eduze kwakho"

Me: "You obsess with me."

Joshua: "If loving someone like I love you is an obsession then yes I'm obsess."

Me: "That R1,5mil is a payment from my father to you."

Joshua: "Yes and I'm not going to take it. I protected you because thats what a man should do for a woman he loves not because he expects a payment."

I was staring at Joshua as he spoke. I don't know whether what I was seeing was another well cooked pot of lies or the real Joshua telling me the real truth. After being fed so many lies its not easy to see the truth.

Me: "Is it still not safe?"

Joshua: "Its safe now."

Me: "I can go back to my own place?"

Joshua: "You leaving me?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Awusangithandi?"

Me: "Love has nothing to do with it. I need a space."

Joshua: "To do what?"

Me: "To breath, to deal with everything."

Joshua: "You can do that here."

Me: "You know thats not possible."

Joshua: "I'll move out then."

Me: "Its your house."

Joshua: "I love you Thandeka."

Me: "As much as I don't want to say this but I love you too ukth nje angisazi Joshua. Its too much. Everything that I know and believe it turns out to be lies."

Joshua: "But you know that you love me. I love you."

Me: "Okay. I'll move out, go back to work and go back to my life then we will try again"

Joshua: "What about your mother? You have to see her."

Me: "What for? She didn't want me. Why should I want her?"

Joshua: "Because she is your mother. You have to see her."

Me: "What for. She choose her husband over me."

Joshua: "You just angry."

Me: "No. I'm tired, I had a long day. I'd like to sleep."

Joshua: "But awukadli nje. I'll go get you some food"

Me: "I'm not hungry."

Joshua: "You have to eat. You passing out and that can't be good."

Me: "Nothing is good in my life."

Joshua: "Ngiyakucela sthandwa sami. Ngisho ungadla izipuni ezimbili." he got up and left.

I got under the blankets and tried to sleep. Joshua came back with food.

Joshua: "Ngicela udle"

I sat up and took the food ngadla. He sat there and watched. Ngadla ngaqeda.

Me: "Done" I gave him the plate."

Joshua: "Thank you"

My phone rang ngayibheka ukth ikhala keph ngayithola. It was Lindiwe.

Me: "Hai"

Lindiwe: "I hate her." I could hear she was crying.

Me: "Where are you?"

Lindiwe: "I don't know. I was just driving nje. How could she? What kind of a mother does that to her"

daughter?"

Me: "You confronted her?"

Lindiwe: "I had to. All this time you were my best friend kanti you are my sister. The pain you went through ngenxa yakhe. I never thought I would say this but I hate my mother." she cried harder.

Me: "I understand that you angry but its not safe out there. Drive back home sisi. I'm coming tomorrow."

Lindiwe: "I don't even know where I am."

Me: "What do you see there?"

Lindiwe: "Trees."

Me: "Drive back to the city."

Lindiwe: "I think I drove past the town 2 or 3 hours ago. I was too angry."

Joshua: "Your car must have a tracker."

Lindiwe: "Is that Joshua?"

Me: "Yes. Let me put you on loud speaker ngoba vele uyayizwa lendaba." I put the phone on loud speaker.

Joshua: "You car must have a tracker."

Lindiwe: "It does."

Joshua: "You insured?"

Lindiwe: "Yes."

Joshua: "Okay. I will help you"

Chapter 93.

Ngaphaphama sengizumekile. Joshua was still busy in his laptop.

Joshua: "Morning"

Me: "Hau sekusile njalo? Kugcine kuphi ngoLindiwe?"

Joshua: "She got home safe."

Me: "Thank you. I'm sorry ukth ngivele ngazumeka."

Joshua: "You were tired. I understand."

Me: "Uke walala nje wena?"

Joshua: "Yes I did." he looked at me and then looked down.

Me: "I guess sekumele ngiye since I told Lindiwe that I was coming today."

Joshua: "I guess. Ngisahambisa uJulia eskoleni. Ngizobuya" He got up and walked out.

I checked the time and it was almost 7am. I needed to call Bongeka. I took my phone ngamfonela yakhala kanye wayiphendula.

Bongeka: "My friend"

Me: "Unjani?"

Bongeka: "I should be asking you that question. I just talked to Lindiwe and she said uthe uzogoduka today."

Me: "Sengiyazisola ukth bengisholani. I don't think I'm ready for it."

Bongeka: "You will never be ready."

Me: "Can you come with me?"

Bongeka: "Yes I will."

Me: "Thank you my friend. Let me get ready."

Bongeka: "Joshua should come too."

Me: "I know. I miss him"

Bongeka: "Kanti uphi?"

Me: "Ukhona. Never mind me oe. I should go."

Bongeka: "Wait. What are you saying? You and Joshua?"

Me: "I'm just being crazy. Can you believe that I'm thinking about sex right now when I should be thinking about my life"

Bongeka: "Why aint you having sex?"

Me: "I don't know. Ever since that coma. Basically ngagcina last year ukuthintwa."

Bongeka: "Did you make the first move?"

Me: "No. I never make the first move. He does"

Bongeka: "Maybe you should. Mhlampe uyasaba naye"

Me: "Angazi mngani wami. Ngizobona."

Bongeka: "Okay dear. Let me know ukth sihamba nini."

Me: "Okay I will. Bye oe"

Bongeka: "Bye." She hung up. I got up and went to shower.

Ngageza ngaqeda ngaphuma ngayogcoba and then decided to pack before ngigqoke. I packed for me and then packed for Joshua. I was almost done when he walked in.

Joshua: "Wenzani?"

Me: "I was packing for us."

Joshua: "Us? Why?"

Me: "I'm sorry. I just assumed that you coming with me."

Joshua: "You didn't ask me to come."

Me: "Now I'm asking."

Joshua: "When do we leave?"

Me: "As soon as we finish"

Joshua: "Okay. Ake ngigeze then" He took his top off.

Me: "Can I make you some breakfast?"

Joshua: "Yes thank you" he looked at me ngavele ngabheka phansi.

Joshua: "Whats wrong?"

Me: "Nothing"

He came closer and held my hands.

Joshua: "Khuluma sthandwa sami."

Me: "Its nothing. I'm just being me"

Joshua: "Then look at me"

I looked up sabukana.

Joshua: "I miss you"

Me: "I miss you too."

he didn't answer. Instead he kissed my lips slowly. The kind that say we are about to make the sweetest love.

Joshua: "You okay?"

Me: "Tired but I'm okay."

Joshua: "Rest a bit. Ngizokuvusa sesihamba"

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "I hope I was gentle enough."

Me: "Yes. And you were right when you said kufana nokuqaqa izitishi."

Joshua: "I'm sorry"

Me: "Its fine. Nakwenza to save my life and I'm grateful."

Joshua: "I guess so. Ngisayogeza" he got up.

Me: "U-right?"

Joshua: "Yes I'm fine."

Me: "Okay. Can I join you?"

Joshua: "Woza"

I got up and followed him safika sageza saqeda kuthulekile saze saphuma sayogqoka kuthulekile.

Me: "I can see something is eating you. Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Its nothing"

Me: "So namhlanje awuxoxi?"

Joshua: "I'm just worried about the trip."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Thandeka you are about to meet a woman who gave birth to you 29 years ago. I'm worried about you. How will you react? Will you pass out? Will you do something crazy. And mostly how will she react when she sees you?"

Me: "Maybe she will reject me."

Joshua: "Or maybe you will reject her."

Me: "Maybe we should cancel"

Joshua: "No. We are going. We have to"

Me: "Thank you"

Joshua: "For what?"

Me: "For being here for me. Omunye umuntu ngabe kade angilaxaza."

Joshua: "I love you. Thats why I stayed. You mean more than you realise Thandeka."

Me: "Ukuba nje I met you first. Mhlampe ngabe konke ku-right"

Joshua: "Maybe we wouldn't have met if your life was perfect."

Me: "Maybe you right."

Joshua: "Asiqede sizohamba kungaze kube late"

We got dressed.

Joshua: "You are not wearing that skirt. Wear something longer"

Me: "And Joshua, my father kicks in"

Joshua: "Whatever. Just change that next to nothing skirt you wearing"

Me: "What does it metter what I wear?"

Joshua: "Because you don't want her to see you as a loose and cheap girl but abone usisi ohloniphekile fth naye ozihloniphayo."

Me: "A woman she wasn't a woman enough to raise."

Joshua: "Yes. My woman"

I changed the skirt and wore a formal dress.

Joshua: "Now you look sexy and I'm proud to call you my girl."

Me: "Thanx, wena uzogqoka ini?"

Joshua: "U-Jean namateki nes kibha"

Me: "I don't think so. I will choose for you."

Joshua: "Okay. Its nice to see you smile like that."

Me: "You make me smile like a love struck teenager."

Joshua: "And I like that."

We both laughed. Joshua was right, smiling and laughing was great but I was scared of what I was about to discover kuloluhamba esasizolithatha. Was I even strong enough to handle it?

Chapter 94.

Joshua asked Njabulo to come with us aswel. I didn't see the need but I didn't object. We drove in one car. Endleleni babexoxa ku-right. I was quiet and glad that they let me be. In my head I was thinking about Julia. I wasn't spending much time with her like I should. Atleast eka-Onica ingane yayihleli naye. I didn't know about the relationship Joshua was having with him nanokuth wayemondla yini. The last thing I needed was for Joshua to be the kind of the father that was never there for his kids, the kind that just throw the money and never look back. I really needed to spend time with Julia and be a mother. Ngaze ngalala ngicabanga about my own mothering skills.

Joshua woke me up and said sesifikile.

Me: "Are you sure its here?"

Joshua: "IseMhlangwane lana. ULindiwe unginikile i-direction. Nawu umuzi esiyakuwo."

Me: "Mkhulu:

Joshua: "Ya mkhulu."

Bongeka: "Asingene guys sebezoz bathuke ukth asiphumi ngani."

Joshua: "You ready?"

Me: "I guess so."

Joshua: "Remember what we talked about. You are a lady. Behave like a lady that we all know you are."

Me: "I will."

Joshua: "Okay, lets go"

We all got out of the car sangena esangweni.

Njabulo: "Maybe kumele sikhuleke" he whispered.

Joshua: "Sizothini?"

He knocked on the door sezwa izwi lith asingene. Sangena.

There were two men sitting on the couch. Nathi sahlala phansi.

Joshua: "Sanibona"

Men: "Yebo sanibona."

Joshua: "Ninjani"

Man1: "Siyavuka bantabami. Sesingezwa kini?"

Joshua: "Nathi siyaphila"

Man1: "Aw MaNgcolosi nasihlasela emini bebade mtanami kwenzenjani?"

Bongeka: "Siphelezela nangu uThandeka Memela."

Man1: "Aw kanti sekuyini. Phela thina silindele uMemela nendodakazi hhay izingane zodwa. Lendoda yakwaMemela vele iyedelela umdalo wayo. Ingathuma kanjani izingane zizothetha amacala ayo."

Man2: "Impela iyedelela. Sizokhuluma ini nje nezingane."

Joshua: "Empeleni uThandeka usesele nathi."

Man1: "Uphi uMemela?"

Joshua: "Udlule emhlabeni ngonyaka odlule"

Man1: "Aw kwakubi lokho. Manje nina zinsizwa ningabaphi?"

Joshua: "NgingowakwaCebekhulu mina, lona engihamba naye umfowethu uNjabulo wakwaMbatha."

Man2: "Aw manje nizeniphelezele uThandeka nje yini?"

Joshua sat up wabuka uNjabulo.

Man1: "UMemela uhlangana kuphi noCebekhulu noMbatha?"

Joshua: "Akusele muntu kwaMemela. UThandeka usele yedwa. Yithi kuphela asele nabo. Ubengeke avele ahambe yedwa nje." I could hear the anger in Joshua's voice.

Man1: "Ubengafika nanangu uMaBhengu. Okunguyena esimaziyo."

Joshua: "Nathi nje uyasibona uzosazi"

Njabulo coughed dramatically.

Man2: "Unenkani mfana kaCebekhulu"

Joshua: "Ngixolise ngokukhuluma kabi baba"

Man1: "Kulungile-ke." he looked at me nami ngabheka phansi.

Lindiwe walked in with a chair followed by a woman. The moment she looked at me she began crying.

Man1: "Biza uMthunzi Lindiwe. Nangu udadewenu esefikile"

Lindiwe looked at me and smiled qede waphuma.

We sat in silent kuzwakala umsindo wokukhala kukamama kuphela. After a while Duma walked in elandelwa obhuti ababili.

Man2: "Ayke bafana nangu udadewenu esefikile. Thandeka mtanami laba abafowenu. Lona uDuma umzala wakho bese lomncanyana uMthunzi umfowenu omncane bese lona uNathi indodana yami endala. Mina noyihlo siyelamana. Okusho ukth ngiwuyihlo omncane."

I didn't have a courage to respond ngavele ngababuka nje and said nothing.

Lindiwe walked in again with a tray efake ama-glass then another girl followed her with a tray efake amabhodlela e-drink.

Man1: "Baningi-ke abantu lapha ekhaya. Nabazukulu inqwaba."

Kwavele kwathuleka nje.

Atlast she stopped crying and other people left the room kwasala mina noJoshua nomama nobaba. Infact they wanted Joshua to leave the room but wanqaba and I was grateful because I wasn't strong enough to be on my own.

Man1: "Manje wena uyini kuThandeka?"

Joshua: "Angazi ukth ubaba uqonde ukuthini?"

Man2: "Aybo wemfana. Musa ukudlala wena. Phela sibandala, siyabona. Akubona ubungani nje qha lobu."

Joshua: "Ew baba eqinisweni thina besize lapho ngoba sifuna umama kaThandeka."

Man1: "Wuye lona."

Joshua: "Okunye sekungayekelwa elinye ilanga."

Man2: "Thandeka ndodakazi. Besazi ngokuba khona kwakho. Eqinisweni sikucingile eminyakeni edlule kodwa sangakuthola. UMemela wathutha eMnambithi wangaziwa ukuthi ukuphi. Safika sekusele izindonga nje."

Man1: "Impela uqinisile umfowethu. Sakucinga mtanami. Nodadewenu elwa ekufuna."

Me: "Udadewethu?"

Man1: "Nanibabili. Ngeshwa lo omunye akaphilanga."

Man2: "Emva kokuzalwa kukaLindiwe izinto zazingezihle mtanami. Kwavela ukuthi udadewenu uth

uyagodola. Ilapho-ke unkosikazi aveza khona ukth unayo ingane eyahamba noMemela ngoba ecabanga ukuth ngekaMemela kanti eyalapha ekhaya."

Me: "Ngiyiwele?" I looked at her.

Mum: "Yebo mtanami." she looked at me.

Me: "Waze wangibheka ngoba usunezinkinga? Wawungangifuni vele." my voice was shaking. I'm not sure if it was anger or ukuthuka.

Mum: "Aw mtanami ungasho kanjalo"

Me: "Vele mama. Ukuba awubanga nankinga ngabe awuzihluphanga ngami. Uwumama onjani ozala ingane qede ayiphe indoda?"

Chapter 95.

Uncle: "Ew mtanami kungakuhle sizameni ukuxola singavusi amanxeba amadala asephola"

Me: "Kuhle uma awenu esaphola babomncane. Awami awakapholi."

Mum: "Ngiyazi mtanami akulula"

Me: "Awazi lutho. Wena wangizala qede wangilaxaza kanjalo. Ungangitsheli ukth akulula ekbeni ungazi lutho ngokuhlupheka kwami."

Dad: "Thandeka!!"

Joshua: "Engathi besingamyeka akukhiphe konke okusesifubeni sakhe."

Uncle: "Wazini wena mfana?"

Me: "Ukulwa noJoshua ngeke kusize ngalutho. Eqinisweni kumele nimbonge. Kwakhona ukuthi ngisaphila kungenxa yakhe uJoshua."

Dad: "Yehlisa umoya mtanami"

Me: "Kanjani nje? Uyakwazi ukuhlupheka engiphuma kubo? Lendoda owayipha ingane umkayo wayengizonda mama futh engafihli. Angilwazi mina uthando lomzali ngoba akaze ngiluthole. Ngazikhulisa, ngazifundisa, ngazinakekela ngingedwa wena uhleli lana unethezekile. Manje u-busy nezinyembezi ngoba udliwa unembeza. Nani ni-busy nilwisana noJoshua umuntu ongenzanga lutho. Futh yazi yin? Asambe Joshua" I got up and walked out. Joshua came after me wangifica emotweni.

Joshua: "Why did you do that?"

Me: "I want to go home"

Joshua: "This is your home. You have to hear them out"

Me: "Abazisoli Joshua. They expect me to be okay with everything."

Joshua: "That's why you have to stay and tell them. It's about time you open your chest to them ukuze kuzodlula."

Ngagcina ngibuyele endlini. Safika sahlala phansi. Ngabachazela ngokukhula kwami nangokuhlukumezeka kwami. Waxolisa umama but I wasn't sure ukuthi ngangimxolela yini. Ukuth kulula kumuntu ukuth athi forgive and forget uma into ingenzekanga kuye.

Uncle: "Manje abantwana unabo?"

Me: "Cha baba abekho."

Dad: "Kwancono. Kuba nzima kakhulu uma sekukhona nabantwana."

Me: "Empeleni odokotela bathi angizukuba nabantwana impilo yami yonke."

Mum: "Hawu mtanami. Yini?"

Joshua: "Walima engozini eyemoto"

Dad: "Aw kwakubike lokho."

Me: "Manje mama kwenziwe yini ukuth ubaba uMemela angazi ukth sasibabili?"

Mum: "Owesibili wafika eseshonile mtanami. Ngavele ngangamtshela ukuthi ukuth benibabili. Nakimi kwakungelula ukukuhambisa naye kangangokuth ngaphambi kokuth ngishade ngamtshela ubaba iqiniso ngacela uxolo wangixolela. Sasesinquma ukuth emva komshado sizokulanda. Nakhoke sekuba nezimpi eNkandla sathutha sazohlala lapha. Kwaphoqa ukuth kesime kancane ukukucinga ngoba kwakufiwa mtanami. Ngonyaka olandelayo wazalwa uLindiwe kanti nodadewenu uzobuya azofuna ukwembeswa nokwethiwa igama. Ilapho-ke esabona khona ukuth kanti awuyena owakwaMemela kodwa ungowalapha ekhaya."

Dad: "Impela mtanami kunjengob echaza umama wakho. Mina ngasengithe asikulande uzokhulela lapha ekhaya ngisho ngabe awuyena owalapha ekhaya ngoba ngangimbona umkami ukuth uyahlukumezeka ngokungabibikho kwakho, sahamba sayokufuna samfica engasekho uMemela eMnambithi futh kungaziwa ukuth ukuphi. Abanye besikhomba eGoli, abanye bethi wabuyela eNkandla, abanye bethi kwaNongoma. Empeleni sahamba izwe lonke leli."

Joshua: "Naye ubaba uMemela encwadini uchazile ukth wathi uma ethola ukuth akayena owakhe wabuyela eNkandla wayokufuna kodwa wafica senathutha."

Uncle: "Wathola kanjani yena uMemela ukuth awuyena owakhe?"

Me: "Odokotela bamtshela ukuth akanabo abantwana ilapho abona khona ukuth nami angiyena

owakhe."

Uncle: "Aw mtanami wabuzwa ubunzima sibe sikhona siphila."

Dad: "Kodwa ngoba usukhona ndodakazi kuhle impela. Sesizokwenza izimfanelo sikufake ekhaya"

Lindiwe walked in with food.

Lindiwe: "Ngiyethemba seniqedile kengintshontshe usisi wami kancane."

Dad: "Akunankinga mtanami. Vele ngeke siziqede ngelanga. Ningakhululeka bantabami."

We got up and followed Lindiwe. UMthunzi took Joshua wamusa koNjabula nami ngahlala noBongeka.

Lindiwe: "Gloria, laba odadewethu abanye. Bazalwa ubab omncane. Lo uPhindile, uZama, Xolile bese lo kuba uSindi." she pointed at them one by one.

Me: "Ngiyajabula ukunazi."

Xolile: "Ushadile yini?"

Me: "Cha. Ubuziswa yini?"

Xolile: "Ngiyabuza nje sisi akunankinga."

Lindiwe: "But yena noJoshua bengashada noma inini. That means he is off limit Xoli"

Xolile: "Aw wangiphoxa phambi kwezivakashi."

Lindiwe: "Sorry uma uphoxekile. Ukuth besengisho nje ukth uJoshua was made for Thandeka. Ungaze ulingeke"

Everybody laughed kwasala mina noBongeka. Lindiwe walked out wabuya nokudla. I wasn't hungry but I ate because I didn't want to offend them. Sathi siqeda ukudla kwangena ingane yathi kukhona ubhuti ongicelayo phandle. Ngaphuma ngafica uJoshua emi eduze kwemoto.

Joshua: "Asiye estolo"

Me: "Okay. Let me text Bongeka"

Joshua: "Already done asambe"

We got in the car sahamba.

Me: "Uyasazi lesostolo?"

Joshua: "Yeah. Bath ilapho esiqhamuke ngakhona."

Me: "Okay"

He drove in silent and then suddenly wamisa imoto.

Me: "Why are we stopping in the middle of nowhere?"

he didn't answer instead he kissed my lips. We kissed for a while and then stopped. He unzipped my dress.

Me: "What are you doing?"

Joshua: "Taking your clothes off."

Me: "But why?"

Joshua: "Because I am about to make love to you."

Me: "Emotweni? What if someone sees us?"

Chapter 96.

Joshua: "Akubonakali ngaphandle."

Me: "Ay ngeke kulunge."

Joshua: "Where is your sense of adventure?"

Me: "I left those in Durban after you told me to pack my lady manners"

Joshua: "You really know how to burst my bubbles"

Me: "Sorry ey."

Joshua: "Its cool. Manje sigoduka nini?"

Me: "Ukuyaphi?"

Joshua: "Back in Durban? Angithi nje uma ngilapha ngiyalanjiswa."

Me: "We are in the car."

Joshua: "So what? Stolen sex is even greater then make up sex. Let me show you"

Me: "You are not fucking me in your car."

Joshua: "Unenkani yezwa"

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "Wake wacabanga kodwa ukth uliwele?"

Me: "Lutho. I've always been just Thandeka"

Joshua: "ULindiwe umazelaphi?"

Me: "Wayewumngani omkhulu kaNeliswa and uNeliswa ezwana noBongeka. Bongeka was my best friend so everytime we went out uBongeka tagged Neliswa along naye afike naloLindiwe. I guess kwakusho ukuthi we are sisters ngoba mina naye we have a lot incommon. Sasithi uma sihamba ndawonye mina naye sichazwe yinto eyodwa ngisho iwumsangano."

Joshua: "Even the way you both deal with things. Ni-actor kuqala nigcine ngokucabanga"

Me: "Mxm"

Joshua: "Manje vele uyanqaba?" he smiled.

Me: "Yes. Linda sigoduke"

Joshua: "Abazali bakho bazokuvalela nje."

Me: "Meaning?"

Joshua: "Mina noNjabulo sizolaliswa sodwa wena uzolaliswa endlini enkulu uzobona"

Me: "Aw kahle boh"

Joshua: "Ngempela. Phela Thandeka kubaba wakho uwusana. You maybe 29 in reality but kuye uyingane futh ingane esizoyibanga ngoba nami ungowami."

Me: "Phela wena you know what to do"

Joshua: "Ngeke bavume uma ngingathi ksasa ngizolobola. Yababona nawe banenkani."

Me: "You still want to marry me?"

Joshua: "You have no idea just how much" something changed in his eyes. Ngambona ukuth uyadinwa.

Me: "What?"

Joshua: "Your cousin. Nangu eza"

I turned around and saw Duma with two guys approaching the car.

Me: "Keep calm."

Joshua: "Asiphume" he zipped up my dress saphuma.

Duma: "Umhlaba mncane Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "Impela. Buka nje wena uthatha i-space esingakanani."

Duma: "Wuyeke lona majita." he told his friends.

Me: "Owenzeni?"

Duma: "Angikhulumi nawe Thandeka. Khona ekhaya bayazi ukuth uhleli ezinkalweni naloskhotheni?"

Joshua: "And it takes one to see one. Ungakhulumi noThandeka kanjalo"

Duma: "Uzokwenzani?"

Joshua: "Ungakhohlwa ukuth umuntu uyakhahleka ngisho ekubo."

Guy1: "Ubuqinisele bafo. Lo cheeseboy uluhlaza. Uzohamba eseke wathola"

Joshua: "Akunankinga. Just say where and when and I'll be there."

Duma: "What about now?"

Joshua: "You and what army?" he raised an eyebrow.

I was enjoying this so much and I wasn't even scared, maybe its because Joshua was so calm efake izandla emaphaketheni encike emotweni.

Guy2: "Uyazethemba bo"

Joshua: "Ukuth vele bafo angizwani nokudlala. Uma umuntu efuna impi ngiyamnika kodwa angifuni ayithathele phezulu bese ethi akalitholanga ithuba lokulungisa kahle"

Duma: "Mina ngi-ready right now" he moved his jacket kwavela isbhamu.

Joshua just laughed wakhapha nezandla emaphaketheni.

Joshua: "Sorry about that, asambe Thandeka" he opened the door wama eceleni ngangena wavala.

Joshua: "Ungakhohlwa weDuma ukuth umuntu uyabulaleka ekubo futhi ephethe isbhamu." washo qede wajikela on the other side wangena emotweni.

UDuma wayesamile nabangani bakhe.

Joshua: "Sibuyele emumva?"

Me: "In Durban?"

Joshua: "Cha. KwaMyeza"

Me: "Why usongela uDuma engakubo? Aint you afraid he will hurt you?"

Joshua: "No he won't."

Me: "Please stop provoking him."

Joshua: "Uyena ongiqalile nje"

Me: "You should have walked away"

Joshua: "And make him think he can insult me just like that qede ngimyeke. Angidlali nezingane mina."

Me: "Maybe I should tell them the truth. What Jason did."

Joshua: "Then they will put two and two together bathole u-4. UDuma is ready to strike at anytime and if this comes out then he will talk. I will deal with him."

Me: "How?"

Joshua: "The less you know the better." he started the car and drove back home.

Safika ekhaya mina ngaya koLindiwe, uJoshua wayakoNjabulo.

Bongeka: "Niphumaph?"

Me: "Estolo."

Sindi kept looking at me abuye abuke ifoni yakhe.

Xolile: "Uyakwazi ukuthwala kodwa?"

Me: "Ukthwala ini?"

Phindile: "25L wamanzi?"

Me: "Aw ubala lolo."

Bongeka: "Wake wathwala keph?"

Me: "Ekhaya aw" we laughed.

Sindi: "Why did you and your boyfriend make that sex video?"

Kwavele kwamuncu endlini.

Lindiwe: "She didn't."

Sindi: "Uwena nje lona" she showed us her phone.

Me: "Its a long story"

Sindi: "Wafa-ke, ubaba uzolwa nawe."

Me: "What for?"

Sindi: "Ukipitile nendoda engakhokhile."

Me: "How exactly was I suppose to get married uma abazali ngingenabo?"

Sindi: "Wawuzoba nani uma uhlalile wangajola and sorted out your mess instead of making porn videos with your gangster boyfriend."

Lindiwe: "Who told you that he is a gangster?"

Sindi: "Uyabonakala. That man is a criminal. Muhle impela kodwa uyisigebengu."

Me: "Pho kunani uma eyisigebengu? Uyisigebengu sami hhayi esakho. Mina ngiyamthanda uJoshua."

Sindi: "Oksalayo ngeke bavume ushade naye layikhaya"

Me: "says who?"

Chapter 97.

Sindi: "Says me. UDuma told me everything and ngizokwenza sure ukuthi obaba bayanqaba ushade naye."

without thinking I slapped her so hard. She slapped me back and then I punched her. She fought back sagcina sesiphansi, rolling on the floor. Xoli was busy screaming while Phindile and Bongeka pulled us apart. Lindiwe walked in elandelwa umama.

Mum: "Nilwelani?"

Me: "Uyangisukela nje."

Sindi: "Uwena oqalile."

Mum: "Ay bantabami impi ayilungisi lutho. Buka nje Thandeka iso lakho livuvukele manje. Nawe uyopha umlomo. Musani ukuziphoxa aw"

Sindi got up and left. Lindiwe and Bongeka went to get the supper ready. It was already dark outside. I asked Xoli to show me the bathroom ngayogeza. It was outside, so ngamcela angilinde and she did. By the time I got back I had 8 missed calls from Joshua.

Lindiwe: "Joshua is pissed. Uzwire about your fight."

Me: "Who told him?"

Lindiwe: "Phindile did. Ubebuza ukuth ukuphi and she told him everything."

Me: "And what did he say?"

Lindiwe: "Something about your manners."

Me: "But uyena oqalile nje"

Lindiwe: "Joshua is being Joshua. Eat your food"

I ate ngaqeda sawasha izintsha and then told that we were sleeping inside. The guys slept in the outside buildings. I sent Joshua a text ngathi ngizombona kusasa and goodnight. He replied with goodnight.

We stayed up until late sixoxa nje. For the first time I felt like It where I belong. Beside Duma and Sindi everybody was okay. Angazi nanokuthi ngalala nini ngathuka sekusile futh sengilele ngedwa. I woke up ngagqoka i-gown and went to the kitchen. The ladies were busy making breakfast.

Me: "Hau anisangivusi?"

Bongeka: "Ubusaphumule nje."

Me: "Kodwa buka nje manje. Yimi kuphela ongakagezi."

Lindiwe: "Go shower."

I got up but before ngiphume Xoli walked in and said Joshua is asking to see me.

Me: "Manje?"

Xoli: "Yes. Ngimtshela ukuth usalele wathi angikuvuse."

Me: "Okay, Thank you"

I went to see what he wanted. Ngamfika ehleli embhedeni polishing his gun. He didn't even jump when I walked in since I didn't even knock.

Me: "Dude, what are you doing with that thing?"

Joshua: "Lock the door behind you" he stood up.

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Because theres a gun and I don't want anybody walking in asibone."

Me: "Oh, okay" I locked the door and turned around to Joshua's hungry lips. He kissed me roughly until I pulled away.

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Nothing. I just miss you" he kissed me again and then began taking my clothes off.

Me: "But I....."

Joshua: "Don't talk" he gentle picked me up and laid me in bed. He began sucking my nipple while his other hand was rubbing gentle in a space between my legs.

I was moaning quietly, hungry with desire. He went further down until he kissed it. Letting his tongue poke in slowly. He kept teasing like that until I was ready to beg for it. He stopped and then took his pants off before he went back in. His finger touched my g-spot and then he took it out. Came up to my face and then kissed my lips while his hand kept brushing my hair. He positioned himself between my legs and then pushed himself in. I gasped out loud and tried to move but his hand held my hair and the sheet together making it hard for me to move without hurting myself. He pushed himself in until he couldn't go any further and then began thrusting.

Me: "You too deep"

Joshua: "I know. Are you a slut Thandeka?"

Me: "No" I was breathing hard and my climax was coming.

Joshua: "Manje manyala mani lawa obuwenza izolo?" he stopped moving.

Me: "I'm sorry." I wrapped my legs tight around his waist.

Joshua: "Ngathini kuwe ngokulwa" he pulled the hair tighter.

Me: "She started it"

Joshua: "She punched you first?"

Me: "No, but uyena obethuka wena."

Joshua: "So what? Did you lose an eye?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "A leg maybe?"

Me: "Cha, but...."

Joshua: "Theres no but. I told you to always walk away"

Me: "But wena you don't walk away"

Joshua: "Did I punch Duma yesterday?"

Me: "Cha"

Joshua: "Thats because I don't fight useless people. I only fight when someone attacks me first." he began thrusting again.

Me: "I'm sorry" he went faster and harder. I could feel that I was coming again. I held him tight as he kept going.

Me: "I'm coming baby" I whispered.

Ngathuswa i-knock. I expected Joshua to pull out but he didn't instead he covered my mouth with his and went on. It felt like something was exploding inside me. My legs were shaking, then he slammed so hard against me and reached his own point of no return. He fell heavily on the space between my neck and shoulder. Angazi nanokuth lo owaye knocker wayeka nini. We stayed in that position until our breath went back to normal.

Me: "What was that for?"

Joshua: "Manners Thandeka. I don't care ukuthi ukuthuke wathini. Ukulwa kwehlisa isthunzi. You are a lady not a common street fighter."

Me: "Okay."

Joshua: "Hopefully uyagcina ukwenza lento oyenzile. Its okay to fight back when someone hits you. But starting a fight doesn't suit you."

Me: "I won't do it again."

Joshua: "Good." he kissed my lips.

Chapter 98.

After that I went to shower. I was feeling so guilty engathi wonke umuntu uyabona ukuth ngenzeni. Ngageza ngaqeda ngabuyela endlini ngafica uSindi ehleli embhedeni.

Sindi: "Hai"

Me: "Hai"

Sindi: "I'm sorry about last night."

Me: "Its okay"

Sindi: "I guess I should have asked not just take Duma's words."

Me: "I guess so."

Sindi: "You love him?"

Me: "More than you realise."

Sindi: "Okay ngiyezwa."

Me: "Just say it. You think he is not right for me."

Sindi: "No. Its just that Duma told me that he is crazy. He can hurt you, if he is not already doing it"

Me: "That's strange, because in my eyes Duma is the crazy one. Did he tell you that he was trying to kill me at some point?"

Sindi: "No. Why?"

Me: "Because Jason killed himself. This sex video yavezwa wuye uDuma. Joshua is not an angel but I love him. Kuyaxaka ukuth uDuma afike angizingele bese namhlanje kuzoba wuye who is trying to act like my knight."

Sindi: "So wena noJoshua decided to make the video for your own private fun?"

Me: "No. Sbu bugged my house ethunywe uJason. Then Jason died uDuma wakhipha i-video trying to hurt me because wayethi ngithenge izigebengu to kill his cousin"

Sindi: "Hau."

Me: "Yes. If it wasn't for Joshua I would be dead."

Sindi: "Tjo wangithusa."

Me: "Next time make sure you get both sides of the story."

Sindi: "Yah ey. But I'm glad we talked and I'm sorry. I thought I was looking out for my sister."

Me: "And I'm grateful. Sorry about your lip."

Sindi: "You throw a mean punch."

Me: "Raising yourself makes everything about you mean."

Sindi: "But you did a great job."

Me: "Yes. And now that I have found my parents, I'm on cloud nine."

Sindi: "And nomama bajabule. You haven't meet my mum though. Uzokhuphuka emini."

Me: "I'm looking forward to it. But ngilunywa isisu"

Sindi: "Maybe you hungry. Gqoka sizoya ekhishini"

I got dressed quickly sahamba sayekhishini.

Bongeka was cooking. It didn't surprise me. She loved cooking ukuth nje her job was demanding but everytime uma ethola ithuba she cooked like a pro. I ate my breakfast but isisu saba worse then before.

Me: "I think I'm dying."

Xoli: "Yini?"

Me: "Isisu siyaluma."

Xoli: "Ithi ngiyokufunela amaphilisi kumama" she left.

Bongeka: "Khona yini okudlile beside lokhu?"

Me: "Ngigcine izolo ebusuku ukudla."

Bongeka: "Maybe udla usulambe kakhulu"

Xoli came back with the pills ngaphuza and then went to lay down a bit. I lay there and played with my phone while waiting for the pills to kick in.

I was falling asleep when I heard someone walk in. Ngavusa ikhanda and saw my mother walk in.

Mum: "Sesinjani isisu?"

Me: "Sisaluma"

Mum: "Khululeka uzophumula maduze nje. Kuzomele uphumule Thandeka"

Me: "Angikhathele nje mama"

Mum: "Ukhathele. Yizwa ngami. Kunini wawugijima. Usufike ekugcineni."

Me: "Uqonde ukuthini mama?"

Mum: "Uzokona izinhlelo zami. Uveleleni? Bekukuhle ungekho" she opened the drawer wakhipha umjovo omkhulu.

Me: "Wenzani?" I tried to move but kwanganyakazeka. Ikhanda nomqala kuphela okwakunyakaza.

Me: "Help" I screamed but izwi laphuma lahoshozela.

Mum: "Akekho ozokuzwa"

Me: "Joshua!!!!" I screamed again.

Mum: "Sengimbulele naye. Iphutha lakhe lonke leli. Ukuba akuvelanga yena ngabe kade wafa." she laughed.

Me: "Kanti ngakwenzani mama?"

Mum: "Lutho mntanami. Sizothola ifa."

Me: "Ufuna imali? Its fine ngizokunika imali."

Mum: "Ngifuna le kaMemela yonke kanye nale yakho obuyisebenza. Uma usufike ngizoyithola."

Me: "Angeke. Ummeli wami ngeke akunike."

Mum: "Uzonginika. Lesisigebengu sakho silisayinile iphepha elingivumela ukuth ngithole ifa."

Me: "Ayikho leyonto."

Mum: "Nali" She took out an envelope under the pillow wayivula and held it close to my face. It was my Will and it said I was giving her everything.

Me: "Please don't kill me." I cried.

Mum: "Ngikuyekele ini? UJoshua ufile"

Me: "Unamanga"

Mum: "Duma" she called out.

Duma: "Yebo malumekazi"

Mum: "Mvuse abone uJoshua wakhe."

Me: "Don't touch me"

Duma: "Uzokwenzani?" he held my shoulders and put me in a sitting position.

Mum: "Nazoke. Hamba-ke mtanami uyolanda abanye ababone."

He walked out.

Me: "Wangizalelani kanti awungifuni?"

Mum: "Ngangifuna imali kaMemela. Sengibonga ukufika kwakho ngoba cishe yangiphutha."

Duma and Sindi walked in bebambisene uBongeka. Her eyes were open but enganyakazi. She had a bullet hole on her forehead.

Duma: "Igugu lakho yalibona" he threw her on the floor. Baphuma babuya noLindiwe. She was covered in blood. I cried harder and she just laughed. Again Duma threw her on the floor waphuma.

Mum: "Sekuza i-final manje."

Duma walked in with Joshua's head.

Mum: "Yeka ubuhle bensizwa"

Duma: "Yalibona isoka lakho oqhoshe ngalo."

Joshua's head was still bleeding, his eyes were opened and wearing thier calm glance. His mouth smiling like he was going to blink and say "I got you"

Mum: "Uze wafa ekhala ngawe."

Duma: "Uzomlandela maduze. Sonigqiba ndawonye." he laughed.

Mum: "Kukhona ofuna ukukusho?"

Me: "Please don't"

Duma: "Awuth ngimnike i-round eyodwa before afe" he unzipped his pants.

Chapter 99.

He came towards me and grabbed my arms. I began fighting him. He was stronger than me. He pushed me down putting his weight on me.

Duma: "Thandeka" he shouted my name so loud ngaze ngathuka and opened my eyes. My mother was holding my hands.

Me: "Don't touch me" I jumped up ngama ngezinyawo.

Joshua walked in ngavele ngaziphosa kuye and held him tight. I was shaking and covered in sweat.

Joshua: "Its okay"

the moment he said that I began crying.

Joshua: "Its okay. You safe now. Bongeka ngicela ungifakela amanzi abandayo e-glass(ini) nama-ice."

Bongeka: "Okay" she left.

Joshua: "Look at me." he tried to raise my face to him but I didn't want to let go or even open my eyes. I burried my face to him.

Joshua: "Okay, asambe siyengale endlini" he picked me up with ease and carried me out sayakwenye indlu. Bongeka brought the glass of water.

Joshua: "Thank you." he took the glass.

I sat on the bed ngabuka izandla zami ziqhaqhazela.

Joshua: "Drink this" he gave me the glass.

Me: "I don't want to sleep. I want to go home."

Joshua: "And we are leaving. Just drink this. You won't sleep." he handed me the glass. I took a sip and gave it back to him.

Joshua: "Its okay. You had a bad dream."

Me: "She was trying to kill me."

Joshua: "Who?"

Me: "My mother. She was going to inject something in my body." I wiped the tears with the back of my hands.

Joshua: "What else did you dream about?"

Me: "You were dead. The cut your head off. Bongeka and Lindiwe were dead aswell."

Joshua: "Come here" he opened his arms and hugged me.

Joshua: "It was just a dream my love. Nobody will hurt you."

I was feeling sleepy.

Me: "I don't want to sleep."

Joshua: "I'll be here when you wake up." he laid down ngalala next to him ngabeka ikhanda eshubeni.

Me: "It was so real."

Joshua: "But it wasn't. Whats your favourite song?"

Me: "My Love by Westlife."

Joshua: "So I say a little prayer, hope my dreams will take me there where the....." he sang.

I listened to the sound of his heartbeat, It was steady. I pulled him closer to me.

Joshua: "Sadly ngazi leyo-part kuphela. Try to rest. I love you"

Me: "I love you too"

I woke up when I heard voices talking. It was my mother and Joshua. I pretended to be asleep ngalalela ukuth bakhuluma ngani.

Mum: "Kodwa lezi zinto zodokotela senake nazihamba?"

Joshua: "Akafuni. Nami nje bengizocela ningincengele yena aye. Uyakudinga."

Mum: "Kungenxa yami. Ukuba angiphathwanga ubungane ngavuma uMemela amthathe ngabe akukho nje"

Joshua: "Wawungazi mama. Thina kumele sibonge ukuth usaphila. Usulitholile ithuba lokuba umzali futhi."

Mum: "Emva kwalento engiyibone namhlanje mtanami. Angicabang ukuth uzongivumela eduze

kwakhe."

Joshua: "Ubephupha kabi mama. Ujwayele ukuphupha kabi. Ngicabanga ukuth kwenziwa yizo zonke izinkinga aseke wabhekana nazo."

Mum: "Manje ngingasiza ngani? Angithandi ukubona umtanami ekhala kanje. Indlela angibuke ngayo ngenkathi ngimvusa nami ingethusile. Angeke ngethuke nje uma engangaphinde abuye"

Joshua: "Uzobuya mama. Akudingayo nje ukwesekwa, athole uthando lomzali"

Mum: "Kanti lomfazi wamenzani umtanami?"

Joshua: "Akukho akwenza. UThandeka wazikhulisa. Okubuhlungu ukuthi bamhlupha. Mhlampe ukuba bamtshela ukuth akuyena owakhona kudala ngabe akukho nje."

Mum: "Bamtshela nini?"

Joshua: "Sizwe ngoba uMemela eseshonile futh nakhona sezwa ngoba sesithukwa ngakho."

Mum: "Aw." I could hear in her voice that she was crying.

Joshua: "Kodwa yena u-strong. Uzoba right."

Mum: "Manje nibuyela nini emumva?"

Joshua: "Kusasa."

Mum: "Nizobuya nini? Nibuye phela bantabami."

Joshua: "Sizobuya. Nami ngifuna kulunge."

Mum: "Ngiyabonga ndodana. Sengibonga ukukhombisa kwakho uthando. Umphathe kahle umtanami."

Joshua: "Ngizokwenzenjalo"

I moved a bit ngenza engathi kade ngilele.

Joshua: "Wake up sleepy head"

I sat up and looked at my mother. She wiped her tears quickly.

Mum: "Usunjani kodwa mtanami?"

Me: "Sengi-right."

Mum: "Awulambile?"

Me: "Cha."

Mum: "Ngiyokwenzela itiye?"

Me: "No. Angifune tiye"

Joshua cleared his throat loud.

Mum: "Anginishiye." she got up and walked out.

Joshua: "It was a dream. A really scary dream"

Me: "I want to go home."

Joshua: "Just talk to her. I know its to much but ngiyakuncenga sthandwa sami."

Me: "Ngithini? I have nothing to say to her."

Joshua: "She is your mother."

Me: "Owaphisana ngami."

Joshua: "She made a mistake Thandeka. We all make mistakes"

Me: "Except hers ruined my life."

Joshua: "And she wants to make up for it."

Me: "Its too late."

Joshua: "Don't be like that."

Me: "I just want to go home."

Joshua: "And we will, tomorrow. Tonight you will talk to your parents."

Me: "You can't force me to."

Joshua: "I won't. But just for a record, your mother doesn't have enough time. She has a heart problem and anytime her heart can stop. You don't want to regret this opportunity."

Me: "She told you about that heart problem?"

Joshua: "No. Your brother Mthunzi did. Umama wakho wathi banganitsheli ninoLindiwe ngoba she doesn't think you girls can deal with it, especially you."

Chapter 100.

Me: "Nawe wamkholwa? He could be lying aswel."

Joshua: "I can't believe you just said that. You being selfish."

Me: "I just want to go home."

Joshua: "Her heart could stop at anytime. If you leave now, you will hurt her and who knows what could happen. She may die."

Me: "We all going to die nje. Kobe sekufike iskhathi."

Joshua: "Get out" he got up and went to open the door.

Me: "You know I'm right."

Joshua: "I said get out" he came towards me ngavele ngasukuma ngaphuma before he could man handle me wasala wavala iscabha.

I went to the kitchen ngafica behleli nje.

Lindiwe: "You okay?"

Me: "Yeah. I'm sorry about earlier. I was having a scary dream."

Sindi: "You need counselling."

Me: "I'll be fine."

Xoli: "I gave you the wrong pill. I'm sorry"

Me: "What do you mean?"

Xoli: "Umama uthe ngikunike iphilisi elimhlophe in a pink container and I gave you a pink pill in a white container. I'm sorry"

Me: "Its fine." I smiled but deep down I was annoyed.

Phindile: "Umama usefikile. Unomamkhulu endlini ngenhla."

Me: "Le ewu-round?"

Phindile: "Yes but lo omncane."

Me: "Okay, let me go say hai" I got up and left.

Ngafica behleli phansi emacansini.

Me: "Knock knock"

Mum: "Ngena mtanami."

I walked in and sat down next to her. There were two women with her.

Me: "Sanibona?"

Them: "Yebo ndodakazi unjani kodwa?"

Me: "Ngiyaphila."

Mum: "Laba-ke omama engijwayelene nabo. Lo, umaNgcobo umama wakho omncane. Lona uMaMsomi ugane kwaDlamini."

Me: "Yebo" I crawled to them baxhawula ngabuya ngahlala phansi.

Mum: "Uyena-ke umtanami omdala lona."

MaMsomi: "Hau yazi ngithi ngizobuza ukuthi lentombi niyithathephi. Kanti wuwe mtanami. Ngaze ngajabula ukukubona"

MaNgcobo: "Ushilo uPhindile ukuthi nifikile. Niyaphila kodwa ndodakazi?"

Me: "Siyaphila mama"

MaMsomi: "Ufike nalezinsizwa ezimbili ezihamba noMthunzi?"

Mum: "Ufike nabo. Nalentombi yakwaBhengu eyake yafika."

MaNgcobo: "Umngane kaLindiwe?"

Mum: "Yena impela. Bangabangani bobathathu."

MaMsomi: "Hau, inhlanhla yona leyo ukth kanti uzwana nodadewenu. Senazane iskhathi esingakanani?"

Me: "Iminyaka, yedlule ku-3 or 4"

MaNgcobo: "Sesibonga uMdali mtanami"

MaMsomi: "Manje umkhwenyana uyena muph?"

I think I blushed because ngezwa ngishiselwa nje ebusweni.

Mum: "Ilona wezinwele."

MaNgcobo: "Yeka ubuhle ensizweni. Nawe umuhle mtanami. Kusho ukuthi nizokhipha abahle bodwa abazukulu"

Mum: "Impela kovala abahle. Uyamthanda bo umkhwenyana. Umbona ngisho emehlweni ukuthi akafune muntu othinta uThandeka."

MaMsomi: "Futh kumele kubenjalo ngempela. Kuhle ukuthandwa mtanami. Nawe umthande futhi umhloniphe."

Ngahlala iskhathi nomama. Bengixoxela amahlaya okukhula kwabo. I really enjoyed it, infact I felt like I was where I belonged. Emva kweskhathi I left them and went to make peace with Joshua.

Ngamfika ehleli ebusy in his laptop. He closed it wayibeka emva kwakhe. I knew Joshua too well to know that he was angry but I wasn't sure if wayesadinelwe indaba ye-earlier.

Joshua: "Uke wadla nje today?"

Me: "Yeah ekseni"

Joshua: "Aybo kuyahlwa manje, awukaze udle again?"

Me: "I'm not hungry. Whats wrong?"

He took my hand wabeka inhlamvu in my hand.

Me: "Its a bullet"

Joshua: "I'm going to kill your cousin." he took the gun under the pillow.

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "This" he took his laptop wayivula kwavela isthombe sami.

Me: "For me?"

Joshua: "Read the messege below. Read it out loud."

Me: "THE BEST WAY TO KILL A MAN IS TO KILL HIS HEART & THANDEKA IS YOUR HEART :)" ngake ngathula after reading this messege ngaphinde ngayifunda futhi.

Me: "We shall see about that."

I took gun and walked out. I knew Joshua was half naked futh wayengeke aphume eqimbile emzini kababa.

I went to Mthunzi's room ngafica uNjabulo noMthunzi naye uDuma and my old and scary brother Nathi.

Me: "What if I shoot you right now and kill you first." I pointed a gun at him bathuka bonke endlini.

Duma: "Aybo what are you doing?"

Me: "You say if you kill me you kill Joshua's heart. Well lets see who am I killing if I pop you right now."

Joshua walked in and took his gun.

Dumi: "Sending your woman? Really Joshua? Uyinja yegwala."

Nathi got up a punched him.

Nathi: "Ngathini kuwe ngobugebengu? Sihleli nawe wena u-busy ufuna ukubulala umzala wakho? If you touch my sister I will bury you alive." he punched him again. Mthunzi stood there and smiled. UNjabulo

noJoshua bebukana.

My father walked in uJoshua wafihla isbhamu.

Dad: "Nama ngezinyawo kwakhona owophayo kwenzekeni?"

Nobody answered.

Dad: "Duma ushaywe ubani?"

Duma: "Angishaywanga muntu liyaziphumela."

Mthunzi laughed quietly.

Dad: "Hamba uyoligeza phela" he looked at me nami ngabheka phansi.

Nathi: "Akwenzekanga lutho baba siyazixoxela nje."

Dad: "Kuhle ke." he walked out. Nathi and Joshua looked at each other before. It wasn't a normal look, there was more to it and I was going to find out.

Joshua: "Lets go. You have some explaining to do."

Nathi: "Awulali endleleni"

Me: "I'm sorry. I was just angry."

Mthunzi: "Remind me to never piss you off"

Chapter 101.

My mother allowed me to sleep in Joshua's room that night. So after eating we did the dishes saqeda ngavalelisa ngayolala. Ngafica uJoshua ehleli noNathi. He got up and got ready to leave as soon as I got in.

Nathi: "Ungakhohlwa mfethu. Goodnight sisi" he walked out. Joshua got up and locked the door.

Me: "What were you guys talking about?"

Joshua: "Its not important."

Me: "But something is happening between you and him."

Joshua: "Like and affair?"

Me: "Mxm"

Joshua: "Sondela lana" he sat down and opened his legs.

I stood between them.

Joshua: "Sit on my lap"

Me: "I'm heavy."

Joshua: "Yeah right. Just sit."

I sat down. He took my top off and my bra followed. He played with a nipple until they were both erect and then took one to his mouth. I was about to receive my punishment. I have to say it was way better than getting a beating.

I was wet and ready in fact I was about to ask for it when stopped.

Joshua: "You sleeping on the floor tonight." he handed me a pillow.

Me: "The bed will be more comfortable."

Joshua: "It wouldn't be a punishment if its comfortable."

Me: "Why am I being punished?"

Joshua: "For that little stunt."

Me: "I said I'm sorry."

Joshua: "Uzolala ecansini today nami ngizothi I'm sorry tomorrow"

Me: "Hau Joshua. Pho why did you make me wet for nothing?"

Joshua: "You can please yourself if you want to reach climax"

Me: "Why would I do that when I have you?"

Joshua: "You can use your imagination. Just think of every pleasure I've given you and play with yourself"

Me: "Mxm" ngathatha icansi ngalindlala ngabeka umqamelo nengubo and then took my pants off ngangena engubeni ngingagqokile.

Joshua: "Good night"

Me: "Night"

Ngalinda nje kahle wakhumula wangena embhedeni wacisha and then began making quiet moaning sound.

Joshua: "What are you doing?"

Me: "Having sex by myself. Its great. I just imagine someone sexy"

Joshua: "Who?"

Me: "I don't kiss and tell. Lala Joshua in your comfortable bed and let me please myself."

Joshua: "Please keep it down then"

Me: "Whatever. Yazi uyaphazamisa mfethu."

He went quiet. I began again and this time it got louder and louder.

Me: "Right there, oh its so good. Oh, I think I'm coming. Harder please. Oh Sam Aaaah"

Joshua turned on the light wathola ukuth ngilele ngecele.

Joshua: "Who is Sam?"

I laughed so hard kwaphuma nezinyembezi.

Me: "You didn't expect me to imagine you. Did you?"

Joshua: "Awungene embhedeni Thandeka."

Me: "Its fine. Sex is great on the floor. Goodnight Joshua."

Joshua: "Don't make me come get you."

Me: "I'm not done nje. I still want to do the second round."

Joshua: "I'm not playing. Awuzolala Thandeka"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "Uma ngike ngasondela uzozisola." he woke up wasusa ingubo.

Me: "Okay. No need to get rough." I woke up ngathatha i-nightdress yami ngayigqoka.

Joshua: "Take it off. I'm about to finish what Sam started."

Me: "No thank you. Sengi-right" ngasho ngangena embhedeni.

Joshua: "I'll be the judge." He got in the bed aswel wacisha ugesi. I turned the other way wasondela and kissed the back of my neck. I could feel him pressed against my back.

Joshua: "Ubani uSam?"

Me: "Angimazi. It was just a random name."

Joshua: "Don't do that again. Cishe ngakulimaza yazi."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Because I thought Sam is a real guy."

Me: "You should know by now that you the only guy for me."

Joshua: "Did I tell you that I love you?"

Me: "In the last two hours."

Joshua: "I love you." he kissed my forehead.

Me: "I love y...." he covered my mouth with his hand.

Joshua: "Theres someone outside. Ngena ngale kombhede and be quiet. I'll go check it out." he removed his hand wavuka.

Me: "Please don't go." I whispered.

Joshua: "I'll be fine. Just hide."

There was a soft knock.

Njabulo: "Joshua awuvule ndoda"

Joshua switched on the light wagqoka and then went to open kwangena uLindiwe wearing Njabulo's t-shirt and shorts.

Njabulo: "Lenja ewuDuma yazi." he closed the door and locked it.

Joshua: "Wuye lo ohamba phandle?"

Njabulo: "Yah. Shuthi ubezolwa noNathi ngoba mina ngizwe uNathi ekhuluma just after ngizwe yena ekhuluma."

Joshua: "Baphi pho manje?"

Njabulo: "Somewhere out there. Ngizoshiya uLindi noGloria and go after them before the kill each other."

Joshua: "Yeses, when grown men act like a bunch kids. Nx." he took his gun.

Njabulo: "Remember what I said" he kissed her forehead and then followed Joshua.

Lindiwe locked the door and switched off the light. We both sat on the floor.

Me: "How long?"

Lindiwe: "I was afraid to tell you. It began when you were in a coma."

Me: "All this time?"

Lindiwe: "I'm sorry."

Me: "Bongeka knows about this?"

Lindiwe: "Yes."

Me: "My sister is dating my boyfriend's best friend. I take you know that Njabulo is a gangster."

Lindiwe: "He told me. He even told me about Zimbili."

Me: "That's good."

Lindiwe: "But I hate moments like this."

Me: "I hate them too." only then the reality kicked in. Joshua was out there with guns and God knows what Duma was up too. I didn't like this one bit. What if it was a trap?.

Chapter 102.

Joshua woke me up the next day. Kwakungavumi nokuth ngiphakamise ikhanda ngenxa yokukhathala.

Joshua: "Drink these. Uzoba right" he gave me two pills and a glass of water.

Me: "What happened last night?"

Joshua: "I'm sorry. I didn't mean to hurt you like that." his hand touched the bruises on my wrist.

Me: "Kwenzekeni kanti koDuma?"

Joshua: "It's cold outside. Kuzomele ugqoke"

Me: "So you going to ignore my question?"

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "You know why."

Me: "No, I don't. What I know is that when you left you were fine and when you came back you turned into a sex freak. Almost broke my neck"

Joshua: "And I'm sorry"

Me: "Mxm" I got up ngagqoka.

Joshua: "Wear something warm. Kuyabanda phandle"

Me: "You should be jumping for joy. Nobody will see your marks."

Joshua: "We are leaving tonight."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "So we can come back again."

Me: "That's just silly. Why singahambi kusasa?"

Joshua: "I want to leave tonight."

Me: "Then leave me behind."

Joshua: "No. We are leaving Thandeka and that's final."

I stopped talking because it was clear that something heavy happened last night and Joshua didn't want me to know about it. Ngagqoka ngaqeda ngaphuma ngayekhishini.

Lindiwe was sitting in a chair looking like a dyng zombie.

Bongeka: "You look better than her. Ungasahlali Gloria. Hambani niyogeza"

Lindiwe: "Ngilambile mina."

Bongeka: "Nizobuya seku-right. Hambani kungaze kuvuke umama bese eyanibona ukth kade nithola."

Me: "Asambe Lindi"

She got up sahamba sayothatha izinto zokugeza sayogeza.

Lindiwe: "Did Joshua tell you what happened last night?"

Me: "No."

Lindiwe: "Njabulo refused to tell me aswel. The only thing he was interested in was sex. I've never been fucked like that before. I didn't even know there was something called squirting."

Me: "And it happened last night?"

Lindiwe: "At first bengithukile then he explained it."

Me: "Awusabi?"

Lindiwe: "Ini?"

Me: "That something huge happened last night and it's stressing them out."

Lindiwe: "They can sort it out. I trust them to do so"

Me: "And in the mean time we become stress management bags?"

Lindiwe: "Did Joshua hurt you?"

Me: "You are covered in love bites, I'm covered in bruises from Joshua's hands. G-spot orgasm doesn't metter when I'm being pushed down in the bed and told not to make a sound."

Lindiwe: "Yoh thats heavy"

Me: "Joshua is rough when he is stressed and I hate it because ngisala nginje."

Lindiwe: "Nase thangeni ubanjwe wuye?"

Me: "Yep. Nasemhlane fth. What if my father sees this?"

Lindiwe: "Its cold today. Wear a long sleeve. How does that feel?"

Me: "What?"

Lindiwe: "Saying my father?"

Me: "Like I'm in a dream. I never thought I will get that chance."

Lindiwe: "And I can see how happy they are. I'm happy too"

Me: "Not more then me. For the first time in my life, I have a family."

Lindiwe: "Two families, because Joshua is your family aswel."

Me: "Yep. I'm grateful."

Sageza saqeda sayogqoka. The other ladies were done with breakfast safika sadla saqeda sawasha izintsha.

We decided to go to town. I wanted to buy my parents some groceries before sihambe.

Sindi was at work so sahamba sobawu-5 in Joshua's car and Bongeka was driving.

Xolile: "I think we being followed."

Me: "You mean that black car behind us?"

Xolile: "Yes. Ilokh isilandele sisasuka estolo and ayidluli"

Me: "Thats Njabulo's car. Abadluli ngoba they are actually following us around."

Xolile: "Ow. Besengethukile yazi. By the way Joshua asked me to give you this." she opened her wallet wakhapha ikhadi laJoshua.

Me: "Wow thank you."

Phindile: "Ukunika ikhadi uma uyothenga?"

Me: "Only when he feels guilty about something."

Lindiwe: "That must be lots of guilty oe"

Me: "And I am going to spend a lot just to easy his guilty" we all laughed.

Safika saqala e-garage before shopping. Lindiwe and Xolile went to pee, Bongeka was talking on the phone noPhindile naye e-busy neyakhe.

I got out of the car and talked to the guy who works there. It was nothing serious just a normal conversation. We were still talking when I saw a familiar face. He saw me too and smiled.

Bongeka: "Thats Anthony"

Me: "And he is coming here"

Bongeka: "And Joshua just parked behind his car."

I paid the guy wabonga wahamba.

Anthony: "Still beautiful. How are you?" he gave me a hug.

Me: "I'm well thank you. You still look fine aswel."

Anthony: "What are you doing in this side of the province?"

Me: "Visiting family. How about you?"

Anthony: "I moved. I live here now."

Me: "Thats great. Anyway we have to go. It was nice to see you"

He hugged me again and then kissed my forehead. I raised my eyes ngabheka ukth uJoshua uphi. He was talking on his phone ebheke le. Thank God for that.

Anthony: "Bye ladies" he walked away.

Lindiwe: "I hope you have a will and insurance."

Me: "Why?"

Bongeka: "Because Joshua is going to kill you."

Xolile: "Akabonanga aw. Ubebheke le."

Phindile: "Thats because ubembuka emotweni. Ubuke kahle nje uthola u-kiss e-garage."

Me: "It was an innocent greeting between friends."

Chapter 103.

Bongeka: "You don't owe us an explanation. You need to explain all that to Joshua."

Me: "And I will. Angeke phela angeke ngibaleke njalo uma kuqhamuka indoda. UJoshua kuzomele abekezele."

Lindiwe: "Asambeni guys."

We got in the car saqhubeka nohambo lwethu.

Safika ezitolo sathenga. Njabulo and Mthunzi offered to push the two trollies. UJoshua wayethule nje ezifakele izandla emaphaketheni.

Phindile: "Kushoda i-rice."

Me: "Ngizoyolithatha ngale."

Joshua: "I will carry it for you"

We went to get it.

Joshua: "Thatha i-25kg. It will last longer."

Me: "Okay."

He came towards and held my neck.

Me: "What are you doing?" I managed to say.

Joshua: "You think I'm stupid?" he held tighter until my feet were of the ground.

Joshua: "Ungenza islima Thandeka. Uyasineka nje ube ungenza islima." he held tighter again before letting go ngawela phansi and coughed.

Shop/A: "Is she okay"

Joshua: "She is fine." he helped me up. Wathatha i-rice sahamba.

My throat was burning.

Joshua: "Don't you want something to drink?"

Me: "No"

Joshua: "I'll buy you a soft drink" He walked away.

I blinked the tears away and pretended to be busy on my phone. We stood in line until our turn to pay

came. I used Joshua's card to pay. Wafika ne-drink yakhe wakhokha sahamba.

Bongeka: "Anilambile?"

Phindile: "Ngilambile mina."

Lindiwe: "Nami fth and ngihalela i-KFC"

Joshua: "Wena Thandeka?"

Me: "Angilambanga."

Njabula: "Shall we go eat or sikuthenge sibuye?"

Joshua: "Thandeka and I will stay."

Me: "We will?" I looked at him.

Joshua: "You said you are not hungry." he gave me a weak smile.

Phindile: "Sizokuphathela u-piece." They left.

Joshua: "Usajola nendiya lakho?"

Me: "Cha."

Joshua: "Usaqhubeka nokungenza islima?" he grabbed my hair.

Me: "You hurting me."

Joshua: "Uyafeba Thandeka?" he held my arm and twisted it.

Me: "I swear, I'm not cheating."

Joshua: "Pho ukufunani lomfana?"

Me: "He just came to say hai, thats all" he let go of my hand and hair.

Joshua: "And you just had to let him kiss you like that? For old times sake?"

Me: "I'm sorry"

Joshua: "Don't cry yet. Asikaqali." he slapped me so hard it felt like the world was spinning.

I held my cheek and cried harder. He slapped me again and then held my neck.

Joshua: "Uyafeba?"

Me: "I'm sorry."

Joshua: "Uxolisani? Ungenza weak Thandeka. Ungigibela ekhanda." he squeezed tighter and then released. I sank down on the floor and cried.

Joshua: "You need a firm hand." he opened the door wangena emotweni.

I sat there and hugged my knees izinyembezi ziconsela emlenzeni wa-jean.

Joshua pushed me down and injected something in my arm. I didn't even fight him.

Joshua: "Fix yourself up" he handed me a tissue.

I wiped the tears away.

I was sleepy when I felt someone touch my shoulder ngavula amehlo.

Joshua: "Woza uzolala emotweni" He took my hand ngasukuma ngangena and slept at the back.

I don't even know when they came back. Ngaphaphama sekwehlikwa ekhaya.

Joshua: "Wake up"

Me: "Sesisekhaya?" My voice sounded strange.

Mthunzi: "Ungenwa i-flue yini?"

Joshua looked at me. I had no choice but to nod.

Joshua: "Udinga ukuphumula. Asambe" he held my hand sayongena endlini.

Joshua: "Why do you always push me too far?"

Me: "I swear to you. I am not cheating"

Joshua: "Why did he kiss you?"

Me: "It was just an innocent kiss on the forehead."

Joshua: "Phambi kwami? Ngiyini mina kuwe? U-doll wezidwedwe?"

Me: "Cha. I didn't know he was going to do it"

Joshua: "He did it because you easy. You always act like a brainless slut. If I ever see what I saw today. There will be hell to pay" he walked out.

I took my shoes off ngagibela embhedeni and just sobbed.

My phone vibrated. I didn't have the energy to check but I woke up ngayithatha. It was a video text from a number I didn't know. I downloaded the video ngayibuka. It was Joshua kicking someone who was on the floor. He kept kicking and kicking and then someone handed him the gun. The video paused and

then a large message appeared on the screen. It said "I'M COMING FOR YOU. I WILL DO EXACTLY WHAT HE IS DID TO MY FRIEND." I read this message again and again and watched the video again. The hand that handed Joshua the gun had a tattoo. It was familiar as if I had seen it recently. Who was the guy that Joshua beat up and why but mostly who was coming for me?

Joshua walked in with a phone.

Me: "What are you doing?"

he ignored me. Wakhapha ifoni yakhe wafona.

Joshua: "Stop being a coward. If you touch my wife I will find you and kill you" he threw the phone across the room yahlakazeka.

Me: "What's going on?"

Joshua: "Don't worry about it."

Me: "Someone is after me and you telling me to relax?"

Joshua: "He is just trying to scare you. Nobody will touch you"

Me: "Why did you beat up that man?"

Joshua: "That's none of your business."

Me: "What happened to the nice Joshua I met and fell in love with?"

Joshua: "Don't start. You made me like this. Why can't you behave like a lady not a common slut?"

Me: "Please don't blame me for your own criminal mind."

Chapter 104.

It was obvious that Joshua was nowhere near a changed man and he wasn't going to tell me what I wanted to know. Ngavele ngavuka ngagqoka izicathulo ngaya ekhishini. Kwakungekho muntu so I decided to do the dishes and avoid thinking too much. I was still busy when Nathi walked in. He was naturally scary. Tall, large with a deep voice. Nathi was the kind you wouldn't be surprised if you find out he is a gangster.

Nathi: "Need help?"

Me: "I'm almost done."

Nathi: "I will dry." he took the dish cloth wasula izintsha.

Me: "Something tells me that you don't usually do this."

Nathi: "Yes I don't. Uyasikhuluma kodwa isizulu?"

Me: "Yebo ngiyasikhuluma. Ubuziswa yini?"

Nathi: "Kwase kuphele amadoda yini?"

Me: "Meaning?"

Nathi: "Wasukela inkunzi nje yesigebengu? UJoshua akadlali sisi"

Me: "Uyamazi yini?"

Nathi: "Bengiqala ukumbona layikhaya nami, bengazi izithombe kuphela. Kodwa I know what he is capable of."

Me: "And that will be what?"

Nathi: "Uyamazi kodwa wena ukth uyisigebengu?"

Me: "He is a gangmember."

Nathi: "Cha dadewethu, asingakhohlisani. Jason was a gangster, Joshua is a sick and twisted hardcore criminal. He is the mastermind. The kind that everybody know but never dare mention."

Me: "You are a gangster too?"

Nathi: "I was but not anymore."

Me: "Thats what he said too."

Nathi: "Men like Joshua don't change."

Me: "Tell me something I don't know." I was watching him as he put the plates away and thats when it clicked. He was the guy in the video. The guy who handed Joshua the gun.

Me: "Who was he?"

Nathi: "Who?"

Me: "The guy that you and Joshua beat up?"

Nathi: "How did you know?"

Me: "Because they sent me the video. Why are you guys risking my life? Niyazi ukuth izigebengu zithanda la ekwehlela ngakhona."

Nathi: "Don't worry. We will sort it out"

Me: "You didn't change at all. You may not be twisted like him but you are still as bad as him"

Nathi: "It was a mistake. We just wanted to scare them."

Me: "Where is Duma?"

Nathi: "Ulele endlini yakhe."

Me: "Are you sure?"

Nathi: "100"

My mother walked in savele sathula.

Mum: "Aw Thandeka mtanami ufike noshintsho. UNkosinathi ekhishini?"

Nathi: "Awuzweke umama madoda. Sengiyahamba" he laughed and walked out.

Mum: "Umkhwenyana uthe niyahamba ntambama"

Me: "Yebo mama"

Mum: "Angeke kulunge nihambe ngingasaniphekelanga."

Me: "Nami ngithi angifuni ukuhamba ngingasaphekanga"

Mum: "Uyakwazi kodwa mtanami?"

Me: "Yebo ngiyakwazi. Ethekwini ngiyapheka nje mama"

Mum: "Phela nina nipeka ukudla kwesilungu. NoLindiwe uke asiphekele uma ebuyile."

I watched my mother as she spoke. She was nothing like my evil step mother. There was something kind in her.

Mum: "Nizobuya nini?"

Me: "Maduze mama."

Mum: "Impela nibuye ngoba kumele uye kaDlamini. Bayokubona omalume"

Me: "Sizobuya maduze"

Mum: "Kuhleke. Asipheke mtanami."

Sapheka kamnandi nomama sixoxa kumnandi. I refused to tell her about the pain I've gone through because I wanted us to have a good relationship not the one where we both look at each other and cry.

Kwathi uma kuvuthwa ngahamba ngayogeza ngabuya ngapakisha. Lindiwe said dad wanted to talk to me ngahamba gaya kuye. Safika sahlala saxoxa. He asked me to come back soon ukuze ngizokwenzela zonke izimfanelo. I told him that I was coming back home and I wasn't lying.

After all the talking was done we went to dish up kwadliwa sawasha izintsha and then said our goodbyes. Sahamba. ULindiwe was staying so sabuya sodwa. Joshua wasn't talking to me and I didn't care. I talked to those who were talking to me.

My phone rang ngayiphendula.

Zinhle: "When are you guys coming home?"

Me: "Sisendleleni. Whats wrong?"

Zinhle: "Julia has been kidnapped."

Me: "What do you mean kidnapped? By who?"

Zinhle: "I don't know. There is a note and it says...." Joshua took the phone wayifaka ku-loud speaker.

Joshua: "Where are you?"

Zinhle: "In the house. They left a note with numbers."

Joshua: "Which one is missing?"

Zinhle: "Julia is missing" she screamed.

Joshua: "Read the numbers. Kukhona eyodwa engekho. Which one?"

Zinhle: "4 and 7."

Njabulo: "Scott"

Joshua: "Okay. I want you to go to your room and lock yourself in and then switch off the light."

Zinhle: "You think they will come for me?"

Joshua: "No. Just go and do as I say. I will call you back" he hung up.

Me: "Who is Scott?"

Joshua: "Dial the number Njabulo."

Njabulo took the phone and dialled the number. It rang once and then went dead.

Joshua: "Dial again."

It rang few time and then a rough voice answered.

Joshua: "You better not hurt my daughter Scott."

Scott: "She is fine. Just like Tasha."

Joshua: "I swear, if you hurt her I will kill you"

Scott: "And how will you find me?"

Joshua: "You better run." he hung up.

Njabulo: "Done. " he showed Joshua the red dot in the screen of his phone.

Joshua: "Thats not Julia."

Njabulo: "Then who is it?"

Joshua: "Julia is blue."

Njabulo: "Sengimtholile."

Me: "Can you stop the car?"

Joshua: "Why"

Me: "Kuth angiphalaze."

He parked on the side ngaphuma and went to throw up.

Chapter 105.

I was weak, my joints in pain and my head pounding.

Me: "I'm cold"

Njabulo: "You bastard. I can't believe you did it." he punched Joshua.

Joshua: "I was angry."

Njabulo: "So what? This is not Onica. You can't keep doing this to her."

Bongeka: "Can you guys stop fighting. My friend is dying here" she screamed at them.

Joshua took off his jacket wayibeka kimi.

Njabulo: "You have to stop."

Joshua: "I won't do it again. I'm sorry Thandeka"

Bongeka: "Whats going on?"

Njabulo: "Kuzodlula. We just need to keep her warm. Asambeni sizongena e-garage"

Joshua: "We switching the seats."

Bongeka and Njabulo sat in the front thina sangena ngemumva.

Joshua: "Its going to be okay. Just hang in there" he brushed my back.

Njabulo: "Call Thizo and ask him to organise the guys bezobheka uJulia."

Joshua: "I will send him an sms." he took my phone and sent the sms.

Njabulo: "Vele wena uTasha wamgcina nini?"

Joshua shifted uncomfortable and ignored the question.

Joshua: "You still cold?"

Me: "Yes"

Njabulo: "Nali i-garage."

Bongeka: "Thank God, I need to pee."

Joshua: "Wena Thandeka awufuni ukuyochama?"

Me: "Cha"

Njabulo: "Ngizobuya ne-coffee."

Joshua: "And something to eat." he gave him the card.

Joshua and I stayed behind.

Joshua: "Ngicela uphakame kancane"

I sat up straight wasukuma wafaka i-CD. Moments by Kenny G began playing.

He sat down again.

Joshua: "I'm scared Thandeka"

Me: "Of what?" I looked at him.

Joshua: "That I'm going to lose you. I love you too much."

Me: "You not making any sense. Why would you lose me?"

Joshua: "Because I'm a monster. Because I've hurt you and it seems like I keep hurting you every chance I get."

Me: "Why do you hurt me?"

Joshua: "That's because I'm a coward Thandeka. Ngihlale ngesaba ukuthi uzongishiya just like all the women I've been with. I didn't think it was possible for me to fall in love again after all the drama I went through with my ex's."

Me: "But you shouldn't punish me for someone else's sins."

Joshua: "I know and I'm sorry. Uke uyibone le-necklace enama-diamond efakwa uJulia?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Ngabona iphepha endlini yakho and decided to buy something for you. I bought that necklace and ngelanga engangithi ngizokunika ngalo ngakufica ufake eyayibiza more than the one that I bought. Ngavele ngaba namahloni ukukunika ngayinika uJulia."

Me: "I didn't buy that necklace. My friends bought it for me for my birthday the year before."

Joshua: "I didn't know. I thought you bought it yourself."

Me: "I never even thought about cheating on you. I'm not Onica Joshua. Yes I make mistakes but cheating is not the kind of a mistake that I usually make."

Joshua: "Ngiyaxolisa sthandwa sami"

Me: "You need counselling Joshua before you and I can be okay."

Joshua: "I'll do it."

Me: "Who is Tasha?"

He took a deep breath.

Joshua: "Scott's sister."

Me: "What did you do to her?"

Joshua: "Promise me that you won't be angry."

Me: "You know I can't promise you that."

Joshua: "Okay. At least please don't react without thinking carefully."

Me: "Okay"

Njabulo came back with the coffee.

Joshua: "Sizoxoxa later" he kissed my forehead.

Bongeka came back with food. I drank the coffee first.

My phone rang wayiphendula uJoshua.

Joshua: "You are on loud speaker ndoda"

Thizo: "Uphi uThandeka?"

Joshua: "Nangu"

Thizo: "Awumkhiphe mfethu. Uyangididisa."

Joshua: "Okay. Take your shoes off." he looked at me. I took them off ngamnika.

Thizo: "Scott wants Tasha."

Joshua: "Ey angimazi ukuth uphi lowo. Why emfuna kimi vele?"

Thizo: "Angazi. Did you take it off?"

Joshua: "Yeah."

Thizo: "Sharp. Sengitholile ukth ukuphi." he hung up.

Me: "You bugged my shoes?"

Bongeka: "Aw kodwa Joshua. Yini nje eningakwazi ukuyenza?" she clapped her hands.

Joshua: "Don't be like that. I did it for thier own safety."

Me: "What if I didn't wear the bugged pair?"

Joshua: "I bugged all of them."

Me: "How?"

Joshua: "Ngiyasixebula ngiyifake bese ngiyasibuyisela nge-glue. Its easy"

Me: "Ay unzima mfokaCebekhulu"

Joshua: "Njabulo came up with the idea."

Me: "And you dating my sister." I hit him on the shoulder.

Njabulo: "And I love her"

What about Zimbili? I said in my head. I needed to ask Njabulo in private.

Bongeka: "Anikwesabi yini ukuboshwa?"

Joshua: "Siboshelweni?"

Bongeka: "Ubugebengu. Lento owayenza in her shoes is against the law."

Joshua: "I was desperate sisi, angith buka nje uScott uzongilinga ngengane yami. Ngayifakela izimo ezinje"

Bongeka: "Ay ngiyakuzwa."

Joshua looked at me and smiled. I wasn't sure if counselling was going to help. UNathi wayeshilo ukth men like Joshua don't change. Ukth iqiniso elingakanani lelo kwakuzomele ngilinde ngibone. Maybe it was just wishful thinking. Indaba kaTasha nayo yayingihlupha. Ukth uJoshua wayeyenzeni intombazane yabantu, only God knew.

Joshua: "Ucabanga ini?"

Me: "Nothing serious."

Joshua: "But your lips were moving. It must be serious"

Me: "I'm worried about Julia. She must be scared."

Joshua: "Ey mtakaMyeza ungayisho leyo."

Me: "This should be a reason enough for you guys to quit"

Chapter 106.

Safika eDurban in the early hours of the next day. Bongeka went straight to bed. Zinhle was asleep on the floor. I covered her with a blanket ngamyeka walala. Njabulo sat on the couch and texted my sister. Joshua ran me a hot bath ngayogeza. He sat on the edge of the bathtub and watched me bath.

Me: "Tell me about Tasha."

He took a deep breath first.

Joshua: "I met Tasha last year, Scott invited us for a braai. Washesha ukungijwayela. Same day we were talking like old friends. But she changed. She began sending me her naked photos, telling me how much she wanted me. Wayeke afike layindlini wearing nothing but a coat. I kept turning her down until you and I started dating. Nakho-ke sekufika oJulia, you and I fighting and seeing you with that Indian guy. I was in a bad space."

Me: "And you slept with her?"

Joshua: "I was at 21, drinking on my own. I was angry at Jo-Anne for robbing me a chance to be in my daughters life, I was angry at you for not fighting for us and I was angry at myself for letting you go. She was there with her friends. She came to me and offered to comfort me. We left the club and came here.

When we got here I didn't waste time. I ripped her clothes off and went straight in. Her body went in shock. When I looked at her, I didn't see the woman who had seduced me. I saw a little girl. She was scared. Her eyes shinning with tears. I stopped and tried to talk to her before pulling out. The moment I did she turned and slept on the side and sobbed. I tried my best to comfort her but it didn't work. Ngambuza ukuth uyafuna yini siyogeza wath yes. Ngahamba ngayofaka amanzi ngath uma ngibuya ngamfica engasekho. I called her and her phone just rang yangaphendulwa. I kept calling and texting. Ekugcineni wayiphendula and asked me to leave her alone."

Me: "She was a virgin"

Joshua: "Yes and she wanted to make love but I fucked her with no emotion attached to it."

Me: "So you haven't seen her since?"

Joshua: "I kept trying to apologise but she didn't give me the chance."

Me: "When was the last time you saw her?"

Joshua: "Last year. I went to DUT ngamthola and she told me that if I don't leave her alone she will report me for rape. So ngamyekake."

Me: "Can you pass me the towel."

He got up wanginika ngaphuma emanzini. Ngakhipha amanzi and rinsed the tub.

Joshua: "Thandeka"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "Aint you going to say something?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "Why not?"

Me: "Because you told me so. You told me that I needed to give you a silent treatment and make you sleep on the couch when I'm angry" I handed him the pillow.

Joshua: "Don't be like that."

I didn't respond. Instead I took my nightdress ngagqoka ngangena embhedeni. Joshua stood there for a while qede wathatha umqamelo waphuma.

I don't know why I was hurt because in Joshua's words it sounded like Tasha wanted to sleep with Joshua. She didn't value her virginity. But then again this was Joshua. Maybe he drugged her. If yena wayethi akamazi uTasha why uScott amfune kuye? There was more to this and I think Joshua wasn't telling me the truth.

I don't know when I slept but when I opened my eyes it was after 10am. I went to brush my teeth and then went downstairs. Zinhle and Bongeka were having breakfast.

Me: "Morning"

Zinhle: "Unjani? Ngikwenzele i-breakfast?"

Me: "Ngi-worried ngoJulia. Ngizozenzela sisi."

Zinhle: "Waiting is driving me crazy."

Me: "I know. Baphi oJoshua?"

Zinhle: "He left with Njabulo."

Me: "Okay. Bongeka?"

Bongeka: "Mhmm"

Me: "Wajula kangaka yini?"

Bongeka: "I'm pregnant."

Zinhle and I laughed out loud kwangath besitshelene.

Bongeka: "I'm serious. I did the test this morning"

Zinhle: "Indlela osho ngayo yazi ayijwayelekile."

Bongeka: "Ukuth bengilindele vele."

Me: "Have you told Bheka?"

Bongeka: "He ended the relationship weeks ago."

Me: "I'm sorry my friend."

Bongeka: "Its okay."

Zinhle: "So you going to be a single mother?"

Bongeka: "Yes and I'm ready for it."

Zinhle: "You stronger than me"

Bongeka: "Its a tough world dade. We have to be strong."

Ngavele ngaphatheka kabi because I didn't know about Bongeka's relationship. I didn't pay enough attention to her. She was always there for me and mina nganganganaki ukth she has a life too. I was a bad friend and I needed to make up for it.

Me: "When are we going for the scan?"

Bongeka: "Tomorrow evening"

Me: "Kazi nganeni. Maybe its a boy."

Bongeka: "I want a girl. But any sex would do."

A door bell rang wahamba uZinhle wayobheka.

Me: "We are going to spoil him or her."

Bongeka: "Like crazy. But my father will be mad. He alway....."

Sathuswa ukumemeza kukaZinhle, sahamba sayobheka.

Me: "Ubonani?"

Zinhle: "This" she picked up a baby in a box.

Bongeka: "Oh My God."

Me: "Did you see who left it?"

Zinhle: "A black car. It drove away when I opened the door."

Bongeka: "There is a note" she took it.

Me: "Asingeneni guys." we took the box in.

Bongeka: "This is yours. Tasha" she handed me the note.

Me: "Let me call Joshua" I dialed his number and it went to voicemail.

Chapter 107.

Bongeka: "UJoshua akanayo ifoni. Try Njabulo"

I tried Njabulo. He answered in a second ring.

Njabulo: "Thandeka"

Me: "Uphi uJoshua?"

Njabulo: "Nangu. Hold on" few seconds later Joshua came to the phone.

Me: "You need to come home."

Joshua: "I'm on my way."

I hung up and went back to Zinhle and Bongeka.

Zinhle: "Yaze yayinhle lengane." she held a sleeping baby.

Bongeka: "Umtholile?"

Me: "Uthe uyeza" I sat down.

Zinhle: "Ingane yaJoshua le. Buka izinyawo"

Bongeka: "Iyafana naye ngempela. Kodwa uTasha uyinja shame. Usengaze afake usana ekhalibhothini pho?"

Me: "Sengifisa ukumbona yazi."

Bongeka: "Nami futhi. Ubengeke kodwa afune i-support kunokuthi afake ingane kanje?"

Me: "NoJoshua behambe bemithisa nje."

Zinhle: "Lentombazane ayifakanga ngisho ubisi lana. Yazi izokhala lengane."

Me: "Maybe I should go buy some. And diapers too"

Bongeka: "No. Joshua should."

Zinhle: "I agree. We can't keep on cleaning up his mess. Kumele igadwe wuye. Maybe next time he will think about a condom."

Me: "You are one fed up woman"

Zinhle: "Ukuth uTasha ngiyamnyanya."

Bongeka: "Why?"

Zinhle: "Wayengapheli layikhaya. Afike egqoke izinto ezincane. Enze engath usewumemu walayikhaya. NoJoshua avele amoyizele njengohlanya."

Me: "Babeyola?"

Zinhle: "uJoshua wayejola no-Onica. UTasha was like a teenage with a crush. Always after Joshua."

Bongeka: "No-Onica athule nje?"

Zinhle: "I doubt U-Onica wayemthanda uJoshua. I think she only cared about the status it came it with."

Bongeka: "I'm not surprised. She was always like that ngisho eskoleni."

Sathuswa ukungena kwaJulia noNjabulo.

Njabulo: "Ekabani ingane?"

Bongeka: "Uphi uJoshua?"

Njabulo: "Parking the car."

Me: "U-right sisi?"

Julia: "Ngi-right. Umalume uScott was nice."

Me: "Nice?"

Julia: "Yep. Bangiphe ukudla. Salala ehhotela"

Zinhle: "I thought you were kidnapped?"

Njabulo: "Awulambile nana?"

Julia: "Nope. Eyabani ingane mama?"

Bongeka: "Kukhona esimgadele sisi."

Joshua walked in and paused when he saw the baby.

Joshua: "Julia go upstairs. Ngicela ukukhuluma nabadala."

Julia: "Okay" she left.

Joshua: "Ekabani ingane?"

Me: "Here" I gave him the note.

He read it.

Joshua: "Thats not possible."

Me: "Nangu ufakazi"

Joshua: "Its not mine."

Bongeka: "He does look like you."

Joshua: "Its not possible."

Me: "You didn't sleep with her?"

He went quiet.

Njabulo: "Insizwa or intombi?"

Zinhle: "Umfana."

Joshua: "He came in a box?"

Zinhle: "Yes."

Joshua: "Tasha dropped him off?"

Zinhle: "I didn't see her. I saw the car"

Joshua went quiet wangibuka.

The baby woke up and began crying.

Zinhle: "Nazo-ke" she handed the baby to Joshua.

Me: "Uhlala kephi yena loTasha?"

Joshua: "Edolobheni."

Njabulo: "Ayifikanga nence?"

Bongeka: "Ifike inje."

Joshua: "Ngenzenjani?"

Me: "He needs milk."

Joshua: "Tasha needs to come and get him."

Zinhle: "Ubisi luyathengwa."

Joshua: "Njengoba ekhala nje kumanje. Ubisi luzofika nini?"

Me: "Mlethe. Wena uhambe uyothenga."

Joshua: "Maybe I should beg her to come and take him"

Zinhle: "Umlethe ngoba naye engamfuni."

he handed me the crying baby.

Bongeka: "Uthenge i-formula namanabukeni."

Njabulo: "I know all those things. NoThizo wayehamba nam uma eyothenga. UZaza engazwile."

Joshua: "Asambe mfethu"

They left.

We all took turns sazama ukuyithulisa ekugcineni yathula yalala futhi.

Zinhle: "Few months later wuwe."

Bongeka: "Ungayiphathi leyo. Those sleepless nights."

Me: "Mhlampe ngeke ikuhluphe kakhulu"

Bongeka: "I hope so too. Ngikubona konke nje. I-weight."

Zinhle: "Leyo figure."

Me: "Izobuya aw."

Bongeka: "Wena Thandeka uzokwenzenjani?"

Me: "About what?"

Bongeka: "Lengane."

Me: "I don't know. I hate what Joshua did."

Zinhle: "And I don't blame you."

Bongeka: "Maybe its your chance to be a mother."

Me: "Meaning?"

Bongeka: "Maybe you can't carry your own but that doesn't mean you can't be a mother to someone who needs one. Lengane izomdinga umama, obviously uTasha akayifuni"

Me: "Maybe she is just angry for now. Uzoxola azoyifuna"

Zinhle: "Angeke esayithola. Umuntu okwazi ukufaka ingane in a box and then drop it on the doorstep does not deserve to be a mother."

Bongeka: "I agree. We can take her to court if we have to"

Me: "And my friend, the lawyer kicks in."

Bongeka: "Ukuth ngiyacikeka nje. Ubhuti wakhe kade ethathe uJulia ngenxa yakhe and yena wenza nje."

Zinhle: "Atleast he didn't hurt her. She looks okay."

Me: "Yah but you can never know."

Bongeka: "Mina nje no offence guys but angisathembi muntu. Lento eshiwo uJoshua last night ingenze ngabuka i-side lakhe ebengingalazi and its not pretty."

Me: "And surprisingly oTasha basaziphosa kuye"

Bongeka: "Girls love bad boys. They can't help themselves."

Me: "Nami ngiyayithanda le bad boy but iyangiphoxa shame."

Zinhle: "Nami uyangiphoxa ngoba uma engashiywa wuwe I doubt he will be able to bounce back."

Bongeka: "We don't choose who we love"

Me: "Yes."

I looked at the baby next to me. I had only met him few hours ago but already I was inlove with him.
Kwakubuhlungu kimi ngoba after lento I didnt see us 2geda

Chapter 108.

Joshua and Njabulo came back two hours later.

Zinhle: "Hau nithenge izinto ezingaka?"

Joshua: "Benginqena ukulokhu ngehla ngenyuka."

Zinhle: "I guess kuzomele wenze i-room yengane aswel."

Joshua looked at me nami ngabheka le.

Bongeka: "Make the milk ukuze uma evuka aphuze."

Joshua: "How?"

Zinhle: "Read the instructions. Ukale ngebhodlela."

Joshua: "Thandeka ngicela ungisize" he went to the kitchen nami ngalandela.

Joshua: "I'm sorry"

Me: "For what?"

Joshua: "Le-situation esikuyo"

Me: "You mean your lies?"

Joshua: "It was a mistake."

Me: "And you couldn't wear a condom?"

Joshua: "I was a bit drunk."

Me: "Ukuba bekuyimi ubuzo xola yini? Or ubuzongishaya?"

Joshua: "Aw Thandeka kube iphutha."

Me: "Then I'm sorry too Joshua. I'm leaving today"

Joshua: "Please sthandwa sami."

Me: "No Joshua. I am tired." I turned around and walked out ngaya upstairs to pack my bags. After packing I took my bags downstairs and ngabona ukuthi bayethuka.

Me: "My car keys?"

Joshua: "Naba" he gave me the keys.

Me: "Thank you. Njabulo ngicela ukuhamba nawe. Ngizokubuyisa."

Njabulo: "Okay."

Bongeka: "Nizongthatha senibuya oe"

Me: "Sharp"

Njabulo took my bags saphuma sahamba.

Me: "Uyakwazi lapha ekuhlala khna uTasha?"

Njabulo: "Ufuna ukuya kuye?"

Me: "Yes. Kunento engifuna ukumtshela yona."

Njabulo: "Maybe thats a bad idea."

Me: "Why?"

Njabulo: "She is rude Thandeka."

Me: "Just take me there."

Njabulo: "Okay. Manje vele umshiya ngempela uJoshua?"

Me: "I'm tired of being Joshua's play thing."

Njabulo: "Kodwa sisi wenze iphutha futh waxolisa. Mxolele. I know you love him."

Me: "Sometimes love is not enough"

Njabulo: "But he needs you now"

Me: "No he doesn't. He needs his baby mama"

Njabulo: "Joshua and Tasha broke up before you and Joshua became serious. Ngenkathi ezwa ukth

usethandana nawe she dumped him."

Me: "Babeyola? I thought it was a one night thing?"

Njabulo: "It was, but uTasha wayemfuna uJoshua and he didn't want to crush her heart so he entertained her."

Me: "I'm not stupid. Joshua and Tasha were fucking buddies and now sekumele kube yini u-nanny. Angiyena uanti Sarah."

Njabulo took me to Tasha's flat in town. We went upstairs and knocked on her door, kwavuleka iscabha kwavela intombazane encane. Kwakungathi eyase-China.

Her: "What do you want?"

Me: "You are Tasha?"

Her: "No, I'm her dead sister Tosh."

Njabulo laughed ngambuka kabi.

Me: "Can we come in?"

Tasha: "No. Just say what you came to say."

Me: "Its about your son."

Tasha: "You mean Joshua's? He is Joshua's problem now." she kept touching her nose.

Me: "You can't expect Joshua to take care of him."

Tasha: "Ofcourse not. I know you will."

Me: "Thats where you wrong. I am not your nanny."

Tasha: "What makes you think I want to be a mother?"

Me: "Its the fact that you got pregnant. If you didn't want a baby maybe you should have used a condom."

Tasha: "Are you done?"

Me: "No. His name?"

Tasha: "Kevin, but you are allowed to change it." She went inside and slammed the door shut.

Me: "Lets go"

Njabulo: "I hate to say I told you so."

Me: "Then don't."

We went downstairs sangena emotweni and drove back to Joshua's place. Safika sehla sangena ngaphakathi.

Zinhle: "You guys missed the show"

Me: "What show?"

Bongeka: "UJoshua egeza ingane."

Njabulo: "Angithandi njalo ngomjita wami."

Me: "Uphi vele?"

Zinhle: "Upstairs trying to put him to sleep."

Me: "Let me go check" I went upstairs in Joshua's bedroom. Ngafika uJoshua elele ebeke ingane esfubeni. The sight of them like that broke my heart. I blinked the tears away. I had to be strong and walk away. As much as I had fallen inlove with both of them, i had to walk away from both of them.

I turned and walk away, closing the door carefully behind me while tears ran down my face. Ngake ngama ngancika edongeni and just cried. It wasn't easy walking away since I was leaving my heart behind.

Chapter 109

I stayed at home the whole weekend, indoors, windows and curtain closed nefoni yami icishiwe. I didn't want Joshua to call and beg because I didn't know what I was going to say to him. After staying like that, on Monday morning I went back to work. Almost everybody was shocked to see me. Ngafika ngabingelela and went straight to my office. It was open kukhona ohleli esihlalweni obheke ewindini.

Me: "Hai, what are you doing in my office?"

A blonde man stood up yaphendula isihlalo.

Him: "Your office"

Me: "Yes. As you can see the photos."

Him: "Oh, thats you? You look different though."

Me: "And usungaze for how long?"

Him: "Sorry I didn't get that."

Me: "You weren't meant to. Now can you get out?"

Him: "The name is Brandon"

Me: "I couldn't care less. Take your things and leave."

Him: "You are so mean." he looked hurt for real nami ngavele ngaphatheka kabi.

Me: "I'm sorry. My name is Thandeka Myeza but I was known as Gloria Memela before."

Him: "You got married?"

Me: "No. Its a long complicated story"

Him: "I have the time"

Me: "Good for you. I do not."

Him: "Well, let me pack up and leave you to it"

Me: "That would be great."

He packed his things quickly waqeda wahamba. Nami ngabeka ezami.

Judy: "Welcome back Miss Memela"

Me: "Thank you dear. Its good to be back."

Judy: "These are your files. Mr Ndlela asked me to give them to you."

Me: "Thank you so much. What happened to Sbusiso Ndlela?"

Judy: "Didn't you hear? He is in jail for raping a 14 years old"

Me: "Oh my God, when did all this happen?"

Judy: "Its been two months and he didn't get bail"

Me: "Yoh kwanzima."

Judy: "And this hurt Mr Ndlela big time. He lost weight and I overheard him saying he is thinking about selling"

Me: "Is it that bad?"

Judy: "Its worse, his wife left him for a younger man."

Me: "I always knew that whore is no good at all."

Judy: "So everybody is worried about our jobs if Mr Ndlela sells."

Me: "But I'm sure we will be okay."

Judy: "Maybe, I have to get back." she got up and left.

Nami ngahamba ngayobheka uBongeka.

Me: "Falling asleep at work?"

Bongeka: "This pregnancy is driving me nuts."

Me: "And you starving?"

Bongeka: "You have no idea."

Me: "Judy says things are not good."

Bongeka: "Yes, Mr Ndlela is selling."

Me: "Tjo. Any buyer willing?"

Bongeka: "Us. Me and you"

Me: "We are?"

Bongeka: "Lets do it."

Me: "Then I will be unemployed."

Bongeka: "Why?"

Me: "I can't audit my own company."

Bongeka: "Oops, sorry"

Me: "If we do it then I quit."

Bongeka: "No, let Joshua buy it himself."

Me: "Then I will have to work for Joshua?"

Bongeka: "Yes."

Me: "Maybe quitting is a great idea. I can travel"

Bongeka: "And who do you think will help me with this?" she touched her tummy.

Me: "I will take him with me"

We both laughed sathuswa ukungena kukaBrandon.

Brandon: "So you can laugh."

Me: "Yes"

Brandon: "I'm glad. Bongeka I need that info I asked for."

Bongeka: "Come sit" she stood up wahlala phansi uBrandon and began working on Bongeka's laptop.

Bongeka: "Muhle lomfana yazi"

Me: "Ubani?"

Bongeka: "Indoda. Buka amehlo ayo."

Me: "You pregnant. Even a pirate would look handsome to you."

Bongeka: "Wena ukhumbule uJoshua."

Me: "I'm trying so hard not to"

Bongeka: "Awukaze umfonele?"

Me: "Ngithi ngenzelani nje?"

Bongeka: "Awusamthandi ngempela or usadiniwe?"

Me: "Angisamthandi oe" I lied.

Brandon: "Who is Joshua?"

Me: "Uthanda nezindaba enjalo nje"

Bongeka: "Joshua is our boss."

He nodded waqhubeka nento yakhe.

Bongeka: "Umzondani umfana wabantu."

Me: "Angimzondi ukth nje ungikhumbuza uJoshua."

Bongeka: "Mfonele uzibuzise ingane"

Me: "Ay oe. Ungihlukumezile, engishaya kanti naye akaziphethe kahle."

Bongeka: "But uTasha wamitha before you guys got serious. He told us that ended the relationship when you guys got serious"

Me: "Pho why did he lie to me? Kimi uthe abajolanga."

Brandon's phone rang. Waphuma wayoyiphendula.

Bongeka: "Angazi but kithi uthe wamyeka ngoba esethandana nawe."

Me: "Joshua is a liar."

Brandon walked in esebomvu ukudinwa.

Brandon: "That bitch just gave away my son"

Bongeka: "Who?"

Brandon: "Tasha Smith."

Me: "Kevin is your son?"

Brandon: "How do you know Kevin"

Me: "Because Tasha gave him to Joshua."

Brandon: "The same Joshua you ladies are gossiping about?"

Bongeka: "Yes. And she said its Joshua's baby"

Brandon: "Thats crazy. Kevin is my son. Where can I find this Joshua guy."

Bongeka: "You need to talk to Tasha first. You can't go confront Joshua."

Brandon: "Why not? He has my son."

Me: "And he believes that Kevin is his son."

Brandon: "So what should I do? Just stand here and yep."

I was yet to answer when Joshua walked in. We all went quiet sambuka.

Joshua: "Angiyithandi lendlela eningibuka ngayo. Kwenzekeni?"

Bongeka: "Maybe you should sit down"

Joshua: "Why? Are you okay?" he looked at me.

Me: "I'm fine. Please sit Joshua"

Brandon threw a furious punch at Joshua.

Brandon: "Where is my son?"

Joshua held his bleeding nose and looked confused.

Bongeka: "I told you not to attack Joshua. He knows nothing"

Chapter 110

Joshua: "Can someone tell me what the fuck is going on?"

Me: "Sit down. Let me see your nose. Maybe we can stop the bleeding."

Joshua: "Its fine. Why did you punch me?" he looked at Brandon.

Brandon: "Where is my son?"

Bongeka: "UBrandon uthi uyena ubaba kaKevin"

Joshua: "Thats my son"

Brandon: "You crazy. Thats my son."

Me: "This is pointless. Ukukhombana ngeke kuisendawo."

Bongeka: "Nidinga i-DNA test."

Brandon: "Can we stick to the language we all understand."

Joshua threw a heavy punch at him.

Joshua: "Thats the language you understand."

Brandon covered his nose with a handkerchief.

Bongeka: "Fighting won't help. We are going to do a DNA test and solve this."

Brandon: "In the mean time what Am I suppose to do?"

Joshua: "Until that DNA he is staying with me."

Brandon: "Over my dead body."

Joshua: "That can be arranged."

Me: "Joshua" I got between them.

Bongeka: "Maybe we should call Tasha and get her to explain"

Joshua: "Thats a great idea. Mfonele"

Tasha refused to come uBongeka waze msongela ngamaphoyisa. Almost an hour later wafika. Looking like a highly paid bitch. She was surprised to see Brandon.

Brandon: "Where is my son?"

Joshua: "You mean my son?"

Me: "They mean your son."

Tasha: "Brandon I can explain."

Brandon: "Start talking"

Bongeka: "If you guys don't behave, I will kick you both out"

Joshua: "Who is Kevin's father?"

Tasha went quiet. Kwaphela nokweyisa.

Brandon: "You gave my son away. How could you?"

Tasha: "He is Joshua's son"

Me: "How do you know?"

Tasha: "Because I'm his mother. I'm sorry Brandon"

Me: "Kumele kwenziwe i-DNA test."

Tasha: "Would you butt out. Its none of your business."

I went quiet because I can see that Tasha was testing my manners.

Joshua: "Watch your tounge."

Tasha: "Or what? What will you do?"

Brandon: "I don't believe you. I want a test"

Joshua: "And I will pay for it. Lets go to the doctor right now."

Me: "You bleeding Joshua."

Tasha: "The trophy wife has spoken"

Bongeka: "Don't start"

Joshua: "I'm okay."

Me: "Atleast go change. Ungahambi unje."

Brandon: "I'm bleeding too. The least you could do is to show some sympathy towards me too"

Joshua: "Why should she? You are nothing to her."

Bongeka: "I suggest you both go home and clean up before going to the doctor."

Tasha: "Where is my son?"

Joshua: "At home, where you left him. I'm going home"

Brandon: "I'm coming with you. I have a shirt in my car."

Joshua: "I don't own a half way house."

Brandon: "What if you run?"

Bongeka: "Sohamba sonke."

Me: "Why?" the last thing I needed was to see Kevin.

Bongeka: "What if they hurt each other?"

Tasha: "I guess you don't need me anymore"

Me: "You are unbelievable."

Tasha: "And yet you still bother."

Bongeka: "Nobody is going anywhere. We are all going to Joshua's place to get Kevin and then go to the doctor."

We drove in Bongeka's car, uJoshua noBrandon bahamba bodwa. Safika kaJoshua sehla sangena ngaphakathi. It was quiet as if it was empty.

Joshua: "Maybe they are upstairs" he went up sahlala phansi samlinda. He came back seconds later with a piece of paper.

Joshua: "They are not here. Someone took them"

Brandon: "Took them where? Lets go get them"

Joshua handed him a piece of paper. Walifunda and went red.

Brandon: "Where is my son, you bastard"

Me: "Can I see the note?"

He gave it to me nami ngalifunda out loud.

Me: "I have your precious son. I told you I'll be back"

Bongeka: "Ebesele nobani Joshua?"

Joshua: "The nanny."

Me: "Pho uphi?"

Joshua: "Maybe they took her aswel."

Brandon: "Or maybe you paid her to run"

Joshua: "And why should I? He is my son."

Me: "For once can you both stop acting like kids."

Bongeka: "Any idea who this maybe?"

Joshua: "I have no idea." he took out his phone.

Brandon: "Then call the police"

Joshua: "Nobody is calling the police. I'm going to find him"

Brandon: "This is no time to be a hero."

Joshua didn't reply.

My eyes landed on a CD under the coffee table. It bothered me that it was just sitting there without the cover. I went to pick it up ngayiphendula and it was written "Kevin" with a marker.

Me: "Joshua"

He turned around and looked at me ngamnika.

Brandon: "Play it"

He went to put it in sonke sahlala phansi salinda idlale.

It took few minutes before ivele. Kevin was a sleep and a woman's hand kept brushing his back. Another lady was tied up in the corner.

Me: "Thats your nanny?"

Joshua: "Yes. They took them both"

All our eyes were glued on the screen. It kept playing that until it ended.

Brandon: "Its a woman. Which woman did you piss off?"

Joshua got up and took the CD out wayibeka etafuleni.

Brandon: "Shouldn't we call the police?"

Joshua: "They will kill him. Nobody calls the police."

Bongeka: "So we wait until they contact us? If they decide to contact us"

Joshua: "Yes. And wena noThandeka ngizocela nihlale layindlini. Abanye angingene kubo"

Me: "No. This has nothing to do with us"

Joshua: "I'm trying to protect you Thandeka. They could be watching us"

Me: "This isn't fair. When your whores act yith esiba nenkinga."

Chapter 111

I agreed to stay because Bongeka didn't even put up a fight and I didn't want to be the only drama queen. We went back to the office to get our things mina ngayosebenzela ekhaya sadlula nasendlini yami sathatha okokugqoka kanjalo nakaBongeka. Brandon refused to leave because in his head he really believed that Joshua staged the kidnapping so he gave him a room to stay in. UTasha yena wavele wahamba.

Just to avoid looking at Joshua I decided to work upstairs. I focused on my work for hours ngaze ngehla ngoba sengizwa indlala. Zinhle and Bongeka were eating pizza out of the box. The guys were watching the footage hoping to find the clue. I watched it aswel and ate the pizza.

Joshua: "Come Julia its bed time" He woke up an already falling asleep kid.

Julia: "Goodnight" she got up and followed Joshua.

We said goodnight aswel.

I took a moment and looked around. They were 6 guys including Brandon. I knew Njabulo, Mlungisi, Ntokozo and Thizo. There was one I've never seen before. As much as you couldn't tell that the others were criminals, this one stood out. He was the kind that makes you want to run away and hide uma uzohlangana nayo.

Me: "Engathi sengiyolala nami."

Bongeka: "Sonke siyahamba" we got up and went upstairs saphambana noJoshua.

Joshua: "Thandeka bengicela sixoxe kancane"

Me: "About?"

Joshua: "In private."

I nodded and followed him to the bedroom. Ngangena wavala wakhiya.

Joshua: "Are you okay?"

Me: "Yes I'm fine."

Joshua: "I miss you."

Me: "Please don't start."

Joshua: "I'm sorry for everything that I've put you through"

Me: "I'm fine Joshua"

Joshua: "But not enough to make you come back?"

Me: "I need time to heal."

Joshua: "You can do it here."

Me: "You know that's not possible."

Joshua: "I've decided to quit"

Me: "Quit what?"

Joshua: "The gang."

Me: "But I thought you said you can't quit."

Joshua: "I've talked to the boys and we all agreed that it's time we all stop."

Me: "That's good."

Joshua: "But not enough to bring you home?"

Me: "Joshua please. Quit because you want to not because you want me to stay."

Joshua: "I want you and my family to be safe that's why ngiyeka."

Me: "I need to go to bed."

Joshua: "You can sleep in here. Mina ngizoya downstairs."

Me: "No. I'll sleep with Bongeka."

Joshua: "Ngiyakucela MaMyeza. You can lock the door ushiye ukhiye escabheni. Please"

In the end I gave in ngavuma ukulala. He kissed my forehead and walked out ngasala ngakhiya and left the key in the key hole. There was a shirt so I changed my clothes ngaligqoka ngangena embhedeni and played with my phone after texting Bongeka ngath akalale.

Something was bothering me though. Umzali onjani ongaba relaxed like Tasha was when we discovered that Kevin was missing. She didn't cry or even look shock or surprise. Instead she kept glancing on her watch as if she wanted to hurry somewhere. I know she didn't want the baby but as a mother she should

have been touched unless she knew that Kevin was fine. I told myself that I was going to tell Joshua the next morning and tried to fall asleep. Something else clicked in my head. Without think I jumped up ngavula iscabha and ran downstairs.

Me: "Joshua"

They all looked at me.

Joshua: "U-right?"

Me: "Yeah I'm fine. I remember the hand."

Joshua: "Calm down. Take a deep breath bese uyasho ukth kwenzekeni."

I did that first.

Me: "Isandla saTumi lesiya. She took Kevin"

Joshua: "Are you sure?"

Me: "Yes, I'm sure. I've seen that hand plenty of time."

Brandon was staring at me smiling.

Me: "What are you smiling about?"

Brandon: "You have great legs."

I turned around and walked back upstairs embarassed. The last thing I needed was to get Joshua's friend to think I was an idiot. Joshua came after me.

Me: "I forgot that I was wearing your shirt."

Joshua: "Its fine, its not like you were naked."

Me: "But still. I'm sure they think I'm cheap."

Joshua: "They don't. Relax. Ilenja ewuBrandon edinga ukulungiswa"

Me: "I was just trying to help you find him"

Joshua: "And I appreciate it. Don't feel bad. And you do have great legs."

Me: "Thank you. Can I sleep now."

Joshua: "Want me to stay?"

Me: "No. Yazi okunye ebengizokusho ukth don't you find it strange that Tasha didn't even cry when we discovered that Kevin is missing."

Joshua: "Akamthandi nje"

Me: "Still. She is his mother. Kumele abe no-touch nje omncane."

He went quiet and thought about what I said.

Joshua: "I'm going to look into it."

Me: "But isandla esikaTumi. Ngikhunjuzwa ucikicane wakhe ogwembile. Vele yena wamgcina nini"

Joshua: "She took the money and ran after ukufa kukaXolani. Kusho ukth she is back for revenge"

Me: "Then she will come after me"

Joshua: "Not if I get her first"

Me: "What if Brandon is the father?"

Joshua: "Still. She has no right to take him. I'm sure akayedwa."

Me: "Maybe basebenza ndawonye, with Tasha"

Joshua: "I'm sure kukhona omunye. They can't pull it off on thier own."

Me: "Manje uzokwenzenjani?"

Joshua: "I will deal with them. Sizomthola. Lala uphumule"

Me: "Goodnight"

Joshua: "Lock up"

Chapter 112.

Me: "Joshua please" I begged.

Joshua: "You are not ready yet" he kissed my neck.

Me: "But I'm wet" I pulled him closer and wrapped my legs around him.

Joshua: "Let me see if you wet enough." he went further down and then kissed it. I twisted my legs and tried to back away but he pushed me down.

Joshua: "Be still" he blew some cool air and then his tounge touched it. I held the sheet, sinking my heels deeper into the mattress.

Me: "I'm going to come" I moaned out loud running my fingers through his scalp.

Joshua: "Go ahead."

I couldn't hold on much longer.

Someone knocked ngavele ngathuka ngavuka.

Bongeka: "Thandeka"

Me: "Ngeza"

I went to the bathroom ngazibuka esbukweni. Did I just had a wet dream about Joshua?

I washed my face and brushed my teeth and then went to open for her.

Bongeka: "Kunini ulele oe"

Me: "Ubani iskhathi?"

Bongeka: "Its after 10. Awulambile?"

Me: "Ngilambile. Let me make the bed."

Bongeka: "Go shower. Ngizondlula"

Me: "Thank you." I went to the bathroom ngageza ngaqeda ngayogqoka. Sasesiya downstairs.

Brandon was drinking coffee. He didn't even look up when we greet him. I went to the kitchen ngazenzela i-cereal ngayodla.

Bongeka: "What happened to your eye?"

Brandon: "That over grown coward punched me"

Bongeka: "Why?"

Brandon: "Because she decided to walts around naked. My mistake was telling her that she has great legs"

Bongeka: "So you got what you deserve?"

Brandon: "Then thank you" he got up and walked upstairs.

Me: "I didn't mean to. Ngivele ngakhumbula ukuthi isandla sikaTumi lesiyana and without thinking, I ran downstairs to tell Joshua."

Bongeka: "Pho uBrandon wenzeni?"

Me: "He said I have great legs."

She laughed out loud.

Bongeka: "Kanti uqinisile. Mina bengith uyadlala uma ethi ushayelwe leyonto"

Me: "Ushayelwe lokho. Anyway uphi uJoshua?"

Bongeka: "They left. Bashiya igwala eliwuBrandon."

Joshua and Onica walked in.

Onica: "Hey guys. Ninjani?"

Bongeka: "Ubusifake imbiza yini?"

Joshua laughed and ran upstairs.

Me: "Never mind her. Syaphila wena unjani?"

Onica: "My nanny dropped me. I need a favour."

Bongeka: "Why ungaceli uJoshua amgade."

Onica: "Uyena othe angicele nina."

Me: "Ngoba si-useless. Asinamsebenzi"

Bongeka: "Ishiye."

Onica: "Thank you so much. Ngizobuya manje." she gave me a sleeping baby.

Me: "Izidingo zikhona zonke?"

Onica: "Yes dear zikhona. Ngizobuya just now" she kissed him and then walked out.

Few seconds later there was a loud bang. Sonke sathuka. Joshua came down wayovula iscabha. He came back esepethe u-Onica. She was bleeding.

Joshua: "Lets take her to the hospital." He gave Brandon the keys.

Joshua: "Lock the door behind me and don't let anybody in. You know where my guns are. Go take that small gun just incase something happens." he instructed and then walked out.

I locked the door behind him and then ran upstairs to get a gun. When I came back the house was filled with a strange smell.

Bongeka: "Do you smell that?"

Me: "Its smells like gas"

We covered the baby as we began coughing. My chest was closing in. I took out my phone and began dialling Joshua's number. Bongeka dropped the baby on the floor before she fell aswel. I tried to get to

them but my lungs were exploding and my knees were weak. I was dying. After staying alive for this long. Finally I was about to die and leave my newly found family. I never got to tell my mother that I love her, I never got to tell Joshua that I love him. My body felt like I was floating in the air and this time no Joshua to catch me.

Chapter 113.

[18LV.]

When I came around I was in a sitting position with my hands tied behind me. Brandon was sitting on the chair opposite me.

Me: "Whats going on?"

Brandon: "You are beautiful."

Me: "What am I doing here?"

Brandon: "You should be crying. And beg us to let you go."

Me: "Us?"

Brandon: "Excuse my manners. Tumi" he called out.

The door opened kwangena uTumi.

Brandon: "She is up"

She didn't reply. Instead she came towards me wangishaya ngempama and then laughed. My eyes filled with tears but I blinked them away.

Brandon: "Meet the woman in charge."

Me: "Why did you take me?"

Tumi: "You killed my good for nothing husband."

Me: "He wanted to kill me."

Tumi: "No, he wanted to fuck everywhole you have in your body. Do you know how it like to be fucked by the man who is obsessed with the other woman?"

I didn't answer. I kept trying to undo the rope that binded my hands together.

Tumi: "You don't know. Xolani was obsess with you. Everyday when he fucked me he called out your name."

Me: "That wasn't my fault."

Tumi: "You took Joshua from me. He was suppose to be mine."

Me: "Still I don't see how all that is my fault."

Tumi: "If you didn't come along ngabe ngamthola uJoshua." she slapped me again.

Me: "What did you do with my friend?"

Brandon: "They are fine and Kevin is fine too and yes he is Joshua's son"

Me: "You sick bastard"

Brandon: "Stop with name calling. You don't want to piss me off."

Me: "Joshua will kill you"

Tumi: "And you will long gone by then."

They laughed again.

Me: "You are both crazy"

Brandon: "And we are going to show you just how much."

Tumi: "I'm going to enjoy killing you. I'm going to cut you into pieces. But before I do all that, Brandon is going to fill every whole you have in your body. Uzokwenza lento eyayifunwa uXolani and you are going to wish you let Xolani do it."

Brandon took his pants off revealing his huge manhood. I tried harder to undo the rope.

Me: "Please don't. I've been raped before"

Tumi: "And you deserved it."

Me: "You can take Joshua. I don't love him. Please, I'll disappear." I begged while sobbing.

Brandon: "But I can't fuck Joshua. I want to fuck you. You are the reason why I took the offer."

Me: "I will pay you. I have enough money."

Tumi: "Ngathatha lonke ifa laXolani so cash is the least of my problems."

Brandon: "You heard the boss lady." he came towards me. The rope was now rather loose as if yayiqaqeka.

Me: "Wait"

Tumi: "Give her a chance. Who knows maybe she might enjoy having a white dick inside her."

Me: "Why did you hurt Onica?"

Tumi: "She will live. I hate her aswel"

Me: "Why?"

Tumi: "She stole my Joshua"

Me: "How is Tasha involved?"

Tumi: "That one will do anything for the next fix. Including selling her own kid."

I almost screamed and jumped up and down when my hands became free, but I stopped myself. I needed to be smart about this.

I shift a bit and then felt something hard press against my spine.

Me: "Thank you" I whispered quietly.

Tumi: "The poor woman hates Joshua aswel and she hates you too."

Me: "Why?"

Tumi: "Because you stole him from her"

Me: "I didn't. Its not my fault that he fell inlove with me"

Tumi: "Go ahead Brandon"

Me: "Wait" I screamed.

Tumi: "What?"

Me: "Next time search your prisoner first." I pulled out Joshua's small gun.

I didn't waste time by pointing at them. I shoot Brandon between the legs. His huge dick vanished same time kwasala kubomvu.

He screamed and fell down.

Tumi: "Drop it" she pointed her gun. I didn't give her a chance to make demands. I shoot her arm sayolahleka le isbhamu and then ngamdubula ithanga.

Me: "Stupid bitch." I kicked her face.

I heard someone turn the lock ngamlinda eduze kwescabha. It was Tasha.

Me: "Join the party"

Tasha: "What did you do?" she went to Brandon who was moaning in pain.

Me: "Don't touch him."

Tasha: "He is going to die"

Me: "And you think I care? Nobody is raping me again. Xolani did it years ago and when he tried again I killed him. I will kill any dog that take chances with my body."

There were running footsteps outside.

I pointed the gun and got ready to shoot at who ever that was about to walk in.

Mlungisi walked in first kwalandela uJoshua. The moment our eyes met I sobbed. He came towards me with his hands open wide.

Joshua: "Lets go home" he took the gun.

Me: "He wanted to... He was going to..."

Joshua: "Its over. You are safe now" he wrapped his arms around me.

Only then the reality sank in. I couldn't outrun my past. The best way to deal with my fear was to face it with open eyes. They were pervert who were going to try to take an advantage of and I had to diffend myself.

Before we walked out, i looked at Tumi. She was in pain. The pain she invited for herself. Brandon was pale. He was losing so much blood. Naye wayedlale idimoni lokungakwazi ukulawula izinkanuko zakhe.

Joshua: "I know you hate what I'm about to do to you but I have to. To help you deal with the shock."

I just nodded and buried my face in his chest.

Joshua: "You did so well. Ukwazile ukuzivikela."

Chapter 114.

I woke up when tiny hands kept pulling my lips.

Bongeka: "Great. Kuze uvuke" her eyes filled with tears.

Me: "Is the baby okay?"

Bongeka: "I thought I lost you. When I woke up you weren't there."

Me: "I have 9 lives. I won't be gone that easily. Wena awulimalanga?"

Bongeka: "We are okay. Nalobhuti omncane u-right. I'm so glad you are alive my friend."

Me: "It was either eat or be eaten."

Bongeka: "But uzodinga i-counselling"

Me: "I'm fine. Don't worry"

Bongeka: "No. You are on drugs. Once they wear off the reality will kick in."

Me: "I don't want it too. I want to stay like this."

Bongeka: "We will all be there. Pregnant and all."

Me: "I shot his dick. It went to different places."

Bongeka: "You did it to save your life. I'm proud of you."

Me: "Kevin is Joshua's son. They paid Tasha for the act."

Bongeka: "She had a drug overdose and didn't make it"

Me: "But she was there, I saw her there"

Bongeka: "Kade ulalile Gloria. OJoshua bafike nawe around 6pm and you were already out."

Me: "Kanti manje iskhathi sini?"

Bongeka: "It almost 2pm."

Me: "No wonder ngilambe kanje"

Bongeka: "Ngizokwenzela ukudla."

Me: "Let me go shower first." I got up and went to the bathroom. My head felt lighter but I managed.
Ngageza ngaqeda ngaphuma.

Joshua was sitting on the bed ebheke phansi.

Joshua: "Bongeka told me that you are up"

Me: "Nginesiyenzi kodwa"

Joshua: "Sizophela. Come sit next to me."

I sat down next to him.

Joshua: "I'm sorry Thandeka. I should have been here to protect you."

Me: "You taught me how to protect myself and I'm grateful."

Joshua: "Maybe we should do it again but this time with fists and kicks not guns."

Me: "You afraid I'm going to finish the town?" we both laughed.

Joshua: "Its nice to see you laugh. I didn't think you would be able to do it after yesterday's events."

Me: "Can I ask you something?"

Joshua: "Buza MaMyeza"

I stood up ngaqaqa ithawula lawela phansi.

Me: "Can you fuck me right now"

Joshua picked up the towel wasukuma and then wrapped it around my body.

Joshua: "I would love to but I know thats not you talking."

Me: "You think I'm damaged goods too. Thats why you don't want me anymore."

Joshua: "Thats not true. You are not damaged at all."

Me: "Then fuck me"

Joshua: "Recover first. There will be plenty of time to make love once you are healed."

Me: "But I'm fine. I just want you to do me right now"

Joshua: "You are not fine. The Thandeka that I know and love will not ask to be fucked because she knows that we don't fuck. We make love and right now we can't make love because you are not well."

I began crying. I don't even know why I was behaving like that or even feeling like that.

Joshua: "Musa phela ukukhala. Its fine I will make love to you." he kissed my lips but I pulled away first.

Me: "Rather give me something to help me calm down."

Joshua: "I'm not drugging you again."

Me: "Just a bit?"

Joshua: "No." He went to the closet wakhapha ama-tracksuit wanginika ngagqoka.

Me: "Ngilambile"

Joshua: "Lets go eat." He took my hand saya downstairs.

Njabulo: "You look better"

Me: "But I don't feel better. I'm horney and its not even funny"

Njabulo: "Kuzodlula."

Joshua: "How long will it last?"

Njabulo: "She needs to eat and drink lots of fluids. Kuzophela ngokushesha"

Me: "You know how to create drugs that can turn a woman into a whore?"

Njabulo: "Unfortunately yes."

Me: "We should sell them"

Njabulo: "We are going straight now."

Me: "We are?"

Njabulo: "Yes. We have kids now and we need to set good examples to them."

Me: "So, no more guns?"

Bongeka brought the food and juice.

Joshua: "Yes."

Me: "No more drugs?"

Joshua: "Yes."

I nodded and ate my food ngaphuza nejusi.

Me: "What did you mean when you said nizoba obaba?"

Joshua looked at Bongeka who pretended to be busy with the baby.

Njabulo: "Don't be mad. But uLindiwe is pregnant."

Me: "Okay"

Joshua: "You not angry?"

Me: "No. So senizokwenzani manje njengoba seniyeka ubugebengu?"

Njabulo: "Mr Ndlela agreed to sell me his shares. So I'm going to be your boss"

Me: "That means I'm out of the job"

Joshua: "Why? Sizosebenza sonke nje."

Me: "I can't audit your company. Umthetho awungivumeli. You guys are my friends."

Njabulo: "Oops, I forgot all that. I won't buy them."

Me: "Still. Joshua owns that place. Uma kuhamba uNdlela nami kuyaphoqa ukth ngihambe, but don't worry I will find something else to do."

Joshua: "Like what?"

Me: "Like a new job somewhere else."

Joshua: "You could be our silent partner."

Bongeka: "Nami ngifuna ukuba wuye. Being a single mum won't be easy. Angifuni ukukhathazwa imali aswel."

Me: "Uyayeka ukuba ummeli?"

Bongeka: "Maybe its time for change"

Joshua: "And we are not growing backwards."

Me: "Ngiyazela"

Njabula: "When you wake up you will be okay."

I put my head in Joshua's lap and tried to sleep.

Joshua: "Awufuni ukuyolala embhedeni?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "Okay lala uphumule."

Bongeka: "I'm worried about her. Are you sure uzoba right?" she spoke in a low tone as if she didn't want me to hear.

Njabulo: "I'm sure"

Chapter 115.

I woke up in bed naked. Joshua was standing near the window half naked. I took a moment and look at him. He looked gorgeous and deep in thoughts. I got up and wrapped a sheet around my body and then walked up to him and hugged him from behind. He turned around and kissed my lips. It was a hungry kiss. His hand removed the sheet exposing my naked body. With little effort he picked me up and I wrapped my legs around him. We went on kissing until he walked towards the bed wafika wangibeka phezulu. We went on kissing for a while until he pulled away and went further down kissing my nipple while his thumb began rubbing my sensitive spot. I ran my fingers through his hair breathing hard. He went further down until I could feel his tongue touch me. I moaned out loud and tried to back away but he held me in place.

Joshua: "Come for me." he began fingering me in a quick pace until a wave of pleasure washed over me and I came. He pulled out and went to the bathroom. I lay there breathing hard asking myself what did I do to receive this kind of morning glory.

When he came out he took my hand ngavuka and then turned me around and began kissing my neck down to my spine. It felt so good. His hand touched my nipple sending a sharp sensation down to my toes. I lost my balance and fell forward using my hands for support. He separated my legs using his knee and then I felt him push himself in. I winced and moved forward. His hands pulled me back and held me in place as he pushed again.

Me: "It hurts." I whispered.

He didn't answer, instead he pushed again and again until it felt like it was all in. He began moving in calculated moves. Pulling out almost completely and then pushing himself in again. He kept going until we both came and my arms became weak, we both fell forward and just laid there breathing hard.

Few minutes later he rolled off me walala ngomhlane.

Joshua: "I love you"

Me: "I love you too."

He smiled weakly and looked over me. Something was wrong but I was too scared to ask instead I reached for his hand and held it.

Joshua: "Onica didn't make it." he spoke softly as if he didn't want to tell me this.

Me: "But you said she was fine."

Joshua: "I thought she was too but it turns out I was wrong."

Me: "I'm sorry."

Joshua: "It's okay. I'm just worried about our kids. Zonke zizokhula zingizonde."

Me: "Why would they hate you?"

Joshua: "When they know how they died and that I was a criminal."

Me: "Who would tell them?"

Joshua: "People, phela bakhona abantu ababaziyo ubugebengu bami."

Me: "Then we will deal with that when we get there."

He sat up and looked at me.

Joshua: "Does that 'WE' mean what I think it means?"

Me: "Yes. I will marry you and be a mother to the kids."

Joshua: "Ngiyabonga sthandwa sami" He kissed my lips gentle. We kissed for a while until he laid me down and got between my legs lifting my knees up before he pushed himself in.

Joshua: "Does it hurt?"

Me: "Yes."

Joshua: "I'll be gentle." he balanced his upper body with his hands making sure that his torso rubbed my clits every time he moved. He was moving in a slow pace, his eyes closed and his jaws tight. I got a chance to watch him and wonder how beautiful was Nozipho if her twin was this handsome. Zinhle was beautiful too and befana noJoshua.

Joshua: "Am I borring you?"

Me: "No. Why would you say that?"

Joshua: "You didn't even come."

Me: "Usuqedile?"

He didn't answer. Instead he got off me and went to the bathroom. I woke up and made the bed while waiting for him to come out then I heard a shower nga-decider ukuyongena nami. He was just standing there, didn't even look up when he saw me walk in.

Me: "Can I join you? "

Joshua: "Okay"

Me: "I'm sorry about earlier."

Joshua: "Did you even feel me inside you?"

Me: "Yes"

Joshua: "But your mind wasn't even there."

Me: "Ngiyaxolisa."

Joshua: "You need counselling."

Me: "Because I didn't have an orgasm?"

Joshua: "Because your mind told your body that I was raping you." he shouted.

Me: "Thats crazy. Why would you rape me?"

Joshua: "Today I'm taking you to a shrink. Geza usheshise."

I didn't argue further. Ngavele ngageza ngaqeda ngaphuma ngayogcoba ngagqoka.

Joshua: "Usudiniwe?"

Me: "No, I'm jumping up and down with joy. Can't you see." I walked out and went downstairs.

Bongeka: "One would swear that you live across the road. Angisakwazi"

Me: "Ngidlala ukuba busy nje oe. Unjani kodwa?"

Bongeka: "Beside the bad news about Onica, ngi-right. Wena?"

Me: "Nami ngijabhiswe ilokho. Where are the kids?"

Bongeka: "Upstairs with Zinhle. Yazi kumnandi ukuhlala nani. Kumele engabe sengahamba ngabuyela kwami manje."

Joshua: "Then move in with us"

We both looked at him.

Joshua: "Theres somuch space plus I really don't think its a good idea for you to live alone ekbeni uzithwele."

Bongeka: "But...."

Joshua: "No but. I'm serious."

Bongeka: "Let me think about it then."

Joshua: "I'm sure Thandeka won't mind"

Me: "I really don't"

Joshua: "Then stay"

Someone knocked once and then walked in sonke sabukana....

Kwangena umama nge obukeka esekhulile. With bags as if she was moving in.

Her: "Wajama nje Joseph. Thatha izikhwama lezi."

Bongeka and I laughed. Joshua took the bags upstairs.

Her: "Itiye aliphuzwa layikhaya"

Me: "Ngizolenza" I went to the kitchen.

Her: "Niyaphila kodwa makoti?" she spoke to Bongeka.

Bongeka: "Siyaphila, kodwa mina angiyena umakoti. UThandeka umakoti"

Her: "Uphi yena lowo Thandeka?"

Bongeka: "Lo osekhishini."

Her: "Lo owome kanje. Waze wahluleka ukukhetha uJoseph. Buka nje wena umuhle kanjani."

My heart broke, ngezwa amehlo egcwala izinyembezi.

Bongeka: "UJoshua noThandeka bayathandana futh bayafanelana."

Her: "Lo okungathi akasebenzi nje. Wome engathi isalukazi."

I finished making her tea ngalihambisa.

Her: "Ugqoke nebhlukwe nasekhanda awuthwele" she complained.

I ignored her and went upstairs. Ngahlangana noJoshua.

Joshua: "Why are you crying?"

Me: "Its nothing" I lied.

Joshua: "So you are crying for fun?"

Me: "Where is are the kids?"

Joshua: "The kids can wait. Woza sizoxoxa in private."

We went to the bedroom.

Joshua: "Tell me whats wrong."

Me: "She hates me."

Joshua: "Who? Umamncane lo ongale?"

I nodded.

Joshua: "Forget her. Umdalo wakhe sthandwa sam uyathanda ukukhuluma. She is a bitter old woman."

Me: "She thinks Bongeka should be your wife."

Joshua: "I only like her because she is your friend. I love you Thandeka. You make me feel complete sthandwa sami."

Me: "I love you too but angithandi uBongeka azohlala nathi."

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Its not healthy. I love her but I don't want her to move in with us"

Joshua: "Okay. Manje sizomtshela kanjani ukth akahambe?"

Me: "We won't. I know she will leave. She can visit as much as she likes but anga-move in."

Joshua: "We can set her up with Syabonga. They would make a great couple."

Me: "Angimazi uSyabonga."

Joshua: "Lo oyiphoyisa."

Me: "She won't like him."

Joshua: "We introduce them and then leave it like that."

Me: "I think I'm the one who should be doing this match making biz not you"

We both laughed.

Joshua: "Ungamniki uncane. But I will talk to her."

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "Uke wadla kodwa?"

Me: "I'm not hungry."

Joshua: "You need to eat Thandeka."

Me: "Nabenzenjani oTumi?"

Joshua: "The less you know the better. That chapter in our lives is closed. Lets focus on our future. Asambe uzoyodla" he took my hand saya downstairs.

Zinhle was playing with Kevin while Thando was busy chewing his thumb next to them.

Me: "Besebegezile sisi?"

Zinhle: "Cha sisi."

Me: "Ngizobageza. Come boo boo" I picked Thando up.

Joshua: "Idla kuqala. Ngizokwenzela."

Ncane: "Imihlola, uwena owenzela umfazi ukudla. Awuhlale phansi wena azenzele lona"

Joshua: "Ngiyathanda ukumenzela."

Ncane: "Ukudlisile. Ngivele ngabona."

Joshua didn't answer. He got up and went to the kitchen.

Ncane: "Unesibindi bo. Wenzelwa yindoda ukudla."

Bongeka got up and went upstairs.

Zinhle: "Ignore her."

I nodded ngaqhubeka ngadlalisa uThando.

Joshua came back with food wanginika ngadla.

Ncane: "Uphi uJulia?"

Joshua: "Uyabhukuda eskoleni."

Ncane: "Oh. Manje wena ziph ezakho izingane? Phela lezi ezikaJoshua."

Me: "Anginazo."

Ncane: "Ugugiswa yini pho ekbeni ungazele noma uyazikhipha"

Me: "Yebo ngiyazikhipha." I got up and went to put the plate in the kitchen.

Joshua: "Ngikuhlonipha impela Ncane kodwa angeke ukhulume nomama wabantwana bam kanje. UThandeka ngiyamthanda, kuzomele ukwamukele lokho."

Ncane: "Mxm."

I went back to them ngafika ngathatha ingane and went to give him a bath waqeda ngamenzela ukudla and gave him to Joshua wamfunza mina ngageza uKevin naye ngamupha ibhodlela wancela waqeda walala. Joshua brought Thando naye eselele.

Joshua: "Our little boys."

Me: "They are cute."

Joshua went quiet wangibuka.

Me: "What?"

Joshua: "I'm worried about you."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "We can't ignore what you went through."

Me: "I don't want counseling."

Joshua: "But you have too. You can't bottle up everything."

Me: "I'm not bottling anything up. I'm fine Joshua."The drug is still in your system."

Me: "Then I will worry when it happens."

Joshua: "Okay" he kissed my lips slowly.

Me: "I want to do the laundry" I told him between the kiss.

Joshua: "I will be quick"

Me: "Not here."

Joshua: "Why not?"

Me: "Izingane. Amanyala lawo."

Joshua: "Okay come with me" we left the room and went to his private shooting room.

Me: "When are you changing this room?"

Joshua: "To what?"

Me: "Any room. Just get rid of the guns."

Joshua: "Okay I will make it a play room for the kids."

Me: "Thank you."

Joshua: "You beautiful."

Me: "Ngisho kuthiwa ngigugile?"

Joshua: "Ignore her. Nami uyangicika kodwa she is family and I can't kick her out."

Me: "Maybe I should go home aswel."

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "To rest and spend time with my family."

Joshua: "Mina ngizosala nobani?"

Me: "Noncane wakho."

Joshua: "Aw kahle sthandwa sami. Please don't do that."

Me: "Kodwa yazi kumele ngilungise izimali zami kuqala."

Joshua: "In what manner?"

Me: "Invest some of it."

Joshua: "Eyakho yonke.u R3 milion owakho wonke."

Chapter 116.

After doing the nasty with Joshua we went to shower and then I went to start on dinner while Joshua went to fetch Julia from her swimming classes. That rude woman was watching tv kanti uBongeka went out and told me not to wait up. Obviously naye wayebalekela isihogo lesi. I cooked and then went to chill with my laptop just browsing the net and looking for potential investments opportunities.

Ncane: "Uyasebenza yini?"

Me: "Cha ngiwuyekile umsebenzi"

Ncane: "Yini indaba"

Me: "Senginemali eyanele."

She went quiet wangibuka. I pretended not to notice ngaqhubeka nezinto zami.

Ncane: "Unezandla ezinkulu, umzimba uwukhandlelani?"

I looked at my hands totally confussed.

Ncane: "Iminwe yakho iyakhombisa ukth kufanele ngabe umkhulu kodwa manje umncane, uyajima yin?"

Me: "Cha angijimi"

Ncane: "Pho udliwa yini umzimba."

Me: "Ukuguga" I regreted my response the moment I had said it. I could see that she was hurt by my response.

Me: "Bengixakekile, ingakho nje ngizacile."

Ncane: "Bekwenzenjani? UJoseph yena engakusizi ngani?"

Me: "Bengingaxakiwe izimali. Bengixakwe izimfihlo namanga."

She went quiet waze wabambelela esihlathini. I went on with my research. I wasn't sure if I was doing the right thing about quitting my job but I knew that I wanted to be a mother to the kids.

Joshua came back hours later, I could tell there was something wrong the moment they walked in.

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "She won't tell me whats wrong."

I nodded ngacisha i-stove and then went upstairs to Julia's room. I knocked few times and then walked in ngamfica ekhala ehleli phansi.

Me: "Can I sit?"

Julia: "Okay"

Me: "Want to share what ever thats making you cry?"

She blushed. My mind told me It was a boy.

Me: "Its just us girls. Share with me"

Julia: "I'm afraid" she whispered.

Me: "Theres nothing to be afraid off. Talk to mummy."

She wiped the tears with the sleeve of her top.

Julia: "Ashaan came to school with his older brother's phone and he was showing all the boys."

Me: "Showing them what?"

Julia: "You and daddy naked"

My heart fell and my throat went dry kwangaphuma nezwi. My heart filled with more hate for my cousin and Sbu. Ngethuka ngoba uJulia esengisula izinyembezi.

Julia: "I'm sorry mommy"

Me: "Its okay my love. Awulambanga?"

Julia: "Cha"

Me: "But I'm sure you are tired. How about you go take a bath and rest a bit?"

She nodded wasukuma wayogeza. I got up and went downstairs aswel.

Joshua: "Ukhalelani MaMyeza?"

Me: "Its nothing" I couldn't exactly tell him infront of her. And as if she knew this wavele wasukuma.

Ncane: "Ake ngiybheka abazukulu" she went upstairs. Ngalinda nje waze wasithela.

Me: "A kid at school brought a cellphone and you won't believe what was in it"

Joshua: "Porn?"

Me: "Us. You and me."

Joshua cursed quietly.

Joshua: "And she hates us?"

Me: "Not really but she is hurt."

Joshua: "I hate them."

Me: "Me too."

Joshua: "Akasabuyeli uJulia eskoleni."

Me: "Cha akabuyele. The video is out there Joshua. Manje uzongafundi ngenxa yayo?"

Joshua: "Manje uzoba yihlaya for how long?"

Me: "There's no need for you to shout at me"

Joshua: "I'm sorry. I should have killed Duma."

Me: "You are a changed man Joshua."

Joshua: "What are we going to do?"

Me: "Go to the school and talk to the principal."

He got up and took his keys.

Joshua: "Asambe"

Me: "It's Saturday afternoon. Sizoya Monday."

He sat down, defeated.

Joshua: "Maybe I should send her to boarding school."

Me: "So she can feel neglected? I don't think so. I will find a way to help my daughter deal with this."

Joshua: "Thank you." he held my chin and then kissed my lips. We kissed for a while sathuswa umuntu ohlala phansi kanti uNcane kaJoshua. We both pulled away and wished the ground could open up and drop us in.

Ncane: "Qhubekani bantabami. Ninganginaki mina. Anilwi nikhombisa ukuthandana."

Joshua cleared her throat and sat up straight.

Me: "Ngisayobheka izingane"

Joshua: "Woza ngikukhapse"

We both went upstairs.

Me: "That was awkward."

Joshua: "Very. But I'm not done with you yet." he grabbed my arm and pushed me against the wall.

Me: "Not here. We don't want Julia to be traumatised at school and at home as well."

Joshua: "You right."

We went to the babies room. Babelele bobabili so we went to our room.

Joshua: "Maybe we should leave the country"

Me: "And go where?"

Joshua: "Canada or Australia."

Me: "I just found my parents Joshua. I can't be that far from them."

He didn't answer instead he kissed my lips slowly. We kissed for a while until he was on top of me. His finger managed to slip inside my skirt and underwear until it found my hot and wet spot.

Joshua: "Just one round." he whispered in my ear.

I was yet to answer when his phone rang, wayithatha wayiphendula.

Joshua: "Yes ndoda" he listened for a moment and then his face changed wasuka ngisho kimi.

Me: "Whats wrong?"

Joshua: "Your mother had a heart attack. Usesibhedlela."

Me: "How bad is it?"

Joshua: "Real bad."

Me: "I'm going home Joshua" I got up and began throwing my clothes to the suitcases

Chapter 117

Joshua: "What are you doing?"

Me: "Packing, I'm going home to my mother."

he got up and came to stand in front of me.

Joshua: "Sizohamba kusasa ekhona. Its already late and I won't allow you to drive through the night"

Me: "I can't Joshua. I don't want to lose my mother. Kanti mina ngojabula nini? What did I do to deserve this"

Joshua wrapped his arms around me, I kept trying to pull away but he didn't let go. In the end I gave in and wept in his chest.

Joshua: "She will be fine." he kept whispering.

Minutes later I was a bit better.

Joshua: "I'm going to get you something to eat and a sleeping pill."

Me: "I'm not hungry and I want something stronger."

Joshua: "I'm not drugging you again. Sit down, I'll be back just now." he walked out.

I took my phone and called Lindiwe. It went straight to voicemail. I tried Nathi and it just rang.

I sat there and just cried begging God not to take my mother.

Joshua came back with food ngadla and drank the pill.

Joshua: "Try to sleep okay. I'll make the calls and find out what's happening."

I nodded ngangena embhedeni.

When I woke up the next day Joshua was sitting next to me.

Joshua: "Morning"

Me: "Morning. Did you sleep at all?"

Joshua: "Not really. Umama uhlinziwe around 3 this morning. The hospital will notify us when we can come visit"

Me: "Then we should go now." I got up but Joshua held my hand.

Joshua: "She is at NSAH"

Me: "She was transferred? But isn't that a private hospital?"

Joshua: "It is and she will receive the best treatment."

Me: "Okay, then I need to transfer for her hospital bill. I can't expect Lindiwe to pay on her own."

Joshua: "Forget that. Get ready sizohamba siyombona."

I nodded and then went to shower quickly. Ngabuya uJoshua esewenzile umbhede. I got dressed and

then went downstairs. Indlu yonke yayinephunga lamagwinya.

Ncane: "Nakhu ukudla. Hlala phansi udle." she gave me a plate.

I took the plate and looked at Joshua, he raised his eyebrows and smiled.

Ncane: "Awuwadli yini amagwinya makoti?"

Me: "Ngiyalidla, elilodwa nje lanele."

Ncane: "Aysuka hamba uyodla. Kuzobuya umzimba lona. Wena Joseph umthanda enjena?"

I looked at Joshua.

Joshua: "Ngimthanda ngisho enjani mama. Kodwa umama uqinisile sthandwa sami. You lost weight."

Me: "Mxm" I went to sit down and ate. Surprisingly it was good.

Ncane: "UJoseph uthe uphuza i-coffee. Nali-ke" she gave me a large coffee mug.

Me: "Ngiyabonga." I looked at Joshua and he looked the other way.

I ate that mountain of food not wanting to offend the poor woman.

Joshua: "Kuzofanele sidle kanje everyday"

Me: "I don't want to be fat Joseph"

Joshua: "Why not? Yazi ungaba muhle uma uyisdudla."

Me: "Really?"

Joshua: "Ngempela."

Me: "Okay, kodwa uze wazi ukthi there will be no nasty business after lights out."

Joshua: "Why?"

Me: "Ngobe ngikhathele."

Joshua: "Wee ay engathi its not a good idea at all. U-right unje."

Me: "Says the freak." we both laughed.

Ngasukuma ngaqoqa izintsha.

Ncane: "Ngizozwa. Hambani niyobona uMaDlamini esbhedlela."

Me: "Okay. Ngiyabonga."

Joshua and I left for the hospital.

Me: "She is not that bad."

Joshua: "I talked to her. Ngamchazela ngokubaluleka kwakho empilweni yami."

Me: "Thank you Joseph"

Joshua: "Don't call me that."

Me: "Why not?"

Joshua: "Angilifuni lelo gama."

Me: "So you changed it to Joshua?"

Joshua: "Its better then Joseph."

We both laughed.

Safika esbhedlela kukhona uMthunzi noLindiwe noNjabulo.

Joshua: "Any change?"

Mthunzi: "Nothing. Unjani sisi?"

I just nodded as my eyes filled with tears.

Lindiwe: "Ungakhali sisi. Uzoba right umama"

Me: "I'm so scared. I just found her and now."

Joshua: "Be strong my love. Kuzolunga."

I was praying that they were right because I didn't think I was going to be able to handle it if anything happen to her.

The nurse approached us.

Nurse: "Joshua Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "Yes"

Nurse: "Doctor Mthembu would like to have a word with you in private. Please follow me" she turned around and walked away.

Joshua: "Ngiyabuya." he followed her.

Mthunzi: "Akuve esebenzile uJoshua."

Lindiwe: "Ngempela futhi. Angazi ngabe sikuphi ukuba akasisizanga."

Me: "Wenzi?"

Lindiwe: "Uyena ofunele umama i-transfer wa lethwa lana, offered to pay the bill."

Me: "He did?"

Lindiwe: "Wanqaba ngisho sengithi atleast asihlanganise sonke."

Mthunzi and Njabulo walked away.

Me: "Manje nina nifike nini lana?"

Lindiwe: "Sifike kanye nomama."

Me: "Why would she have a heart attack now. I just found her and I can't lose her."

Lindiwe: "We won't. She will be fine, she has too."

Joshua came back.

Me: "And?"

Joshua: "Theres no change."

Me: "Bebekubizelani pho?"

Joshua: "Its not important. Baphi oNjabulo?"

Lindiwe: "Angazi. Baphumile."

Joshua: "Don't you want something to drink?"

Me: "No."

Joshua: "Wena sisi?" he looked at Lindiwe.

Lindiwe: "No. I'm okay. Thank you."

Joshua: "Okay. Ngiyabuya." he walked away.

Me: "I think he is lying."

Lindiwe: "Who?"

Me: "Joshua. He is hiding something."

Lindiwe: "You being paranoid."

Me: "I'm not. I just hope its not about my mum"

Chapter 118.

Joshua Cebekhulu.

I watched Thandeka sleeping. Something I always do when she sleeps. The difference was the fact that this time she had her head in my lap as she slept in the hospital's waiting room.

She moved roughly as if she was having one of those scary dreams she always have. Her body went stiff as she fought and then relaxed again after few minutes.

"Thandeka!" I called her name. Her eyes shot open as if she wasn't asleep at all.

Me: "You were dreaming"

Thandeka: "Where am I?" she looked around.

Me: "At the hospital. Your mum is sick"

I noticed that there was something strange in her eyes. I held her chin pulling her closer to my face.

Me: "Whats with your eyes"

She pulled back and blinked fast.

Thandeka: "I'm fine." she smiled and then got up waya koNjabulo. Something was wrong with her. Her eyes don't light up like that unless she was high and lately she had been higher than usual. I didn't like drugging her but I had to. Her tears broke my heart. Ngangifuna ahlale ehleka nje.

"Joshua" Njabulo stopped my train of thought.

Me: "Mjita"

Njabulo: "Konke ku-right. Kapoor will send the heart tonight. I think kumele uthathe oLindiwe ubagodukise."

Me: "Awumtshelanga?"

Njabulo: "Nope. Relax."

Me: "You know I can't do that. Right now ngithuswa amehlo kaThandeka."

Njabulo: "Anani?"

Me: "Maybe I'm going crazy but I swear abenomlilo. Like she was high on something."

Njabulo: "Uke wamfaka something yini?"

Me: "Cha and I got rid of the drugs."

Njabulo: "So what do you think it is?"

Me: "Angazi and lately usehlale ephupha kodwa ekseni kubengathi akwenzekanga lutho."

Njabulo: "She needs therapy."

Me: "And she won't go." I looked at her as she hugged her sister as if akakaze ambone before.

Njabulo: "I hope its nothing serious. The poor woman has been through enough"

Me: "Tell me something I don't know." I got up and went to them.

Me: "I think we should head home."

Bongeka: "I think so too."

Thandeka: "I'm starving."

Me: "Ilokhu ugcine ekseni ukudla."

Thandeka: "That explains it. Can we go eat first."

I reached for her hand but she moved as if she didn't want me to touch her. This was pissing me off and everytime Thandeka piss me off I get an erection.

Me: "Can we go" I walked away first and they followed kwasala uMthunzi noNjabulo. We got into the parking lot uLindiwe wangena emotweni kaBongeka and I expected Thandeka to ride with me but she got into her best friend's car. I got into my car and drove straight home. Zinhle was playing with Thando.

Zinhle: "How is she?"

Me: "Still the same."

Zinhle: "It must be hard for Thandeka."

Me: "Yeah it is." I looked at my watch and then sat down.

Zinhle: "You look nervous"

Me: "I have a lot in my mind. Where is Julia?"

Zinhle: "Upstairs doing her homework."

I nodded and got up. I wanted to go check what was keeping Thandeka and her friends. My mind began getting these disturbing thoughts of them being injured in a nasty car accident. As a man few things

scared me and one of them was losing Thandeka. I didn't admit this to my friends because I didn't want them to think I had gone soft but yeah, the thought of losing Thandeka kept me awake at night.

A car pulled up outside and my heart smiled. I waited for them to walk in and they did except for Thandeka ofcause.

Me: "Uphi uMaMyeza?"

Bongeka: "She went to the beach. For some strange reasons she wanted to go there."

Lindiwe: "She is acting strange."

Me: "Strange how?"

Bongeka: "She acted like akakaze asibone before. Nangendlela asibuka ngayo iyangithusa."

Lindiwe: "Me too and she chew a gum."

Me: "Theres nothing strange about that. People chew all the time."

Bongeka: "Thandeka doesn't chew a gum. Wathi ukhandwa ngo-plastic nethayi lemoto." she rolled her eyes exactly like Thandeka would do.

Me: "So what do you think is wrong with her?"

Lindiwe: "I really don't know."

I took my phone and dialled her number. It rang for a while before she picked up.

Thandeka: "Yes"

Me: "Where are you?"

Thandeka: "Who am I talking to?"

Me: "You not funny. Come home Thandeka"

Thandeka: "Ey angimazi uThandeka bhuti. Wrong number" she hung up.

I stared at my phone ngangakholwa ukth she hung up on me. I tried again and it just rang until it went to voicemail.

Me: "I know you ladies are tired but can you take me where you dropped her off?"

Bongeka: "Yeah sure." she took her car keys ngaphuma ngamlandela. We drove in silent saze safika olwande ngehla ngayomcinga. I was beyond pissed and I wanted to bend her over and fuck the childish stunt out of her.

After searching up and down I finally spotted her. She was sitting on the sand ebuka emanzini. She

looked like someone who just lost her whole world. I went to her ngafika ngahlala eduze kwakhe.

"Thandeka" I called out her name and she sat still. My hand reached for her shoulder and she turned and gave me the strange look. Once again I saw fire in her eyes.

Me: "Uthuleleni ngikubiza?"

Thandeka: "Ufunani kimi."

Me: "Whats wrong with you?"

Thandeka: "Nothing. Leave me alone." she punched me.

Chapter 119.

I managed to calm her down sahamba sayongena emotweni.

Thandeka: "Can you take me shopping?"

Me: "Its sunday afternoon. Where exactly would you like to shop?" I was annoyed but I tried to hide it.

Bongeka: "Aybo kuvaliwe ezitolo manje."

Thandeka went quiet engath akazwanga.

We drove home safika sehla wangena and went straight upstairs. Thina sasala noZinhle.

My phone rang ngabheka ukth uban ofonayo. It was Njabulo.

Me: "Mjita"

Njabulo: "Everything is in place, how is Thandeka?"

I seriously didn't know how to answer this question.

Me: "Ey bafo angazi."

Njabulo: "Have you called a doctor?"

Me: "And say what? How do I explain this without sounding stupid."

Njabulo: "Maybe its the stress"

Me: "What if she is possessed?"

Njabulo: "By what? Evil spirits?"

Me: "Those things."

Njabulo: "Then we will take her to church."

Me: "Izinto azifuni ukulunga yazi."

Njabulo: "Zizolunga ndoda. We managed to get Mrs Myeza a heart, we will get help for her daughter aswel. Relax. The doctor is here I have to go. Sharp"

Me: "Sharp" We hung up.

I was still sitting playing with Kevin when Thandeka walked downstairs wearing some real short pants. The kind that you don't need to bend over in order to show your butt cheek. I felt a cold sweat run down my spine. The other ladies went quiet, I'm sure they were waiting for my reaction.

Thandeka: "How do I look?" she turned around.

Me: "I love your shoes and vest. Where are you off to?" I tried to sound calm and collected.

Thandeka: "Clubbing ofcause"

Lindiwe: "While umama egula esbhedlela?"

Thandeka: "Ngimdala dade. You don't tell me what to do."

Me: "Don't you need some money?"

Thandeka: "I do"

Me: "Asambe soyithatha upstairs" I got up sahamba. The moment we got in I locked the door ngafaka ukhiye ephaketheni.

Me: "Where do you think you going?" I held her upper arm sinking my nails in.

Thandeka: "You hurting me." she tried to pull away but my grip was tight.

Me: "Take those damn things off." I expected her to cry but she didn't.

Thandeka: "Okay, i will change" I let go of her arm ngahlala phansi.

She began taking her clothes off wasala ngezicathulo kuphela. UCebekhulu was standing firm for attention.

Thandeka: "It seems he likes what he sees." she pointed my erection.

Me: "I guess so"

Thandeka: "Maybe theres something I can do about it." she touched my belt. I didn't need a transilator, i got up and took my clothes off aswel. When I reached for her chin she pushed me back to bed and went straight for my dick.

I grabbed her hair.

Me: "Who are you?"

Thandeka: "Shit, you hurting me. Whats wrong with you?"

Me: "Who are you? I know you are not my wife."

Thandeka: "Really, and how would you know?"

Me: "Whats happening?"

Thandeka: "I just wanted to please you."

Me: "You acting strange. As if something else has taken over your body."

Thandeka: "I'm trying to cope with the reality Joshua."

Now I felt really bad for doubting her. It was my Thandeka.

Me: "I'm sorry then" I reached for her lips and gave her a passionate kiss. We kissed for a while and then I gently laid her down and got between her legs.

Me: "I'm sorry for doubting you. Ukuth nje you were acting strange."

Thandeka: "I know and I'm sorry too."

I pushed myself in while staring at her. It felt so good. She gasped and closed her eyes.

Me: "You okay?"

Thandeka: "Yes"

I began moving in a slow pace, kissing her neck while she wrapped her arms around me. I kept going picking up the pace until I felt her reach her point of no return. I opened my eyes and looked at her. She was beautiful. I felt my heart smile at the thought of having her in my life. I couldn't hold on anymore, I gathered her body in my arms and reached my own climax"

Me: "I love you Thandeka"

Without any warning she pushed me so hard ngayoshayisa edongeni and fell on the floor.

Thandeka: "You just had to mention her name nx" she got up and went to the bathroom.

I got up and sat on the bed my body in pain. I didn't understand what had just happened.

My phone rang ngasukuma ngayibheka ngayithola. It was Ntokozo.

Me: "Mfethu"

Ntokozo: "I just talked to Njabulo and uthi umkakho akaphilanga."

Me: "Ey mfethu angisazi manje."

Ntokozo: "Kanti kwenzekeni?"

I told him the whole thing beside being pushed to the wall.

Ntokozo: "Akanalutho. Nidinga umuntu ohlolayo."

Joshua: "What for?"

Ntokozo: "You said Thandeka was a twin. Uphi njengamanje?"

Me: "In the bathroom"

Ntokozo: "Uyalazi igama lewele lakhe?"

Me: "Thandiwe. You don't think she is....."

Ntokozo: "Mbize ngoThandiwe and see."

I got up and went to the bathroom ngavula ischabha.

Me: "Thandeka" she didn't move at all. Kwangathi akazwanga. I repeated few times and she just stood there under the shower wangasho lutho.

Me: "Thandiwe"

She turned around with a huge smile on her face.

Okay this was freaky even for me. I took a step back and walked out.

Me: "Thats impossible."

Ntokozo: "I'm on my way." he hung up.

"Joshua"

My heart almost stopped when I heard her call my name.

Thandiwe: "Did you call me?".

Chapter 120.

Ntokozo came with a woman who began praying the moment she walked in. After the prayer she told us that we needed to take Thandiwe and Thandeka back home ukuze bezokwenzelwa isiko and acknowledge Thandiwe because she felt left out, but kwakumele umama wabo alulame kuqala before all

that could take place. She explained that as long Thandiwe was happy then she was harmless and if she gets angry that meant she could hurt Thandeka's body. After she explained all that Lindiwe called her father to let him know and then everybody went to bed. Ntokozo left with the woman.

I sat there staring into space. Ngakhumbula izinto uThandeka angitshela zona. All this time kwakungihlupha ukth why yena enamabhadi amangaka kanti ulaka lwabakubo. They were being unfair though. Its not like she knew about Thandiwe.

After sitting there for 3 hours I got up, switched the lights off and went upstairs. The lights were still on in the bedroom so I figured she was still up. I knocked and then walked in.

Thandiwe: "Usabhekile?"

Me: "Yep and nawe awulele. What are you doing?"

Thandiwe: "Doing some online shopping."

Me: "Why?"

Thandiwe: "Women love shopping"

Me: "But Thandeka doesn't"

Thandiwe: "She love flowers, swimming, mountain climbing and she loves you. Thats my sister"

Me: "I love her too"

Thandiwe: "But you hurt her, you don't trust her, you want to own her like she is a piece of land."

That hurt, a lot infact.

Me: "You are being harsh."

Thandiwe: "No, I'm just telling you the truth. You don't like that?"

Me: "I guess I have to swallow it, with bitterness and all."

Thandiwe: "Be a man about it"

Me: "Sometimes I don't mean it, ngivele ngibe nesikhwele."

Thandiwe: "You can't punish her for someone else's mistakes. Yes they hurt you but you don't have a right to hurt her."

Me: "I'm sorry then."

Thandiwe: "So, you want to sleep?"

Me: "Here?"

Thandiwe: "Yes."

Me: "No, its okay I will sleep on the couch"

She laughed, not just a giggle but a loud and annoying laugh.

Me: "For a hardcore gangster, you are a coward." she got up and took her clothes off. I stood there and watched my wife's body and I sort of expected it to turn me on like it always does but it didn't. I turned around and walked out ngayolala kwelinye i-room eli empty. I missed her.

The next day I woke up after 8. Zinhle had taken Julia to school. Ncane was busy with the kids and Thandiwe making breakfast. She was dressed in a short dress. It hugged her body like a sock and I wasn't amused.

Me: "Morning"

Thandiwe: "Morning to you to. Breakfast is almost ready."

Me: "What are you wearing?"

She looked at me but said nothing.

Me: "Thandiwe!"

Thandiwe: "Don't start. I'm not your wife."

Me: "But you are exposing my wife's body."

She didn't respond. Instead she took the food and walked out. After few minutes we all went to sit down and ate. I wasn't hungry, I was nervous about Mrs Dlamini's operation. She had to pull through. I looked at Thandiwe as she played around with her food, as if she felt my eyes on her she looked up and smiled.

Me: "Thandeka"

Everybody looked at me. She looked down again and when she looked up again it was back to Thandiwe's burning eyes.

Me: "Stop doing that."

Thandiwe: "Why not? Its fun."

I took all my strength not to get up and strangle her.

Lindiwe: "Kwenzenjani manje?"

I ignore her. Ngavele ngasukuma and took my car keys to leave.

Thandiwe: "Can we go shopping?" she looked at Bongeka. I looked her nganikina ikhanda.

Bongeka: "I'm not feeling well."

Thandiwe: "Wena Lindiwe?"

Lindiwe: "My mother, who happens to be your mother as well is fighting for her life esbhedlela. So shopping is the last thing on my mind" she got up and walked upstairs.

I looked at Thandiwe and her eyes filled with tears ngavele ngaphatheka kabi.

Me: "I'll take you but in one condition"

Thandiwe: "Name it"

Me: "Cover up. Wear something lady like."

Thandiwe: "Done"

Me: "And stop switching. I miss my wife and when you do that you hurt me."

Thandiwe: "I'm sorry."

Me: "Its cool. Go change"

She basically ran upstairs.

Bongeka: "Uvumeleni?"

Me: "She was crying. I hate her tears."

Bongeka: "I miss my friend too."

Me: "When her mother recovers, I'll make sure I get my Thandeka back."

My phone rang. It was Njabulo.

Me: "Any news?"

Njabulo: "The operation was successful."

Me: "Thank God."

Njabulo: "Where is my woman? Akayibambi ifoni."

Me: "Ukhona. I'll get her to call you."

Njabulo: "Please do and nami ngicabanga ukuthatha uMthunzi siyolala kancane."

Me: "Umqondo o-right lowo. I'll be there just now."

Njabulo: "Cool, sharp" he hung up.

I went upstairs to inform Thandiwe about the change of plans. She wasn't in a room. I went to check the other rooms until I heard voices in the spareroom.

Lindiwe: "You want everything to be about you."

Thandiwe: "Maybe I want Thandeka to acknowledge me aswel. I'm part of her."

Lindiwe: "So you had to hijack her body? Thats just low even for a dead you."

Thandiwe: "What else was I suppose to do? Just butt out or I will kill her."

Chapter 121.

When I heard Thandiwe say that I had to act.

Me: "Maybe Lindiwe should move to Thandeka's place."

Lindiwe: "Why me? Why kungahambi lo ozenza uThandeka already."

Me: "Lindiwe please"

Lindiwe: "No Joshua. Why should we jump just because she decided to ruin my sister's life."

Thandiwe: "Ruin? You don't know what Thandeka and I been through."

Lindiwe: "I know everything that Thandeka went through."

Thandiwe: "Really? Where were you when she was dumped on the side of the road in the middle of nowhere? Were you there?"

Lindiwe: "You weren't there either. Uvela ngoba konke seku-right."

Thandiwe: "I was there. I was the one who comforted her when Thulani and his father raped her repeatedly. You weren't there. I have every right to be here. I need my sister to acknowledge me."

Me: "Comforted her how?"

Thandiwe: "Like I'm doing right now. Excuse me" she turned to walk away but I held her arm.

Me: "You mean you....." I couldn't say it.

Thandiwe: "Yes. Sometime I took her place but the fact that they were hurting her body meant she will feel the pain when we switched back."

Me: "So awuqali manje ukuvela?"

Thandiwe: "No and I've been trying to kill her ever since."

Lindiwe and I gasped in shock at the same time.

Lindiwe: "Why?"

Thandiwe: "Nobody knows or even understand the pain Thandeka went through. I just wanted her to rest." I let go of her arm waphuma wahamba.

Lindiwe: "I'm sorry Joshua. I was just annoyed because she was acting like everything is okay."

Me: "Its okay. I understand." I sat down, resting my head on my hands. Something else popped in my head. If Thandiwe had taken over Thandeka's before that meant there was a chance that I've been with Thandiwe and thought I was with my wife.

I got up and went downstairs but she wasn't there.

Me: "Uphi uMaMyeza?"

Ncane: "Upstairs. Uhambe noThando." I nodded and went back upstairs to my son's room. She was there. I walked in and pretended not to notice that she was crying.

Me: "Ulele?"

Thandiwe: "Yebo."

Me: "So you want to take a drive?"

Thandiwe: "Just ask"

Me: "Waze ngani ukth ngizobuza something?"

Thandiwe: "Its Thandeka's secret."

Me: "So she is with you?"

Thandiwe: "Yes"

Me: "Can she hear me?"

Thandiwe: "Every word but she may not remember somethings."

Me: "She didn't try to kill herself. You did?"

Thandiwe: "Yes."

Me: "The car crash?"

Thandiwe: "Yes."

Me: "Why?"

Thandiwe: "Because wayesebuyela kwaMemela, trying to make peace with people who destroyed her."

Me: "And the pills?"

Thandiwe: "Again that was me."

Me: "How?"

Thandiwe: "That's my secret."

Thando made a sound sobabili sambheka. He didn't wake up though.

Me: "I need to know something."

Thandiwe: "I won't try again." she smiled a bit.

Me: "You do know that uma niqeda ukwenzelwa usiko wena uzophuma kuye."

Thandiwe: "Yes."

Me: "And you won't come back?"

Thandiwe: "That rest in your hands buddy"

Me: "Meaning?"

Thandiwe: "Only touch my sister soft Joshua, don't beat her up."

That hurt me and my damn ego but I nodded.

Me: "Can we go see your mother?"

Thandiwe: "Okay. Let me go change."

Me: "Make sure you cover up."

She laughed and walked out. I sat down and watched my son sleeping. Deep down I prayed that he doesn't grow up and be like me.

Safika esibhedlela bavumela uThandiwe yedwa ukuthi angene and I honestly didn't mind at all. I sat down in the waiting room ngamlinda. She came back after an hour.

Thandiwe: "Can we go?"

Me: "You okay?"

Thandiwe: "Can we go to the beach?"

Me: "Awulambanga?"

Thandiwe: "No."

Me: "You just like her."

Thandiwe: "I'm her Joshua."

Me: "You know what I mean. Asambe."

We drove to the beach safika sahlala esihlabathini sabuka ulwandle.

A pregnant lady walked by. I stared at her and felt my heart break.

Thandiwe: "It was better this way." she spoke in a low tone.

Me: "What?"

Thandiwe: "Thandeka's baby. It was best that he didn't live."

Me: "Why?"

Thandiwe: "It would have killed her every single day. Just imagine nje wena uhlale ujamele ingane yomdlwenguli wakho."

Me: "What do you mean yomdlwenguli? Thandeka and Thulani were dating when she fell pregnant."

Thandiwe: "Is that what she told you? Thandeka never loved Thulani. She just wanted someone to be there for her and that pig took an advantage."

Me: "So Thandeka was that lonely?"

Thandiwe: "Lonely is an understatement. That woman was never there Joshua. Who leaves a 10 year old alone for days? She had to learn to cook because if she didn't wayezobulawa indlala."

Me: "And you were there all the time?"

Thandiwe: "Yes. Esemncane she use to see me. But then she grew up wakhohlwa yimi but I never did."

Me: "She has a lot to deal with."

Thandiwe: "Force her to go for counselling. She needs it."

I was yet to answer when my phone rang. I didn't recognise the number.

Me: "Hellow"

Lady: "Mr Cebekhulu. I'm calling in connection with Mrs Myeza. We need to you to come to the hospital."

Me: "Did something happen?"

Lady: "I'm not allowed to say."

Me: "Okay I will be there." she hung up.

Me: "Kuzomele siyesibhedlela. Its about your mum"

Chapter 122.

Thandeka Myeza- Cebekhulu.

6 Months later.

A cool breeze brushed against my skin, I didn't want to wake up just yet but I had to. So I opened my eyes and sat up. The sliding door was opened as Joshua stood in the balcony watching the ocean. He was half naked showing a tattoo in the back of his neck. I got up and wore his t-shirt and went to join him.

Joshua: "You up?"

Me: "Yep. I'm starving"

Joshua: "Shall we order or sehle Mrs Cebekhulu?" he reached out for my hand.

Me: "We can order."

Joshua: "I'll go make the call." he went inside. I stood there and watched the ocean. For the first time in my life I wasn't afraid to be happy. It felt like I was writing a new chapter in my life. A chapter that was filled with joy and happiness.

Joshua: "Are those tears that I see?" he hugged me from behind.

Me: "Happy tears."

Joshua: "Its better be otherwise I'm booking us a flight back home."

Me: "Why?"

Joshua: "Sikwi honeymoon sthandwa sami. Akumele uphatheke kabi nje at all."

Me: "I'm happy Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "And I'm glad. I love you Mrs Cebekhulu"

Me: "I love you more Mr Cebekhulu."

Joshua: "Its like a dream. A dream I never want to wake up from."

Me: "But It wasn't easy. Especial the Thandiwe part."

Joshua: "Ey phela leyo yangithusa kakhulu. Kwathi khona sekuthiwa asize esibhedlela ngathuka kakhulu kanti sizothola ezimnandi, wasinda umama wakho nawe wenzelwa isiko. And today usungowakwaCebekhulu."

Me: "And I love being your wife."

Joshua smiled and then kissed my shoulder.

We stood there in silent saze sathuswa ukukhala kwefoni.

Me: "Thats my phone. Let me go answer it"

Joshua: "And hurry back to my arms."

We both laughed ngayophendula ifoni.

Me: "Yes"

Bongeka: "How is Brazil?"

Me: "Beautiful. Namanje angikakholwa ukth ngishadile Bongeka. Its like I'm dreaming."

Bongeka: "You better get use to it dear. UsungokaCebekhulu manje wena."

Me: "And I'm loving it."

Bongeka: "You deserve it my friend."

Me: "How is Thula?"

Bongeka: "Please don't get me started on him. I owe Joshua big time for match making us. He is such a blessing. how many guys would love a pregnant woman oe"

Me: "I know ey. But God always has a plan."

Bongeka: "I know. Anyway let me go now. Akumele engabe ngiyaniphazamisa nje kwakona. Was just checking ukth ni-right yini"

Me: "And thank you. Please kiss my kids for me and tell my mum that I miss her."

Bongeka: "I will. I love you bye"

Me: "I love you too. Bye" We hung up.

Joshua: "Ubani lo onenhlanhla kangaka?"

Me: "Iskhwele Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "I'm allowed. Bayaphila ekhaya?"

Me: "Yep. Ngiyabonga Joshua."

Joshua: "For?"

Me: "I know you organised a heart for my mother."

Joshua: "Thandiwe?"

Me: "Yes. After we switched back sesenzelwa imbeleko I saw her and we talked."

Joshua: "I'm glad. After that you never saw her again?"

Me: "Ngike ngimphuphe engathi usendaweni enhle nje."

Joshua: "Doing what?"

Me: "Picking the flowers and she looks happy."

Joshua: "Just like you look happy too."

Me: "And I have every reason to feel and look like that. I married the man that I love, I have 3 kids, I found my family and they love me. Kumele ngijabule."

Joshua: "And nami ngijabule" he reached for the back of my neck and pulled me closer before kissing my lips. A knock stopped us. Joshua went to check kwangena ukudla.

After eating we went to freshen up and then went out for our walk in the beach. I was loving every moment and taking pictures to ensure that we were creating the best time for us. I didn't know what the future had in store for us but I was ready to find out as I began my journey of being MRS CEBEKHULU.

Me: "I love you Mr Cebekhulu"

Joshua: "I love you too Mrs Cebekhulu."

The End.

#####

Another Dead Rose.

Chapter1

"Need help with your bags miss?" asked the driver.

"Its okay. I'll manage" I dragged my heavy luggage towards the entrance. I couldn't exactly say it was the door because it was huge like a gate. I stood for a minute just revising my speech in my head and looking

around. It was a beautiful mansion.

"This is it Phelisa. No turning back" I took a deep breath and rang the bell. Almost immediately the door opened and an almost teenager looking boy with a huge smile welcomed me in.

"Mum. There is a lady at the door." he picked up a lighter bag while I struggled with a huge one.

"Oh Miss Phelisa usufikile" a sweet like melody voice called upstairs.

I raised my head and gasped. Mrs Cebekhulu was standing on top of the stairs dressed in a gold sleeveless dress and black 4 inch pumps. She was beautiful, more beautiful than the pictures I saw.

"Leave those there. My husband will bring them in." she waved as she began walking gracefully downstairs.

"Kevin where is Thando?" she asked the boy who let me in.

"Upstairs with dad. Ngibalande?" he asked already making his way upstairs.

"Yebo babize. Ubize noJulia" she addressed him and then turned her attention towards me.

"You look younger than I expected but I'm not complaining." she smiled. I think I blushed because suddenly I was warm around the face.

"I hope uhambe kahle." she talked again. I'm sure she thought I was nuts because I wasn't responding.

"It was a pleasant journey" I tried to sound upper class as well.

"But I'm sure ukhathele. What can I get you?" she smiled again.

"A glass of water" I looked at my feet.

"Nonsense, do you drink coke? I think we have coke only. My husband is obsessed with it. Come let's make you something to eat" her hand brushed against my elbow.

"Yiyo lenkosazana echaze umfana wami"

We both looked up. The mighty Joshua Cebekhulu stood there and smiled at us. He didn't age a bit. He was still beautiful as ever. His long dreadlocks tied at the back of his neck.

"They grow up. Uyena lo u-miss Phelisa. Uphi uJulia?" Mrs Cebekhulu asked smiling at her husband.

"I'm here mum" a young lady appeared upstairs.

"She was on the phone" the boy joined in.

"I was not" she shot back.

"She was" the little guy ran and hid behind his father.

"Welcome to our household. There's never a dull moment." Mr Cebekhulu said looking at his wife. They looked at each other smiling like they were sharing a secret joke. How I wish I had someone who looked at me like that.

"The kitchen is that way." Mrs Cebekhulu smiled at her husband.

I followed her turning to steal a glance at her husband behind her back. My heart fell when I realised that he wasn't even looking at me. He was busy with his daughter. I walked to their huge kitchen. It was beautiful and very homey.

"I hope you can cook dear." she spoke.

"Yes I can." I responded.

"That's good. Because there will be time where you will need to do it." she spoke while busy making sandwichies.

"Can I help?" I felt stupid just standing there watching her.

"No. Sit dear and relax. You have to feel at home." she smiled again.

I pulled a high chair and sat.

"MaMyeza" Mr Cebekhulu walked in.

"Almost done." she spoke without even looking at him.

"Miss Phelisa, excuse my wife. Asambe singaze sibe-late" He held her hand gently pulling away.

"Usuyoxola dear. Sisahamba. Julia will show you around." she gave me a plate and a glass of coke.

"And the kitchen is yours." Mr Cebekhulu said as they walked out. I watched them leave and then picked up my phone sending a quick text to my boss. He didn't respond and I didn't mind.

"When you're done, follow me. I'll show you your room." Julia spoke standing in the doorway.

"Oh thank you." I got up and followed her.

My phone. Bad timing, I decided to ignore it.

"You can answer. I will give you some privacy." she pointed the closed door.

"Thank you" I rushed in answering the phone.

"I'm in" I answered.

"Good. Now remember what we talked about." he instructed.

"They are such nice people." I responded.

"Phelisa, your job is to get Joshua. Anginendaba nokuba nice kwabo. I want that dog to beg for forgiveness. And you my dear you should be happy. You will get to be fucked by the mighty Joshua Cebekhulu. Stay there and enjoy the dick" he hung up.

I took a deep breath. And looked around the room. It was beautiful. Like a five star hotel.

"This is it Phelisa. Just do your job and your job is to win Joshua Cebekhulu's heart and distroy Thandeka Myeza's heart." I was going to hurt the kids but they will get over it. My boss wanted the results and I had to deliver. I smiled when Joshua's image crossed my mind. I longed to feel his touch, kiss his lips and ride that dick for the finals. I imagined Thandeka moaning against his lips. I could feel my chest closing in. I was going to cry for someone elses husband. The man I was hired to seduce and distroy, the man I was afraid to fall inlove with and the man my boss hated with such passion. I didn't know why, and I wasn't allowed to ask questions

Page2.

After settling in I changed my clothes. I wore a floral skirt and a red vest that hugged my figure. Julia knocked and asked to show me around because she was going out. I followed her around as she pointed the room.

"You are allowed in all the rooms except those who are locked and mum's bedroom." she instructed.

"Okay. So can I cook?" I asked as we went downstairs.

"Knock yourself out but Kevin doesn't like food. Mum is the only one who knows how to make him eat, so don't feel bad when he rejects your food." she smiled as her phone beeped.

"Your date?"

"Yes and I'm gone. I'll be back later." she took her bag on the couch and left.

I went back upstairs checking the boys. Thando was playing the game on big screen and Kevin was playing a ping pong game against the wall. I smiled at them and went back downstairs to cook. If I wanted Joshua to give me a second glance I needed to win him and what better way to win a man other than through his stomach. I made a chicken stew and rice adding boiled spinach and green beans. Mrs Cebekhulu had a huge kitchen and it had everything that any woman may need. When I finished cooking I went upstairs to take a bath. I was walking down the passage when I realised that Julia forgot to point one room. I was curious about the locked rooms. What were they hiding? I was going to find out.

I approached the door, turning the knob slowly and it wasn't locked. I pushed the door open and went in. The room was covered in a thick soft white carpet. The wall was painted white and a huge painting of Mrs Cebekhulu was hanging on the wall. There was a huge leather couch in the middle and a big screen tv. In the corner there was mini fridge. I went to open it and looked inside. It was fully stocked with strawberries, wine, chocolate and coca cola. I closed it went to the door to get out but my eye caught an

empty vase in the corner. I went to peak inside and it had kinky stuff. The things that people use when they spice up their sex life. It was clear that the room was used for their sex adventures.

"I don't think you should be here" a stern voice behind me. I turned around to Mr Cebekhulu's smiling face.

"I'm sorry. I...." he raised a hand and I shut up same time.

"You got curious. Its fine but next time please." he instructed.

"I won't. Excuse me" I walked out almost breaking into a run.

I had him laugh as I went to my room, locking the door behind me.

"Great, Phelisa. You almost ruined the mission before it even began. But Joshua is fine. He is sex on two legs." I smiled a little imagining us in a heated moment. A ringing phone interrupted my train of thought.

"Yes" I answered.

"And?" A voice barked in the other end.

"I've been here for few hours. You can't results already." he was being impossible.

"Have you atleast talked to him?" He barked again.

"No. Please don't rush me. You knock I panic under pressure." I warned.

"Okay fine. Just talk to him. Get close Phelisa and I know that the wife is not there. This is your chance" he ordered.

"How do you know she isn't here?" I was surprised.

"She is in some party with her rich friends. Just go to Joshua." he hung up.

"Mxm" I threw my phone on the bed and walked out. Joshua was talking on the phone with his back towards me. I needed to get his attention fast. Already the bastard was breathing down my neck.

"Aaah" I cried out as I pretended to trip and fell hitting my nose on the floor. Shit, it hurt like hell.

"I love you too." he hung up and turned to look at me."Are you okay?"

I nodded holding my throbbing nose.

"Your nose is bleeding. Let me help you up." his hand touched my upper arm lifting me up.

"Thank you" I walked to the bathroom. I knew he was following me so when I went inside I bended really low against the sink showing my thighs. He cleared his throat first.

"You need ice?" He asked.

"Yes, thank you" I rinsed the blood watching the water change from clean to bloody.

"Turn around" he instructed holding a pocket of mixed veges.

I turned around and looked at him. He pressed the cold pocket against my forehead.

"I think you need to lay down. Come" He removed the pocket and stepped aside allowing me to lead the way. I went to my room and lay on my back.

"Hold this against your forehead." he gave me the pocket. I did just that. My eyes looked at him scanning his body until I noticed that his crotch was rather huge.

"Its rude to stare" he spoke without looking at me.

I blushed and looked away.

"I think its better now." I mumbled.

"Thats good." he took the pocket and walked out.

I sat up and my heart smiled because I knew that I had an effect on Joshua. Now all I needed was to get him into my bed. I got up and changed my top. My nose was no longer bleeding so I went downstairs.

"Where is mum?" Kevin asked standing near his dad.

"She went to visit her friend." Joshua answered looking at me.

"I'm hungry" Kevin spoke again his voice sounding a bit lower now.

"I've cooked. Let me dish up for you." I went to the kitchen smiling

Page3.

The next day I woke up early. If I wanted to make a good impression on Joshua I needed to be perfect. I showered real quickly. The last thing I needed was for Joshua to see my oily face and my morning eyes. After showering I wore a summer dress showing my perfect cleavage. Puffing my exclamation perfume. I may not have puffed a million rand perfume but I knew that I was going to make a statement without saying a word. After making the bed I went downstairs.

Mr and Mrs Cebekhulu were cuddling in the couch. They both looked up when I approached.

"Morning" I greeted not stopping.

"Ulale kahle?" Mrs Cebekhulu asked.

I turned around to face them first.

"Kahle kakhulu. Ngiyabonga." I looked at Joshua who looked down.

"Are you going somewhere?" she asked.

"No" I mumbled crossing my fingers for her not to say I should change.

"Okay. But its Sunday dear. If you want to go out you are allowed. Me and the boys are going out so if you want to visit friends its cool" she smiled showing her perfect white teeth. Thandeka Cebekhulu was beautiful. Everything about her said I'm classy. I understood why her husband would want to stare at her day in and day out. Sadly I wanted the same. I wanted Joshua to look at me with those admiring eyes he looked at her with.

"I don't have friends yet. So I'll stay and prepare for tomorrow" I smiled too.

She nodded and I turned around and went to the kitchen. There was coffee so I poured myself a cup and then went upstairs to my room. I needed to talk to Azande. Her phone rang for while before she answered.

"Girl" she sounded sleepy.

"You are still in bed oe?" I sipped my coffee.

"I had a long night. So how is the boss?" she asked laughing a little.

"Sex on two feet. Some women are blessed shame." I imagined Joshua smiling.

"Have you made your move yet?" she asked again.

"Not really but sengike ngambamba engibuka oe. Its only a metter of time." I said in such a proud voice.

"Girl becareful." her voice sounded concerned.

"Why?"

"I did some research about that guys and he is a gangster oe. He may own few companies but he is a gangster." she explained.

"Aw oe. I'm used to gangsters. I can handle any gangster." I reminded her.

"Okay girl. I have to go anyway. Ube-right." she hung up.

I put my phone away. I knew that Joshua is a gang member. I did my research, watched the sex video they made 11 years ago and also did some research on the mrs. I knew she couldn't have kids because of some abuse in her childhood. I was sorted.

After an hour in my room just fantasizing about Joshua I went back downstairs. The boys were sitting on the floor eating cornflakes. Joshua was typing away in his phone looking rather pissed.

"Mr Cebekhulu, can I make you some breakfast?" I smiled at him.

"No thank you." he went back to his typing.

I went to the kitchen and Julia was there making breakfast.

"I thought mum hired you to do this. Not to hide in your room." she shouted.

"I'm sorry, I was..." she cut me off.

"Save it. Just do your damn job." she looked at me up and down.

"Julia" Joshua's stern voice cut in.

"Sorry dad" she looked down.

"Apologise to the lady not me." he ordered.

"I'm sorry Phelisa." she walked away but Joshua caught her arm before she exited the kitchen.

"Julia you maybe 23 but you are still my daughter and as my daughter I expect you to sleep in this house every night. Am I clear?" he smiled at her.

"Yes dad. Can I be excused now?" she asked trying to remove her arm from his firm grip.

"Yes. Go to your mother. She wants to talk to you." he let her go.

I turned around and pretended to be busy with breakfast until a cool hand touched my waist making me jump a little bit.

"Sorry, I didn't mean to scare you." he spoke so close to my ear.

"Its okay. And thank you for standing up for me."

"You look like a good person Phelisa and just because you are our help doesn't mean you don't have feelings." he brushed my arm and walked away. I stood there blushing away at the thought of feeling his touch.

After finishing breakfast I went to set the table. Julia came to help. I'm sure her parents gave her a speech because she looked better then before. We set the table and then called the others to eat.

"Sit and eat with us dear" Mrs Cebekhulu asked looking at her husband.

"Thank you" I sat down and noticed that Joshua was looking at me.

We ate in silent. When we were done I cleared the table and then went to do the dishes. Mrs Cebekhulu and her boys left few minutes later Julia went out aswel leaving me and Joshua. I finished cleaning the kitchen and then went to clean the lounge. He was nowhere insight so I cleaned real quickly.

When I was done I went upstairs passing the secret room door opened.

"You can come in if you want" Joshua's voice called inside.

I pushed the door wide open and walked in. He was sitting on the couch half naked.

"I really don't bite. Come closer" he ordered.

I went to sit next to him.

"You are beautiful, but I'm sure you know." he smiled cupping my chin pulling me closer.

Page4.

His lips brushed against my lips. I leaned forward going for the full kiss but he pulled away.

"Open your eyes and look at me." he ordered still holding my chin. I looked at him. Part of me expected to see lust but I saw something else. His face was smiling but his eyes were dark and scary.

"You want me to fuck you?" he spoke in a low but deep voice.

I didn't know how to answer. As much as I wanted him to fuck me I didn't expect him to be that bold about it.

"You saw my wife Phelisa. She is fine and she fucks like a pornstar. So I don't normally offer my dick to anyone unless you are really special. So I'm asking again. Do you want me to fuck you?" he brought his face closer to me.

I nodded shyly.

"Let me hear you say it" he demanded.

I cleared my throat first before saying

"I want you to fuck me"

He smiled and looked away first.

"Whats in it for me?" he asked.

"I don't understand" I looked at him.

"Well, I can't offer you my wife's dick for free. You have to give me something in return." his index finger touched my bottom lip.

"You want me to give you a blow job?" I whispered.

"Are you offering?" he asked.

"Well I give a mean one." I said in a proud voice.

"Wow thats great. But I wasn't looking for a blow job." his thumb flicked my nipple making me feel like I was leaking. I was so wet I'm sure my panties were soaked.

"Then what is it that you want?" I asked staring at him.

He looked at me for a while and then looked away.

"I've changed my mind" he stood up.

"What?" I grabbed his hand.

"The fuck offer. Its off the table." he gave me a stern look.

"But why?" I was confussed.

"You can't give me what I want" he removed my grip.

"I can. Please just tell me what is it." I begged.

He looked at me with a raised eyebrow.

"I'm sorry" I ran out embarrassed at my behavior.

After locking self in my room I sat down breathing hard. Yes I wanted Joshua to fuck me but I wasn't suppose to make myself that weak infront of him. I wanted him to want to fuck me not to throw myself at him, atleast not that obvious.

"We can't be fucking buddies if you don't have the ball Phelisa" he knocked.

I got up and went to the door with an aim to open but stopped myself.

"Open up Phelisa" he demanded.

"Why should I?" I asked leaning on the door.

"Because you want me to fuck you and I also want to fuck you." he turned the handle.

"You do?" I turned the key and opened the door. He smiled waving the condom.

"Yes I do. So can I come in?" he smiled.

I moved aside and allowed him in.

"Hold this. I need a glass of cold water" he gave me the condom and walked away. I went to take my phone and sent a quick text telling my boss that phase 1 was about to take place.

"Ready" Joshua asked holding a glass of cold water.

"Yes" I took off my dress.

He walked in and sat down still holding a glass.

"Done" I stood in front of him in my underwear.

He took a large sip of water and then stood up. He pulled me closer with his free hand and smashed his lips against mine. I opened mine wanting to taste his tongue but instead warm water filled my mouth. I tried to pull away but he held me tight until I swallowed it.

"We are about to be busy so drink up sweetheart" he took another sip and did the same thing. Again I swallowed. We repeated until the glass finished.

He threw the glass on the floor and kissed my lips furiously. My bra came off and my panties followed. I was wet and ready for him. He picked me up and gently laid me on the bed positioning himself between my legs as well. His hand touched my vagina. I held my breath as his finger slipped inside.

"You tight." he mumbled under his breath.

"That's so good" I moaned a bit moving my waist.

"Promise that you won't tell my wife." he looked at me.

I nodded with no strength to speak.

"Say it Phelisa. You won't tell my wife?"

"I won't I promise."

"Turn around and lay on your back" he ordered.

"You want to fuck my anal?" I was a virgin there and not ready to lose it at all.

"No. I'm into pussy dear. Do what I tell you." he demanded.

I turned around and lay on my back.

"Open this for me" he gave me a condom. I opened it quickly and gave it to him. He went quiet for a while. When I turned around to look at him he pushed me down.

"Don't. Just hold on."

I took the pillow and buried my head on it and got ready to receive the best fuck of my life.

"I'm sorry Thandeka. But you know what they say. I-ring eyomunwe, istifiketi esomshado but indoda eyami nami." I laughed at the thought.

Page5.

I woke up before dawn the next day. My body was exhausted like I was hit by a train. The memory of being fucked by Joshua was still fresh. He gave me multi orgasm somethin I never experienced before. I sat up and noticed that there was a note on the bedside table.

"GREAT FUCK DEAR, LOOKING FORWARD TO OUR NEXT SESSION. Love Joshua"

My heart smiled at the thought of that next session. I chew the note and went through my phone. I had few missed calls from my boss. I made a mental note to call him later. I got up and made the bed. A box of condoms was on the floor. I didn't remember much about the second round because the first round was so powerful I passed out after having a g-spot orgasm.

A sound of someone moaning stopped my wondering mind. The room next to mine was locked and Julia had told me that it was no go. I guess that meant it was the fuck room because the sound that Mrs Cebekhulu was making was clearly the sex sound.

"Again?" Joshua's deep voice asked.

"You too deep." Thandeka's voice complained.

"Hold me tight baby" he demanded. I'm sure she did because what followed was enough to make me want to scream and beg them to stop. What hurt me the most was hearing Joshua tell her how much he loved her, how good she was and beg her to hold him. Things he didn't do to me. He laid me down on my stomach and fucked me from behind. He never said anything at all. He didn't ask if I was okay like he was doing to her. I was jealous because that meant he was more concerned about her than me.

After thier sex marathon they finally stopped.

"What was that for?" she asked.

"I was missing you. I feel like I didn't see enough of you this weekend." he complained.

"I'm sorry you felt that way." she spoke in a high pitched voice giggling in between.

"I love you MaMyeza wami." Joshua's voice sounded so deep.

"I love you more Cebekhulu wami"

Tears filled my eyes. I was hurting so deep. I felt so used even though it was my fault that I seduced him. I got up and went to shower allowing tears to blend with water. 20 minutes later I was feeling better I got out and got dressed. The boys had school so I went downstairs to prepair thier uniform.

"The uniform is in the closet. Mum sorted it out last night. How are you feeling today" Julia asked sipping her coffee.

"Better thank you" I went upstairs to wake the boys. Kevin was already dressed and Thando was still bathing. I went to help him quickly before thier mother came to check. After I got both of them dressed I went to make them breakfast and thier lunch box.

"Morning" Joshua's voice made me jump. I looked at him.

"You slept well" he walked closer.

"Yes thank you" I went back to the task at hand.

"That was cold. Whats wrong?" He brushed my arm.

"Nothing." I mumbled.

He nodded and walked out.

I didn't want to act like that but I was angry. He fucked his wife in a room next to my room. He wanted me to hear them.

"Phelisa can you make my husband a cup of tea. He is in his study." she ordered.

"Okay" I closed the lunch boxes and began making the tea.

"Kevin and Thando. Qedani bo." she took the lunch boxes and left.

I finished making the tea and took it upstairs to the study.

I knocked and waited for him to open for me.

"Ngena" he called inside.

I opened the door and went in.

"You tea" I put the tea on the desk.

"Whats wrong with you today?" he asked.

"Nothing" I turned to walk away but he grabbed my arm.

"So you sulk for nothing?" he looked at me.

"Cha." I mumbled looking down.

"So you don't regret last night?" he asked.

"I don't." I looked at him.

"Pho yini wamuncu nje?"

"I heard you this morning" I whispered.

"So?" he looked at me with a raise eyebrow.

"Next to my room Joshua. Did you atleast think about me?" My voice was a bit louder.

He let go of my arm and stepped back.

"Why would I think about you when I'm making love to my wife?" he looked at me.

"So it meant nothing to you?" I was hurt.

"I'm a married woman Phelisa. I won't lie to you and say I'm going to leave my wife for you. I won't." his voice was stern.

"So you used me?" My eyes filled with tears.

"No. I gave you what you wanted." he turned and walked to his chair.

"And Phelisa, If you dare tell my wife. I will make you wish you were never born." he warned and picked up his tea.

I turned and walked out. I went straight to my room to send a text to my boss.

"THE NEXT PHASE OF THE PLAN."

Joshua messed with a wrong bitch. He was going to be mine. If not by choice then by force. Nx.

Page6.

I managed to ignore Joshua for the whole week. He was hardly around anyway. Thandeka's Birthday was coming up the following weekend so he was busy organising a surprise party with her friends. I focused on my work since I had no choice. On friday afternoon my boss asked to meet at the mall so I went to him.

"You are late" he barked before I even sat down.

"But I'm here now. So whats next?"

"You sound bitter. My guess is. He fucked you and then threw you away" He laughed.

I ignored that comment. The waiter came to take our orders. I wasn't hungry so I ordered a salad.

"Thandeka's life style rubbing on you?" he pointed my meal.

"Its a great life style" i began eating.

He ate his steak.

"This is what you will give to Mrs Cebekhulu tomorrow morning" he handed me a small container.

"How?" I took the container.

"Its her birthday tomorrow. Wake her up with a cup of tea." he rolled his eyes.

"And then I will be the first suspect?" I raised my eyebrows.

"It won't kill her. Just give it to her. Its a birthday present from me." he ate his food.

After eating I left the restaurant and called a taxi to take me home. When I got there Thandeka was already back and cooking supper. I greeted her and then went upstairs to chill with the boys. When she was done she set the table and called her family to eat. I went to my room and only went down to eat after they were done. Joshua ignored me flat.

The next day I woke up early and did the laundry. When I was done I went to clean the bedrooms because Julia and Thandeka were already making breakfast. I managed to empty the container in Thandeka's tea pot of her special tea. After that I went to clean my room and avoided being near them when the poison begin working since I didn't even know what It was. When they finished breakfast I went to make my self a bowl of cereal and ate.

"I'm planning a surprise for my wife. I'd like for you to be there aswel." Joshua stood in the doorway.

"Why?" I looked at him.

"Because it would mean a lot to my wife." he took out his wallet and gave me R2500. "Buy something formal. Its a formal dinner" he turned and walked out.

I took the cash and washed the dishes.

After lunch Mrs Cebekhulu said we are going shopping with her friends. I was happy to tag along. We went to pick up her friends and went to shop. Not once did she address me as her maid. She treated me like a friend. We bought dresses and shoes. They all bought long dresses and I bought a short one. It was a blue cocktail dress, had an open back and showed my long legs. I bought black 6inch open toe pumps. After the shopping we went to eat and then went home.

Joshua and the boys weren't there. There were flowers all over the place. I felt jealousy strike but I forced myself to smile and be happy for her. Mrs Cebekhulu suggested we both take a long hot bath before her evening began. I agreed and went to my room. I decided to call my boss and ask why the drugs weren't working.

"She is not going to drop dead. Just be patient." he shouted and then hung up. I threw my phone on the bed and went to the bathroom but a small box on the pillow got my attention. I went to open it and it was a string of large pearls. I knew they were from Joshua because there was a card signed J. Atleast I was somewhere in his mind. I went to bath with a spring on my steps. I showered quickly and then went to get dressed. It was ready at something to six and I could hear Thandeka's friends laughing downstairs.

After I was satisfied with my looks I went downstairs. Bongeka and Lindiwe were there. They both looked up when they saw me approach the stairs.

"Yoh uJoshua akalikhaleli ilobolo lakhe." said Bongeka looking above me. I turned around to look. My jaw dropped because Thandeka looked like she was attending a ball with a prince of france.

"Thats not the dress we bought" I said it out loud.

"I know but my husband bought me this and he requested I wear it tonight." she said in such a proud voice.

"And what Joshua asks, Joshua gets." Lindiwe said already taking the pictures. I stood there and watched them giggling like school kids getting ready for the matric farewell.

"Wavele wamela le wadabukisa. Come" Lindiwe looked at me. I went to join in and tried to look happy even though I was busy plotting to distroy a woman that was treating me like a friend.

"Asambeni bo." a deep voice cut in. It was Lwazi. Bongeka's husband.

"We are done" she told him.

"We won't fit in your car." Lindiwe looked at him.

"We will. Asambeni" he went to open the door and we went out. There we two cars.

"Thandeka will follow us. Your husband hired a driver for you." he opened the car for her. She went in waving at us.

"Asambeni-ke" he opened his car for us. Lindiwe and I sat at the back and Bongeka sat in the front with her husband.

As arranged Thandeka's car followed us behind. We drove to the destination. Joshua was waiting for us at the parking lot. We parked and got out.

"Uphi uThandeka?" He asked after 10 minutes of waiting for her.

Page7.

"Where is my wife?" He shouted.

"They should be here by now" Answered Lwazi already making a call. It must have gone to voicemail because he hung up.

"I'm going to kill someone. Nobody touches my wife except me. Can I have the keys?"

Lwazi didn't hesitate. He handed him the keys.

"Naba" Said Bongeka sounding relieved.

We watched the car park next to us. Joshua went to the driver's side and banged the window.

"Where were you?" he shouted already opening the door. The driver came out and I saw Joshua's shoulders drop. He smiled and opened the door for Thandeka. The moment she came out he grabbed her and hugged her tight.

"You scared me." he kissed her forehead.

"I had a terrible heartburn so we had to stop at the garage for something" she kissed his lips.

I watched in a distance and realised what my boss meant when he said "Thandeka is Joshua's heart. She balanced his world and a thought of losing her scared him deeply."

We went inside leaving the happy couple outside. There were few people there already sitting. I went to sit with Bongeka and Lindiwe. 10 minutes later Thandeka and Joshua walked in. They came to sit in our table. I expected the speech or something but there was nothing instead we were served the starter and the main meal followed soon after. We ate and then drank wine until Joshua went on stage and asked for our attention. We all went quiet.

"I won't be long. I just want to wish my wife a happy birthday. Ngiyabonga MaMyeza ngokuba sempilweni yami. You are everything that I ever wished for in a woman." he paused a bit and sipped his glass of water. "Ngiyakthanda Thandeka. I can't even explain it. Maybe ngiyibhimbi but uthando lwakho luyangibusisa." he put down the microphone and walked to her. I wanted to cry when he kissed her lips. The music came on and only then he pulled away.

"Theres another surprise for you ladies. Sit back and relax." said Njabulo grinning.

The other guys got up and disappeared behind the stage. We sat there waiting for the surprise. 15 minutes later the lights dimmed and the sound came on. Njabulo, Thizo, Mlungisi and Lwazi came on stage dressed in suits and hats. The beat of Good Kisser by Usher came on. The guys began dancing and then Joshua came on singing the lyrics. He was dressed like them aswel. Thandeka was in tears watching her husband perform for her. I must say it was a good show but I wanted it to be over because it felt like Joshua was showing off to me. Rubbing it in.

After that Joshua went down on his knee and asked Thandeka to marry him again. I wanted to die right there when she said yes.

Her friend got up and took her to the private room. Joshua and his friends left aswel. I sat there and drank wine.

"Hai" a guy pulled a chair and sat next to me.

"Hai" I didn't even look at him.

"You look stressed."

"Really." I was annoyed.

"I think you are beautiful and beautiful women shouldn't stress." he sipped his glass of whiskey.

"Okay." I went quiet hoping he will take a hint.

Joshua came back with his friends and a pastor. 3 elderly women walked in followed by 2 elderly men. They sat in their own table. The lights went brighter and then Here and Now by Luther V began playing. We all turned and looked as Thandeka walked in. She looked beautiful shame. Her eyes shining bright and her face looking bubbly as always. She waved at the elderly couple who walked in and they waved back. She finally made it to Joshua who took her both hands and kissed them after she gave Bongeka the roses she was holding.

I couldn't take it anymore I got up and went to cry in the toilet.

I only came out when I heard the clapping indicating that Joshua and Thandeka were done showing off their perfect life. For a moment I felt like going there and exposing Joshua for being fake. There he was loving and showing off his wife while he was busy buying me pearls and thanking me for a great fuck, but I decided against that because I knew that my boss would kill me if Joshua didn't do it first.

I went to sit down and watched them slow dance. They kept whispering sweet things to each other and laughing out loud like teenagers.

After 1am we finally went home. I drove with Bongeka and her husband. They dropped me at home and I went straight to the shower before hitting the sack. My heart was aching so bad but it gave me a motivation. Thandeka had to go. She was Joshua's heart and I wanted him without her. Even if that meant having a heartless Joshua.

Page8.

A light giggle woke me up. It was already dawn but I wasn't ready to wake up yet. I realised that it was Thandeka and Joshua in their private room. I could hear them loud and clear.

"Where did you learn to dance like that?" she asked still giggling.

"Practise makes perfect. We began practising about 3 weeks ago. I had to master the song and the dance." answered Joshua.

"It was great. Ngiyabonga Cebekhulu" they must have kissed because they went quiet for a moment.

"Can you shake it for me a bit?" she requested.

"Mxm, usufuna ukungihleka." he complained.

"But you guys were perfect. Njabulo can sure shake what his mama gave him" Thandeka laughed.

"That's why I refused to hire that man. Angith nje namanje ngabe usachazwe wuye" said Joshua.

"What man?" asked Thandeka.

"That Raymond guy. Umnikazi we culo" answered Joshua.

My jaw dropped, in fact I almost gasped out loud. Joshua almost hired Usher to perform the song for his wife.

"Ubuzoqasha u-Usher just for me?" asked Thandeka.

"Yes dear but that was until I saw his face and also saw how he perform on stage." answered Joshua.

"Let me guess, you didn't want him to touch me?"

Joshua didn't answer. Instead I heard moaning sounds a while later.

"Do that again" Joshua demanded with a strain in his voice.

Thandeka didn't respond instead she kept moaning and I knew they were making love.

I wanted to wake up and shower but I just couldn't. I guess I want to listen to them more.

"I want to try it" said Thandeka.

"Uzolimala Thandeka." he complained.

"I won't. Please I want to try it again." she begged.

Joshua went quiet for a while and then said "Turn around then" he ordered.

Hearing Joshua say that reminded me that day when he fucked me. I waited to hear Thandeka respond but there was nothing. A while later I heard her gasp out loud and Joshua demanding for her to be still.

"Ngiyayeka MaMemela" I heard Joshua say.

"Please don't" she begged.

They went quiet again and then I heard Thandeka scream and Joshua encouraging her to come. She must have done that because they went quiet for a long time.

I got up and went to the bathroom to pee and then came back to make the bed.

"U-right?" I heard Joshua ask.

"Yeah I'm okay." she responded.

"Amehlo akho abomvu kodwa" said Joshua.

"I have a heartburn again." she responded.

"Vele ikusuka ngani. You never had them before. Let me get you some milk." I heard the door open and then close. Few minutes later he came back.

"Phuza nalu ubisi"

"It taste bitter" she complained and then I heard the door open and close.

I went to shower aswel and then went to get dressed. Wearing a simple dress. It was quiet in the other room so I figured they must have moved to their bedroom.

I went downstairs to fix breakfast for the boys even though I knew that they weren't there.

Joshua was downstairs talking on the phone.

"She has a heartburn. Akakaze abe nayo mfwethu." I could hear the panic in his voice.

Thandeka walked in from the kitchen. She was wearing a dress.

"Morning" I greeted her.

She nodded and went to sit down. Joshua went to sit next to her.

"Can I get you guys some breakfast?"

"No!!" said Joshua with stern voice he even gave me a nasty look aswel.

I went to the kitchen and made myself some coffee. I was still drinking coffee when I heard Njabulo come in.

"Kwenzekeni?" he asked.

"Its a heartburn." answered Thandeka.

"Look at her and tell me that she looks fine to you." Said Joshua.

I got up and went to them. Njabulo was standing near Thandeka.

"Did you eat something?" he asked.

"Food like everyone else" she answered.

"She threw up the milk" said Joshua.

Njabulo nodded and went to sit next to Thandeka rubbing her hand.

"Your hands are cold." he touched her forehead.

My phone vibrated. I went to the kitchen to check. It was a text messege from my boss.

JUMP FOR JOY. THANDEKA IS ABOUT TO BE HISTORY.

Page9.

An hour later Thandeka was worse. Her eyes were blood red, her skin was pale. Njabulo kept giving her an injection but her condition didn't change at all instead she got worse.

Joshua was panicking and Njabulo went to call an ambulance.

"Ungangishiyi MaMyeza wami. Just hold on." he begged.

Thandeka looked at him and then a tear rolled down her face. She smiled at him and then turned her attention towards me. I looked away because I was now regretting my role in poisoning her.

Njabulo walked in and said the ambulance is coming.

"I'm thirsty" she whispered.

Joshua went to get her a glass of water. They helped her sit up and she drank the whole glass at once. She looked up at Joshua and then she fell forward but luckily Njabulo caught her. They laid her on the couch.

"She is not breathing Joshua." I could hear the worry in Njabulo's voice. Joshua began performing the CPR on her but she wasn't responding.

"She is gone" said Njabulo.

Joshua didn't stop. He kept going begging her to wake up. It broke my heart to see Joshua breaking like that. I wanted to hold him and tell him that it was going to be okay.

Njabulo went outside to make a call. I went upstairs to call my boss.

"I told you." he sounded pleased.

"So what's the next step?" I asked.

"Your mission is done dear."

"Just like that? I thought you wanted Joshua not his wife." I was confused.

"I told you. Thandeka was Joshua's heart. I took out the heart so the rest will fall on its own. Joshua will self destruct. He is going to destroy himself." he explained.

"You sound so sure that he can't bounce back."

"That's because I know he won't." he spoke in a proud voice.

"I want my money. You have to pay me." i reminded him.

"Okay. I will bonus you for a job well done. Then you know what to do after."

"Okay. Sharp" I hung up.

I sat down for a while before going back downstairs. Thizo, Zaza, Lindiwe, Bongeka, Lwazi, Zinhle, Delani and Mthunzi were there. Thandeka's body was no longer there. Everyone was crying. Zinhle was heavily pregnant, her husband kept brushing her hair.

Seeing all of them crying like that was painful even for me. Joshua had his elbows in his knees while his face rested on his hands. My phone beeped and when I checked it was my payment. R750 000. My heart smiled.

The house was filled with sadness. No one had any desire to speak. Joshua took his car keys and walked out. Zaza asked Thizo to go after him because he was too hurt to drive. We heard them argue outside. Lwazi and Mthunzi went out as well.

"Can I make you guys some coffee?" I asked the girls.

"I'll help you." offered Zinhle.

"No. You should rest Zinhle." her husband looked at her.

"Sitting will stress me even more. How can she just die like that? Thandeka was such a beautiful soul. She was forever smiling. She didn't deserve to die like that." she broke down and cried. Her husband just held her.

"I'll help you with the tea." said Bongeka.

I nodded and went to the kitchen. Lindiwe followed as well. We made the tea and went to serve it with muffins.

"She loved those. Always baking them just for fun" Said Lindiwe staring at the muffins.

The guys came back with Joshua who went straight upstairs. I wanted to follow him and tell him it was going to be okay but I stopped myself. The last thing I needed was for people to begin getting suspicious.

"The kids?" Njabulo spoke for the first time since he tried to help her.

"Banomama. Don't worry about them." Lindiwe told him.

"Bona senibatshelile kodwa?" he asked again.

"Cha. I don't think I can tell mum." she wiped the tears with the back of her hand.

"Imina ozosho. Maybe I should go now ukuze ngizobatshela bebonke." He got up left. Lwazi offered to go with him.

I took the fresh pot of tea upstairs to Joshua. I knocked in his room for a few minutes but there was

nothing. I tried again but there was no response. When I turned to walk away I heard the door open.

"What do you want?" his voice sounded pissed.

"I made you some tea and muffins." I showed him the tray.

"I'm not hungry."

"But you have to eat. To keep your strength up." I begged.

"Why? Will that strength bring my wife back? Will that strength wake her up? No, it won't." he slammed the door on my face.

I turned to walk away but changed my mind. Yes, Thandeka was dead but I needed Joshua to live. I wanted to be the one who was there for him. I knew I told my boss that I was going to leave after the mission but I had not intention of leaving now. I was going to be the mother to her kids and the wife to her husband. Joshua was going to love me.

I knocked again. He opened the door again.

"I said no." he barked.

"Your kids needs you. Do it for them." I begged again.

He looked at me up and down as if he was having a debate with his heart and mind.

"She baked blueberry muffins just for me. I don't even like them but I ate them with joy because I knew she baked them with love." he looked at the muffins in the tray.

"I will bake them for you." I offered.

"I don't like them. You are not her."

Chapter2.

Page1.

Thandeka was buried the following weekend. It was such a private affair I didn't even hear the details. They all left on Friday afternoon. When Bongeka suggested that I come too Njabulo almost jumped up and down to reject that idea. Even Lindiwe was surprised by his strange behaviour. Joshua sided with Njabulo and made a lame excuse to leave me behind. I was hurt by that but then again I understood that Njabulo and Thandeka were close, They were like best friends. So I stayed the whole weekend in a huge empty cold house. It was perfect but it didn't feel like a home. It felt like Thandeka died with it.

Njabulo and Joshua came back on Sunday morning. Joshua looked like a mess. His clothes were dusty and sweaty, his hair was dusty aswel and his eyes were swollen and his face was so hairy I wouldn't have been surprised if I saw something crawling in there. Njabulo was a mess aswel but he was better than

Joshua.

"Can I make you guys some breakfast?" I asked trying to make them be aware of my presence.

"I need a shower first. Thanks Phelisa" he didn't even look at me.

"I would like a cup sisi." Said Njabulo with a huge smile in his face.

Joshua ran upstairs to shower.

"And shave aswel. You look like barbarian." he shouted after Joshua.

"Fuck you" responded Joshua.

I got up and went to make the coffee and brought it back.

"Thank you Phelisa." he took the mug and drank it.

Joshua's phone rang and Njabulo looked at the screen and smiled before answering.

"And?" he looked at me and I looked away.

"Okay, thank you so much." he hung up and then got up and went upstairs.

I went to the kitchen and made myself some breakfast.

Joshua and Njabulo left with a huge suitcase and two small bag. They were in a hurry. Joshua gave me a set of keys and asked me to clean thier private room and the the room next to thier bedroom. I went upstairs to begin right away. The room next to thier bedroom was empty. There were mats on the floor like yoga mats. I picked them up and rolled them together. The room had tiles on the floor and the wall. In the corner there was a small table and a lamp only. I cleaned it quickly and then went to clean the other private room. When I opened the door I was hit by the smell of dead roses. There were dead roses on the floor. Red and white pillows, rotten strawberries and cream, an empty bottle of wine and glasses. On the wall there were pictures of Thandeka and Joshua in the ocean. I figured it was Brazil because thats where they went for thier honeymoon 10 years ago. I went downstairs to get boxes in the garage and brown paper. I wanted to wrap up the pictures and put them away. I went back upstairs and began cleaning up the whole room. I packed everything away. I took the pictures downstairs to the garage. Threw away the dead roses. It felt like the last of Thandeka was gone. Now I had to remove her from Joshua's heart. I could imagine thier private turning into our private room. The room where make love like theres no tomorrow. When my boss asked me to take this mission I thought it was going to be taugh but it was so easy. Seducing Joshua was the walk in the park. I expected him to resist a bit but he didn't. I won. So easy.

Someone rang the door bell. I went downstairs to check. When I opened the door it was Joshua, atleast thats what I thought before he turned to face me because when I opened the door he was looking the other way.

"Can I help you?" I looked at him. Noticing that even his body structure was the same as Joshua.

"I'm looking for Joshua." he spoke in a soft voice.

"He is not here. Can I take a message?" I looked at him.

"No. I'll wait for him." he walked towards me. I moved aside to let him in.

"Can I offer you some tea."

"Yes. Thank you Phelisa" he smiled and sat down.

I went to make the tea and brought it back. Something clicked in my head.

"How do you know my name?" I looked at him.

"Joshua mentioned you." he looked at me.

"Okay. Honestly I don't know when Joshua will come back. He lost his wife so he is in a bad space." I explained.

"I heard about Thandeka's passing. It's such a sad thing. But I feel sorry for those who were involved."

"Why? What makes you think someone did something?" I tried not to panic.

"We had her body tested and we found the poison. So the battle line has been drawn and Joshua is not some wannabe thug. Someone killed his wife and that someone will pay." he was no longer smiling.

I swallow hard and asked him to excuse me. I went upstairs already dialling Duma's number.

"The number that you have dialled is incorrect. Please check the number and dial again." said the woman on the phone. I checked the number and dialled again. Same message followed. I was panicking now. I dialled his other number and met the same message. Duma cut me off and left me in deep shit. If Joshua found out that I was involved I was dead. He was going to kill me for killing his wife.

I didn't waste time. I went to my room and began packing. I had to run.

Page2.

After packing I went back downstairs. Joshua was back staring at the picture of his wife. The mystery man was gone. He put down the picture when he saw me approach. I could tell he was crying.

"There was someone looking for you."

"My cousin Sihle. Yeah sengimbonile." he looked at me.

"When are the boys coming home?" I asked trying to calm my nerves.

"Basazohlala ekhaya. UJulia uzohlala noLindiwe. I'm not okay Phelisa. I just lost my wife." he looked down.

"I'm sorry" I hated seeing him like that.

He nodded without looking up.

I went to the kitchen to prepare dinner. My mind and heart weren't there. I wanted to get out of there but I had to sneak out and disappear.

"I'm going to take a nap for a while. Please wake me up when you done with dinner." he walked upstairs.

I waited for an hour and then went upstairs to get my bags. The taxi was already waiting outside.

As quiet as possible I took my bags downstairs and closed the door behind me. The taxi driver took the bags and I got into the car. I was praying that Joshua doesn't wake up and stop me.

"Ngicela usheshe bhuti"

"Sengiqedile. Asambe." he got in, started the car and drove off.

I took a deep breath and relaxed.

The taxi dropped me off at Umlazi. I called my friend Zoe and asked her to come get me. She came after 30 minutes.

"Sfebe waze wamuhle" she hugged me.

"Thank you. Ngiyadlula oe. I need a place to sleep tonight then ngiqhubeka kusasa." I told her.

"What are you running away from?" she took my bags as we walked home.

"Drama. Its following me around." I lied. I couldn't tell her that I had killed an innocent woman.

"Okay." I knew she didn't believe me but I didn't care. I wasn't planning to stay anyway.

We got into her shack. It was improved then the last time.

"Ayke oe uzolala ngapha." she showed me the room. I thanked her and went to sit down.

Zoe cooked supper and then we ate while catching up. I was exhausted so after eight I went to bed. My phone rang and it was Joshua. I decided to ignore him. He kept calling until he sent a text. I opened it and froze. It was a picture of a hand holding a gun. Below it there was a message that said. "RUN AND MAKE SURE I DON'T CATCH YOU". I knew that Joshua was bluffing. There was no way he was going to catch me. I've done this before. My phone rang again and this time I answered.

"Yebo"

"Where are you?" asked Joshua in the other end.

"I'm at home. Emthwalume." I lied.

"Really? Ufunani lapho?" he laughed.

"Visiting family." I lied again.

"We Phelisa uma ungafuni ngikulimaze wena. Awubuye." he hung up.

A loud knock made me jump. I heard Zoe open the door and then a male familiar male voice followed.

"Uphi uPhelisa?"

"Who wants to know?" asked Zoe.

"My name is Njabulo and Phelisa knows me." said Njabulo.

I almost died right there. Quietly I got up and went to open the window. I was going to outrun them.

Something cold touched my forehead. When I looked up I saw Joshua smiling at me.

"Small world don't you think?" he pushed me back inside.

"Please don't hurt me." I begged.

"Aybo kwenzakalani lana? I'm calling the police" said Zoe.

"And make sure you call the ambulance aswel." ordered pointing a gun at her.

"Please don't kill me, I have kids." she begged while sobbing.

Joshua looked at her and then lowered his gun.

"Ngiyaxolisa dadewethu. Uziphathe kahle izingane zakho. Every kid deserves to have a mother." he looked at me.

"Its okay. Phelisa has kids aswel." she lied.

"I want her to mother my kids aswel. She is the reason why they don't have a mother. Lets go lady. I have needs that you are going to take care off." he grabbed my neck.

I was crying and begging them to let me go but all my cries fell into deaf ears. They dragged me to the car and threw me inside.

"You don't kill my wife and then just run away to live your happily ever after. AwungaziPhelisa but uzongazi today" said Joshua before slapping me across the face.

Njabulo drove us back to Cebekhulu mansion. I was crying but they ignored me. They were talking and laughing out loud like nothing was wrong. When we got there Joshua dragged me to the house and threw me on the couch. Njabulo brought my bags in.

"Third door on your right." Said Joshua as Njabulo took the bags upstairs.

I sat on the couch and prayed for them not to kill me.

"How much did Duma pay you?" he asked.

I didn't answer.

"They paid you so much you don't even know the amount?" he stood in front of me and took off the belt.

"I forgot. I'm sorry" I answered quickly.

"Where is Duma right now?" he asked again.

"I don't know. His number has been deactivated." I answered.

"So he gets you involved in deep shit and then dumps you?" he laughed a bit.

Njabulo came back and sat down next to me.

I didn't answer Joshua's statement because I was staring at Njabulo who was loading bullets in a gun. He handed me one.

"Look at that bullet and tell me what you see" he ordered.

I looked at it and it was written Phelisa Cekane. My blood went cold.

"If you try to run again, I will use that bullet to crack your skull." he said taking the bullet from my cold hands.

Joshua laughed and went upstairs.

"Your stomach is complaining. Go make something to eat in the kitchen." ordered Njabulo after my stomach kept growling.

I stood up and almost fell but he caught me just in time.

"Thank you." I walked to the kitchen. There was a pizza and juice. I took a slice and ate.

"When you are done. Come to the lounge." said Joshua standing in the doorway.

I nodded and ate quickly. Njabulo and Joshua were speaking in a language I didn't understand. They laughed out loud in between until Joshua mentioned Thandeka's name. They both went quiet. I got up and went to them.

"Sit down Phelisa. I think we need to lay down some rules." said Njabulo looking at Joshua.

"Yes. And rules are pretty simple. If you break one rule I will kill you." he didn't even laugh.

"I hope you heard Phelisa. Chasing you is not my idea of fun. We did that enough with Thandeka." said Njabulo.

"And Thandeka was my woman. Letting her run and think I can't find her was so much fun. But I was always one step ahead. Don't make us chase you again." said Joshua.

"Are you guys going to kill me?" asking that question took all my strength.

"Unless you give me a reason to. I don't hate you Phelisa. I hate Duma for hiring you to kill my wife. So yes I'm angry but killing you won't give me any pleasure." said Joshua.

"Thank you. For not killing me."

"But once we get what we want from you. Dying maybe your only solution." said Njabulo.

"Please. I will do anything" I begged as tears were already streaming down my face.

"I know you will." said Njabulo.

"But still your everything may not be enough to keep you alive." added Joshua who then got up and went to the kitchen. When he came back he gave Njabulo an injection.

"Give me your arm." said Njabulo.

I looked at Joshua with pleading eyes.

"Hold her." said Njabulo after I didn't move.

Joshua grabbed my arm roughly. I screamed for help and Njabulo slapped me so hard I went quiet the same time.

"Good girl." he said before sticking in the needle.

"You won't die. This will help you relax." he said before withdrawing the needle.

"Go shower dear. I'm sure you had such a busy day and you need to rest." said Joshua.

I got up and went upstairs.

"No nasty ideas Phelisa." warned Joshua.

"And if you try to kill yourself. We will wake you up and make sure that you survive only to kill you afterwards" added Njabulo.

I nodded and went upstairs.

When I got to my room I sat on the floor and just cried. I was afraid because I knew that Njabulo and Joshua could kill me. After crying I searched for my phone and tried Duma's number even though I knew that it no longer existed. I was in deep shit and dying was my only solution. I stood up and went to the bathroom. I filled the bath with warm water and took my clothes off before getting in. I sat back and cried some more. I wanted to die and be out of this misery. I wondered about Thandeka. If she tried to run away from Joshua that meant Joshua was tough on her too. So thier marriage wasn't exactly roses. Maybe he beat her up too. If Joshua had hurt Thandeka before then who was I? I was nothing to him. He could kill me and bury me in his back yard just like that.

Page4.

Something yanked my arm roughly. When I looked up it was Njabulo.

"Really Phelisa? Trying to kill yourself after I told you that if you try I will wake you up and kill you myself." he shouted ignoring that I was coughing painfully.

"Joshua is not going to kill you because he made a promise to Thandeka that he is a changed man but I didn't. So I can pop your head right now. Don't push me. And cover up nx" he walked out and few seconds later he threw a gown on my feet. I picked it up and walked out. Joshua was sitting on the bed looking down.

"Duma was really desperate to send you. I'm not surprised though. He fell for the obvious trap years ago and obviously his skill did not improve over the years. You also fell for the obvious trap. Trying to drown yourself." he got up and left too.

I sat on the bed and dried the tears atleast now I knew that Joshua would not kill me. It was Njabulo I was worried about. That guy could kill me so easily. I hated Duma for getting me into this deep shit and then just leave.

I don't know when I slept but I did because when I opened my eyes it was sunrise. I woke up and went to brush my teeth. I was hungry so after making the bed I went downstairs. Joshua was sitting in the corner infront of a piano.

"I miss my wife." he said and began playing All Of Me. Njabulo looked at me.

"And Phelisa killed her." he added as I walked to the kitchen. That made me feel worse than a dog. I drank a glass of water because my heart was no longer into eating.

"The first song she ever played for me was Dandelion. I didn't even know she could play until one day I walked in and found this piano waiting here. I stood there for a moment wondering why there was a piano in our living room. Then she came down stairs smiling and said 'sit down Cebekhulu.' I still remember the dress she was wearing. It was Blue and when she walked it followed behind her and she wasn't wearing any shoes. Something I always liked about her." Joshua's voice broke, then he got up and

went upstairs. I knew he was crying.

"I guess your mission was a success. Joshua is broken." said Njabulo.

"I'm sorry." I mumbled.

He looked at me slowly shaking his head.

"I didn't know it would be like that." I answered.

"You thought he will love you?" he looked at me.

I didn't answer.

"Thandeka had a special place in Joshua's heart. Thandeka had no one Phelisa. She had Joshua. She stayed with him when Joshua was the master. Joshua was rough. He manhandled Thandeka a lot because he didn't know how to love. But that woman stayed and gentle taught him how to love again. Maybe Duma told you that if you kill Thandeka, Joshua will self destruct. What they didn't tell you is that when Joshua self destruct he destroys everything and I mean everything." Explained Njabulo.

I was crying silently.

"But you should be glad that you are still alive. We don't want to hurt you. We want Duma and who ever that calls the shots because we both know that theres someone above him and you my precious, will help us catch that bastard." he looked at me.

I didn't respond.

"It wasn't a request Phelisa. Its an order." he pulled a gun and put it on the table.

"I can't find Duma. " I answered.

"We found him. He just doesn't know it yet." he said proudly.

"Then what do you want from me?" I asked.

"You will see Phelisa. Just wait and see." he smiled and then stood up and went upstairs leaving a gun on the table. I looked at it and debated with my heart. I had a bit of power so I picked it up. It was a bit heavy but I could handle it. I slowly made my way upstairs. I wasn't going down with a bit of a fight.

Page5.

I went to Joshua's study. The door was already open so I held the gun close and walked in. Joshua saw me first and nudged Njabulo who turned around. I pointed the gun at him.

"Pull the trigger dear" said Njabulo.

"Shut up or I will shoot." I warned him.

"Don't do it Phelisa." Begged Joshua.

"No, let her do it." said Njabulo stepping closer.

"Damit Phelisa put that gun down." shouted Joshua.

"Will you both shut up." I screamed.

"Just pull the damn trigger bitch" shouted Njabulo.

"Listen to me Phelisa. That gun is a trap. If you pull that trigger the bullet will go straight between your eyes." explained Joshua.

I looked at him. He had to be lying.

"I don't believe you." I didn't lower the gun.

"Then pull the trigger and see" said Njabulo.

"Trust me Phelisa. Don't pull that trigger" Joshua looked at me with pleading eyes.

I lowered the gun in defeat. Joshua took it from my hands.

"You really have to stop like this Phelisa otherwise you will die for real." said Njabulo.

"And if you keep on falling for obvious traps like this you will fail this mission and then I will break my promise to my wife and kill you." said Joshua.

"It was a trap?" I looked at Njabulo.

"The obvious trap and you failed it." he walked out.

I was left with Joshua. I didn't know what to say or even do.

"Sit down Phelisa." ordered Joshua.

I sat down in a chair and he came to sit on the table in front of me.

"Listen and listen careful. I don't know how Duma operated but with us its all about using your head not heart. Uyezwa?" he gave me a stern look.

"I'm sorry about that gun thing. I'm afraid. Njabulo will kill me for real." I spoke without looking at him.

"And if you keep messing up he will. If you want to survive Phelisa you have to be smart."

"What am I suppose to do?" I looked at him.

"Be calm. Continue with your work around the house, but you can't leave the house because I don't trust

you and I hate having to go get you." he raised his eyebrows.

"Okay. Thank you for not killing me Joshua."

He looked at me for a long time as if he was seeing something.

"I didn't do it for you. I did it for my wife. Thandeka wanted me to be a good man and I want to be that man."

"You really loved her." wrong question but it was already to late.

"More than you realise. I almost hired Usher Raymond to sing on her birthday." he chuckled

"She loved him?" I asked.

"I caught her singing along to his music one day and she was a great singer." Explained Joshua.

"Why did you change your mind about hiring Usher?" I asked.

Joshua stood up and laughed.

"Did you see my wife Phelisa? She was fine. I think God spend weeks just creating her."

"And she only had eyes for you. I don't think she would have fell for his charm." I explained.

"You don't get it. Its not my wife I didn't trust. Its the man himself."

I couldn't help but laugh. Thandeka was beautiful but Joshua was worried about nothing.

"But she would have let him down." I added.

"Some men just don't stop and I wasn't interested in finding out whether he respect boundaries or not." said Joshua.

I nodded.

After talking to Joshua I felt better. I didn't know what they had planned for me but the fact that Joshua seemed like he didn't hate me for killing Thandeka was a bit comforting.

I cleaned the house and then cooked supper. Joshua left for a while and when he came back I gave him food.

"Go first." he looked at the plate.

"Excuse me?"

"To make sure that you didn't do anything. Eat first dear."

"I didn't do anything."

"Then don't give me the lip. Just eat your food Phelisa." he shouted and slammed the plate.

I went to the kitchen to get the broom and cleaned up.

"I thought you trusted me." I spoke while cleaning up.

"You thought wrong dear. I don't trust you." he shouted.

"I'm sorry Joshua."

He got up and went upstairs but stopped midway.

"Phelisa, we may live together but you are still the woman that killed my wife and for that. I will never forgive you let alone trusting you ." he continued with his walk.

I sat down heavily. I was never getting anywhere with Joshua. Even in a grave, Thandeka owned Joshua.

Page6.

I was about to fall asleep when I heard a knock.

"Get dressed Phelisa. We are going out." said Joshua's voice on the other side.

"Right now? Its almost 10pm." and I wasn't even in a mood.

"Its early. Just get dressed." he ordered.

I got up and went to take a real quick shower and got dressed in black jeans, red and black vest and a pink hoodie and my black all star.

"Are you done?" asked Joshua.

"Yes." I opened the door and walked out.

Joshua was dressed in black. Black all over. He looked so damn fine. We both stood there for a moment and looked at each other. Joshua cleared his throat first.

"Thizo is already downstairs." he walked away.

We went to a club. When we got there, Njabulo was there. He bought us drinks. They were talking about cars. Infact I was bored because they didn't include me in thier convesation. 3 hours later Joshua took my hand and looked at me.

"Are you okay?" he asked licking his lips.

"I'm tired and bored." I mumbled.

His fingers touched my chin lifting my face to his face. I closed my eyes and felt his breath close to my face. His lips touched mine. His other hand touched my thigh. We kissed for a while until he pulled away.

"Get a room." said Thizo.

"Fuck off." said Joshua as he grabbed me again and kissed me roughly. His hand brushed my inner thigh and the other kept touching my boobs.

"Why did you wear jeans?" he whispered close to my ear.

"I wanted to be comfortable."

"Shit." he pulled away and sat up straight.

"Maybe we should go." said Njabulo sitting next to Joshua.

"Its done?" asked Joshua.

"Yes." said Njabulo getting up. His hand reached for Joshua's hand as he helped him up. When standing Joshua looked really drunk. He couldn't stand still. Njabulo had to support him.

"Drink this." Thizo gave Joshua a glass of water.

"I'm not that drunk. I have Phelisa. She will take care of me. Won't you Pheli?" he looked at me.

I nodded.

"I told you. I'm sorted." he took my hand and pulled me closer.

"Joshua you just lost your wife and_" he didn't even finish it because Joshua punched him. The music stopped and everybody looked at us.

"Don't you ever mention my wife again." Joshua hissed.

"Or what? You are the one disrespecting her memory by acting like a jerk." shouted Thizo.

Joshua grabbed Thizo but the security managed to pull him away.

"Fuck you, fuck this. Fuck this place. Lets go Phelisa." he took my hand.

"Phelisa stays. You too drunk to drive." shouted Thizo.

Joshua stopped and looked at him.

"You want to stay Phelisa?" he looked at me.

I looked around. All eyes were on me.

"Well? You want to stay or go home with me?" he shouted.

"I want to leave." I mumbled.

"Well you heard her. Lets go dear." he turned and walked out. I followed him.

Njabulo followed us. He took the keys from Joshua and offered to drive. Joshua sat at the back and slept while I sat next to Njabulo.

When we got home Joshua woke up and went inside. I went inside aswel leaving Njabulo in the car.

I went to the kitchen to get some water. I kept playing the scene at the back of my head. The way he kissed, the way his hand kept brushing my thigh and the way he spoke to Thizo. Maybe there was a chance for us after all.

Voices interrupted my train of thought. It was Thizo laughing with Joshua. I went to check and found them drinking in the lounge. Thizo's eye was a bit swollen.

"Need a pain killer?" asked Njabulo.

"Nah. Joshua's punch wasn't that hard." he said.

"I didn't want to take your eye out?" he said.

I looked at them surprised. Njabulo looked at me.

"It was a set up?" I asked.

"And it worked like a charm. Thank you Phelisa." said Joshua.

"So the_" I wanted to say the kiss but I stopped myself.

"Go to bed Phelisa." said Njabulo giving me a stern look.

"Goodnight dear." said Joshua.

I walked back upstairs disappointed. I actually thought It was a start of something kanti kudlalwa ngami. I won't lie. It hurt like hell.

Chapter 3.

Page1.

RIO DE JANEIRO.

18V

I opened my eyes and looked around. There were people around me, strangers and they were speaking a strange language. One of them looked at me and alerted the others. They all came standing around the

bed with thier heads bow down like they were praying. This lasted for a minute and then they all moved away.

"Wait" I spoke but they didn't turn.

"Excuse me" I tried again but still, it seemed like they didn't hear me. I raised my hand and snapped my finger. It was painful but it helped because one of them came to me.

"Can I have some water?" I asked.

He looked at me but didn't move.

"Do you speak english?" I asked.

The man walked away. I wanted to scream at him. Instead my eyes filled with tears. I was thirsty and confused. My mind was completely blank. Where was I and most WHO AM I?.

>>>>>>>>>

South Africa.

I didn't wake up early at sun rise. My heart was aching. I couldn't face Joshua after what they did at the club. To them it was a game and they didn't care how much I was hurting. I lay on my bed and just cried.

"Phelisa. Open up" said Joshua's voice on the other side.

I got up and wore a gown before opening the door.

He walked in with a tray.

"I made you some breakfast. I'm sorry about last night." he gave me the tray.

"Thank you"

"I assumed that you were aware of what we were doing." he said.

"Its okay. I guess its my fault. I should have known that it was a game." I sat on the bed putting the tray on my lap.

Joshua came to sit next to me.

"You make it obvious and the guys can see it." he said.

"See what?" I looked at him.

"How much you want to jump me. Its so obvious, even a kid could see it." said Joshua.

"Wow. I'm sorry then." I mumbled.

"Its okay. Just try to relax. Eat your food." he got up and left.

I put the tray away. My heart was no longer in it. I got up and went to shower. It was already obvious that Joshua had no desire to be with me. He knew I wanted him but he didn't take the advantage. +food downstairs and threw it away. Njabulo, Mlungisi, Thizo and Ntokozo were downstairs looking at something that looked like a building plan. I pretended to be cleaning the room while trying to hear what they were busy with but they didn't give away anything. A phone rang and everybody looked at it.

"Joshua. Your phone is ringing. Its Rio" said Ntokozo picking it up.

"Answer. I'll be there." said Joshua upstairs.

Ntokozo answered the phone. He spoke only for few seconds and then hung up.

"And?" asked Joshua walking downstairs.

"There is an effect." said Ntokozo.

"What effect?" asked Njabulo.

Ntokozo looked at Joshua and then looked at me. I turned my attention back to cleaning.

"What effect Ntokozo?" shouted Joshua.

"Mute" answered Ntokozo.

Joshua turned to me and slapped me so hard across the face. I lost balance and fell on the floor. He kicked me repeatedly until the guys managed to pull him away.

"Let me kill her!" he shouted trying to break free from Mlungisi and Ntokozo.

"No. Joshua." said Njabulo.

Thizo helped me up. It felt like my ribs were broken where he kicked. My face was already swollen and my arm I was sure it was broken. He sat me in the couch.

"I think her arm is broken." said Thizo.

"Let me finish her off" said Joshua.

"No Joshua." shouted Njabulo giving him a stern look.

Thizo went to get some ice in the kitchen. I was in pain but for some strange reasons I couldn't cry. Maybe its because I didn't know why Joshua attacked me. The beating only lasted for few seconds but its effect on my body felt like it was longer.

"Maybe we should take her to the hospital." said Mlungisi.

"You both need to let me go." said Joshua to Mlungisi and Ntokozo.

"Don't attack her." said Ntokozo.

"I won't" he hissed.

"I have some morphine at home. I'll be back." said Njabulo walking out.

Ntokozo's phone rang and he went outside to answer, leaving me with Thizo and Joshua because Mlungisi went in the kitchen. All I felt was a tight grip around my neck.

"Joshua!!" said Thizo trying to pull him away from my neck. I couldn't breath or cry. All I could do was to stare into his cold eyes. The eyes of a monster I created.

At last they managed to pull him away. My eyes rolled to the back of my head before passing out.

I woke up in bed in a cold room. When I tried to get up I realised that my hands were cuffed to on the bed so were my legs.

I screamed for help as loud as I could.

"You can't be heard Phelisa. Its just me and you." said Joshua appearing above my head.

"I'm cold." I told him.

"Thats because you are naked in the freezer." he laughed out loud.

"Are you going to kill me?" I asked with a shaking voice.

"Yes Phelisa. You killed my wife nje. You can't kill my wife and then just get away with it." he said.

"I'm sorry Joshua. I didn't know that Duma was going to kill her. He said he wasn't." I tried to explain.

"But he did and I killed him too. Look." his eyes looked to my left. I followed them and gasped out loud when I saw him.

Page2.

When I opened my eyes I was in my room. I was grateful it was a dream. A hand pushed me down gentle when I tried to move.

"Keep still. You are injured." said Ntokozo his face coming to the view.

"What happened?" my throat was burning.

"Joshua attacked you. Don't you remember?" his hand brushed against arm.

"Gosh that explains the pain in my ribs and arms."

"You were crying in your sleep. What were you dreaming about?" he asked.

"Joshua was trying to kill me." just thinking about it made me cringe.

"It was just a nightmare. Are you hungry?" he asked.

"Just thirsty."

He got up and helped me drink with a straw. When I finished he help me sit up.

"Thank you. Why did Joshua attack me like that?" I asked after he sat down.

"I'm sorry dear. He was just angry." he said looking at me.

"Where is he right now?" I was afraid to face him.

"He went Brazil." answered Ntokozo.

"Do do what?" I asked surprised.

"Business. So Phelisa, how old are you?" he asked.

"A lady never share her age." I laughed a bit.

"Aw that hurts. But I'm 45." said Ntokozo.

"You don't look over 40." I looked at him.

"Share yours." he smiled.

"Okay. I'm 25." I told him.

"You are so young. How did you get involved in this." he looked at me.

I looked away when tear filled my eyes.

Ntokozo went quiet for a moment and then got up and left. I lay there and thought about this. I was only 25 but already I had distroyed families, slept with different men for money and now I had added murder in the list. Women my age were getting married, owned cars, had kids and beautiful homes but I had nothing. I needed to change my life and make something out of it. Thats if Joshua doesn't kill me.

>>>>>>>>>>

Brazil.

Rio De Janeiro.

I kept drifting into deep sleep and then wake up again. This kept happening over and over again. When I woke up there was a man. He helped me sit and then gave me a laptop.

"You will type the answer." he instructed.

I nodded to show my understanding.

"I'm going to show you some photos. If you remember anything about them just type what you remember." he said.

I nodded again.

He held a photo of a smiling boy. He had black curly hair.

"Do you know him?" asked the man.

I typed no.

He held another and again I didn't remember him.

He held a young woman. She had beautiful eyes.

Again I typed no. The man looked disappointed. He held another. It was a man. There was something familiar about his eyes but I didn't remember him. I typed no again.

"Okay. Do you remember your name?" he asked.

I typed no and asked where was I.

"You are in Brazil." answered the man.

I nodded and closed the laptop because I was tired of typing.

The man left and came back with food. He helped me eat and gave me some water.

I wanted to say thank you but my voice didn't come out.

"Its going to be okay. Try to relax." he took the plate and left.

I lay down again. I couldn't relax. How do you relax when you don't know who you are or where you from and worse you can't speak.

Page3.

My arm was broken but I had a plaster cast on. My face was swollen and my whole body was in pain. Ntokozo made me some soup and helped me eat it. He was such a nice guy. Smiled a lot and laughed a lot too. I must say he was handsome. Had a deep voice like Vin Diesel, thanks God he didn't look like him at all. Ntokozo was tall and slim, had beautiful eyes, perfect white teeth, a tattoo on his neck and short hair with nice shaved sideburns.

"What are you thinking about?" he asked suddenly making me jump.

"Nothing. Just how messed up my life is." I told him.

"You can fix it." he said so easily.

"How? I could die anytime." and I wasn't lying. Joshua and Njabulo could murder me anytime they wanted.

"Joshua won't kill you. He was just angry." said Ntokozo.

"Why? Why would he be suddenly angry and attack me."

"I'm sorry. I can't tell you that." he looked at me.

"I understand." I smiled a bit.

"What do you want to eat for dinner?" he asked.

"Its 10am." I laughed.

"I know. Its just that I want to cook for you."

"Nobody has ever cooked for me."

"Then let me be the first. Whats your favourite dish?" he asked.

"What can you cook?" I asked.

"Anything. Just say your dish and I'll make it."

"Anything with beef." I told him.

"So you like meat?" he smiled.

"Very much."

"Okay dear. I'll be back with meat." he got up.

"You leaving me alone?"

"Are you scared?" he asked.

"Its a huge house."

"I know but its safe. Nobody will get in. I'll be back now now." he walked out.

I sat there quietly listening to my heartbeat. The house was too quiet until I heard the door close.

"Are you back already?" I asked out loud thinking it was Ntokozo.

There was no answer but I heard footsteps.

"Ntokozo" I sat up ignoring the pain in my body.

The door opened and Duma walked in.

"What the fuck are you doing here?" I asked breathing heavy.

"I came to see you." he answered.

"How did you get in? Someone could be watching the house" I was pissed.

"I watched them leave. What happened to you?" he pointed the cast.

"What do you think. Its your damn fault. You killed your damn cousin." I shouted.

"So Joshua attacked you after what he did at the club. The dude is losing it." laughed Duma.

I felt sorry for him because what he didn't know was the fact that Joshua was 10 steps ahead.

"What did Joshua do to you?" I asked.

"Lets just say he messed with wrong people."

"So there is someone giving you the order?" I asked trying to confirm if Joshua was right.

"Not just one dear. But lots of people would like to see Joshua take the fall. Including me." explained Duma.

"Why did you come back after you disappeared on me?" I asked.

"I just came to check if Joshua was stumbling already. You should leave Phelisa. Already your arm is broken. Who knows whats next." he said.

"Don't you think I tried that?"

"I hope you didn't tell them about me?" he pulled out a gun and pointed at me.

"If I did, do you think Joshua would let you live and follow him around like you do?" asked my voice shaking.

He thought for a while and then lowered his gun.

"You right and it better stay that way Phelisa. I'm gone." he walked out.

I took a deep breath. Njabulo was right about Duma being the idiot. He actually bought the story and really believed that Joshua doesn't know about his involvement. I was stupid too for being in his side.

Ntokozo came back after an hour.

"Anything happened while I was gone?" He asked.

"No." I lied.

"Are you sure?" he looked at me.

"Yes I'm sure." I looked at him.

"You know Phelisa sometimes survival depends on being the team player." he said.

"I don't follow."

"You are not in our team because we are using you to get what we want and you are not in Duma's team because you will betray them. So your survival depends on the team you choose. We can get what we want and let you live but I doubt that you can betray Duma's team and they will let you live to tell the tale. The choice is yours." he walked out.

>>>>>>>>>>>

Brazil.

Rio De Janeiro.

I opened my eyes when I felt a hand closing against hand. It was a man from the photos.

"Hai" he spoke.

I wanted to respond but I couldn't find my voice.

The nice man who showed me the pics walked in and asked to talk to the stranger in private. I wanted them to stay and speak in front of me.

After a while the man came back. He sat next to me and said nothing. We sat like that in silence until I noticed that he was crying. That hurt me. Seeing the tears in his eyes hurt me. Without thinking I raised my hand and wiped them away with my thumb. He smiled a bit.

"Thank you." he spoke again.

I nodded and pointed the laptop next to him. He took it and gave it to me. I sat up and began typing.

"Who are you?" I showed him.

He cleared his throat first.

"I'm Joshua Cebekhulu." he answered.

"We are married?" I typed again.

"For more than 10 years. We have 3 kids. 2 boys and one girl." he took out the photos and showed me

"So you are not married?" I asked.

"I was but she left." he pause a bit and looked up.

"I'm sorry." I mumbled.

"Its not your fault. We were both young and stupid. Shit happens." he answered smiling.

"I know. Shit happens." I repeated looking at my arm.

"You can change all that." he said looking at me.

"How?"

"Pick sides Phelisa. Pick the wisely." he advised.

"What if I don't want to be involved?" I asked.

"Thats no longer an option for you." he answered.

I nodded. He was right. I was in and deeper than the deepest ocean.

Ntokozo finished cooking but we weren't hungry so we went to relax in the lounge.

"Where is Njabulo?" I asked.

"In Brazil with Joshua." said Ntokozo.

"Can I ask you something?" I looked at him.

"Fire away" he sat up straight.

"Njabulo and Joshua mentioned that they had to go after Thandeka at some point. Why?" I asked.

"Why are you asking?" Asked Ntokozo.

"I'm just curious. They look like a nice couple." I explained.

"It wasn't always roses. Joshua use to be a monster Phelisa. He was taugh on Thandeka and she didn't like it. So she ran." He explained.

"And they found her?" I asked already knowing the answer.

"We followed her but she didn't know that." he answered.

"How does Joshua track us down?"

"He bought you these pearls." he touched my neck.

"They have a tracker?" I tried to take them off with one hand.

"Yes. Thats how they found you. Same with Thandeka." he explained.

"So Joshua and Njabulo are smart like that?"

"Joshua is smart like that. Njabulo is the master when it comes to drugs." he explained.

"And you?" I asked.

"What about me?" he asked.

"What do you specialise in?" I asked.

"Thats my secret. I can't tell you." he laughed a bit.

"Aw come on. Please share." I begged.

"I won't tell you Phelisa. If you behave I'll show you."

"Behave how?" I looked at him.

"Be a good girl Phelisa." he touched my hand.

"I'll try. Thats if its not to late."

Ntokozo stood up and pulled out a gun.

"Get down." he whispered.

I quickly lay down on the floor. He walked towards the door but didn't open it.

"Shit." he took three steps back and pulled the trigger. I covered my ears and tried not scream.

"Go upstairs Phelisa and lock yourself in." he ordered.

I got up and limped up the stairs. I was about to reach the top when someone yanked me away and put the gun against my head.

"Drop it." Ordered the man to Ntokozo who stood down the stairs.

The door opened and 5 guys ran in and pointed guns at him.

"Just let her go." pleaded Ntokozo.

"Why should I? She did her part. Just put it down or she dies." said the man.

"Okay fine. I'll put it down. Slowly." said Ntokozo slowly lowering his gun.

When the gun was about to reach the floor he turned and pulled out the second gun and began shooting the men downstairs.

"I said drop it." ordered the man.

"Nobody gives me the orders." he pulled the trigger and shot the man in his left shoulder. He let go of me and I stumbled backwards before falling on the floor.

I heard running steps but I was too shocked to look up. I lay there and realised I was feeling rather cold.

"Phelisa." Ntokozo kneeled beside me. He looked at me and then I saw him gasp.

"What?" I looked at him.

"You bleeding. You've been shot." he looked at me.

"How bad is it? Why doesn't it hurt? Am I dying?" I asked already panicking.

"I'm going to rip your top to see."

I nodded. I was shaking and breathing was beginning to feel like a challenge.

"I'm cold." I told Ntokozo.

"Just hold on dear. Its going to be okay." he rip my top off and used it to cover the wound.

Page5.

Brazil.

I wasn't asleep but I had my eyes closed because I was tired. Infact I think my brain was tired because I didn't do much except typing it down. But trying to remember who you are was exhausting. Worse there was a man claiming to be my husband but didn't even looklike my kids and the way he spoke. He hardly looked at me when he answered the questions, at some point it felt like he was lying. But why.

Voice and then a sound of laughter stopped my train of thought. The laughter sounded familiar but I didn't know where.

The door opened and two men walked in. They both paused when they saw me awake and sitting.

"MaMyeza wami" said the other one coming towards me. He kissed my forehead and I just sat there frozen.

"Joshua. Be gentle." warned the other one who then came close and kissed my hand.

Like I did with my first husband, I asked questions ignoring the fact that I was tired. The man was Joshua Cebekhulu aswel, which confirmed that one of the men was a liar. The other guy said his name is Njabulo Mbatha.

They showed me pics, told me stories about our lives. I was listening and smiling.

"I could be wrong but It seems like your mind is somewhere?" said Njabulo looking at me.

"She lost her memory and the ability to speak. She can't be okay." said Joshua stating the obvious.

"Still. You keep holding your breath like you expecting something to happen. You and Lindiwe do that when you are stressed." he explained.

Joshua looked at me for the longest time. I was debating whether to tell them about the other man or just shut up and pray for the best. The problem was, I didn't know whether to trust them or not.

"Thandeka. Did something happen?" asked Joshua.

I looked at Njabulo and then back at Joshua before typing it down.

After typing I showed them.

"I can't be Duma. He isn't smart like that." said Njabulo.

"His boss. That means my wife isn't safe anymore." said Joshua.

"And someone tried to take out Phelisa last night." said Njabulo looking at his phone.

"Is she okay?" asked Joshua.

"Yeah. Ntokozo saved the day." said Njabulo.

"I hope he didn't ruin my house." complained Joshua.

"He says all is well and Phelisa will be fine. We missed the action." said Njabulo sulking.

"And you will never get tired of watching Ntokozo smash someone or something." said Joshua.

"The man is a legend Joshua. I can still see him sliding across the floor while shots were fired left and right. Then he gets up and says "ARE YOU DONE" tjoo that shit right there earned him my buckets of respects." said Njabulo sounding like a child.

"Never mind him. He is still growing" said Joshua looking at me. I laughed at them.

"Okay. Jokes aside. Plan B" said Joshua looking at me.

Njabulo nodded and looked at me aswel. I didn't like the way they did it. I could tell they were up to something. I raised my hands, shaking my head furiously.

"I'm sorry MaMyeza. I almost lost you and I can't risk it again." said Joshua.

Njabulo took out a small cloth in his back pocket and covered my mouth and nose.

I tried to fight them but they were stronger. I regretted tell them about the other husband. I trusted the wrong men.

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

South Africa.

Ntokozo was asleep next to me. I took a moment to look at him. He wasn't Joshua but he was a man. A man who had fought for me. A man who had cooked for me. The man I was beginning to trust. Maybe Joshua wasn't a man for me after all. Maybe Ntokozo is.

"Your lips are moving and you are not praying." he said sounding like he wasn't asleep at all.

"How do you know that I'm not praying?" I laughed a bit.

"Your body went still for a moment. What are you thinking about?" he asked.

"About yesterday. Thank you for saving my life."

"It was just a scratch dear. You will be okay." he smiled.

"Still. You shot him to save me."

"And you are worth saving Phelisa. You are a good woman just wrong choices." said Ntokozo.

I got up and went to brush my teeth. When I was done I went back to him.

"I want to change and I'm choosing your team." I told him.

"Theres no going back." he advised.

"I know and I want to be with you." okay that came out wrong but I didn't have the strength to explain.

"Wise choice dear." he smiled.

"You do that a lot."

"Do what?" he asked.

"Smiling. You smile a lot." I pointed out.

"No. I show my teeth a lot. How is your arm?" he asked.

"Better than before." I lied. It wasn't better. It hurt.

"You lying. Maybe I should take you to the hospital."

"How do you know that I'm lying?" I asked.

"You look me straight in the eyes. And I hate that." he said.

"I'm sorry." I mumbled.

"Trust. Phelisa. All good relationships should begin with trust. Trust us and let us trust you. Without it then we have nothing." he explained and then walked out.

I sat on the bed and took a deep breath. Ntokozo was right. I needed to trust them. They were keeping me alive after all and who knows maybe I could score myself a husband as well. He wasn't going to be Joshua but he could be mine and just mine.

Page 6.

Brazil.

I had a headache. I sat up and looked around. It wasn't my home. Yes I had a huge house but I knew all the rooms and this wasn't mine. I got out of bed and went to try the door. It was unlocked so I opened the door and bumped into Njabulo.

"Hey." he spoke so softly as if afraid to be heard.

"Why are you whispering? Where am I?" I looked at him.

"You remember me?" he asked.

"Are you high? Of course I know you. My sister's husband. Duh." I raised my eyebrows.

"Joshua!!" he screamed and then ran downstairs. I followed him. Joshua was asleep on the couch. He sat up looking rather alarmed.

"It worked. Damn I'm good." said Njabulo jumping up and down.

"Thandeka." said Joshua looking at me.

"Can someone please tell me what's going on?" I was annoyed and the headache was killing me.

"You remember?" he touched my chin.

"Remember what? Where am I Joshua and where are my kids?"

"Sit down dear." he sat me down on the couch.

Joshua and Njabulo explained that we were in Brazil and I was sick.

"When are we going home?" I asked after they gave me the low down.

Joshua looked at Njabulo who looked down.

"What is that? Why are you looking at him like that?" I asked knowing my husband.

"There's a bit of a situation." mumbled Njabulo.

"What situation?" I looked at him.

"We kind of lied back at home. We said you are, um, dead." said Njabulo looking down.

I looked at Joshua and he looked down.

"Why? Why would you guys do that? Why would you guys hurt my kids like that?" I stood up and sat down again.

"I had to act Thandeka." justified Joshua.

"And your actions hurt my kids. Did you atleast think about them?" I shouted.

"We didn't tell them. We only told few people." said Joshua.

"And my parents?" I looked at him.

"They don't know but you can't go home just yet." said Joshua.

"Aint you hungry?" asked Njabulo.

I gave him a dead stare and he went quiet.

"Mxm. I have a headache."

"I have some pain killers." Njabulo said and ran upstairs.

"MaMyeza" said Joshua.

I looked at him but didn't respond.

"I know you angry and I'm sorry" he held my hand.

"Who is it this time?" I asked.

"I don't know. Wena awukhumbuli lutho nje about the last 24 hours?" he asked.

"No. Ngikhumbula sishada futhi." thats all I remembered.

Joshua nodded. Njabulo came back with the pills and gave me two. I drank them the same time.

"I need to rest. Maybe when I wake up I will fill better." I walked upstairs.

Joshua followed behind me.

"Who's house is this?" I asked.

"Ntokozo." said Joshua.

"Its beautiful but lonely. It needs a woman's touch." Joshua grabbed my hand making me stop. I turned

around and looked at him.

"I'm sorry" He wrapped his arms around me.

"Its fine Joshua. I just miss home. Kevin has a chess tournament, Thando has cricket." I blinked away the tears.

"I'm sorry you missed it." I didn't respond. I just buried my head in his chest and cried.

>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>

Durban.

Ntokozo took me to the hospital. They did the scan. The doctor wanted to keep me overnight but Ntokozo refused. In the end we went home.

"Anything to eat?" He asked.

"I'm not hungry."

"You angry?" he asked looking at me.

"No." I lied. I was angry.

"You lying again Phelisa." there was a bit of a warning in his voice.

"I'm sorry" I looked down.

"So what about some ribs?" he asked.

"Thank you"

He drove to the mall and came to open the door for me. I got out and followed him to Spur.

"I haven't been here since my divorce years ago." said Ntokozo as we sat down.

"Why?" I asked.

"My wife hated the place so I use to bring her here if she pisses me off." he answered.

"As a punishment?" I looked at him.

"Sort off. As I've said before. We got married so young and shit happened." he smiled a bit.

"So you roll like that?" I asked.

"Roll how?"

"Get pissed off and deliver a punishment?"

"I won't lie to you Phelisa. I do get angry and when I do, lets just say you don't want to be the reason why I'm angry." he explained.

We got our ribs and I began eating.

"And I hate being lied to Phelisa." he added.

"Okay"

"Just like you lied about Duma being in the house."

I choked and began coughing. Ntokozo got up and came to sit next to me, slowly patting my back.

"Hopefully that was before your choice to be in our team because in our team Phelisa. Trust is everything and without it there is no team." he handed me a glass of juice. I took a sip and put it down.

"So, lets start again Phelisa. Is there something that I should know about Duma's visit?" he gave me a stern look with no smile this time. I swallowed hard.

Chapter4.

Page1.

Ntokozo's house was beautiful and it had everything except the home feeling. Njabulo stocked up the fridge but I stood there in front of the counter and wondered if Kevin had eaten. He loved spinach but hated all the other vegetables. While Thando loved everything but hated spinach. Everytime I tried to give it to him. He would look at it and say "it poisonous mum."

"Hey" said Joshua wrapping his arms around me.

"I miss them. I miss my kids Joshua." I whispered.

"I know and we will go home soon." he kissed my neck.

"Third person alert" said Njabulo walking downstairs.

"Jealous makes you nasty." said Joshua following him to the lounge.

"Aysuka. By the way I found the footage and its him." said Njabulo sitting heavily on the couch.

"Did you tell Ntokozo?" asked Joshua.

Njabulo looked my way and I looked away.

"I did. But I'm worried about them." said Njabulo.

"She is safe. I trust Ntokozo. He never lose focus." said Joshua.

"That's not what I'm worried about." said Njabulo.

"Then what?" Asked Joshua.

"I think he could be falling for her." said Njabulo.

"As in, in love with her?" Asked Joshua.

"Yes." said Njabulo.

"So what? Phelisa is a nice young lady and I honestly think Ntokozo is ready to move on." I spoke even forgetting that they weren't talking to me.

"Wow." said Joshua adding a laugh.

"Women and match making." added Njabulo.

I turned my attention to the kitchen and began cooking but I put my ear out to hear what the boys were talking about.

"Nokho my friend you've gone soft." said Njabulo out of the blue.

"I'm a family man now. I have to think about my wife and kids, but ngizombamba." said Joshua.

"Uze usho kugcwala umlomo ukth I'm Joshua Cebekhulu." said Njabulo.

"The bastard. Nx." said Joshua looking at me.

"You know who pretended to be you?" I asked Joshua.

"No." said Njabulo first.

"I wonder what Lindi would say if I call her right now" I looked at Joshua.

"Sbu is out. He is the one who tried to be me." said Joshua.

"Sbusiso Ndlela?"

"Yes my love." said Joshua.

"No need to blackmail me with my wife anymore." said Njabulo.

"Tell no lies and you shall not be blackmailed." I gave him a side glance.

"Sit down Thandeka. Its time I tell you the truth." said Joshua.

I sat down opposite Joshua.

"Last year I recieved a tip that Duma was planning to take me down." said Joshua.

"My cousin Duma?" I asked.

"Yes. He hired Phelisa to seduce me and destroy our marriage." he explained.

"But I hired Phelisa. Through an agency." I was confused.

"Yes. It was a set up. From the word go." said Njabulo.

"Okay. Continue." I looked at Joshua.

"I don't know what happened or the plan changed because you became the target." said Joshua.

"Why me?" I asked.

"Because Duma believes that I can't exist without you." said Joshua.

"We had Duma followed and we saw him give Phelisa something to poison you with." added Njabulo.

"Did she poison me?" I asked blinking the tears away.

"She did but I managed to switch the tea. But in order for them to believe that you were dying we had to do something." said Joshua.

"And you killed me first?" I looked at Njabulo.

"I made you sleep. The problem is that the drugs I used had an effect. That's why you couldn't speak or even remember." explained Njabulo.

"So uSbu noDuma work together?" I asked.

"I doubt it because Duma still thinks you are dead and Sbu pretended to be me." said Joshua.

"So we are back to square one? Me being the target of every loser out there." My voice was breaking.

"We will protect you. I promise" said Joshua.

"That's not the point. When will this stop Joshua? When I'm dead?" I broke down and cried.

"You won't die MaMyeza. I just need you to relax." said Joshua.

"How can I relax when my own cousin wants to kill me?" I got up and went upstairs.

"Thandeka" Joshua came after me.

I ignored him and went to the bedroom.

I wanted to get in and slam the door but Joshua blocked it by putting his foot between the door and the frame.

I threw myself on the bed and wept. I was back to living in fear again. I wasn't sure if I was strong enough

to deal with this again.

Page2.

I told Ntokozo everything that Duma had said even though it felt like he already knew.

"Wow Phelisa. Sleeping with the enemy already?" Duma's voice cut in.

Ntokozo and I looked up the same time.

"Duma" said Ntokozo showing his teeth.

"Mdluli." said Duma putting a gold coin on the table.

"When?" Asked Ntokozo taking the coin.

"Anytime. Even right now." answered Duma walking away. He stopped before reaching the exit and walked back to us.

"I hope lover boy told you the secret already." said Duma looking at Ntokozo.

"Back off Duma." warned Ntokozo.

"I guess not. My cousin is alive. Hiden away in Brazil, in Mr Mdluli's house. So he is here playing you like a tin foil guitar while Joshua is enjoy his honeymoon." he laughed and walked away.

"Is it true?" I looked at Ntokozo.

"Yeah, its true." he answered.

"Wow. So Njabulo and Joshua made me feel like shit for nothing." I shouted at him.

"And who do you think you talking to? Your stokvel friend?" said Ntokozo.

"Mxm" I got up and got ready to walk away but he grabbed my hand.

"Do you see this coin. It means they are ready to take you out. If you walk out that door they will kill you. So I suggest you sit your behind in that damn chair and let me think." he spoke through his teeth.

I sank down.

Ntokozo took out his phone and made a call.

"Duma knows about Thandeka." he spoke looking at me.

"Don't worry about Phelisa. I'll take care of her. Just take care of your wife." he hung up.

I opened my mouth to speak but a loud crack stopped me. Everything happened in speed. Ntokozo

pushed me to the floor before the sound of a breaking glass filled the room.

People were screaming and most on the floor covering thier faces.

"Come" said Ntokozo helping me up. We walked to the back.

His phone rang and he took it out.

"Exit2. I'm leaving the car behind." he hung up and took my good hand and led me to the back exit. We walked in silent. The only sound we could hear was the police cars and the ambulance.

When we got to the exit there was a car there. Mlungisi was standing few feet away from it with his head looking up like he was praying to God in Heaven.

"Wait." said Ntokozo stepping infront of me.

Mlungisi held his index fingers and pointed upwards before turning away from the car.

"Shit. Go hide in that corner and don't come out until I tell you to." ordered Ntokozo pulling out a gun.

"But_ "

"Just go Phelisa. I'll come and get you. I promise." he kissed my forehead.

I walked away as instructed. When I got to the corner I sat down leaning against the wall. The place had a nasty smell like it had been used as a dump site. But at that moment I didn't care about it. I cared about being alive. Thandeka crossed my mind. I wondered if she ever faced moments like this in her life. If she did than her life wasn't perfect like most of us thought it was. Living in fear was no joke. Sound of guns being fired almost stopped my heart. I thought about Ntokozo. He was fighting to keep me alive even though I wasn't worth saving.

2 hours flew by. The guns stopped going off. Infact it went quiet. So quiet that it made me sleepy but I couldn't sleep. Not that the stinking was keeping me up but I was worried about Ntokozo. Where was he? Was he dead? I did I get him killed. I didn't realise I was crying until I beggan gasping for air because it felt like the corner was shrinking.

A familiar scent of Straight to heaven by Kilian filled my nose. I looked up and blinked when I saw Ntokozo standing there dressed in white pants and white v-neck top and white leather sneakers. At first I thought he had died and came back in an angelic form.

"Hey." he took my hands pulling me up and then wrapped his arms around me.

"Its okay. You safe but the smell of this place might kill you." he whispered and then laughed.

"I hate to ruin this moment but we have to go guys." Mlungisi's voice cut in behind Ntokozo.

"Lets go." said Ntokozo pulling away.

"Maybe Joshua should come home." said Mlungisi walking in front of us.

"Sbu was in Brazil pretending to be Joshua. Luckily Joshua and Njabulo came to see Thandeka and she told them about the man that was claiming to be her husband." explained Ntokozo.

"So Duma and S'bu are working together?" asked Mlungisi.

"They didn't before but I think they do now. Because Duma told Phelisa that Thandeka is hiding in my house in Brazil." said Ntokozo.

"Wow. So we are back to the first square. Keeping Thandeka and Phelisa alive." said Mlungisi.

"I guess so. Sbu wants Thandeka dead. Duma wants Phelisa dead." said Ntokozo.

"Why does Sbu want Thandeka dead?" I asked because it didn't make sense to me.

"Sbu, Xolani, Sizwe and Jason did something to Thandeka. Years ago. The other 3 is dead and S'bu did try to kill Thandeka but failed so he wants to kill her first before she kills him." Explained Ntokozo.

"You talking about Sizwe Memela?" I asked.

"You know him?" asked Mlungisi.

"Yes, but I'm surprised that you guys say he is dead. Sizwe Memela is alive" I told them.

Page3.

"The Sizwe Memela who happens to be Thandeka's stepbrother?" asked Mlungisi looking at me.

"I don't know about him being related to Thandeka but Sizwe Memela who use to be a business man. That Sizwe is alive." I explained.

Mlu looked at Ntokozo but didn't say anything at all.

"Maybe its time Thandeka and Joshua came home. Drop us off at my place." said Ntokozo taking my hand.

"Nah you guys drop me off and keep the car. I'll ask Thizo to stay over at Joshua's just incase Duma returns." said Mlu handing the keys to Ntokozo. I got into the passenger seat.

We went to drop Mlu at his home and then went to Ntokozo's place. It was a quiet drive. I could tell that Ntokozo had a lot in his mind. He kept cursing quietly. When we got into his home he opened the door for me.

"Welcome to my home MaCekane." he took my hand and led me inside leaving the car unlocked.

"Thank you. You have a beautiful home." I stood on the door way and took a moment.

"Upstairs. The 3rd door on your left is the bathroom. Get rid off those clothes. I'll get you new clothes."
he walked towards the door.

"You leaving me alone?" I panicked.

"Just for few minutes. Its safe."

I didn't feel safe at all. Duma could walk in and pop my head in less then a minute.

"Okay. I'm not leaving anymore. Come, take a bath." he took my hand and led me upstairs.

"You will use this room." he opened the door and I was met by a beautiful lavender room.

"Thank you." I went inside and stood in the middle and just looked around.

"You smell like garbage. Woza uzogeza." said Ntokozo.

"Okay." I stood for a moment waiting for him to leave so I could undress.

"Well?" he asked.

"Some privacy."

He laughed and walked out.

I undressed quickly and then wrapped the towel around my body before opening the door.

"There is the bathroom." he pointed the opposite door.

"Thanks" I went inside and showered quickly using one hand as I couldn't get the other hand wet. After few minutes I walked out. Ntokozo was standing near the wall.

"Done?" he asked.

"Yes." I walked into the room and he followed.

"Are you in pain?" he asked sitting on the edge of the bed.

"Not really. I'm more freaked out." I answered sitting down.

"Why?" he asked.

"Because there are people out there who want to kill me."

"And I told you that I'll protect you." he spoke raising an eyebrow.

"I know but what happens when you get what you guys want. What will happen to me?" My eyes filled with tears.

"So you think I'm doing this because I want to catch Duma?" he asked.

"Well, aren't you?" I asked.

He looked at me and then got up and walked out. I thought about going after him but then changed my mind. I had to ask. I knew it was my fault to be involved in this but I had learned my lesson.

The sound of the door being opened gave me a fright. Ntokozo walked in and came towards me.

"Are you sure you are not in any pain beside the hand?" he asked.

"Yes I'm sure." I answered not understanding what that question meant.

He took my hand pulled me up until I was standing in front of him. Without any warning he smashed his lips against me roughly and began sucking my bottom lip. I was so stunned I couldn't even react until he removed the towel, letting it fall into my legs. I tried to step back but he stepped forward and grabbed my naked ass. I began responding to the kiss. He picked me up and then lay me down on the bed before he ended the kiss.

"I hope now you get it." he spoke and then went to suck my nipple. His hand brushed my legs until it touched my honey pot. He touched the sensitive spot and my whole body went into shock. He didn't stop. He kept going. Kissing my nipples and then fingering me. I won't lie, it felt so good. I found myself opening my legs wider and allowing him to continue. He took his clothes off without breaking the kiss. When he was done he didn't hesitate, he held my other leg up and penetrated my honey pot.

I gasped and tried to move away but he held me down and kissed me deeply.

He thrust gently at first but picked up the speed resulting into a bit rough moves.

"Relax your muscles." he demanded and then smacked my thigh.

I let out a cry as he began hitting the same spot. I was receiving pleasure in such a wild manner and ready to reach my orgasm. He smacked my thigh again and that sent me over the edge as the wave of pleasure washed over me leaving me numb.

"Shit. I love you Zama" said Ntokozo reaching his own climax.

He held his breath and looked at me. We both knew what had happened.

"I'm sorry." He mumbled.

"It's fine." I responded, but it wasn't fine. I hurt more than it had hurt when Joshua made love to Thandeka to the room next to mine. Once again I found myself in pain of a broken heart. The pain that I had invited into my life. Don't get me wrong, I was used to being fucked and then left like that. But with Joshua and Ntokozo it was different. Maybe I was desperate to give away my heart in such a way that I kept giving to people who didn't want it.

Page4.

I didn't want to wake up the next morning. I was hungry but the thought of facing Ntokozo sent shivers down my spine. I lay under the covers and sobbed.

"Phelisa." Ntokozo's voice gave me a sick feeling in my stomach.

"Phelisa" he called me again. This time there was a warning in his tone.

I moved a bit and wiped the tears with my hands.

"I'm sorry." he said pulling back the covers.

"It's okay." my voice came out in a whisper.

"It's not okay. I made a mistake and I'm sorry. I made you some breakfast. Come eat." he took my hand.

"I'm not hungry." I lied.

Ntokozo took a deep breath and then gave me an intense look.

"So you back to lying again?" he asked.

"I'm not lying. I'm just not hungry" I responded and then got up.

"5 minutes. Don't make me drag you down the stairs." he warned before walking out.

I made the bed quickly and then went to rinse my mouth in the bathroom finding a new toothbrush waiting for me. I brushed my teeth and then decided to shower quickly. I was done when there was a loud knock and then Ntokozo walked in.

"Breakfast Phelisa"

"I'm coming." I got out of the shower and then went to get dressed.

"Check the closet. I bought you few clothes." said Ntokozo.

"Thank you." I said and then went to get dressed.

After getting dressed in a simple summer dress and sandals, I went downstairs to eat. Ntokozo was sitting on the piano playing a song I didn't recognise. I found that odd. Joshua was a piano player and very good at it. Was being musical part of the gang or Joshua and Ntokozo were just musical.

The food was already on the table so I sat down and ate. Ntokozo kept playing until his phone rang. He looked at the screen and then rejected the call.

"Are you done eating?" he asked.

"Yes." I got up and cleared the table. Ntokozo came to help. He did the dishes and I dried them. When

we were done I went to take my pain medication.

"Come join me when you are done." he called downstairs.

I went to him.

"I'm about to show you some safety measures. In this room alone I have 8 guns." he spoke ignoring my surprised face.

"Do you know how to handle the gun?" he asked.

"Carry it or use it?" I asked.

"Carrying it. I'll teach you how to aim and then shoot."

"Its a bit heavy but I can try." I answered not looking at him.

"We will use this toy until your arm is healed." he gave me a toy.

His phone rang again and he went to check it.

"Ufunani?" he answered looking at me. I could hear that it was a woman's voice in the other end. Maybe it was the famous Zama that he was inlove with.

"Don't call me again Zamandosi. Lose my number." he hung up after that.

"Where were we?" he asked.

"Teaching me about gun handling" I answered.

"Yah. Come I'll_" He paused and raised a hand to indicate that I should be quiet.

"Go upstairs and hide." he ordered.

"Why?" I asked because I didn't hear anything at all.

"Because Duma is here. Look at that red light on the window. He is the only moron that I know." he went towards the door and took out a gun inside the vase.

"Go upstairs Phelisa." he demanded before opening the door. I turned and walked up the stairs.

"We meet again Phelisa" said a voice behind me. I turned to look and saw Sbusiso Ndlela holding a gun.

"Jail was good to you. You look younger" said Mlungisi behind Sbu.

I don't even know when Mlungisi walked in or maybe he was inside the house all along.

"I just want Phelisa. Hand her over" demanded Sbu still pointing his gun at me.

"And what makes you think I'll hand her over to you?" asked Ntokozo walking up the stairs pointing a

gun at Duma.

"Phelisa is with us now." said Mlu.

"You fucked her. Did she tell you that she slept with Joshua? She is a whore. A low life whore" said Duma.

"Then she is my whore" said Ntokozo.

I saw Duma stumble backwards a bit and then falling flat on his face.

"Take your trash with you." said Mlu pushing Sbu forward.

"Its not over Mdluli. Wena Phelisa ngizokuthola." he picked Duma's body and walked downstairs.

"Ngisayolala." Mlu walked away leaving me with Ntokozo.

"You slept with Joshua?" he asked taking few steps towards me.

"It was a mistake. I swear I didn't mean to. I was still in that mission." I explained.

"And your mission was to be my brother's side whore?" he spat the words with such disgust.

"I was desperate Ntokozo. I needed the money and Duma offered the money." I explained.

"How many times did you sleep with Joshua?" he asked again.

"It only happened once."

"Go to your room Phelisa." he turned and walked away. I went to my room feeling rather strange. I thought Ntokozo was aware that I slept with Joshua, but obviously he didn't tell them that. I didn't understand why Ntokozo was angry though. Its not like he was inlove with me or anything. Zama lived in his heart and head.

I lay down on the bed and tried to figure out what I was missing. Ntokozo was jealous that I slept with Joshua aswel and.... My brain almost burst when I remembered Ntokozo's words. He referred to Joshua as his brother.

Page5.

"Aaaaah" I cried out and bit my arm as I recieved my 3rd climax. Joshua flipped me over and then got between my legs. He held my wrists above my head as his full of lust gaze was fixed on my face. I lifted my knee up and felt him jerk violently.

"Keep still Thandeka." he hissed with such a strain in his voice.

"I think I'm going to come Joshua. Oh gosh I'm coming, I'm coming." I cried out again and sank my nail in his upper arms after he released my wrists to hold my leg.

"Come" he ordered and then thrust in a quick pace until a wave of intense pleasure washed over me leaving my whole body trembling. He pulled out and then released his seed on my navel.

"That's disgusting" I managed to say still trying to catch my breath.

"And you love me anyway. Let's go shower." said Joshua kissing my lips.

"Can't I rest just for few seconds." I complained.

"Not when you are covered in my cum. Let's go." he got up and pulled me up.

We both stood under the shower and enjoyed the feeling of hot water on our bodies.

"I love you." said Joshua suddenly.

"I love you too" I looked at him.

"And I'm sorry that I didn't tell you about Phelisa's intentions. It's just that I was worried that you were going to kick her out before we could get anything out of her." he explained.

"I can't say I'm not angry but I understand. So what will you do to her?" I asked.

"I don't know. I wanted to send her to Cuba." said Joshua.

"Why?" this surprised me.

"She is good in Maths and Biology. She could be a doctor." said Joshua.

"Did she tell you that she wants to be a doctor or you just assumed?" I asked feeling a bit jealous that Joshua had such high hopes for Phelisa. I wasn't her fan, at all.

"I assumed. She doesn't have parents Thandeka."

"You can't rescue the world Joshua. If you want to help Phelisa then give her a job and then if she is smart enough she will shine on her own." I explained.

"Are you saying this as Thandeka my loving and caring wife or as Gloria." he asked.

"What is that suppose to mean?" I looked at him.

"Because the Thandeka that I know will be happy that I want to give Phelisa a good start and the Gloria that I once knew will expect Phelisa to strive on her own just like she did."

"Is it wrong for me to want that? She tried to kill me Joshua. If you weren't a smart ass man I would be dead as we speak. You can't expect me to warm up to her." It wasn't fair. I trusted her and in return she messed me up.

"You may not have a choice. Ntokozo could be falling for her" said Joshua.

"And I thought that was a great idea but that was before you told me about her mission. Right now I have nothing but hate for her." I spat the words out with such fury.

Joshua looked at me slightly shaking his head.

"Don't give me that. She is evil. If you want to help her. Just give her a job at the club and then let her live her evil life away from me." I suggested.

"If she is overseas then she is away from you."

"No. She will be in our lives for ever." I argued.

Joshua turned off the water and walked out. I followed.

"If she is dating Ntokozo then we have no choice but to like her." said Joshua applying the lotion on my back.

"I really like Ntokozo but I'm sorry. I can't like Phelisa." I said and then relaxed to Joshua's hands as he kept playing with his fingers on my back.

"Theres something that we discovered." said Joshua pausing a bit.

"What is it?" I turned around to face him.

"Ntokozo is my brother." said Joshua running his hand over his dreadlocks.

"Brother? How?" I was shocked.

"My mother was his mother. She had him first and then had me." he explained.

"But you are a Cebekhulu and he is a Mdluli." It didn't make sense at all.

"My mum had him and when she married my father she was forced to leave him with her parents. Then Mr Mdluli paid the necessary required amount to have him." explained Joshua.

"So all along you were friends with your brother?"

"Yes. Its a lot to take in. So if Phelisa and Ntokozo makes it then we have to like Phelisa. We are all family." said Joshua looking at me.

"Yeepee, lucky me." I couldn't hide my anger about this.

"For my brother. Please." he begged.

I looked at Joshua. This was important to him.

"I'll try." I lied.

"Thats all I ask" he kissed my forehead and then went to pick an outfit.

We got dressed and Joshua went downstairs to Njabulo. I stayed behind and thought about the situation. It wasn't fair. The woman had tried to kill me and now I had to like her because Ntokozo was in love. This brotherhood/family wasn't going to be good for me. As much as I liked Ntokozo and all the others but I wasn't ready to bond with Phelisa, she was a snake and the snakes should be killed before they strike you first. A ringing phone snapped me away from my deep and dark thoughts. I looked for it and found it under the bed. It was Joshua's and it was Ntokozo, so I answered.

"Really mjita. You just had to fuck Phelisa and cheat on your wife. How could you!!" shouted Ntokozo on the other end without even greeting.

Page6.

"MaMyeza." said Joshua walking in. I didn't hesitate. I threw the phone at him with such force. By the time he ducked it was already too late. It hit him just above the eye and left an open wound.

"Are you crazy? What the hell are you doing?" he shouted still holding his one eye.

"Uyinja Joshua. I can't believe I married an arse hole like you." I shouted and went to the closet to pack my things.

"Joshua. You have a phone call. It's Ntokozo" said Njabulo on the other side of the door.

Joshua opened the door and took the phone.

"Yah" he answered.

I went back to my packing and occasionally throwing a glance towards him. I could tell that Ntokozo was giving him an earful.

After throwing everything in I decided to go talk to Njabulo and ask him to book my ticket, but when I opened the door to walk out. Joshua grabbed my hand and then blocked the door with his foot.

"We will talk later when you are willing to let me explain." he hung up and threw the phone on the bed.

"Let go of me" I shouted.

"I can explain Thandeka."

"I'm not interested Joshua. I just want to go home." I tried to break free.

"You leaving me?" he asked.

"You have Phelisa. I'm sure she will take good care of you."

"So we are back to square one? Something happens you run. You haven't changed Thandeka." he let go of my arm.

I turned to face him.

"I just told Thandeka the truth. I didn't mean to. I thought I was talking to Joshua. So she knows." he said.

"So?" I asked not caring at all.

"What do you mean so?" he looked at me.

"You don't really expect me to care, do you?" I sat up.

"Are you trying to piss me off? Because if you are then it's working." he warned.

"And you will do what? Joshua fucked me and then broke my arm. You fucked me and now you want to break my neck? Go ahead dude. Save me from this hell prison." I shouted.

"Do you want me to kill you?" he asked.

"Yes. Do it. I'm tired of this life"

Ntokoza got up and walked out. I lay down to bed again feeling a bit proud that I stood up for myself.

"So which one should I use?" asked Ntokoza.

I sat up and looked at him. He was holding a gun, a knife, a syringe and a rope.

"Pick one" he put everything on the bed.

I got out of bed. Was he crazy? I didn't mean to.

"I don't have time Phelisa. Just pick one and let me help you out of this prison." he picked up a gun.

"I didn't mean to. I was just angry. Please don't kill me." I begged, tears already streaming down my face.

Ntokoza stood there and looked at me.

"Always be careful of what you wish for Phelisa. Next time I'll kill you for real." he took his things and walked out.

I sank on the floor and wept. My whole body was shaking.

"I'm not your friend Phelisa. I'm a grown man and I don't have time to play hide and seek. You will not talk to me like you talk to your friends." said Ntokoza sitting next to me. I sat still just hugging my knees.

"Do you know what you want in life?" he asked.

I didn't answer.

"Let's try again. Do you know what you want in life?" he asked again.

Again I didn't answer. If Ntokozo thought I was going to roll over and be a sheep then he was wrong.

I was nobody's play thing.

Page 7.

Ntokozo was holding my neck pushing it towards my knees. I couldn't breathe. It felt like I was drowning.

"I'm a good man Phelisa. I care too much and I really care about you but you have this really dumb I don't care attitude and I'm going to enjoy milking it out of you, bit by bit." he said before letting go. I coughed and tried to breathe.

"We are going out. It's a formal dinner with my business associates. You have to get ready." he ordered.

"I don't have anything to wear." I replied ignoring the pain on my throat.

"Someone is coming to help you get ready." he said and then walked out.

I sat there and wiped the tears off my face. I didn't understand Ntokozo's anger toward me. We were fine until he found out that I had slept with Joshua. Thinking about Joshua made my stomach turn.

"Woza Phelisa. Navan is here." said Ntokozo standing on the doorway.

I stood up and went to him.

"Go wash your face." he ordered and then went downstairs. I went to do as told and then went downstairs.

There was an Indian lady waiting there.

"Oh sweetheart. What happened to your arm?" she asked before I even had a chance to greet.

"Pool accident." said Ntokozo giving me a fake smile.

"Okay. I have few dresses we can try. Anything specific that you want?" she asked me.

"Make her look like a queen. My queen." said Ntokozo.

"Okay" she gave me a sad look like she felt sorry for me.

We spent the next hours changing the dresses and shoes. In the end Ntokozo decided on a gold and black. After that I went to shower and then Navan did my makeup and hair. He was right about me looking like a queen.

"Sometimes happiness is poverty." she said as she finished doing some touch up on my hair.

"Meaning?" I asked.

"Mr Mdluli is rich dear but he is a ruthless man. The kind that will smile and laugh but beat you to death in a second. Obviously you are here because you like the guy but be careful." said Navan.

"Ready?" Ntokozo's voice cut in making us jump.

"Yes." I stood up.

"Thank you Navan. I'll transfer your payment." he looked at her flushing a smile.

"Okay Mr Mdluli. Have fun." she touched my arm and then walked out.

"Angihlanyi njalo wePhelisa. I don't just beat people up. They ask for it." he said looking at me.

I didn't respond. I thought Njabulo was mean and dangerous but I was wrong. Ntokozo was worse.

We left the house and went to Kingfisher Lodge.

"You are about to meet some real thugs in suits. I want you to smile and be on my side at all times." said Ntokozo.

"Okay"

"Don't accept any drinks from anyone. I don't trust them. I know Duma might be there so he may try something." said Ntokozo.

"I thought you killed Duma."

"He was wearing a vest. He is much alive." said Ntokozo.

I just nodded and went quiet.

We got to the venue and went inside. The place was a bit crowded but we found our seats.

"Mr Mdluli. How nice of you to join us." said a blonde man giving us a weak smile.

"I never say no to these kinds of things." said Ntokozo pulling a seat for me. I sat down and then he sat next to me.

"You brought even a younger one. Your daughter?" asked a chinese looking like man.

"No. I like them young. Just like you." said Ntokozo.

"Anything to drink Miss" asked a blonde man.

"No. She is fine. But you could use some wine." said Ntokozo shifting in his seat.

I saw the blonde guy tenses up and then raising both his hands.

"We would like more wine and juice for my wife." said Ntokozo to the waiter.

The guy nodded and walked away. When he turned I noticed that it was Mlungisi.

I gave Ntokozo a puzzled look and he rested his hand on my thigh.

Mlu came back with wine. Placing glasses in front of us.

"Drink your juice sweetheart." said Ntokozo.

I took a sip and then froze when I felt something hard and cold touch me under the table.

"I want my chip or she dies" hissed the blonde guy.

"Raymond has your chip." said Ntokozo casually.

"I do not" said another white man almost jumping.

"Search him" said Ntokozo.

"You search him or she dies." ordered the man still pointing a gun at me.

"You don't get to order me around." I saw the blonde guy gasp and then falling on the table.

"Let's go dear. We have a party to attend." said Ntokozo taking my hand.

"You shot him" exclaimed the Chinese man.

Ntokozo didn't answer, he pulled out a gun and shot the man leaving the second blonde guy shocked.

Someone screamed and then the lights went off leaving us in pitch black.

"Hold on to me." said Ntokozo moving forward.

"This way." said Mlungisi appearing with a torch.

We followed him out and got into his car.

"Are you okay?" Asked Ntokozo.

"Yes" I lied. I wasn't fine at all. I just saw him kill two men like it was nothing at all.

"Jump to the back seat and change. I brought you some casual clothes.

"Can't we go home? I'm tired and my arm is in pain." I complained.

"Change Phelisa." he parked on the side of the road and got out. I got out too and went in the backseat. Another car parked in a distance. Mlu got out and ran before the car went into flames.

Chapter5.

Page1.

We touched down at King Shaka International Airport. It felt good to be home. I missed my kids, my home and my friends. I wasn't talking to Joshua, I even slept on the couch the night before just to show my anger.

"Ntokozo is waiting outside." said Njabulo taking my bags.

When we walked out my eyes landed on Phelisa. She was standing there leaning against Ntokozo's car. My ears started burning. The anger swallowed me up. Before I knew it I was in front of her and slapping the day light out of her. She stood there and took it.

"What the hell are you doing?" Ntokozo pulled me away from her.

"Let go of me." I screamed at him but he didn't release me at all.

"Get in the car Thandeka." said Ntokozo with such authority in his voice.

Joshua led Phelisa into the other car and they drove off leaving Ntokozo, Mlu and I to take the other car.

When we got home they were already there. I walked upstairs without saying a word to anyone. When I got into what I knew as our bedroom I was surprised to find everything in its place.

"The kids went to visit your parents with Lindiwe" said Joshua standing in the doorway.

"Okay." I began unpacking.

Joshua stood there with his arms folded in his chest. I didn't like the way he was watching me.

"Are they gone?" I asked.

"No." he answered and moved a bit making me move away from him.

"Wenzani?" he asked.

"Unpacking." I told him the obvious.

He nodded and moved again. I was panicking. I knew Joshua. And I knew what made him mad. At that very moment I knew he was angry that I hit Phelisa.

"I'm sorry." I mumbled.

"What for?" he asked again.

"My behaviour at the airport."

Joshua grabbed my arm and threw me on the bed.

"You don't grow up, do you?" he held my arms above my head.

"I was angry Joshua. She tried to kill me. She slept with you in my own home. You can't punish me for having emotions." I tried to reason with him.

"I didn't sleep with Phelisa. Sihle did." said Joshua putting his weight on me as he sat on my lower body.

"What?"

"Yes. Sihle slept with Phelisa but she doesn't know. She thinks it was me." explained Joshua.

"Can you get off me. I need to sit up for this." I tried to push him but he didn't move at all.

"No. I'm angry Thandeka." he spoke.

"And I'm sorry."

Joshua didn't answer instead he lowered his head and kissed my lips.

"Joshua" said Ntokozo on the other side.

I almost jumped up and down because that meant Joshua would leave me alone.

"Sure" said Joshua pulling away from me.

"Ay ay woza ndoda." complained Ntokozo.

"I'm not done with you yet." said Joshua getting off me.

I got up to and followed him out.

"Lets talk in private." said Ntokozo as they went to the study. I went downstairs to Phelisa.

She looked up as she saw me. I wanted to attack her again but decided against it.

"Yah Phelisa." I sat opposite her.

She opened her mouth to speak but snapped it shut again.

"How much did they pay you?" I asked.

She shifted uncomfortable.

"You can't talk now? Duma got your tounge?" I looked at her.

Again she didn't answer.

"What kind of a whore are you? What did you think you will achieve? Have my husband? My kids?" I shouted at her.

She sat there and looked down.

"You bitch" I jumped to her again. I had my hands around her neck. She let out a faint cry.

"Thandeka" Joshua's angry voice got me. I let her go.

"Asambe Phelisa" said Ntokozo taking her hand.

Joshua gave me a nasty look before walking them out.

I sat on the couch and realised that I was exhausted from a long flight and the anger I had for Phelisa was messing with my judgement.

"You sleeping in the spareroom until I can look at you." said Joshua walking in.

"Whatever Joshua." I didn't even care."

He paused and looked at me.

"Whatever?" he raised an eyebrow.

"I'm tired. I want to rest." I got up.

"Did you say whatever to me?" he asked walking towards me.

"I didn't mean to."

"Usungikhohliwe Thandeka?" he asked.

"Cha."

"Oh ufuna ngikukhumbuze ukuth ngiwubani?" he asked again.

"Cha"

Joshua turned and walked upstairs.

Page2.

Phelisa

Ntokozo drove us back to his place. We weren't talking at all. When we got there I went to take a hot bath. I was exhausted from being slapped around and my throat was burning. I sat there in a bubble bath and allowed my mind to drift away. This wasn't how I wanted my life to be like.

"Phelisa" Ntokozo knocked on the otherside.

"I'm done." I got up from now cold water and wrapped a towel around my body before opening the

door.

"I made us some dinner" said Ntokozo giving me a sad look.

"I'll be down in a minute." I turned and drained the tub.

I heard Ntokozo walk away. After rinsing the bath tub I walked out and went to the bedroom. There was a sexy lingerie on the bed and note that read "PUT THESE ON AND THEN COVER UP". I decided to put them on and then wore the gown.

When I went downstairs Ntokozo was standing near the fire place, half naked and holding a glass that had something gold in it. I figured it must be some expensive alcohol. He turned and looked at me.

"You warm enough?" he asked.

"The room is warm. Thank you"

"Come sit dear." he pointed the cushions on the floor. I went over and sat down. He brought food and we ate in silence. I was a bit afraid to look up because I could feel that his eyes were on me.

"I'm sorry for what Thandeka did to you." his hand brushed my slightly bruised jawline.

"Its fine. She had every right. I did try to kill her." I didn't even hate her for attacking me.

"Is that why you didn't fight back? You think you deserve it?" he asked.

"I don't think, I know. I was wrong Ntokozo. I made a mistake and it seems like I'll pay for it impilo yam yonke." I explained.

"No one is perfect Phelisa but we don't punish ourselves like that. At some point you have to forgive yourself." said Ntokozo.

"I don't think I can. Sometimes I wish I was dead." the moment I said that Ntokozo stopped touching my face.

"Uyabheda. If you are dead then I wouldn't be here. I like you Phelisa. Maybe you can't see that because you still hung up in Joshua."

"I'm not, but I know that some lady named Zama has your heart."

"Zama is my ex-wife and I'm sorry." he held my hand.

"And its clear that you still love her." I pulled my hand away.

"I don't. Like I told you, we got married so young. Made lots of mistake and I want to correct them. I want to love again. Get married and have someone to come home too. I want you Phelisa. Be my woman." said Ntokozo holding my chin up.

"I don't think I can be that woman for you. I slept with your brother."

"No. You didn't sleep with Joshua, even if you did. Its fine. I'm not a saint." he kissed my lips.

"What do you mean I didn't sleep with Joshua?" I pulled away.

"Joshua drugged you. He would never cheat on his wife."

"Drugged me how?" I was confused.

Ntokozo didn't respond. Instead he kissed my lip.

One thing led to another and we ended up making love on the floor and falling asleep right there.

A loud bang woke me up. When I looked around I noticed that Ntokozo was laying few feet away from. He was bleeding.

"No lover boy to save you now" said Duma pointing a gun at me.

"Please don't kill me." I begged.

Duma laughed and then pulled the trigger. I screamed on top of my voice.

Page3.

"Wake up Phelisa. You are dreaming" said Ntokozo waking me up.

I sat up covered in sweat.

"What are you dreaming about?" he wrapped his arms around me. I couldn't speak. It felt so real, like I had lost Ntokozo for real.

"Shh, its okay. Ungakhali. It was just a dream" said Ntokozo rocking us back and fourth.

"You were dead and Duma was about to kill me." I tried to explain between the sobbs.

"He won't get you. I won't let him hurt you. I love you Phelisa." said Ntokozo.

We both went quiet until Ntokozo pulled away.

"How about some music, a cup of coffee and then we just chill?" he suggest.

"That would be lovely." I tried to smile but I was too shaken it ended up looking like a stupid grin.

Ntokozo put on Maxwell and then went to make coffee. I sat there wrapped in the sheet and hugging my knees.

"Here is your coffee" he put it down next to me.

"Thank you" I picked up the cup and then sat it back down because my hands were shaking.

"So, tell me about yourself." said Ntokozo sitting in front of me. My knees were almost in his chest.

"There's nothing to tell. I'm a home wrecker." I answered.

"Where are your parents?" he asked ignoring the comment I made.

"I don't know. I've never met them." I answered.

"Who raised you?" he asked.

"I grew up in the orphanage."

Ntokozo looked away and then took a deep breath.

"That's why you didn't study further?" he asked.

"Yes. I started dating gangsters." I explained.

"Do you want to study further?" he asked.

"No. I want to work."

"Why?" he asked.

"To earn an honest living." I answered.

"I'll talk to Msizi. Maybe he can organise something for you."

"Thank you." I picked up my coffee and began sipping it.

"Okay. My turn?" I put down an empty cup down.

"Fire away" said Ntokozo smiling.

"Beside gun handling. What else do you do?" I asked.

"I don't handle guns dear. I'm a trained contract killer." he explained.

"What does that mean?" I asked.

"I take out nasty people like Duma. Quick and clean." said Ntokozo.

"Wow. So you went to school to study that?" I asked.

"No. My dad sent me to USA. When I got there let's just say it didn't go according to plan. I lost focus and hung out with a bad crowd."

"So you came back?" I asked.

"No ngaqhubeka ngafunda. I'm an investment banker."

"Really?" I didn't believe him.

"Yes really. My father wanted me to be something and I am." he explained.

"You and Joshua share the same father?" I asked.

"No. We share the mother. But my step mother raised me." He explained.

"And you don't have kids?" I asked.

Something changed in his face.

"Sensitive topic?" I asked.

"Sort of. I don't have kids. But I love them." he answered.

"You ex-wife couldn't have them?" I asked.

"She did. Except it wasn't mine. She slept with my friend after refusing to give me a child." he explained.

"I'm sorry." I held his hand.

"It's okay. Just so you know Phelisa. If you ever do what Zama did to me. I'll hang you and then tell people you killed yourself." he didn't even smile when he said that.

"You are not joking?"

"I never joke about that. I'm going to be faithful to you and I expect you to be faithful to me."

"I will." I kissed him and he kissed me back gently laying me down until he was between my legs and his forehead in my forehead.

"You drive me crazy Phelisa" he kissed me again.

"I love you too" I said between the kisses.

"I love you more. Ungangiphoxi MaCekane." he said.

"I won't. And thank you for seeing a human underneath the monster skin." I held him tight.

"Sometimes love is what we need dear." he kissed my neck while his hand travelled down there. Being in Ntokozo's arms made me forget about Joshua. I didn't need him to admire me like anymore. I had Ntokozo who was willing to walk on fire for me and I was willing to do the same for him.

"Wake up. I got you a cup of coffee." said Joshua removing the blanket over my head.

"Thank you" I sat up and winced a bit as I felt the pain on my butt.

Joshua looked at me and then looked away. I took the coffee and began drinking it.

"Lindiwe is coming home today. She is bringing Julia with her." said Joshua.

"And my boys?" I looked at him.

"Mthunzi is bringing them. Finish that coffee and go shower, Ntokozo and Phelisa are coming." he said.

"To do what?" I couldn't hide my anger.

"Why are you shouting?" said Joshua shifting in his sitting position.

"I'm sorry. I just don't want that witch in my house Joshua."

"Watch your tone. Phelisa is coming because she has to. My brother and I have things to discuss" said Joshua.

"Mxm" I got out of bed and went to the shower. I stood there and enjoyed feeling hot water soothe my skin. The punishment last night wasn't what I thought it would be. There was no sex involved. It was just Joshua sitting on the back of my thighs, holding my both hands on the back and his other hand smacking my butt away as he kept preaching about self respect. I didn't care about that because if I had died I wouldn't need self respect.

"Thandeka" called Joshua on the other side.

"I'm coming" I turned off the water.

"I'm joining you" he walked in and stood in front of me.

"I'm done already."

"Turn around. I want to see." said Joshua ignoring my statement.

"It's not that bad." I answered.

"Let me be that judge. Turn around Thandeka." he ordered.

I turned around. He pushed me forward and I used my hands to stop myself from falling.

"You will be fine." he kissed my spine and his hands brushed my lower body.

"We should get out. You said Ntokozo is coming." I tried to stand straight but he pushed me against the wall.

"I know and I'll be quickly." he separated my legs by pushing his knees between them.

"I'm really not in the mood." I complained.

He didn't respond, instead he went on with his business. As much as I didn't want to but I did come, multiple times and then we showered.

"Why did you cry?" asked Joshua as he lotioned my back.

"Nothing. I just miss my kids" I lied. I had cried because my body was deceiving me by enjoying that sexual encounter even though I had made it clear that I didn't want to.

"We both know that's not true. If you were crying because of what I did last night." he said.

"No." I looked down.

"Thandeka. Look at me" he demanded.

I looked up and blinked the tears away.

"What's wrong MaMyeza? Is it because you said you weren't in the mood?" he asked as he wiped my now falling tears with the back of his hand.

"It's everything Joshua. You expect me to like Phelisa even though she tried to kill me. It's not fair." I cried harder.

"I'm sorry Thandeka." he held me.

"I just want my kids. If you want to make friends with Phelisa, it's fine but don't expect me to love her. I don't and I don't think I will." I pulled away from Joshua and got dressed.

"Thandeka" said Joshua.

I ignored him.

"Thandeka" he said it again and then stood up. I paused and looked at him.

"I'm doing it for my brother. Ntokozo loves Phelisa and I can't tell him that he can't come here because you hate his girl friend." Explained Joshua.

"Okay." I walked out after that.

I went downstairs and began cleaning the house. I didn't even make breakfast. If Joshua wanted to impress his brother so bad then he was going to make it himself.

2 hours later I was still deep in my cleaning I didn't even hear Julia come in with Kevin and Lindiwe.

"Mum" said a voice behind me.

I turned around and Julia almost knock me out with a hug.

"Oh my God I missed you so much mum" she cried aswel.

We both stood there and crying.

"I hope those are happy tears." said Lindiwe joining us.

"Yes." we answered at the same time.

"I'm glad to see you." said Lindiwe.

"Me too. You guys are early though."

"We left before dawn. Someone was crying last night." she looked behind her where Kevin stood.

I opened my arms and he ran to them.

"I missed you." I kissed his head.

"Thando is driving with Mthunzi. They should be here in the next hour or two." said Lindiwe.

"I'm glad that you guys are home."

After all that we went to make something to eat. Ntokozo was in the lounge with Joshua.

"Hellow" I greeted him.

"How are you?" he asked.

"As it can be expected." I answered and went to the kitchen. Phelisa was there.

"What the hell is she still doing here?" asked Lindiwe behind me.

"Its a long story" I answered.

"Let me make it short. Get out bitch." said Lindiwe.

"Its not your house. Joshua said its fine." answered Phelisa.

"Well, Joshua lied. Its not fine. Get out Phelisa" she went to her but Ntokozo grabbed her before she could touch her.

"Phelisa go to the lounge." said Joshua behind me.

"How could you Joshua? She almost killed your wife." shouted Lindiwe.

"She made a mistake. We all make mistakes. You both are not saints. Maybe if you spend less time judging Phelisa you will realise that she is a nice person" said Ntokozo

Joshua nodded

Chapter6.

Page1.

The atmosphere at home was intense. The whole day Joshua wasn't talking to me and for the first time I didn't care at all. I wanted to be left alone with my sons and daughter. Joshua hang out with Ntokozo and Phelisa was sitting on the couch alone. After hours later Ntokozo took her home and left me with my family.

Julia cook and we and dished up for us all but Joshua didn't eat at all. After that lovely meal we did the dishes and went to bed. Joshua was in bed already. I got in aswel and slept facing the other way.

"Thandeka" Joshua spoke.

"Joshua" I didn't turn around though.

"Turn around and face me" he demanded.

"Talk. I can hear you"

I heard him take a deep breath but didn't hear him exhale.

"Whats your problem?" he asked.

"You. You are my problem. This Ntokozo's butt kiss game that you are playing isn't fun anymore. Phelisa tried to kill me. What if she goes after the kids? What happened to Joshua that I know? The Joshua that I love. The Joshua that protect us at all cost? Hm?" I shouted.

"I'm sorry Thandeka."

I was shocked by this apology. I knew that Joshua didn't mind saying I'm sorry but this time I didn't expect him to apologise so easily.

"Its okay. Just don't let Ntokozo drag his witch into my house again." After that I switched off the lights and slept.

The next day when I woke up Joshua wasn't in bed with me. I woke up and made the bed before showering. Julia was downstairs making breakfast.

"Morning" I greeted her.

"Morning mum. Almost done with breakfast then I'm off to campus." said Julia.

"What for? You don't have classes." I asked.

"Some doctor from USA is delivering some speech. Its the 3rd and final day. I've been following him on

the web but now I want to be there." explained Julia sounding excited.

"That's great. Go and have fun." I took over from her.

"Why don't you come with me." she asked.

"To the university? Am I even allowed?"

"Oh come on mum. You could pass as a 25 year old. Lets go, it will be fun." she begged.

"Go and have fun with your daughter. I'll take the boys out." said Joshua walking in.

"Is it safe?" I asked. I knew that Duma was out there and ready to strike at anytime.

"It's safe." said Joshua kissing my lips.

Julia and I went to ML Sultan campus. I was a bit worried that they won't let us in but they did with no problem. We went to the hall and sat down. It was crowded with students screaming at each other across the floor.

"Mum can I ask you something?" said Julia.

"Ask dear." I leaned closer to her.

"You and dad. Are you guys fighting?" she asked.

"It's normal for the parents to argue dear. Don't worry." I told her.

She gave me a look to show that she didn't believe me at all.

"Is he abusing you?" she gave me a straight look.

"No" I didn't even blink.

"I'm a grown woman mum and I can tell when you are in pain. You don't have to be strong for me." she held my hand. My eyes filled with tears but I blinked them away.

The room fell into silence and a medium height man walked in.

"We will talk about this later." said Julia before turning her attention to the guy in the front.

"Ladies and gentlemen my name is Roy Tucker. Thank you for joining me again and sadly it's for the last time." he smile and dimples appeared on his cheeks.

"I won't waste time but I'd like to recap on what we covered before. To those who have just joined us. Welcome and you didn't miss much. We spoke about abuse. We mentioned all types of abuse and if you need a detailed explanation. Just go up to my website and check it out." he paused and then sipped some water.

"Today I want us to focus on non violent abuse. The kind that most of us suspect but we can't point it. The kind that most women claim to have it under control. The kind that leaves emotional scars that never heals. I'm going to make few examples. Like when you think you know what makes them angry and you try by all means not to trigger thier anger but in the end they get mad. Most women are victims of this abuse and they don't even know it. If there are things that you are allowed to do but he won't let you do them and he doesn't have a clear reason then you could be a victim too. Relationships should be about us not I or you. If you heard him saying YOU in anger and you saying I in fear then you should question your relationship. People may not see the scars but you know that they are there and you are in pain but you covering it up with that beautiful smile. You are not being a hero. Theres an excuse that most use. 'I did it for the kids', no you are not doing it for them. If you do something for your kids that thing should make them happy. Are your kids happy when they see you all bruised up? What example are you making for your daughter? That she should stay aswel? What advice will you give her when you, yourself didn't do anything about it. And your son? What kind of man will you want him to be? An abuser like his father?...." I couldn't stay any longer. I got up and walked out in tears.

Page2.

I walked straight to my car and got in. I wanted to drive away but I remembered that Julia was still inside. I sat there and cried my eyes out. It hurt so bad. A knock on the window made me jump. It was a security guard.

"Are you okay ma'am?" he asked.

"Yeah. Just emotional." I gave him a weak smile.

"Maybe you should come inside. Just to be safe." he suggested.

"Its fine. My daughter is inside." I refused politely.

The guy nodded and walked away.

I sat there for more than 45 minutes before Julia walked out.

She knocked on the window and I let her in.

"Can we go out for lunch?" she asked.

"I'm not hungry but its fine." I started the car and drove off to the city centre.

"Mum" started Julia quietly.

"You think your dad is abusing me?" I asked.

"Is that why you stormed out?" she asked.

"I left because I didn't want to stay there anymore." I lied.

"I can see mum. I hear the arguments. I see the scars. The bruises. We can see, me and the boys." she blinked.

"Yes we argue Julia. Show me any couples that don't argue. What Mr Roy Tucker said is true but not to me."

"Why? Because dad is hot and cold? He loves you and then punish you like you are a kid?. I may not be sexually active but I know what it is. He hurt you over and over again." said Julia sobbing.

I parked on the side and cried along with her. It hurt me that they could see what was happening.

"You have to leave. Leave us, we will be fine. Just go mum before we have to watch you being taken away in a plastic bag." she begged.

"No Julia. We will work it out. Joshua is changing" I explained.

"He won't change mum. He doesn't want to change mum." she shouted.

"Watch the tone. I'm your mother." I reminded her.

"Then set an example for us. For my brothers."

I opened the door and walked out. She got out too. We both stood there until the tears stopped.

We didn't make it to lunch. Instead we went to the beach and walked on the sand.

"That's why you invited me? You knew what the lecture will be about?" I asked

"I wasn't planning to until I heard Kevin talk to Thando about your happy tears."

"Happy tears? What is that?" I asked.

"Kevin believes that you are always crying but yet you smile. He says you always have tears in your eyes even you are happy. I had to do something mum."

"We are going to fix" I told her.

She nodded and looked away.

"Doctor Roy looks nice." I made another conversation.

"Yeah. He is damn fine." she smiled.

"I'm sure women like him." we both laughed.

"And he is way out of my league. I'm a big fan but not that way." she laughed.

"So who has your heart?" I asked.

"I haven't met him yet and I know its not doctor Tucker." She laughed.

"How do you know?" I asked.

"I just know mum." she picked up a rock and threw it on the ocean.

"Okay. Thats fair enough. I don't want to be grandma yet" we both laughed.

We went home at sun set. Joshua was watching tv and Kevin sitting on the floor.

"Thats a long lecture." said Joshua.

"We went to the beach." I answered.

"The whole day?" he asked.

"Come Kev. I have something to show you." said Julia taking Kevin.

They both walked upstairs and I turned to walk to the kitchen.

"Roy Tucker is interesting don't you think?" said Joshua.

"I guess so." I answered and then went to the kitchen. He followed.

"Anything interesting he talked about?" he sat on the chair.

"I left early. It was noisy and crowded." I lied.

"Okay. Anyway we had a good day too." he said.

"Thats good. So how did you know about the lecture?" I asked.

"Julia posted on Facebook." he spoke.

"Oh okay. I don't even remember the last time I logged in."

"Maybe you should log in and check out Roy Tucker's page. He put up the pictures there and I saw someone who looked like my beautiful wife. Its strange that the picture was taken in the angle that captures your face. Your full face." he took out his phone.

"They must have taken the picture before the show." I lied.

"I figured that already because my beautiful wife doesn't lie to me." he looked at me and then got up and left. I sat down on the chair and thought about this. Maybe Julia was right, Joshua wasn't changing.

I waited until Joshua went to bed before sitting down with my laptop. I googled Roy Tucker and found his website. I connected the headsets and then watched the video.

"Ladies and gentlemen, My name is Roy Tucker. First let me thank you for joining me today." he paused and then smiled. I don't know why I so nervous about this, maybe its because It was about to make or break my relationship. I stopped my mind from wondering off and went back to the screen.

"Today we are talking about abuse. There are different types of abuse. Some leave visible scars and some leave emotional scars. Either way, abuse is wrong and no one should go through it. I want to focus on violent abuse first because thats so common. Violent abuse is not just hitting. It can be grabbing, twisting and blocking. So don't say that they don't hit you when they do any of the above. A man is not allowed to put his hand on a woman unless you are comforting her." laughter broke out in the crowd and I laughed too.

"There's nothing wrong with jealous. Its natural and we are all allowed to be jealous but don't let your jealous make you raise a hand on her." he paused again and then looked straight to the camera. For a moment I felt like he was looking at me.

"Another common abuse is emotional abuse. When he puts you down. He can criticize the way you dress, the way you eat, your friends, your job, the list is endless. As a partner he is allowed to voice his opinion but that opinion should not break you. It shouldn't hurt you. If his opinions hurt you then thats wrong." he pause again and sipped some water.

"Another form of abuse is when he controls you. I know most women like a man who stands on both feet and takes the lead but a leader works with the team. If your man tells you what to do and how to do it then its time you question the relationship. In most cases the abuser has a form of punishment. The punishment can be anything from silent treatment to spanking. Don't get me wrong, theres nothing wrong with spanking to spice things up when you do your business. But it shouldn't make her cry, it shouldn't leave a bruise or make it hard to sit. Another form of punishment could be sex. Sex isn't suppose to hurt, it shouldn't be done roughly unless you both agree that you like it like that. Its....." a hand yanked the laptop away from. I turned to Joshua's angry face. He threw it across the room and it hit the wall.

"You think I'm stupid Thandeka? Are you sleeping with him. Is that why you sitting on the dark staring at him like some love struck teenager?" he shouted and then slapped me so hard, I lost balance and fell back on the couch.

"I can explain." I tried to get up but he grabbed my neck.

"Thats why he put up that picture? To show me that he is sleeping with my wife?" shouted Joshua as he squeezed my neck. His knee was on my chest.

I couldn't speak. All I could do was to cry and ask God to take my soul.

"How could you betray me like that? 10 years of marriage and this is how you thank me?" he squeezed

harder and it felt like something was roughly pulling me away. I wanted to die. To be finally at peace because the world wasn't so kind to me.

Page4.

Phelisa

We were busy making out when Ntokozo's phone rang. He answered and then told me that we needed to go to Joshua's house, something had happened. I thought about Duma but brushed it off. Joshua was too smart for Duma. We got dressed quickly and left.

When we got into Joshua's house I was shocked to see Thandeka's body laying on the couch and Njabulo kneeling next to her. Her face was swollen, her lower lip had a nasty cut and her nose had dried blood. Joshua was sitting on the couch with his head on his face.

"Please don't tell me you did this? What the fuck Joshua." shouted Ntokozo.

Joshua didn't move or even look up.

"What was it this time?" asked Ntokozo.

"Roy Tucker" answered Njabulo.

"So you beat your wife up for Roy Tucker? You sick Joshua." said Ntokozo.

Joshua stood up and stepped closer to Ntokozo.

"Go ahead Joshua. I dare you." said Ntokozo stepping closer aswell.

"Now is not the time. Phelisa can you get me a glass of water." said Njabulo.

I went to the kitchen to get it and brought it back.

"Thank you" he took it and roped two pills in.

"She was crying for him. I found my wife sitting in the dark crying for a man who had a nerve to post a picture of my wife on Facebook." said Joshua.

"Are you even hearing yourself? Did you ask her why she was crying or you just assumed she was cheating?" asked Ntokozo.

"Her pulse is a bit weak but I'm hoping it will pick up." said Njabulo.

"Maybe you should let her die. It seems like Joseph doesn't want her anymore" said Ntokozo.

Joshua raised his fist to Ntokozo but held it midway.

"Go ahead. You have no idea how much I want to punch you right now. So I dare you to go first and then let me show you how to deal with an arse hole like you." said Ntokozo.

Joshua sat down again.

Njabulo kept giving a half awake Thandeka a sip with a straw. She was weak and I felt sorry for her.

"By the way Roy is not your average joe. That man is an advance shrink. The kind that can finally open Thandeka's eyes to this abuse. The kind that comes in like a knight in a shining armour ready to save the day. You keep this up and you will hand her over to Roy. I tell you" said Ntokozo.

"Over my dead body. No man will have my wife." said Joshua.

"Then keep this up. You will see. Lets go Lisa. I don't want to kill my brother" said Ntokozo.

I stood up and followed after him.

"Let me know how she is. I can't stay" said Ntokozo to Njabulo.

"Sure. Her pulse is getting stronger." answered Njabulo.

"I'll be back." he opened the door and we walked out.

The drive back home was quiet. Ntokozo kept cursing under his breath. When we got home he sat on the couch and closed his eyes.

"Come sit Lisa" he spoke.

I went to sit next to him.

"I'm sleeping here tonight. I'm angry and when I'm angry I'd rather be on my own." he held my hand.

"Its okay. I understand."

"I'm not rejecting you. I just don't want to expose you to my anger." he explained.

"Its okay. I'm off to bed but can you lend me your laptop?" I stood up.

"Theres a brand new one in the closet. You can take it." he kissed my lips.

"Thank you. Goodnight." I walked upstairs.

I found the laptop and switched it on. It came to life and I went straight to the internet and googled Roy Tucker. My jaws dropped when his picture came into screen. Roy Tucker was a good looking man. He had visible dimples, short hair, nice treamed side burns. Round shaved beard on his chin and a beautiful smile. He had brown eyes. The kind you want to stare at the whole day. For a moment I understood why Joshua would be jealous if Roy set his eyes on Thandeka. The man was fine. I went to his facebook page and checked out his pictures, there were lots of pictures. I kept clicking until I found it. The picture that

made Joshua go crazy. It was indeed Thandeka but the picture was taken in a right angle, the only reason why she was the only one who was clear was simply because she had been looking on the side when the camera captured her plus she was wearing bright coloured clothes. I understood what elders meant when they said anger clouds your judgement. Joshua let his jealous clouds his thinking ability. For a moment I was grateful that Ntokozo had rescued me. If Joshua was able to bit up Thandeka like that then who was I? I was nothing. He could have killed me so easily. I felt sorry for Thandeka. Looking in from the outside it looked like a fairy tale but from the inside, it was the never ending torture of hell and Thandeka was experiencing it first hand.

Page5.

I must have fallen asleep with a laptop on the bed because when I woke up Ntokozo was sitting next to me frowning at the screen.

"Morning" I sat up, he didn't respond.

"Hello" I tried again.

"Morning." he didn't even look up.

"What's so important there?" I asked.

"Roy Tucker." he answered.

"I thought you into women." I joked. Ntokozo caught the joke aswel. We laughed.

"Let me show you what I'm into." he put the laptop away and held my hand.

I sat in his lap as we kissed slowly but deep.

"You were distructed. Whats wrong?" asked Ntokozo as we lay in bed covered in sweat.

"Thandeka. I know she hates me and its fine but I don't think she deserve that." I could still see her laying the looking rather lifeless.

"I know. Joshua needs help." said Ntokozo.

"Maybe its not Joshua who needs help. Maybe its Thandeka" I suggested.

"You mean a divorce?" asked Ntokozo.

"Yes. Joshua didn't see anything wrong with what he did. Obviously that person won't change because they see nothing wrong. Thandeka should leave before he kills her because I'm sure this isn't the last time." I explained.

"It isn't the first time. He did it before." said Ntokozo.

"Maybe its time she leaves him." I suggested.

"I doubt that Joshua will let her go just like that. He loves her too much." said Ntokozo.

"But to beat her up like that for a man on the internet, thats just wrong"

Ntokozo didn't respond, instead he kept playing with my nipple.

"How do you know Roy anyway?" I asked trying to get him to stop trying to turn me on.

"I went to university with him overseas." he answered but didn't stop licking my nipple.

"So he was your friend?"

"No. He was a bad boy. A known bad boy. He was smart but he was interested in guns than books." explained.

"That fine looking man on the internet is a criminal?"

Ntokozo raised his eyes and looked at me.

"You being bad, you need some punishment." he smiled and kissed my lips. He used his knees to seperate my legs. I wrapped them around him and gave in because he wasn't stopping. We had another round of love making and then went to shower.

"Roy was not a criminal, he was just bad." said Ntokozo as we stood under the warm water.

"Bad how?" I asked.

"He had guns but didn't shoot people. He use to say, if you want to kill a man just shoot him but if you want to teach him a lesson use your fists." explained Ntokozo.

"So he is a fighter?"

"No. He is a doctor now. He changed." said Ntokozo.

"Maybe Joshua will too."

Ntokozo looked at me and then gave a slightly nod.

"You don't think so?"

"He could change but he needs to want to change first." said Ntokozo.

"Maybe Thandeka should leave him."

"Thandeka is keeping Joshua in line. Without her Joshua would worse than this. He was bad Lisa. Then she came along and Joshua went back to human."

"But now he is going back to monster. He is hurting the woman that he loves." I turned the shower off.

"Ey Lisa. Its just a mess." he grabbed the towels before we exited the bathroom.

After having breakfast I asked Ntokozo if we could go see her. He agreed and we left.

Njabulo and Joshua were in the lounge.

"Where is Thandeka?" asked Ntokozo after the greetings were exchanged.

"Upstairs. She is resting" answered Joshua.

"Go to her." said Ntokozo kissing my lips. I went upstairs.

I knocked few times and then walked in. She was laying there staring into space.

"Hai" I sat on the edge of the bed.

"Hai" she looked at me.

"How are you feeling?"

She laughed a bit and then looked away.

"Where? In my body or in my heart?" she asked.

I didn't know how to answer that one so I went quiet.

"Morning glory" she looked at me.

"Excuse me"

"Your neck. Ntokozo did you good." she smiled.

I covered my neck in embarrassment.

"So its serious?" she asked.

"I think so." I answered.

"I'm glad for you. He is a good guy." she turned and looked away.

"Thank you"

An awkward silence followed.

"Thandeka" I started. She looked at me.

"Yes"

"Maybe you should leave Joshua." I whispered.

She looked at me for a long time and the tears began falling in her eyes. She didn't wipe them, she let them fall.

After a while she stopped crying.

She sat up with difficulty.

"I need your help to leave him" she spoke.

"Just tell me how and I'll do it." I wanted to help her. She was a good person and she didn't deserve this at all.

"I want you to kill me." she looked at me. I was shocked. I stood up and then sat down again.

"Please Phelisa. You the only one who can help me." she begged.

"No Thandeka. What about your kids? Your friends? Your family?"

"They will mourn and it will pass. I will be at peace." she held my hand.

"I can't. Ask me anything else but not this." I was given a second chance and I wanted to be a better person.

"Death is my only option." she answered.

I looked at her. She was better than yesterday but those were just visible scars. Nobody knew how bruised she really was inside, but was death her only option? I started thinking about the options and they weren't much. Roy Tucker popped into my mind

Chapter 7.

Page 1.

"You talking to yourself." said Ntokozo bringing me back to reality.

"I'm just thinking." I looked at him, I couldn't tell him that Thandeka asked me to kill her.

"What did she say?" asked Ntokozo turning his attention to the veges that he was busy with.

"Nothing much." I lied.

"So you are talking to yourself because?" he put down the knife and came to stand between my legs.

"I'm worried about her." I put down the glass of juice I was drinking.

"And you want to help her leave Joshua?" asked Ntokozo.

"Yes. She has to leave him."

"I'm really proud of you. What you doing shows that you are kind." said Ntokozo kissing my hands.

"She doesn't deserve it."

"I know but you have to understand something Lisa. Joshua worked on Thandeka years ago." said Ntokozo going back to his chopping.

"What do you mean? Like mind control?" with Joshua anything was possible.

"Let me let you into my brother's mind for a bit." said Ntokozo helping me get off the counter. We went to sit down in the lounge.

"Lisa, Thandeka is rich, she has both parents, she has no kids and she is educated. She could start over somewhere but she is with Joshua. Do you know why?" he asked.

"Because she loves him." I answered.

"We know sometimes love is not enough. She is with him because she thinks she can't live without him. If she run he will catch her. She did try it and he caught her." explained Ntokozo.

"That explains why she asked me to kill her."

"She did what?" asked Ntokozo.

"She asked me to kill her but I refused."

Ntokozo took a deep breath.

"So what did you offer?" he asked.

"I'm going to help her leave him."

"How? Joshua installed fear into her. Just like most abused women she had high walls around her and Joshua took them down so the only shield she has is Joshua." explained Ntokozo.

"He wanted her to see him as the hero that saved her?"

"And he did save her but instead of setting her free he installed fear and Joshua is the only knight that can save her. In Thandeka's eyes Joshua is her hero." explained Ntokozo.

"Maybe its time we demote Joshua and show her that she could be her own hero." I suggested.

"Does that mean I'm going to have to kill Joshua?" asked Ntokozo.

"No."

"You don't understand. If Joshua finds out that you are trying to ruin his marriage he will come after you and then I'll be forced to kill him and then Njabulo will kill me and then Mlungisi will kill him." explained Ntokozo.

"Wow. I didn't think of it that way."

"But its like that." said Ntokozo.

"So what do I do?" I asked.

"I really don't know my love. But I know you will make a plan, just make sure that Joshua doesn't find out." adviced Ntokozo.

After talking to Ntokozo I was convinced about my plan.

I logged on to Facebook and checked if I could get any info on how to contact Roy. There was none so I had no choice but to leave an inbox even though I wasn't sure if he checked his inbox. After leaving a message I logged out and put the laptop away.

I wasn't sure about what I was doing but I had to try, for Thandeka's sake.

"Come and taste" said Ntokozo.

"It smell good." I got up and followed him to the kitchen.

"We could eat now, if you hungry." he said.

"I am hungry." I sat on the chair while he dished up.

"I'm not sure about the salt though."

I nodded.

He finished dishing up and poured me a glass of juice and poured himself a glass of wine.

"I do drink wine, you know."

"I know but juice will go well with the food." he said and then sat down next to me.

I took a spoonful but before I could even swallow my stomuch turned and everything came back. I got up and ran to the bathroom to throw up.

"Are you okay?" asked Ntokozo.

"I don't know." I rinsed my mouth.

"Did you eat something?" he asked.

"Breakfast. Thats all I ate."

"Maybe I should take you to the hospital." he suggested.

"I'm fine. Stop stressing"

"Are you sure? Are you feeling any pain?" he asked.

"No. Lets go eat. I'm starving." my phone beeped in my pocket. I took it out and it was a facebook notification. Roy Tucker sent a reply.

"Who is that?" asked Ntokozo.

"No one." I replied.

"Your eyes don't just light up for no one." he said.

"Okay. Its an inbox from Roy Tucker."

"About what?"

"I think he could help save Thandeka." I answered.

Ntokozo closed his eyes for a bit.

"Its worth the try."

"And when Joshua finds out? What if he kills you?" asked Ntokozo.

"I'm not going to introduce Roy to Thandeka. I'm just going to ask Roy to help me figure out how to help her. Thats all." I explained.

"It better not backfire." said Ntokozo.

A door bell rang and Ntokozo went to check. I got up and went upstairs but when I was halfway the stairs I heard Ntokozo say something.

"..... No. You are not allowed into my house." he shouted.

"Ntokozo please. I need your help." cried a woman's voice.

"No Zama. I bended backwards for you and you thanked me by having my best friend's child. Who does that? Please get out of my house" said Ntokozo.

I went back downstairs to see the famous Zama.

Page2.

Thandeka

"Thandeka", I lay so still and pretended to be a sleep. I wasn't ready to talk to Joshua.

"MaMyeza" he called again and then duvet was pulled away from my face. He saw that I wasn't asleep.

"You need to eat." he said.

"I'm not hungry." I lied.

He looked at me for a moment and then got up and left. I went back to my sleeping position, covering my head. I thought about Phelisa. I really thought she was going to agree but she didn't. I didn't blame her though. Her and Ntokozo seemed to be doing great. Tears began streaming down my face.

"She is just resting. Ngenani" I heard Joshua's voice say and then the sound of the door opening.

"Thandeka" Bongeka's voice filled the room.

I pulled the blanket back after wiping the tears away.

"You look better than before." Said Lindiwe.

"I wish I feel better." I replied.

"What did you do to him?" asked Lindiwe.

"Why do you assume she did something?" asked Bongeka.

"Joshua is not crazy, he wouldn't just beat you up for no reason." said Lindiwe.

Bongeka and I looked at her. Was she being real.

"Don't look at me like that. You both know I'm right." she diffended herself.

"I didn't do anything." I told her.

"He didn't beat you up for nothing." insisted Lindiwe.

"Even if you did something my friend. You don't deserve to be beaten up like that." said Bongeka.

"I know." I told her.

"I still say you need to change your behaviour to avoid Joshua's anger. Njabulo told me that some American doctor had your photo on Facebook. You are married Thandeka, men shouldn't be taking your pictures and uploading them like that. You were both wrong." she preached.

"Me and who?" I asked.

"You and your doctor friend." said Lindiwe.

I explained to her how the picture was taken and the fact that I didn't know the doctor at all.

"So he beat you up for nothing?" asked Bongeka.

"Yes."

Lindiwe went quiet.

They left after a while and I was glad because they weren't helpful at all. Lindiwe was worshipping Njabulo too much while Bongeka was no longer Bongeka the lawyer that I knew. She didn't have that fire anymore. Lindiwe had it but in her eyes our husbands were saints and we were the bad ones. My heart was warming up to Phelisa now. I knew she was scared of Joshua and Njabulo but the fact that she had told me that I need to leave Joshua meant dating a thug wasn't clouding her judgement, unlike my two friends.

>>>>>>>>>>

Phelisa

Zama was beautiful. She was built like a model and you could tell that she knew that she was fine. Just looking at her made me wonder if Ntokozo was using me to forget her. Don't get it twisted, I was nothing like her. Infact I didn't match any of the women that Ntokozo's friends were married to. I was average and right that moment I realised that I had nothing on Zama.

"I want you out of my house Zamandosi." warned Ntokozo.

"Wow, because of her?" she pointed at me.

"You still smart like you were before. Yes, she is my queen now." said Ntokozo.

"I don't even have a place to stay." she cried.

"Don't confuse me with someone who cares. Just go." he pushed her out and closed the door.

"Did you check your message?" he asked.

"Was about to." I turned and walked back upstairs.

"Come Lisa" he called me. I turned and walked back downstairs.

We sat down on the couch.

"She means nothing now." said Ntokozo.

"Okay."

"I'm with you because I love you. I want to be with you." he kissed my lips.

"I love you too. Its just that I've noticed that all the others are beautiful and educated. I didn't expect your ex wife to look like a model." I explained.

"Do you want to be educated?" asked Ntokozo.

I nodded.

"Okay. After the winter holidays we will go check out the universities."

"You are going to send me to school?"

"You want to have a qualification, don't you?" he asked.

"Yes I do."

"Then you are going to study and another thing. You are beautiful Phelisa, you are young. The world could still be your stage and us be your audience if you choose to shine. Forget what others have achieved and focus on what you want to achieve and I'll be here cheering for my queen." said Ntokozo wrapping his arms around me.

"Thank you." I held him tight.

"Lets go eat."

"Let me go check the message first." I got up and ran upstairs. I had new hope, not just for me but for Thandeka aswel.

I logged in to Facebook and went straight to the inbox.

"HELLO MISS PHELISA.

AFTER READING YOUR MESSAGE I WAS TOUCHED. I WANT TO HELP YOU AND I'M CURRENTLY IN CAPE TOWN. IF ITS POSSIBLE FOR YOU TO COME TO CAPE TOWN AS YOU DID MENTION THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO DO THIS FACE TO FACE. LOOKING FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU" the inbox ended. Now I had another problem. Ntokozo was never going to allow me to go to Cape Town to meet Roy on my own. I needed a new plan, but what?

page3.

"No. You are not going"

"Baby please. He agreed to help me. I'll be in and out just like that." I begged Ntokozo.

"No. What kind of man allows his woman to meet another dude like this? You are not going." said Ntokozo turning the other way.

"But you know him. Its not like I'll be meeting some stranger on a blind date."

Ntokozo didn't reply, instead he switched the bedside lamp off and pulled the blanket over his face.

"I'll ask Lindiwe to come with me." I suggested.

"Then Njabulo would know about it. That would be a dumb move. Ask Bongeka instead." said Ntokozo turning around.

"Do you think she will agree?"

"Bongeka is Thandeka's best friend. If you tell her why you want to go she will agree, but make her promise not to tell Lwazi." advised Ntokozo.

"Is that a yes?" I tried not to show my excitement.

"I'll book you a ticket at sunrise. Just promise me that you will be careful."

"I'll be extra careful. Thank you baby." I sat on top of him and kissed him.

The next day Ntokozo woke me up and said he had managed to get me a flight to cape town.

"How?" I sat up.

"I know someone who knows someone and that someone own a private jet so you are all set." he explained.

"Thank you, but what about Bongeka? I haven't asked her yet."

"Then I suggest you call her and ask." he handed me the phone.

I dialled her number and it rang few times.

"Bhuti Ntokozo" she answered.

"Its Phelisa. I'm sorry to bother you but I need to ask you for a favour."

"Okay. Ask"

"I'm going to Cape Town and I was wondering if you could come with me."

"Why? I mean you are old enough to travel on your own." she said.

"Its kind of a long story, But I really need your help." I begged.

"When do we leave?"

"This morning. Ntokozo managed to get us a flight." I crossed my fingers for her not to say no.

"Gosh thats such a short notice. You know I have a kid."

"I know, its just that I didn't expect Ntokozo to get us the seats." I explained.

"Then Ntokozo will pick Kuhle from school and babysit him until my husband gets home." she suggested.

"Let me ask him" I went downstairs. He was in the kitchen making coffee.

"Boo, can you pick up Kuhle from school and baby sit him until his father picks him up?" I asked.

"Okay but Bongeka will have to notify the school." said Ntokozo.

"I heard and I will. Come pick me up then." said Bongeka.

"Thank you so much." I hung up.

"Theres no turning back now." said Ntokozo taking his phone.

"I know hey. I really want to help her."

"I hope you do realise that you will help her only if she wants to get help." said Ntokozo.

"She wants too. I could see it in her eyes."

"How much do you know about her, beside the obvious?"

"I know that she was abused as a child, she can't have kids, she married Joshua after dating for few months."

"Thats the obvious. Roy will want to know her relationship history and thats where Bongeka comes in. She knows her more than all of us." said Ntokozo.

"Wow thanks. I didn't think of it like that."

"You have to go get ready." said Ntokozo.

"I'm doing it for Thandeka."

"Yes my love. You doing it for her and I'm proud of you."

"What are you doing for my wife"

My heart almost stopped when I saw Joshua standing on the door way.

"Did you just break into my house Joseph?" asked Ntokozo looking at Joshua.

"And its a good thing I did. What is that you're doing for my wife?" said Joshua looking at me.

"Thats what you get for sneaking around. Yes we were talking about her, no. I'm not going to tell you." said Ntokozo.

"But Phelisa will, won't you dear?" said Joshua.

"I doubt that. Go get dressed my love and let me deal with my brother." said Ntokozo.

I turned and walked upstairs slowly so I could hear thier conversation.

"I'm no longer a bachelor Joseph. You can't just break in." said Ntokozo.

"My bad okay. I was just checking if you dropped your guards already."

"Nope. You know I'll never drop those. Not with Duma out there." said Ntokozo.

"On the real though. Why are you guys gossiping about my wife." asked Joshua.

I couldn't hear Ntokozo's response as I was out of sight. All I heard were loud gun shots that went of repeatedly. Lots of things went through my head.

Did Joshua find out about my plan and he is ready to kill me after killing Ntokozo or Ntokozo killed Joshua like he said he would if it came down to it.

Page 4

When I went to check all I saw was a man laying on the floor. His face was covered in blood. Joshua and Ntokozo were staring at the man on the floor. Joshua saw me first and alerted Ntokozo who then ran to my direction. I swear everything I ate in this age of my existed came back and I ran to the bathroom to throw up but sadly I didn't make it there. I threw up all over the floor. Ntokozo came to help me up. "Are you okay?" he asked. I just nodded and threw up all over him. "Maybe I should call Njabulo. He helped me a lot when Thandeka was having trouble adjusting" suggested Joshua. "I'm not drugging my girlfriend Joseph." Refused Ntokozo taking off my now stinking sleep wear. "Suit yourself, was just trying to help." He shrugged his broad shoulders. "And I appreciate your help but no." he led me to the shower and opened the water until it was warm enough for me to take a warm shower. "I think we should cancel the trip" he suggested. "I'll be fine." I managed to say. "Are you sure?" he held my face not caring that he was getting wet too. "I'm sure. Thank you." I gave him a weak smile. He gave me some privacy. I washed up quickly and then exited the bathroom. I went to get dressed as quickly as I could and then packed few things. "Are you okay? I know what you just saw wasn't exactly comforting." Said Ntokozo leaning against the door way. "I'll be fine. Don't worry." "I love you Phelisa and I asked my friend Vince to accompany you and Bongeka so don't panick when you see someone follow you around." He explained. "Thank you, I'll see you when I get back." I kissed him. " You quiet. What's wrong?" asked Bongeka as we took off. "I have a lot in my mind." I was thinking about the dead man in the house. "Why are we going to Cape Town?" she asked. "To get Roy to help Thandeka." I told her. "Gosh, are you trying to get us killed or something? Do you know that Joshua will kill us both if he finds out" said Bongeka. "He won't find out." I convinced her even though I was hardly convinced myself. "How do you know that he won't? What makes you think Thandeka needs help?" asked Bongeka. I gave her an 'are you kidding me look' and she shrugged because she knew that Thandeka needed help. "Okay, maybe you right. She does need help but you have to understand Phelisa that Joshua is the only man that Thandeka knows. She might be angry for a moment but she will eventually forgive him and then we will be the bad guys." She added. "How do you know that she will forgive him?" I asked. "Because it wasn't the first time that Joshua has got physical with her and she did forgive him." She explained. "That's because Joshua painted himself as

the hero to her. If we show Thandeka that a hero should protect not hurt maybe we can save her." I explained my belief and hoped that she bought it too. "Ay girl I hope you know what you doing" said Bongeka taking a deep breath. I just nodded and looked out the window.

~~~~~

"Did you know that Phelisa and Bongeka are going to Cape Town?" asked Joshua. "No." I went on brushing my hair trying to ignore the pain I was feeling on my elbow. "I just find it odd that they didn't tell you." He moved a bit. "Well I haven't exactly been up to date with everything that's happening around me. Where is Julia?" I changed the subject "She took the boys to school." He answered. "Okay. Have you had breakfast?" I asked. "No, I'm not hungry." He got up and walked out. Only then I managed to breathe, I didn't even realize that I was holding my breath. I took my phone and dialed Bongeka's phone and it went to voicemail. I hung up and tried Ntokozo because I didn't have Phelisa's. he answered after several rings "MaMyeza" "Hai, I'm trying to get hold of Phelisa but I really don't have her numbers." "I'm going to text you right now." he answered. "Thank you." I hung up. "Why you suddenly want to talk to Phelisa?" asked Joshua behind me. "To find out why she is going to the cape, I thought you wanted to know" I smiled. "No, I was just curious. You don't have to spy for me." Wrapped his arms around me. "That's good because I didn't even like it." I lied. "You are changing Thandeka. Lately you just lie without even blinking. You didn't make that call for me. You did it for you. I want to know why." He held my chin. "Joshua please. I swear." I begged, tears already streaming down my face. "Where did you learn to lie to me?" he held tighter, in fact I thought he was going to break my jaws. "I'm not lying my love please. You hurting me" I begged.

"Dad please don't hurt mum" Joshua released his grip. When I turned to look I saw Julia. She had tears in her eyes. "Julia" Joshua tried to speak to her but she turned and walked out. I sat on the bed and just cried. I knew I had a new bruise on my face "She is going to hate me." Said Joshua walking in. I didn't respond. "I'm sorry." He spoke again. And again I didn't respond. "MaMyeza" "I heard you. The people you owe an apology are the kids. They know what's going on and it's only a matter of time before they tell the school. I'm sure you don't want to be the father that teaches his kids that women should be beaten." I got up and left.

Julia locked herself in her room. I went to knock and after a few minutes she opened. I got in and closed the door behind me. I noticed that she was packing. "I'm sorry you had to see that." I sat down on her bed. "Not as sorry as I am that you have to go through it." She went on throwing her clothes on the suitcases. "Where will you go?" I asked. "To Chatsworth. A friend of mine found us a great place there." She explained. "Us?" I asked. "Me and my brothers. I took their things yesterday." She zipped it up. "How are you going to survive there?" I stood up. "I saved up. It should keep us going for at least 5 months, by then I'm sure I'll make a plan." She opened the door and I followed behind her. "I love you Julia. You and your brothers." "I know mum. You stayed for us and I think now that we are gone you will find the courage to leave." She gave me a brief hug and then went downstairs with her things. I watched her leave. Maybe I was wrong to let her leave but I didn't have the strength to make empty promises about Joshua changing. Maybe when he realizes what his actions were doing to our kids then that will be a motivation enough for him to change.



to do was sleep but Bongeka had other ideas. "I'm going to shower and then see the city" "I'm going to rest a bit. Maybe I'll tour the city tomorrow" I ran to the bathroom because I was getting this want to throw up feeling. "Are you okay?" she knocked on the door. I opened the tap and rinsed my mouth before opening the door. "I'm fine." We went back to the room. "Maybe I should stay with you. We will tour the city tomorrow." Said Bongeka making me feel guilt for being weak and ruining her plans. "Please don't. I'll be fine. Go and take lots of pictures for me" "Are you sure?" she asked. "Yes I'm sure. Go girl, I'm going to order in and then sleep." I picked up the phone and ordered chicken. For some strange reason I felt like eating chicken.

When Bongeka was gone I ate and then got under the duvet but I couldn't sleep like I had planned to. I stayed up and goggled any possible reason of my throwing and the first thing they listed was the pregnancy. There was a huge possibility that I was pregnant and not even once did we use a condom.

## Chapter 9

"Maybe you should come home" suggested Ntokozo after I had informed him about the test being positive. "I'm not sick, just pregnant. I have to do this." I explained. "I get you but I'm worried about you and that mission you girls went for. If Joseph finds out there will be a blood bath." Said Ntokozo. "Why do you call him that?" I asked because Joshua didn't object when Ntokozo called him Joseph. "Mum named him Joseph and he changed it to Joshua. Not that I blame him." He laughed. "Don't be mean. Look I have to go. I'm meeting Roy in an hour for breakfast" "Okay. I miss you my love. Hurry home." He sounded really serious. "Pregnancy already having that effect on you?" I joked. "I'm allowed. Thank you Lisa. As soon as you come back, I'm taking you to the doctor to check up and check if I'm buying a sport car or a gun" said Ntokozo. "Why would you buy a sport car? There's nothing wrong with you BMW" "Well dear if it's a boy I need it but if it's a girl I'm buying a gun to keep the boys in check." We both laughed at the same time. "Now I'm worried. We will talk later my love." "I love you, bye" he hung up.

"Wow, that explains the throwing up" said Bongeka making me jump. I wasn't even aware that she was up. "Wrong move don't you think?" I sat down and drank the juice I had in my hand. "Ntokozo isn't exactly 20 girl. He needs to experience fatherhood. It's not wrong at all" said Bongeka. "But I'm scared." I admitted. "Pregnancy is scary girl. We all went there and be glad that you have Ntokozo. I was on my own but it worked out. Just be strong" she advised. "That's not my only fear. I'm scared that he will be like Joshua at some point." I confessed. "I don't think there's anyone like Joshua out there. Ntokozo is a nice guy, with Joshua we all knew there was something there but we ignored the signs and now he is worse." I could hear the bitterness in her voice. "You guys didn't know, but now we do and we will save her." I tried to light the mood a bit. "Speaking of that. I think you should shower. Roy will meet us in less than 45 minutes." Said Bongeka. "Yep, how was the city last night? I didn't even hear you come in" I got up and stretched my body for a bit. "Was boring. Some drunk teenagers tried to chat me up and that killed the mood." We both laughed and then I went shower.

Roy's photos didn't do him justice at all. The man was fine. Bongeka spotted him first and we both gathered our confidence before approaching his table. He looked up when he saw us and then smiled

showing his dimples. "Ladies" he extended a hand and gave us both kisses at the back of our hands. "Mr. Roy thank you for agreeing to meet us." I spoke as we sat down. "The pleasure is all mine. Can I get you anything to drink?" he asked. "Coffee for me and juice for my friend" said Bongeka. Roy nodded and then called over the waiter, he ordered our beverages and then got down to business. "You are the friend?" he looked at Bongeka. "No. We left her in Durban." She explained. "Okay, The fact that you ladies want to help a friend means you really care about each other. Not many would do this for a friend, most turn a blind eye and pretend they saw nothing." Said Roy. The waiter brought our order and then left. "We are just trying. It's wrong to watch her go through all that" Said Bongeka. "Do you have her pictures, just for me to see what I'm working with. It would be great if it's a recent picture." Said Roy. Bongeka took out her phone and showed him the pictures. "No, This is Gloria Memela!" exclaimed Roy covering his mouth. "You know her?" Asked Bongeka looking surprised as well. "My friend Chad used to have this massive crush on her. He saw her at the presentation in Johannesburg about 15 years ago. I tell you, he kept telling us about this African queen he met but forgot to take her number." Explained Roy. "Small world, I guess." Added Bongeka. "Very small. So there's a fool out there who doesn't see gold right in front of him. What man would hurt this woman. Damn" said Roy shaking his head.

After Roy went outside to make a call I began feeling guilty because I knew he went to call his friend and risked Joshua finding out. I swear the man could smell a man trying to take chances with his wife from miles away. "I'm going to help you ladies. I think everybody deserves to be happy in life and there's a gorgeous woman out there married to an ass hole." Said Roy. "She needs help for real." Added Bongeka. "How old is their marriage?" he asked. "More than 10 years" answered Bongeka. "She has been living with a monster for 10 bloody years?" asked Roy obviously shocked. "Yes" answered Bongeka. "Then you have to realize that she may not leave him at all. Some women grow fond of their abusers. Not because they want to but simply because they are the only people they have in their lives." Explained Roy. "So what can we do to show her that she doesn't need him any more?" I asked. "Show her real love. What you ladies are doing is a right step to the right direction" said Roy.

Roy asked us a tons of question about Thandeka's up bringing and Bongeka explained. "So her husband is the only man that she knows. In her eyes he is a hero, the man that gave her what she didn't have. Her step kids mean so much to her that's why she is staying." Explained Roy. "But she is no use to them when she is all swollen and in pain" I added. "Yes, but some people get use to the pain. Maybe she is use to him already" said Roy sitting back in his chair. "So there's no help for her?" asked Bongeka. "There is but its going to take time." He answered. "How long do you think it will be?" I asked. "I need to see her and talk to her" said Roy. Bongeka and I eyed each other. There was no way Joshua would let Thandeka meet Roy. "The man is jealous. I doubt he will allow her to come here" I had no choice but to come clean. "Don't worry, I'll make a plan." Said Roy. "Thank you Mr Tucker." I said. "You welcome dear. So tell me, why she couldn't have her own kids?" asked Roy. "She was involved in the car accident" answered Bongeka. "Were you there when they told her?" he asked looking at Bongeka. "No, but Joshua was." Answered Bongeka. "I take, Joshua is the husband?" said Roy. "Yes and he was the one who broke the news to her." Explained Bongeka. "Did she get a second opinion?" he asked. "No, we had no reason to doubt the doctor" explained Bongeka. Roy just nodded and then took a deep breath.

"You don't think he lied about that and bought the doctor?" asked Bongeka. "Anything is possible, from

what you ladies have said about Joshua. Anything is possible” he said. “He wouldn’t hurt her like that.” Said Bongeka slightly shaking her head. “Joshua is a dangerous guy. He is the kind that can buy you a private jet for your birthday and then beat you into the coma for looking at the pilot.” Explained Roy. “He gets really angry when Thandeka even looks at another man.” Added Bongeka. “But what would he gain about lying about her not having a womb? That’s to extreme even for Joshua.” I asked. “To gain control. To make her feel like he is so special and that he is supportive.” He explained. “How can we find out if he did lie about that?” asked Bongeka. “Get a specialist to confirm and ladies if it turns out that my theory is true than Joshua is more dangerous than we previously assumed. Chances are he knows about this trip and he knows how his wife’s mind works.” Warned Roy.

## Chapter 10.

It did bother me that Roy thought Joshua had lied about Thandeka not having kids. What kind of man would hurt the woman he claim to love like that. Making her believe that she is a barren when in fact she is able to produce kids. What kind of game was he playing and why. “It’s cold.” Complained Bongeka as we both stood over the balcony over looking the view of the table mountain. I even forgot about her. “You don’t think it is true?” I asked her and she shrugged her shoulders. “With Joshua everything is possible girl. She did show some pregnancy signs before but we dismissed them because she had already accepted that she can’t have kids.” Explained Bongeka. “That’s not fair at all. Why would he do that?” “I wish I knew the answer to that. So now we have to convince her to see the specialist.” Suggested Bongeka. “Without Joshua finding out because if he finds out then we are dead.” My hand touched my stomach. Now I had someone else to think about and protect.

We didn’t have much to do after talking to Roy. The weather was bad so we couldn’t go to the beach. We stayed in our room and talked about lots of thing. Bongeka was really nice and you could tell that she was raised in a good home. Her friendship with Thandeka was deep, so deep she knew almost every detail of her past. I guess Ntokozo knew this and that why he suggested I take her with me instead of Lindiwe. My phone rang and it was Roy asking to see us again. We agreed to meet with him. “I called you here ladies because I just talked to my colleague and she thinks she can help us.” He explained. “Any help would do.” We said at the same time. He laughed showing his perfect teeth and dimples. “So she will join us in Durban as soon as she gets the flight.” He explained. “I hope you are not bringing your friend over as well. The last thing we need is to poke Joshua because his response will be nothing we ever watched on scary movies.” Said Bongeka. “Don’t stress. I know what I’m doing.” He assured us. “So Ntokozo wasn’t lying when he said you are not an average shrink.” I looked at him. “Ntokozo Mdluli?” he asked. “You know Ntokozo Mdluli?” asked Bongeka not hiding the surprise look on her face. “We went to school together. That guy is bad. How do you know him?” he looked at me. “Small world, we are dating.” I explained. “Bad how? I hope it’s not Joshua bad.” Said Bongeka. We all laughed but it did bother me a bit. What if Ntokozo becomes a monster too.

“Joshua bad has some early signs that we tend to ignore.” Explained Roy. “Such as?” I asked just in case I had missed them on Ntokozo. “There is love and then there is an obsession. When you suspect that your

guy is obsess then chances are, he is. One minute he loves you like crazy, the next he is all over you about what he thinks you did wrong. I advice women to run but most instead of running to the opposite direction they run straight into their hands. They paint themselves as heroes. Always ready to protect you and you see yourself as blessed while you are actually cursed.” Explained Roy. “Joshua was always ready to jump to the fire for her. He made us all wish to have a guy like him in our lives because Thandeka was always telling us how great he is.” Added Bongeka. “She never showed you guys any signs that the man is controlling and abusing her?” asked Roy. “She did show me the bruises in her arms and we thought he was into Fifty Shades Of Grey style.” Said Bongeka. “And that didn’t bother her at all?” he asked. “It did but she was inlove so I guess we over looked the signs.” Said Bongeka. “I understand. I can’t be easy to spot a fault when you have never seen a correct output.” Said Roy. “So how are you going to help her?” I asked. “We are going to give Thandeka what she real needs.” Said Roy. “Joshua won’t let her go. What if he kills her?” asked Bongeka. “He won’t. Joshua won’t kill Thandeka. When he see that he doesn’t have that much control over her anymore he will gentle hand her over” said Roy. Bongeka and I looked at each other, I’m sure we thought the same thing. We were screwed and Joshua was going to kill us.

% % % %

Thandeka

It was the second day since Julia left home. Joshua wasn’t talking to me and I didn’t mind at all. I enjoyed the peace and quiet. After eating I changed my jean and wore a pencil skirt and my 6 inch pumps. I needed something to pick me up and shopping wasn’t exactly my idea of therapy but I had to do something. Joshua deleted the text message that Ntokozo sent with Phelisa’s number so I couldn’t ask her why she went to Cape Town. Bongeka wasn’t answering her phone aswel and I didn’t feel like talking to Lindiwe. Her words that it was my fault that Joshua beat me up did hurt me, so I was avoiding her. After being satisfied about my look I went to the garage to get my car. Joshua was just driving in. I had no choice but to wait for him to drive in. “Where are you going?” he asked before getting out of the car. “To do my hair.” I answered. “There’s nothing wrong with your hair.” He got out of the car. “I want to change.” I got into my car. “I’m coming with you.” He went to the passenger seat and got in. “Just so you know, I’m going to do some long braids so we are going to sit there for hours. Please don’t complain.” I warned him. “No problem.” He closed the door and I drove off.

I did exactly what I told him. We got to the salon and I requested long braids. Joshua sat down and began going through his phone. When he was facing down and focused he looked like a fine man, a real angel but I knew that he was bad. I noticed that other ladies were eyeing him but I pretended not to notice. “I’ll be back just now” he said after an hour of being bored. “Okay” I smiled at him but deep down I was glad to get a chance to breath. “You are lucky” said the lady next to me. “About what?” I asked even though I knew that she was talking about Joshua. “Such a loving husband. Not many man would do this” she pointed out sadly I didn’t feel lucky at all, maybe I did at first when we first began dating but lately it wasn’t roses any more. “Thank you” I smiled at her. “I don’t like it. Being here should be some time out from the man and other house hold stuff.” Said the other lady joining in. “What do you mean” asked the first lady. “Men who choose to come the salons with their wives or girlfriends are not that loving and

caring like they want us to believe. They do it to keep tabs on how much you spend and with who.” She explained. “So you think I’m spending my husband’s money on my hair?” I asked her. “Well?” she gave me the attitude. “No sweethearts. I’m spending my hard earned money.” I told her and tried to remain as calm as I could. “I’m just pointing out the obvious. Looking at the man and you. It’s clear that he is paying. I’m sorry but you don’t strike me as a working class.” The room fell into silence. “I guess you would know about that since you are the working class and all” I shot back. “Yes dear, I work for my money. Don’t let people fool you. Clothes don’t change a person. You may wear your fancy clothes bought by the man but your face says a different story.” The others laughed. “Wow, thank you. Just so you know, I’m a qualified Internal Auditor. I have enough money to buy not just a Brazilian hair but the damn Brazil it self. Maybe I’m not like you. Maybe I don’t wake up and put on make up just to go to the front door. Maybe I’ve realized that in life there’s more other than being rich and buying someone else’s hair. You don’t know shit about me but yet your conclusion about me is shocking. Maybe what you see as poverty on my face is the reality taking its toll. You don’t know where I’ve been and things I had to over come to be here today.” I told her. The room fell into silence once again. I waited for her to be nasty but she looked straight forward and said nothing at all.

When my hair was done I texted Joshua and told him I was done but I made sure to pay in cash so that the cow can see that I had money. He came back and we left the salon. “You are not hungry?” he asked. “I’m fine thanks” I went straight to the car. “I heard her” said Joshua opening the door for me. “She insulted me. Said I’m spending your money because I’m poor and uneducated” I told him. “But you handled her like a lady and I’m proud of you” He kissed my cheek. “I wish I feel proud, but I don’t. She was right. I look like a zombie no matter how fancy I look.” I started the car and drove off. Joshua went quiet and I was grateful because nothing was going to make me feel better.

## **Chapter 11**

Joshua didn’t say anything at all until we got home. When we got there he got into his car and said he forgot something, I just nodded and went inside the house. I made myself something to eat and ate. I called Julia and she answered on the third ring. “Mum” she sounded like she was asleep. “Hello pumpkin, are you asleep?” I asked. “Yes we are. We played until late last night.” She laughed. “Where is Kevin?” I missed him more, maybe it was because he was the last born. “Asleep. Dad was here this morning. He bought us some grocery and gave us cash.” said Julia. “Wow, instead of asking you guys to come home. Who does that to the kids?” It pissed me off. “Actually he did mum but I refused. We are not coming home until he goes for help or you guys get a divorce.” explained Julia. “Julia,” I started to explain but she cut me off. “No mum, something needs to be done. I’m old enough to see that something is wrong. I have to go.” She hung up. I put down the phone and took a deep breath.

After the call, I didn’t know what to do with myself. I was bored so I decided to take a long bubble bath and just try to relax. I missed home, my mum and dad but I was scared to visit them because I didn’t have answers for mum. The last time I was there she asked if my husband was abusing me and I just laughed and told her that Joshua is the sweetest man ever. But now I knew that she was going to ask



tons of questions again and worse that the boys went there. I'm sure she got enough proof from them. I missed Onica, she did warn me about Joshua but I was too blind to listen to her. She told me to run as fast as I could but I didn't instead I went straight to hell. I must have fallen asleep because when I opened my eyes the water was cold and my skin pale. I got out and drained the tub before exiting the bathroom. On the bed there was a box and a rose. I opened the box and there was a sexy lingerie. A note fell when I picked it up. It said 'put this on and follow the roses.' Trust Joshua to think sex solve everything. Never the less I put it on after moisturizing my body first and then followed the signs.

Joshua was standing near the window with his hands behind him. John Legend was playing and there were roses on the floor. He came towards me and handed me a rose. "You look beautiful" he kissed my nose and my forehead and then kissed my lips. "Thank you." I said after he pulled away. "We haven't been in this room for a while now. I missed it" said Joshua. "I'm worried about the kids Joshua. They are out there on their own and it's not safe. Duma is still out there." I pointed it out. "Duma is dead Thandeka" said Joshua. "Dead, how?" I didn't believe him. "Honestly I'm trying to have a romantic evening with my wife not to talk about her crazy cousin." Complained Joshua looking very cross. "He was my family, I have a right to know" I reminded him. "Funny he didn't regard you as family. That man was ready to kill you so many times or have you forgotten that part?" asked Joshua. I knew he was right. Duma did not regard me as family. In his eyes I was bad for sleeping with the enemy.

"Are we going to do this or what?" asked Joshua after we both went quiet but didn't move. "I guess finding out that my cousin is dead killed the mood" I turned to walk away but Joshua grabbed my hand and pulled me to his bare chest. "I'm sorry that you are hurt by his death but I'm not sorry that I killed him. He got what he has been after." said Joshua before kissing my lips in a rough manner. We kissed for a while or should I say he kissed me for a while because I was out of breath to actually kiss him back. "Take it off" he pointed the outfit. I hesitated for a moment and then he ripped it apart totally destroying it. I gasped and looked at him. "Don't look at me like that. I told you to take it off." He untied my braids as well. "It's still new so handle with care." I step away but pulled me back to him. "You are changing Thandeka. It's like you are not afraid of me anymore." He held my chin. "Then you should be happy that finally I'm becoming exactly what you want me to be to be" I removed his hand on my chin. "That's where you wrong. I don't want you to be like this. I want you to listen and do what I tell you to do. Like right now, I want you to sit down and obey me." He ordered.

I sat down as instructed because I knew that I can only push Joshua so far. He sat down next to me and kissed my lips, his hands massaging my thighs. "I'm sorry." He mumbled when he realized I wasn't kissing him back. "I'm not in the mood. Sorry" I looked down. "It's okay." He lay down and pulled me to lie in his chest. I obliged and lay my head down. We lay like that for a while. "Something is bothering me." I spoke. "What is it?" he asked. "At the salon, You left. How did you hear what that slut said about me?" I asked lifting my head up so I can see his face. "Next door is the barber shop and the wall is really thin so we could hear you ladies argue." He answered. "Oh, okay" I lay down again. I didn't believe him at all. The only theory I had was that he bugged my phone and I needed to be smart about this. He removed my head on him and then raised himself up and kissed my lips, this time I responded and we kissed passionately.

He pulled away from my mouth and kissed my neck, gentle sucking it while his hand brushed my inner thigh. I could feel his erection poking me through his pants. He moved from my neck to my navel and then went to take the underwear off with his teeth. When it was completely off he opened my legs and then I felt his tongue press against my clitoris. I moved my hips trying to back away but he gently pressed me down and continued with his mission at hand. He slipped in his finger and began fingering me. I was turned on and with each move I was becoming wetter than before. Joshua kept sucking and licking until I felt like I was going to come in his mouth. He stopped, took his pants off and then positioned himself before pushing himself in. I gasped out loud and he just smiled and looked at me. "I think you are too deep." I complained. "Breathe and relax those muscles." He ordered while his other hand raised my leg higher. "Joshua, no" I tried to push him away but he didn't move instead he began thrusting in and out. Each thrust felt like it was going to come out in my throat. "Who wears the pants in this house?" he asked. "You" I answered. "Good, It seems like you needed a reminder. You are my wife Thandeka, I love you and I expect you to love and respect me." He released my leg and picked up the pace. I wish I could say I was coming or at least enjoying but instead it became painful. I winced with each thrust until he was done.

We lay there in silence for a while. My honey pot was burning it felt like it was my first time. "When was the last time you spoke to Bongeka?" he asked. "It's been a while. Why?" I asked. "They went to Cape Town with Phelisa." He said. "Okay" I said. "Aren't you curious to know why?" he asked. "No, If they wanted me to know I think they would have told me" I answered. "Well I was curious so I had someone watching them and you will never guess who they went to" he held my hand. "Roy Tucker." He said. "Wow." That's all I could say. "Yep my love, that's all I could say when I heard. Do you know what else I find strange?" he asked. "What?" I looked at him. "The change in your heartbeat. Do you know something that I don't?" he asked. "No. I was just surprised." I explained. "Okay my love, well it seems like I'm going to have to deal with Roy because I'm not allowed to touch the ladies. The last thing I need is having to kill Phelisa and Bongeka because that will destroy our family while if I take care of Roy we can all survive and teach the ladies a thing or two about loyalty. Don't you agree Thandeka?" he looked at me and my blood went cold.

## **Chapter 12**

After what Joshua said I began worrying about Roy. He was innocent after all. I wasn't worried about the girls because I knew that the only woman Joshua enjoyed hurting was me not my friends. Roy was a different story; I knew that Joshua could kill him in a blink for nothing at all. I needed to save him before he was hurt for trying to help women out there. "Joshua" I woke him up even though I doubted that he was even asleep. "Yes" he opened his eyes and yes he didn't sound like someone who just woke from sleep. "I'm not having an affair with that American man. You are the only the only man that I love and I would never look at another man." "I know" he said simply. "So you won't hurt an innocent man just because you think he might be interested in me?" I asked. "No. I'm not going to hurt him. I was just testing you." He laughed. "Thank God, You did scare me there for a while." I admitted. "Just do me a favor. For some strange reason Phelisa believes that I'm abusing you, so I need you to stop her from

meddling in our business. Can you do that?" he asked and I just nodded.

The next day I decided to call Ntokozo. He picked up on the first ring. "Thandeka" "Morning, I know it's early it just that I need to talk to Phelisa but I don't have her numbers and the last text got deleted before I could save them." I lied. "I'll text you again." He hung up. After few minutes the text came and I saved the number before calling her. It rang for a while before a sleepy voice answered. "Yes" "I don't know who you think you are and I don't care but I want you to listen good. Stop poking your nose in my business. I don't know where you get the idea that I'm being abused. Just do me a favor and stop." I shouted. "Thandeka!! But you said....." I cut her off. "I don't care what you think I said, okay. Leave my home alone. You will not have my husband dear and I suggest you stop cooking lies about my marriage" after that I hung up and then went to shower.

&& ~ &&

"Wow" I was shocked by the call from Thandeka. For a moment I stared at the screen of my phone as her words rang in my ears. Did she just go off at me for trying to help her?. My phone rang again and this time it was Ntokozo. "My queen, How are you this morning?" he asked. "I'm fine, I think. I just got a call from Thandeka and she asked me to leave her marriage alone. Basically told me to back off" I told him. "That means they sorted thing out. Come home then" said Ntokozo. "Don't you find it strange that she said that, I mean this is the woman who asked me to kill her no so long ago." I pointed it out. "So you suspect that Joshua forced her to say that?" asked Ntokozo. "I don't know, maybe he did" "Or maybe he did not. Thandeka loves my brother. Maybe they decided to forgive each other. Just come home." Said Ntokozo. "Okay, I'll let the others know that our mission is over."

"She called you and said that?" asked Bongeka after I told her about the phone call. "Yes. Her words." I was disappointed to. "Let me call her. Maybe Joshua forced her to call." said Bongeka taking her phone and making the call. I went to the bathroom to pee and when I came back she was staring at her phone. "And?" I asked. "She wants us to drop it for real." She sounded disappointed. "I guess I have to tell Roy the news." I added. "And then we go home. That's why sometimes it's better not to be involved because something like this happen and you end up being the bad guy." complained Bongeka. "Why is she protecting him?" It didn't make sense at all. "Love I guess." said Bongeka. "Strange kind of love. Today you want to die because you are being abused, the next you are protecting your abuser." I added before going to take a shower.

After showering we met Roy for breakfast. Neither of us wanted to break the news to him but in the end I knew I had to. "Roy I have some bad news and I would totally understand if you hate me for it." I began. "What is it?" he asked looking a bit alarmed. "She doesn't want help. She told me this morning to drop this and mind my own business." I explained. "I'm sorry that we have wasted your time. I honestly thought she was going to leave him for sure this time." added Bongeka. "It's okay ladies. It's normal. You should be proud of yourselves that you did try. That's what good friends do. I can't say I'm not disappointed but we can't force her to leave him if she doesn't want to." said Roy. "How can she not want to? I doesn't make any sense" said Bongeka. "Like I told you ladies before. Her husband worked on her. It's hard to fix an emotional damaged woman. Today they want out, the next they want in again."

said Roy. "Anyway thank you for this. We really appreciate this" said Bongeka. "You are welcome. I guess it's time I fly home as well. I have a European tour next month." He said. "If you ever come this way please let us know so we can organize a real African tour for you" said Bongeka. "I might just take you up on that offer because I have a feeling that I will be back in SA sooner than I think." said Roy.

## Chapter 13

It was Friday morning and we had to go home for Duma's funeral. I was angry at Julia because she was refusing to come home so we could go to Vryheid together. She insisted on travelling by public transport with the boys. I didn't get why. "The others are here already. Hurry up." said Joshua kissing my cheek. I must say that things were better between us, in fact we were doing so great. The only thing I needed now was for my kids to come home and I was positive that they were going to come back after the funeral. "How many? Lindiwe and Njabulo left last night." I asked fixing my braids. "We are driving with Ntokozo and Phelisa, but Bongeka and Lwazi will follow behind us." said Joshua taking the bags. "Do I really have to socialize with Phelisa? Why don't they follow us and we all take our cars." I complained. "Don't be difficult Thandeka. We are going with them and that's final." said Joshua. "Don't get all worked up. I was just asking. I haven't seen them ever since that stunt they pulled about their Cape Town trip." I explained. "It is fine and it's good like that. The trip will show them that we are fine. Let's go" he walked out and I followed.

Ntokozo and Phelisa were already waiting outside. We were driving in Joshua's car and leaving theirs in our garage. "Lwazi and Bongeka have already left. We will catch up halfway. So who is sitting at the back?" Joshua looked at me and I volunteered to sit with Phelisa, Ntokozo sat next to Joshua. "Are you comfortable Lisa?" asked Ntokozo after Phelisa got in. "Yes my love." She smiled. "Wait! Are we missing something?" I asked. "We are very much pregnant." said Ntokozo looking really chuffed. "Gosh, congrats. No wonder you look glowing." I hugged her. "Thank you." She hugged me back and in her ear I whispered another thank you for her effort to help me. She pulled away and looked at me in surprise. "Yes I know about it and I will explain when we get to Vryheid." I smiled at her. "Know what?" asked Joshua. "The fear of being pregnant." Said Phelisa first and I was grateful because I didn't know how to answer that one. "Okay that is my cue to start the car." He got in and drove off.

The trip was boring because I had to act like I didn't want to talk to Phelisa while deep inside I was dying to find out about the trip and explain why I bitched about it. We stopped at Melmoth for some drinks and food. Bongeka and Lwazi were waiting for us there. We went to the ladies while the guys went to buy food. "Before you kill me, let me explain. Joshua found out about the trip and he was having you followed. I had to act." I explained. "You could have called us and explained not to go crazy like you did." said Bongeka. "He bugged my phone and he was threatening to kill Roy." I told them. "Gosh. So what now?" asked Phelisa. "Let's just focus on the funeral girls." I walked out first and went to call Julia to ask where they were. She said they went past Melmoth because their taxi had stopped at Showe. "And?" asked Joshua after I ended the call. "They are fine." I got in the car and opened a pocket of chips. Phelisa was eating chicken. "Twins I tell you" said Joshua looking at her and then back at Ntokozo. "Fuck off"

replied Ntokozo. Phelisa looked up and realized that they were talking about her. "She is allowed." I came into her defense. "Thank you TK." Said Ntokozo and we all laughed and continued with our journey.

We got to Vryheid after midday. It was still early so we bought few things in town and then drove to Mhlungwane. When we got there it was already busy and I was grateful because that meant I could avoid my mother. Mthunzi took the grocery out of the car while I showed Joshua and Ntokozo the room they were going to stay in. Njabulo and my older brother Mthunzi were already there so I left them there and went to the kitchen. "You sure do know how to hide." Said Sindi as I walked in. "I was busy aw." I hugged her and then introduced Phelisa. "It's really nice to meet you." She said afterwards. "What are you standing around for? Shouldn't you be cooking." Shouted Bongeka as she walked in. "God you scared me. I thought it was mum." Said Lindiwe coming from the lounge. The moment she saw Phelisa she turned her nose up in disgust. "No drama. We are here for Duma." I warned her. "Mxm!!!" she stormed out. "And then?" asked Sindi. "Ignore her. Come Lisa you need to rest." I took her to the bedroom.

"Ignore her." I advised. She nodded and sat down on the bed. "I want to help though." She added. "Girl please. You saw how many ladies are out there and beside you have to rest. I was a long trip." "I'm sorry Thandeka, For what I tried to do." Said Phelisa before I could walk out. "Forget about it." I went to sit next her. "You are so kind and I don't know what I was thinking." Her eyes filled with tears. "You are pregnant dear and sadness is bad for the baby. I forgave you the moment you offered to help me." I held her hand. "Thandeka" a voice called outside. "Rest I'll be back." I told Phelisa and then went to check who was calling me. It was Xoli. "And then? Why do you look like you just saw a ghost?" I asked. "Julia is in labor, come" she said. "What labor?" I asked. "Labor pains. She is giving birth." She explained. I froze for a second, my ears ringing. She had to be wrong. "I don't understand. How can she be in labor?" "Normally labor happens when the baby is ready to be born." Answered Xoli sounding annoyed by the question. "Julia is pregnant?" I asked.

## Chapter 14

My knees were shaking when we went to the room she was in. How could she do this to me? Hide the pregnancy until it was this late. Before I could get in my mum came out and stopped me. "Uthi umzukulu akashongo ukuthi sekonakele. Lalela ke, ungathethi. Yehlisa umoya" she preached. "Kodwa mama ngizongatheth kanjani?" They were expecting too much. "Ukuthetha kwakho ngeke kusize ngalutho kodwa kuzokwenza ukuthi angabelethi kahle." She walked back inside and I turned and walked away. Joshua was with my brother and I was happy because that meant I won't have to explain a lot. "Can you borrow me your car keys?" I asked standing on the doorway. "What's wrong?" he asked already searching for them. "Julia isn't well. I'm taking her to the hospital." I took the keys and walked out but I knew that Joshua was coming after me. "Well how?" he asked already catching up with me. "I'll explain when we get back." I brushed him off. "Thandeka!" his voice was firm. "Joshua please not now!" I lost my cool too and left him there.

"The car is ready. Let's go." I walked in. "I don't think we will make it there. The baby is almost here." said Xoli sitting next to Julia who didn't even look at me. "Is there anyone who can help?" It hurt me to see Julia in pain like that. "I can do it." volunteered Xoli. "Ay ay, you are not going anywhere near my daughter." I protested. "I'm a nurse. I do this every day." She rolled her eyes. Bongeka walked in and looked at us with a questioning look. "What's going on?" she sat next to Julia who was quiet but sweating. Tears occasionally rolled down her cheeks with each pain. "Don't look at me. Ask Julia." I told her. My mum gave me a warning look. "Julia, what's wrong?" she asked and Julia didn't respond but instead she cried harder. "She is in labor" answered Xoli on her behalf. "As in giving birth labor?" asked Bongeka again. "Yes." I answered. "Then we should get her to the hospital or call an ambulance." She looked at me. "We won't make it." said Xoli removing the blanket on Julia's lower body. She checked whatever that she was checking and then began sending us on different directions for the things she needed.

It didn't take long for the baby to be born. I held her hand as she pushed and gave birth to a little girl. I won't lie and say I wasn't angry. I was pissed but I pushed aside the anger and focused on helping her. I had tons of questions for her but I saved them for later. The ambulance came to take them to the hospital because she lost lots of blood and the baby was small. That explained not showing at all. I went with them because I wanted to be with her and drill her in private, away from my mum's eyes. We were lucky to find the doctor since it was Friday night and all. She checked her and said they were doing well even though they were going to stay for a while. "I'm sorry mum" she spoke after the doctor had left. "Why didn't you tell me?" I sat down next to her. "I was scared. I didn't want to disappoint you." She looked down. "Who is the father?" I asked. "Tyler McPherson" she answered. "That's such an unfamiliar name. When did you meet because to me you said you are not dating and you are not sexually active at all?" "Can I explain later? I'm really sleepy right now." She lied. "Julia, what is it that you are not telling me?" I pressed on. "I'm tired mum. I will explain after the nap." She closed her eyes and I knew I wasn't getting the answers now. I sat there and covered myself with a blanket. For a moment I was glad that I had left my phone in Durban. At least I knew that Joshua wasn't listening in.

The next day I went home after making sure that Julia and my granddaughter were fine. When I got home it was busy. I went to take a bath first before going to help out in the kitchen. I was avoiding Joshua because I knew that he heard what was happening. "Maybe you should go and sleep for a moment." suggested Phelisa. "I won't be able to. How can she hide a baby for nine months? I must be a bad mother. My daughter falls pregnant and gets ready to give birth without me even noticing." "You can't blame yourself. Julia had such a small stomach, nobody would have suspected that she was pregnant." Said Phelisa. "Still Lisa. I was supposed to see. The cravings, the morning sickness, etc. How can I not see all that?" "Maybe she didn't have any." Said Phelisa. "Thandeka, Joshua is asking to see you." Said Lindiwe walking in. "I'll be back" I walked out to see what he wanted.

"How are they?" he asked the moment I walked in. "The doctor was happy this morning, but they are staying the weekend." I answered surprised by the calmness he was displaying. "What are they going to need?" he asked stepping closer to me so I could fix his tie. "The usual I guess." I fixed it up. "Who is the father?" he asked. "Tyler McPherson." I answered. "From where?" he looked at me. "She won't tell me where or even where they met." I came clean because I didn't want him to think I was hiding anything

from him at all. "He doesn't even sound South African. I wonder where he is from." Said Joshua. "I wonder too." I added. "Anyway how are you?" he held my chin up. "I'm fine. I'm tired from not sleeping but I'm okay." He smiled and kissed my forehead. "I'm glad you are okay."

The service went on for a long time, people kept talking about how nice Duma was and how sad it was for him to die like that. I kept asking myself if they weren't lost or something because the person they were talking about was far from being a good man. After the talks were done we went to the grave yard. It wasn't far so we walked while the elders took the cars of cause .I had a strange feeling like I was being watched. "Are you okay?" asked Lindiwe standing next to me. "Yes I'm okay." I looked around, searching for Joshua. He was talking to Ntokozo. I looked around searching for whatever that was waking my sixth senses. My eyes landed straight to him. The ghost of my past. The man I grew up knowing as my older brother Sizwe. The man I thought was dead.

## Chapter 15

"Thandeka!" I turned and looked at Lindiwe for a second but when I looked where Sizwe was standing he was gone. "Did you see him?" I asked her. "See who?" she asked looking where I was staring. "Sizwe, I think I just saw Sizwe." I told her. "Sizwe who?" she asked giving me that strange look. "My dead brother Sizwe." Lindiwe laughed so hard people turned and looked at us. "Sorry, I think Duma's death has gone and messed with your head. Sizwe is dead and buried. Let's go home so we can go check on Julia later on." She looked at me still suppressing the laughter. "Mxm" I walked away in front of her. "Okay, I'm sorry" she caught up with me. "I'm not talking to you again." I joked and pretended to be still angry. "I'm the one who shouldn't be talking to you. How can you bring that witch in to our home after what she did?" she stood in front of me blocking the way. "She is not that bad." I tried to walk past her. "How do you know she is not that bad? She tried to kill you or have you forgotten that part as well?" she shouted because I was a distance away. I ignored her and went inside the yard before going to help with the dishing up.

"Did you wash your hands at the gate?" asked my mum. "No" I looked at her and then turned. I went to wash the hands and then went inside. We dished up the food into take a ways and gave it to those who didn't go to the cemetery. "Where are my boys?" I asked Bongeka. "With the other kids." She answered without even looking at me. "Where? I haven't seen them today." I was a bad mother. No wonder Julia did what she did. "Come, let's go give them the food." She took the take a ways and gave me 5 more. "How many are they?" I was surprised by the amount of food we had. "About 10." She answered. I followed behind her until we reached the noisy room. They were all sitting on the floor playing chess. Kuhle was the one giving the instructions and all. "Chess can wait. Dlanini nakhu ukudla." Said Bongeka as we began handing them the food. "I'm a vegetarian mum" said Kevin. "Since when?" I looked at him. "Since last night." He mumbled. "That's great, no more Big Mac, no more pizza, no more braai." I kissed his cheek. "Aw, maybe I can start next year." He took the food and began eating. Bongeka and I looked at each other and laughed.

After everybody ate and the others left I went to shower quickly and then went to change. "Are you

going somewhere?" asked Joshua. "I'm going to check on Julia and the baby." "Okay." He went quiet after that. The calmness did surprise me, Why wasn't he shouting at me for allowing Julia to date? Or maybe be angry at her for being pregnant. "Joshua" I went to sit next to him. "If it's about Julia, rather you don't say anything." He took a deep breath and that was all the proof I needed to see that he wasn't calm at all. "I think I saw Sizwe." I looked at him. "Where?" he looked at me. "In the cemetery. He looked at me and then I looked at Lindiwe, when I looked at him he was gone." I explained. "Then you are not going to the hospital on your own. Let me change and then drive you." He stood up. "So I wasn't seeing things?" I looked at him. "No. He is alive, I don't know how he survived but yeah he is alive." He answered. "And you knew but didn't even tell me?" I asked. "I didn't know that you own a gun or that you fight your battles now." He answered sound annoyed. "So we are back to me being stupid and you being my hero?" He didn't answer.

When we got to the hospital it wasn't visiting hours but I begged them to let me in. Joshua stood outside and refused to go in. I went inside on my own. "Hey" they were both up. "Hey mum" she sat up. "Can I hold her?" I sat in the chair next to her. She handed the baby to me. She was beautiful. Her eyes were opened and I noticed that they were blue. "So Tyler is blonde?" I looked at Julia. "How do you know?" she looked at me. "My granddaughter's eyes are blue. That explains it." "Yes he is blonde." She looked down. "Does he know?" I asked. Julia didn't answer instead she took the baby and began breastfeeding her. "I take he doesn't know. You have to tell him, it his responsibility too." I advised. "Mum please. I don't need a lecture right now." "To bad you are getting one. Why didn't you tell me?" I asked. "I said not now" she shouted and scared the baby. The nurse came to us and asked us to keep it down. "Any idea when are you getting out?" I asked getting ready to leave because it was clear that Julia wasn't interested in sharing the info with me. "Monday I hope. But I'm staying here with grandma." She said. "No you are not. We are going back to Durban. You have school remember." I reminded her. "You can't change my mind mum." "You right. I can't and I don't need to but your father will. Let me go get him right now" I put down my bag. "Okay, fine. You win." She stopped me. I went back to her and sat down. We talked about the other things until it was time to leave.

"So, how are they?" asked Joshua as we drove home. "You should have came with me if you were interested in seeing them." I told him. "Don't start. I'm not ready to see Julia just yet." He answered. "You will have to see them at some point, I know she let us down but you don't write the kid off for making a mistake." Joshua gave me a nasty stare and I decide to shut up. "I'm not writing her off but I'm angry Thandeka. I'm angry that she hid something as big as this on us. What else is she going to hide? Marriage?" he shouted. "She was scared. It's not easy to find out that you are pregnant. I know that pain." "It's not the same. You were raped and Julia wasn't. Her behavior shows that she knew what she was doing." said Joshua looking a bit destructed. "What is it?" I looked behind us. "This car is following us. Put on your seatbelt." He instructed. I did as told as Joshua picked up the speed. "Are you sure?" I asked. "Yes I'm sure. Call Ntokozo " he gave me his phone. I dialed his number and he answered before it even rang. "Put him on loud speaker" instructed Joshua. I did that. "Joshua!" said Ntokozo. "I think we are being followed. Can you meet us halfway but don't scare him off. I want to know who is it and why." He instructed. "Mxm you are ruining the fun. Sheila needs some action" complained Ntokozo before hanging up. "Who is Sheila?" I asked. "His gun" said Joshua looking behind us. The car was still following



us. "He named his gun?" "Yes and Sheila loves playing with bad boys. It's about to go down" said Joshua adding a laugh.

## Chapter 16

Just as Joshua had asked, Ntokozo met us halfway with Njabulo, Nathi and Lwazi. Joshua drove past them and then stopped the car. "Stay in the car Thandeka." He instructed pulling out a gun under the seat. "I wasn't planning to come out anyway." I told him. He laughed and got out. The other car stopped and instead of the driver to come out bullets began flying in all directions. I lay down on the seat and covered my ears. The bullets kept flying from both side and all I could do was just hide there and think about my kids. After a while the gun sound stopped and I felt a cool air brush against my skin and then someone roughly grabbed me. "Let's go miss" said the guy putting the gun on my forehead. "I don't think so." Said Joshua opening the other side. "I think so." Said another guy behind Joshua. "Who sent you?" asked Joshua. "Boss. Sorry we are not allowed to say. We were instructed to get her and we just did. Let's go maam." Said the guy pulling my braids. "Lets make a deal." Said Ntokozo being pushed forward by another guy who had a gun in his hand. "You are in no positions to make any deal but fire away." Said the first guy pressing his arm on my neck. "Don't hurt my wife." Said Joshua moving forward a bit but the guy grabbed him. "Mr. Let's Make A Deal, let us hear your deal." Said the guy ignoring Joshua. "If you make it to your car with her I'll shoot you in the head." Said Ntokozo. The guys looked at each other and laughed. "With what? I think lady Sheila has reached menopause." They laughed so hard. "And it's a bullet for every bruise in my wife's body." Said Joshua.

The guy dragged me away kicking and screaming. His gun was pressed on my forehead it felt like it was going to leave a hole without being fired. I looked back at Joshua and he had his hands in his pockets as 3 guys had guns pointed at them. I realized that Nathi and Njabulo weren't there. "Remember the deal. You reach the car, it's a hole in your head." Said Ntokozo. "Grandpa is crazy. He use to be a legend but not anymore. The field has new players." Said the guy. "At least tell me who sent you?" I asked with tears rolling down my cheeks. "I told you, I'm not allowed to say." He shouted. "Then tell your boss I said not with my sister." Said Nathi appearing behind the car. The guy let go of me and pointed his gun to Nathi. "I doubt he will make it back" said Njabulo behind him. "I told you not to reach the car." Said Ntokozo behind us and then a loud bang followed. The guy fell flat on his face. "And Sheila has kids." He said as they took the guns from the other team and pointed at them. "Are you okay?" asked Njabulo looking at me. "Yes I think I'm okay." I walked back to the car. They let the guys go with their dead friend and we got into our cars and drove home.

"Don't you think the police will follow up on this? This is not Durban where you guys play with guns and the cops turn a blind eye." I asked to Joshua. "But they were no cops there. That's a grazing field and even if someone saw anything what will they get? Someone's blood and he cannot be linked to us." Said Joshua. "Okay, I hear you." I sat back in the seat. "Are you okay though? No pain somewhere?" he asked. "I'm fine. I just want to see my boys before they sleep." Joshua nodded and drove inside the yard. My dad was standing under the kraal with 3 men. He looked rather angry. "I think your father is angry." Said

Joshua as we got out of the car. "I can see that. Let me go check the ladies." I walked to the kitchen and Joshua went to the room to Nathi and Njabulo.

"What happened?" I asked when I noticed that everyone in the kitchen was looking really sour. "You missed the biggest fight of all fights." Said Phindile. "Who?" I pulled a chair and sat down. "Lindiwe and Phelisa. She almost killed her." Said Bongeka. "But Phelisa is pregnant. How can Lindiwe attack a pregnant woman? Where is she?" I stood up. "Mum took Lisa and Lindiwe stormed out, I don't know where she went." Said Phindile. "That baby won't make it Thandeka. Phelisa fell on the chair and hit her stomach. I honestly don't know what to say" said Bongeka. "How could she? After I asked her not to give Phelisa a hard time. Let me go find Lisa." I walked out. It didn't take long for me to find them. Ntokozo was there as well. She was laying in bed with tears streaming down her face. "Let me take you to the hospital." Said Ntokozo removing the blanket. He helped her up and we all noticed that she was bleeding already. My mother gave her a blanket to wrap around her waist. "I'm coming with you." I told them. "No it's fine we will go on our own. You had a busy day and you need to rest." Said Ntokozo picking her up with such ease.

Nathi drove them to the hospital. My mum suggested I burn the sheet, so I went to make a fire and tossed it inside. Lindiwe was nowhere to be found and I was glad because I wasn't sure what I was going to do to her. After I was satisfied about the sheet being ashes I went to take a bath. Such an eventful day it was. It made me realize that there was no such thing as happily ever after. Troubles never stop following you around. I didn't know who was after me but I suspected Sizwe. But at that very moment I didn't care about me. I was worried about Lisa and her baby. I didn't know what she had with Ntokozo but was it strong enough to survive even if the baby don't make it. I didn't even realize that I was crying until I tasted the tears on my lips. I finished bathing and then went to find my husband. He was in bed with the boys. They were asleep so I pulled a duvet over them. "Hey." Joshua opened his eyes. "I didn't mean to wake you up." I sat on the edge of the bed. "But I'm glad you did. They were waiting for you." He looked at the boys. "I had to clean up after Lisa went to the hospital." Joshua nodded and looked down. "Njabulo said he can't find Lindiwe. He went with Mthunzi to look for her." Said Joshua. "She can't be far. Its late so I'm sure she will be freaked out at some point." "Duma was bad. Even his funeral has such events. I'm worried about Ntokozo. He was looking forward to fatherhood." Said Joshua. "I think it's every couples dream to experience parenting." I looked at my boys. "Even though kids do let us down" I knew he was talking about Julia. "Just like we did let our parents down at some point." I added.

Joshua and I decided to sleep on the floor and allow our little men to sleep on the bed. We both lay there in silence until Joshua's phone rang. He answered. "Did you find her?" he asked and then listened. I looked at him because I suspected that it was about Lindiwe. "Okay, thanks for letting me know." He then hung up. "They found Lindiwe?" I asked. "Yeah they did. I'm worried about them though." Said Joshua. "Why?" I raised my head to look at Joshua. "Didn't she tell you?" he looked at me. "Tell me what?" "Njabulo suspect that she is having an affair. They are fighting a lot and she is refusing to have another kid. He said he found cufflinks on her bag but they weren't his and when he asked who are they she went crazy and accused him of cheating." Explained Joshua. "But Lindiwe owns a clothing shop. It's not unusual for her to have an item in her bag." "That's what I said too then Njabulo pointed out that lately she has late meetings, she is always angry at something and she takes her calls outside." Said



in mind?" he laughed. "Not with the kids here." I reminded him. "We will be quiet." He licked his lips. "I doubt that very much. I don't remember us having a quiet sex at all." I whispered. "You are so right but it can be our new adventure, come on lets try." He whispered back. "Mum" said Kevin waking up.

"So much for the adventure." complained Joshua. I gave him a side glance before attending my son. "Pee first?" I looked at him. "I think Thando had an accident" he pulled back the duvet and showed me a big wet spot where he was sleeping. "And he switched with you so that you can take the blame?" asked Joshua. "Yes dad." answered Kevin. "Thando is so wrong. He needs to be punished. What should we do to him mum" said Joshua looking at me. "Take him to Disney Land and leave him there for a week." I suggested. "That's a great idea. We can even take him to France and leave him in the Eiffel Tower" added Joshua. "But I can take the punishment for him mum, I don't mind." said Kevin. "You really don't have too. Thando needs to be punished not you, he is the one who did the pee pee on my bed." I told him. "I remember that maybe it was me" he mumbled. "Was you who did what?" asked Joshua. "Who had an accident. I'm sorry mum." He confessed. Joshua looked at me and I couldn't help myself I just burst in to laughter.

After having fun with my family I went to take a quick bath and then went to help in the kitchen. Bongeka wasn't there and I was glad because I was beginning to feel like we were abusing her active skills. It's not like we never went to her home, we did and had a great time with her strict parents. They are so strict in such a way that we weren't allowed to sleep with our husbands during that visitation. Her father was like 'if any of you girls sneak out and I catch you, I'm demanding a second lobola.' Joshua offered to pay it up and Mr. Bhengu asked him how many millions he was willing to lose. "Why are you laughing by yourself?" asked Bongeka walking in. "I'm just thinking about Joshua and how many millions he was willing to lose" we both cracked up. "Share the joke" said Lindiwe walking in. "We are just being crazy" answered Bongeka and I went quiet. "Don't look at me like that. Lisa got what she deserved" said Lindiwe. "And what does that make you?" I looked at her. "Obviously not the butt kisser you turned out to be." She answered. "Better the butt kisser than a murderer. You killed Ntokozo's baby." I reminded her. "I did that baby a favor. No kid wants to have a slut for a mother." Bongeka gasped and I decided to walk out. "Run Thandeka, That's what you do anyway. I'm tired of this crap." She shouted.

I stopped when I heard her say that. There was more to this and I knew that she was dying to give me the piece of mind. "What crap?" I walked back to the house. "Don't act like you don't know. Everything is about you. Just you, you and you." "Lindiwe stop it. This isn't the time or the place" warned Bongeka. "It's the perfect time. Maybe it's time people know that you are the reason why my marriage is ending." She pointed at me. "And what exactly did I do?" I looked at her. "My husband is forever worshipping you. 'why can't you dress like Thandeka? Why can't you cook like Thandeka? Why can't you stay at home like your sister is doing? Everything in my house is about you." She shouted. "You can't blame me for that. You the one who doesn't want to have more kids, you are the one who doesn't cook for the man. I refuse to allow you to make me feel bad for your own choices." I defended myself. "That's because I want to be the career woman, I want to be independent. I don't want to be like you. Always ready to take instructions from Joshua like you are uneducated." "Then you shouldn't have married the guy because obviously you don't want to share your life with your kid and his father." I told her. "Don't act like you perfect, Your precious daughter hid her pregnancy for 9 months. If you were loving and caring



buzzed and I replied with a text and told him that they were asleep. He complained about waiting for two hours and I told him to come and see the baby, after that text he didn't reply. I stayed there holding my granddaughter and felt at peace. She may have been a secret but I loved her and I prayed for Joshua to love her too. "Hey" said Joshua's voice behind me. "Hey" I tried to hide my excitement as I thanked God for answering my prayers. "She doesn't have hair" said Joshua looking at the baby. "It's early. She will probably have long hair like you and Julia" I looked at him. "If she can be beautiful like you then I'll be happy" said Joshua looking at me. "She will be more than me. Do you want to hold her?" I asked. "Maybe when she is at least 2 months" he refused. "Fair enough" I put the baby down when I saw Julia waking up. Her eyes went wide when she saw Joshua. "Mum, dad" she sat up and picked the baby up. "Finish up Thandeka, It's getting late and I hate driving late" said Joshua before walking out. "He will never forgive me" said Julia looking at me. "Give him time. He saw the baby. He will come around" I tried to comfort her. "Mum please we both know that dad will never come around. We should accept that he will never forgive me" she looked at her baby. "Have you named the baby yet?" I tried to change the subject. "Yamkela Cebekhulu" she answered. "Great name. I love it." We both smiled and looked at baby Yamkela as she sucked her fist.

When we left the hospital we went home. I didn't question Joshua about Julia. If he wanted to spend all his life hating his daughter than it was my job to love her and my granddaughter. I borrowed his phone and goggled the ideas of the nursery and when I found what I was looking for I sent Julia a text and asked if she loved it and she said yes so I placed an order online. "What are you doing?" asked Joshua. "I'm trying to get Yamkela the best nursery money can buy." I told him. "Okay, need anything?" asked Joshua. "Like what?" I asked. "Extra cash?" he looked at me. "I don't get you. You refuse to touch her, you ignore Julia but you want to spend on her baby. That's not what grandfather's do" I said. "I'm trying Thandeka. I don't hate them" he answered. "But you are what? You are punishing the child for her mother's mistakes" I told him. "You would rather I punish you?" he looked at me. "No but I would rather you forgive Julia" I tried to reason with him. "Then it's best you stop talking about this because I want to punish you so bad" he warned. "But I didn't do anything" I looked at him. "That's exactly why I want to punish you. You should be angry at Julia for what she did but you are not, instead you are carrying on like she brought a Nobel Prize at home." said Joshua parking the car in the yard at home. "I'm trying to be a parent Joshua. Julia made a mistake but she didn't kill her. Would you rather she had some back room abortion?" I asked before getting out of the car. Joshua didn't respond instead he took a deep breath and closed his eyes.

## **Chapter 19**

5 months later.

I was so nervous. Almost everything in my stomach was turning, I was sitting on the couch waiting for Ntokozo with my results. After the miscarriage I went to register at UKZN and did medicine. Ntokozo was supportive, he drove me to school every day, picked me up after class and stayed up with me when I had to study. Our relationship did suffer a bit after losing the baby but we worked it out. Zama came and



he was still young, on the singing part I wasn't so sure. He was shy and each time I caught him singing he stopped as soon as he realized he wasn't alone anymore. I tried Joshua's phone for the last time and it went to voice mail again. I tried Julia and it just rang. I put my phone away because the couple next to me was giving me the evil eye. The first act went on stage and they were dancing. It was a group of four boys and five girls. We watched them dance and then clapped when they finished. A girl followed after. She sang and her voice was bad but never the less we clapped because that's what parents do.

"Sorry we are late" whispered Joshua sitting next to me. "What happened?" I whispered back. "Little Miss Yam decided that my English Blazer wasn't smelling nice anymore and she added her mother's breast milk to the scent. So we had to drive back so I could change" said Joshua looking at Julia who was holding a sleeping baby girl. "That's what being a grandpa is all about" I laughed a bit and then went quiet when the couple gave me their famous evil eye. The next act followed and it was a cheerleading squad. Their act was beautiful except it had all of us crossing our finger because it was too advanced for the little kids. When they finished there was a loud clap and I'm sure it wasn't for the act itself but it was to say thank you that nobody fell and broke a bone. "Yamkela will never do that" complained Joshua. "How will you stop her?" I asked. "We will raise her like a boy so she will grow up doing boy staff until she gets married" explained Joshua. "That's crazy. Why are we going to do that?" I asked. "Because the only man that will be allowed to even look in her direction will be her husband" answered Joshua. "I feel for Yam" I looked at Julia and then we both burst into laughter.

Finally it was my boys turn. A piano was brought into the stage but instead of Kevin, Thando came in and sat in front of it. I looked at Joshua and he looked at me as well. We were both surprised by this even though we never watched the boys practice. They didn't want us anywhere near their secret music room. For a moment I was afraid that they will start doing some rapping and go off yelling fuck you and staff. I can survive all scandals but I doubted that I could survive being the mum of those famous boys who insulted people in their school competition. Thando began playing the piano and then a voice came in. "I'm hoping this isn't too hard to believe' cause baby, you're the only one for me. I know it gets hard when I'm moving in and out of state But I promise my heart for you I would save just remember that" Then Kevin appeared. My jaw dropped. I watched my boys sing their hearts out. Lots of things were surprising about their performance. I expected Kevin to be the pianist and Thando to be the singer but instead it was the opposite. The song was older then both of them but still they sang it like they have been in love before. When they finished Thando got up and went to stand near his brother and did the cutest bow before they both walked off stage. "Did you know that we have two musicians at home?" asked Joshua. "I had no idea" I looked at Julia and she looked away. I knew she knew about this. "Julia" said Joshua looking at her. "Okay, I knew. I caught Kevin singing. He is good" she confessed. "How come I never caught him?" I was always at home. "Be glad you didn't because this was a nice surprise" added Joshua. We all went quiet when the next act went on stage.

"How about we go out for pizza?" asked Joshua as we left the school. "Can you guys drop me at home? Little madam did something in her diaper" said Julia. "Didn't you bring an extra one?" I asked. "Even if she did, where will she change her? Not in my car" complained Joshua. "The toilet. Duh" I looked at him. "I did" said Julia. "We will find a restroom and change her" I suggested. "Its fine you will change her in the car at the mall. That toilet will be cold and I don't think it's wise to expose her in a cold place like



that” said Joshua. “Are we going out for pizza to celebrate our trophy?” asked Kevin. “Yes we are” answered Joshua. “Maybe we should go to Paris. Remember mum promised to take me to Paris if I stop wetting the bed. I did stop” said Kevin. “Wow” said Joshua looking at me. “Don’t start. I had to try something” I defended myself. “You could have tried something like Cape Town or Port Elizabeth not France because Yam can’t travel” said Joshua. “We can stay behind” said Julia. “She is six months. I’m sure she can travel” I suggested because a trip to Paris was a great idea. “Will find out at home” said Joshua. “Are we not going for Pizza anymore?” asked Thando. “Well if we go for Pizza then we will have to postpone the holiday and go next year” said Joshua. Kevin looked at Thando with pleading eyes. “Okay. We can cancel the pizza” said Thando.

We went home straight after that. The boys took their trophy to their room and Julia went to change her baby. Joshua and I stayed in the lounge while I called and ordered the pizza. “So you are okay with a trip to Paris?” asked Joshua “Yes, but I have to ask Bongeka as well. I know you and the boys will dump me as soon as we get there and Julia will be busy with her daughter so I will be on my own” I rested my feet on his lap. “How about Lindiwe? Njabulo said she is filling for divorce.” said Joshua. “What about their son?” “Njabulo wants custody and he will get it because Lindiwe doesn’t seem like she wants the boy” said Joshua. “I don’t understand, they were doing so well before” It made me sad because I kept hoping she will change her mind. “Me too” said Joshua. The door bell rang and I went to check. To my surprise it was Njabulo and Lindiwe. They both had this sad look in their faces like they have been crying for hours. “What’s wrong?” I asked and Lindiwe didn’t answer instead she buried her face in Njabulo’s chest and sobbed. “And now?” asked Joshua getting up from the couch. “Can you guys give us a minute? We are waiting for Ntokozo and Lisa with our son” said Njabulo leading Lindiwe to the couch.

After few minutes Bongeka and her family joined us. Kuhle went to the boys upstairs. We all sat there in silence waiting for Ntokozo and Lisa. At last they came and the boy went to the other kids. The pizza I had ordered came, I gave it to the kids and Julia. “Is that what I think it is?” said Bongeka grabbing Lisa’s hand. “Yes” said Lisa blushing. “Wow congratulations.” We admired the ring on her finger. It was beautiful. “Thank you” she sat down next to her fiancé. “Guys the reason why we called you here is because we have some news” said Njabulo taking Lindiwe’s hand. “What happened?” asked Ntokozo. “We found out that my wife has cancer” said Njabulo. “She can still get help, right?” asked Bongeka. “I can’t” said Lindiwe looking at me. “What do you mean you can’t? We can get the best doctors money can buy” I looked at Joshua. “I’m sorry Thandeka but it’s too late. I’m dying” she whispered as tears streamed down her face.

“No, we will try everything. You can’t die” I stood up but Joshua held my hand and I sat down again. “I’m sorry guys. I know I should have told you sooner but I was scared. I wanted to divorce my husband so that they can find someone else to mother them. I didn’t want them to watch me lose this battle. My son is so young to understand and I couldn’t look at him knowing that I won’t get to meet his first crush, his first girlfriend and see my first grandchild” said Lindiwe between the sobs. We were all in tears now. I buried my head in Joshua’s neck. He kept brushing my back saying he was sorry. A long silence followed after that. “Mum can we take Kuhle to Paris too?” asked Thando standing on top of the stairs. “We will all go” said Joshua to get rid of him. “Thanks dad” I heard his run to his room. “You are going to Paris?” asked Lindiwe. “Well Thandeka promised Mr. I Never Forget the trip” said Joshua. “Maybe that’s a great

Idea. One last trip with you guys. My doctor estimated 6 months so we can go this festive and enjoy ourselves” suggested Lindiwe. “Are you sure?” asked Njabulo. “Yes, It will be fun and you guys will get a chance to make memories. What do you say?” she looked at me. “I say yes” said Bongeka looking at her husband who nodded. “Lisa?” said Ntokozo. “I’ve never been out of the country” she smiled. “ Then this is your chance. It will give us a chance to start over. I know I did a horrible thing to you, I was angry that you were getting a second chance to experience happiness and I wasn’t. I’m really sorry” she got up and went to hug Lisa. “I forgive you” said Lisa hugging her back. We all got up and hugged each other.

After all the revelations we ordered more pizza and ate. I wasn’t hungry and finding out that my sister wasn’t exactly easy. When everybody left I went to tug the boys in and then went to check on Julia. She was on the phone and she ended the call when I walked in. “I just talked to Tyler and he is coming to see Yam tomorrow” She told me. “I thought you hated him?” I looked at her. “I heard about aunt Lindiwe mum and I realized that life is too short to stay angry” she smiled. “I’m glad you did. He made a mistake and he is sorry” “And we all deserve a second chance” she finished for me. “I raised you so well. Get some sleep tomorrow we shall get ready for the trip” I kissed her cheek. “Goodnight mum” she looked at her sleeping daughter. I left them and went to Joshua. He was sitting on the bed staring at his laptop. As soon as he noticed me he got up and came to hug me. I couldn’t help myself, I just cried. “I’m sorry MaMyeza” he whispered. “It’s not fair” I cried harder. “I know my love. Maybe this is a lesson for us. That we should stop fighting and live our lives as if tomorrow isn’t coming, just in case it doesn’t” said Joshua. “I love you Cebekhulu.” “I love you MaMyeza wami.”

THE END.

## **SURPRISE MOTHER’S DAY CHAPTER**

A hand brushing my swollen tummy woke me up from my not so deep sleep. I placed my hand over his and helped him find a right spot where they could play. As if he or she was waiting for the wake up brush the kicks began. “I’m starving” I grumbled. “Me too but not for food” said Ntokozo licking his lips. “You are not allowed to poke anymore” I tried to get up but it was a bit impossible, being 9 months pregnant was no joke. “Need any help?” he asked already helping. “Thank you. I can’t wait for delivery” I went to pee. “You do know that it’s not exactly roses. I hear delivery room is no joke” said Ntokozo helping me off the toilet seat. That’s how huge I really was. “I’m ready for anything. Gosh I’m so tired” I washed my hands in the sink. “The doctor told you what could help make delivery easy” said Ntokozo holding the door frame. “You being horny” I walked past him. “You can’t blame me. You look so hot right now and I’ve been hungry for weeks already. After you deliver we have to wait 6 months right?” he looked at me with pleading eyes. “Okay fine. Let me get some breakfast and then we can get naughty” I walked to the kitchen and made myself a sandwich.

“Today is mother’s day. Maybe we should celebrate mother’s day already since you could pop at anytime” said Ntokozo sitting next to me on the couch as I finished my sandwich. “Thanks a lot for killing the mood” I hit him playfully. “What did I do?” he was seriously confused. “I could pop? Really Ntokozo” I tried to get up but it was difficult shame. “Oops I’m sorry. It came out wrong” he helped me up and we



my eyes and focused on my breathing. "Can I see you?" he asked. "I don't think that's a good idea" I looked at the door as Roy stood there frowning at me. "Why not?" asked Joshua. "You don't expect me to answer that question do you?" I looked at Roy as he encouraged me to breath and calm down. "I do. Please let me see you. I have to see you" he begged. "I'm sorry but I can't" I hung up and threw the phone on the bed.

"Are you okay?" asked Roy standing in front of me. "I didn't expect him to call me. Why did he do it?" I sat down on the edge of the bed and buried my head on my hands. "Then I suggest you go and see him" suggested Roy. I looked at him thinking he must be crazy because I wasn't going there. "Tee you came the long way to be here right now. It's time to show Joshua that you took your life back and you doing great. Go see him" he kneeled in front of me. "What if he tries something? Should I remind you that I almost died in his hands" I looked at Roy. "But you didn't and that's what meters. I'll be there with you and if he tries something I will ready to deal with him" said Roy. "I miss the kids. Julia sent me photos last night and the boys are having a mother's day concert this evening at school" I told him. "Then we should go see the concert and surprise them" suggested Roy. "Joshua will be there for sure" I shrugged. "They are your kids too. You have every right to be there for them" he helped me up. "Thank you for being there for me" I hugged him. "I didn't do anything. You did it all on your own and I'm proud of you" he kissed my forehead. "Let me go shower then" I went to the bathroom.

I spotted Joshua first. He looked the same as he was 3 years ago when I left him. He saw me approach and stood up. I looked where Roy was sitting just to be safe. "I'm sure I'm still allowed to pull out a chair for you" he said and smiled. "Its fine, thank you" I sat down and he sat down opposite me. "You look beautiful" he tried to touch my hand but I removed my hand before he could touch me. "Thank you" I looked at him. "How is New York?" he asked. "Great. How are the kids?" I looked at his hand and he was still wearing his wedding ring. "They are fine. They miss you, I miss you in fact everybody misses you" he said. "I miss them too" I looked down. "It's me you don't miss?" he asked. "Joshua please" I got up but he grabbed me before I could even get out of the chair. "Sit down MaMyeza" he instructed and removed his hand on me. "Don't touch me" I sat down. "So you are still afraid of me" he said and I wasn't sure if it was a question or statement. "What do you want?" I asked. "So that's your new man?" he pointed at Roy. "He is a friend" I answered. "That's the story he sold you? That man wants you more than everything" he laughed. "At least I'm not that damaged. If I still charm real man like Roy then it means I can still catch a real husband" I looked at him straight in his eyes. "I see. So what would you like to eat?" he asked when the waiter come to take our orders. "Steak please. I haven't had those in 2 years" I looked at the waiter. "You heard the lady. 2 steaks and 2 glasses of wine. Thanks" said Joshua.

"So you hate me?" he asked as we ate. "No. I don't hate you" I sipped my wine. "You love me?" he asked. "Don't complicate things even further. You know why I left" I looked at him. "I don't know why you left. You said I abuse you but I never did" he put down the glass he was holding. "So you don't think you were wrong when you beat me up? When you forced yourself on me? When you threatened my friends and broke my elbow?" I asked. "I was putting you in the line. What do you call what you were doing? Crying for that man in the hours of the night. The same man you ran off with. You ran with that bustard and claimed that I was abusing you. I was helping you to become a straight woman not a common slut you wanted to be" he shouted and people on the tables next to us looked at us. "Maybe

this was a bad idea” I stood up and tried to walk away but he managed to grab me again. “If you pull a stunt like that again I will not just shoot and kill your new boyfriend but I will make you watch while I do it” hissed Joshua sinking his nails in my flesh. “You hurting me” I tried to remove his hand. “Then I suggest you sit down and stop acting like a bitch” he released my hand and I sat down.

“The boys have a concert at school in the next two hours. You want to go?” asked Joshua sitting down. “I heard and yes I am going not with you though” I answered. “With Roy. How could I forget that you have Roy now. Does he fuck you like I did? Make you come multiple times in one round?” asked Joshua. “I wouldn’t know. We haven’t fucked yet and in fact I wasn’t even thinking about it but since you just filled my mind with the idea I’m dying to try it and see. Shall I send you a postcard when I do?” I looked at him. “So you grew some balls too. I like this but we both know that you can’t survive on your own out there and Roy still wants you because he hasn’t had a chance yet. Once he does he will leave and find the next victim” said Joshua. “It doesn’t matter. I’m just glad that I’m not your play thing anymore. And Joshua you may kid yourself and think I’m scared of you but I’m not. You nothing but a coward and leaving your abusive ass is the greatest thing I have ever done. Now if you want to kill Roy for being a man go. You can go ahead but that won’t make you the man that he is. You will still be the same abusive pig that you are. Thanks for the meal. But I have to go, I have a concert to attend” I got up and walked away. I kept praying he wasn’t following me and he didn’t. When I reached Roy he stood up and I didn’t hesitate, I smashed my lips on his. We kissed for a moment before we both pulled away. “Wow. Shall we go to the school?” he looked at me and I looked where Joshua was sitting. He was still sitting there staring at us. “Yes please” We both walked away.

The concert was great. Thando and Kevin danced this time and Kuhle sang. They looked older than the pictures I had. When they finished they came to us. “Julia said you will come” said Kevin standing few feet away from me. “And I never break a promise. I told you that nothing will change” I hugged them one by one. “Did you miss us?” asked Thando looking at Roy. “Everyday, even right now I miss you guys” I blinked the tears away. “Can we go for pizza?” asked Kevin. “All of us” I looked at Bongeka and she nodded. “Can I come too?” Joshua’s voice cut in. “Can he come mum?” asked Thando looking at me with pleading eyes. “Yes. All of us” I looked at Roy and he nodded. “But the concert isn’t over” said Bongeka. “We are done mum and when we are done it means its over” said Kuhle putting his mature voice. “Wow then let’s go” we all left the school hall. Roy was walking behind us while Joshua walked next to us.

We went to the pizza hut and ordered the biggest pizza they had. The boys ate while we chatted. Joshua was texting in his phone, he occasionally raised his head to look at me and look down again. Roy was talking to the boys and by the look of things, him and Thando were having a good laugh. “So Njabulo and Lindiwe are still in Canada?” I asked. “Yeah, her cancer treatment is keeping them there. I’m glad he took the chance” said Bongeka. “Me too hey. They got their happily ever after” I looked at Roy and Thando again. “Some of us were robbed that chance” mumbled Joshua. “Some threw that chance away” I said it out loud and Joshua looked at me. Bongeka’s phone rang and she answered. She spoke for a while and then informed us that Lisa and Ntokozo just had a little girl. “Shall we go see them?” I asked not able to contain my excitement. “You ladies go ahead. I’ll take the boys home” said Joshua. “But I want to see Julia and Yam so I’ll be there later and hopefully I can kiss someone goodnight” I looked at my boys.

When we got to the hospital Lisa and her baby were resting. Ntokozo looked exhausted but I could tell he was happy. He got a chance to go home when we got there and he took Roy with him. "Gosh you look so sexy, the American soil loves you" said Lisa. "I thought the same thing when I saw her. She looks glowing" said Bongeka. "You guys are making me blush. I'm happy and carefree for the first time in my life" I thought about my beautiful apartment in New York. "Roy is doing you good I can tell and please don't tell us that you are just friends. The chemistry between you is clear" said Lisa. "We are friends and I'm enjoying this friendship. When I left this country guys I didn't think I could survive. I spent days not being able to sleep because I was afraid that Joshua will hurt me but Roy was there. He stayed with me during those hours of tears and random outburst of fear. Today I'm enjoying life like I have never been abused" I laughed trying not to cry. "And I'm glad you did" said Bongeka giving me a hug. I hugged Lisa as well. We talked about lots of things. Hours later Ntokozo came back and we were shocked when he told us that it's been 5 hours.

When we left the hospital it was already dark. I drove us to Joshua's home and he let us in. Yamkela was sitting on the floor and Julia was busy in her laptop. She put it away when she saw me and got up to give me a hug. We held on to each other until she pulled away and I noticed she was crying. "I didn't think you would come" she wiped her tears away. "It's mother's day dear and you maybe a mother but I'm still your mother" I smiled with tears in my eyes as well. "The best mum any girl could ever ask for" she hugged me again. "It helps if she has great kids" I whispered. "Where are you staying? Yam and I will come visit you. I can bring my annoying brothers too" she said. "I will come get you guys tomorrow" I looked up and noticed Kevin sitting on the stairs. "We did something for you. If you guys are not in a hurry we have a surprise for you" said Julia. "We can stay for few minutes" I looked at Roy and he nodded. Kevin ran to his room and came back with Thando who was carrying a DVD. We sat down and waited for him to put it on.

When it began playing it was Kevin and Thando singing Here I Stand like they did in that talent show. They sang the whole song and then Julia came on and said "HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY MUM. YOU ARE THE ONLY MOTHER THAT WE KNOW AND WE WILL NEVER STOP LOVING YOU" Joshua appeared behind her and said "MAMYEZA. THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR RAISING MY KIDS. YOU BUILT THIS HOME AND MADE IT A HAPPY HOME EVEN WHEN YOU WEREN'T HAPPY" he pauses and looked up. Zinhle came to the camera and said "HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY" "HAPPY MOTHER'S DAY MUM" SAID THANDO AND KEVIN. I got up and hugged them. Roy got up and hugged me as well. "I'm proud of you" he whispered in my ear before pulling away. "MaMyeza" said Joshua behind me. I turned to him and he hugged me too before turning to Roy and said. "Take care of her Roy otherwise you will answer to me" "I intend to" said Roy holding my hand.

THE END