

## \*ETERNAL SUNSHINE\*

1.

"Fire and ice is just like up and down

Minimize for pain

Maximum just for the same

Pawns we are sometimes

Lost in blue sometimes

Balance for the truth

Be kind, in the biggest pond called home"

I've always dreamt of being a poet one day. I wanted to stand in front of big crowds and small crowds with an acoustic guitar or violins softly playing in the background. The magical sound comes out of my mouth like waves in a shore. The sound of my voice carries the room in sound waves,

bouncing around wildly and feathery while I am covered in a smooth fabric that shows my skin, too much skin, that makes women turn their heads with disgusted looks on their faces because they feel threatened and men looking at me with lust wishing they could shove their dicklets inside my vagina, moving their hips until they scream in a language they don't understand then gaze down at me with their eyes glowing under the light on top of their heads.

I mean who doesn't have dreams?

We all had dreams from the time we used to build sand castles and playing in the mud, turning our school jerseys into a beautiful baby that looked like a mixture of you and that boy you always dreamt about, a soft dream that turned wet as you grew older and became a fantasy, sexual fantasy.

We always dreamt and we were told that you need to chase your dreams for them to come true, and

we tried chasing them but we started by crawling and stumbling, and by the time we had to run already life has thrown buckets and buckets of lemons our way then we cut those into many pieces and threw them in a glass before pouring vodka.

Dreams, huh? I hate those now. They turned my father into a bitter a man who pushed everyone away and became friends with an amber liquid. He moved away from home because he blames us for how his life turned out and he couldn't tap into reality.

At some point he believed that he was going to be the next Bob Marley, share knowledge and heal the world with his music. Well that's the reason why we all ended up with dreadlocks in this family because we were the next Marley family.

And when he failed us. Yes! I am calling him a failure --my mother had to clean up his mess and be

the one who man up to make sure that my brother and I survive. She did everything to make sure that she raises us right, all of that sweat and tears didn't go down the drain. All those sleepless nights hugging herself and wondering what we were going to eat the following day really didn't go down the drain and we turned out just fine --using a plural there huh? But I did turn out fine just few mistakes here and there maybe not few but I made my mother proud, once, twice, thrice.

Well she was or let me say she is working for this wonderful white family who sent us to a fancy boarding school and made sure we get the best education as their children. I have never met them. Never been interested honestly. I hope I don't sound like an ungrateful bitch. Anyways my brother grabbed the opportunity with both hands. And I grabbed it with just one hand. Regardless of my brother asking her to quite her job since he can take care of us, my mother disagreed.

Fancy school, fancy life and fancy language that we speak so smoothly like it belonged to us. We get applauded for being able to twang and just speak without neither stuttering or biting our tongues.

We have been boxed or let me say labelled in our community because we didn't turn out like any other kids in our neighbourhood. Some call us snobs, coconut, you name it. Not that I care because I have been through worse than that since I am not your typical girl from the township.

All kind of names have been thrown my way. Old women from my neighborhood calls me "uskhotheni we ntombazane". Men from my neighbourhood calls me, "a beautiful bitch". Taxi drivers don't think I'm a "wife material" because of my tattoos-- people have these crazy stereotypes towards people with inked skin and also the way I dress as an impact on this name calling. I am highly inspired by street wear and the 90s aesthetic.

I find those patriarchy creatures, taxi drivers I mean, very funny with their small penises and two minutes sex. I don't really know much about their sex life but I have heard a lot of about them.

Isn't it funny how I'm speaking about sex drives from my chest and sex lives like I have one? Or like my hymen has been broken and I bled on a white sheet after someone whispered sweet nothings close to my ear.

I portray myself completely different from what I am.

How did she get those tattoos then? You must be wondering--well, I dated a tattoo artist who was an amazing creative. And after the benefits of dating him then I dumped him like a used teabag.

Oh please don't give me that look, men do that to

women everyday.

You may think you have me figured out or you know me but you don't. And anyone who knows me should learn to know me again, for I am like a moon you will see me with a new face everyday.

At last I feel powerful drowsiness drifting through my veins from all the pine-bark wine I had been drinking. The music is blasting, vibrating the floor and piercing my eardrums. The sound is a bit whooshing, rushing air inside of a pipe that the cap opens and closes on.

I dart my eyes between my friends with a blurry vision watching the movement of their lips.

"Kwanda, please do this for us once. The night is still young and we no longer have alcohol and if you pretend to like that man over there then he is going to buy us more alcohol" I hear Khethelo pleads.

Did she just say the night is still young when I am already tipsy and four five seconds from being sloshed? The night is not young but looking like an old man with wrinkled neck and hands, grey strands who always dreamt of being a pornstar one day but his sex drive failed him.

Here we go again!

"Why you don't pretend to like him?" I ask, my tongue suddenly feeling heavy and tingly. All I want to do right now is tiptoeing my way to the bed, not alcohol.

She looks towards those men with pot bellies sitting in a circle laughing loudly. The smell of burning meat and cigarette is very refreshing. "Because he likes you, come on you know you're the beautiful one amongst us" Onalenna says. Lies. First of all

she looks like she drinks those protein shakes and advertising that brand about weight loss, skin care and all that crap. They promise you that one day you're going to have strong abs and firm buttocks just like them then you keep ordering their shakes and nothing ever happened.

My friend right here looks like she spends her nights at the gym but she actually eats six slices of bread and three eggs with a jug of juice. Lucky bastard and she wants to talk about who is beautiful and not beautiful?

They use me as the cover page of the magazine and when you start reading that magazine then you find them somewhere along the pages. We go to these fancy restaurants and clubs all the time and I have to be the crème de la crème of the group to make sure we have enough alcohol for the night and also they have enough pictures to post on social media about their so called fancy life not that I mind, it

boost my ego knowing I have men at the palm of my hand, this is what you call power of woman's mind and body.

I take a deep breath looking at her beautiful golden eyes as she bats her long fake lashes that grabs all the attention to her, that make-up and highlighter alone screams look at me not in a bad way. "Fine! But I am not kissing or sleeping with him" they both throw their arms around me and dragging my hand so we can go back to join these men when suddenly there is a sound of sirens and blue and red lights flashing.

"Amaphoyisa!" someone screams.

"Ahamba noMaphorisa!" My drunk self screams with laughter in my voice but my high pitch laugh slowly fades the moment I realize that people are running from left to right and suddenly I am being dragged and told that I should run. I am thankful

that I am not wearing heels tonight otherwise it would have been another story. I hear dogs barking and gun shots. My breathing becomes harder and faster, but I still continue running until we actually have to jump a fence with a bob wire.

"What the fuck? I am not jumping!" I say yelling out, heat is slowly enveloping my chest and my tears threatens to squeeze themselves. It feels surreal. The gun shots and police. Never in my life I have been chased by an employed dog until today.

My damn dress will get ripped and I recently bought it from kwamadunusa, you guys make that place sound fancy by calling it a thrift shop. We see you with your "I bought it online" we know very well where is online.

"Baby girls its either you jump or we leave you behind!" Some boy with a silver tooth says. Onalenna is already being helped with the jumping

and Khethelo is praying under her breath. Really? There is no time for that here. We hear sirens once again and instantly I try jumping but my dreadlocks gets hooked around the wire and my dress too.

I scream in tongues.

I cry out in pain trying to pull them off and silver tooth actually helps me before we continue with our running. I run, stretching and pumping my legs muscles to their limits and by the time we pause running because Khethelo is bleeding from her knee my lungs are not producing enough air and it feels as if boulders has arisen in my chest.

My legs slow of their own accords and my breath comes in gasp. "Khethelo are you okay?" I ask her feeling an urge to spew all of that alcohol I have been drinking and suddenly my head is throbbing. "What the fuck is this all about?" I try catching my breath.

"My sister if the cops caught us we would have went to jail because at that party they were stolen cars and drugs" silver tooth tells me taking out a tissue from his pocket to clean up his carvella and when its shinning enough then he throws away the tissue fixing his collar.

Instead of giving my friend a tissue for her bleeding knee he used it for his carvella, yoh!

What did I expect though coming to a party eMlazi out of all places I could have went to.

"Onalenna you knew about this?" I flare my nostrils and holding an intense gaze. She hangs her head low and I cluck my tongue taking out my phone from my pocket to call my brother. I will regret this decision I am making since he will preach about my life choices like I am sleeping with a pastor until

kingdom comes.

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I wake up following morning with my head pounding and fuzzy, almost as if I am under attack by the thousand of toy soldiers and my brain is shattered into million pieces. Light trickles in through the slats of a nearby window. I roll over to hide my face from the light --And promptly roll off the bed into the floor. I hold my throbbing head and whimpering in pain and peering blearily around me. "You're awake!" The voice resonate and I hold my head whimpering and complaining under my breath.

My head is in pain, every corners of my brain feels like they are being stabbed by a sword not mentioning my scalp. It probably because my dreadlocks were hooked around that wire. Who knew one day I'll be jumping fences?

"Not so loud!" My voice comes out hoarsely as I struggle to get up from the wooden floor but I soldier on and stumble backwards. Great here we are standing on my two feet.

My brother gives me a disapproval look, "take a shower and join me for breakfast" There's traces of anger and irritation on his face. I wonder at who because it cannot be me.

I find him seated in the kitchen with a bowl of beautiful fruits that looks straight from the farm. He watches my movement as I make my way around the kitchen probably planning on how he is going to start reprimanding me and making me feel like I am somehow related to Lucifer or something close to demonic.

I hear him taking a sharp breath and I turn around

drinking milk from the bottle and he shakes his head, "Kwanda you cannot be living like this" his tone comes out smoother and politely than I expected.

"Living like what?" I furrow my eyebrows.

"You are drinking alcohol everyday of your life, two days ago I found you sleeping in my garden and hugging a bottle of wine not forgetting to mention that few weeks back you asked me to come and pick you up to a location you didn't even know"

I shrug my shoulders, "I was drunk and obviously when one is drunk they make reckless decisions"

"So since you were drunk it automatically makes it okay to put your life in danger like that? How many reckless decisions are you going to make for you to wake up and smell the coffee?"

"I was having fun, its not that deep" I respond scowling.

Wake up and smell the coffee, could never be me that thing makes me nauseous.

"Kwanda can you focus. You have lost yourself because of this anger you have towards our father. You are drinking your life away and completely forgetting yourself. Do you even know who you are? Your dreams? What you aspire? What are you striving for in life? Or you just don't care because you have me and mom and we going to spoon feed you for the rest of your life?" His voice becomes venom the more he utters every single word, the strands of his dreadlocks falling and his face has suddenly turned red. Don't date men who have heavenly honey skin complexion, they are easily bruised physically and their fragile egos too.

Look at this one looking all pink, shame.

"You want to talk about dreams, huh? Where did those dreams got your father Kayise? Nowhere don't dare stand there and tell me about those stupid dreams because your father abandoned us and turned into a pathetic alcoholic loser who drinks his livers away" I spit pointing him with the manicure he paid for, days ago "dreams? That's some bullshit that doesn't even exist" I chuckle sardonically.

He darts his glistening eyes between mines, "how are you different from him?" that comes out as a whisper at first as he clasps his hands on the counter, "how are you different from him Kwanda because you are doing the exact same thing, abandoning yourself and drinking your livers away, how are you different from him?" I see the veins in his arms aggressively popping.

My tears trail down my cheek before landing down my chin like soft rain in spring as they evaporate then form a long flat cloud in the shape of surfboard voyaging westward board. "You're comparing me to him?" I choke, and suddenly my own saliva tastes like a bile, "Fuck you Kayise and go to hell with your father!" I click my tongue.

"He's your father too!" His voice chases me as I walk out of the room and my feet propelling me to the guest room where I normally sleep when I am at his house.

"Tsek!" I shout over my shoulders, furiously wiping my tears and pushing my dreadlocks backwards.

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2.

"I can't be a singular expression of myself  
There's too many parts, too many spaces  
Too many manifestations, too many lines  
Too many curves, too many troubles  
Too many journeys, too many mountains  
Too many rivers, so many"

I push my dreadlocks backwards and tugging some strands behind my ear staring at my reflection in the mirror.

Am I really like my father? I mean my nose is shaped like his and my mouth--he was a beautiful and a charming man. We used to sit outside our house on sunny days. He'd wear his blue faded jeans and tank top seated on a small wooden chair and playing his guitar while singing with his husky

voice. He was not a great singer but there was something captivating about his voice. I am using past tense because his existence doesn't really matter to me anymore. Then my mother would bake scones and when the sunset we'd return inside the house and have them with tea without milk.

I take a long and sharp breath buttoning my linen shirt I wear every morning when I wake up and padding to the living room where I am invited by the sound of alternative rock and Onalenna who is sashaying her body around the kitchen and making a sandwich. I am not talking to them after putting our lives in danger. I was chased by dogs. I had to jump a fence and my brand new dress was ripped.

That is truly unacceptable.

When my brother bought himself a house, he also got me an apartment right after building my mother a house and Khethelo alongside Onalenna are my

roommates and that's how we become friends.

It's an open plan space and we have a grey living room with an enormous red modern sofa that expands the light. The red sofa modules snake back on themselves to make a double sided seating arrangement. A grey area rug peeps out from beneath half of the sofa, drawing attention to its wraparound nature. Panel molding adds an element of sophistication across the neighbouring walls. Then the wood chevron flooring stops abruptly as the open plan transitions into a kitchen diner space. Our elegant white kitchen features a dainty cooking island, which is equipped with a couple of bar stools at one side. Gas burners are intergrated right into the white marble countertop. A white oven is tucked beneath.

Then we have a flock of dining room pendant lights swoop above a round dining table and drink coaster protects the white marble tabletop and well

Khethelo is behind the whole set up and designing of our space.

I plank myself in front of the television screen when Khethelo comes and stand in front of me blocking the view. I look up at her with a marble face and first glimpse at her my heart feels at ease she's in a floral dress showing her Kalahari sand complexion and her knee length dreadlocks loose around her shoulders--we both have dreadlocks but hers are longer and too thick compared to mines.

"I made you a cup of tea and whiskey" she says batting her lashes and her scent wafting through my sense, she smells fruity.

"I do not want your tea and whiskey"

She gasps for air dramatically and tugging her head in, "are you saying no to tea and whiskey?" she

blinks rapidly with her mouth slightly open.

"Yes!" I respond boldly when she sees the seriousness on my face she sits on the couch next to me and holding the cup closely to her stomach and in that moment Onalenna walks into the room in her tights that holds her perfectly showing her firm and round buttocks and camel toe.

Khethelo clears her throat, "About the other day we wanted to apologise to you" she says in a lower tone. The music that was playing has been switched off and both of them are eye balling me and making me feel uncomfortable. "We could have went to jail or even worse died that night are you guys aware of that?" I look at them and they nod their heads, like toddlers who are being reprimanded.

"It won't happen again" Onalenna says eating her four slices of bread "and the nights out also needs

to stop. We are grown now guys we need to be more responsible" she starts sounding like my brother.

Responsible? That sounds like being an adult and I am not signing up for that, sorry.

I grab the cup from Khethelo taking sips from it and they both erupt with laughter and shaking their heads. "I just said what happened shouldn't happen again. Going back to that place again is out. Where does responsibility comes in?" I ask them.

For being chased by dogs once and dodging bullets suddenly they want to be responsible. What happened to living young, wild and free? That's our motto whenever we take shots and gulping it at once allowing the liquid to burn our throats before we scream with our hands in the air and chewing the inside our cheeks.

"Are you saying you want to party for the rest of your life Kwanda?" Khethelo creases her eyebrow at me and crossing her long legs in a ladylike manner.

I shrug my shoulders holding the cup close to my lips, "That doesn't sound like a bad idea" I respond taking a long sip this time.

"Why are you so afraid of growing up?" Onalenna asks me. I almost choke from the burning liquid with a bittersweet taste. That was an unexpected question. Instead of responding to her I get up from the couch.

"Are you guys going to work?" I ask the moment I stand on my feet and they exchange looks regardless of them having wonderful and great paying jobs they still prefer men buying them drinks. Well I don't have a job.

"Kwanda don't you have dreams?" Khethelo asks me from the living room.

I turn around to face towards her, "dreams are like magic, both do not exist"

"But we are magic" she responds.

We are magic, ha ha ha Maya Angelou!

"And dreams do exist. I have my dream job and I dreamt to have friends like you and Khethelo, stop abandoning yourself because of this hurt and anger you have towards your father" Onalenna says.

I chuckle sardonically, "Anger and hurt?" I shake my head finishing the last sip in my cup before washing it then leaning against the kitchen counter. "This

has nothing to do with my relationship with my father but I am being realistic" I think I am tipsy and that's good.

Onalenna gets up from the couch and dancing while making her way to the kitchen to change the sudden tense atmosphere. "Tomorrow my boss is movie screening her gallery showing do you want to be my date?" she asks me hugging me from behind and nuzzling on my neck.

"Take Khethelo with you"

"I have a date" she announces.

"You have a what?" Both Onalenna and I say in unison and surprised.

"Why are you guys acting surprised like I've never

went on dates before? We should be asking Kwanda when is she going on a date"

"I've been on a date before" I respond defensive. "I am dating remember?"

"Oh please don't tell us about your pastor" Onalenna says with an uninterested facial expression. They call my boyfriend a pastor because he's a church boy. A charming walking bible and a total opposite of me --opposite attracts. He doesn't touch me, nor lust over me because sex before marriage is a sin, my darling.

"Have you ever had sex on a first date?" Khethelo asks.

"Yes" I respond boldly and twirling my dreadlocks on my fingers suddenly trying to find something to make myself busy with around the kitchen.

"Where?" Onalenna giggles.

"In a bathroom" I say confidently and they're both attentively looking at me as if they are examining my lie.

"Wait..." Khethelo pauses "...are you a virgin?" she frowns and pressing her lips together.

I erupt with laughter. "Me? A virgin, no"

"Kwanda you're virgin!" They both clap their hands together and chuckling as if they discovered a gold from a mine.

"You're the only virgin I know" Khethelo.

What on earth is that supposed to mean?

"You're portraying yourself as something you are totally different from, that's strange but interesting at the same time"

"I am protecting myself"

"From what?" Khethelo

"People tend to take advantage of innocence because it's easily manipulated but when you act tough they cannot easily take advantage of that because they feel you are enlightened and know more" I tell them down turning my mouth.

"That is so true, I never looked at it like that"

Onalenna winces, "I cannot believe you're virgin" she looks at me with a mischievous smile. "Are you coming with me tonight? We can find you a man and a virgin breaker"

I feel like breath has been knock out of my lungs and my heart tightens around my chest. "I did not agree to coming with you and I have a man"

"You don't have to just prepare yourself for tonight and look beautiful as always. Don't tell me about someone who has failed to give you a taste of the land of orgasm" Onalenna winks at me and leaving the room.

We are disturbed by a tentative knock and I drag myself towards the door to find my brother standing on my doorstep with a bouquet of flowers showing his teeth. "I'm sorry for saying you are just like my father. You are nothing like him" he says sounding sincere, I trail a blazing gaze at him from head to

toe before stepping aside and allowing him inside.

"That's right and I will never be like him"

He makes himself comfortable on the couch then he clears his throat, "I went to visit mom" he tells me rubbing his hands against his pants.

"How is she?" I ask him.

"She's good and finally opening her yoga classes"

"Oh so she's leaving her job finally"

"Nope, she loves her job too much"

"I wonder when she'll ever leave. What are you doing here?"

He frowns, "I came to see my sister is something wrong"

"Everything is wrong. Get a girlfriend"

He laughs shaking his head, "Mom wants us home tonight"

"For what?"

"Dinner"

"I'm going out"

He takes a deep breath, "I found him there" he says randomly.

"You found who there?"

"Ubaba"

"Kabani?"

"Wethu"

"Wakho?"

"I found our father there"

"I don't have a father"

"Kwanda..."

"No Kayise!"

"This is not the time for us to fight. I just wanted you to know that I found him there"

"Why you didn't kick him out?"

"Why would I do that?"

"Because you built that house for umama not him"

He takes a deep breath darting his hazel eyes between mines looking almost defeated, "Mom wants us home tonight for dinner, please be there" he stands on his feet and kisses my cheeks then walks out of the door.

Me? Dinner? My father? Never.

[01/24, 07:21] : 3.

"Black girl magic

The prescription of my description

Is not a depiction of yours

For taking"

Growing up I was very curious. I always had questions with why I was different from my brother. It was strange having something looking like a weird animal opened mouth in between my legs while he had what looked like sausage just dangling. I'd peep through the door when he was bathing to see him, the nipples that looked glued on his chest and his muscular arms.

I used to touch myself in all the places I was told not to ever touch. I'd touch, smell, taste and feel, when my breasts starts growing rapidly I got excited. I used to jump up and down to see them moving or sometimes try to bring them into my

mouth to taste my nipples until my mother caught me in action. Early in the morning she took me to my neighbour's house and that old lady beat my then gigantic breasts with a small belt after that day they slowly but surely disappeared and never grew back.

I will never forgive my mother for that. I loved how roundish my breasts looked and how full they were. There are so many things I will never forgive my mother for especially for allowing her husband to waltzes back into our lives whenever he feels like. My phone has been ringing since my brother left and I am sure my mother wants to know if I'll be joining them for dinner or it's my boyfriend who wants me to join bible study.

I wasn't planning on being Onalenna's date tonight but she walked into my room batting her lashes and her body draped in a white towel and she begged me until I agreed into coming with her.

We wasted too much time with our make up and deciding on what to wear and now Onalenna is complaining about the time, flapping her lashes and the corner of her eyes decorated with crystals to match the white wide-legged pants and asymmetric neckline top she is wearing with an open back and matching white shoes, some people are beautiful unprovoked.

We get off the car and she takes my hand squeezing it and showing me her crispy white teeth before she pushes instead of pulling the glass door to the entrance and we both erupt with laughter, our shoes echoing against the white marble floor then we walk through an art gallery with images hanging on the wall and people who are immaculately dressed having conversations with whispery voices holding glasses of champagnes in their hands.

I grab a drink from a passing waiter and take a sip

of the champagne. This is where I belong not being chased by dogs and jumping fences. The sips slides like liquid gold against my tongue richer and better. "The movie will start in four minutes"

Onalenna tells me with a smile, she sounds elated about this, by the way she is an assistant curator.

I nod my head and wandering my eyes across the room. I pause after catching a first glimpse and he is clad in a black suit that does nothing to hide his physic. Well built, a statuesque work of art and the sight of his thighs in well fitted pants forces heat to well up and washes through me.

I rotate my head to look towards Onalenna who is introducing me to a gentleman but my eyes once again drift towards his direction and I look at him with detail. Lust at first sight, assumptions are already made in my head. I have said so much about men who looks like they have been drowned in butter but I might change my views because of

him--he is at the midpoint between dark and light tone.

My heart thumps a deep bass note in my chest when he looks towards my direction as he takes a glass of champagne from the waitress who was passing by and I notice the tattoo at the back of his right hand and the black ring on his middle finger. I involuntarily squeeze the buttons of my purse on my arm as he stares at me bringing his glass closely to his luscious lips slowly and surreptitiously and I gasp for air with my chest heaving then he smiles broadly at me before turning away to face the woman standing face to face with him.

Looks like his cougar.

"Let's go!" Onalenna penetrates my subconscious and leading the way. I take a deep breather and following right behind her as everyone moves in one

direction. We take our seats comfortably.

I see him once again and his incredible looks hit me fierce like a blow. The expensive cut of his dark suit and the ruthlessness in his chiselled jawline screams power since he is facing towards the other direction to look at the same woman he was with then he sits down, I cannot see him clearly but it seems like he has his hand over his chin makes me envy being the projector screen that has his attention and seeing his facial expressions.

Ah, so much interest in a stranger Kwanda?

I am thankful when the movie ends because I couldn't focus since I was distracted. "Did you like the movie?" Onalenna asks me the moment the light blinks and everyone gets up from their chairs.

I look towards her and pulling down the long

sleeves of my dress that doesn't need to be pulled, "yeah, yeah" I say after clearing my throat as we walk out returning to where we were earlier than we are leaded to another room with pictures on the wall but it looks more cosy.

"You look great by the way" she pushes me with her shoulder playfully and grinning. I look down at this long black plunging neckline dress that holds me perfectly showing off my nutmeg skin. It sums up lazy, sexy and comfort and if that jealous old woman didn't hit my breasts I would've looked more glorious or if I had curves and firm buttock but I am still embracing my womanhood.

"Thank you and you look beautiful too"

"What do you think of Yathandwa?"

Who is that again?

I look at her once then ahead taking a fleeting note of the discreetly expensive wood and brocade decor before eyeing zeroed in on the long, low-slung bar. Seriously intimidating rows of drinks are displayed on a revolving carousel and behind the bar there's a bartender twirling a sterling silver set of cocktail shakers while chatting to a woman with a maroon dress and matching coat. "I think she's great" I shrug my shoulders not sure who we are talking about placing my clutch on the counter while she slides into the stool and I remain standing next to her.

"Did you just say she?" she frowns "I am talking about the guy I introduced you to when we got here. I mean he's your type, you love them dark skin huh?" she wiggles her eyebrows at me causing me to shake my head then she turns towards the bartender smiling and flirting as she orders our drinks.

I look around searching for him. There he is, his collar is open and the black flannel pants hangs from his hips. His hair is nicely shaven into waves with bald fade. My mouth goes dry looking at him. His face is smooth with a mustache and beard on his chin.

"Your drink" Onalenna says, "Look, I am coming back just now I have to talk to my boss" she kisses my cheek and takes her drink along with her. I tip the glass and swallow the content, setting it down and order another one. The truth is I don't feel even the taste as the stranger clouds my psyche.

I think he just looked towards me. I quickly turn away and face towards the bartender very much aware of the delicious current running through me, lighting me up and making me blush and I'm sure my erratic breathing must be audible.

I need to get myself together, this unacceptable. All of this achy and discomfort is just confusing especially towards someone I have been looking from the distance.

One more look then I am done, I promise.

The moment I turn to steal a glance towards him, I immediately order myself to breathe and not keel as I see him walking towards my direction confidently, five foot eight feet of perfect masculine virility can only describe the man walking towards me and I swing around my fingers and clench around the delicate glass as my pulse catapulted. His suit faultlessly fits to every muscular angle of his lean and powerful body.

His is a brutal force of nature beneath that sleek, sophisticated façade.

He stands in front of me staring and I get the final detail of my description--his eyes are deep dark black like the suit he is wearing. "Can I help you?" My voice is small and contrite as I hide behind the short glass of whiskey that now has melted ice. My lungs drag in a hasty breath.

"Yes. I would love to dance with you" His mouth lifts slightly in a wry smile. His lips are thick and brownish.

I place my glass on the counter and chuckling sardonically but matter fact nervously and holding his cloudy gaze. "I think you should really work on your pick up lines because they are very stupid. We have no music here and secondly there is no dance floor so no I don't want to dance with you sir" He stares at me surprised and if I am not mistaken a little wounded, perfecto!

"Well I can organise music and I can create the

dance floor for the both of us so I'd love to believe my pick up lines are not so stupid, so you wanna dance?" He is glaring at me. His eyes blazing and I try to bite my lip but I fail to repress my laughter.

I'm not easily impressed, fine, I am impressed.

"What makes you think I would love to dance with you?"

"Why not?"

His eyes soften and his expression warms and I see a trace of smile on his beautifully lips. "Why not what?" I frown.

I try biting my lip once again but he stops me pulling back my lip with his thumb that rests on my chin and then runs it down across my lower lip.

"Don't do that" My heartbeat had pick up and my medulla oblongata has neglected to fire any synapses to make me breathe. My hormones are racing and my skin tingles where his thumb traced over my lower lip and chin. I feel like squirming. I don't understand this reaction, shame on me. Tomorrow I am going to church with my boyfriend. "Dance?" His gaze is dark obsidian.

"Yes" I say breathlessly.

Did I just agree to this?

He digs into his pocket and comes out with his phone with half eaten apple at the back and airpods. Is he serious about this?

As he plugs the airpod into my ear something tugs tight in my belly. If only I can put it down to queasy stomach but to my shame I am responding to his

overt, male sexuality and he grins at me and leads me to the middle of the gallery and all eyes on us. And suddenly "Easy For You by Hablot Brown" starts playing in my ear and I guess to his too since he just smiled down at me. I thought he was going to play something sensual but this is bouncy but smooth. He takes me into his arms and start to move. We grin at each other like two imbeciles who've known each other for years as he whirls me around and my back presses against his chest and his hands on my waist. I can hardly breathe but he turns me around once again.

He grins lazily this time as our faces are just few inches apart and he looks comfortable in his heavenly honey skin as he pulls me tighter into his embrace, his arm curling around my waist and he sways. I put my free hand on his shoulder and grin up at him, caught in his infectious face. We cover the entire floor as people are watching us standing in a huge circle with smiles on their faces.

We whirl and turn in time to the music. And he makes it so effortless for me to dance with him. Who is he? Where is coming from? I cannot help my carefree laugh. I haven't laughed like this in a while or felt goofy. He grins down at me as the song comes to a close and everyone applauds.

"Mongezi" he extends his hand, he has tattoo of bow on his index and arrow on his middle finger.

"Kwanda" I smile.

"Enjoy your night" he smiles a dazzling, unguarded, natural, all teeth showing glorious smile then he walks away.

Is that it? What on earth.

Onalenna walks towards me ecstatic, "Kwanda!" she

grins, "I want all details"

"Can we leave?"

"Yes. I need a bottle of wine and pasta for this" she is really thinking about food.

[01/24, 07:21] : 4.

"If I pucked my lips

To utter, the words down to this body

Would I be wrong?

Unrealistic ophites

Stretching all of me

Yet forcing all of me into a blinding box

And if I don't fit this box

I cannot be free?

That's just not me"

I am restless that night, tossing and turning.  
Dreaming of deep dark black eyes, dance moves,  
long legs, long fingers and dark, dark unexplored  
place. I wake twice in the night, my heart pounding  
and feeling something foreign in between my legs  
needing to be touched, achy and discomforted and  
the third time I woke up my hands were under my  
iridescent lace underwear just resting there maybe  
wanting to explore but they were there.

You thought I was spitting nothing but lies when I  
said I was going to church with my boyfriend didn't  
you?

He sounded elated this morning when I called him  
and asked what time was the service starting.

Well here we are in his car with gospel music  
playing softly and him stealing glances towards me

with an indescribable smile. What made him more ecstatic is that I wore something longer, not showing too much skin nor any of my tattoos beside the one at the back of my hand just like the stranger from last night and I look representable enough, sadly. I enjoyed seeing old women looking at me with disgusted looks on their faces last time I was here and offering me scarfs to cover myself since I was in a short sheer off shoulder dress. Men were enjoying the sight, they sang loudly than they normally do. The sat at the front row closer to me and some offering me their bibles.

My mind keeps drifting as the freshly stored memories from last night flashes like a camera light in my brain. From the moment I saw him at the distance grabbing a glass of champagne and that particular tattoo at the back of his hand written in typewriter fonts, the black ring on his index finger. The way he left me breathlessly and gasping for air with just a trace of flirting smile and bringing his glass closer to his lips. His warm, rich, golden and

buttery brown skin tone. The beard on his chin and mustache.

I smile involuntarily as I recall being in his arms as he spun me around, so unexpected with the music that was only playing in our ears.

"What are you thinking about?" Sambulo asks me as soon as he parks right next to other cars outside his church and I can hear the singing from the inside here.

I am thinking about another man, a total stranger who asked to dance with me and then walked away after he told me his name, Mongezi.

I look at him with the same smile on my face, "nothing just excited to be here"

Reaching out, he grasps my hand, draws it up to his lips and kisses my knuckles gently. I wait for it. The electric current I felt when a stranger smiled at me from the distance, I feel nothing. "We both know that's a lie" Sambulo says softly, he reads minds?

"When are we having sex?" I ask him unexpectedly and his eyes are out of their own volition locked with mine before he chokes on his own saliva. "I am joking" I continue chuckling and his body language starts to relax as he helps me unfasten my seatbelt. I enjoy teasing him.

"I will have to marry you first" He says avoiding eye contact with me.

"Marry me? Are you sure?"

Why would he want to do that to himself?

He smiles at me mildly, "Ngiyakuthanda Nokwanda" that came out softly and sweet but the hairs at the nape of my hair did not tingle or did I feel like chickens and bugs running around my stomach. "Are you ready for this?" He gives my hand another reassuring squeeze.

"I cannot wait to hear you preaching" I smile wickedly as we both get off the car at the same time. He grins broadly giving me a bible with a pink cover and roses that he bought for me as a gift.

You must be wondering how we met and how did we even date? Well I asked him out because he was scared to make the first move.

I looked at him almost urinating his pants as I told him I want to be his girlfriend and then he wrapped me in his arms confessing how he feels and yes! I was drunk.

Sambulo attends the same church with my mother and every Sunday he'd give my mother a lift to my house and stays for a cup of tea. I would listen to them bored as they discussed bible verses and how amazing was the service but there was something captivating and passionate about him that I actually started joining their discussions. Watching his lips movement as he spoke and smiled. The way he'd looked at me, never judgemental but it was pure as a glass of water filled with pearls. His voice so smooth like shores in the ocean and suddenly I am confused about how I feel for him over someone I've known for two minutes.

I sit comfortably on my chair and watching him making his way to the front and turning both male and females head. He looks charming in that grey suit and the sun piercing through the windows shine beautifully on his rich melanated skin.

You love them dark huh? Onalenna asked me. I don't even know anymore.

A female singer who is part of the worship team starts singing loudly the moment Sambulo is called on stage, she starts using words and then starts singing in tongues before she prays loudly and everyone claps their hands and screaming along with her.

Okay, the holy spirit is here, I guess.

I pray under my breath as well with both my eyes close but the dramatic screams from the same female singer interrupts me. I flutter my one eye open to see her crawling towards my boyfriend and touching his gleaming leather shoes. He has his hands on top of her head praying.

Do I crawl too all the way to the front? Or should I

continue praying under my breath.

I decide to sit here and compose myself until Sambulo starts a song and the same woman slowly gets up making her way back to her place and grabbing her microphone. They sound so perfect as they sing together making me turn green with jealous. The old women have sphinxlike smiles on their faces like they are seeing Adam and Eve in sight.

"Amen!" Sambulo says with a sweet smile opening the bible he has placed at the pulpit before he instructs us on what chapter and verse we should read, "someone please read for me" there she goes again flicking her weave and getting up from her chair to read.

Did I come here to look at this?

When she's done reading they smile at each other before she returns back to her seat and Sambulo starts preaching. His eyes lightens and he speaks with passion using his hands and body language. Moving around the stage and jumping up and down. People are screaming and clapping their hands. Men are whistling and Sambulo is sweating as he speaks about the book of John. The same female is on her feet clapping and shouting.

I also stand and clap my hands watching my boyfriend running around the stage, preaching.

I am glad when the service ends mainly because I was closed to dragging that worshipper with her weave and squeaky clean these floors with her face, bitch.

I shake hands here and there before I am invited to come back the following week. I am waiting for Sambulo outside his car who walks out laughing

loudly to the same woman who is holding his blazer and bible then hand it to him before she waves her hand.

Great!

"Are you okay?" He asks the moment he opens the door for me and I ignore him making myself comfortable on the leather seat and crossing my arms. His eyebrows arch in a fine show of hauteur. He goes to the driver's side and goes behind the wheel. "I am listening" he says the moment he manoeuvres his car on the road after hooting at his pastor and bidding his farewell.

"Do you like her?"

"What are you talking about?"

"That girl you were singing with, she was busy shouting when you were preaching and standing on her feet"

"Snothile?" Even their names starts with a same letter, "You were also standing on your feet Kwanda, so what's wrong?"

"Do you like her?" I ask accusing gaze on him, his seasoned expression shows nothing as he stares back at me.

"No, hawu Kwanda. Do you think I'd invite you to come to church with me if I did?"

"You tell me" I say flippantly.

"Are you jealous?"

"What?" I scoff "don't be ridiculous"

"You're angry" he observes.

"Why should I be?"

He shrugs his shoulders, "did you enjoy the service?" He steals a glance towards me.

"Yes, your message was beautiful"

He smiles, "Ngiyabonga sthandwa. I hope you'll come more often to church" I chuckle and shaking my head. "I'll pass by the shops, do you want something"

"Yes, wine"

"Besides that"

"Gin" I respond.

"Besides that"

I look at him, "vodka"

"I am not buying you alcohol"

"Fine then take me to my place"

"We've spoke about this Kwanda"

"I was just joking, Sambulo"

He takes a deep breath, "I have to go to my pastor's

house he called me. Is it okay if I don't stay over?"

"It's okay"

Sambulo drops me off outside my gate after kissing my cheek then he leaves. The moment I open the door I find Onalenna and Khethelo seated in the living room with a guest--the same woman who was laughing and talking to the man who visited my wet dreams. She looks confident with her legs crossed and having a glass of wine.

"There she is. Kwanda my boss is here to see you. We'll be outside" Onalenna says with a smile and taking her glass of wine leaving walking towards me with Khethelo.

"What does she want?" I whisper to her.

She shrugs, "I don't know, find out" they walk out shutting the door.

[01/24, 07:21] : 5.

"Nothing can destroy what is already at peace.

Walk in faith by the sight"

I look at the intimidating woman seated in our living room in her off shoulder white dress, her long sleeves are puffy and at the bottom the dress captures her perfectly showing her bare buttery thighs with nude heels matching the matte nude lipstick. Her fringe weave almost covers her beautiful eyes with a diamond choker around her neck "How about you sit down then you can stare" she says showing me her teeth.

"What gave you the impression that I am staring at you?" I shouldn't look intimidated.

I watch her as she flicks her hair and everything happens in slow motion and I get to admire her glass acrylic manicure. "Mihlali Ndamase" she introduces herself to me and extending her hand for me to shake.

"Kwanda Mkhungo"

"I know" she smiles and placing the glass of wine on the floor to uncross her legs and clasping her hands on her thighs.

"How can I help you?"

"I want to give you a job" she says.

I attentively look at her, but she keeps the marble face that represents her seriousness even the

sound of her tone. No humour, no laughter, nothing.

I erupt with laughter pointing her with my index finger and relaxing on the red sofa, "you are very funny Mahlase" I say shaking my head and chuckling "A job? Ha ha, wow" I continue saying under my breath.

"Mihlali" she corrects me, I did that on purpose "I wasn't joking"

"I never said you were"

"Then what was funny about me saying I want to you give you a job?"

"What makes you think I want you to give me a job?"

She looks at me then her lips slowly shapes into her smile and her straight nose twitches, "I like you" she says and then picks up the bottle of wine and refilling her glass before she takes a slow sip.

"Why are you offering me a job?"

She shrugs her shoulders and twisting her mouth into a scowl before she takes another sip then she places her glass aside, "I think you are beautiful"

Another loud laughter escapes my lips and this time grabbing the bottle of wine and drinking from it while shaking my head, "You are funny I give you that, you want to give me a job because I am beautiful?" I challenge my eyebrow at her.

"Not really but you can benefit from this"

"What kind of a job is this?"

"More like personal assistant but outside of my work place. You'll look after my house so I want you to stay with me"

How can someone be so beautiful and so funny?

"You want me to stay with you?" This time my laughter comes as a bark and taking another sip from the bottle as she sips from her glass with impeccable mannerism.

"Yebo"

"Like a domestic worker?" I frown

She shakes her head in agreement, "No. You will

make sure my domestic workers do their job. My house is safe. Decide on my menus. And make sure I never forget important meetings, family meetings and gatherings" she tells me and I closely look at her, "Twenty thousand a month and on weekends you can go home"

What?

"To me this sounds like some serial killer tendencies or you want to traffic me and that is not happening"

"You staying with me means having my son at home more often because I won't have as much work and I could work on our strained relationship and I also need you to keep an eye on him for me"

"Like baby sitting?"

"Yes"

I shake my head, "I hate kids. I mean the payment is tempting but you'd find him burning in the oven"

Unexpectedly I hear laughter from her tapping her hands on her thighs before she gives me what I think is an impressed smile, "I really like you" she continues smiling, "...and also my son is not a kid but he is twenty four years old" That's an old man.

"Is he disabled?"

"No"

"Is he mentally disturbed?"

"No"

"Then why should I babysit a twenty four year old?  
That person is two years older than me"

"Not baby sitting but becoming friends and looking  
after my house and reminding me important things  
that's just about it"

"You're hiring me to stay with you so I can become  
friends with your twenty four year old son so you  
can work on your relationship with him?"

"Yes" she says simply.

I laugh taking another sip placing the bottle from  
the side and relaxing on the red sofa, "You are  
insane!" I say breathlessly.

"I am a mother who would do anything for her

children" she says with a trace of sadness in her eyes. More vulnerable than the woman who has been intimidating me with her presence.

"Is he your only child?"

She smiles, "He is my last born"

I nod, "Is he dying?"

"He almost died" her shoulders hang low.

"What happened?"

"You have so many questions. I am not answering this one until you think about my offer"

"Twenty thousand" I say under my breath "That's a

lot for just staying with you and becoming a friend  
with your son who almost died"

"What are you saying?"

"I will think about it"

"Great then after making your decision you can call  
me and we can take it from there" she says and get  
up from the couch, "Kwanda" she searches for my  
eyes and I look up at her from her toned legs and  
thighs to her beautiful mesmerizing face.

"Yes"

"Don't fall for him" that comes out as a warning.

"Fall for who?"

"My son" she states.

This woman clearly came here to make me laugh until my stomach hurts from my bellybutton and I turn into a tiny insect. "What makes you think I'd fall in love with someone who cannot make friends at twenty four?"

"He's attractive and charming"

"And you just automatically assumed that I'd fall for him because he is charming?"

She smiles, "yes and you are not becoming his friends because he cannot make friends. He has plenty but I think you can help him"

"With what?"

"After making up your mind you will know and I am serious. You don't want to get hurt so don't fall for him" she gives me a sphinxlike smile placing her business card on the table and leaves. I am baffled and curious at the same time.

I am not a superhero that saves people.

Khethelo and Onalenna walks back into the house eyeballing me and anxious, the squeeze me inbetween the both of them. "What did my boss want from you?" Onalenna asks, she has taken off her weave and showing her old cornrows, I love them when they're looking like this. Her fake lashes are long as always with a natural make up.

I take a deep breath, "she wants to give me a job"

"What? So she wants to fire me?" Onalenna panics.

"What no! She doesn't want to fire you"

"What kind of a job is this?" Khethelo

"More like personal assist but out of work place and the pay is good"

"You are taking it right?" Khethelo

"I don't know" They both give me unreadable expression causing me to frown, "what?"

"You are being offered a job and you don't know if you are going to take it? You want to be your brother and your mother's responsibility until when?"

"They never complained" I scowl.

"Of course they won't complain. Look we are your friends and I am not going to sit down and watch you ruin your life anymore. I decided to let you be but now you are getting out of hand. No more parties. No more alcohol. You'll take that job and make your mother proud for once in your life Kwanda make the right decision" Khethelo says shouting then she gets up from the sofa leaving the room.

"And then?" I look at Onalenna.

"Khethelo is right" she responds.

"Nawe"

"We are being honest with you. We are being your

friends"

"When did you guys become a bore?" I look at her and she shakes her head then leaves the room following after Khethelo.

I sit here alone with the walls staring at me, waiting for me to say something but I stare back then look at the empty bottle of wine, curling myself on the sofa and fluttering my eyes closed so I could swift through my thoughts.

A twenty two year old girl who doesn't believe in fate. Not destiny. Or dreams that will ever come true and the logical behind unconditional love, sounds cliché to me. I have no sense of direction with being one of those people who wakes up early in the morning to take a shower in a hurry to wear an outfit that looks immaculate. Have breakfast in a car to make sure I do not miss any of my meetings or either sit behind a wooden desk with a beautiful

interior design in my office and perfect view, not my ordeal life.

I just want to be a creator and a creative. Maybe be a television writer, producer, director and an actor. Share the world from how I see it, the bitterness of life and sweetness of it. Different experiences and hardships. Being a woman. Being a black woman. Being a man. Being a mother. Being a father. Being a boy. Being a girl. Being gay. Being different. Being unaccepted. Being you, me and us.

I allow the words that have been spat to my face sinks into every corner of my brain, slowly but surely and they start invading me.

Do I really want to be my mother and brother's responsibility for the rest of my life? Not really. But I want to make my mother proud. I would love to see that smile on her face she had after I graduated with a Bachelor of Arts. The warmth of her arms

and listening to her brag to my neighbours that one day I'll be working with Connie Ferguson, Lelethi Khumalo and Duma Ndlovu, she dreams.

I get up from the couch almost stumbling, the alcohol is already in my bloodstream. I change into something more comfortable. Remember how Aaliyah used to dress up? Baggy pants and crops tops, looking like a beautiful boy at the same time looking like a mind blowing girl. That's how I am looking right now in these black baggy pants, black sport bra and white crop top. The tattoo at the side of my breast written in italics is showing. I start packing. I need to make up my mind with regards to this job I have been offered.

"Are you going somewhere?" Onalenna says standing by my door with a packet of chips and watching me pack my backpack.

"Ngiduka nezwe"

"Don't joke like that"

I chuckle and shoving my clothes in a leather bag, "I am going home" I zip up my bag swinging it over my shoulders.

"I can drive you"

"I can take care of myself"

She studies me for a while, "since when?"

"I don't have time for this. I am going home" my voice is tight.

"Don't being pig headed. I will drive you"

"And I said no. Can you guys just give me a damn break haibo!" I throw my hands in the air and walking out.

[01/24, 07:21] : 6.

"Much needed

Took much needed break

And still can't seem to feel replenished

My thoughts and aching heart still

Heavy from the lies and embellished

As truth

Venomously trained to be the sleuth of the youth

Robotic to pain

I took much needed break

And still can't seem to shake

This is real life nightmare disguised as a dream"

I am being pulled by a man in black shorts showing his ashy yet toned legs and his feet looks crusty, "shesha baby girl otherwise you won't find another taxi to eNtuzuma" he says smelling like cannabis and armpits. I am not in a mood to fight with him about the way he is pulling my hand.

I get in a taxi that is almost full sitting by the window and placing my bag on my thighs and pressing my head against the window. People are packing their stuffs in big red and white bags. An old woman has her pots on top of her head while a young man is helping her with other bags, seems like she was selling food the whole day. I can hear whistles, hoots, screams and loud laughter. The taxi behind us is playing maskandi and the one next to us is playing amapiano.

After few minutes the taxi is full and a young looking taxi driver gets behind the wheel and we start moving. We speed up quietly and listening to

our driver and his conductor talking about their boss who pointed guns at them last night in the middle of the road. They don't sound traumatised at all instead they are laughing about almost dying and being saved by their boss' wife. I am brooding staring out of the window listening to these two men beneath the intermittent light of the passing street light.

"Kodwa mina bengeke ngife bafo, bengeke" The driver says guaranteed he wasn't going to die if he was shot. He keeps hitting the steering and glancing at his friend who has a smirk on his swollen lips. "Mina? Ngeke" he continues saying. The woman next to me seems to have same interest in this story. We both look at each other and chuckle shaking our heads. My scalp prickles when he mentions someone was shot leaving me wondering if they died or almost died but sadly I cannot find out since I am getting off already.

"Umuhle wena" says the conductor holding the sliding door for me while I get off and flicking my dreadlocks at the same time.

"Did that person die?" I cannot hold myself.

He looks at me and laughs including the driver who I cannot see clearly because he is wearing sunglasses at night. "No he didn't muhleza" I didn't know I was holding my breath until now and everyone else in the taxi before they erupt with laughter and waving their hands at me bidding farewell. That was an interesting trip.

I can feel the changing of atmosphere. Where I am staying in Kloof, at this time people are indoors, seated in front of their television screens and here everyone comes out at night like wolves. There's different music, coming from different houses. The kids are still running in the streets and laughing. Growing up elokshini you truly enjoy your childhood,

no doubt.

"Kwanda" my mother says the moment she sees me walking through the door and closing it behind. She is seated in the living room and styling her dreadlocks while her iris are focused on the television screen, "come and sit here princess" she pats the beige modern sofa that sits on top of a textured area rug that complements the texture and colours of the marble featured walls in our home.

My brother wanted mom to move into a suburban neighbourhood but she never agreed to the idea so he turned our home into my mother's dream house, nothing extravagant and extraordinary just a simple six roomed house with a garage and beautiful interior design.

I put my bag on the floor to throw myself in her arms and she welcomes me warmly then she cups my face pushing back my dreadlocks and she has

my favourite smile. "Why are you crying?" There's an undercurrent of affection in her words, the way her voice grows softer and her eyes crinkle then she hugs me once again hard. And I cannot help but smile at her boundless enthusiasm.

"Kayise told me your husband was here"

"Is that why you're crying?" I don't know, I have been upset since he walked away without looking back. Everything seemed to slow down as I looked at him. Even the air felt thicker, making breathing a laboured thing then my friend ran towards me disturbing my subconscious. On our way back home she kept hovering me. Wanting to know who was the stranger since she did not see his face and only arrived when we were just staring in each other's eyes with beautiful smiles and introducing ourselves.

I draw a searing breath, "did you go back to him?"

"Your father and I are not enemies Kwanda. We once shared love. We shared our lives together for so many years. Yes he made mistakes because he's human. Are you perfect?" I'd love to think I am.

"This is not about me"

"Of course it is. While your father is working on himself you are here bitter and angry. You are destroying yourself while he's becoming the better version of himself" I might've made a mistake by going to church because suddenly everyone feels a need to preach to me.

"I just don't understand why you forgave him that easy"

"To set myself free"

I look at her and she smiles making me shake my head, "do you still love him?" I search for her eyes and she faces her body towards me, her hands resting on mine then her lips spread into a smile, I was not aware that mine has also been murdering me.

"What would you do if you shared something with someone for years. Almost your life with nothing but beautiful chemistry and beautiful moments. The smiles, laughter, touch and eye contact then one morning they wake up completely forgotten about you?"

"I'd drink alcohol"

She laughs, "Kwanda be honest with yourself once"

I look at her then drop my eyes to my hands, "I'd be

extremely hurt" I tell her honestly.

"Exactly. I'd be hurt too if I could wake up one morning and all the memories of your father have been flushed. I will always love him as the father of my children and someone I have shared my life with" she smiles.

"You have forgiven him for leaving us?"

"Nokwanda one day you will understand how easy it is to forgive someone you love. I was never angry at him. Set yourself free Nkosazana" she pauses "Do you want us to go out and eat? You didn't join us for dinner" she says after the comfortable silence, that doesn't sound bad.

"Kayise told me you've started your yoga classes"

"Yes, my boss found a place for me in Umhlanga and well things are going well so she decided to let me go" she beams.

"Let you go?"

"I won't be working for her anymore. But she is very supportive and I had to help her find someone new. It's rare to find a black woman so successful and kind"

"You were not working for white people?"

"If you met her then you would have known" she admonishes softly "I was working for a black woman and her husband died last year. They have two beautiful sons together but her last born moved to Johannesburg after he almost died in a car accident with his father. Well their relationship is on the edge of the sword"

"Why?"

"He blames his mother for the death of his father. I heard he was coming back though" she shrugs  
"Enough. Let's go, where you want to eat?" she says getting up.

"Anywhere is fine with me"

"As ambeni"

My mother slide behind the wheel of her silver Hynduai that her boss bought for her engaging the engine. Very funny how I automatically assumed she was working for people from the other race. I mean the family she was working for, from what she told me is very successful, they treated her like family and she was never allowed to wear the purple uniform but she wears her clothes instead.

We sit at the restaurant looking at my mother who is glowing and looking rather happy. The tenseness of her shoulders is long gone. The smile is genuine and her eyes have lightened beautifully.

"I'm going to the bathroom, don't miss me" she gets up from her chair kissing my cheek then she disappears around the restaurant. I continue eating from my plate and the moment I look outside the window I see him, I blink as a residual hum of heat flashes through my memory. I am immobile as a statue now and I can hear my own breath scissoring audibly through my tight throat while my heart thumps so hard on my chest.

I get up from my chair walking out of the restaurant to catch up with him as he walks fast carrying expensive shopping bags in his hands. "Mongezi!!" I shout on top of my lungs, echoing the entire mall and some people are weirdly looking at me walking

fast and shouting, "Mongezi!" finally he stops. My female hormones must be summersaulting. My knees get unsteady at at how he turned to look towards my direction. He is dressed in black denim jeans, black tee with Kurt Cobain printed on it and chunky sole Chelsea boots with an elasticated side panel. He is damnably attractive.

"Hey" I smile and waving my hand.

"Hey" he pauses "Do we know each other?" The harsh undertone, appraises my unfamiliar appearance with a frown of incomprehension.

I look at him and wincing, "I should have known you are a piece of shit"

He wanders his eyes over mines, "Thank you" a sensual smile curves into a rakish grin making his harsh features soft.

"Thank me?"

"For assuming that I am piece of shit" his deep voice rumbles up my spine. "Are you sure you are not mistaking me for someone else?" His eyes crinkles with amusement, "Or maybe we have met but..." He pauses as if he was about to tell me something I shouldn't know.

"But what?"

He stares at me. I have no idea what he is thinking and his eyes twinkling with mischief. He steps within my space drawn into me as a freezing man lured with warmth. I am aware of wild weird little tremors running down my spine. Aware of the fluttering in my stomach, the thousand of bugs inside. I struggle to draw in air as my body stirs responding to the slumberous, sensual provocation

shinning in his dark eyes. We are standing in the middle of the mall and some people passing by are watching us frowning and some grinning. His mood has changed, his nostrils flaring. "You're beautiful"

"Fuck you!"

"I would love to"

"Nokwanda!" I hear my mother calls and I look towards her before looking at him one more time. I try walking away but he seizes me by my arm causing a collision on his chest. He doesn't do anything just tugging the strands of my dreadlocks behind my ear and winks then he walks away, same way as he did last time.

Keep walking, J ohnny Walker

My mother walks towards me, "Haibo Nokwanda, what is this? Who was that boy?"

"No one. Can we leave" Tears are suddenly threatening and burning my eyeballs. I dreamt about him. I was thinking about him in my boyfriend's presence and he doesn't remember me?

"Who was that boy Nokwanda?"

"No one ma, asambe"

"What happened to Sambulo?"

"We broke up" I lie.

"You guys broke up?"

"No. I mean. We will break up"

"Because of that boy?"

"Angazi. Ngicela sambe" she looks at me then shakes her head in disapproval. I am seething the entire distance to the car parking and mumbling curses under my breath as rage and frustration mounts.

He is an epitome of any woman's fantasy. The sexiness in his looks, his body, the way he walks and talk or just plain stares at you. He is most definitely the most gorgeous man of his tone I have ever come across.

He doesn't remember me?

"Are you trying to kill my car?" My mother creases

her eyebrow when I bang her door.

He doesn't remember me.

[01/24, 07:22] : 7.

"Everything takes time

Even the things that may seem easy

We run everyday but once upon a time

We could only crawl

Perspective

Remember to fall in love with the process or you'll  
watch time pass you by"

The scene kept repeating over and over again in my  
mind and did much churn up animosities from the  
darkest pit of hell. The way he turned around with a  
frown looking at me like a stranger, an unfamiliar  
pain knifed into me. The feeling was vicious and

ferocious enough to carve up my inside causing me to shiver as the thought crossed my mind. I have been sad for almost three days, ridiculous isn't it?

I mean I don't even know this person for heaven sake and this just makes me incandescent with rage. My brain tangles. I have been curled up on this bed since that night and listening to that song we danced too. My mother knocks on my room everyday shouting that I should come out, I am being treated like a fragile adolescent. She keeps asking who was that guy since she didn't clearly see his face from the distance.

I am done acting like a toddler who has lost her rag doll. I am sure I will never meet him again and I will continue dating my handsomely walking bible and compete with worshippers--that's what I am going to do and I'll also take the job offer. I have thought about it but I will also have my terms and conditions.

My mother bores her eyes at me the moment I walk into the room as she mixes her dough, "You are done sulking?" she asks me.

"I was not sulking"

She looks at me and taking the black tray shoving it inside the oven then turns to me, "We have people coming over for something small and your father is coming" she announces. The kitchen has sophisticated marble floor tiles showcasing the soft beige. A slatted wooden wall that makes a partial divided between the lounge and the living room and it provides an effective visual stop. The wooden legs of the kitchen bar stools tie in with the look of slender light slats. White glass orbs in the unique kitchen pendant lights match the sheen of white marble. "You heard what I said" my mother says.

"I heard I just choose to ignore you"

"I have never met anyone as stubborn as your father. You are so stubborn Kwanda" as soon as she finishes her sentence we are disturbed by a knock on the door. We face each other. I can feel my heart beating in my palms, my throat and my chest. I don't remember the last time I saw him, I am not ready to see him. "Go and get the door" my mother instructs and all I do is shaking my head, my speech is temporarily paralysed.

She looks at me defeated and walking to get the door in the living room. Suddenly I hear his voice resonate as they both laugh at something with my mother. I get up from the chair walking to the living room, the widened cheeks immediately falls and the mood becomes intense. "Nokwanda..." He says, looking different from what I expected him to be. I thought he'll be down and out with one eye he lost at the tavern and someone stepped on it and broken jaws. He looks like the man who used to swing me around and listen to me talking about the boy from

down the road that I was going to marry and have two kids with.

"Sawubona" I am surprised I haven't murdered him, remembering him packing his bags while my mother was begging him with her body shivering and her lips. Pulling him by his hand as I cried screaming baba. Kayise stood from the distance watching everything and never said nothing. He never speaks. You will never know what goes through his mind and how he truly feels.

"You've grown so much, you are beautiful. I am so happy to see you" he smiles showing all of his teeth even the rotten ones.

I look at my mother, "I will be in my room" I announce and she looks at me with an unreadable facial expression. What she thoughts? I was going to jump in this man's arms and celebrate that he is back. This is not a Tyler Perry movie.

Before I can even turn making my way to my room another knock disturbs the eerie silence wheezing in the air and this time it's my brother followed by my uncle and they are carrying shopping bags.

"Nokwanda!" My uncle says in his high pitch voice, wearing his black pants, white shirt and high heel shoes. We share a hug before he takes my hand and we head to the kitchen helping my mother preparing the food. We have music playing loudly on our sound system and our yard is full. We are celebrating my mother. The meat is burning outside and my uncle is shoving alcohol down my throats, his name is Thokazani. We are like tongue and saliva.

They are loud voices coming from outside, people trying to hold a conversation on top of the loud playing music. "Lelethi didn't you say your boss is coming?" Thokazani asks my mother who is sashaying her body around the kitchen.

My mother beams, "she is on her way with her sons" she announces, looking rather elated. I have been ignoring her husband in all angles since he got here, atleast I am composing myself and not ruining this day for my mother. I was not even aware about. Thokazani forced me to change and wear something nicer than the dull baggy clothes I was wearing and then he did my make up, I cannot recognise myself in this satin red wine mini dress.

The house is suddenly buzzing and my brother has locked the gate because of our uninvited neighbours who shouted when they were walking past the streets that they are coming. Onalenna and Khethelo just arrived, and helping around as we set up the table into a mix match chair set theme over the wooden table with flowers and we have draped twinkle lights.

Everyone is now outside and seated on camp chairs

sharing loud laughter. I am glad my friends are here they have managed to keep me on the leash so I do not erupt like a volcano and burn the man who is drinking tropical fruit juice since he no longer consumes alcohol. This is not the man who raised me. He is now painting himself as this perfect human who fought everyone when Jesus was being beaten. "Kayise open the gate!" I hear my mother shouting then she gets up walking out. I am thinking to get her boss since I just heard a car parking outside. Well she cannot drive through because out yard is small, so all the cars are parking outside.

My phone interrupts me and Sambulo's name flashes on the screen causing my friends to dramatically roll their eyes. I laugh loudly and walking inside the house. "Baby" he says the moment I answer his call.

"Sambulo"

"Your mother invited me but I cannot come over since we have a meeting here at church but if I finish early then I'll come" he tells me.

"No problem"

"Okay. Ngiyakuthanda"

"I love you too" I say and I can almost hear his smile over the phone before he immediately hangs up and I take a deep breath, returning back.

I am shocked seeing Muhlali looking gorgeous and curvaceous in her red maxi dress with an open back and huge glasses that covers almost her face, hugging my mother who is leading her to what is her designated chair. "Kwanda come here" my mother waves her hand. I compose myself and my mother wraps her hand around my waist, "so this is

my daughter, finally you meet her" my mother beams.

"We have met before" I bluntly say and not tearing my gaze at Mihlali with my hands against my chest.

"Met?" My mother raises her eyebrow.

"I approached her, something about business" Mihlali says looking at me with an undeniably beautiful and showing her white teeth smile.

My mother darts her eyes between us, "I hope you will take that opportunity with both hands Kwanda" my mother says, almost like she is reprimanding me while I am still trying to make sense of everything. "Where are your sons?" My mother asks.

"They were driving behind me and I am sure they'll

be here any minute" Mihlali responds.

"Great let me check these people and I'll be back"  
my mother pats my shoulder and then walks away.

I look around before lowering my tone, "you  
approached me because my mother worked for  
you?" I ask her.

"That's not the main reason"

I laugh. I need to stop laughing in serious moments  
like this one but this woman right here takes the  
cup at making me laugh. "What was the reason  
then?"

"When I saw you..." We are disturbed when the gate  
is opened and I don't know why I glance up, maybe I  
catch a slight movement from the corner of my eye,

I don't know but when I do, he's standing with my brother watching me intently. He is wearing dark denim jeans and a white plain round neck T-shirt with double faced biker jacket that has faux fur collar. His intrusion into my life makes me quite sickingly faint and I quickly recover from my stupor, from throbbing shock at his presence. I am frozen. I open my mouth and close it again, twice now looking at Muhlali who just sipped from the bottle of cider.

"Your son?" I ask her, all breathlessly.

"My son" she smiles. I look towards him again and his eyes are still fixed on me mirroring something I cannot read.

"Why?"

"I saw the way you guys danced. He was himself

again"

"I am not taking this job thank you"

"Kwanda think about it"

"Your son is a piece of shit" I say through my teeth.

She takes a deep breath, "After this we going to revis it this conversation but trust me when I say he is not what you think he is" Obviously she will defend her son.

"Fine!" I throw my hands back and returning back to my friends. I am seated on the chair with my legs crossed and looking towards him until my eyeballs aches. Several inches separating us. I'd feel better if we were at least a foot. I study him. He is standing next to what I think is his brother who is much

darker than him.

I distract myself listening to Thokazani and Onalenna rating the men in the yard and laughing loudly. I cast him a look only to find him studying me and he smiles at me before winking. My knees are shaky and my heart in my mouth thumping a dramatic uneven beat and flushing scarlet.

"That boy is cute. I feel like zaga zagaring him" Thokazani says using his eyes to point at Mongezi. I throw him the most diabolical look. "Haibo, do you like him?" He asks me.

Onalenna looks closely towards their direction than snaps her fingers. "This is him. The guy you were dancing with. Damn he looks fine" They all agree "His brother can have me in the backyard" she continues.

"I say Sambulo has a tough competition" Khethelo says.

"No he doesn't" I defend.

"Where is he?" Onalenna

"At a church meeting"

Thokazani yawns, "Amen" they erupt with laughter and clapping each other's hands.

"Don't talk about Sambulo like that"

"He is looking at you" Khethelo

"Who?" I pretend like I don't know who is she talking about. If I look towards his direction again I might

become a statue on this chair.

"Lunch is ready" My mother announces. We all stand and following behind but someone clutches my elbow bringing me to an abrupt halt.

"Can we talk?" His tone soft.

"No"

"Why not?"

"Because I don't want to talk to you"

"I wanna explain"

"And I am saying no"

"Why you're being hard headed?"

"Now you remember me?"

"That's what I want to talk about"

"No!"

He narrows his eyes and releasing my hand. "We will talk later" that sounded like a command but it came as a whisper and I glare at him before walking away. We take our places and he is seated opposite me and he closes his eyes briefly.

The food on the table looks mouthwatering and smells delicious. And in spite of the fact that my stomach is churning from the man seated opposite me, I am starving. My mother starts talking about

me and my brother on the table making me a centre of attention but Thokazani comes into the rescue when he sees I am uncomfortable. My mind is working furiously, what is that Mihlali wants to tell me about his son and what does her son want from me?

"Tell us about your yoga classes" Mihlali says and I am grateful since this distracts my thoughts.

Our eyes meet and not even once he tears the gaze away instead he leans back on his chair with his hand pressing over his chin almost covering his mouth. While his right hand has a tattoo written something, his left hand as an outstretched eagle. My mind is suddenly paralyzed apprehension.

I look away and listen to everyone exchanging words on the table. Why I cannot keep my eyes off him. He has a hint of a smile on his lips and I am feeling giddy and I tingle all over.

When we finish eating and having a long conversation the music is brought back. His brother's name is Bongeziwe. Everyone is now drinking I am almost half drunk from all the wine I have been consuming, two more glasses I am a gone girl.

Onalenna and Khethelo decides we should go to my room and sit there. So we make our way to my room with our alcohol and continue with the drinking locked in this room and playing our own music.

You know what!

I am going to tell him on his face that I don't like him and I haven't been thinking about him and to top that off I have a boyfriend--that is what I am going to do.

"Where are you going?"

"I am coming back" I walk out. I look around to find him standing aside alone on his phone. I approach him confidently. But the moment I stand in front of him my breath comes fast and panic seizes me. My mind is reeling for the right words, I am not weak.

"You wanted to talk"

"Not here" He gazes down at me cool as a cucumber.

"I want to talk here" I hiss acidly.

His mouth twist and his eyes frost, "And I am saying not here. I am the one who wanted to talk and not you" he says, his voice soft with undertone of something far more menacing.

I fold my arms, my anger spikes, "Don't talk to me like. You have no right to talk to me like that. And stop what you're doing Mongezi"

"What are you talking about?"

"You are confusing me!"

He blinks at me, surprised by my outburst "I have a boyfriend so whatever shit you are doing to me before you sleep at night, stop it" my stomach heaving feeling an urge to throw up and almost fall trying to run but I trip. He tugs his hand that he's holding hard that I do not fall against him. I fall in his arms and he's holding me tightly against his chest. I inhale his clean scent. It's intoxicating. He has his arm around me and clasping me to him while the fingers of his other hand softly traces my face, gently probing, examining me. I am not

breathing. I am squirming. I am drowning in his scent.

Then he holds his fingers up, "How many fingers do I have up?"

"September"

"You're drunk"

"I'm joking I meant Friday" I laugh.

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See you guys on Monday.

[01/24, 07:22] : 8.

## "Connection vs Attachment

The roots on my tree gives me trunk power

It holds firmly in soil

Reaching for branches that holds my leaves steady

But sometimes kites get stuck my branches and  
they pull like tangled hair

Pets pee freely

I'm carved for pleasure and cut in measures

They forget

Or maybe they never knew

The power of my essence

So my power is my stance

While so many don't understand

The power of my essence

Take a second to look at me

Or give me"

I woke up to my annoyingly vibrating phone and my brain felt shattered against my head. I screamed and whimpered gently pulling away from the arms that were wrapped around me whom belonged to Khethelo. The memories from last night came running like an Olympian eyeing a golden medal. My saliva tasted bitter and I cussed myself under my breath before getting off the bed.

I drive through the gate and my mother's car that she borrowed me suddenly looks like a toy while my eyes wander around the contemporary glass box house seated on the steep slope surrounded by beautiful trees you can see from every angle. The home boasts of enormous glass windows that overlooks nature from throughout the entire home.

The call I received this morning was coming from Mihlali who sent me her location since last night we ended up not revisiting the conversation as we were supposed to. I hope he is not there. I pray. I wonder

what he thinks of me since my eyes just shut completely. I don't know if I fell asleep because of the warmth of his arms and his fresh fragrance that combines aromatic, fruity and woody. Maybe it was his laughter. Or I fainted.

I get off the car and closing the door behind. I have lost my capacity to speak wandering my eyes around the yard before walking up the staircases to the door and knocking.

The elderly woman who appears from behind gives me a blazing trail from my white sneakers to my crotchet skirt in colour black, red, yellow and green and a matching crotchet crop top that goes around my neck. "Come in" I guess she was expecting me, this one should be fired since she doesn't know how to welcome guests. No smile. Nothing, she is just cold.

I gasp at the light and airy modern living room,

brimming with elegant charm and the mix of concrete, leather and wood gives off a serene vibe. There is an unique floor lamp and firewood is openly displayed to create a floor level work of art. The low to the ground setup lends the contemporary white chairs an opportunity to pop in this modern meets rustic living room and then the light brown chairs not only contrast in colour, but material as well with their leather upholstery.

I take a sit uncomfortably and looking at the open-concept dinning room graced with table and chairs that contrasts beautifully against the pale floors with their dark, rich tones. The dining pendant lights looks stunning and fierce paired with this simple dinning room table.

My heart leaps into my mouth when he appears behind the door and strolls in. I take a deep breath and close my eyes before fluttering them open and they meet his. He's staring at me, deep dark eyes

and as the usual I have no idea what is thinking. He hides his thoughts and feelings so well. He is in all black with faux suede biker jacket and flat embossed animal print ankle boots.

"Sawubona" his voice is kitten soft but deep, smirking as he stroll closer to me. Then he halts in front of me, I am seared by his intensity. He gazes down, wide unreadable eyes burning into mines. I can feel the scorching heat as my knees touches his legs.

"Sawubona" I whisper. My mouth goes drier still and my heart pounding in my chest.

"How are you feeling?" He asks silkily.

I swallow, I cannot tear my gaze away "I am okay" I respond feeling breathlessly.

"Headache?" He cocks his head to one side and regards me intently. I really find it annoying how I am having a hard time to utter words or even inhale yet he looks so calm and collected.

"No"

"About last night?" His voice is soft.

I blink rapidly, my eyelids matching my heart rate, "I think we should keep a distance" I murmur increasingly embarrassed and flustered.

"Distance?"

"Distance" I repeat.

He nods his head and twisting his lips into a scowl

turning on his heels and I get a chance to breathe with my eyes closed but when I open them I almost crawl out of my skin finding him seated on the white chair gracefully opposite me. One hand relaxed in his lap and the other cupping his chin and trailing his long index finger decorated with a moon and sun across his lip leaving me wondering how many tattoos does he have since I have only seen the one on his hands. I think he is trying to suppress his smile. "I thought you were leaving" I stutter.

"You asked for distance and I gave you that"

What?

"I meant stay away from me"

"What you're asking me is hard"

I chuckle sardonically, "Yet you easily forgotten about me?"

He straightens and gazes intently at me once more, "Did that hurt you?"

I erupt with laughter and shaking my head while crossing my legs to stop the squirming, "Hurt me? No" I tug my head in and continue laughing.

"You sound deeply hurt to me and that wasn't my intention maMkhungo" he says and I refrain from rolling my eyes. I look at him and he holds my gaze steadily impassive. "You said I am confusing you, want to talk about that?" My heartbeat quickens.

Why does he have such an unnerving effect on me? His overwhelming good looks maybe? The way he blazes at me? The way he strokes his index finger against his lower lip.

"I don't remember saying that"

He raises an eyebrow at me, "You don't?"

"I don't"

He smiles, revealing perfect white teeth. I stop breathing. He is really beautiful. No one should be this good looking and arrogant. "How long you have been dating your boyfriend?"

"Its been a year" I respond.

"Do you like him?"

"Are you interrogating me?"

"Do you feel interrogated?"

"No"

His mouth quirks up and he stares appetisingly at me, "Do you like him?"

I surreptitiously gaze at him beneath my lashes as he keeps running his finger on his lower lip. I'd like to do that. The thought comes unbidden into my mind, and my face flames. I was warned about him. "I came here because your mother called me. Where is she?"

"Do you like him?" He prompts me.

"Yes" my voice is quite.

"Why?" His gaze holds mine. He's so unnerving. I want to look away but I'm caught—spellbound.

"Because he's nice"

"That sounds boring to me"

"Are you saying my love life is boring?"

"You like him because he's nice really?"

"Really"

"You are very stubborn" He murmurs.

"And you are very arrogant"

"I love these assumptions you have about me maMkhungo" My mouth drops open. Why is he so damn calm? Can he atleast argue with me or something so I can find a reason to walk out of the door. "You eaten this morning?"

"That is none of your concern"

"Follow me so we can get you something to eat then you can take painkillers for your headache" I never said I have a headache. I mean my head is throbbing but that doesn't mean he should tell me what to do.

Who the hell does he think he is? Nxarga.

He gets up from the chair and when he sees that my buttocks are planted on this couch not willing to move he turns to look at me, "I'll make you get up from that couch, don't test me Kwanda" is that how

he calls me now? His tone is quiet and deadly. "I dare you to try me" his tone is calm but threatening. Calm than threatening.

These bloody feet obeys getting up and following him to the kitchen. I can see a Cabernet with elements of glass and wood carrying off on to the back wall to create built-in curio cabinets. The cabinets elegantly house wine glasses and champagne flutes adding a certain sophistication to the room.

The dark kitchen pulls off a effortlessly minimalistic style. An open sesame. The insides of the cupboards reveal a delight contrast with their light wooden interior and then the kitchen bar stools are ultra sleek. "You are not having alcohol" he says when he sees me eyeing the cabinet of wine as he takes off his jacket. I get to see his arm tattoos this time. They are not all over the place but it's line minimalistic tattoos. They are tiny some are

medium but distance from each other not to look chaotic. His arms. Him. The smile. The way he is narrowing his eyebrows with his lower lip between his teeth.

"What do you want to eat?"

"Nothing"

He sighs, "Don't start being pig headed with me otherwise I'll choose what you are going to eat maMkhungo" Control freak.

"You sound like a control freak" The words are out of my mouth before I stop them.

"I exercise control in all things maMkhungo" He says without a trace of humour in his smile. I look at him and hold his gaze. All things? What is all

things?

How does he exercise that?

Words fail me. I realize I don't know what to say. I watch him washing his hands in the sink and not even once breaking eye contact with me and I stare down at my hands. "Bhuti" I glance up at him.

Why did I just call him that?

He smiles, "maMkhungo" can he stop calling me like that.

"How come you forgotten about me? When I met you a night after we danced together?"

"We will talk after you've eaten"

"You push me in a corner to answer your questions but when you have to answer mine you start running"

"I don't ever run, I'm simply just saying I'll answer all your questions once you've eaten" He glares at me, incredulous, before continuing "Do you want to help me?" It's very surprising how I just obey his words. It just happens, strange isn't it?

I get up from the chair to his side and before I know it. I am folded in his arms and he pulls me hard against him. I can barely breathe and my chest is heaving--I cannot control it. My tongue is not producing enough saliva. His hands move to the nape of my neck, loosening their grip around me and I take a deep breath, it comes within my guts.

When he strokes my face with the back of his

knuckles and the tip of his thumb, gazing intently at me my mouth slightly opens. My eyes flutter close. I feel him running his hands down my body and I feel tingly when his fingers trail around my bare stomach, then he cups my backside. Flexing his hips, he presses something that feels hard into me.

He breathes down my bare skin around my shoulders and my lips part as a foreign sound escapes my lips but he pauses forcing me to open my eyes with my breath ragged. "Why did you stop?" I ask whispering.

"Have you ever been touch like that before?"

"No" I breathe flushing scarlet.

A sphinxlike smiles appears on his face "you need to eat"

I don't want to eat!

[01/24, 07:22] : 9.

"Sound and colour

With me in my mind

Sound and colour

Try to keep yourself awake

Sound and colour

This life ain't like it was

Sound and colour

I wanna touch a human being

Sound and colour

I want to go back to sleep

Sound and colour

Ain't life just awful

Sound and colour

I wish I never get it all away"

I follow behind him carrying a small cup without a handle and its burning my fingers, a teabag that smells like herbs floating in water that has been dyed greenish and a glass of juice with colourful fruits inside. The unique wood accent wall infuses this room with a subtle motif, while the built in lightening and wall sconces weave in a trickle of ambience. And the plush oversized sectional that looks perfect with fitted large screen television, surround sound and a huge couch.

He sits on the floor on what looks like a cushion folding his legs while I sit on the couch with my legs beneath me. I guess we still keeping the distance since we are few feet apart and opposite each other.

This is me seated on this couch eating sesame chicken noodles stir fry and drinking juice. Me drinking juice, unbelievable. Hablot Brown is softly singing to a soothing melody, this is almost magical.

Sitting here and poking what looks like worms in this white bowl and looking into his deep dark eyes and his lips movement as he chews. "Deal with the anger you are containing inside you" he says twisting his fork on a bowl "and alcohol can only numb the pain for few hours but it cannot take it away"

"You don't know what you're talking about" I mutter trying to conceal my hurt that relates to sound of the masculine voice that is singing in the background.

"You have beautiful eyes" His murmurs "I can see everything in those eyes maMkhungo" he breathes. How can he see everything? This is demonic. Like his devilishly good looks.

"What can you see?"

"I think you are very self contained" I am not. This is bewildering. He throws the worms into his mouth and starts chewing slowly. Not taking his eyes off me. "And very beautiful"

"Is that a compliment?" I smile at sweetly.

His mouth presses into a hard line, but then, almost reluctantly, seems like he's trying to stifle his smile. I wish he can smile. "Take it however you want to take it" he mouths and his eyes soften with humour  
"Why are you angry maMkhungo?"

"I thought we were going to talk"

"Are we not talking right now?" His tone changes, becoming accusatory. He is very sleek and has a silver smooth tongue.

"We are talking"

"Tell me why are you angry?"

I swallow and a lump on my throat strangles me. I grab the glass of juice and drinking from it. If this was wine I would be seated here and feeling rather confident to answer his questions with an attitude that woman gave me when I stood outside the doorstep, cold as ice. "I don't want to talk about it" I seethe.

"I respect that" he takes his cup of tea and bringing it closer to his nostrils first and then taking a sip. His fingers are nicely manicured. "Tell me more about your boyfriend" He smiles, but the smile doesn't touch his eyes.

"Are you gay?" I'd be hurt if he was. I mean. I don't mean it like that. What I am trying to say is I'll be

hurt if he is interested to my boyfriend. He inhales sharply and I cringe, mortified.

"No I am not. Unless you want me to proof it of course" He raises his eyebrow, a cool gleam in his eyes. He does not look pleased. My heartbeat accelerate thinking about what happened in the middle of the kitchen moments ago causing me to heat up again. "I am listening" He watches me intently taking occasional sips of his tea. I shouldn't look at his mouth. Not when I am about to talk about my boyfriend. Yes! I should be thinking about Sambulo and his beautiful Bible verses that he sends to me every morning before I can start my day.

"Well he is being ordained to be a pastor soon"

"That's it?" He's surprised.

"Yes"

He chuckles and cocks his head to one side and taking another sip. "Well your church boy is lucky to have you"

"I wish I can say the same about your girlfriend" I murmur.

His lips quirk up in a half smile and he looks straight at me. "Luckily I don't have one" He says softly. An arrogant, controlling and charming player, I knew it.

"Why?"

"I don't do this relationship thing" Is this why I was warned not to fall for him? Shame she has nothing to worry about because—does she really have

nothing to worry about? I do find him attractive though and charming. I love how his breath felt against my skin and his touch. And the way he looked into my eyes.

Ha ha ha she has nothing to worry about?

"I knew you were a player"

"What is a player?"

I shrug and scowl, "someone who cannot commit to one person" I respond.

"I guess I am a player then"

I gasp for air, I don't know why this came as a shock and it feels like he slapped me in the face.

You are hurt Kwanda, my brain murmurs humming along to the echoey vocals and a tranquil vibe setting the tone. I love his taste in music, sadly I want to break this glass in my hand and stab him.

She's not hurt, she is just shocked. Why would she be sad when she has a boyfriend? My heart responds back and defending me, she is always on my side.

Look at her, look at that look on her face. My brain screams and my heart stares blinking then she shakes her head.

I told you, my brain chuckles.

I am not sad!

"You cannot commit?"

"No"

"Why?"

"Because apparently I have memory loss, it's possible it could be long term" Everything freezes around me. The song even becomes saddening as Hablot Brown lends flawless to the synth-heavy track, more jazzy. My heart beats in my mouth, my hands and armpits. I look at him blinking. The look on his face, he looks like a man in agonizing pain. Utterly lost and broken. My hands shivers and wanting to wrap him in my arms and my feet inches to get up and sit on the floor with him in my arms.

It all make sense. The warning. The mall scene. It makes sense. Everything.

"Apparently?" I squeeze the words out past the lump in my throat.

"That is what I was told" His voice is low.

"You like fine" More than fine actually.

"Appearances can be deceptive" he says quietly. I hate this song playing it makes everything sombre with a melancholy of bitter sadness.

"What happened?"

"I don't remember" He looks so vulnerable as he exhales, "But I know my father died and an event before that" he murmurs with a perpetually enigmatic expression on his face

"You don't remember anything?"

"It's blurry"

"So what happens?"

"It's not like any other memory loss, they said it is unique, rare and very complicated. Today I could remember you and tomorrow wake up not remembering nothing about you. This conversation. Nothing. Next week I could wake up remembering you and everything. I cannot control it. I never know when it will happen" He gazes at me speculatively  
"You're feeling sorry for me maMkhungo"

"I am not"

"You are not?" He cannot hide his contemptuous disbelief.

"Yes" He stares at me incredulous, "But I want to hold you" the tiny drums in my chest increases the pace. It sounds loud. Very loud. I really want to hold him. I don't know why but I want to feel his warmth spreads through every corners of my body that suddenly turned cold.

"What is stopping you?" I get up from the couch and he gets up from the floor, slowly striding towards each other. The atmosphere is undecipherable. I wrap my arms around his and nuzzling his chest through the black T-shirt. He stills and I tighten my arms around him and my hands on his back, feeling his taut toned muscles beneath.

Gradually he relaxes as the tension slowly ebbs away. We stand in the middle of the room locked in our embrace and just holding each other. I am sure he can hear my heartbeat. I can hear his too and his breathing that smells like honey that he poured in

his tea. He is warm like how I imagined. "Are you okay?" He whispers, after heavens knows how long.

"I want to be your friend" I whisper. My voice came out husky.

He looks at me intently. That is why I am being hired for right? To be his friend.

He looks quizzically at me, "Friend?"

"Friend?"

"Does that mean I cannot stare into eyes?"

"Friends "

"Your lips?"

"Friends?"

"Your hair?"

I can't help but smile. "Friends" we are interrupted by the doorknob turning and when I try to pull back he tightens his grip but eventually let me go. I step back. Mhlali walks in wearing a black suit and matching bag the softness in Mongezi's eyes disappears. His chiselled jaw clenches.

What is going on?

Mhlali smiles warmly, "I didn't think I'd find you here Mongezi" she says elated.

"Bongeziwe sent me to fetch his stuff but I am leaving" He is what?

"You don't have to" Mihlali.

He looks towards me, "I have to go, take the painkillers" he says to me sternly then walk out of the room and disappearing around the house. Just like that?

Mihlali takes a deep breath, "I'm sorry but I had an urgent meeting to attend"

"I am taking the job"

"What?"

"I'm taking the job"

[01/24, 07:22] : 10.

"I grew up a little girl with  
Dreams, dreams  
Dreams, they come a long way, not today  
They come un-, they come undone  
They come a, they come around"

When we were children we create this beautiful world in our heads with rainbows, sunshine, unicorns and pink elephants with tears made of candy and trees that look like candyfloss. Then imaginary friends. Our beautiful pink world with birds chirping beautifully and pink muffins with long lashes singing along. Rabbits that can talk wearing big bowties. Makes me wonder were we creating this world to escape reality? The real world. As we grow we find new different escapes. Sex. Alcohol. More alcohol. Work. Alcohol again. Books and more.

Is alcohol my escape? What is your escape?

Many people has brought to my attention about the anger I have towards my father and the hurt but it never echoed in my head like a new song I recently heard. But with him it was different. Usually I became aggressive when someone brings up the topic about my father and very hostile. But as our eyes met, I got a kind of deja vu but instead of feeling like I'm repeating something in the past, it felt like I was experiencing something that will happen in my future. It's like knowing all the words to a song but still finding them beautiful and surprising. I know there's no such thing as meant to be, and yet here I am wondering if maybe I've been wrong. This is all strange. A human who squeezes themselves into my life and suddenly I am questioning myself, what do you call that?

A joke, my brain says chuckling.

I can hear someone talking but my thoughts are stars I cannot fathom into constellations. "Kwanda"

someone pats me. It feels like coming out of water after drowning and gasping for air as my subconsciousness is penetrated.

"Hmmm" I murmur facing towards Sambulo seated on the bed with me, there's a distance between us. "Are you okay?" He frowns searching for my eyes.

A beautiful plastic smile appears on my face, "I am fine just worried about my first day at work tomorrow" I am moving tomorrow. Makes me wonder if I am making the right decision. What am I setting myself for?

People tend to dream that one day they could wake up with amnesia. The hurt, anger, sadness, hatred, sorrow and people completely forgotten without understanding the consequences this comes with. We are not reasonable creatures. Instead of being rule by logic, we are always ruled by emotions. Some people exist in your life to make it better.

Some people exist to make it worse. And some to offer you alcohol, I am joking.

My heart's been on my sleeve all day, and it's pretty bruised up right now at the idea of him waking up one morning completely forgotten about me. The songs we listened to as we sat in the cosy room with white bowls and eating sesame chicken stir fry noodles. Why does that bother me anyways? I mean my boyfriend is right here seated distance apart from me because he doesn't want us to touch. He can wake up five years to come and he will still remember everything about me. My nutmeg skin and my straight body, I have no breasts, buttocks neither curves. I am just a beautiful plank woman, that sounded funny.

Plank woman?

"You'll be okay, you got this" he says "Baby did I tell you that after my ordination I am going to have my

own branch? Which means you have to attend church services with me more often to normalize yourself with how things work out"

"We spoke about this"

"Kwanda I'm going to be a pastor soon, I am going to need you by my side and you know that. Fine if you are not ready now but eventually you will have to come around" He says taking my hand into his. No, no, no. I am not coming around. I cannot even imagine myself wearing a peach three piece with a huge hat that makes my face disappears and asking people to shout hallelujah and saying "Lalela" at the beginning of every sentence. That is not me

I take a deep breath, "we will talk about this not now Sambulo"

"Are you sure you're okay?"

"I'm fine, why?"

"I mean you haven't drank wine since I got here and you haven't been teasing me about sex which is very new to me" Drank wine? Oh. I'll have a glass maybe later.

I chuckle uncomfortably, "I am fine baby"

"Let me change this song. You know Nqubeko Mbatha recently released an album baby and it sounds beautiful" He disconnects my phone and connects his instead. "You should teach yourself how to sing so we can be like him and Ntokozo" he smirks, showing his dimples.

"That girl from your church can be Ntokozo" I shrug

my shoulders and he turns to me, and his eyes blaze with a vague emotion.

"Is that why you've been acting different?"

"Sambulo I am not acting different"

"I told you there is nothing going on between Snothile and I. She just understands me, that's all"

"Understands you?"

"Not like that, come on baby stop trying to twist whatever that I say to you. I am in love with you Kwanda"

"Then why you never touch me?" I question. His touch flashes through my mind and his warm

breath against my skin. His fire inferno eye contact and the self satisfied smirk. "One year of dating but you've never not even once attempt to touch me. We are here in my room, your pastor is not here and I am sure J esus is sleeping and he cannot see us but you cannot get yourself into touching me"

"J esus never sleeps" He says "I'm a pastor Kwanda"

"You are my boyfriend too"

"I want to do right by you"

I chuckle softly looking at his frustrated expression and his eyebrows furrowed. This conversation surely made him disconcerted. "I am just kidding" I say throwing a pillow at him.

He laughs slightly and throwing the pillow back at

me, "You need to stop with your jokes sthandwa. Be patient with me. I don't want you to think I'm like anyone you've dated in the past" He says. He doesn't know I am virgin by the way. He has this picture of me, I portray myself to be.

"I know baby"

His phone starts ringing and he quickly takes it and disconnect from the speaker. All he does is murmuring and responding with a respective tone before he shoves his phone in his pocket. "I have to go" He announces.

Just great!

"I thought you were spending the night so you can drive me tomorrow"

"Bishop just called and someone needs an urgent prayer but tomorrow morning I'll be here"

"Okay"

"Are you mad?"

"I understand" I actually don't, sigh.

"Thank you s thandwa, let me go"

"Amen" I say sardonically and he wears his shoes grabbing his jacket and then walk out of the room.

Within a minute Onalenna and Khethelo walks into my room and throw themselves on the bed, turning me into a sandwich. "I didn't hear you screaming" Onalenna says to me and eating biltong.

I narrow my eyes, "why should I scream?"

"Your boyfriend has been here more than three hours, what were you guys doing?" Khethelo asks.

"We were here talking"

"Anal?" Onalenna

"No"

"French kissing?" Khethelo

"No"

"What do you guys ever do besides talking?"

Onalenna asks and sitting up straight on the bed to study my face.

"Nothing"

"And you're okay with that?" Khethelo

"Hawu, can I sleep?"

"Sambulo is either gay or he is fucking someone else there is no inbetween" That is impossible he just wants to do the right thing.

"Not everyone is like Mongezi"

"Mongezi" Khethelo raises her eyebrow "why not everyone is like him?" I did not mean to say that or even bring his name up for that matter.

"I didn't mean it like that"

"We understand that, what did you mean?"

Onalenna.

"Nothing"

"Tell us" Khethelo

"He touched me"

"Now we are talking" Onalenna brushes her hands together, "Where did he touch you? Your vagina? Your breasts? Your buttocks?"

"My upper body and then he breathed on my skin and...I don't know..."

"You have to know" Khethelo

"I need to sleep"

"All I am saying is Sambulo doesn't see you"  
Onalenna.

"What do you mean?"

"Does he know anything about you or even bother in getting to know you? All that matters to him is becoming a pastor that's all. Does he ever bothers to know you for you. The real you. Not the Kwanda you are pretending to be to other people to protect yourself. No. But you. The gentle Kwanda. The beautiful Kwanda. He wants to change you"  
Khethelo.

"No he doesn't" I defend.

"Believe whatever you want but I think taking this job is a great start into exploring yourself" Khethelo says, with her motherly tendencies "Now sleep tomorrow is your big day" she kisses my cheeks and drags Onalenna out of the room.

He doesn't see me? Is he blind?

This house is extremely exquisite, homely with a masculine vibe, but without full-on man cave feel. I toured around and I am happy with what is my room, unwinding king sized bed and a gray chaise lounge chair, the industrious swing arm wall lamp is artsy. The unique design perched atop the black and white abstract art. There is a large sliding room that offers some privacy, to the master bathroom but keeping the open concept feel when it is not in use. And then on the side of the bedroom wall, there walk-in closet floods with natural and artificial light.

Drawers, shelves, and hanging bar all harmoniously.

The bathroom is my favorite especially the soaker tub basking in nature's glow bathes a peace and hospital warmth. The in floor lightening and wooden bath table only further the serene aesthetic. I'm still going to continue with the tour but my mind is invaded with different thoughts that are all fighting for my undivided attention.

Remember Sambulo was supposed to drive me here this morning? Well he didn't show up since they went to the mountain with his Bishop. He said he saw a vision and therefore he went there to seek for answers and clarity.

Clarity is clear to see, he he he. My brain sings and then grins.

A tentative knock comes from the door before the

elderly woman appears from behind, I am convinced that this woman hates my guts. I don't know if she feels threatened that I might take her job or she genuinely just doesn't like me. "Madam said you will tell me what I must cook" she says venomously as if she is expecting me to fight her so she can punch my vagina.

"Uphuthu nemfino" I respond.

She looks at me clearly shocked and tugging her head in. "Madam doesn't eat that" she spits, "Macaroni and cheese sounds like a better option" you don't get to decide.

"Uphuthu nemfino will do and when you set up the table make sure there's no spoons. We will use our hands. And make sure we have a jug of water too. No juice. Just water"

She dramatically clap her hands and then she laughs like an antagonist in a movie. "Madam will not be happy about this. You are expecting her to use her hands when she recently did her nails? Ungazo bheda wena"

"I'm still saying cook uphuthu nemfino" she looks at me in a most diabolical way then she clicks her tongue and walk out the room. I also have my nails done and I am going to use my hands to eat.

An hour later Mihlali is back and the dinner is ready as per announced. I sit on the table with white bowls and plates before she appears in what looks like pajamas, the garment looks silk and floral. Her hair is long and curly then she sits on the table. "What do we have here?" She opens the bowl, then she looks towards me when her eyes meet the spinach.

I shrug my shoulders and already using my hands

that have been washed eating. "You said I get to decide the menus" I say chewing and swallowing.

"And we are not using spoons?" she frowns.

"It's tastes nicer like that"

"Okay then..." she folds her sleeves and pushes her hair back before she starts eating "Are you happy with your first day?" she looks straight at me.

"Yes but my walk in closet is empty"

"We can do shopping" she says hitting her chest, "Where is the juice?"

I pour her a glass of water and handing it to her, "This should be fine"

She shakes her head and gulp down the glass of water at once. "Tomorrow, I'll decide what we are going to eat"

"That's my job" I state.

She smirks, "You said your closet is empty. We can do shopping tomorrow, I'll make time"

"Great. Kwamadunusa actually has wonderful clothes. With just hundred we can come back with so many clothes"

"Where is that?"

"Thrift shop"

She laughs, "No, thank you" she waves her hand, "I cannot imagine myself there"

"You can start imagining yourself there"

"You and Mongezi will get along well" she says and taking a sip from a glass of water. "You both want things to happen your own way"

"Your son is controlling" the mention of his name makes me smile. But I quickly wipe off the smile on my face.

"Very" she loves her son. I can see it on her face, "Did he come today?" Sadly no.

"Mihlali he told me"

She stops eating and looks at me, "He told you?" she sounds surprised "But you are still here, why?"

"The pay is good" I shrug trying to believe my own lie and look down on the plate and pick up the food in my hand throwing it inside my mouth.

"Are you sure it's just that?"

"Very sure" I state "you have a beautiful home by the way. I was thinking of taking pictures and show people my new house"

"Your new house?" She laughs.

"We are staying together, it's only fair to say its our house"

"You are a lot"

"What did you do to him?" I unexpectedly ask and she chokes, "Drink water"

She clears her throat, "I hurt his father"

"How?"

"I am a very messy person Nokwanda. Well I was, I am still trying to be a better person"

"How deep did you hurt him?"

She takes a deep breath, "His father drove straight to a truck. He wanted him and Mongezi to die just to hurt me the way I did"

"So the accident was on purpose?"

Her eyes are glistening with unshed tears, "yes. Mongezi spent six months in a coma. Doing operations over and over again. I thought I was going to lose him"

"Will he ever gain his memory fully?"

She avoids eye contact with me. Is it because she doesn't want me to see the tears in her eyes or there's more?

"The doctors said its possible"

"Do you want him to gain his memory?"

"Sometimes I don't" she says sadly.

What?

I blink and swallow, "Why?"

"As much as he hates me now, he won't hate me the way he would when he fully recovers his memory. He'd kill me"

"Is he capable of killing?"

"Everyone is capable of murder Nokwanda depends on a situation but I want Mongezi to fully regain his memory"

"Why?"

"So he can remember the truth"

"Regardless of the fact that he could kill you?"

"I told you I'd do anything for my son"

"I want to help him gain his memory fully" I tell her and this time she picks her head up to look at me with quivering eyes "I am not doing this for you but for him" I tell her, "And goodnight"

.

I have a book called BLACK LOVE LIVES that I am selling for only R50. It could help you understand the character of Mihlali but you will get to understand her here as well. I wrote Mongezi POV as per requested but I am not posting it until the person who promised me data sends it.

[01/24, 07:26] : 11.

"You're my kind of woman,  
And I'm down down on my hands and knees  
Begging you please, baby show me your world  
I'm feeling so tired, really falling apart"

## MONGEZI

I love this part of getting to know someone. How every new piece of information, every new expression, the newness seems magical. These days I tend to wake up with her at the back of my mind. When she ran towards me and shouting my name at the mall. The trance of hurt that appeared on her face when she learnt I did not remember her. My insides turned cold. I have seen that expression in a lot of women before and it never moved any of my toenails but with her it was different, she didn't only look hurt but she wanted to send my body in mortuary, my eyes and brain shut with a tag on my

toe.

Her smooth and flawless chestnut skin tone, her waist length thin dreadlocks and her bow shaped lips. The way she frowns whenever I said something she doesn't agree with and mostly her stubbornness. That woman is stubborn. I realize I'm doing one thing I've told myself this whole time I wouldn't do. I'm wanting something I can never have.

Why would I want to hurt her like that? Knowing one day I could wake up completely forgotten about her and the memories we have shared. Why would she leave her nice boyfriend to be with me?

Nice, that all she said.

I have been distancing myself from her. Surprisingly these days I feel pretty normal. I do not

have any chronic headaches nor migraine like any other days. My memory hasn't flushed itself either--it's been four days of being a norm human being.

I remember the accident, no matter how much I forget certain events but that's one memory that cannot be erased. It always dances in my mind like a sad clown on stage forced to entertain toddlers who are busy hysterically crying and running away to hide behind their parents.

My father who had tears building up in his eyes murmuring underneath his breath that it was all my mother's fault before he drove straight to a truck. I never got to beg him to stop since it all happened so suddenly and unexpectedly and next thing I know I drifted into the world of darkness.

I cannot seem to forget the rage in his eyes and disgust plastered on his face like he was seeing a tissue with mucus when he set my eyes on me. He

wanted to kill me, I do not know why. He wanted to kill my mother and he then dragged me into the car and shove me inside. I do not really remember what was the heated argument about but there was my uncle in the house as well who had a gun pointed at my father as they exchanged words and my mother was standing behind my uncle and clinging into his shoulders crying and begging my father to hear her out.

Some days I could be seated with her laughing loudly or just listening to her talking but the moment the memory comes flashes in my mind my hands itch to strangle them around her neck, tighten them around until she stops breathing. I wouldn't do that though, regardless of her flaws but I love her beyond them and still trying to come into terms with forgiving her.

What makes things worse is that she is hiding why things turned out the way they did on that day from me. But here I am in the early hours of the morning after she has left, in her kitchen and making cup of

tea.

I watch her as she walks into the kitchen and brushing sleep off her eyes using the heels of her hands, wearing a white linen shirt that is above her knees and her nipples are perking. Her dreadlocks tied into a lower ponytail and two strands in the front are falling off her face. The moment a web around her eyes has been wiped off she picks her head up and plants her feet on the spot with an opaqueness facial expression. I wonder what is going through that mind. I stare at her from the painted white toenails, her naked feet makes me wish I could soothingly suck them and the warmth of my mouth wrap around as she trembles seeing kaleidoscopic images. She keeps her face straight.

Does she think I have forgotten about her? That would be seriously fun to see how this unfolds in this moment as she stands here as if pivot the earth turned around and batting her eyelashes at me.

"Sawubona" she greets, her eyes feasting on me.

"Sawubona" My voice is cool and making sure that my expression is completely guarded and unreadable, "How are you?" I ask and my eyes dances with humour.

It seems as if the power of her speech has remained elusive. "I am okay. I am Kwanda by the way and I work around here" her voice comes out small as she strides towards the fridge and opening it taking a glass of water.

I pick up the cup of tea and watching her opening the cap of her bottle with her hands quivering like a leaf. "Very nice to meet you Kwanda" Politeness wins out over everything.

"Are you going to tell me who you are?"

I place the cup on the counter and clasping my hands, "so you don't know who I am?" I furrow my eyebrows at her and she shakes her head in disagreement and hiding behind the bottle of water then she bites her lower lip. "Are you biting your lower lip deliberately maMkhungo?" I ask darkly.

She blinks up at me, gasping and freeing her lip. Just meeting her stare sends adrenaline shooting into my bloodstream.

"You were playing me Mongezi?"

"Chabo"

"What were you doing?"

"You made assumptions maMkhungo as always"

"How can you do this to me Mongezi? Do you know how scared I was? I was practically walking on egg shells here"

I stride towards, leaning to place a soft warm kiss on her cheeks and I can see her breathlessly--butterfly effect. I watch her opening her eyes and I give her a small smile, tugging a stray lock of hair behind her ear and my eyes leaves her to drift towards her face. Hovering momentarily on her locked long hair, her neck and her lips. I take sight of her bare feet and her shirt with three buttons opened, she seems smaller and softer and sweet and pretty much stubborn.

I love the way she responds to my touch, she barely keeps still with my arm draped on her waist and my thumb rhythmically stroking her back. "Ngiyaxolis a" I murmur while my thumb skates softly over the nape of her neck and her eyes have been closed again allowing my touch to resonates deep inside

her where it aches.

She blew out a breath when I stop and I step back to look at her. Her heaving chest and half opened mouth. "What do you want me to do to you?" There is no space in between us now. My eyes are never leaving hers and I am sure she can feel my scorching gaze everywhere.

"Mongezi please" The need in her whisper is akin begging then she mewl. I have not touched here nor kissed her but she is already under my mercy.

"Tell me what you want maMkhungo" my voice comes out commanding and her nipples contract into tiny points under her shirt. My grip flexes and tightens around her waist and smiling down at her.

"I don't know"

"You don't know?" My voice is low, almost humming and my index finger softly trailing her nipple, insolently. She moans as I skate my thumb across her left nipple and teasing gently with my fingers.

"Yes" I suck in a hard breath and pulling away from her to grab my cup of tea and taking sips from it attentively watching her looking like a sexually frustrated frozen pea and the innocence in her eyes makes me wanna do unimaginable things to her.

"Why are you doing this bhuti?"

I grin at her, "what did I do maMkhungo?"

"This thing you are doing to me. You know what I am talking about" This is fun. Playful. Sexy. Fun.

"I am going out for breakfast you want to come

with?"

She pouts, "No"

"Sadly I am not giving you a choice. I'll wait for you while you take a bath and get dressed and don't dare touch yourself Kwanda" I warn.

"Or what?"

"Hambo geza Kwanda" she looks at me then turns on her heels to walk out of the room but she pauses and turns to look towards me, "You are always wearing black, why?"

"Black is beautiful..." I pause "you should wear white more often"

"Why?"

"Black and white collides"

[01/24, 07:26] : 12.

"I was made to love her, been working at it

Half of my life, I've been an addict

And she's been good to me

Far as I can tell she's happy"

I think I am coming down with the most toxic virus and its very dangerous that it makes my body burns, even the droplets of water coming from the roof do not decrease my temperature instead it makes things worse that I feel some insects crawling--right there. It does not end there, I feel a need to touch myself. My mouth parts beneath the pressure, it feels as if my breath has been shoved in a glass jar and I cannot open it.

I am standing in front of the mirror, my body dripping slowly and the drops are so sensual forcing me to flutter my eyes closed. I can still feel his breath against the nape of my neck and his fingers trailing on every spot where his breath was tingling me. I drew in breath as I felt his fingers thread through my hair, his touch sending new nerves skittering down my spine. I gasp for air at the pressure circling my own nipple and I start to tremble--I guess I am feeling like this because of the weather outside that I can see through these transparent wall.

I stop immediately when his warning that I shouldn't touch myself echoes in my head. This is dangerous. He is dangerous. What he is making me feel is dangerous. He is not here yet I am squirming and feeling discomfort. He really rid my brain off oxygen. The torturous memories flashes through my mind again drawing as I clad a white top with an asymmetric neckline featuring one long sleeve with

gathering on the shoulder and matching his jeans.

You are wearing all white Kwanda? My brain looks at me as she fixes herself in the mirror then she turns to look at me from the high heel ankle boots all the way to my dreadlocks.

I stare back at her just blinking. My speech became temporarily paralyzed from the time I was asked what I want and the lump just sat on my throat not willing to move and I ended up saying what I didn't want to say to him. He had the most sexy as a grin plastered on his face and I knew right there that demons are using him to tempt me. They are using him. I am not falling for it, no ways--I mean me? Nokwanda Mooncres Mkhungo? Never ever.

I found him seated on the couch with his legs crossed and reading a romantic novel, eyes focused and his forehead corrugated. The moment he saw

me an expression I cannot entirely explain appeared on his face. His gaze travelled up and down my body. My cheeks coloured prettily. I levelled his intense gaze. His black pants enhances his height, narrow hips and not too long muscular legs, he looks absolutely gorgeous and sleek and the very ultimate raw in sexual power. We did not exchange words just smiles and mind fucking eye contact. His hand on my waist almost as if he was branding me as we walked out of the house all the way to the black gleaming car that was just few inches from the ground.

I hunched in my seat watching him as he was fastening my seatbelt and torturing me while at it. He made sure that his fingers do not come in contact with me and when he saw the suffering on my face, he gave me a self satisfied smirk and then shut the door to slide behind the wheel and manoeuvring the car on the road. I did not jump nor fight him when he placed his hand on my covered knee while his other hand was on the

steering wheel as we listened to a masculine voice singing over an ukulele smoothly.

We keep glancing at each and showing each other our teeth. He has such a captivating smile. He is such an Adonis it hurts. I thought we were going to a restaurant somewhere but it doesn't seem like it. The droplets of rain keeps slapping the windshields as we drive through the gate and the strong salty breeze hits my nostrils. A modern beach house located on a cliff and the shape of it that of rectangular boxes with timber slats and glass facades is met with my eyes.

"Where are we?" I ask him when he switches off the engine. Is he kidnapping me? Jesus Christ my mother would go crazy and turn the whole country upside down causing a havoc.

"My house" he responds simply.

"I thought we were going to have breakfast well lunch since the time has moved"

"Lunch is what you're going to have maMkhungo" he says, that smile--devilishly.

"Your house is quite huge" I say as we both get off the car and the small drops touches my skin.

"Abazali bami badla izambane lampondo" He responds. His tone is forever calm and brings some sort of serenity. "Take off your shoes" he instructs.

"What?" I frown

"We are not going inside the house yet"

"Where are we going?"

"The beach"

"In this weather?"

"Your body is so warm, trust me this weather won't affect you but if it does I have so many ways to take care of you" What ways besides feeding me medication and forcing soup down my throat. Is there any other ways by the way?

"How do you know my body is warm? Are you a doctor? Are you a thermometer?" He just stares pressing his lips into a thin line to suppress his laughter. But he cannot hold it. He erupts and I watch him laughing. His shoulders moving up and down, looking relaxed. Like the weight on his shoulders have been removed. His laughter is such a beautiful sound like his taste in music. I watch

him laughing and I find myself laughing with him. We both pause then laugh once again. "You're so funny mngani wami" the moment he uttered that my laughter quickly disappears. My heart drops into my stomach and starts diving into my intestines but it keeps drowning. It dives in over and over again but the dumbskull standing in front me has not stopped laughing.

"Let's go inside first and eat and then we'll go to the beach" He suggests after catching his breath. "You look extremely beautiful in white"

"First thing I found in my wardrobe" I lie.

"I'm glad you did, find it more often" He winks.

He turns looking at me as he unlocks the door with a wicked smile. I hate that smile and how he is making me feel. I hate the fact that I want to be

drowned in his aura and energy, I want him to smile at me like this all the time. "Welcome to our home maMkhungo" he says stepping aside to allow me inside a home that celebrates a beautiful green view with its inner serenity. Perfectly smooth white wall panels smooth out of the wall of its home, gently lit above. Each piece of furniture inside the living room is of a low profile design that leaves the layout feeling airy.

"Our home?" I challenge my eyebrow at me.

"Friends share" he shrugs "What were you thinking?" he attentively looks at me.

"Nothing, your house is beautiful" I compliment looking around and my eyes comes across a wood room divider marks the change in use between the lounge and the dining room, allowing the visual to flow through. The living room rug is cut with geometric shape and a small side table curves

gently into its pile.

He screams asking the feminine voice stuck somewhere on his roof to play a certain playlist and she repeats what he said before soft music plays. I have realised that he loves this white man with smooth vocals who sings over jazzy and soulful instrumentals.

Our fingers intertwines as he takes my hand leading me to the kitchen. The base of the kitchen is clad in slatted texture, to match the treatment of structural column in the room. He manoeuvres me to sit on the chair. The moment my buttocks sinks in, I bend to take off my shoes. "What are you doing?" He frowns.

"Taking off my shoes"

"Let me do that for you" He bends in front of my feet

and pulls my feet up. I look towards the shiny chrome fixtures that gives the kitchen polish finish trying to avoid looking at this intimidating man by my side. I close my eyes as his hands slowly unzips my shoes. He places them aside and his hands comes in contact with my feet, so soft and succulently. I savoured the feeling until both my shoes are taken off.

He disappears somewhere with my shoes and comes back in less than a moment. "Are you okay?" He smiles.

"Yes" I breathe.

"Good want to help me with the cooking?"

"I cannot cook to save myself but tin fish and rice then I am there"

He laughs, "You can do the chopping then just make sure you don't hurt your Septembers and Fridays"  
Unbelievable, I was intoxicated.

"Is that how you call fingers now?"

"Ngezwa izimanga"

I get up from the chair to shove him playfully and laughing alongside with him. Our laughter echoing as we laugh from our bellybuttons like two toddlers who are sugar high.

"You love Hablot Brown" I say peeling the onions while he pours white wine in a glass and handing it to me but he makes what is written chamomile tea in a box for himself.

"They're my favourite band. I listen to a lot of fresh

neo soul and jazz with a unique sonic polish" Is he always this calm and confident when he speaks? The texture of his voice brings serenity like his home and taste of music. Is this how perfection would have looked like in a human form?

"Who are your favourite artists?" I ask taking a sip from a glass, this tastes different from the cheap wine I am normally drinking. The smell is strong against my nostrils and it tastes like stars in my tongue.

He winces, "I have a lot actually but just to name few. Hablot Brown obviously, Tom Misch, Maths Time Joy, Braxton Cook and Mac DeMarco" he counts using his fingers.

"I have no idea who are those people" I chuckle and start chopping as he places the pot on a gas stove after switching it on and throwing spaghetti inside the water.

"I will create a playlist for you maMkhungo" he then smiles and looks at me for a good two minutes and then strides towards the fridge, "who do you listen to?"

"Brenda Fassie, Lebo Mathosa and KB. Thembi Seete made good music when she went solo" We are so different but we seem to collide, somehow, like the colour of the clothes we are wearing--black and white.

He stands right next to me making it hard for me to finish my task with this chopping as he presses his hand on his cheek and balancing his elbows on the kitchen island. We smile at each other, and even though there are so many reasons why we shouldn't but I cannot help it. "What are your dreams Kwanda?" His voice sounds deeper than the usual. I choke on my wine and then look at me.

"I don't have dreams"

"That's strange, can I ask why?" He moves away and taking the onions I have been chopping and peppers.

"Dreams didn't get my father anywhere. Instead he turned into an alcoholic and blamed us for how his life turned out then he packed and left. Dreams do not exist"

"You're allowing your father's past experiences to rule your own present experiences?" My mind is reeling.

"No I am just saying that dreams don't really come true"

"But that doesn't mean you should stop dreaming.

Having dreams never killed anyone. Dreams do come true mama"

"I guess you're right"

"Is that why you're angry?"

"What do you mean?"

"The anger in your eyes. Is your father behind that?"

I take a sip from my wine once again watching him stirring his pots, eyes focused but he never forgets to steal glances at me. "That is something I am still coming into terms with" I tell him honestly.

"Understandable when you are ready to talk about it you will tell me right?"

I nod my head, "Bhuti" I call him out.

"Yebo maMkhungo"

"Do you hate your mother?"

He intently looks at me, "Can I pass that question?"

"No" I state.

He has the enigmatic expression on his face then he looks down to my feet then my face, "You have beautiful feet by the way" I eminence as he redirects the conversation back to me closing his pots. And turning into me taking his cup of tea.

"I wish I can see yours" I go with the flow.

"Do you want me to take off my shoes?"

"Yes"

"What else do you want me to take off?" He smirks.

"Your jacket" I say breathlessly.

"Why?"

"I want to see your arms" My chest moves like waves in the shore.

"Anything for you maMkhungo" Something in the way he says this grabs my attention and I turn my whole body to face him, my eyes match into where I catch his naughty and mischievous look as he

takes off his jacket. For some reasons my pulse is jumping madly and my belly flips nervously. My teeth work ferociously at my lip and I dip my eyes. When he chuckles my face stings with shame. He is standing in front me. He tips my head up and saves my lip from my teeth, "The food is ready" Huh? Oh the food. Okay. My glass of wine is now empty. We make our way to the living room and sit on the white rug poking the spaghetti in our bowls, seated face to face.

"How many tattoos do you have?" He asks looking at the one in my hand.

"I have ten and you?"

He swallows, "I have twenty if not thirty" He shrugs his shoulders. "I want to see all of your tattoos one day"

"Even the one close to my breast?"

"I am looking forward to see that one"

The drizzle rain outside has turned to full blown rain. Making the atmosphere more tense than it is between us. "Don't you drink?" He's been drinking tea.

"I do drink in special occasions"

"I have only seen you drinking, once"

"Do you want to see me now?" My hands start to shake and next thing I spill the wine on my pants. He crawls towards me and instead of him helping me with my dampen pants. He gently pushes me against the white rug. Me beneath him. His watch is hot and severe. I feel the blood slipping from my

body turning my skin unusually pale. The rain outside is heavy. I hide my euphoria by frowning at me.

"What are you doing?" I look quizzically at me.

"Showing you that I do drink alcohol on special occasions now close your eyes"

"Get off me Mongezi"

"Please" Suddenly the atmosphere around is charged with a wicked sexual energy. I am trapped in his stare and bite down on my lower lip, powerless against the fresh desire.

"We are friends"

"I never said we are not friends, I'm asking you to close your eyes" He grins, I dart my eyes between his before closing mine curiously. I can hear a movement, "Do not open your eyes" He warns.

"What are you doing Mongezi?"

"Be still, Kwanda" He murmurs and he's close to me, "If you move, you're going to spill this again, we both do not want that" I breathe. Next thing his lips are on mine, the cool crisp wine flows into my mouth from his. I swallow reflexively. My belly is feeling like a giant flock of birds just flew through me.

My sex furiously clenches. "I drink on special occasions" He whispers, his breath warm on my cheek. I'm bathed in his proximity, the heat radiating from his body even though he has not touched me.

He really drank wine to make me drink it from his mouth? Damn.

"We need to get you off these clothes"

My eyes immediately flutters open, my stomach tying in knot, my pulse is beating everywhere. "What why?" My voice has disappeared.

"Because you spilled wine on your pants" He smirks.

Oh!

[01/24, 07:26] : 13.

"Do you think it's funny that our favourites memories are about people we like the least now"

His smile is broad and lights his eyes with sheer sensuality, all I can do is mirror it straight back. He grins like a lunatic--besotted. "Do you want me to

help you take off your clothes?" That oppressive tightness is back in my chest, my breath falter. A rose flush blooms over my skin. The room is filled with glorious natural light. His eyes have turn a dark slate and he swallows watching me breathing, words are failing to roll out of my parted mouth while his delicate scent fills my nostrils with burning sensuality, curls and twists around my body. He is not touching me, not at all and that alone is torture. "Should I bring back your capacity to speak?" I open my mouth and close it again, twice. "maMkhungo" His dark black eyes blazes at me, his challenge intrinsic in his stare. Desire--acute, liquid and smoldering, combusts deep in my belly.

I try to get up from the floor to catch a breather but he pins me beneath him, my arms stretch out and holds above my head. "Bhuti" My heart is bouncing off my ribs.

"Kwanda"

I swallow, I can still taste the wine and his warmth inside my mouth, "You scare me" I confess honestly and he frowns.

"How?" Both our breaths are ragged.

"You make me want a life I can't have" I hope he can now see the sombreness on my face. One day he will wake up completely forgotten about this and that makes me experience a different type of heartbreak, "and that is the scariest thing I've ever felt" My insides turn cold. "Please help me get off these clothes" I dart my eyes between his. Mines glistening with salty waters that burns my eyeballs.

"You also scare me Kwanda"

"How?" I whisper

"You give me hope..." Hope is the thing with feathers, "hope for so much more" Our eyes meet. There's something between us that wasn't there a minute ago. The universe stops and waits for us. "But I cannot give you a perfect love story and that what hurts "

"What if I don't want a perfect love story?" There is an endearing nervousness in my voice.

"You don't deserve less than that"

"We don't always get what we deserve" His pupils dilates and his hand clasp the back of my neck. His lips brushes mines, stirring electrical tingles. The fire ignites like dry kindling in a roar blaze. This feels different than kissing my hand and an apple. Passion sparkles and flares even brighter, turning my mind inside out and uncovering a need in me

that I never knew existed. I want to touch him but my hands are locked on his on top of my head. His tongue is in my mouth, claiming and possessing me and I revel in the force he is now using. I feel him against the length of my body. This does strange delicious things to my insides. He stops kissing me and opening my eyes, I find him gazing down at me. "Now I can help you take off your clothes" He breathes. He let go of my hands and I do not know what to do with myself.

When his hands starts unbuttoning my first button, I am very much aware of the wild weird little tremors all over my body. My breathing becomes heavily, like I am drowning in an ocean but I love the sexual suffocation. When he unbuttons another one this time my breathing ragged. I inhale and exhale slowly but I am failing. Every sense I have is screaming but he is luxuriating in torturing me. Another button. I gasp. Harder. "Kwanda" A low hum from his throat tingles racing wildly down my spine. "Look at me"

"I can't" I am trembling uncontrollably. I try to withstand the barrage of storming tears while I shake with euphoria.

"Look at me" His commanding tone makes me flutter my eyes open to meet his and in that moment he unbuttons my last button making me gasp and my back arches, "You are very responsive maMkhungo" I can barely contain myself feeling my jeans being pulled out off my feet and the he pulls off my top.

I am a mess, who cannot move nor inhale. "You are so beautiful" He says wandering my body covered in black lace. He trails his fingers over my non existence breast and the horizontal line tattoo between my breast symbolising that I'll forever mourn my cat that my father threw outside the window when he was drunk and she died. I'm still helplessly on this floor around this white room, it's

heady aphrodisiac.

He slowly and leisurely trails chilled kisses from where the line of my tattoo starts down, from the base of my throat, centre of my body, down my torso and to my belly. "MaMkhungo if you do not keep still I cannot imagine what I will do to you" I whimper looking at his eyes hopelessly. He pulls down my bra cups and push up my small lemons, exposed and surprised what is happening. My kitten is ululating. He leans down down, kisses and tugs each nipple in turn with cool, cold lips. I fight my body as it tries to arch in response. His cool fingers trail languidly across my belly. My skin is oversensitive, my hips flexes automatically. I want to scream like that worshipper at church. I am panting loudly. All I can concentrate on is his touch. Nothing else. My boyfriend has been pushed at the back of my mind.

His fingers slips into my underwear, and I am

rewarded with his unguarded sharp intake of air.  
"Did that hurt?" I flutter my eyes and shake my head in disagreement and then he pushes two fingers inside me. I gasp.

Holy Mother Mary!

"And now?"

"A little"

"Do you want me stop?"

"No" I say quickly. He smiles then moves his fingers tantalizing slowly, in, out and I push against him, titling my hips up. I have no idea why I did that.

"Easy maMkhungo" His thumb circles my clitoris

and then presses down. I groan loudly as my body bucks beneath his expert fingers. He leans down and kisses me, his fingers rhythmically inside me, his thumb circling and pressing. His tongue is mirroring the action of his fingers, claiming me. My legs begins to stiffen like how they do after Khethelo forces us to squat. He gentles his hand and I am brought back from the brink. He does this again and again and I am frustrated. I am a ball of sexual, tense and need. He stares down at me for a moment. I was feeling something coming but I do not know what is it. It felt like a wave. "Let me get you something to wear before you catch cold" He smirks getting off me.

What on earth? What is this?

"Bhuti" I call him.

"MaMkhungo" He smiles.

I clear my throat, laying on the floor panting and dehorning, "Why are you torturing me?"

"You are not ready"

"You don't know that"

"Trust me, I know" He says sucking the fingers he was using inside me, smoothly and seductively. "I am coming, I'll get you something to wear" he pulls me up. I am like an angry toddler who was promised dessert after eating vegetables but told to go to bed. He finds a joke in this. He disappears and I try touching myself, "Do not dare Kwanda!" I hear him screaming from the corridor. He has cameras? Eyes at the back of his head? Why do I just obey to what he says?

He comes back with nude sweatpants and knitted

jersey. He helps me wear his clothes like an adolescent. "Why do you think I am not ready?" I ask unexpectedly.

"Because we are friends and you are with someone. I am not the type who ruins other people's relationship"

"But that didn't stop you from doing that thing"

"What thing?" He creases his eyebrow.

"That thing you did to me"

"What I did to you?" I cannot say it ,instead I grab my plate of food has turned cold and eat then I look at him shaking my head. "You are adorable when you are sulking"

"Before the accident were you dating someone?"

"No. I never did this relationship thing"

"You've never did what you did to me to another woman before?"

"They were women in my life before Kwanda, plenty of them" I feel a pang of hurt at the corner of my heart and swallow.

"Do you still have women now?"

"Should I get you a blanket?"

"I always answer your questions. I even told you about my boyfriend"

"I do not want to ruin the picture of me you have in your mind because of my past. Fine there are women whom I fuck but it means nothing" That hurts.

"Do you want to just fuck me too?" Now I turn sombre.

He pins me with his dark look, "If that's what I wanted I would have fucked you long ago"

"And I am supposed to believe you?"

For a beat his eyes flashes his anger and I bravely stare at him. "Have I given you a reason not to believe me?"

"You are giving me now"

"Well I don't know what you want me to say" He shrugs his shoulders.

"What will happen when you wake up forgotten about me and remembering one of the woman you have fucked?"

"Nothing"

"Nothing?" I raise my eyebrow.

"Kwanda do you think I enjoy the fact that I am having this undeniable connection and chemistry with you and I might forget about it tomorrow? And probably remember after two days or weeks, months or even worse years?"

"No"

"Then why are you being hard on me maMkhungo? I want to figure things out too but I just don't know how" We both fall into eternity of silence. My fork making noises against the plate and him looking at me with a trace of sadness in his eyes. "Can I hold you?" He whispers and I nod my head. He takes my plate and places it on the table and tugging me in. Wrapping his arms around me as we are seated on the couch and he kisses the top of my head while a feminine voice sings about wanting to be unravelled.

I wake in the shimmery light of the early sun's sigh. The rays pours in through the open blinds and tiny crystals dances and flutters. The weather is confusing. Yesterday the clouds were heavily crying and now the sun is waving at everyone in the sky. I growl under my breath and looking around my surroundings. The wooden planks line an accent wall inside the bedroom. The different widths of wall plank creates adds interest and texture which is highlighted by a warm white LED strip light along the top of the headboard. Two black modern wall

sconces punctuate either side of the bed, shining down on built in bedside units. The decorative wall sconce glows between mirrored panels on one side of the room and reflects the natural light from large windows.

I spent the night, tucked in his arms as he listened to me talking about my cat, Simba. He looked at me with a hint of a smile as I told him that she used to meow late at night to get my attention and one day when she was meowing as the usual my father kicked her across the room, and then threw her out of the window. The pain reflected in his eyes. He connected with my cat in few minutes without knowing it. He hugged me and told me he is going to buy two cats and we would name them September and Friday.

I asked to sleep in separate room, I was scared. Maybe of the things he has been doing to me or just him not remembering me. I breeze through the door

and it's quite here, I walk through the dark walkway barefooted until I am in the living room. My heart almost comes out of my throat to meet his brother seated on the couch drinking tea with a magazine in his hands. He is dark, not good looking as his brother but his smooth skin that looks like he exfoliate more than I do and full trimmed beard on his face and bald head makes him attractive. He is a type of man I would have gone for any day.

He looks at me with a smile, "Good morning" He greets me raising the white cup in his hand before bringing it in his lips.

"Morning" I say after clearing my throat.

"He brought you here?" He asks amused. Does he think I just showed up here?

"I tracked him" I respond.

He laughs, "You want coffee? Seems like you had a busy night since you are even wearing his clothes"

"Where is your brother?"

He shrugs, "I came here to see him" he responds, "so do you want coffee?"

"I am leaving"

"You won't wait for him?"

"No"

"I won't allow you to do that Kwanda, come with me"  
Oh, he knows me. He gets up from the couch and walking to the kitchen. He is clad in a suit,

immaculately. Different from his brother who is always wearing like he is part of the rock band or streetwear magazine.

I sit on the chair fiddling my fingers and watching Bongeziwe making me a cup of coffee then he places the cup on the table and sitting opposite me drinking his refilled cup.

"Thank you" I say and he smile warmly, "Can I ask you something?"

"Yes"

"Doesn't he forget you?"

"No. He forgets people he started meeting after the accident mostly"

"What happened?"

"He was involved in a car accident..."

I interject immediately, "I know that but why would his father try to kill him?"

"When this whole thing happened, I was away from home. I just found my mother and uncle at the hospital clinging into each other. We never got time to actually talk cause I was grieving utata" He tells me and in that moment the door opens then footsteps follows before Mongezi appears with a brown paper bag and when he sees us he frown. He has the same look he had when I met him at the mall. Confusion dancing in his eyes and something that looks like hurt almost as if he is fighting with his brain to remember something, anything and then its hits me. I chew the insides of my cheeks refraining myself from breaking down.

"I didn't think I'll find you here" He says to his brother and his scorching gaze has not left mine while I pray under my breath, "with a guest" he continues and in that moment everything in me shatters like a vase on a marble floor.

Bongeziwe looks at me once then at him, "where are you coming from?" He asks. Mongezi is pinning me with his dark eyes, looking for different pieces of the puzzle in his head, "stop looking at her like you are making her uncomfortable"

"Have we met somewhere?" He asks.

How I am supposed to answer that?

"No" I swallow the humongous lump on my throat, "we have never met, I'm Bongeziwe's friend" He comes closer to me and strides towards me, I hold

in my breath. I fumble around my brain for something to say and inhale a stuttering breath when he tugs my dreadlock behind my ear and when I flutter my eyes close, tears involuntarily falls from my face and I quickly get off the chair. He looks at me, there is something about him. He is lost. Very lost. The colours on his face has been drained out.

I thought I can handle this, but no.

I clear my throat, "Bongeziwe we were leaving right?" I look towards him with begging eyes. He looks at his brother than me. Me, his brother. His brother, me. He keeps doing this over and over again without blinking.

"Bongeziwe tell me the truth" Mongezi demands his eyes trapping me, "Have I met her before?" His voice trembles, his eyes shimmery.

"No!" I say first.

"Bongeziwe!" Mongezi says sternly.

My chest is heaving, I look at Bongeziwe again pleading him with my eyes. He looks like he wants to cut his head into half. I would too. Seeing my brother so vulnerable.

"No" Bongeziwe answers, and I breathe out and instantly Mongezi leaves the room. "Why did you lie?" He asks me.

"Please take me home"

"What the fuck Nokwanda? I have never seen my brother like that before, ever"

"Can you please take me home"

[01/24, 07:27] : 14.

"Who I am is always changing not because I am being fake, but because I am always open to growth and transformation"

By the time I get to my apartment, I feel like I might throw up my intestines--or punch someone. My mind keeps replaying the scene as he walked through his white walled kitchen looking baffled like a toddler trying to put together a puzzle of some animated characters, and unable to find one piece to connect everything. It was like he was fighting with his memories but his brain was rather dancing and beating drums while his medulla oblongata was singing to disturb him from finding that one freshly stored memory amongst many others. His face when I said we have never met before, I really

cannot figure out if that was hurt or something totally different from that.

The whole way Bongeziwe was asking me questions, I couldn't answer instead I pressed my head against the window like I was in a music video of a heart break song, my water beads touching the corners of my lips. My sniffles filled the huge car with brown leather seats and it smelt masculine and clean.

What did he expect me to tell him honestly? That his brother makes me lose my speaking capacity when he looks deeply into my eyes like he is searching for my sins? It makes me wonder if that is how Adam looked at Eve the moment she walked into the garden of Eden unshaved and her hair falling over her shoulders. Or when she asked him to eat an apple.

Was I expected to tell Bongeziwe that his brother

makes me forget how to breathe when his breath tickles my face or when he was unbuttoning my jeans? Or when his long and nicely manicured fingers were digging for gold inside me. What was I supposed to tell him honestly? That he makes me feel thousands of bugs crawling in between my legs and he did things to me that my boyfriend who has promised me marriage has never done to me? How on earth do I explain this wanton behavior.

No words can explain how I feel, no words.

I want to slam the door behind me--as if making noise will somehow jolt my life back into shape so throwing myself on the couch seems much better, it feels like I am jumping off the cliff and landing on a soft grass. The silence settles around me like a mist, reminding me of what I've been trying not to think about. Nobody's home, they're at work. I couldn't go to Muhlali's house because Mongezi might show up and I cannot help but feel Muhlali is hiding

something pretty major that could destroy her family.

Is that why she wishes some days her son shouldn't regain his memory? I mean why would a mother even wishes that.

This apartment feels like a morgue. I get up from the couch striding to the kitchen. There's no alcohol. I need something to make my adrenaline rush like that day when I was chased by employed dogs and jumping fences. I need something dangerous. Anything. But mostly alcohol and tonight I am going out, I will dance on the tables and cause some havoc.

Yes, that is what I am going to do!

My dreadlocks looks like delicious noddles, curled and decorated with beads. I am wearing a full lace

outfit--the dress is white in colour and the lace styled in what looks like flower patterns covers my vagina and my nipples but rather than that I am showing too much skin that will make me grab attention the moment I walk through an entrance. This dress would have looked more beautiful and elegant with high heel shoes but black sneakers would actually do for tonight to give it a casual look.

One more look then I spray perfume at the sides of my neck. My eyes are pretty much swollen from hysterically crying like a woman who has lost her husband in a shower and I am not going to hide it with make up. It makes the entire outfit looks like a cover page of Vogue magazine or maybe Elle or BONA, okay DRUM.

The door to my room slightly opens and Khethelo walks in looking wonderful in a black maxi dress--she's is always wearing dresses. "Where are you going?" No greeting, nothing. Her blazing trail starts

from my sneakers peeking through my dress all the way to my curly dreadlocks.

"Out" I shrug my shoulder and packing the essentials on my small black sling bag.

I am wearing black and white, yes.

She frowns, "Outside?"

"No, out as in I am going to get drunk"

"Kwanda we spoke about this" she says softly and I only pick my head up and look at her once before swinging my sling bag on my shoulders ignoring her. No one is going to stop me, I'll run around in circles if they do. I want to drink all of this away and dance it away until I cannot feel any of these emotions relating to this situation right now. "I am

coming with you then" No, no, no.

"No, thank you"

"Why not?"

"You are going to ruin this for me. I'm going out alone"

"What happened Kwanda? I mean for the past days you were doing just fine and I thought we were getting somewhere"

"I am doing just fine now and I am getting somewhere at the club" I shrug.

"Did you speak to your father?"

I laugh loudly, "My father died Khethelo, what are you talking about?"

Her eyes widens, "When? How? Are you okay? How is Kayise? Is this the reason why you are going out" she starts blabbering.

"I was just joking" I look at her and she takes a deep breath before pressing her hands against her hips with a disapproval look and immediately I walk pass her before she says anything. I do not want anyone to ruin this night for me especially when Lebo Mathosa is already singing that she wants to be Free--I relate to every single word she utters along to the kwaito beat.

I get in a Uber that has been waiting for me since I have been going back and forth with my friend.

"You are going to eMlazi neh?" The driver in a blue cap asks glancing at me on the rearview mirror and I nod my head with a slight smile then he starts the

engine and manoeuvres the car on the road. The streets are already buzzing, we are heading to the weekend. I can see some women overdressed and ready to take over the streets and men carrying bottles in their hands standing outside their cars and loudly laughing. My heart is doing a little flip flop. My throat is open. My feet are ready to dance.

The moment we park outside I can hear music from the inside and people screaming. I can hear the burning of meat. Some people are walking in and out. The cars are everywhere. The famous Eyadini. I get off the car only for my eyes to meet some girls who are jumping off the expensive car--and the one who is driving has a long blonde weave that touches her waist and her make up is vibrant with long lashes. Her thick thighs are showing under the olive green dress matching it with sneakers, they are beautiful as they all argue about who is paying for entrance and the moment they see me, they give me the exact look I expected from everyone.

"I will pay for your entrance" I tell them, all four of them look at me batting their fake lashes as I pay for all of us then we walk through the gate. The music is throbbing and I can feel it against my chest. The girls on the other side are trying to be my friend but tonight I do not want any friends so I dismiss them. I just helped them because we all came here for fun.

I sit down after ordering ciders, I do not want expensive alcohol either. I open my first bottle moving my shoulders side by side to the sound of the music and wandering my eyes around. To see the girls I came in with already settled and seated around the table full of men, and holding glasses of champagnes--these girls are focused and I am here for it.

I am on my fourth bottle and feeling the alcohol travelling through my system when someone pats my shoulder. "Sawubona" He greets me the

moment I pick my head up, "I think I know you from somewhere" He says, I look at him. Remember that guy who took out a tissue and wiped his shoes and didn't bother about my friend's bleeding knee, this is him.

I blink at him and instead of saying anything I just drink from my bottle, "I don't think I remember you" I place my bottle on the table. And he smiles, showing me his crooked teeth that suits him perfectly.

"Hawu baby girl. I helped you and your friends" he says and fixes his tropical shirt that matches his shorts and today he is wearing a navy carvella shoes, "Is it okay if I sit here? The moment my friends get here then I'll leave" He says and I nod my head although I am uncomfortable but I let him sit with a box of beers then he takes one out and lean back taking sips.

We sit here and I listen to him telling me about his friends who later arrives and instead of them leaving me alone, they join us rather with their girlfriends who are not pleased to see my presence. Feeling threatened maybe? I do not blame them. I look like those sesame stir fry chicken noodles I ate, with amazing music playing in the background and a beautiful man seated opposite me.

I wonder how many cups of tea has he drank today or how far is he from reading that romantic novel he is always carrying around makes me wonder if it helps him feel at ease or it makes him remember, something, anything.

"Akakhulumi yini lo girl Ayanda" The girl in a boob tube dress asks if I cannot speak looking towards me. Ayanda is the guy I have been sitting with. And when I give her a deadly stare she quickly looks away.

Ayanda chuckles, "she can speak" he looks at me and then winks before he introduces me to everyone and I have already completely forgotten about their names. We continue with the drinking and they buy meat. I am now dancing along to the music and alcohol is driving through my bloodstream when Ayanda takes my hand so we can go to the dancefloor. They're playing kwaito—and I am having the best time of my life dancing and going down with one knee. Up and down again, screaming as Ayanda is doing some dance moves with his feet like he is moonwalking. Someone touches my buttocks.

I turn around and Ayanda is nowhere around but a man with a big belly, his buttocks look uncomfortable, they can hardly breathe. "Leave me alone" I say and turn around to continue dancing to the music but instead he roughly grabs my buttocks this time causing me to turn and forcefully push him and he stumbles back.

"Stop acting like you don't want this bitch!" He aggressively grabs my arm and when I try fighting back, he grabs my hair and dragging me instead of people helping me they step aside and watch. The girls I helped earlier are taking videos and laughing. I push him again but he keeps pulling me by my hand and I am thankful when someone punches him. My eyes are blurry as I wipe my tears and in that moment Khethelo takes my hand. I do not ask her questions about how she found me and what is she doing here with my brother, who is punching the stranger that was violating me.

She opens the door to the backseat for me, and I get in then she asks for my bag before she leaves to go and get it, coming with my brother who has turned red as beetroot water from anger.

I close my eyes and pretend to be sleeping the moment they get in a car and Kayise bangs his door and clicking his tongue. "I know you're not sleeping

wena" he sternly says and starts the engine.  
Khethelo glances towards him then ahead.

My head hurts and I am hiccuping from all the crying I have been doing. "Is this the life you want for yourself Kwanda? Putting yourself in danger?" My brother starts yelling disturbing the eerie silence in the car. I cry even loudly now so he can leave me alone. I do not want to talk. I know exactly what happened. "Are you aware of what could've happened if I didn't get there?"

I cry again.

"Stop crying and answer me!" He bangs the steering.

"I am sorry" I murmur.

"That is not what I want to hear from you Kwanda"

He says and I wipe off my tears. "From now on I won't be fetching you. If anything happens to you that is entirely on you. I cannot be going around and fighting people because of you Kwanda"

"Ngiyaxolis a" I apologize again. No response until we are outside my apartment and I am the first one to get off expecting my friend to come off with me but she is glued on the leather seat.

Okay.

I walk up the staircases, stumbling. Although I am not drunk but I was almost there. The moment I walk through the door my heart skips a beat and my tongue immediately stops producing saliva to find Onalenna seated in the living room with Bongeziwe and that very same person I have been saying I'll distance myself from, Mongezi.

"I couldn't lie to him" Bongeziwe says the moment he sees the look on my face, "I told him the truth after dropping you off and seeing that both of you were hurt" He continues saying and my eyes shift towards Mongezi who has this dangerous yet calm look on his face. And his fingers resting on his lower lip.

Onalenna clears her throat, "Do you want something to drink?" she asks Bongeziwe who shakes his head in agreement and then they both leave the room.

I stand in the middle of the room like a chicken without feathers, under his intense gaze. I don't know when he stood in front of me. My chest feels blocked when his hands wrap around my waist. "You lied to me why?" He asks in a smoothest tone, "Look at me" he places his index finger under my chin, "why you lied to me?"

"You remember anything?"

"No. But that doesn't mean you should've lied to me. I woke up with a picture of you in my head which was confusing but it makes sense now"

Tears glistens and I look at him through them. "Talk to me, say something" he begs. Instead of words coming out, a gut wrenching sob comes out of my mouth. I don't think it's because just minutes ago a man grabbed my buttocks and my hair in that manner. It could be that too but just looking into these dark black eyes, my stomach hums a perfect melody like an orchestra. My heart is a lead singer. He cups my face in his hands and I rest on them, my tears landing on his hands.

[01/24, 07:27] : 15.

"Reached into my mind for reflection

The truth is obscuring my perception

So take a hit on this ship filled with resin

On our fingertips

And watch it below"

I tilt my head right back to meet a pair of deep black intensely eyes and he runs the soft pad of his thumb across my cheeks before kissing both my eyes. We stare in each other's eyes like both our bodies are floating into another dimension we have both created. If this was a movie, a tiny feminine voice would've started singing along to an acoustic guitar until her voice turned raspy. I need him. I don't know how I need him--maybe like how Jupiter needs Mars.

My brother walks into the room followed by my friend and his anger pretty much seems subsided but he frowns at the sight of Mongezi and I standing so close together, like I am the oxygen and he's the lungs causing me to take a step back and swallowing my saliva and this man standing in front of me feels a need to step closer to me with that

mischievous smirk I have missed for the past hours of my miserable life. "I'll go get something to drink, Kwanda come with me" Khethelo winks, I steal a glance towards my brother then attempt to walk away but Mongezi seizes me by my arm, I gasp for air when his hands come in contact with my own skin. He has turned breathing a laboured thing. I can feel the bugs again but this time rushing through my bloodstream, my mind and soul.

He just darts his eyes between mines but in that moment Bongeziwe walks in with Onalenna carrying a bottle of wine and glasses. Our sexual tension is disturbed when Khethelo announces that we should gather together in the living room--pretty much sounds like a good idea for everyone since we have snacks prepared and placed on the table alongside the dark bottle.

I am pouring wine on everyone's glasses, and the conversation is slowly flowing as they argue about

the kind of music they want to listen to. The tenseness and anger on my brother's face has disappeared and he's now constantly showing his gappy smile. "I don't drink wine so can I have tea rather" Mongezi requests when I was about to pour him a glass. Then I remembered he only drinks on special occasions. Makes me wonder what that means to him. Was it a special occasion when he made me drink from his mouth with my eyes closed?

I volunteer into making him tea, and he thanks me as I disappear into the kitchen and finally catch a breather. I take off my sneakers first so I can walk around barefooted, I am still in my white dress. I hope I am not making Bongeziwe and Kayise uncomfortable since I am showing too much skin but that is not my fault anyways, I shouldn't be sorry right?

I boil the water while taking out a white mug from the cupboard. He normally uses white cup so this

would do. I have seen him making his tea. I know how many spoons of sugar he uses and that he prefers sliced lemons in his tea than milk.

I am stirring his cup when I pick my head up he is getting up from the couch and striding to the kitchen to lean against the cupboards with his hands on his pocket, "you know how I like my tea?" He has an undeniable beautiful smile on his face, the confusion and hurt from earlier faded long ago and the passion and sensuality I have been longing to see is now back.

"I have learnt few things about you" I say confidently and stirring the burning liquid even though there is absolutely no need for me to, the smell of his tea fills my nostrils has the lemons float around and absorbing the dyed water. I wish this was not an open plan apartment so we can have privacy. Although the others are paying attention to their conversation and the funky music

playing but I wanted to alone with him.

"You are observant are you?" He raises his eyebrow, still standing distance away from me. Words have disappeared. And my heart is humming, dancing and flip flopping. He peels his soft split suede men high heel ankle boots to stand right to to me.

I expect him to do something. I do know what but anything. Maybe touch my hands or hover me with questions I know I'll fail to answer instead he takes the mug from me and sip slowly. I watch every single movement. From the way he is holding the mug to how he brings it closer to his lips and the way he swallows the burning liquid while Adam's apple on his throat moves after every single sip. "Exactly how I like it, thank you" he thanks me politely then returns back to the living room. I feel like I am being tortured for all the sins I have not yet committed.

I return to the living room and grab the half poured wine and settle on the floor on top of the cushion and listening to everyone. Not even once paying attention to what they are saying but my eyes are lost in his. Eye contact is magnetic and a very underrated form of intimacy. Ours is burning with passion and desire and more. The smiles in between and mischievous smirks. Winks from him and I am covered in a rosy hue.

"What was Kwanda like when she was young?" Mongezi unexpectedly asks my brother, who looks towards me first then his cheeks spreads into a smile before he places his glass on the table and balancing his elbows on his knees, leaning forward.

"Kwanda has always been selfless and caring although she acted tough but she has always been soft and a great story teller and a writer. Mom bought her a notepad so she could write all her stories. It was mostly love stories. They were

beautiful and unique, surprising coming from her since she was young. Mom would read chapters to us everyday in the dark which gave Kwanda motivation to continue writing more. She was carefree and always looked at nature different from other people, she loved everything about it" he says, I sit here listening to him like he is talking at my funeral.

"What changed?" Mongezi sounds interested, including everyone in this room beside me.

"Things at home..." Kayise holds a gaze with me "The environment wasn't as warm and loving. I mean mom and dad constantly fought. He was not abusive but what they were fighting about was not just minor and that somehow had a huge impact at how Moon started looking at life. What was once a colourful world to her become dull"

"I think she is still that same old person she was

when she was young, colourful and carefree. But she needs to understand that everyone in this world is breathing borrowed air. She is just looking for someone to save her but no one will. She must save herself" Bongeziwe says and his words are like the most dangerous poison the scientist have created to paralyse your mind, your body and soul making sure your heart starts beating faster first then slowly after that it stops beating. Your mouth slightly parts as you take your last breath and your skin turning pale while your eyes roll back--what a horrific way to explain death actually.

"I don't think that's the case" Mongezi says, "I think she deserves love, genuine love so she can see that not all love stories end the way the love story she grew up witnessing ended" He says that in a deep smoothest and velvety tone that made me choke on wine, it comes rushing through my nose causing me to breath rapidly. Love. We tend to spend our whole lives looking for love. How it tastes. How it looks like. How it feels. Poems and songs and

entire novels written about it. But how can you trust something that can end as suddenly as it begins?

These days I have been wondering about what I really feel towards Sambulo--although at first I thought I was blinded by all these sudden electrifying feelings and sensations that I feel when I am around towards that man wearing all black right now but what I have for my so called boyfriend is not love--maybe comfortability and knowing that I belong to someone. That is what we always long for belonging, titles, affection, acceptance and attention.

"I think she needs something curvy with veins"  
Onalenna says. My brother immediately shoots her a diabolical look causing everyone in the room to erupt with laughter including myself. Something curvy with veins.

What is that?

"Enough about me, stop talking like I am not here" I finally say something.

"The guys are sleeping over right?" Khethelo asks  
"We will share the room and they can share the other rooms" she suggests.

"I am sleeping with you" Kayise says to her. I frown darting my eyes at them. Onalenna gives me a look asking for an explanation but I shrug indicating that I do not have a full scoop. While our friend ignores eye contact. We continue with the conversation, and Bongeziwe is more outspoken than his brother but what comes from his mouth is nothing but knowledge. He is confident too. The conversation continues until the early hours of the morning when we all decide to go to bed and sleep.

The moment my dress lands on the floor as I take it

off the door to my room opens. I am immobile as a statue and my hands are cold, immediately the pigmentation have changed. I cannot find my eyeballs on the floor.

He closes the door and strides toward me. He stands just in front of me reading my face while my nipples perk at him. I am supposed to be hiding but I am not, my feet are planted to the ground and looking at him. "What are you doing..." I do not finish my sentence when his hands cradle each side of my face slowly as he lowers his head, "...here" I finish breathlessly as he claims the softness of my lips with his own. A kiss touchingly beautiful that I find it impossible not to respond as his lips gently sips and taste my own. Between the breeze coming through my opened window and his kisses I am trembling badly. I lift my arms and the trembling increases as I feel the warmth of his body through his shirt, his muscles flexes as I place my hands against his back. His hands grabs my bottom and lifting me up and into him, my legs moves

instinctively about his waist as I am clung to the muscles broadness of his shoulders.

I thought he was going to place me on the bed but he doesn't instead my feet are back on the floor and his single finger runs up my bare spine. "Tell me where do you want me to touch you, show me" My breath hitches and goosebumps blooms through along the trail he is making on my back and shoulders. He traces patterns across my breasts then breathes warmly hallow below my ear. "Talk to me" I let out a honeyed whimper.

"You are always doing this" I say in a breathy voice. He takes a suckling bite on my neck and a sound comes out. I thought I was a kitten for a moment.

"Doing what?" His finger is still gently running along the crease of my buttocks and when he slips his hand further between my legs he finds me already wet, dripping. My knees almost buckles when he

reaches further and circles my berry and spreading the moisture there before pulling away.

Oh my!

"Doing what?" He asks me.

"Torturing me" I swallow.

"I am not planning on doing so tonight. You have to tell me why you lied to me"

"Now?"

"Yes now" He says almost sternly but the texture of his voice is like roses covered in honey, "Keep your eyes on me" He unbuttons his shirt and his eyes blazes as he stares at me. I see a black line art

tattoo at the bottom of his stomach--on the left side. I want to run my fingers in it and many more.

"I thought we were going to talk"

"We will do a lot of talking" He smirks "Show me where you want my mouth" For a second I hesitate. And he arches his brow and warns, "Trust me you don't want me to repeat myself" Tentatively my hands slides to brush my nipples. "Pinch them harder, the way you want me to" He hums and my fingers plucks with more force, doing something I have never done before yet it feels good, making me part my mouth. Once he gets his shirt off, he backs up until he feels a chair behind him. He sits deliberate slowness and removes his shoes and socks oozing sex.

My breathing is erratic now and my breasts plumps with my nipples teased with flawness, tight peaks.

"Woza la" he calls me to come closer to him. I am staggered strutting towards him as confident and seductive as a siren. I stop in front of him and wait for him to say something--I never listen to anyone but following his commands always seem easy. He motions me closer between his spread legs. "Now tell me why you lied to me" His eyes are fixed to my core, "While touching yourself"

"Mo..."

"I am listening" He interjects

Fingers slides to my alluring flesh trembling slightly and he bites back his groan. "I was...I was protecting you" I murmur.

"Don't part the lips yet. Tease yourself then tell me who said I needed protection" I tickle my long

fingers slowly along the crease where my thighs meets more tender and flesh, just barely scraping my nails there.

"I thought... Hmmm" I make tiny circles up one my tender labia then pretty much doing the same to the other and when I start petting the line where the two lips meet, he aches with need to replace my fingers with his tongue but he doesn't.

"Put your foot on one arm chair so you can touch yourself deeper and then tell me what exactly is that you thought" I make noises in my throat. My foot on the chair arm and the other firmly planted on the floor between his knees, the scorching heat between us is unbearable. My nails painted in white gel rubs along the path there.

"I was hurt Mongezi" I circle my plump berry and stroke down to delve knuckle deep inside only to pull out and start again.

"And you think I am not hurt?" I feel something coming, rushing, running like yesterday in his living room on that white rug and immediately he clamps a firm hand on my wrist making me growl. I want to rip the hair of my scalp. We hear a sexual scream. Is that Onalenna or Khethelo?

Mongezi smiles at me as I am still wondering who was that screaming. He brings my hand into his mouth and I watch him with wide, glassy eyes. My panting erratic puffs. A cry escapes my mouth and once my fingers are between his lips he explores the taste in his mouth.

He picks me up again and angles my face to allow him deepen the kiss with the moist sweep of his tongue across my parted lips. I groan low in my throat as I turn fully in his arms and my breasts pressed against the heated skin on his chest. He devours the softness of my lips and lays me in the

centre of my bed and I gasp softly as he runs the soft pad of his thumb across my swollen berry, continuing to devour the sweet intoxication of my lips and mouth. I gasp and press up into him and my bottom shifting restlessly against his arousal as his lips left mine and moves along the column of my throat whistle he squeezes and caresses the aching tip of my breast. "Bhuti!" I feel the warmth of his hand against my own heated flesh, he parts his lips over my pert nipples before suckling me into the moist heat of his mouth, and sending waves of that heat deep between my throbbing thighs. He sucks hungrily on my sweetness and pulling ever deeper into his mouth, tongue rasping that aroused nipple. "Hawe ma!" I scream, crying for my mother who'd pray in tongues if she could see this. Our ragged breathing and throaty groans sounds like a beat to a hip hop song. I gasp out loud when he cups my thighs and the soft pad of his thumb instinctively finding the throbbing flesh and caressing, pressing to the same rhythm as he sucks my nipples harder and deeper into his mouth, teeth gently nipping before biting. This is nice. No wonder

Shaka Zulu said this should be paid for. I splinter into his arms, he continues, tongue latching and his hand pleasure until I collapse against his chest from the intensity of release that leaves me weak and screaming, crying and begging before I feel something coming like a broken tap, water explodes in between my legs.

"Mongezi!" I am pleading breathlessly as his lips leaves mine and move along to the column of my throat and up to latch onto the sensitive lobe of my ear, teeth gently biting and sending quivers of pleasure again to the tip of my breasts and my swollen heat between my thighs. My hands trails the hard contours of his muscled shoulders and chest. My fingers grazes his sensitive flesh moving lower, to touch his tattoo and he groans at my touch and switching side so I can be on top of him and straddling my legs. I look down at his eyes, my body still vibrating. He looks up at me with a smile. My fingers exploring every tiny piece of art on his body. Touching and kissing. Before he brings my head to

his chest then he kisses the top of my head. "Don't ever lie to me again" he says closer to my ear and my eyes shut.

A knock from the door forces me to snap my eyes open, I am wrapped around in strong manly arms and my buttocks pressing against him. The sun piercing through the olive green curtains blind me. The knock doesn't stop. I get off the bed cussing under my breath, grabbing the black shirt on the floor. There he is peacefully sleeping and his mouth pouted while his eyebrows are furrowed. The sun kissing his face looks like freckles on his face. So beautiful. With his muscles relaxed and looking like a definition of serenity.

I hope this is not Khethelo and Onalenna. I button up the shirt before swinging the door open, "What the...Sambulo what are you doing here?" My eyes are out looking like two soccer balls and watching him wearing a suit, all immaculate and sleek. He

doesn't say anything instead he kisses my cheek and takes my hand leading me to the living room.

Lord, why I gave him the keys to access here?

The living room has been set up, surrounded by rose pedals on the floor, flowers here and there making me wonder where were my friends when this was being set up where are they now. "Sambulo what is this? When did you get here?" I look around, the set up is beautiful. On the floor that's a white cloth and cushions almost set up like an indoor picnic with deliciously looking breakfast.

"When I got here your friends were leaving, so they let me in and I got to set everything up" I pressing my legs together hoping the man in the other room doesn't wake up.

"What is going on?" I ask. He just smiles. A

charming smile that made me attracted to him before he slowly goes down to his knee and takes out a velvet box from his pocket opening it, a shimmering diamond ring smiles at me. I blink few times. No excitement visits me. I thought one day when a man kneels in front of me like this I'll dramatically cry elated maybe throw myself against the wall but I don't feel a need to do any of that.

And immediately I hear footsteps, "maMkhungo" His voice says in a corridor. The excitement I am supposed to feel about a man who wants my hand in marriage. Is the excitement I feel that Mongezi remembers something. Last night he did not call me by my surname. He remembers. Tomorrow he might not but this is the feeling I want to feel everyday with him. Not the man who has tears swimming in his eyes when he sees another man appearing behind me. I look at Mongezi and my heart sings opera. I look at Sambulo and my heart bleeds, heavy clots.

Guilt and shame washes over me, my own tears involuntarily starts falling from my eyes. "Sambulo, I can explain" My voice comes out shaky. He shakes his head and standing on his feet. "Sambulo!" I shout behind as he walks out of the door angrily. "Sambulo please let me explain"

"What do you want to explain Kwanda?" He turns to shout behind me, his eyes have turned dark. Looking like something I have never seen before.

"I have been meaning to tell you" I shout back "I am confused"

"You are not confused, you need Jesus!"

"Sambulo can you not talk about Jesus now and just hear me out, please" I am running behind him barefooted. Wearing another man's shirt and naked under. People are now watching us. "Sambulo" He

turns around and aggressively pulls me by my neck wrapping his hand around my neck tightening it, so hard that I cannot breathe.

"Is this the version of me you wanted to see Kwanda?" He darts his eyes between mines. "I am changed man Nokwanda, damn it!"

"Sambulo, uyangilimaza" I say hoarsely that he is hurting me and words seems to be lodged in my throat. I do not know where is Mongezi coming from but he just threw a punch at Sambulo. Who let me go, and punches him back. A fight erupts, and I am seeing two bulls in a kraal.

[01/24, 07:28] : 16.

"Another day to figure our and adapt.

Tapping on the endless, friendless,

& Tremendous earthly map.

Everyday

Spirit defend us

But

We let the dark near us

We let it seep and sweep beneath us

We cannot trust us

When we are superfluous "

I am standing aside like an animated character lost in a jungle, shouting on top of their lungs for their parents and their eyes glistening with tears--the scenario is different. Here I am watching two bulls pushing each other with their long and sharp horns. Sambulo is bleeding and his left eye is now closed then Mongezi has a broken lip. They won't stop. Punch after punch. It feels like watching boxing and no one wants to stop them either. No words are coming out of my mouth, they are lodged in my throat. I tried standing in between them but Sambulo aggressively pushed me and I landed on

the floor on my buttocks and that turned Mongezi into a demonic creature. I have never seen anything like this.

Sambulo is on the floor and Mongezi is continuously punching him what happens next leaves me paralysed. Sambulo just hit Mongezi once on the head, and he lands on the floor with his eyes rolling back and blood comes gushing from his nose. Not just blood, but clots. "Mongezi!" I run towards him and kicking Sambulo who stumbles back. My knees grows and I collapse to my hands in front of him. My head spins, swapped by a toxic cloud. The strength vacates my whole body. "What have you done Sambulo?" I scream kneeling in front of Mongezi and placing his head on my lap pleading for help. "Mongezi wake up" I slap his face, there's no movement. I feel his pulse and yes, it's still there that means he is alive.

Sambulo is frozen like a baby carrot on the side,

watching me crying for another man. It seems as if it all seeking into every corner of his brain like a cheese sauce in a pasta. "Kwanda" he calls me almost in a whisper.

I look up at him wiping my tears, "Tsek!" that's my response to him. His lips are trembling, balling his hands into a fist. "Go away Sambulo!" I say seeing the vein on his forehead. I can hear someone calling an ambulance. I look back to Mongezi, he looks peaceful the same way he looked as I watched him sleeping just minutes ago. I wipe the blood coming out of his nose but it has not stopping gushing either. Now his ears are bleeding too. I am shivering like a leaf. My vision is blurry that I can hardly see but I can hear sirens and people whispering to themselves.

They take Mongezi and shoving him at the backseat of the ambulance and I follow behind. He is now connected with some pipes. I am holding his hand,

here I am barefooted and half naked while my dreadlocks are falling over my face. The female paramedic is doing something to him. We are not exchanging any words either. Until we arrive at the hospital and he's taken to an emergency room. I am advised to stand outside.

My hands are covered in blood including my shirt. My face is covered with dry tears while my eyes are swollen and the salty acidic waters are burning my eyeballs. I am asked thousands of questions. They need someone from Mongezi's family to sign something so he can go for an operation urgently. I just heard the word operation and started hysterically like a toddler whose ice cream has fallen on the ground covered with sand and stones and insects.

After what feels like eternity of turmoil emotions Bongeziwe arrives alongside with his mother, they are running towards my direction. Unexpectedly

Mihlali grabs me up from the chair and throws me against the wall. "If anything happens to my son Kwanda, anything you'll regret the day we crossed paths" she spits venomously "I asked you to help him not trying to kill him!" A slap lands across my face and a part of me wishes she can throw more slaps so I can feel something. Physical pain. Anything. Bongeziwe separates us and shouts at his mother who wants her claws on me. She was about to wrap her hands around my neck--her eyes are fire ice.

"Ma! Stop this nonsense" Bongeziwe says, his voice comes as a roar demanding respect but this moment is interrupted by a man who walks in wearing a full suit looking attractive and impeccable. He is getting fine like wine. It's like looking at Mongezi in years to come. Isn't it strange? How Mihlali just threw herself at him and he welcomes her warmly kissing the top of her head and assuring her everything is going to be okay. I believe him. Every single word coming from his mouth. Although

he is not comforting me but I feel comforted by his calamity nature. He reminds me so much of Mongezi, everything about him.

"Kwanda let me take you home so you change" Bongeziwe says seeing the sudden atmosphere between his mother and this man. He looked at them with a frown almost as if he saw the undeniable chemistry and love between the two. "Malume it's good seeing you here" he continues saying to the man who has his mother in his arms. His cologne has engulfed my senses. "Kwanda let's go" I shake my head in disagreement. I am not going anywhere until I hear something from the doctors. "If anything happens I'll tell you, asambe" Mhlali gives me the most diabolical look. I do not care anymore. My feet are planted on these cold ties not willing to move. I am glued here.

Bongeziwe takes my hand and my feet obeys him as we walk to the car parking. He opens the door for

me to the backseat. "Is he going to be okay?" I ask, my face feels like dried fruits and biltong.

"We don't know as yet, get in" He says. Is he also mad at me? His face is like a marble floor all his dark features makes him more attractive. I clamber in a car and make myself comfortable before he shuts the door. I expect him to get in a car in less than a minute but no, it seems he went somewhere. I sit here wondering what to do with myself.

The uncle who looks like Mongezi what is his story? It cannot be what I am thinking but connecting the dots and puzzles that's the only answer I am getting.

Bongeziwe gets in a car, burning with rage and flexing his hands on a steering wheel while clenching his chiselled jaw then he starts the car driving like we are being chased by demons from hell. "Bongeziwe please slow down" I say softly he looks at me from the rearview mirror and then

slows the pace after murmuring his apology. I ask him to take me to my mother's place and all he does is nodding. No words exchange after that.

He parks outside my gate and the moment I get off the car he immediately drives off it seems as if his mind was flashing into thousands of different directions.

My mother is not around. I am thankful. I don't know how I would have explained the reason I am covered in blood. My heart feels like it will come out of my mouth whenever every scene starts playing in my mind like a song requested in a jukebox. Was I wrong for continuing to lead Sambulo on knowing very well I was falling out of love for him and feeling something completely foreign for someone else?

Does this means I cheated on him? He'll be okay though that I know after fasting for couple of days and asking for strength he'll rise like a phoenix. I am

sure one day I'll be his testimony and he'll call me his dark time, he he.

Sigh.

I hope the operation went well. I cannot suppress the thought of him waking up completely forgotten about everything and not even remembering me. I am going to the night prayer today, just to pray for him. Maybe that sounds like a bad idea since I am not ready as yet to see Sambulo and if anything happens to Mongezi--I will never forgive him.

I think I might have fell asleep since someone is shaking me and I can hear a soft singing and a sonorous masculine voice leading. "Kwanda wake up" my mother says. I blink my eyes few times and she is standing in a floral dress and a cloth wrapped around her head. "Khona abazalwane" she announces that people from church are here. "Sambulo brought them here" she continues saying.

"He what?" I widen my eyes.

"What happened Kwanda?" she searches for my eyes. I do not have time to answer her questions as I jump off the bed attempting to walk out of the door but my mother pulls me back, "Do not even think about it Kwanda. Don't embarrass me!!"

"You don't know what happened mama"

"Then tell me Kwanda, tell me. Sambulo has a swollen face and crying outside. What did you do to him Nokwanda. Hmmm?"

I swallow, "Nothing mama" I respond huskily.

"It cannot be nothing. Mihlali called me, she told me she doesn't want you anywhere near her son and she is going to pay the amount she promised you and you still want to tell me its nothing?" What? Mihlali cannot do that to me. Not when she was the one who approached me. No. I refuse. "Don't dare cry Kwanda without telling me anything"

"Sambulo wanted to propose..." I pause "...but he found me with Mongezi and they fought but mama--"

She gasp and interject "You will find me in the living room" that all she says and walk out. It always an issue when women are capable of doing what men can do. But we are not there. I put on the dress and padding to the living room to meet Sambulo who looks like steamed bread, seated on the couch and his head bowed.

The moment I walk in an old woman makes me

kneel in the centre and all the sudden they casting out demons out of me. Who is the demon? Me? The fact I fell out of love with a man of God? The man who is fighting for his life because of the same man of God?

I don't understand.

I kneel here with my eyes open and watching these people praying from the depth of their souls. I don't know what happened but I start crying. And no, I do not have demons but I am angry at Sambulo for doing this. Couldn't he come and talk to me like two civil adults? Rather than interfering his people from church as always.

They start praying loudly now, in tongues even probably because of my cries. They are shouting Jesus' name. I try getting up but they are pulling me back. My mother finally shouts that they should leave me alone. "Leave my daughter alone and get

out of my house" she yells. "Leave her!" she shouts.  
My hearts feels like it has been covered by a  
blanket seeing her standing up for me.

"Her demons are using you" The one with missing  
tooth says.

Haibo!

"Get out of my house!" My mother yells. The all walk  
out including the men in oversized jackets.  
Sambulo stands on his feet and looks at me once  
then he walks out of the door. That look was very  
dangerous. If looks could kill then I'll be long gone.

"Thank you ma" I murmur.

"Go and talk to him"

"Who?"

"Sambulo, talk to him Nokwanda"

"I can't"

"Do you even feel sorry for what you did to him?"

"Mongezi is fighting for his life" I defend.

"And whose fault is it? You were leading two people on here. They are feelings involved and for once in your life Nokwanda face your damn problems!"

[01/24, 07:28] : 17.

"--Enter If You Dare--"

The imagery in my mind

Describes a library

With elevated hallways and columns

Walk ways, maps, themes of solemn

Room inside of rooms with high volume

And an escaped door

On ceiling

And deep into the floor'

I stand in the living room after my mother disappeared with my feet just planted not willing to move--running away from my problems? It felt as if I put on my training shoes all the time and start running away from demons who are naked behind me, laughing and chuckling while I keep falling, crawling and stumbling.

Maybe I am running away from my problems but it also seems like a very much better option than having to deal with so many rollercoaster of

emotions.

How do you face your problems anyways? Do you organise your mind first? Do you pray? Do you read? And then sit down and talk about emotions even you don't understand where are they coming from.

Life is an entanglement shame!

After hours of rethinking my whole existence, I decided that maybe I really need to talk to Sambulo because I might have hurt him. And I guess he has a lot to unfold to me about who he really is because I saw him in a very different angle this morning. He strangled me and what he said to me while he was squeezing the breath out of my lungs made me question a lot about him.

I park outside his gate before going in. There are two cars parking inside and I hope his pastor or

anyone from church is not here and start continue praying for me from where they left off.

I knock on his door but there is no response, very strange since I can hear soft music playing and some sounds I can only explain as animalistic—maybe they are praying.

Luckily I brought the keys he gave me so I unlock the door and let myself in to find a bottle of wine on the table and two glasses. I examine the other glass to check for any lipstick prints or lip gloss but nothing. I take a gulp breather. What caught my attention is the masculine wrist watch, that looks like I have seen it somewhere before maybe in a catalogue. And then there's a packet of cigarette that has been left opened.

Sambulo and alcohol? Maybe its the anger.

The sounds erupts again. More louder now that I am inside the house and someone is calling out Jesus' name--this sounds like a powerful prayer.

I flutter the door open in his room to meet with the naked Sambulo who is violently slamming into someone, going as deep as he can and his buttocks looking like squashed marshmallows. I cannot see his face nor the person beneath him. His tempo increases rapidly while the other person beneath keeps rocking back and forth to meet his thrust. I cannot move. I want to move but I can't. My breathing is ragged and I can feel bugs and insects crawling all over my body in a very strange way--so strange. A deep grunting sound comes from Sambulo's throat. What caught my attention is that the person beneath him has rather a masculine voice as they moan and my eyes travel to see something dangling in between their legs looking like an iron bar. Huge and the veins are scary while the crown is swollen and bathed in clear. Harder and faster Sambulo moves. Pounding, thrashing

and thrusting.

I am confused. All my emotions are spiralling out of control at once. The person beneath is pumping their prick like mad. This is rough and hard before they both roar loudly and I gasp for air feeling something leaving my body only to look in between my legs and my urine is slowly travelling all way down to my feet and in that moment Sambulo turns to meet me and his facial expression like a cartoon. His eyes out and mouth parted. "Nokwanda" that is not coming from him but the man who was beneath him pushing their dreadlocks backwards. I look at him, my eyes glistening like crystals. My hands shaking. "Mntanami let me explain" my father says grabbing the duvet on the bed to cover himself and all I can do is darting my eyes between them and shaking my head.

My boyfriend and my father? He he he, no.

My chest heaves feeling sick in my stomach and next thing I throw up looking like an anime spewing noodles before running out of the house and wiping my mouth. My eyes have become blurry and burning. I feel a gust of wind. Feeling dizzy as if I am swamped by the toxic cloud. I almost fall on the floor running and not seeing where I am going and before I can reach the gate someone pulls me back by my hand. "Kwanda let me explain" Sambulo says with a shaky tone. I feel my face heat at the sight of him. My father standing from distance. "Baby please let..." My hand lands on his cheek. A loud clap before pushing him aside and striding towards my father who looks like a wet cat.

"Is this the reason why you left us?" I look at him straight in the eye so he can see my pain. My anger. My hurt. "Is this why you packed your things and left baba?" As the words leaves my mouth it feels like swords are stabbing my esophagus. "Does mom knows about this?" He is just blinking at me with tears covering his eye lids and I erupt like a

volcano with laughter, clapping my hands together

He looks at me almost as if he can feel my pain when he doesn't. I drag my feet and ignoring him since he has suddenly regained his ability to speak. Shouting my name as if he learnt it for the first time. Sambulo cannot look at me in the eye. I get in the car and drive off. I am shocked that my body can still manage to drive. I keep mumbling under my breath until I am home swinging the door and shouting for my mother who appears in the corridor ready to shout but when she sees the messy condition I am in she pauses. "What happened Kwanda?" She takes slow steps towards me. I stand here. Just chuckling and aggressively wiping my tears. I smell like urine. My dress is drenched and my underwear. "Kwanda talk to me"

"You knew about this?"

She shakes her head in agreement, "Sambulo came

to ask for my blessing before he can propo--"

"Not that ma!" I shout and she almost crawl out of her skin. "You knew that dad was gay?" My heart is moving back and forth.

"Where did you get that from?"

"Answer my question!"

"Kwanda where did you get that from?"

"Answer my question ma please" I choke in between my words trying so hard to keep my eyes open. Tears are dancing around my eyelids.

Her shoulders hang low and she tightens the robe around her waist with her hands shivering and her

mouth trembling. "Yes" that all she says, "And that's why he left"

"You lied to me?"

"I never lied to you Kwanda"

"You did mama! You lied to me. You said he left us because he was blaming us for how his career turned out. That is what you said to me. You made me stop believing in dreams because of how things turned out for my father. And you watched me not saying anything. You watched me ma!"

"I was protecting you!" She yells pointing her finger at me.

"From what? What is that you were protecting me from?"

"The truth Kwanda!"

"How are you going to protect me now? How are you going to protect me since I saw my own father and my boyfriend having sex and shouting on top of their voices. How? Can you protect me now?"

"Nokwanda..."

"Kayise knows?"

She shakes her head in disagreement, "please don't tell him Nokwanda, please. No one should know about this"

"Do you even care about how am I feeling or you bothered about people finding out about this?" No response, just great. I walk away and leaving her

hysterically crying. The drive to my brother's place felt like driving to Egypt. My life has just took a drastic turn and I don't even know how to crawl out of this.

I knock on the door and Kayise appears in brown pants and bare at his torso. I do not say anything and just throw myself in his arms and allowing myself to be vulnerable in a way I have never been before. He embraces me with so much warmth. Love and care.

He kisses the top of my head without questioning me nor saying anything. Just holding me in his arms, "come inside princess" he says and then wipes my tears with his thumb.

I wish I was him. Unaware of everything with my own house with a serene interior design and eating dragon fruits.

I take a bath allowing the drops of water to touch and burn my skin just to feel some sort of pain that mirrors my own. Every scene invades my mind. Mongezi falling on the ground and bleeding from his nose and ears and I cringe. Sambulo groaning and pounding. My father screaming in ecstasy. My mother who looked like she was in agonizing pain. All of it flashes at once and a loud cry escapes my lips, hugging myself as the water from the roof keeps dripping. Slapping against the marble floor. The sound matching the sombreness of my mood.

[01/24, 07:28] : 18.

--Reality is fake--

I cry for my future children

Who will live judged and carried by how they look

Nose

Cheeks

Lips

That never fit.

Yes, the system works.

It works perfectly

But not for you and I

Yes, the system works

Far from broken

It's just not made for you and I

Carefully constructed in black and white

To oppress black

And lift white

A system not made for you and I but

Tears run only so long

Yes, ride out wave only so long

And then time for action"

The water keeps touching my skin flawlessly and

my skin that has occurred maceration suddenly feels like satin fabric whenever the droplets touches and drip. My hands have become lighter in colour and wrinkly as a prune. It feels soft, wet and soggy to touch. I cannot feel the burning sensation anymore because of the numbness. A sound and a gut wrenching sob that has been coming out from my mouth had turned mute. My mouth is just opened with no sound coming out and choking from the tasteless liquid.

I am not sure if tears are still streaming down my face but I can feel pain in every part of my body. My muscles. My veins. My lungs but mostly in my heart that feels shattered and not functioning like how it normally does – my pulse is moving slowly like everything happening around me.

I don't know what really hurt the most. Discovering my father's sexuality maybe? I have nothing against homosexuality instead I stand for it.

Why does it hurt though? Is it because he was painted as an antagonist in this story while my mother was a protagonist when she also flawed?

It all suddenly became clear. My dad would be the one to pick and choose what I should wear before placing me in between his legs and styling my dreadlocks, he listened to me telling him how much I hated the fact that I was always a child and never a mother when we were playing houses a kid. He was gentle with me. Very gentle that at some point I gave him an award of being the best father in the world. He really was. Not only to me but to my brother too. We never felt abandoned nor neglected until the ruckus started erupting in the house and there was a lot of hostility and harsh exchanging of words.

The drinking, was he trying to be strong for himself with the intoxicating liquid because no one was

there for him? No one understood him nor he understood himself and what he felt towards his same gender.

"Kwanda if you don't come out I'll kick down this door!" I hear my brother shouting from the outside and his knuckles pressing against the door. I have been stuck in this modern bathroom with flush amount cabinets, a walk-in shower and rain shower head for overly hours. "Mooncres!" He shouts. I cannot get myself to respond back, seated on my butt on the brown floor and feeling weak like overcooked noodles. My body feels like it's covered with nail blanket.

I gasp for air when the door swings open. He has his eyes shut as he hands me a white towel making sure that not even once he sees my nakedness and when I have draped it around my body he scoops me in his arms, taking me to another room. I cannot speak. I am vulnerable in a way I have not imagined

myself--I have always mastered suppressing and hiding my emotions but this time around it feels like a difficult task to accomplish.

"While you are still dressing up. I am going to make you something to eat and bring you a bottle of wine okay" He darts his eyes between mines mirroring my pain. He has always been like this. When I am sad, he becomes sad. He always put himself in my shoes to relate more to what I am going through -- selfless isn't he?

"No alcohol please" I cannot believe those words are coming from my mouth. Nor he does either. He blinks at me. Then the memory flashes in my head when Mongezi had a white bowl in his hands poking and chewing before he told me that alcohol can numb the pain but not take it away, he looked glorious than ever in all black. He always does. I hope I get to see him again gracefully wearing that dark colour but making it look bright. His calamity

nature.

I don't want to take away this pain either -- I want to feel it. I want to drown in it until I cannot feel nothing anymore.

Facing your problems huh? My brain murmurs pouring herself a glass of wine and trying to tempt me.

Kayise stands in the middle of the bedroom. "Talk to me Kwanda, you are not yourself" He says in a saddened tone. "I have seen you hurt and in pain before but not like this"

I laugh softly as the usual -- something is wrong with me in the head. "I am okay" I say in a sing song and avoiding eye contact. I can feel them coming. Like an angry wave in the ocean. They cloud my eyes.

I am so scared to tell him. I cannot tell him. Why I must be the one to carry this burden on my shoulders?

He searches for my eyes and take a step closer to cup my face. His tears glistening in his eyes to reflect my own melancholy of bitter sadness.

"Please talk to me" He begs in a shaky tone. He has always been the soft one. While I am the tough one. Not today. Or ever. I don't see that happening again.

Tough? Reality has shown me that I am not as tough as I imagined myself to be.

How can you be tough? After finding out the man who made you believe you were the one for him, the marriage promises, trying to change you, strangled you almost to death has been making your father scream like an animal and spanking his buttocks

like a toddler who is being disciplined.

Tough? Nope. I am far away from that word.

"I want to be left alone" that comes out as a whispery and he opens his mouth to say something but I immediately interject, "Please"

"When you're ready we are going to talk?"

"Yes" I smile.

"I love you Moon"

"I love you too Scooby-Doo" That how I'd call him when we were young.

"Are you sure you don't want a glass?"

I giggle and wiping my tears, "No." I respond.

He laughs slightly, "this is scary" I know.

I roll my eyes at him but my tears fall and choking me from laughter then he kisses my forehead before leaving the room and the sombreness invades every corner of this room including the eerie of silence.

In the morning I woke needing to see him. There was heaviness in my chest as if someone has sat on it. My thoughts were flashing into so many directions but I focused more on the direction that pointed at him. I want to talk to my mother. And my father. Not now though. I don't think I have anything to say to the man of God at this moment but right now, I need to see Mongezi.

I want to hold, touch and sniff him. Although I won't get to stare into those deep dark black eyes that are hiding something nor feel the warmth of his breath against my skin but I want to be in his presence.

I left the house before my brother woke up in the morning. I couldn't wait any longer. I didn't want to waste anymore time – what I feel towards this man is incredibly dangerous in a most beautiful way. Like escaping in a world with pink skies and blooming flowers.

I find Bongeziwe seated on the chairs with a cup of coffee, in same clothes from yesterday. He seems like he has not left this place. I have expected his mother to be here as well. "Nokwanda" He says when he sees me. His eyes bloodshot red as beetroot water. The colours on his face has been drained out. "What are doing here?" He asks getting up from the chair. "Are you okay? You look like you

have been crying" concern is laced in his voice.

"I am sure I look much better than you" I tease to lighten up the atmosphere, "How is he?" Asking that question tastes bittersweet.

He breathes out, "The operation went well..." I did not realise that I have been holding my breath until now and my hands are tightly gripping the nylon pants that belongs to my brother "...the doctors said when he wakes up he could be worse and mentally ill or his brain will slowly start functioning normally again"

"He'll remember everything?"

"Not entirely. But he can forget things but it won't take him longer to remember than before. He could remember several hours later or a day" That sounds like good news to me. I am optimistic. "As time

goes if he takes his medication then he'll fully regain his memory and his brain will perfectly works normally again. But when he wakes up now I doubt he'll remember anything maybe after a day or two"

"You don't sound happy"

He smiles, "Trust me I am. But my family is going to fall apart after this and I don't think we will ever recover. I might lose my only brother"

"What do you mean?"

He hangs his head low and trailing his fingers on his cup. "Do you want to see him?" I shake my head in agreement before he leads me to the ward.

The machines connected to him are peeping. His face covered in an oxygen mask and his head

covered in a white bandage. I swallow my saliva and look towards Bongeziwe who just nods standing by the door while I stride towards the peaceful looking human. He shuts the door behind to give me privacy.

Very strange that he is not looking into my eyes or smiling at me yet I feel all these strange and foreign sensations all over my body, I have lost my ability to inhale and exhale.

I sit on the chair beside him. I have no words anyways. This is what I wanted being in his presence and touching his hand with nicely manicured fingernails and tattoos. And I finally get to read what is written on his hand.

"My mind wants everything that is worldly. Enough is never enough. My soul yearns for freedom from mind" The tattoo written in typewriter fonts says. I kiss the back of his hand and placing it on my face

to feel his warmth. There is a ring mark on his index finger. That black ring he is always wearing.

I sit here with nothing but serenity washing over me before having to leave. I had to force Bongeziwe to go rest as well and come back later since he looks messy. He cringed when I mentioned his mother making me wonder what has happened. The missing piece of puzzle that I connected was spot on maybe?

I find Kayise looking like he has been waiting for me. He has a lucid facial expression on his face and I can hardly figure out what is he thinking. "Mom called me" He says as I walk in. What she told him? The truth, maybe. I am sure she did by the look of things.

Why is he looking like that?

"I wanted to tell you" I murmur.

"But you didn't"

"Kayise I discovered that our father is gay and sleeping with my boyfriend. Cut me some slack!!" I scream out.

He freezes. "What did you just say?" He furrows his eyebrows.

Wait!

"Kwanda what did you just say?" He yells.

"What did mom tell you?"

"What did you just fucking say Kwanda?"

I humongous lump starts forming on my throat,  
"Mom lied to us. The reason why dad left was  
because he is gay"

[01/24, 07:28] : 19.

"Your soul hungers for love that reminds  
It of its own beauty and power"

I am standing face to face with my brother who  
looks like he is covered in pink and rose glitter and  
sprinkles. His eyes have something dangerous in  
the them -- poisonous and scary that I am gripping  
tightly to the either sides of these grey pants and  
my palms are sweaty. "I am sorry" I murmur under  
my breath. I do not know why I am even apologising  
but it seems right uttering those words. His chest is  
moving in waves. Up and down. Inhaling and  
Exhaling. In and Out. "Kayise I am sorry" I repeat.

"Why you're sorry Kwanda?" He frowns.

I shrug and the salty river starts building up in my eyes and burns my eyeballs, painfully. "When did you find out about this?"

"Last night before coming here. Sambulo showed up at my place. He wanted to propose but he found me with someone else. He strangled me almost to death. He strangle me so hard and my eyes rolled back and I saw Jesus himself at that moment" I say dramatically. He wants to laugh but his anger won't allow him. "Then he came home with people from church to cast out my demons. I went to his place so we could talk" everything starts becoming bitter and hard to swallow when the scene flashes in my mind. My heart beats abnormally fast. "I found dad with Sambulo"

"You found them?" He raises his eyebrow. I do not want to get into details with this.

"They were..." I dry hump the air to show him instead and Kayise chuckles shaking his head. I want to see a sense of calamity in his eyes and face but it is not there.

"Sambulo strangled you?" I shake my head into agreement and his jaw clenches aggressively before he grabs his car keys on the table. I stride towards him holding his palm looking into his eyes with mines that are glistening with tears.

"Don't do it please"

"I want to talk to him, Kwanda"

"I don't think that's a good idea right now but the person who needs us the most here is our father Kayise"

He sardonically laugh "Our father? Are you listening to yourself?"

"He needs us Kayise. He has been alone for so many years. No one was there for him. Not a single person instead he was pushed away"

"I don't have a father who is gay!"

"You are being unfair right now Kayise"

"How am I being unfair? The person who needs us here is mom not ubaba"

"Because she is not gay?"

"Take it however you want to take it"

"So you're going to side with her even after she has lied to us and not dad since he is gay?" I dart my eyes between his.

"Who are you?"

"What do you mean?"

"Since when you care about dad? He slept with your man yet you are standing by him?"

"He needs us!" I shout.

I am standing by him? Am I? I should be feeling different emotions towards him. Anger or maybe hatred. Instead I want to comfort him and hold him. I want him to know that I am here for him--he is not alone nor is he different.

Kayise throws his hands in the air. "What changed you? You're different" He attentively looks at me and then sit on the couch balancing his elbows on his knees. "There is love burning in your eyes"

I tug my head in, "Love? You are crazy. There is no love burning in my eyes" I respond.

"How come you have easily forgiven ubaba?"

I am still standing. My feet cannot move. I have so many things running through my mind at once. I do somehow feel different. "I have a throbbing headache. I am going to bed" I come up with a perfect excuse and all he does is nodding. My feet slowly drags themselves to the bathroom first. I stand in front of the mirror to stare at my reflection.

I am not different. My nose is still sharp with bow

shaped lips and gingerbread skin tone. Although I have saggy bags under my eyes and my face looks pretty puffy but I am still the same --nothing different.

Am I feeling different? I do not know maybe.

I throw myself on the bed and hugging the pillow close to my stomach inhaling deeply from the depth of my soul and slowly shutting my eyes. I can hear my brother's car moving from the outside. I do not have it in me to get up and stop him. Everything in me feels heavy.

My phone vibrating from my pockets interrupts me and I immediately flutter my eyes open. I have fallen asleep, seeing the unknown number flashing on my screen makes my heard buzzes with steel like sounds like church bells.

First thing that comes to mind is that something happened to Kayise or he murdered Sambulo or even worse -- maybe killed both of them alongside my father.

My tongue, is not producing enough saliva at this moment and the vibration hasn't stopped either causing the level of my anxiety to increase with every second.

"Kwanda" A familiar sound drawls on the phone after swiping through the green button. "It's Bongeziwe" he continues saying and my eyes speeds. Moving left and right. I am holding my breath as if I am underwater.

Mongezi!

"Is everything okay?"

"He is awake" He sounds alive. Different from the tone that sounded defeated and given up. I can hear a smile in his voice. I am smiling too wiping my tears and getting off the bed to stand on my feet. "He doesn't remember as yet but he wants to see you"

"Why?"

"On his phone there was a picture taken that night when you guys danced together. He has saved it on his notepad and there is something he wrote there from all the moments he met you. So he wants to see you"

He did that?

"I don't know" I am scared of going there and the connection and chemistry we share is just not the same. Maybe what I feel towards him won't be

mutual. I cannot bare seeing that confusion plastered on his face.

"Please" he pleads.

"Okay fine"

"Thank you, I'll send someone to fetch you" He says sounding elated like a teenager who is new in high school who thinks everything is going to be sunshine and rainbows little do they know they're going to be given wrong directions to the Tuck shop.

I get off so quickly in the car and the driver is taken off by surprise as I leave the door open and running inside the hospital. I cannot wait to see him. The sky has turned dark and the bright stars are humming while a full moon is bouncing up and down beautifully. I have changed into a white dress -that I left at my brother's house.

White dress, yes.

Suddenly joy and excitement has wrap itself around me like a gift. When Bongeziwe sees me he leads me to his ward. He has freshen up and looking much better than earlier showing me his delighted smile.

Where is the mother? And the uncle? I am scared of asking though.

He is seated up straight and lithe on the bed with a novel on his hands written Sense and Sensibility and his eyes focused. When he hears my movement he picks his head and turns to face towards my direction and a smile appears on his face. His eyes full of warmth that I truly adore, "maMkhungo" He says so smooth and warmly that warmth spreads through every corners of my body

even the ones that has turned cold.

My lips are pressed tightly, "bhuti" that comes almost as a whisper standing like a goat afraid of being slaughtered and he closes his book and places on the table, shifting and patting the empty side of his bed. I am a bit hesitant but he gives me a stern look and my feet obeys.

I get on the bed and placing my head on his chest carefully and looking up at him pale face and his head covered in a bandage. He is gorgeous as the night we last spent together when he made me feel foreign things. "You look more beautiful than I described you" He says after our eternity of silence. He is dragging his voice from his chest since he is drugged. The atmosphere is wheezing with something I cannot describe in the air but it's sweet, glittery with feathers and diamonds.

"Where?" I smile at him.

"In my notepad. I didn't want to forget about you anymore so I have written everything about you on my phone" He tells me. I am covered in a rosy hue. "Words cannot describe how beautiful you are maMkhungo. And you look amazing in white" His soft lips touches my forehead and our fingers intertwining. They are also painted in a white gel. The physical touch feels electrifying and scorching.

I look towards his book. "You are always reading romantic novels" I chuckle.

"I didn't before the whole accident happened. They remind me of what love is like. Genuine love. I learnt that we won't know love until we've taste the sweetness of our own. And thereafter, the heart expands in its capacity and be loved. Our souls hungers for a love that reminds it of its own beauty and power"

"I am in love with you" I say quietly and looking up at him. Fear appears in his. Mirroring my own. His eyes darts between mines.

"MaMkhungo" His eyes keep fluttering open and close.

"I am" I cannot breathe. He cups my face in his hands. His big and soft hands and staring at me. I can see the corners of his eyes crinkling. "I am in love with you and I am not about to deny myself the simple pleasure of saying true things. For the first time I want to be honest with myself and my feelings. I know that love is just a shout into the void but I am in love with you bhuti"

"I don't want to hurt you"

"Someone in a book once said you don't get to choose if you get hurt in this world but you do have

some say in who hurts you. I like my choices. And I relate to it. I'd gladly love to be hurt by you. I have never been consumed by anyone in this world the way you had"

He smiles, "uyangishela maMkhungo?" He asks if I am asking him out. His eyes have lighten up so beautifully shinning brightly. Leaving me paralysed.

"Chabo"

"I want you to think things through. I'll give you space. Take time to really think if you want to be with someone like me and after making up your mind then we can visit this conversation. Trust me. I am madly in love with you. Although I don't remember now but from what I have written what I feel for you is beyond words and my imagination. Even the chemistry between us is undeniable crazy right here and now. The energies never lie maMkhungo but I want you to be sure you really

want this with me. I want to kiss you so bad right now"

"What is stopping you?" I say breathlessly.

"You have a lot of thinking to do"

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I am sorry for not posting at midnight I fell asleep while writing.

[01/24, 07:28] : 20.

"Two distant hearts can never be separated.

It is love that connects us all, and that love

Is enduring and everlasting"

## MONGEZI

Light fills the room, coaxing me from deep sleep to wakefulness and I am covered in a fine sheen of sweat gasping for air as vivid images dances in every corner of my brain and I am delirious all of a sudden. My body trembling and my heart racing. My brain feels like it is under attack by the thousands of toy soldiers and in that moment a doctor followed by my brother walks in and I look at them through the slits of my eyes.

Something inside me is building up. Different emotions at once. Anger. Hurt. Pain. Betrayal. The missing puzzle makes the entire image I have been looking for complete, making me wish that I can flush everything once again. My heart is rapidly beating. "Ready to go home?" Bongeziwe asks me. He has eyes of a bird like a seagull. His shirt looking wrinkled and pants as if he came here running and has a lot on his mind.

I clear my throat as the doctor is examining me, asking thousands of questions before announcing he is happy with my results and everything will fall back into place soon -- If only he knew. A moment later he walks out of the room leaving me with my brother who has a palpable expression.

And then she flashes through my mind unexpectedly from the time I saw her distance away in her black dress that showed a bridge between her breasts. Their existence is not noticeable but they are damnably attractive. The dress had a long slit showing her smooth and flawless gingerbread thigh. She kept stealing looks towards me holding her glass closely with her white painted fingernails.

She's artsy, as if the creator had all the time in the world to mould her and then threw a little bit of attitude and stubbornness in those mesmerizingly good looks.

"Are you okay?" Bongeziwe asks me as I smile to myself and I look towards him as he packs my bags while I am seated on the bed buttoning the black shirt and stealing glances towards him.

I give him an opaqueness expression. This will be very hard to hide from him since he knows me from the follicle of my hair up to my toenails. "I am okay" I murmur putting on a hat over my head and getting up from the bed. It's been over two weeks already being stuck in this four white walled room with flowers on my table and reading a novel -- she hasn't come here since that day she looked into my eyes and told me how she felt. My heart clenched against my chest and my scalp tightened. The alpha male in me exalted and energy vibrated through in waves. My insides burnt with something acidic and poisonous as I have lied to her.

I never wrote anything on my notepad nor do I have a picture that was taken that night when I asked to

dance with her but my memory is working wonderfully and perfectly normal. Functioning as it should be. The blood pumping around my brain as it should be. Nothing is foggy nor frosty.

"You look more than just okay" Bongeziwe says examining me and I avoid eye contact grabbing my bags after he has signed my discharging forms.

"What is that supposed to mean?"

He stares at me then we both walk out. Our foot steps matching as if we are not half brothers. I wonder how will he react to the truth? Will he still love me the same? Like when we were young boys and he would let me sit next to him while he was doing something in his computer. Building houses in abstract shapes?

"Nothing" He says and I nod vigorously. We get in

the car and he looks comfortable and confident behind the wheel before opera music and perfect orchestra fills the entire leathered car. He is drumming his finger and whistling along to a woman in a first soprano alongside a baritone voice. "What are you hiding from me Mongezi?" He asks but his eyes are focused on the road. "And since when you hide things from me wena?" His deep voice drawls.

"I am not hiding anything" I chuckle.

"Have you spoke to her?" He glances.

I know exactly who is he talking about. But she has some thinking do and so do I but I thought distancing myself from her will lessen all the affection, passion and love that burns when I am in her presence. "Not yet" I respond to him absent minded.

"Why not?"

"We need space to think"

"About?"

"Everything" I respond and shrug. He looks on the rearview mirror before turning the steering wheel on the right. "Mom didn't come to the hospital to see me why?" I pretend to be clueless. I am glad she hasn't shown her face because I'll end up doing something I wouldn't regret even in my deep sleep.

"It's better that way" he says that coldly before we drive through the gate to his house. That all he says. Nothing more as we park outside then he takes my bags leading me inside. His house is spotlessly and freakishly clean. Those were lessons our father gave us. Our father? That sounded as if I am

swallowing denim down my throat.

He leaves me in the living room and comes back with a cup that has a steam coming out handing it to me and pouring himself a glass of whisky on the rocks, taking a sit on the couch and crossing his legs. "You remember everything don't you?" That caught me off guard. He has an enigmatic expression on his face. The pink elephant that has been dancing tango in the room has disappeared.

I clench my jawline and gripping tightly into my cup and my chest heavens. "How did you know?"

"I can see it in your eyes" He gulps his drink.  
"Whatever happened won't change anything between us Mongezi you are my brother"

"How did you know?"

"I found out when he came to the hospital" He tells me and grabs the bottle to drink from it then he starts sardonically laughing. "All these years you were raised by your uncle while your uncle is your father" he shakes his head and gulps down his drink once again. "If I was home. Qophelo would have tried to kill me too"

"But can you blame him. His brother was sleeping with his wife behind his back" I take a sip from my drink.

He shrugs his shoulders and drinks again before placing the bottle on the table to run his hands on his bald head. "I'm glad you remember. I needed you man" He says sounding vulnerable as I have ever seen him. "This is some fucked up shit man and then she went on and hired Kwanda to be friends with you"

What was that now?

"She what?" I lean forward and placing the cup on the table to look closely to him as he picks his head up to look at me. "Kwanda was hired to be my friend?" I shiver as something cross my mind. Familiar pain knifed into me. The feeling is not vicious but it is still ferocious.

"She only worked for like a week and that was just about it" He says as if any of this is supposed to make everything better.

So none of this was genuine? She was just hired? This makes me incandescent with rage. My brain is far too tangled.

I get up from the couch and and grabbing the car keys from the coffee table. "I have to go. I'll bring back your car" He just blinks at me and groaning under his breath. I pat his shoulder and walk out as

if I am being chased by an army.

The drive to her apartment was not short either. I knock twice on the door and her friend in long dreadlocks as her and a cream white dress appears with her eyes widened. "Kwanda is not here" she tells me.

"Where can I find her?"

She steps aside allowing me to walk inside then she closes the door behind. I look around the house before turning back to her. "Her mother has been missing for two weeks" she tells me with a saddened tone "and she was found this morning"

"Where is Kwanda?"

"At her mother's house. I am on my way there" she

tells me softly. "Her mother was found hanging from the tree"

[01/24, 07:33] : 21.

"Love didn't hurt you.

Love gave you the strength to move on.

To let go and to forgive

And find love within yourself.

Love saved you"

He has been the first thing I sleep thinking about and also the first thing that runs through my mind the moment my eyes flutter open as the sunrays escapes through the window to shine and burn my face while the birds are softly chirping outside my window.

Waking up in the early hours of the morning with tears dried on my face and tasting the saltiness at

the tip of my tongue and no, he is not the reason why I have been crying waterfalls maybe he is part of the reason has his love burns through every fibre of my body. My muscles dances with his affection. My blood hums his passion that burns when he looks into my eyes and softly saying my name.

Yeses!

Who I have become? A bird who has found love and cannot stop singing loudly and spreading its wings for everyone to witness the love.

Me? Love.

Funny.

That day when my brother left he firstly went to see my mother. To confront her about the lies she has been shoving down our throats but she was not home. The house was left clean and tidy than the

usual, she baked before she left and the aroma was hanging thick.

We looked everywhere for her but no one knew where she was--we called our relatives and immediately my aunt came home to help with the searching since there was no sign of her anywhere.

Kayise is pacing around the room as he has received a call in the early hours of the morning before the egg horizon can even rise. He shoves his phone in his pocket and pauses pacing then he darts his eyes between my aunt who has a small bottle vodka in her right hand and her left hand clasped in her thigh. I am seated next to her hugging myself in pajamas and my dreadlocks wrapped in a matching cloth. "They are calling us at church" he tells us "mom has been found there, outside" he says with a vague expression. It's hard to interpret his emotions.

"Hawu asambeni phela" My aunt says that we should go opening a bottle and taking a gulp before she groans, shaking her head rapidly. "J esu wami!" She screams in a high pitch voice as the liquid burns her throat. And in that moment she gets up.

Kayise looks at me with his shoulders hanging low and his eyes dancing side by side. "What did they say is she okay?" My heart is about to leap out of my mouth.

"Let's go Kwanda" he says and I feel a pang of different emotions at the corner of my heart following him behind. My feet feels like they have been chained and something spikey rushes through my entire body.

My aunt is the first one to get off from the car when she sees people gathered outside the church then my feet drag themselves. We can hear people exclaiming and some holding their heads as we are

approaching towards them. We are then taken at the back of the church but we walk a distance and instantly everything in me shatters and stops functioning. It feels as if the bones in my knees have been broken and they land on the floor. I look at her body hanging from the tree in her favorite olive dress and her dreadlocks are floating in the air. There's a chair under her feet that are in the air and a bible and what looks like a note in a white envelope. A gut wrenching sob escapes my lips and painful scissored sound follows. My tears comes like waves in an angry ocean. Everything in me is in pain. A pain I never knew exist. My aunt runs towards her shouting and calling out our clan names. And screaming for my mother at the same time. I am on my knees with words lodged on my throat and my entire body shaking.

My brother tries pulling her down but he is advised otherwise since the elderly people have to shout at my mother and beat her with sticks for what she has done. I am paralysed and someone wraps their

arms around bringing me closely to their chest. Whispering something in my ear and consoling me.

Kayise is bending almost kneeling with his eyes bloodshot red eyes and shaking his head while his eyes are glistening with tears.

Kayise has asked someone to take me and my aunt home. He is trying to tailor his self, the toxic masculinity shouts that he needs to be strong and be a man -- he is doing that.

My aunt hands me a glass of sugar water before she asks me to go and sleep. I have been trying to wrap my head around that traumatic image I have seen. I cannot. Instead my breath comes in gulps and the water beads caresses my cheeks.

My aunt bathed me like a fragile adolescent. In a bathtub I sat there like an immobile statute as she

ran her hands around my breasts with a soft sponge. Raising my hands. Her tears softly touching my skin. Nothing in me could move. Not even my fingers. After that I was forced to wear a long dress that covers my shoulders and a cloth around my head. I have not been given a chance to accept my mother's death instead they are shoving it down my throat.

Everything in our living room is suddenly sombre with just a mattress, a candle and plate that only has two coins on it.

My grandmother got here hysterically crying with her hands on her head, screaming from the depth of her soul with a blanket draped around her shoulders before she was forced to sit on a mattress and mourn the death of her daughter who has taken her own life because of people's stereotypes towards her once upon a time husband who is a homosexual.

A tentative knock comes from my door in my room. A part of me has been hoping its Kayise but we have been avoiding each other. Too scared to witness the pain mirroring in our eyes. Too afraid to utter the words that sounds sour against taste buds.

I am seated on the floor when the door slowly swings open and Onalenna followed by Khethelo walks in before they rush to me throwing their arms around me and it feels as if the taps in my eyes have been opened. I weep and shake in their arms. "I am so sorry sweetheart" Khethelo cups my face. Onalenna is an emotional wreck next to her. My mother was their mother too. I am biting the insides of my cheek as my mucus falls from my nose. "Come let's go outside so you can get fresh air" Khethelo suggests.

I shake my head in disagreement, "I don't want anyone to see me right now"

"No one will see you, come. You need some air"  
Onalenna pulls me up by my hand. I stumble a little since I haven't eaten since the early hours of the morning when we received a call.

We follow each other outside and they keep pulling my hand until we walk outside the gate and something tugs in my belly seeing him, standing outside my gate and leaning in his car with both his hand on his pockets.

Our meets. His are cold in a way I have never seen before. The fire that always ignites around them is not there but as I come closer to him the coldness disappears. His delicate jaw is clenched. "Bhuti" I murmur standing distance away from him.

"Sondela maMkhungo" He says sternly, asking me to step closer. My feet are just planted on the street

but he pulls me closer to him. So close that I cannot inhale air in my lungs but his cologne. He kisses the top of my head and I melt in his arms gripping his shirt and burying myself in his chest.

I pull away from him and look up to his face. I wish I could read what is in her eyes. "What's wrong bhuti?" I whisper frantically.

"You haven't eaten didn't you?"

I try dropping my eyes but he holds me by my chin and forces me to look straight into those black eyes that looks darker than the usual, "maMkhungo" His touch resonates deep, deep inside me where that ache as spawned and frown.

"Bhuti..." I say breathlessly.

His lips part as he inhales sharply and his thumb rhythmically stroking my back sending delicious tingles down my spine. "Is it a sin that I want you so bad? Right here and now? I am mad at you maMkhungo but I cannot stay away from you"

"Mad at me?"

He shuts his eyes once and then flutter them open to darts his eyes between mines. "Go inside and I'll send someone to bring you something to eat"

"What did I do?"

"I am sorry about your mother" He says his hand on my face avoiding to respond to me, "Go inside Kwanda" he says sternly.

"You won't tell..."

"Kwanda" He interjects.

"Yebo"

"Hamba"

[01/24, 07:33] : 22.

"Your mind can be a garden or a grave,  
Practice planting seeds of love and forgiveness,  
and learn to let dead things go."

ONALLENNA

Growing up my childhood was different from others.  
While other kids had their mothers driving them to  
school my father was the one who drove me  
instead. While other kids had their mothers taking

them to the park and play around while their mothers sit distance away my father was the one who did that for me with a cam-recorder in his hands and a wide smile plastered on his face. And not because my mother was not around or we don't have a relationship.

We have a wonderful and beautiful relationship. One perfect family with happily married couple but my mother would take me out at night. Mostly for movies or we'd go to the park when there's no one and stare at the sky as she tickles me and my smile burst like a tiny star in a sky.

I'd see the trances of pain in her eyes when my father and I had to go out and dance in the sun but she couldn't because she is sick - she was diagnosed with xeroderma pigmentosum. She is not supposed to be exposed to the sun not even a little otherwise she will die.

My mother never wanted me to weep around and be sad about her sickness -- she never allowed me to. Instead she asked me to live my life the way I want to and come back to tell her how lovely it is to be in the sun. My father painted our walls in yellow and the light bulbs are decorated like a sun, beautiful right?

Never been lucky to find love like that.

"Waze wamuhle ntombi ungavumeli abafana badlale ngawe" An old woman says to me as we meet at the corridor. If only she knew that boys has finished me and put a nail on the coffin. I just smile at her. The house is full and buzzing with nothing but sadness and sombreness since tonight it's a vigil.

You see when I met Kwanda her mother became ours, an amazing woman with the warmest heart and very kind. She had one beautiful smile that

made the whole world pauses and her flawlessly skin – she advised us all the time to eat food from the earth. It made sense why she had yoga classes, she was very spiritual and wanted to share that knowledge with the world.

I don't blame her for what she did but also at the same time she was selfish. But I cannot help but think that behind that exquisite smile she always had she was struggling with her thoughts everyday. Her once upon time sweetheart and darling is homosexual and worse slept with what was her son in law. Are we going to blame her for her actions and doing what she thought was good for her children at that time? I don't.

If their father also wanted the relationship with his children to work out he would have at least tried to reach out to his children but he never did but that has nothing to do with me.

I have known Kwanda for too long to know how much of a strong person she is, selfless although she doesn't want to portray herself like that and also soft when needed but these past days she is vulnerable. Not eating. Not talking. Not laughing. Not smiling. Nothing but a marble face and tears that endlessly keep involuntarily falling down her face.

I was asked to look for her in the bathroom since she has been there for too long. We are scared and walking around eggshells around her. Trees frighten her, maybe it because of the traumatic scene that she saw but Kayise asked that the avocado tree outside should be removed since Kwanda had a panic attack just days ago.

I stand outside the door and knock but there is no response. "Kwanda!" I whispery shout and still no response so I open the door and surprising it is not locked. "Kwanda!" I scream finding her under the

water that has been filled in a bathtub, almost looking like a mermaid as she is holding her breath and bubbles keeps appearing and immediately she gets up gasping for air then she chuckles sadly and wiping her face with her hands that are always painted in a white gel before she leans on the tub and look at me.

"I was not trying to kill myself" that doesn't look like it to me though. I furrow my eyebrows at her and she blinks "I was trying to ignore something" she murmurs.

"And what is that?"

"Pain" she shrugs her bare shoulders that has water dripping down on the them. "But pain demands to be felt" she gets up on the tub placing her one foot down then the other. I grab the towel handing to her, she wraps it around her body. "Everyone is here?"

I take a sharp breath, "Uhm yeah. Some people from church are connecting the sound system" I tell her and she laughs slightly. It been a while since I have seen those white teeth.

"People from church" she says jeering and walking out of the bathroom leaving me behind wondering what was that supposed to mean and then I follow behind to her room.

"Mongezi sent those flowers and something for you to eat" she looks towards the fresh tulips and then continue lathering her skin with a moisturizer.

"He can send flowers but not show his face? That is really great" she puts on a long dress and straighten it at the bottom, "Have you spoke to him? Has he told you what I did?" He hasn't came around since that day he was here. But he sends flowers and food, not a day passes without a delivery from him.

"No" I respond to her and she nods her head and then smile weakly.

"We can go outside now" her plastic smile appears before she gives me her hand to take and we both walk out. Khethelo has not yet arrived. The moment we get outside I am surprised seeing my parents here. My heart starts hammering against my chest and my anxiety wraps itself around me.

I pull my father aside and I can tell he knows what I want to talk about. "Baba what are you guys doing here?" I ask him unable to breathe and he places his hands on my shoulders asking me to inhale and exhale slowly. Until I can normally take a breather again and clutching my chest.

"How are you feeling?" He asks.

"I am okay. Dad what is mom doing here?"

"We are here to support your friend. Kwanda's mother used to come to our home to visit your mother. They were friends. Beside its the night nothing will happen to your mother"

"Night vigils normally ends when the sun is about to rise we cannot risk that"

"We will leave early don't worry. This is the least we can do for your mother because she won't be able to attend the funeral and stop worrying angel" he says then pull me in his arms kissing my forehead and returns back to the tent where the singing has started.

"Your boyfriend loves you" I hear someone saying and look right next to me. A tall frame is standing closely to me and our shoulders are almost

touching. I look up at him with his full beard and bald head. He smells heavenly. We have met when he showed up at my apartment alongside his brother -- Bongeziwe. Overly confident but somehow attractive and arrogant too.

"My boyfriend?" I furrow my eyebrows.

He shakes his head in agreement and points towards the direction where we see my father entering the tent and then he turns his gaze to me. "Although he is..."

I immediately interject "You honestly think my father is my boyfriend?" I ask him and he freezes almost immediately. Opening and closing his mouth and instead of getting a response from that arrogant mouth he chooses to walk away from me. I get to watch his bowed and firm legs as he walks like a model who has mastered walking on a runaway with nothing but confidence and his one

hand shoved in his pocket.

My boyfriend? A joke.

I follow after few minutes of mumbling under my breath and taking a sit next to Kwanda and immediately Khethelo arrives.

The singing hasn't stopped. The dancing either nor the talking from anyone who has something to say about Kwanda's mother. Normally the coffin arrives on a Friday but hers will only arrive tomorrow when we are already at church, they said it's something about bad luck since she took her own life in that manner, ridiculous right?

Everyone turns when Kwanda's father arrives with swollen eyes and tears glistening on them. My friend next to me looks at him once and then look away to the front as if she just saw a random

stranger who looks like he has been running in a desert with no food or water.

We are clapping our hands and joyfully singing although the sombre atmosphere is there but music has the power of bringing everyone together.

My father signs that they are already leaving so I follow them outside. "We are already leaving" my mother announces, she is staggering beautiful like all the world energies confined around her.

"Take of yourself and I'll see you tomorrow mama"

"No, no your friend needs you. I'll see you some other time and stop worrying about me Onalenna. I am fine" she smiles warmly and then her husband opens the door for her to the car. She kisses my cheeks first before she clambers and then my dad does pretty much the same before he slides behind

the wheel and they drive off while my mother waves her hand until they disappear.

I almost urinate myself when I turn around to find him standing behind with his hands crossed on his muscular and chiselled chest. "What is wrong with you? Are you crazy? I almost died for heaven sake!!" I yell out.

"I can't stay away from you"

I dart my eyes between his, "bad lucks are going to follow you for the rest of your life Bongeziwe"

He smiles so infectious, "And why is that?"

"Hitting on me on a night vigil are you serious? Couldn't you wait for another day?"

"Makes sense so is it okay if I hit on you tomorrow?"

I look at my watch, "Tomorrow is in two minutes"

"I know" he says "And that's why I said tomorrow"

"Another bad luck"

"You got to be kidding me now Nkosazana"

"Tomorrow it's the funeral"

"After the funeral"

"No!" I protest.

"Fine. The day after the funeral"

"I am attending another funeral"

"Who died?"

I clear my throat, "My cat"

He erupts with laughter and his shoulders moving side by side. "That is a lamest excuse I have ever heard my entire existence"

"No really my cat died. Like super dead, gone"

"Oh really, what happened?"

"Something bad happened"

He challenges his eyebrow at me, "something bad happened? That's really sad"

"I know"

"Is it okay if I come to the funeral?"

"That is not a good idea"

"Perfect I'll see you on a Monday at your cat's funeral" He smiles then takes out his phone and walking pass me.

I have to buy a cat and kill it, great.

[01/24, 07:34] : 23.

"Love is stainless

It is lust that fades"

My eyes are hidden behind the rectangular shaped dramatic glasses as I sit here at the front looking at my mother's coffin and a picture of her with a sweet face. Her eyes speaks volume - happiness and no sorrow. Too bad she had to die in pain and hurt. Those flowers looks like they belong there with her.

The worship team starts singing as my brother stands behind the pulpit and balancing his elbows on it while running his hands on his dreadlocks. We have not yet spoke. I can only understand that we both need time to wrap our heads around everything and that particular traumatic picture we saw. The singing pauses. My brother leans closer to the microphone, clearing his throat and rapidly shaking his head as if he is trying to get rid of the image he saw that day. As if he is shaking off the pain. Too bad it's dances around his mind regardless.

I no longer have it in me to weep and roll around the

floor. It feels as if the taps of the salty waters around my eyes have been closed and all I can do is to feel. Nothing more. Just feeling and allowing each and every emotion to crawl in every fibre of my body.

Kayise points his chest with his shaky hands. He keeps pointing and trying to find words that can only describe how he is feeling but his voice is lodged on his throat. "Kubuhlungu..." he chokes, telling us how much it hurts that's all he can manage to say. It hurts. It hurts. Those words echoes in my own head as I can relate to them. "...Kubuhlungu" he continuously say. His entire body trembling. My aunt next to me starts hysterically crying and my brother steps away from the microphone and holds his head. He is crying and roaring. Something spikey erupts all over my body.

I get up from my own chair to the front, climbing the

staircases to the stage but my knees are weakling. As if they are drowning in water. That I almost fell on my buttocks as I stumbled backwards but someone holds me. "maMkhungo" My heart stops functioning. I turn my head to see him looking impeccable in a black suit.

Our eyes meet, mine behind the glasses and for a moment all the anger I have towards him disappears. Those black eyes look even more darker, hiding something. His delicate jaw clenched as he holds me in his arms and taking my hand. Helping me climbing the staircases like a toddler who is still learning how to walk.

He walks with me our steps matching. One and two. I pretend like I cannot feel his hand that is wrapped around my waist as if he is branding me. The physical contact feels like a scorching sun. Everything in me is humming a sweet symphony. I am avoiding eye contact with him. I cannot look into

those eyes again otherwise I'll evaporate.

I step away from him and striding towards my brother to pull him closer to my chest. Wrapping my arms around him and he nuzzles himself on my neck. "Kubuhlungu Kwanda" He whispers and if he was not close to my ear I wasn't gonna be able to hear him. I tightly embrace him and he grips my dress. All the tears he has been holding back are finally flowing like a river. They are warm against my shoulders and damping the fabric that is covering my nakedness.

I have no comforting words to feed his heart as I need consolation myself. I take his hand as we both return to our seats. My father is here, wearing a pink tie. It stands out.

My mind is scattered, every single thought needs my undivided attention. My father who is now seated between Kayise and I wearing a pink tie with

gauges piercing in his ears. He covers my hand with his and I quickly pull away from him and clasping my hands on my thighs. I thought this was going to be like drinking sugar water but every time I bring myself into talking to him I hear his groans and that picture plays in my head.

My mind flashes towards the man who held me before I could fall and that soft look into his eyes, there is something dark about him though and very dangerous not forgetting scary. I cannot focus anymore, I force myself into it. Looking towards Mihilali standing in the front looking prettily petite in her black dress that makes her stomach looks roundish, sleek hair and expensive sunglasses. Her lips are painted in red and I can see her tears appearing behind those glasses as she speaks about how much of a great woman my mother was.

I have been hearing a lot of people singing the woman who gave birth to me praises -- some

wondering what made her take such a drastic decision.

We are walking out of the hall listening to the humming and hysterically cries while the men in our family are holding my mother's coffin and taking one step at a time, following the rhythm of the soft voices. My aunt, her name is Thokozile, she can hardly walk and now they are holding. The foundation that doesn't even match her skin tone is all over her dress and her pink lipstick is peeling off. Not forgetting the blue eye shadow that is now on her cheeks.

Here he is. Walking beside me and he takes my hand into his and our fingers intertwines. I look up at him and he is looking ahead, focused. That all it takes for me to finally feel the humongous lump on my throat and the emotions that were numb. I feel tears prick the edge of my visions but I blink them away. The moment we get outside he pulls me

aside. "Bhuti we cannot be doing this" I say breathlessly standing face to face with him. The sun lit up his face and he slowly takes off my glasses to read my face.

A traitorous tears fall from my eye and he uses his thumb to wipe it off and suck it in his mouth. I flutter my eyes close and something in me, right there, throbs. He is looking magnificent with broad shoulders. Strong, lean and hard. "I have to go to the cemetery Mongezi" I murmur velvety. He is not uttering a word just darting his eyes between mines making me feel uncomfortable and under his mercy. He is not touching me either, feels like a punishment. "What I did to you?" I finally get the courage to ask and his facial expression changes, it's vague.

"Let's go" that's all he says gracing my forehead with his warm lips as they brush against my skin. My core clenches in response.

Seeing the brown shimmering coffin disappearing underground made my own sad reality comes crashing like a tidal wave that my mother is really gone. Gone. Never coming. I'll never get to see her sashaying her body around the kitchen baking and the aroma hanging thick in the room.

We are back home. I can hear the loud voices from the outside and people asking for beef curry instead of chicken and some wants steamed bread and not samp. And others prefers juice than cold drink, exhausting really. My aunt is shouting at everyone and telling them this is not the restaurant. I can hear laughter as well and the smell of a cow that was slaughtered last night boiling in a black three leg pot.

I am being called left, right and centre by the relatives and neighbours who wanted to let me know that they're are just one call away. I have been

expecting this. Not really surprising. I return back inside the house and Khethelo grabs my hand leading me to my room where I find Onalenna and my cousin Yolokazi who is already drinking wine. "You have to eat something, sit down" Khethelo says and flicking her dreadlocks before she hands me a plate she has kept for me.

I look at her and she gives me a stern look with her hands against her hips. Seems like I have nothing else to do beside forcing this samp and tribe down my throat. "Here have some wine too" Yolokazi hands me a glass and I shake my head indicating I do not want alcohol. They all give me an indescribable look and their eyebrows furrowed. "Yoh! Motase are you okay?"

"Of course she is not okay, let her be" Khethelo says taking the glass that was supposed to be mine and drinking from it.

"Where can I buy a cat?" Onalenna.

"Yoh a.a wena khawume nobughwirha" Yolokazi tells her to stop with witchcraft and her thick accent makes me erupts with laughter.

"Why do you want a cat?" Khethelo chuckles.

"I want to kill it" Onalenna responds.

"Tjeeerrrr!!" Yolokazi exclaims and taking a sip from her glass after clapping once. "That's really dark" she continues saying.

"Why would you buy a cat to kill it?" I ask her.

She puts her phone away and crosses her legs to get into details but a tentative knock interrupts her before my nephew appears carrying a chocolate in his hands. "Aunt Kwanda someone asked for you

outside" he says waving the chocolate on our faces as an indirect brag.

"Who is that?" I frown.

He shrugs, "But he is standing next to a Aston Martin baba and it's red. He gave me money and chocolate" He says with a slight grin and peeling his chocolate. The room is filled with laughter before I get up to see who is he talking about only to find Mongezi standing outside his car with Bongeziwe and Kayise, the conversation looks witty.

He strides towards me when he sees me. He has taken off his blazer jacket and tie. "Don't bribe kids with money and chocolate, that's wrong" I say the moment he stands in front of me.

"You suddenly know what is wrong and right?" His voice reverberates in me, low and dangerous.

Eyebrows challenging me and his nostrils flaring.

I order myself to breathe and not keel over. My mouth flattened and my eyes narrows to needle sharpness "what is that supposed to mean?"

"How much did she pay you?" His eyes are fixed on me like a glue on paper. I look around. My brother is loudly laughing with Bongeziwe. They are people walking in and out my gate with plates in their hands to sit in their cars. They are smiling and waving as they walk pass us.

"What are you talking about?"

"My mother" He boldly says, "she hired you to be my friend right maMkhungo?"

"Is that why you're mad at me?"

"One of the reasons"

"What is the other reason?"

"How much did she pay you?" Dark eyes bore into me and a shudder of awareness makes my nape tingle and my breast tighten. He looks at my perky nipples, screaming for his attention then my face and he smirks. "It seems like we'll have this conversation at my house" He pauses and I swallow. "In my bedroom maMkhungo"

"That is not happening"

He steps closer. I step back. Closer. Until there's no room between us and our chests are rubbing against each other before he tugs the strand of my dreadlock behind my ear. "You think so?"

"I know so"

"Are you sure you want to challenge me?"

"I thought you were mad at me" I catch my breath.

"I am"

"Then why you want to take me to your bedroom?"

He leans closer to my ear. His breath fanning there. The creaminess in between my legs makes me uncomfortable as if everyone around us can see it. "Uzobona wena" he whispers and then pull away to look at my face.

What? What am going to see?

"Kwanda stop having sex there!" Yolokazi screams and everyone turns to look at me. She laughs loudly and clapping her hands together. "Kwanda and Kayise you are being called inside" That all she says after grabbing the attention to us. I look at Mongezi who has his lips pressed into a thin line to hold back his laughter and humour dances on his eyes.

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“You can run but you cannot hide ”

I look up at him with a soft smile while watching his eyes looking magical like a rose quartz but I cannot brush off the darkness in them. His lips that looks velvety are pressed together and I am sure between the slits they're bouncy since they are so thick, they are texture is like a silk fabric. My chest is slowly moving up and down. I look at the green grass outside our yard since our eye contact feels like intimacy – succulent synergy. Then I look up at him

once again grinning “Go, I will wait here for you maMkhungo” I walk away with my lips in between my teeth and bugs crawling in my shaven vagina and dragons moving around my stomach.

How do you explain this? I mean the way he is making me feel.

Witchcraft? Khumbaya? Magic?

I walk inside the house and aunt Thokozile is seated on the couch looking like a grumpy cat and holding her small bottle of vodka then my father is opposite her with his pink tie, sigh. Both of my uncle have their hands on their pot bellies looking almost suffocating as they are breathing heavily like bulldogs who needs an inhaler, “sit down Kwanda” my uncle says, his shirt buttons will fly across the room if he sneezes or cough. I take a sit next to my aunt who squeezes my hand and then looks at me batting her lashes and she has applied her dark

blue eyeshadow again and added glitter. “Where is your brother?” The moment he finishes asking Kayise walks in. All eyes on him widen.

When did he go bald? Or maybe I did not notice when he was standing with Bongeziwe? Why did he shave his head?

“What happened to your hair?” I ask after picking up my eyes from the floor and putting them back and I had to blink few times.

He looks towards my father and clenches his jaw. And my father fixes his tie, it is so pink.

I guess I am not getting any response since he just comes and sit next to me and balancing his elbows on his knees while flaring his nostrils. “Why am I being called here?” Kayise asks with an aggressive tone.

My uncle clears his throat struggling to sit up straight but he eventually does and laughs in between. “Since your mother has died we thought it’s a good idea that your father moves back into the house. They were married. You guys need each other” malume Sonke says with his finger resting at the bottom of his upper lip and looking attentively at my brother who just chuckled sardonically then looks at me before shifting the focus somewhere else.

“They divorced” I utter first before my brother says something rudely, that sweet and kind, light complexion brother of mine died that day he watched old women beating my mother while she was hanging from the tree, shouting how much of a disgrace she is and when they had enough he is the one who put her down to place her head on his lap and stroked her dreadlocks backwards. Looking at her pale face that looked peacefully then he brought her closely to his nostrils, to sniff her scent and

nuzzle on her neck -- he is gone.

Oh what a sweet, sweet boy he was.

“Westernized yes but traditional they are one”

“He left us!” Kayise shouts, veins showing and his hands balled into a fist "He left my mother to bend over to another man and he is not moving to this house. I built this house for my mother. I don't know where you got the audacity to sit there and call the shots. You don't have a say in anything that involves this house. If there's nothing else you wanted to say malume can I leave?" His tone sounds calmer but poisonous.

“What do you mean he's bending...” Before my uncle can finish what he wanted to say aunt Thokozile laughs loudly until she burps.

“He wears a pink tie Sonke” that all she says and opens her bottle of vodka, to take a sip and closes it again. “My sister accepted him, she tried really but he’ll bring men in her house” he says and my father has his head hanging low, “start talking Khumbulani”

He picks his head up and dart his eyes between Kayise and I. He murmurs his apology before he starts crying. “I just wanted to be free” he chokes.

“By bringing men here?” Aunt Thokozile “Is that what you call being free? Beating my sister to see how much of a man you were? Is that how you were tasting freedom Khumbulani?” My aunt yells “Zakithi is gone. Although you left her and the children all she ever told them was that you left because your career didn’t turn as you planned it. Wena usatan onama bibane!!” This time she gulps her vodka at once.

My uncles are mumbling under their breaths.

“Khumbulani what is she talking about?” His brother asks, his eyebrows furrowed and his corrugated bald head sweating.

“I am gay” He announces and they gasp, while his son just get up to walk out of the room and clicking his tongue. “Zakithi killed herself because the children found out the truth. Kwanda who is seated there surely hates me with her guts after she found me with her boyfriend but my angel please understand. I didn’t know that you were with him” He says looking at me, tears falling like raindrops on a windowpane.

“Haibo!” Malume Duduzane exclaims with his hands on his head “Haibo! Haibo Haibo!” You can say the thought of this disgust him. “Andiyazi le” He continues saying he has never heard of something like this. Looking at his brother and then he holds his mouth before he pulls him with his tie that

makes him look like he will sing twinkle, twinkle little star.

I get up quickly from the couch to stand between them defending my father. “We are mourning my mother. He lost someone he was shared his life with. Yes he is not perfect but all of us in this room either. Him being gay doesn’t mean he has a contagious disease. He is just like me and you. We both have eyes, bleed same blood and attracted to different genders that’s all” I say and they look at me like I am cute alien, with a head shaped like an egg and big dark eyes. Duduzane is not having it he just want to grab him with the pink tie.

I cannot hear who is talking since everyone is talking at once. And of course they are saying what I said is nothing but nonsense, rubbish which means everything that came out of my mouth belongs to a trash can. “Everyone out!” Kayise shouts standing in the middle of the room. Looking

rough. “Out now!” He yells out and it echoes in the room. The uncle leaves the room. My father shares a eye contact with his son before he walks out.

“Wenza kakuhle wabagxotha [you did great by chasing them out]” my aunt says making herself comfortable.

“Nawe aunt phuma!” Kayise also kicks her out.

She gasps and clutches her chest, “Yoh! Zakithi is turning in her grave already. Mna? Soze” she refuses to leave “Unenkingon?” She opens her bottle to take last sips. Yolokazi took all the madness from her mother but, she made her proud that day she wore her white coat just to clean and take out people’s rotten teeth that has been painful for weeks, imagine having Yolokazi as your dentist?

Kayise laughs, his shoulders move up and down,

“Fine go to the bedroom ke” he says sounding more calmer and my aunt gives him the most diabolical look before she kisses our cheeks and leaves silence looming between us. My brother who is now bald and me with my hair falling over my shoulders.

“You cut your hair” I say after the eternity of silence.

He shakes his head in agreement and taking a sharp breath, “I had to let go” He says then takes a sit on the couch patting the empty space for me to sit. The moment we both have been running away from is finally here. Our hands are shaking. Tears in our eyes. Ache in our hearts. Pain in our bones. Hurt in our veins. Grieve in every part of our bodies. “I am sorry” He murmurs “I should have been there for you” he says.

“It’s not too late Kayise”

“I know. You just scared me. You became lifeless. Little things triggered you. Kwanda growing up you loved trees, you used to climb on them and you once said when you grow up, you’re going to have a big tree house and now...” He breathes “Things will never be the same” Trees reminds me of that picture.

“I cannot believe she is gone”

“Me too”

“Did you...did you read the letter?”

His facial expression changes, “Yes”

“What it says?”

“Kwanda...” In that moment Mhlali walks into the room looking angry and ready to kill the both of us.

“Your mother pretended to be my friend while she was fucking my husband?” She screams out and I look up at Kayise who looks like he already knows this. “And she left a letter? She thinks a letter will make everything okay? She deserved to die that bitch” I slap her across her face and she immediately becomes immobile as a statue holding her cheek and her hair on her face.

“Don’t call my mother by names when you were sleeping with brothers! What makes you different?” I shout, she tries charging towards me but in that moment Bongeziwe holds her back and Mongezi who pushes her so hard that she stumbles.

“Hamba la ma!” Mongezi. People have been kicked out today. She points at me then smirks before she leaves, her sons gave her stern faces.

“What did the letter say Kayise?” I cannot be related to Mongezi, no.

“It says Bongiwe and I are brothers”

“And me?”

“No, but Bongiwe was not your father either. He cannot have children” he says. I breathe. I breathe. I breathe. And I breathe.

I turn to Mongezi, my head buzzing, “Please take me far away from here”

“Kwanda listen... ” Kayise begs.

“Please” I look at Mongezi.

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“Who am I?

Who are we?”

Have you ever felt something buzzing in your head. It sounds like church bells but also like those hospital machines peeping or someone is banging pots in your head while your brain is bouncing on every corner of your head, screaming and yelling all at once. That is what happening to me right now, everything is moving in slow motion. I am about to walk out when Yolokazi stands by the corridor, tears clouding her eyes and mucus on her nose, she has turned pink. Her blonde and brown dreadlocks are falling over her face. She asked for them when we were young after she saw me with mines. We look so much alike that people always assume we are sisters.

“They told you?” I furrow my eyebrows and looking at the pain visible in her eyes and aunt Thokozile appears hysterically crying. I look at Kayise who is suddenly avoiding eye contact. “Kwanda they told you?”

“Yolokazi don’t” Kayise says, “she heard enough today” he continues saying.

“I am not the one who will tell her the truth” Yolokazi says, her voice sounds hoarsely, as if there is a dumbbell stuck on her throat “Mama will tell her” she says looking towards aunt Thokozile whose lips are trembling.

“Kayise what is it?” I ask grabbing his arm and forcing him to look at me “If you don’t tell me then I am going to leave and I am not coming back is that what you want?”

“Kwanda...”

“Tell me Kayise!”

“You know I love you right and...”

“I’m your mother!” Aunt Thokozile bluntly says and everything stops moving. Literally. Everything starts moving in slow motion and before I know it my knees are overcooked noodles. My chest is slowly closing.

“MaMkhungo!” that is all I hear before I crash to the ground, my head felt like a watermelon hitting the floor and everything goes dark. I can hear voices but I cannot respond to any of them. Kayise shouting that I should open my eyes and Mongezi telling everyone where to get off and after that I am unconscious. I cannot feel myself. I cannot feel my hands. My feet. My breathing. Nothing. Lifeless.

I slowly open my eyes, sunrays are trying so hard to crawl through the roman blinds. The slits are shining on his face almost looking like freckles. Eye closed and balancing his head on his hands. I am in a four walled grey and white room with an aircon on my left. I am just staring at him with a connected needle in my hand and a drip on my right, the droplets keeps falling and following the rhythm of my blinking. I rotate my head to find him wide awake and creepily watching me. "You scared me!" I say after gasping for air. When I turned my head he was deep in his sleep. His lips moves to touch his cheeks forming a beautiful smile, as exquisite as the sun outside.

"How are you feeling?"

I shrug my shoulders, "How should I feel?"

He shifts on the chair almost as if he is making a hard decision on his head. “Let’s runaway” he says unexpectedly “For couple of weeks”

“Bhuti...”

“I know exactly how are you feeling. I just recently regained my memory and I remember everything maMkhungo. I don’t want to talk to my mother about it as yet, she is unaware about everything”

“You regained your memory?”

“We will talk about it, not now. So what are you saying? We will drive to where the road takes us” He pauses “Just you and I Mooncrees” I look at him sounding like a toddler who wants to run to the jungle with wild animals yet he thinks they are friendly.

“Sound like a wonderful idea but...”

“No buts we are leaving” he says getting up from the chair and walking towards the door. He pokes his head outside and then turns to me grinning and rubbing his hands together. “Asambe” My tongue is paralysed as he is so close to me. His breath fanning my face. His hands pulling out the connected pipes on my hands. I close my eyes, they are tightly fluttered shut. I feel his hand on my face and I open my eyes.

They lock with his. He leans down and kisses me gently on the lips. When our lips touches a slow fire rises in my body. He deepens the kiss by pulling me closer and I wrap my hands around his neck. His touch makes feel free and I forget everything. That my mother was actually my aunt. How fucked up that can be?

All my life I have been raised by my aunt?

He pulls away from the kiss and smiles, I am trying to regain my senses. “We should go, your family will be here anytime from now” He picks me up from the bed and places me on the cold tiles. We run out. Our fingers intertwining. I am running barefooted with a hospital gown. Following him behind until we are at the car parking where he opens the door for me to his gleaming car. We are laughing loudly from my belly button.

He slides behind the wheel all sleek and manoeuvring the car on the road as a feminine voice starts singing, sounding like an angels walking around the clouds. This song is so beautiful. I cannot hear what she is saying but the velvety vocals are smooth, forcing me to close my eyes. With a window open and the breeze kissing my face. His hand on my bare thigh and tapping his fingers on them. Every moment his fingers touches my skin all the vibrations moves along with them. “Please put this song on repeat” I ask him with my eyes still

closed. As the car moves on the road.

“Don’t open your eyes keep them closed”

“Why?”

“Just keep them closed ntokazi”

The car hasn’t stopped moving. The air smells like basil and mint. The song is still on repeat. My thoughts are drifting in on all directions: north, south, east and west. But I am mostly focused on this human seated next to me with his hands on my lap and humming along to the sensual song. “Bhuti” I call him.

“Keep them closed”

“I wanted to ask something”

“Okay go on”

I take a deep breath, I cannot ask him. “This song...whose song is this?” Fantastic Kwanda you did great.

“Its Lia Butler, she did a cover song of Sho Madjozi and what she did to it is magical. But that is not what you wanted to ask”

How does he know?

“I thought about...”

“We will talk, not now, there’s so much we have to talk about but right now enjoy the ride, okay” He

squeezes his hand on my thigh and all I can do is squirm on my seat. And nod my head like an obedient adolescent.

When I open my eyes we are in what you can call a passive house, in a hill surrounded trees that gives an organic extension. I start trembling and having a hard time breathing and my door opens. He quickly picks me up inside the house and makes me sit on the couch running to the kitchen and getting a bottle of water then he forces me to gulp it down as I was gasping for air. “Why did you open your eyes?” This is the reason why he did not want me to keep my eyes open.

“I cannot stay here ”

“Kwanda--”

I cut his tongue, “please bhuti”

“I want you to face your fears here with me. I want to face mines with you as well. We are here to heal and go back to the real world much stronger together”

“Not here... ”

“Here is perfect please trust me” He breathes “I want this. I want us maMkhungo”

“It seems impossible ”

“We will make it possible”

I dart my eyes between his before we both erupt with chuckles and our fingers interlocking. We are intimate with our eye contact and showing each other our teeth. “I took the job because I realised I

was into you” I tell him, “It was all real the feelings.  
Everything it was all real”

“It was?” He challenges his eyebrow.

“It is all real” I say breathlessly.

“Uyangithanda?” He is so charming.

“Kakhulu”

He takes my hand and makes me sit on his lap. His hands circling my waist and kissing the nape of my neck. “I know everything doesn’t make sense in your life right now. But I want to be the only thing that makes sense not just now but forever  
Mooncrest ”

“You really think you’re cute when you call me Mooncres, bhuti?”

“Do you think you ’re cute when you call bhuti?”

“But you like it” He smiles when I call him like that now he suddenly acts like he doesn’t.

“Strange enough, I do”

“I thought as much”

“You want me to bath you?”

“Are you saying I stink?”

He chuckles, “I want to feel your warmth with my fingers”

“How?”

His fingers have a thermometer?

“I’ll dip them inside you maMkhungo”

Lord! Those words are like his fingers already dipped inside me, moving slowly in and out. “So do you want me to?” I have lost my ability to speak and I just nod my head.

“Do you want my fingers or tongue?”

“Both”

“Greedy” He laughs “Asambe”

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“If you watered the seeds of pain  
With love flowers would grow”

I am seated in a bathtub full of water that smells like freshly brewed herbs, the essence is so soothing and refreshing the hot liquid makes me entire body tremble maybe not. His hand is resting by my knee, not moving just there and he has his eyes on me to reflect how poisonous he is, what a wizard. He smiles then moves his hand slowly to my inner thighs and I shut my eyes, breathing heavily and gasping and squirming. “You are very responsive maMkhungo” that echoes in the chunky marble bathroom with white vanity. “Very responsive” he continues as his hands are almost by my kitten. I expect him to insect his fingers. I am ready. I am prepared but he doesn't. The sexual tension is so high that I tremble slightly. “If you want them inside you then open your eyes and look at me”

“I can’t”

“Oh yes you can” He just moves his fingers against my skin. “Get up” He instructs and I snap my eyes open. “Now you can keep them open?” He is very sleek, very smart.

“L...I...P”

“You what?” He laughs.

“Why you’re always doing this?”

“I love seeing you under my mercy get up and face that side” He wants me to face marble walls. Just great. I get up and the water makes a splashing sound. My buttocks are facing towards him. Wet. And dripping. I can hear his movement, he was

seated at the edge of the bathroom. He runs his hands up my back and situate my arms so they can be above my head. I feel a spank on buttocks and everything in me clenches. That felt so good, damn, yes. I wiggle my butt hoping he'd spank again. But he doesn't instead he moves my hands further. "MaMkhungo" He calls me.

"Hmmm..." I respond back, no words coming out.

"Ngiyakuthanda" Yes, yes, yes. Those words sounds magical as they echo. In the bathroom. In my ears. In my head. I try turning to face towards him but he pins me forward. "You said you cannot look at me didn't you?" He is calm but controlling.

"I did but..."

"No buts face that way" He grins and I chuckle. His fingers slip behind me and pinch my butt. I bite the

inside of my cheek to keep from making a noise. He keeps his one hand on my buttocks and shifting the other stroke on my breast. I try to relax and enjoy the feel of his hand on me and the warmth of the water on my feet and legs. The experience is more erotic by accompanying my sighs and whimpers and moans.

He finally makes his way between my legs and I hold my breath, anticipating his touch right where I needed it. "I'm going to finger fuck you" His warm breath kisses my ear. "You can't make noise and you cannot come since I asked you to open your eyes but you failed. Do either of the two I'll do more than just finger fucking you"

"I want you to"

"You want me to what?"

“Do more ”

“What is more?”

“Inserting your thing inside me” He is purposely making this hard for me.

He chuckles, “What thing?” I try turning around to point at it but he pins me once again. “MaMkhungo” that comes out as a warning “Now tell me what thing?” He says moving his fingers lightly over my clit and making me rise on my toes.

“It starts with a P”

“Say it”

“Your...” I arch against him as his fingers finds the

spot inside me, it feels good. “Your...can I moan?” I say heavily breathing.

“No!” I suck in my breath and almost let out a moan. My skin breaks into a delicious shiver “My what?” He strokes over and over. My release built within me but he immediately stops.

What on earth?

“Your penis!” I scream feeling a tidal wave comes running and my body shakes, as if I have been hit by lightening and for a moment I thought I was going to die. Right here and my knees are shaky. My whooshing breathing hasn’t stopped. And he hasn’t stopped moving his fingers inside me either. Hard. Rough. Slow. Fast. More faster.

“Bhuti...” I call him out “I want to scream” A finger of nausea pokes my stomach. I think I am going to

throw up glitter or anything celestial.

My throat is hot. The heat building up in me until it spills once again into a riding wave of pleasure. Immediately he throws me over his shoulder making his way to the bedroom. He gently places me at the centre of the bed. My body is trembling. My eyes are closed since large drops splatters onto my face. I cannot keep them open until I feel him gripping my wrist. The embers in the fire flickers in me. I yearn his tongue and teeth all over my skin.

“Ah” I feel something hard as a steel, rubbing against. Those are not fingers. I snap my eyes open to look at him and he smiles when our eyes meet. He is so beautiful. The light coming from the outside illuminates his face. His skin is so flawless. He is naked. “You are doing it?” I ask innocently.

“Not yet you are not ready, I am just rubbing” He has stopped.

“It feels really good” His hands grab my breast, twisting and pinching my nipples. His manly vigor taking me away. Far, far away.

“You are beautiful” He is rubbing himself again, so slow. With a magical eye contact while his hand is resting on the side of my face. I love that look on his face. Eyebrows brought together. His lips slightly opened. I grit my teeth. “Scream sthandwa sami” His tongue inside my ears, twirling it around. So incredibly erotic and stimulating. I feel him along my tight cleft and my labia. He keeps rubbing gently. Kissing and nibbling my neck. I am screaming and my body starts to shake as I grunt. I finally come in hard, flooding, sticky and hot. Now he puts his fingers between my legs just to feel me and then looks at me. “Are you okay?” He asks.

“You won’t stop?” I ask breathlessly

“You can still talk so I am not stopping” He lets me catch my breath and then cups my vulva. The pad of his finger slip along the right slit feeling the mound of my clitoral good and he pushes into my slit. My plump labia parts hugging his fingers in a sensual embrace and then the hard as a steel penis. Lower yet he can feel the very small opening of my vagina. I am not wet but I have my own waterfall in between my legs.

“Jesus!” Okay this time it feels feels mindblowingly good as he draws up the moisture up to where my clitoris. I moan, huskily and raw. “Mongezi” I start to mewl like a kitten and I shudder around him as the orgasm consumes me. This time it feels as of someone has opened the taps in between my legs. His groans sounds like music to my ears. Then he goes down in between my legs and his head there. His face just inches apart.

He inhales smelling me and gently parts the plump

labia with his fingers and thumb exposing my clitoris sheath and he touches me with the tip of his tongue and my body jerks. “Mongezi...” I murmur as he pushes his finger up and kissing past my hymen. He licks and sucks and nibbles. I scream and moving my head side my side. I grab him by his head and pushing him to me. And I close my legs around him with another climax approaches. He cups my buttocks with his hands and holds me as my orgasm wans and finally leaves my body, limp and normal. My breathing soft and regular. I release the grip on his head with my hands and thighs opening my eyes.

He lays beside me and I snuggles up to him resting my head in the crook of his arm.

“You know we cannot runaway from reality forever right bhuti?” I look up at him. He kisses my forehead and strokes my head back.

“Harsh reality” True.

“We can stay here forever. Just us”

“I would love that baby trust me but we cannot runaway from our problems forever. Eventually we have to face our demons”

“How bhuti? My mother was my aunt and my brother is my cousin. Saying this sounds crazy” I laugh under my breath.

“And I can understand exactly how you are feeling and that is why we are going to figure everything out together” He trails his fingers on my shoulders and repeatedly kissing my forehead.

“I hope we don’t do this to our kids” Wait. What did I just say? What kids? I do not want kids. All my life I

have never planned on having kids. I do not even hold them. The idea of having humongous stomach and walking around with swollen feet makes tiny shivers breaks into my skin.

He looks down at me with a coy smile. “You want kids with me?” No, I mean yes, no.

“No!” I protest “No” I continue defensive.

“You want me to donate my sperm? Which won’t happen by the way”

“Do you want to have kids with me?” I ask.

“Yes. We already have one”

“Excuse me?” I frown.

“I have a daughter maMkhungo” he says and I sit up straight on the bed, shocked is an understatement “And she belongs to my brother but more like mines” I grab a pillow and hit him with it.

“Don’t ever do that!” He laughs.

“What? You don’t want to date someone with a baby?” he asks.

“No. I want to be the one who gives you babies” I wiggle my eyebrows.

He smirks, “Let’s make one now”

“No!”

“Hawu woza”

[01/24, 07:35] : 27.

“Breathe slow, in, out,

Minds a crowded mess,

I need to take a second breather”

ONALENNA

I am interrupted by a knock on the door as I am curled up on the couch and staring at the television screen, everything is dull and sombre alongside the drizzly weather outside with cold breeze. If Kwanda was around she would have cooked steamed bread and sugar beans, sad she disappeared but her brother assured that wherever she is she's fine. I am worried about her especially since she collapsed. She is not taking the death of her mother very well.

I drag myself to the door and I almost urinate myself seeing him standing on my doorstep with flowers on his hands and a bottle of wine, wearing a black suit. What an adorable dumbskull. He really dressed up for a cat's funeral? Ha ha ha.

My eyes are swollen and looking puffy, I have been crying while watching this romantic movie that will work on my favour. "Bongeziwe..." I say looking at him. I must say his mother really ate expensive food, with a name like bonjour and givenchy, when she was pregnant because her son's are every woman's fantasy, they make you wish you can do ungodly ghastly things "What are doing here?"

"I am here for the funeral" He says simply.

I blink at him trying to keep a straight face as possible while balancing myself with a door handle.

His face is such a work of art, a sight. “The funeral was two hours ago, you are late, sorry” I respond, the fact I am wearing a black dress works on my favour too, very thoughtful. I couldn’t buy and kill a cat.

“Oh!” He downturn his lips into a scowl “Can I leave these flowers at the grave then? I mean since I couldn’t make it to the funeral”

I clear my throat. What if I take him to cemetery and just take him to any grave? Bad idea Onalenna.

“My cat hated flowers, no”

“I can go there and leave milk”

I look at the seriousness on his face before erupting with laughter and snorting. He looks at me as if he

is fascinated by the bee creating honey with a slight smile. He's freshly shaven, and the full and connected beard is kept shiny and clean. "I lied" I confess.

"I know, these are yours. Can I come in?" I step aside and allowing him inside. He takes off his blazer jacket and places it on the couch before taking a sit. These tulips are very beautiful actually.

"Since you knew I lied why are you here?"

"I wanted to see you"

"I'm John Cena"

"What?" He frowns.

“You can’t see me” He looks at me and sonorously laugh and throwing his head back while I put my flowers in a vase and then take a sit next to him on a couch. I cover him with my brown blanket and he smiles at me making himself comfortable. I do not like the intensity in the atmosphere “If you want me to offer you a drink, I am sorry but I won’t”

“Is this how you treat your guests?” He chuckles.

“One of the reasons why I do not like having guests”

“Why?” He shifts his entire body to face towards me. I keep my focus on the screen as a lady in a long blonde hair is running on the street, crying and huffing, shame. Bad breakups can even make you drink sunlight liquid

“At home we have never had visitors. So I don’t really know how to treat them or be a great host”

“Your parents hated visitors?”

“You are getting me into opening up. Next thing you will ask me about my childhood, right?” I glance at him

“I am interested in knowing you”

“Look I...”

“Don’t say it”

“But I haven’t said anything”

“I know what you wanted to say. Can I get us some wine? And we can watch a movie or anything as soon as the movie ends I will leave. You do not have to tell me anything about yourself or anything that

makes you uncomfortable”

“I will pour the wine” I smile at him “Wait are you trying to have sex with me?” I look at him. I mean wine and this intimate weather, doesn’t that scream sex?

“Right now? No” He answers honestly and laughing.  
“In future yes. I would love to have sex with you”  
Damnly attractive.

“You are so honest, I was joking”

“You were not. You want to sex me Onalenna” he mischievously smiles.

“What no!”

“Then why you asked?”

“Because of this weather and wine”

He attentively looks at me as if he is studying my body language and what is behind my eyes. “Are you always this nervous around men?” No.

“No” I get up from the couch to the kitchen “You make me nervous” I tell him over my shoulders and grabbing the glasses and a bottle of wine he came with, making my way back to the living room. He is watching my movements, observing with his hand on his chin and confidently leaning backwards. The scent of his cologne is hanging thick in the entire room.

“You should be nervous around me”

“Why?”

“Because you have a same effect on me that I have on you. But I can control myself, I cannot say the same about you ma” Why did something vibrate in my body when he called me like that.

I hand him a glass of wine and he takes a sip and places it back on the coffee table, tugging me to him. Okay, okay. “You do not have an effect on me, get off that high horse”

He chuckles, and pulls me to him placing my head on his chest. I do not fight him either. I can hear the tiny drums behind his chest as a movie start and his hand over my shoulders. I am praying that my weave doesn't mistakenly comes off, imagine he he.

We watch the movie silently, just my heavy breathing as I inhale him, all of him. His chin resting on top of my head and the only time he utters a

word is when I have to pass him his glass of wine. When I hear him swallowing, I also swallow my saliva. The sound his throat makes is, sexy. Maybe because he is making it.

I do not find him attractive, no.

Do not get me wrong, Bongeziwe is good looking and I would spread my legs for him anytime and any day or breastfeed him but you can tell that this one changes women like it's a hobby.

When the movie ends, I want to rewind. I do not want it too because that means he's leaving.

Wait, I don't want him to leave? Of course I want him gone.

The white fonts on a black screen are moving

upwards as a sad song plays in the background. I try moving away from him and I look up at him, he is peacefully sleeping.

What?

I'd be snoring and drooling already yet he looks like a new born baby, with all the muscles around his face resembling calamity. Was the movie that boring?

I make him sleep comfortably and covering him with a blanket after taking off his shoes. I cannot believe I am doing this, but I feel a need to. I take a sharp breath and kiss his forehead like he is a toddler who slept after a bedtime story. As I turn around attempting to walk away and he grabs my wrist. "Don't go" He says with a sleepy voice and shifting on a couch making a space for me. He flutters his eyes slightly open. "Please" I snuggle next to him and he wraps his arms around my waist

and nuzzling on my neck before he kisses the sensitive spot behind my ear. I do not fight him although I want to. This is the first and last time I am spending time with him, no, no, no. I cannot be a weakling. Me? I am not naïve. I know men. I have tasted all kinds of penises and all sizes.

When I wake up I find him staring with a smile, such a creep. “How long you have been staring?”

“Long enough to lick the saliva at the corners of your mouth”

Jesus Christ I was drooling and that is disgusting.

“Did I snore?”

“At some point I thought you have a lion as a pet”  
He responds. Now I must dig my own grave and

bury myself, too much admin.

“I think you should go”

“You really want me to go?”

“Yes”

“Why?”

“You were supposed to leave after the movie ended”

“You’re beautiful when you’re sleeping. All these vague emotions you have in your eyes disappears. I want to watch you sleeping everyday and lick your drool. And listen to your snoring”

“You would fit perfectly in Tyler Perry’s movies.”

Thank you for selling me dreams but you have to go” I try shifting away from him and he pulls me closer. Our faces are almost rubbing against each other. His breath fanning me. Mines on him. He has dark brown eyes they are almost black. I love the shape of his nose. I want to run my eyes on his beard and bushy eyebrows.

“What are you afraid of?” He asks.

I sardonically chuckle, “Nothing”

“Tell me”

“No!” I respond defensive “You have to leave”

“I can find out for myself but I want you to tell me why are you so scared of being loved? That all I want to do to you. Love you”

“And then runaway on our wedding day?”

“Who did that to you?”

“It doesn’t matter I have told you enough. Please just leave”

“I am not leaving Onalenna”

“Let me go then”

“No”

“I am going to scream!”

“I am going to kiss you”

I chuckle, “Bongeziwe you are such a force than a person” I shake my head “You’re annoying”

“You’re beautiful”

“You’re seriously not leaving?”

“No”

[01/24, 07:36] : 28.

“He has stopped weeping over the inevitable

I realise in his silence that his mind has won

I cling on to hope as fate lingers, enraged by the fact that I could never pushed over the edge.

He is slipping, willingly he falls

Crippled by hope I gaze in amazement

He wears a cap now, like a brave hero

Anchored I keep moving forward”

I pad down the corridor, there is only silence in the house but filled with the drizzly rain outside. The sound is smooth flowing ripple breathed alongside the calmest breeze in this weather, low shelf reverb with very wet ambient echoes using a subtle delay with gentle rain, therapeutic.

I woke up to an empty side of the bed, he was nowhere in sight then it hit me that I came here with just a hospital gown. I wore his black long sleeve tee that I found and black sweatpants after bathing. I wonder if he wears black because he knows he makes it damnably and devilishly attractive or there's a story behind it. I smell masculine. Just like him.

His living room has a view, but all I can see is trees.

My heart starts to beat rapidly and very unusual. Burning as if I swallowed something acidic and powerfully dangerous, contagious. “Look at me” I hear his voice says smoothly, I flutter my eyes open to meet him staring at me, concern plastered on his face. “Now inhale and exhale. Slow. In and out. Your focus on me” I shake my head the warmth of his hands on my face spreads through me. I lean on them, breathing. Until I can normally breathe again. My mind is no longer a crowded mess.

He looks intently into my eyes before he takes my hand and pulls me closer to the glass window. “Bhuti, no!” I try pulling back instead he stands behind me. His hands on my waist forcing me to look at the trees surrounding this place. We are technically in a forest. They are long and greeny with drops of rain on them. Moving side by side. Left and right.

“Now take a deep breath. Get rid of that image you

have in your head and look at how beautiful the nature is” He whispers in my ear. The ticklish feeling makes me rotate my head to look towards him. “What?” He smirks. What a man he is, beautiful really.

I shake my head, “Nothing” I smile at him. His grin is scorching before he rotates my head and forcing me to look towards the trees. I take a sharp intake of breath. I look at them. When the pictures flashes in my mind. I push it back. Far, far away and admire the beauty. I do not feel the fire in my chest nor the crowded mess in my head instead everything is serene like the interior design of this home. The tiny drops of rain on the windows. The humming of trees.

I faced my fear, a round of applaud for me.

I turn to find him with a proud smile as if I am a toddler who just spat her first words, then he claps

his hands. Have I mention how beautiful are his hands? With nicely manicured fingers and veins. “Wanna go outside and touch the trees?”

“Slow down tiger” I wave my hand at him. He chuckles pulling me close to him. His fingers massaging my waist while I look up at him. He tugs the strands of my dreadlocks. He loves doing that or nuzzling his nose on my hair when we are sleeping. “Thank you” I say warmly to him. Looking at his spotless skin. I am sure he exfoliate more than I do. He drinks a lot of water too, and tea.

“I am doing what a boyfriend should do”

“Who said you’re my boyfriend bhuti?”

“Don’t make me lose my memory again weh maMkhungo please” He says with a thick accent, that I find truly attractive. It makes me wanna

attend a maskandi festival and walk barefooted covered in nothing but beads.

I laugh loudly, showing all my teeth. “You never asked me out”

“You took a piece of meat from my mouth”

“It doesn’t work like that. We are still friends”

He frowns tugging his head in. “Friend who makes you scream?”

“And makes me feel really good”

He smirks, “I do that?”

“I am hungry” I try shifting the conversation. The

look in his eyes has me by my throat, his trailing on my waist is exquisite. We are sharing besotted look.

“I bought us doughnuts and coffee. I got you some clothes as well and toiletry” I cannot suppress my grin or his face. His smirk as his black eyes brighten.

“Why excites you that you bought me clothes?”

He laughs, mercifully it’s good-natured. “You don’t trust me?” That laugh, no, I do not.

“I want to trust you but that look on your face” When I point at him with my index fingers. He sucks it to his mouth. I feel my pulse jumping with ecstasy. “You bought me everything white?” His snort is an ugly yet cute one as he laughs. He holds up my hand and kisses it. I should have known.

“You have me figured out”

“Black nyiff and nyeff nyiff and white is a thing” I imitate his voice with a clownery expression plastered on my face.

His mouth tugs into a smile, “Usazongits hela kahle ukuthi ubani okhuluma kanjalo maMkhungo. Tonight. But right now we have to get you something to eat” He tells me that I still have to explain who speaks like that. He could be threatening to kill me but the way he is always calm about it, damn, damn. Before he can leave. He kisses my lips that are ever so softly before boring into me. He does that all the time. A rose blooms over my face under his gaze before he comes back with a brown box and coffee.

When he comes back his mouth slats over mine, coaxing it open to slip his tongue inside licking my protest away and then we settle on the couch. Me in

between his legs and resting my head on his chest. His chin on top of my head and silently listening to the sound of the rain outside. “Before you gave up on dreaming what is that one thing you dreamt of doing or becoming?” His honeyed voice always brings stickiness to my thighs that I am only too happy to indulge. “I hate the fact that I cannot see your face right now”

“You want me to turn?”

“No. I am kind of enjoying trying to figure out the facial expression plastered on your face” He murmurs. “So tell me”

“A poet”

“Are you good with words”

“I managed to ask you” I respond confidently.

“I will never hear the end of this. I have to take you out on a date ngikushele kahle” He says with a smile in his voice, “Do you still want to be a poet?”

I sigh. Heavily and swallowing the doughnuts coated with chocolate. “No. I need to find myself again and figure myself out. I feel like I am lost. Like I don’t know who I am. The anger I had towards my father really strained me”

“Don’t carry the weight by yourself anymore. I am here for you”

“Forgive your mother bhuti”

He stretches his hand to grab the coffee, “Do you want yours too or you will drink from mouth?” I turn

looking up at him with a mischievous smile, so seductive as he tries to change the whole syllabus.

But we are disturbed when we hear a car outside and Mongezi immediately gets up, and a knock follows when he opens the door his mother walks in. Looking sophisticated as always. Her belly looking roundish under the tight dress. Is Mihlali pregnant?

Her eyes makes her look like a night owl as she stands here looking at him, with disbelief. Looking like a naked statue with a tiny penis and hands in the air. “Mongezi what is she doing here?” Her tone is thick. But she quickly gathers herself when she meets a venomous look on her son’s face. I get up on the couch and stand next to him. I hold his hand that was balled into a fist. I know he was thinking of doing something dangerous. He is angry. I can tell but he’s so calm that you can only see him attacking and then feel his wrath. “I have been looking for you and I figured you might be here. You

come here when you need space”

“What do you want?”

She looks at me first. I cannot believe at some point that this woman liked me. But now, shame. That look on her gorgeous and milky face says it all. Remember when she begged me to help his son? When we were best friends, gone. That smile and laughter. All gone. Now her face is like marble. “I am worried about you. Is she poisoning you against me?” She glances at me.

“Why you hired her if you don’t her?” she gasps at the question and clutching her chest dramatically.

“Me?”

Hah! This woman.

“I remember everything. You standing behind malume Sisonke naked after dad found both of you in his bed. I remember ma”

Naked?

[01/24, 07:36] : 29.

“Truth will set you free”

Like cartoons with their eyes out and held by tiny springs that’s how the woman in front of me in an olive green, one arm dress and a pixie cut fringe wig with blonde tints looks. I wish her persona was beautiful as she is, she is so muddy. “Mongezi” that comes as a choke, her small purse that is shaped like a tiny square has landed on the floor. The coffin shaped nude nails are laying gently on her chest along her hands, diamond ring flashing on our faces. “Where did you get that from?” I can tell there

are knives on her throat, stabbing her and poking. The blood in her body is not functioning the way it is supposed to.

I am holding this man next to me from doing something dangerous or becoming a murder right in front of me. He is painfully squeezing my hand and I can feel my bones crackling and breaking but all I can do is grit my teeth. If this is helping then fine with me. “I remember everything and I know everything but manje I want you to leave” How is he so calm? When he let go of my hand I take a sharp breather.

“Let me explain” she pleads, her tears are not ruining her make up. It is still there and looking beautifully done. Who looks beautiful while crying?

Mongezi laughs sardonically, but that sounds like a chant you can do during meditation. “How do you explain that my memory loss was not caused by an

accident but you were behind it? You hired maMkhungo so I can oftenly come to your house and you can use the drug on me again because it was wearing off right? I bled clots Mihlali. I could have died. You didn't care, not even once cared about side effects" He really called me like that in a middle of an argument. My focus completely shifted from the serious matter to my body clenching with nothing but ecstasy and delight.

"I was protecting you!" same old, same old excuses they always use when they have get caught. How is that protection?

"Me or yourself?" The calamity nature of this man ah, right now I'd be gun blazing and throwing this woman against the wall, cutting her body into so many pieces, cooking her and chanting wizardly.

"Can we sit down and talk please" she keeps repeatedly wiping her tears, her lips trembling and

rubbing her hands together. Now the sight is not as beautiful. With her mouth now down turned and mucus all over her nose.

“Ngicela uhambe!” He says in a monotone. She is not willing to move, her feet are stubbornly planted on the marble floor. He turns facing towards me then his mother. “You want to talk?” He asks and she nods her head vigorously “Fine but not here so let’s leave I will find you outside” Is he playing mind tricks?

Mihlali looks at me from my bare feet that need a pedicure to my dreadlocks that were tugged behind my ears. Dangerous and murderous look. Scary too. Then her shoes start to click as she walks out leaving a whiff of her cologne behind.

The moment she disappears behind the door he turns facing towards me and cupping my face on his hands. “I will ask Bongeziwe to bring your

friends here is that okay?” His hands are shaking on my face. Now I finally know where the darkness I have been seeing behind his eyes is coming from. They are cold, very, very.

“Don’t hurt her” I murmur

He smiles sweetly, warmly, beautifully making me feel like a warm breeze, lovely and new. “You will be okay right?” His honeyed voice spreads through me.

“Yebo” I respond to him and he kisses my forehead taking a step back to examine me, searching for something before his lips spreads into a smile.

Then he turns around attempting to walk out.

“Bhuti” I call him out and he pauses from walking turning to me.

“Sthandwa sami” He responds.

“Uhm...” I cannot say it. “Drive safely”

“That is not what you wanted to say”

I clear my throat, “That’s all” I play with my feet and he chuckles slightly.

“Ngiyabonga, mina ke ngiyakuthanda” He says that he loves me. His words sounds so velvety and silky like fabric against my skin.

“Nami futhi” I utter.

“Nawe futhi ini?”

“I love you too” I tell him and instead of him taking steps towards the door. He takes them towards me. I was not aware of just how close he has move

towards me until now. So many details comes into focus. The shape of his thick and brownish lips. The muscles on his shoulders. And then his lips are on mines. I close my eyes, and the world around me fades. The rain outside. The distractions. All gone. All that matter is the taste of his mouth, mix of cinnamon and chocolate. There is fierceness in his kiss, desperation and I answer just as hungry. I do not stop when he pulls me closer. His arms goes around my waist pulling me onto him further and his other hand slide up the back of my neck, getting entangled in my hair. He takes his lips away from my mouth and gently trailing kisses down to my neck. I tip my head back and gasping when the intensity returns to his mouth. There is an animalistic quality that sends shock waves through the rest of my body. Then he brings his lips back to mines. He kisses me slowly and we melt together. Every movement of mines is somehow perfectly mirroring his. My heart pounds hard then I pull away.

His hands release my waist and I notice I am not the only one breathing heavily. He pulls me to him, bringing our bodies together. The world is all heat and electrifying, thick with tension that the only spark away from exploding around us. “I want to come with you” I murmur.

“MaMkhungo...”

“Please”

“No, sthandwa sami. You stay here and I will be back to you. I will be fine. I promise ” A bit of uneasiness spreads through me. I watch him walking out of the door until it closes. I do not have a phone with me. How am going to call him?

It been overly an hour since he has been gone. I found myself going through the shopping bags he came with and he bought grocery. I am not that

much of a great cooker but here I am sashaying my body around the kitchen with my crowded mind as dumpling and chicken hangs thick in the room.

I cannot brush off what Mongezi said, it made sense, why would you hire anyone to be your son's friend? Evil. Was it after she has realised that he was distancing himself from her has whatever poison she was using on his memory was washing off. I remember she once said sometimes she doesn't want her son to regain his memory. I wonder how many skeletons are in her closets. As much I want to preach forgiveness but this is unforgivable.

A car outside making noises disturbs and most immediately I go stand by the doorstep. They are here. I didn't know much I needed them until now and my heart loudly beats when I see Yolokazi as well, I can now see the resemblance. Everything. She is one shade lighter and has cute duck shaped

shaped lips. When our eyes meet hers are crowded with tears, I open my arms and she throws herself on my chest. I wrap her like a gift and she nuzzles on my neck, sniffing the cologne that belongs to a man who has changed my life in a way I have never imagine in a short period of time.

Then Onalenna and Khethelo wrap their hands around us, making our way inside the house. Being here alone was making me crazy as I was overly thinking and my head was buzzing.

Khethelo is forever calm, her aura is pure and ethereal. “How are you? I found Bongeziwe at our place cuddling with our girl” Khethelo says taking off her dress and left with a white top skinny and matching thong, sitting on the floor and crossing her legs, yes that’s her all the time.

Onalenna shoots her the most diabolical look while Yolokazi is leaning on my shoulder. My sister. It

tastes differently saying it but sweetly.

I look at Onalenna waiting for her to start spilling the news instead she crosses her legs as always. “Are you cooking dumpling?” she asks giddy, this is the only person who loves my cooking, literally cause my brother is always eating healthy since he is a vegan.

“Don’t change the topic!” I chuckle.

She dramatically rolls her eyes, “Remember when I asked where I can buy a cat?”

“To practise witchcraft? Did you...Onalenna!!” Yolokazi says dramatically loud and clapping her hands together “You done did voodoo him with a cat?” she moves away from my shoulder and looking towards Onalenna who has turned into a tiny insect laughing. Shaking her shoulders up and

down.

“No! I told him I had a cat that died when he was asking me out so he said he will come to the funeral and that is why I am wearing a black dress” she tells us and we all erupt with laughter that echoes. A good laughter. Our eyes almost closed and our cheeks rubbing our eyelids.

“And then what happened?” Khethelo

“He came and we watched a movie. He fell asleep and we ended up taking a nap together. Besides we are never spending time together again, no” she shakes her head.

“Why?” Yolokazi asks opening her arms.

“I was left at the alter only to find out he was

marrying another woman same day, different province” she murmurs sadly and immediately the vibrant mood turns sombre, “I do not trust men. Not even one bit”

“Not everyone is like Avulele” Khethelo says.

“They all have penises just different sizes” Expect that from her. “Can we eat” she is shifting the conversation from her to something else. I get up making my way to the kitchen. He has small white bowls. They are very adorable. I am busying myself when Yolokazi walks into the kitchen and tying her dreadlocks up.

“Can I help you?” she asks.

“I almost done but you can grab glasses and wine” I tell her and she smiles making her way around the kitchen. “Kayise is a mess without you around. He

is still your brother” she says not looking at me but focused on the cupboard with glasses “That will never change”

“We are same age, how come we are sisters?” I ask unexpectedly this has been baffling me.

“We are twins” she says “Tada! Did you like it? Oh really. Thank you” she says jokingly before the seriousness comes back and plastered on her face. “And our father is a pastor”

“Which pastor?”

“Sambulo’s father in spirit” she mocks “Umama slept with him and when she found out she was having twins, she wanted to send one of us for adoption since she was not ready to raise two humans at once so your mother took you instead. I don’t know what to believable and not believable

but I saw pictures of us when we were born. It made sense. I always felt that something is missing you know” she tells me. I never felt anything. “And I am not expecting you to accept how everything has turned out now. Take your time but I want you to know that Kayise will always be your brother and if you want us to kill mom then I am down for it” she says with a grin. I shake my head laughing softly.

“I cannot believe I shared a womb with you!”

“Now we must share men”

“You are out of your mind!”

“You love him huh?” Yes.

“Let’s go back to the living room” she chuckles and already making her way to the living room leaving

me behind to allow everything to sink in.

Pastor's kid? Me? No.

[01/24, 07:36] : 30.

“The mask you live in”

MONGEZI

I can see the silvery glow, it all reflected light, the hot golden light of the day turns cool and ethereal in windings through space as I get off my car immediately the woman who gave birth to me parks hers from behind me.

At some point I thought I was still trying to swift through my thoughts, and allow myself to feel each and every emotion but I realised that I am very inadequate about everything that is happening. A

sad and solidarity human who once thought he was living a normal life until he eventually adapted what is now “norm” to him.

My mother get off the car with watery eyelids and sudden reddish eyes. With solemnly plastered on her face probably hoping I was still her young boy with wild hair wearing a dungaree, running around our yard and chasing my dog and after she has beaten me up for playing in the mud, I'd still forgive her. Run into her arms so she can wrap her warm arms around me, braid my tangled and stubborn hair. Her once upon time little boy is not so magnanimously anymore. “Mongezi..” she calls me, we are standing outside my uncles house. From here we can see his wife in lilac knitted dress laughing loudly with her daughter in law but as soon as they rotate their heads towards us. Their faces brighten, waving their hands towards our direction clearly indicating we should come inside. My mother shows them her teeth then looks towards me “What are we doing here?” Her voice is

shaky with fear. Wondering why? She betrayed the only woman who stood by her when she had no one.

I look at her intently and walk away but she grabs me by my arm. “She cannot find out the truth. It will destroy our family Mongezi. Can we go home and just talk about this?” I poisonously look at her fingers around my arms and then her face. She removes her hands and keep them to herself.

I do not know how to crucify her but she will for sure dance with her demons. Alongside an orchestra under red lights. Moving side by side with her head up and her hands waving in the air.

Kefiloe is standing by the door looking voluptuous and her mouth painted in red showing white pearly teeth. Her skin looks like she has been drowned in butter. “Come in!” she says in her high pitch voice, full of life as always. I smile warmly at her but it doesn’t reach my cheeks, fake enough to look

convincing.

She steps aside allowing me to walk inside the house that screams nothing but classy elegant with shades of gold and white. I can hear laughter as she sees my mother on her doorstep. Should be interesting, right? The intensity of the atmosphere. The guilt that will make my mother sit on the couch as if they have needles, tapping her thighs as anxiety screams on the left ear first and then right before screaming on both of them, softly at first and then loudly.

They walk in together, holding a conversation they have created from the door before Kefiloe manoeuvres my mother to sit on the couch then she sits opposite her crossing her legs in an impeccable mannerism and in that moment Azande walks in as well, she is married to my cousin Avulele. Not really my cousin anymore – but my half brother. Who woke up one morning and decided to marry his high

school sweet heart. “Mongezi!” she greets throwing herself next to me and leaning on my shoulder.

“I am so happy to see you guys here. We haven’t done this since Qophelo passed away” she says with a saddened tone when she mentions the man whom I thought was my father. The tensity starts wheezing in the air. But I stay calm leaning back on the couch and balancing my hand while leaning on my shoulder. “How about we call Bongeziwe and just have lunch together. My husband will be home anytime from now with Avulele” Londiwe suggests rubbing her hands together. I keep my eyes on my mother who swallows the bricks on her throat. Uncrossing her legs as her friend looks closely at her.

“Bongeziwe is on his way, that sounds perfect” I respond the moment my mother was about to utter a word. She looks at me, with the eyes the man who stands on the side on the road with a brown

cardboard written in black fonts gives you, needing coins. “Right ma?” I keep my eyes on her. Her lips purse into a side smile. Looking at me then her friend. Me then her friend. Guilt already giving her a lap dance to a nice sensual music followed by shame as a backup dancer. All she does is shake her head in agreement since her capacity to speak is temporarily paralysed.

“Wonderful let’s go to the kitchen. Azande get up. Mongezi your uncle will be her...” she doesn’t finish her sentence when my “uncle” walks into the room followed by Avulele but the sonorous laughter disappears when his eyes meet mine and then my mother. An owl in the daylight.

Oh his reaction is delightful as he keeps darting his eyes at everyone in the room. To read our faces? To find out if he is caught? I really would love to know. Kefiloe gets up from her couch and softly rubs her lips on his. My mother hangs her head low

clutching on her purse so tightly. “Bafo!” Avulele says and I get up to meet him half way and we shoulder hug. Strange. Very strange that we have always been more than just cousins only to find out we are made of a same sperm. “It’s great seeing you here ” he says with his forever husky voice.

“Mihlali” my uncle says and my mother slowly picks her head up. Looking towards me first before she looks at him with a plastic smile and putting out her hand for a handshake —How sway? —but he pulls her into a hug instead. Not just a hug. But an usual hug with fireworks dancing in the sky.

Kefiloe grabs my mother’s hand and calls out for Azande to join them in the kitchen leaving the men behind and awkwardness between my uncle and I who can clearly see I know something through the coldness of my eyes. “Let me go change I am coming back” Avulele says already taking off his tie and walking out of the room.

A woman in a purple uniform offers me a cup of tea then she disappears. My uncle pours himself a glass of cognac before he sits across me and taking a sip groaning. "How are you?" He looks closely at me. I keep the indescribable expression on my face, taking sips on my cup.

"Great" I respond.

He nods his head slowly, eyes fixed on me. "What did the doctors say?"

"Nothing"

"Remember anything?"

"Is there anything I should remember?"

“I mean you had dreams to achieve. You were almost at the peak of your career”

“I am doing just fine. I have people working for me. That shouldn't bother you”

He gulps his drink, cool as a cucumber. “I care about you”

“Why?” I lean forward and he takes a sharp breath pouring himself another glass but his son walks back with a grin plastered on his face and he sits somewhere across the room clasping his hands on a couch.

“I went to your fashion house the other day to get myself some garment and the people working for you are amazing. I heard you are collaborating with Lulama Gum and Yasmine Khuzwayo” He says

proudly and all I can do is purse my lips into a side smile – pretending like I have no idea what is he talking about maybe? Yes. “I must say I was not about this thing of men being designers but you have proved me wrong” His father– Our father– is silence. “Ngiyazi qhenya ngawe bhuti wami [I am proud of you my brother]”

“Bhuti wami” I grin and my uncle chokes on his drink and starts coughing rapidly at how I emphasised those words before he searches for something on my face. He won’t find it whatever he is looking for. It’s not there as I have masked it perfectly with a unreadable expression. Minutes passes by in an tense atmosphere with my uncle who is wrapped up with uncomfortability and too scared to look into my eyes. But keeping his calamity? He is very much perfect at doing that – I guess like father, like son, right?

After couple of minutes it’s announced that lunch is

ready and Bongeziwe is here as we get up making our way to the table he grabs me by my arm turning me to face him. His face sharp, cheekbones hard. I am man enough to say he is a very good looking man. “What game are you playing?” He asks.

“Game?” I smile “I am not playing a game”

“Mongezi” He warns “I understand... ”

“You don’t understand anything Bongeziwe”

“I am your brother”

“And so is Avulele”

He breathes, “This could ruin us. Our family. Everything. Is that what you want?”

“No. But I am not leaving Kefiloe in the dark either that is one thing for sure”

“There is something that you are hiding from me”  
He has no idea about my mother poisoning me to brainwash me. Turn me into something robotic that constantly forgets memory. Stays in the dark. That woman ruined me. Unforgivable if you ask me.

“That darkness in your eyes scares me”

I smile, “Lunch is ready” I walk away leaving him whispering shouting my name. I sit on the table that is sophisticatedly decorated in black and green, very refreshing as we eat greener over giggles and laughter. Joy dancing in the atmosphere. Kefiloe has the most amazing spirit.

“Babe Muhlali has been very secretive...” she says smiling towards my mother before looking towards

her husband “she met someone and she is pregnant” My uncle spills his drink. Eyes out of their own volition. Getting better and better. “I know. So Mihlali who is he? I mean it’s been a year already since Qophelo passed on so there’s nothing wrong with moving on right baby?”

My mother glances at me and I lean backwards on my chair placing my hand on the table and slowly chewing – she is pregnant? No words really. “Tell us hawu!” Azande says chuckling.

My mother pokes her food then picks her head up. To steal glances at me. “I am sure Ziwe and Ngezi do not mind at all so tell us” Kefiloe says “Or do you guys mind?”

“No, not at all” I smile warmly. “Tell us ma” I say and looking straight into her eyes. “The truth”

She shifts on her chair and clearing her throat.  
“When the time is right” she smiles.

“The truth ma” I say sternly “Tell her the truth”  
Everyone hears the tensivity of my voice and their eye  
iris are at me then my mother. Interested plastered  
on their faces.

“Mongezi...” her voice trembles and tears starts to  
build up in her eyes, glistening, shimmery. “...can  
we talk...”

“The truth”

She looks towards my uncle, then his wife next to  
him who seems surprised. “Kefiloe I am so sorry...”

“Mihlali...” my uncle interjects.

“Let her talk baby. What is wrong honey. Why are you’re sorry?”

“Baby can we talk privately?” Sonke to Kefiloe.

“No. Mihlali talk” The tension is so thick.

“The truth is...”

“Mihlali don’t!!” My uncle shouts then he looks towards his wife. Who is trying to make sense of everything and it clicks in her mind because she removes her hand from my uncle, shivering and shaking her head.

“Mihlali speak!”

“Baby can we —” Sonke.

“Mihlali!” Kefiloe.

My mother has the salty water streaming down her face. Azande has her hands on her face. Avulele has his mouth wide open. And me? I don't know.

“I am sorry” That came out as a whisper from my mother “I am so sorry Kefiloe”

“What are you sorry for?”

“The child she is carrying is mine and Mongezi is my son!” My uncle bluntly says with his eyes closed “Qophelo died after he caught us together. He wanted to kill Mongezi so we can feel what we made him feel but sadly he passed away. I am sorry baby” He says and immediately Avulele gets up from his chair screaming out. Those piercing screams are filled with pain? Hurt? Disappointment?

Whatever it is, I relate.

Kefiloe erupts with laughter darting her eyes between the two shaking her head and pointing at them before she gets up from the chair and leaves the room. My mother is hysterically crying and my uncle is mumbling under his breath. Bongeziwe eating from his plate like nothing happened and Azande leaving the room looking for her husband.

We hear few screams before Kefiloe appears holding a gun and Avulele following behind him and begging her. Everyone on the table gets up immediately. My mother standing behind Sonke — feels like de ja vu but this time they are wearing clothes.

The man I thought was my father in the middle of the room with eyes red as beetroot water, mucus on his nose. His hands shaking with anger and the veins on his forehead visible. His brother standing

infront of him with his penis dangling in between his legs and his wife standing behind him, hiding. Begging that he should stay calm. Everything feels the same. My mind feels like shattered glasses. “Kefiloe don’t do...” he doesn’t finish his sentence before a gunshot goes off. Screams follows. Another gunshot. Another screams. Another gunshot. Black.

[01/24, 07:38] : 31.

“– Of a Whole–

This side is Furious

But Valid, knocking options

With heavily impulsivity

Stretching parts that make up my diversity

And that side

Spirit calls me,

Inclusive,

Covers and molds.

I see

Even through wrong

With each step in the wind

I still stand strong”

MONGEZI

It's after the last gunshot and loud scream when I see his body crashing into the ground and red liquid right next to him. My heart beat accelerates and hammers in my throat. “Bongeziwe!” I scream out kneeling in front of him and placing his head on my lap. He is holding his bleeding arm, groaning in pain on the other side of the room my uncle is calling my mother's name. “Bongeziwe!” I call him once again as his eyes are slowly closing and his long lashes are resting at the bottom of his eyes like a crescent.

I pick my head to meet the dangerously looking woman holding a gun with her hands trembling

matching her lips. Tears clouding her eyes and another gunshot goes off straight to her head. The white walls are covered with tiny drops of blood. Her body is on the floor, eyes wide open surrounded by the pool of blood and her plump lips that were painted in nude are slightly parted oozing blood. “Ma!” Avulele scream tears glistening in his eyes. My uncle shouts all at once both at his mistress and his wife. The entire house is echoing with screams and Azande’s womanly cries.

I can hear sirens before the paramedics runs inside the house followed by the police officers, I am being pulled away from my brother. He is still breathing but hardly —but he is alive. He got to be.

I look around the room, with a woman in a two piece taking pictures of the scene while they are pushing Kefiloe’s body outside in a body bag —this spiralled out of control. I just wanted the truth out. I wanted my mother to be punished, I do not know in what

manner but there she is being shoved in an ambulance, covered in pipes and bleeding from her stomach.

My uncle looks like a man in agonizing pain and utterly lost, walking towards me and he grabs me by my collar pushing me against the wall and saliva coming out from his mouth, dripping. Tears covering his stern and harsh face. “This is all your fault!” He yells out to me poisonously and he attempts to wrap his hand around my neck. I hold it, tightly feeling his bones crackling. Strangle who? Me? Never.

“Everyday before you sleep at night I want you to remember that you killed your brother and your wife. Not me, you did that” I say in a lower tone, venomously. His knees wiggles before they land him on the marble floor, hanging his head and shoulders, that keeps moving up and down. I walk outside. We have neighbours standing outside in

their gowns to see what is happening.

I slide behind the wheel manoeuvring the car on the road following the ambulance that keeps flashing the red and blue lights that has my brother inside. If anything happens to Bongeziwe, I will take the blame and put it on my shoulders. Turn all fingers so they could point towards me. The bullet was meant for me but he took it instead. I guess Kefiloe wanted to kill everything that will remind her of her husband's ungodly ghastly doings.

The drizzle has turned to a full blown rain by the time we get to the hospital. The pandemics looks like ninjas coming out from the back of the ambulance and pushing my brother before my mother follows, rushing to the emergency room and I am advised to stand outside as I was hovering them with thousands of questions.

I sit here alone pacing up and down, my hands

running through my head and neck. The sound of the rain outside is therapeutic and calming sitting here alongside a woman and what I think is her son, anxiously and tapping her feet. A doctor in a white coat walks into the room before calling out their names, she immediately stands wiping her tears from her face and pulling down the sleeves of her knitted jersey covered in blood.

The doctor makes an announcement and instantly she falls on her knees, crying from the depth of her soul and shaking her head repeatedly. The son is holding her. The sight is sad and painful to watch. I get up making my way to the canteen buying a cup of tea to warm the anxiety dancing in every fibre of my body, my brain and everywhere else.

Returning back to the empty waiting room I decide to call Kayise —it's only fair since Bongeziwe is his brother as well and also to provided him with the location to fetch maMkhungo. I cannot look into her

eyes right now because of the sudden guilt that has found a way to wrap itself around me.

Maybe this should have been left unsaid, but also truth always find a way to come out. One way or the other, it would have found a way to appear from the darkness and stand confidently in the light with arms crossed wearing high heel shoes with a smirk.

The tea in my hand is turning cold. I have not yet taken a sip. I cannot bring myself into swallowing the hot liquid down my throat. I haven't heard anything from the doctors.

I lean forward on the chair when I hear footsteps picking my head up my uncle is here, excuse me – my father is here – in same clothes covered with blood and we do not exchange any words instead he makes himself comfortable in one of the chairs rubbing his hands together, mumbling under his breath and looking agitated. “I love your mother...”

he says unexpectedly "...just as much as I loved Kefiloe" He looks up to see my reaction and he meets my face plastered with a grin and shaking my head.

"Keep it to yourself" I respond and only this time I take a sip from the lukewarm liquid still grinning under my breath has his words echoes in my head. "Bullshit!" I say it out loud. He looks at me with something sphinxlike in his eyes before he looks at his hands again. We continue sitting in the room with a pink elephant annoyingly singing between us, and sitting on our chests. It been hours. Nothing from the doctors. My mind grows fuzzier and fuzzier as if melting from edges in. A dullness begs the mind to go blank.

"Bhuti..." I hear her smooth voice calling me out repeatedly fluttering my eyes open there she is wearing my clothes and her dreadlocks tied into a loose ponytail. I get up immediately and she wraps

her hands around me, her head just below my chin. “I thought something happened to you” she says in a lower tone with a sense of relief. I hold her closely to my chest. It comes crashing as a tidal wave that this is what I needed. Her hands around me. The sound of her washing over me to feel the sense of calmness again.

She looks up at me, “How is he? What happened?” she asks all at once and pulling away from me taking my hand so we both could sit on the plastic chairs.

“We haven’t heard anything from the doctors as yet” I tell her and she nods her head looking towards her friend with a puffy face. “Can we talk outside?” I ask her she shakes her head in agreement with a slight smile. I give Kayise a handshake before we follow each other out with maMkhungo, our fingers intertwined and her head on my shoulder.

We stand outside facing each other, under the moonlight the illuminates her face. “What happened Mongezi?” the seriousness of her voice scares me. She steps closer and closer then cups my face into her hands. “Talk to me” her eyes are on mines, darting and searching.

“My aunt found out the truth. And she left the room, came back with a gun and starting shooting. Bongeziwe took my bullet” I tell her and she gasps, pulling her hands away from my face. The warmth that has seep through me disappears.

“She wanted to shoot you?” It is as if everything is sinking slowly into her brain. Drop by drop. Making sense of it and then she starts shaking. I take her hand to mine, holding her to me. This time I am the one who cups her mesmerisingly beautiful face in my hands with her lips in between her teeth.

“I am fine maMkhungo, stop”

“I cannot lose you”

“That won’t happen”

“What if she tries shooting you...”

I immediately interject hearing her panicked tone.  
“She killed herself after shooting” Her mouth hangs open.

“And your mother?”

“Alive” I tell her.

She swallows her saliva, “How are you feeling?”

“Now that you are here. I am okay sthandwa sami”  
We interrupted by Avulele who walks towards us  
alongside Azande.

“How is he?” He refers to Bongeziwe after he has  
greeted maMkhungo who is closely looking at him  
and observing.

“We haven’t heard anything as yet but we can go  
inside and hear. I am right behind you” I tell him. He  
looks lost. He nods his head and they walk inside  
with Azande.

“Do you know him?” Kwanda.

“He is my half brother”

“Hmmm” she murmurs before we follow right  
behind Avulele to find everyone on their feet and

listening to the doctor.

“Onalenna!” Avulele says to maMkhungo’s friend who turns to face towards him. You cannot miss the anger and hatred in her eyes. Then she walks out of the room without saying anything.

What was that about?

Unexpectedly Kwanda punches Avulele before she follows her friend.

Haibo Mohammed Ali!

[01/24, 07:38] : 32.

“Love didn’t hurt. Love gave you the strength to move on, to let go, to forgive, and find love within yourself”

## ONALENNA.

I stood in front of the mirror as the sun was slowly setting creating an orange artistic picture outside. In a corset white gown that looked like it was tailored made just for me – Yes it was – it fitted me like a glove, perfectly and beautifully with my make up impeccably and sophisticatedly done as I had requested.

The house was filled with loud singing and joyfulness wheezing in the air. “Onalenna” my mother walked into the room, with her cheeks touching her eyes that were glistening like pearls in a glass full of water. I made the decision of getting married under the moonlight and stars twinkling in the sky so she can be there seated in the front and looking beautiful in her black and white dress.

Oh many complained about my theme colour and getting married at that time of the day without an

understanding that black and white is what makes life —there was a powerful meaning behind it all as we sat with my once upon a time sweetheart at the park seated in a red and white cloth and laughing from out belly buttons planning our wedding.

Our love story? Hmm. It wasn't your typical fairytale where we had met at a coffee shop and spilled the coffee on each other's clothes, laughed about it and then went out on couple of date. Reality doesn't mimic movies, sadly.

It was supposed to be a one night stand, so I thought, falling in love with him was not part of the plan but it happened unexpectedly. Exploring what was between us was the moment beautiful thing that ever happened in my life. I do not regret it till this day —because I believe it was meant to happen. To teach me something maybe about love? I guess but it was most definitely a lesson learnt.

“Avulele is missing” My uncle walked into the room as my mother was about to give me one of those sweet and emotional speeches. I stood up from the edge of the bed to walk towards him as he looked at me with melancholy of sweet sadness on his face.

“And we found something”

“Avulele is not missing” I said “He is not missing!” I continued more sternly this time and breathing through my mouth. My chest slowly closing as he gives me a phone. I look at his face first but he hangs his head low. The bright screen blinded me, but I soldiered on to meet pictures of the man I was deeply in love with, standing at the alter with a wide smile on his face and love in his eyes looking at another woman holding hands in their black and white themed wedding —a slap in the face wasn't it?

“Black represents the dark and white represents the light. Feminine and Masculine. It would be wonderful to use those colours for our wedding.

You bring the light into my dark world” He said to me eating peanut butter from the jar. I wonder if he said the same to her. If he was wearing boxers and socks eating peanut butter from the jar before smiling beautifully, like an angel.

I shook my head repeatedly, watching him in a short video saying his vows. His voice sounded so velvety and dripping honey. The way he looked at her. Her smile. I saw a man I was very much in love with colliding with another woman in front of me. I picked my head up with my eyes clouded with tears that tasted like angry oceans and my mother who mirrored the same motion.

I took off my shoes and pulled up my dress to run out of the house. Dry heaving and blinking my tears away. Ignoring the exclams behind me. The screaming. The shouting. The picture taking. The whispers. The gossiping. I ignored all of it and kept running with my thoughts scattered like a pile of

papers next to a trash can and my brain shattered.

I called him and all he said was “sorry” without any sense of solemnity before he hung up the call and that was it. I never heard anything from him. He never called. And I did, countless times until my number was blocked.

You see those simcards you get for free? I had many of them. Then he changed numbers and blocked me everywhere on social media.

I created so many accounts and spent my nights stalking him and his voluptuous wife with a face that looks straight out of magazine. I wish, I wish I could call her by names. But why would I? When she didn't do anything to me, I bet she is not even aware of my existence.

We are in the living room with a sweeping view. A

modern couch backs onto a simple dining area, its low back allows the two different zones to connect yet still remain defined. The sofa is facing onto the television wall that is clad in a mirrored panel and a neat floor lamp provides reading light — everything screams serene like the owner. Then there is a curvaceous glass panel screens the kitchen from the living room dining combo. Kwanda is slowly falling asleep and snuggling next to me. I had few glasses of wine and I am feeling the alcohol shooting through my bloodstream but the tentative knock disturbs.

We look at each other spooked. “Kwanda open!” the person at the door says “uKayise” he continues saying and Kwanda gets walking barefooted, she has such beautiful feet. I have a fetish by the way, she comes back with her brother following behind and Khethelo suddenly has unremovable smile as he appears.

He greets his eyes on my friend, who is half naked in this cold weather and a glass of wine in her hand. “I was sent here to fetch you guys” he announces, that doesn’t sound good. “Bongeziwe has been shot” he announces and my intestines were found at the edge of the mountain, shaking. Before I gasp for air.

“Is he okay?” I ask first.

“I do not know as yet but I am here to get you guys before I can go to the hospital” I find myself feeling something I have promised not to ever feel towards a man again, ever. And that is caring. Heart is a very stupid organ.

“Mongezi how is he?” Kwanda asks panicking and before he could response, she is already running around the house looking for something then she comes back wearing oversized shoes. If it was any other day I would have laughed at how clownery

she looks in those shoes. This is new. My friend caring about someone like this. The facial expression on her face gives every single detail of her emotions. A woman who has fallen deeply in love —she cannot be saved.

In the backseat of the car and my body is uncontrollably shaking. I am praying under my breath. For a man. Strange huh?

Kwanda is staring outside the window and silently crying when Yolokazi pulls her into her lap, stroking her dreadlocks. I have mastered masking my emotions. Trust me I am very good at doing just that.

When we get to the hospital Kwanda runs out of the car almost tripping because of the shoes that are too big for her feet – only she can manage to make you laugh at times like this. She turns around to see if we saw that she almost fell then grins a little

before walking away as we follow right behind her.

Two men, in a tense atmosphere, and Mongezi uncomfortably sleeping on the waiting room chairs. We settle down while Kwanda wakes him up. His eyes brighten when he sees her immediately getting up from the chair and she wraps her around his body embracing him. I sit here tapping my feet on the floor agitated.

Mongezi and Kwanda are leaving the room holding hands, they are beautiful together, different – very different but compatible. “Mr B Ndamase ’s family” A woman wearing scrubs says and everyone gets up at once. I am hugging myself to stop shaking. It happens when I am super anxious.

The doctor opens her mouth to say something. “Onalenna” someone calls me, a familiar voice. I turn around to meet him standing next to her. He doesn't look as I imagined or thought he would

when I see him again. Worn out, like the earth has chewed and spat him. Not even close —damn he is so fine as I first saw him across the room with colourful disco lights and a drink in his hand, smiling and showing his crispy white teeth. His skin looks like he has been drowned in butter, so smooth and flawless. His jeans fit him perfectly. And she stands next to him, the same oval shaped ring that I have chosen in her finger.

My chest slowly closes up, finding it hard to breathe and diving through the suffocation. The memories I thought I have dug a grave for comes crashing like a wave in shore. I look at him reflecting exactly how I feel towards him and walking out of the room.

Crying over him? Never that. I walk faster as if I am being chased by the demons and that is when everything shuts around me. Noises in my head becomes louder and louder. Tears cloud my own eyes. “Ona!” someone grabs me by my arm. But I

push her back furiously and she stumbles.

Khethelo finds her balance and grab me again forcefully pulling me into a hug and a gut wrenching sob escapes my mouth. The sound hurt my own oesophagus. My chest is drumming loudly being held opens the taps I wanted to stay close in my eyes. Kwanda is walking towards us angrily —she trips again but she balance on the gravel with her hand. I cannot help but erupt with laughter while still crying. This one will be the death of me. She clicks her tongue and dusting her hands. We are laughing sitting on the pavement of the hospital and them wrapping their arms around me.

He really moved on like nothing ever happened?  
Fear men right after God.

[01/24, 07:38] : 33.

“Happiness is just a breath away”

## ONALENNA

It been overly five days, of my wounds bleeding and needing tender loving and gentleness to clean them up and take care of them.

I have been stuck in this room filled with darkness and not even a single slight of sunshine manages to escape my closed curtains and windows – pretending like I am okay when I walk out of this room though? I am perfectionist at doing that. I have been given space too, to be myself and within my emotions. When the time is right to spew whatever that I am feeling then they will give me an ear. I really found sisters in my friends.

I currently do not have a job since my boss is fighting for her life in a coma after she has been shot. No one knows what happened or maybe

Kwanda does. I just haven't brought up that conversation since it might seem like I care about that gorgeous bald man with a full beard and beautiful hands with nicely manicured fingers and veins at the back of his hand and arms, tell me what is more attractive than that? His white teeth? Or his brownish coloured lips with a hint of pinkish.

You are thinking about him again, my brain appears saying in a sing, sing, song and wearing feathery dress while doing tango.

That look on your face screams you care, my heart says this time and staring at herself in the mirror before she looks towards me with a mischievously smirk.

I care? No. I mean why would I? When he is related to a man who treated me like filth and had an audacity to call out my name. I am sure Bongeziwe knows about this and he applauded him for being a

sleek player now he wants to finish me, shame poor me.

I dramatically roll my eyes at these two and walking out my room padding to the kitchen to find Kwanda cooking porridge. I thought she'll be at her mother's house these days or brother but she is here, always, like someone who is running away from something. As always looking beautiful in her white organza top with puffy sleeves and short matching skirt that holds her body perfectly. No one is as voluptuous as this woman stirring her pots with a smile on her face and her dreadlocks tied neatly into a fleek ponytail. "Good morning, you smell good" she winks at me, I just came out of the bath. "Do you want porridge?" I shake my head in agreement and she shows me her thumbs.

"Khethelo and Yolokazi have left for work?" I ask making my way to the living room, shouting over my shoulders.

“Just minutes ago. Butter or peanut butter in your porridge?” she asks me shouting.

“Both please and thank you” I make myself comfortable on a red sofa. I can see her movements in the kitchen and minutes later we are seated together on the sofa with bowls in our hands and looking towards the television. I clear my throat, it is stuck in my throat. I wish I can do something to make it evaporates. “How is Bongeziwe?” I bluntly ask making sure that my focus is on the screen and nothing else but the screen.

I can see her from the corner of my eyes glancing at me and shoving a spoon inside her mouth. “He was discharged yesterday. Do you want to come along with us? We are going there with Mongezi” My heart and brain scream yes, yes, yes at once.

I shake my head in disagreement, “That’s great he wasn’t that hurt?” The porridge burns my throat but I soldier on and keep it moving.

“I don’t know but you can come and find out. Avulele won’t be there, I promise” she shifts her body towards me giving me an adorable look as she begs with pouting her lips. Then we hear a knock, she quickly gets up and her man appears behind the door wearing all black. Are they matching? Black and white? I hate this blending of colours but they make me fall in love with it all over again.

This man right here, in black – an Adonis.

“Sawubona” he greets me with a smile sitting on the sofa and I greet him back mirroring his smile. He grabs the bowl that belongs to Kwanda and eating her porridge. And she playfully shoves him as he hands her back the bowl. The light in their eyes. The look on their faces. The smile on his face as he looks at her – this is what dreams are made of.

“Onalenna are you coming?” Kwanda.

“Yes, let me change” I get up from the sofa and striding to my room and it only hit me, now that I agreed to this. I mean she caught me off guard when she asked. I was still admiring her and her man. What am I getting myself to? I can still come up with an excuse though right?

I change into a rust, orange hue asymmetric dress and my natural silk blonde hair it tied into a sleek ponytail. And no, I am not biracial but my hair is silky because I use chemicals on it and its blonde because I bleached it – nothing specially really.

I think I look decent, more than that actually, I would have love to touch my face with make up but I do not have that much time but mascara and lipgloss could work.

Why am I bothered? Actually I am not.

We get in the car and Mongezi slides behind the wheel before soft music fills my ears, very soulful and smooth. There is a bit of sunshine but these past days the weather just changes. One minute its hot leaving you flustered and then next its raining heavily leaving you drenched. The chemistry between these two is undeniable, this is something enjoyable to watch. Seeing the love being shared right in front of you, not with words but eye contact, smiles and fingertips. The music playing softly makes the moment even more beautiful a smile manages to escape my own lips and Kwanda turns to look at me from the front seat “Are you okay?” she asks with a grin and I shake my head in agreement before we drive through the mall first. I am feeling very agitated now.

I choose to stay behind, Mongezi was not happy

about that one but he let me out of the leash. I stay behind tapping my cold hands on my thighs and taking uneven breaths. Looking at people walking out the stores and pushing their strollers.

The two finally comes out pushing grocery and Mongezi is laughing at something while Kwanda keeps her straight face, he does something with his face then she erupts with laughter, pausing walking looking rather defeated as she laughs then she shakes her head as they continue approaching towards the car. I help them pack in the boot before we continue driving.

We drive through a house with a beautiful balcony heightens, that provides you an enjoyment of the outdoors. Large, open - framed windows that makes the most of this rural setting while glass railings allow a comfy seat in an outdoor pod.

Mongezi opens his woman's door first then mines,

gentleman mannerism. “Are you sure you’re okay?” This time he is the one who asks, attentively looking at me. Does he know? I hope he doesn’t because I do not want a pity party right now.

I smile, “I am okay” He nods his head as he grabs the plastics from the car boots then he walks before us. We follow behind while I admire around until we are inside the house that features a dark hone design with wonderfully unique dual tone herringbone floor which sweeps through a large open living area. A solid area of white floor planks transition into rich dark wood tone by introducing contrasting planks at random intervals across the midsection to stunning effect.

He is nowhere in sight —I take a deep breather that was very much needed. “Make yourself comfortable, I will get him from his room” Mongezi says then kisses Kwanda on the cheek before he disappears.

The living room too has different coloured couches using green and light brown that also matches the rug. My heart moves from its normal place to my throat when he appears in grey sweatpants and grey sweater. He has splint so his arm is close to his stomach, he looks surprised to see me and an unexpected smile escapes his lips. “Makoti wami” He greets Kwanda. Is that how he greets her? Why he calls her like that? And why am I green with jealous?

“My mnyeni. You look much better today” she says.

He looks towards me, “she is here” he responds as he is about to sit, I quickly get up helping him and placing a cushion that he could lean on. He searches for my eyes and I avoid eye contact instead he holds my arm forcing me to look up at him. And when I do, I am met with unexplainable expression. Hard to read but I quickly pull away from him. And take a step back when I am satisfied

that he is comfortable enough I return back to where I was seated.

“MaMkhungo, let’s go and cook something quickly” Mongezi says already on his feet.

“Haibo I am a guest I cannot co...” he gives her a stern look and she looks at me then Bongeziwe who is chuckling under her breath “Oh...yeah” she gets up “Onalenna you want to hel...” she gets the diabolical look from both the brothers, she just walks away without saying anything and Mongezi follows her laughing and shaking his head.

“Ngenzeni?” He asks the moment the two disappears. And I pick my head up pretending I did not hear a thing. I hate the seriousness on his face, it makes me feel like I am in his den. “What did I do?”

“Nothing”

“Let’s try again. What did I do to you Onalenna?”

“Nothing” I repeat again.

“You cannot tell me its nothing when you cannot even look at me in the eye, come and sit here please” he pats the empty space next to him and I shake my head in agreement. These bloody acidic waters in my eyes are slowly approaching I can feel them. One more word from him, I am going to weep. I look down at my white sneakers then towards him. “Please” I get up and walk towards him when I am about to sit he takes my hand and forces me to sit on his lap locking his big hand around my waist, something clenched in ecstasy, something in me jumped when his hand came in contact with me. “Khuluma nami” He asks me to talk to him.

“I was worried about you” I confess.

“Yet you did not come to see me, why?”

“Nothing”

“Please stop saying its nothing because there’s clearly something”

“Your house is beautiful”

“I only have one arm Onalenna”

I smile, “So?”

“Do not force me into having sex with a broken arm to get you into talking” My vagia walls closes and opens, humming and dancing, screaming and

shouting “Why are you squirming?” He smirks.

“I am not” I try keeping a straight face.

“Umuhle nezinwele ezigold [you are beautiful with your gold hair]” he compliments.

“Blonde” I correct him, “Ngiyabonga”

“When Kwanda and Mongezi leaves can you stay behind for the night? So we can talk?”

“Okay” Just like that I agreed and he smiles again and his fingers rubbing my back. “What?” I hate that coy smile on his face. I am covered with a rosy hue.

“Nothing. Want us to go help in the kitchen?” After shaking my head in agreement we make our way to

the kitchen. With dozens of orbs shaped dining room pendant lights cluster, like giant white caviar, at the centre of a kitchen diner with black kitchen cabinets surrounding the eating area, cut through with a stripe dazzling white marble. The cloud dining pendants float over a white marble table top, teamed with deep green dining chairs.

Mongezi is cooking and Kwanda is chopping they make everything looks fun.

“What time are you guys leaving?” Bongeziwe

“We are sleeping over, yindaba?” Mongezi responds and Bongeziwe looks at me with widened eyes. I laugh loudly.

[01/24, 07:38] : 34.

“My hands are power

They are just that good”

We are in the living room and the only thing that is illuminating this entire four walled room is the television screen, we are watching an action movie and I am slowly falling asleep on Mongezi’s shoulder. We spent the day at his brother’s house, he has become overly protective. Mongezi wants to see Bongeziwe in front of his eyes twenty four seven and making sure that he is perfectly fine. If Bongeziwe dares groans in pain, this man right here is the first one to quickly spring off the sofa to check if everything is fine. They have a lovely bromance. “Baby wake up, we are leaving” Mongezi says softly gracing my forehead with soft kisses and looking down at me. I open my eyes slowly, I was really deep in my sleep.

“Are we not sleeping over?” I drag my voice —that was the plan.

He smiles and kisses my forehead again, “I have other plans” I pick my head up looking at the other two focused on the television screen before I get up from the sofa as Mongezi pulls me up. He wraps me with the fleece blanket we were using because of the sudden change of weather. “Bafo, we are leaving” he announces to his brother.

“Oh. Already?” He sounds excited than saddened that we are leaving. The clock just blinked half past nine pm and he is asking so casually that we are already leaving.

“We will come back tomorrow morning”

“Not in the morning though. Makoti wami I will see you tomorrow” He says to me, he calls me his wife.

I wink at him, “Ona let’s go” I say.

“Oh I am staying” staying where? Here?

I tug my head in and before I can utter a word Mongezi unexpectedly picks me up and swings me on his shoulder like a sack of oranges. Shouting over his shoulders that we are gone. Until he shoves me into the car smirking and shaking his head. “hhayi maMkhungo” that all he says fastening my seatbelt. “Want something before we drive home?” I shake my head in disagreement, still laughing at how slow I am. “You might want to take off your underwear right now” He shuts the door. Oxygen has been knocked out of my lungs. His words stole breath from these lungs. My heart is drumming, as I watch him slide behind the wheel and starting the engine like he didn’t not just say that.

The robot turns red and his hand travels in between my legs and I glance towards him breathing uneven. The effect he has on me is instantaneous. I feel a

rush as he feels the plumpness of my vulva through my lace underwear. His fingers traces along my cleft and blood pounds in my head as he feels how plump is my labia and I gasp as the tip of his finger touches the nubbin of my clitoris, I close my eyes and start to mewl. His fingers gently rubs and press my nubbin through my lace underwear. I can feel the car now moving as I shudder. My body starts to shake and I grunt – I know he finds this profoundly sensual. He draws the moisture up to where my clitoris is that is now hood, larger and firmer. I moan gripping his arm. He massages and presses. He keeps rubbing until I reach my climax and come in my underwear, closing my legs around his legs and my frame shuddering as my orgasm consumes me then he pulls his hand out of my thighs and licking his fingers, slowly like he is tasting something chocolate flavoured.

I lean backwards my eyes still closed slowly falling asleep. I feel him moving my head so I can be comfortable. Minutes later we are parking outside

his house and the sea breeze is cold making me shivery. The blanket we took is still draped around my shoulders.

When we get inside the house after he has shut the door, I feel him from behind. Not touching me just standing and the blanket over my shoulders slips to the floor. His fingers trailing from my wrist all the way to my shoulders and around my stomach, my belly button since my shirt is like a formal crop top.

“I want you” He whispers at my back and stroking my breasts. The answer is on my lips. Then he buries his face on my dreadlocks and I gasp. “I need you maMkhungo” My knees buckles.

“You said I am not ready” I swallow.

“There are so many ways I can have you but I want to know what you want”

“Rub yourself against me again” It feel really good having what felt like hard steel rubbing against me the sensation that it came with. “Please” I beg. I wish I can see his face. He pulls me into arms, lifting my feet from the ground. I loop my arms around his neck. Carrying me to his room. He lowers his knee and rests me gently to the bed. Pulling my skirt down and he pushes my legs apart. My spirit soars with desire. He finds the waist of lace underwear and slowly edges his hand under the elastic waistband and cups my vulva. Feeling me, squeezing. The smoothness and I open my legs to giving him more access. The pad of his middle finger slips along my tight slits feeling the mound of my clitoris as he pushes to my slit, my labia parts hugging his fingers in a sensual embrace. I take off my own top.

He groans feeling my wetness and he draws the moisture. “Yes!” I mewl like a kitten. I look down at him. His face just inches away from my kitten and

inhaling my scent. I feel him parting my labia with finger and thumb exposing my clit sheath and he touches my clit with a tip of his tongue. It feels as if I stuck my finger in an electric outlet as my whole body jerks. He puts his mouth over my kitten and starts kissing it. He gently pushes an exploratory finger inside me. "Ah, that feels good" I murmur as he pushes his finger deeper. It feels as if I am being penetrated. He continues kissing and nibbling causing me to moan louder as he suck my nubbin. I move my head from side to side, up and down. I place my hands on his cheeks, pulling him to me further. His fingers dig into me more, the pace quickening and the sound of my pants increases. My sex spasm before constricting his finger, a sudden wave of sweet juice gushes from me and I stifle my scream. My orgasm comes hard and fast. My body quivers and twitch with each pleasure and he bites my inner thighs. He licks and suck my nub and the liquid that has rush from me. I let out a sated sigh, the grip in his head loosening and he smiles watching my breast rising and falling with each deep breath. I close my eyes once again as

the wave of pleasure pass through me. I feel him pull out his fingers from me and I open and smile at the sight of him slurping me off his fingers. He licks each finger clean, and bend down over to capture my lips with a hot kiss.

“I love you” I confess, as he positions his hips between my thighs taking off his black tee and unzipping his jeans throwing them across the room.

“I love you too baby” He says the mushroom head of his penis pressing against my hot entrance. My hooded gaze meet his with an daze expression still feeling the waves of pleasure after the intense orgasm. He lifts my leg over his hips and moves me closer such that the head of his mushroom sits in my mons. Grasping the shaft he rubs the head up and down, passing over my clitoris sending sparks of electricity into me. “You like that?” All I can do is shaking my head in agreement as his head sit at my opening. I watch as he strokes his head it is almost

pushing inside me. I can feel myself stretching a little. The feeling is incredible as if I am being penetrated. He continues swiping up and down, bumping over my clitoral hood sending sparking of pleasure. His groans are music to my ears. As he screams out for my name, eyes closed and his lashes resting at the bottom of his eyes. Mines flutter close instantly when another wave approaches. He continues pushing aside my plump labia stroking himself.

I hear him grunt a few times and his hot semen spurts inside my vagina, filling me.

I can see the excess oozing out between the head of his penis and slightly stretched opening my vagina and immediately I climax.

He collapses on top of me as the last of his come dribbles out into my kitten and I can feel his hot breath on my neck and when he finally relaxes he

sleeps next to me, placing my head on his chest stroking my hair back. “Why you think I am not ready?” I trail the tattoos on his hand slowly and the ones on his fingers.

“I don’t think you trust me enough”

“I trust you bhuti”

He kisses my forehead and I look up at him. “You don’t” He states strongly “This is special maMkhungo and I want you to be sure that you wanna give that to me and our souls connect beyond the connection and chemistry we already have. You are not ready and so am I. When the time is right everything will fall into place naturally but I won’t stop making you feel good”

“Hmmm” I murmur.

He chuckles, “Are you mad?”

“No” I protest.

“You really want this?” He takes my place placing it on what feels like a hard steel and I freeze looking into his eyes and he smirks mischievously. My hand just stays there not moving until I start rubbing my fingers over the end of precum that leaked out. I grasp his shaft and start stroking it. Our eyes locked. His breathing starts to increase and his eyes closes. I move my hand up a tad and rubbing the end then I lean over kissing the end of his mushroom shaped crown. I open my mouth and stuck my tongue out.

“Am I doing it right?”

“Yes, baby, yes” He watches me puts my mouth over his head again and sucking it like a lollipop. My

cheeks indented as I suck all of him, feeling it in my throat. I start stroking his shaft as I suck on his head. He is laying back and enjoyment written on his face. I continue sucking with my lips under the rim and rubbing my fist up and down the shaft. I suck and fist him. “Baby stop, I am close” I do not stop. He never stops either. I feel him swell as the first of his thick, salty liquid surge its shaft into my mouth. He roars, his head on my dreadlocks pushing me harder, fucking my mouth and deep throating. I gag and my eyes are watery —this is a near death experience but having him under my mercy is what I am striving for. I quickly pull off and let the next rope of vume splash into his stomach. He looks at me eurb his come in my mouth and I swallow, its tasteless. I lick my lips. “MaMkhungo” he has a satisfied smirk “Hhayi” he shakes his head and pulling me into him. “Hhayi” he repeats again looking down at me before he kisses my mouth getting off the bed.

He comes back moment later, “I am filling the

bathtub with warm water so we take a bath before we sleep but before that. I want you to do something for me” He standing in the middle of the room, naked like a perfect sculpture. His skin smooth, decorated with tattoos, some are tiny and cute.

“What is that?”

“I want you to talk to your brother”

“My cousin?”

“Your brother. You have been running away from this for too long of which I understand. If you don’t want to talk to your mother as yet then fine sthandwa sami but your brother. No, you have to talk to him because he needs you as much as you need him. He is still your brother, nothing will change that”

“Okay, fine I will talk to him” I easily obey to his commanding tone, its annoying.

“Ngiyabonga. Come so I can bath you and give thank you for making Ndamase excited” He looks down at his penis “Woza, uyeke ukumoyizela [come and stop blushing]” he chuckles.

[01/24, 07:39] : 35.

“Every time I worship you  
My mouth is filled with honey”

ONALENNA

This is me, cleaning his wound as he is seated on the bed watching my movement as I lather ointment in his stitches, tenderly and gently. He looks at me with a look I think I am slowly falling for, not exactly

what I have expected nor need right now but there is so much warmth in those eyes that invites me.

The muscles on his arms are taut, his skin is coated with rich melanin. He shuts his eyes to feel my touch. Because a touch needs to be felt not experience whether its skin, soul or a soil. I swallow the denim stuck on my throat watching his chiselled chest rising up and down slowly and rhythmically.

I step back when I am done wrapping a bandage around his arm and he opens his eyes and flapping his long lashes. “Ngiyabonga” he looks at his arm and then straight at me standing in the middle of his bedroom. That is freakishly neat. “I am glad you decide to stand there” he starts a trailing blaze from my toes all the way up to my face. His eyes burning my own skin, causing me to quiver like a leaf — without even being touched? I have become weak, weak.

“Why?” I raise my eyebrow, at least the attitude is still there, crossing my arms against my breasts that have become perky and nipples that are staring at him, rolling their own tongue and calling him.

He chuckles softly, and clenches his jawline, in a most sexual way. The veins in his arms and hands are even more visible making me wonder if – let me get my act right. “Are you ready to talk to me?”

“Bongeziwe do you still remember that we are not dating? I don’t have to answer your questions” He gets up from the bed. And I swear I gasped for air. Unexpectedly. It felt as if I was choking from water.

He stands in front of me, closely and our chests touching. The only thing I can inhale is his scent. “Then why are you here?” His voice. His damn voice and that breath that keeps fanning my face. With a mixture of cinnamon and mint.

“You were there for me when my cat died” I have managed to say, in a whispery voice. And he furrows his eyebrows before a soft laughter comes out of his mouth then he steps even more closer. “Bongeziwe...” I say breathlessly his hand peeling off one strap of my dress and then he looks into my eyes and smile before he peels the other one and my dress touches my feet exposing my saggy breast with perky nipples. They are not small nor gigantic but they are there and full. “Bong—” I purred but he grabs my buttocks hard and rough pulling me even closer to him and his fingers are almost there by my ululating kitten and I gasp, my chest feels like a motorcycle engine with my eyes shut.

“Look at me” He commands and I slowly open my eyes to meet a seductive gaze. He reads my expression before he slams me down on the bed and pinning my hands on top of my head, staring into my eyes. “You want to know what I am going to

do to you?” He is in between my legs and dry humping me slowly with his groin in contact with my now soaking sex. I am panting and squirming. I shake my head in agreement. “I am going to fuck you” he says unravelled “Hard” he smirks running his fingers between my now wet lips under my underwear and I moan softly. His fingers caresses my aching sex and sliding in me like silk. I open and close my eyes then lock them with his.

“Your arm”

“Forget about it” He thrusts his fingers harder and faster so unexpectedly that my moans echoes the entire room. This not delectable and gentle. Its a hard fuck. He rips my underwear and throws it on the floor. When he sees the looks on my face, he chuckles taking off his sweatpants and his member springs free – I really like what I see. He opens the shelf and grabbing out a foil opening it with his mouth before he wears it around the hard steel.

“You still don’t want to talk?” No, no, no.

“I told you its...” He thrusts unexpectedly and then pull out. “Fuck!!” I scream and swallow, looking up at him. He lowers his head to my lips and capturing me into a tender kiss. His hand gripping my face roughly. Then he wraps his one hand around my waist and the other behind my neck as he slips his tongue into my mouth.

“Do not give me wrong answers. Now tell me what’s wrong Onalenna? Do not piss me off” I am still trying to recover from that one hard thrust, just one and my vagina walls were found screaming.

I breathe and blink, “Why did you stop?”

“Because I am still going to fuck you”

“There’s nothing you are going to do that will...” He thrusts again into me. All the way to my core. I gasp relentlessly take me. “Fuck! Fuck!” He does not say anything but holds my gaze with his bouncing off me and into his penis. The sound of his hard rod squelching in and out of me quickened and I feel an intimidating feeling building up tension in my belly. He is taking me hard, so dominating and fierce. My head falls back as I feel a gush of fluid explodes from me with an unbearable feeling of desire. My climax is so strong but does nothing to sate the hunger within me. I want more and more.

“Bongeziwe” I tighten my legs around his waist and both his hands dig into my buttocks still holding my gaze with his fiery eyes. His delicate jawline clenched and so focused on my pleasure.

“Khuluma nami” When he says that everything in me screams for him. My body reacts like a strong chemical and I gasp again and reaching the point that each one of his deep thrusts makes a short gasp break through my lips. I feel close again. My

voice is betraying me.

“I am close” I scream and he stops moving. I hear him chuckling and when I was about to calm down his hard steel pummeled into me again even harder. Then stop. I hiss in protest and nipping his neck, groaning when he pulls out from me. He untwists my legs around his waist and push me off him, before grabbing my hips and spinning me around like a coin. I push up onto my hands knees, looking over my shoulders at him. I am met by lust dancing in his eyes and he winks before slamming himself back into me, reaching the entrance to my womb. “Ah!” He pushes all the way into me, slowly withdrawing until just the head of his mushroom head teases my entrance before pushing himself back.

His hands grabs onto my hips, his back arches and his head rolls back as he slams into me harder and faster. He feels wonderful in my slick tunnel as he

rubs his hand down my spine. His hands suddenly grips my hair and it wraps around his hand like a coil of rope. My head is forced up and my mouth automatically falls open as I struggle for my breath, feeling how he is gradually speeding up his thrusts.

“Oh my fucking God!” I cry and wantonly arch myself even higher up so that his thrusts is deeper. I am so close and I can feel my core tightening around him and my limbs begin to shake. “I am going to tell you!” I scream as I come apart and feel how he harsh grunt ramming inside me, hitting the right corners with a bullet like precision. “I am going...Fuck!” I wail loudly and start shouting a string of gibberish as my core locks around him, spasm. My arms shake and now also threaten to give out from under me. He slows down his pace as my orgasm finally subdue. I am panting hard.

He chuckles above me and uncurling my hair around his fist, he trails his hand down my spine to

my mid-back until it takes sideways dive and goes around my waist to my stomach. "Talk to me" He hums leaning in over me, supporting himself on one hand and rubbing my breast tentatively. He presses a kiss to my sweaty neck and then press small ones down my shoulder to my shoulder blade.

I wiggle a little underneath him and he is still hard inside me. Then he places another kiss on my neck, so sweet. I moan as he draws back again and return to his position inside me. He presses one hand against my back, pressing my upper body further into the mattress. Then he put both his warm palms on my my buttocks and squeezed them tightly, causing a purr to slip from my lips. He moves out and thrust back inside. Slow at first while I am still recovering from my orgasm but it does not take him longer to speed up his pace. I feel him begin to throb inside me, swelling up and threatening to erupt. "Yes! Yes! Yes!" I mewl against the pillows and his hard steel strike inside me over and over again until my kitten is dripping for him. I can feel

my own build up coming again. “He left me the day we were going to get married and he married another woman. Fuck Bongeziwe, I am close again!” He grunts above me and squeezes my rear even harder. It is bordering painful, the way his fingers dig into my juicy flesh. “Bongeziwe...” I breathe as feel his hips take over, his strokes becoming shorter and faster. “It was your cousin Avulele!” I scream, feeling my tears threatening to spill. Is it pleasure? Or pain? It could be both. “I am scared you might hurt me the way he did which is...Fuck!! Yes!” He groans animalic and he jerks inside me, “which is why I decided to distance myself from you” I shiver and feel myself fall into another small orgasm that has me gasping for my breath and left me feeling numb in my fingers.

Finally, another moment of panting on both our sides and I feel him pull out of me. Empty and drained. He is breathing hotly behind me, his fingers digging into my buttocks. Withdrawing his softening member. I moan feeling him dipping his

one finger inside me and rubs slowly against my clit then up and down my folds. I want to see his face. Lord know how much I want to look into those eyes after bluntly confessing like that. I can barely feel my feet anymore.

He turns me around, my back against the mattress and I am underneath his scorching gaze. He darts his eyes between mine and his eyebrows furrowed together. He kisses my forehead. My nose. My watery eyes and licking my tears with his warm tongue. My lips. My cheeks. My chin and my lips again. “You won’t say anything?” I whisper looking up at him and his wound that is bleeding. “We need to clean that up”

“Don’t worry about that. I will take care of it. You need to rest”

“Please say something” I beg him.

“You are beautiful”

“You know exactly what I mean. What is on your mind?”

“That I want to make you mine”

I breathe, “Are you mad at me?”

“Very for thinking I am like him. But my actions will prove my intentions” He says “We will talk about this just not now Onalenna”

[01/24, 07:39] : 36.

“Love is the only thing that is perfect.

And that is why we have each other, to help us perfect our love in this school of life”

Walking into the living room I almost run back to the bedroom when I find my brother, alone rubbing his hands together and mumbling under his breath. The sea breeze from the outside has managed to whizz in the air since the windows are opened. I pause when he rotates his head towards me, and we just stare at each other – I do not know what to do with myself standing here and gripping on each side of this black collard shirt I am wearing, it looks like a dress.

He gets up and stand on his feet looking charming in his mushroom linen short pants and matching shirt. Powerful watery chemical dances in my eyes when I see a smile blooms on his face opening his arms for me. I am immobile as a statue on the spot before taking slow steps towards him and when I finally get in front of me I throw myself in his arms. He warmly embraces me, kissing the top of my head. The lump I didn't know has been on my throat for so long bursts open, making a way for a gut

wrenching sob that escapes my lips and I start to cry. Silent at first but as he tightens his arms around me, my cries become louder, feeling wiggly. He holds me so tight and I feel his tear dropping on my shoulder. Breathing. Sniffling. Holding each other so tightly like it is the last time we are doing it.

And when we both finally calm we pull away from each other. I look up at him smiling so sweetly like a little girl and he wipes my tears with his thumb. “I missed you” I finally utter after the eternity of silence that has been looming between us. We were just exchanging heart melting smiles and giggles.

“I miss you too” I really did. We both sit on the couch next to each other and I turn to face towards him and pressing my hand against my cheek. I cannot stop smiling. He actually looks really good without the dreadlocks more masculine than before. “When did you get here?” I ask him — I wonder where is Mongezi.

“Few minutes ago and your boyfriend left. He said he wanted to give us space” He tells me. We are like two toddlers meeting for the first time at the playground with unremovable smiles on our faces and he wiggles his eyebrows.

“My boyfriend” I mimic giggly and he shakes his head looking at his hands then me. “How are you?” I ask him and his facial expression changes to something more serious.

He takes a sharp breath, “Honestly?” I shake my head in agreement “I am not okay Mooncres” He utters sadly “I have been dealing with everything alone I need you” I hang my head low and avoiding eye contact “Your father came to my house days ago wearing a pink shirt” He tells me with a sense of humour and I pick my head up, before we both erupt with laughter that fills the entire living room. His sounds sonorous and mine is quite as a tiny bell.

“What did he want?”

“He wanted to tell us that he will always be our father. Funny enough he was not even there but I listened to him anyways” I dramatically rolls my eyes and catching my breath. “You will always be my princess you do know that right?” His red eyes are looking straight at mines, the atmosphere is tense again.

“The reality is...”

He interjects, “I don’t care about reality. You are my sister Kwanda and nothing is going to change that and I want you to annoy me for the rest of my life. Piss me off has always because I would rather have that then completely losing you”

“I am not annoying” I protest playfully shoving.

“No one is annoying as you are. I feel like throwing you against the walls sometimes”

“Too bad you are stuck with me forever” His face brightens when those words comes out from my mouth and he gives me the best smile he has on his shelf. His body language becomes more relaxed than tensed. “You will always be my brother and I’d choose you as my brother anytime. I am sorry for just leaving you like that I needed time to wrap my head around everything”

“I know trust me and I do not blame you. Whatever step you take after this just now that I am here for you”

“I cannot accept her as my mother”

He breathes, “Take your time. You don’t have to

accept everything now. One step at time and eventually everything will fall into place. Do not rush into making decisions but whatever decision that you make remember to put your sanity first and yourself. Not me or her or anyone for that matter”

I look at him and smile, “Manje ubaba wakho showed up with a pink short? [So your father really showed up with a pink short?]” I ask humorous and our laughter erupts like a volcano.

“Mfethu!” He laughs “I have accepted him though not because he is not my father but because he is not different from me. He was part of our lives at some point so we cannot just push him aside like that”

“I cannot get over that picture in my mind”

“His ass was up?”

“Kayise stop!!” Does he know how traumatising that was for me. And hearing my father screaming like that. “Uyang’traumza” I shake my head.

He chuckles, “So you and Mongezi?”

“It seems like it”

“What?”

“I am joking. We are dating”

“Uyamthanda?” He asks if I love him and being under that seriousness of his gaze makes me uncomfortable. “Stop blushing and talk to me”

I am covered with glitter, “Hmm” I murmur.

“Hmm what?”

I push him playfully, “I love him hawu”

“How did he do it? You were never like this with that other guy. I mean something has changed about you Kwanda. There is fire in your eyes. You look more alive. I haven’t seen you like this in a while”

“And you think its him?”

“Its not him?”

I shrug my shoulders, “I decide to live my life for me and not someone else but me. For so long I lived my life so angry at everything. I am done being that person”

“Maya Angelou is that you?”

I poke him, “You are so annoying. I wonder how Khethelo keeps up with you” This is the time to find out what is cooking between the two.

“You should have asked directly if I am dating your friend and then I would have told you that no, I am not dating your friend because I am still stuck on my ex which is fucked up because I actually like your friend”

“Which ex?”

“You don’t offer visitors something to eat?” He teases me, pressing his lips together to hold back his laughter and when he sees my face he bursts out laughing. I stare at him with my mouth pouted and that makes him laugh even louder. I was not

planning on laughing but that idiotic laughter of his forced me into laughing and in that moment Mongezi walks into the room.

We excuse ourselves as Mongezi calls me to the kitchen, I wink at Kayise who shows me his middle finger. I laugh disappearing in the kitchen but the moment I get there I hear voices and loud laughter from the living room. “We have visitors?” I raise my eyebrow.

“My brother and your friends. I wanted us to get together. To get our minds off things”

“You should be at the hospital to see your mother and helping your uncle with the funeral bhuti” He steps closer to me pinning me in the kitchen counter and his groin pressing on my stomach. I look up at him, and he has a mischievous smile on his face before his hand slowly travels between my thighs. He separates my legs with his knees and dips his finger inside me. “Bhuti” I gasp. He thrusts

his fingers so deep inside me, so, so deep and his thumb is on my clit. It feels so damn good.

“You called me mfazi wami”

“Is that how you call me now?”

“Yebo”

“Why?” His fingers go even deeper and I gasp, wrapping my one leg around his waist to give him more access nuzzling on his neck and breathing down there then I look at him.

“Ngoba ngiyakuthanda maMkhungo” His mouth captures mine, his tongue inside my mouth thrusting deeper even his fingers fills me up. So raw and wild. What is exciting is the idea of having someone walking in on us while I am heavily

breathing and his fingers slickly moving inside me.

Yes! Someone walks in and I immediately put my foot down and Mongezi pulls away from my mouth but his fingers are still inside me not moving just there. I turn facing the other direction.

“Oh sorry. We wanted to know if we are going to cook pap or should Kayise and I go buy rolls?” Khethelo asks. As I open my mouth to speak Mongezi starts moving his fingers. Up and down my folds, his thumb on my clitoris. I do not know what kind of witchcraft is this.

“Hmm” I murmur then clear my throat “We are...” He thrusts deeper turning his finger inside me, moving in and out. I whimper “Rolls” My voice comes out huskier. Mongezi is standing behind him. I can hear him chuckling. “Rolls...are..” I clear my throat “They are fine”

“Okay. And chakalaka?”

“We will prepare chakalaka” Mongezi responds and Khethelo looks into my eyes, I think she finally sees what is happening and then she immediately walks out laughing.

He thrusts his fingers harder, I gasp.

.

To those who have been asking for inserts on VW, I do not have data nina so do what you gotta do.

[01/24, 07:39] : 37.

“Deep within man dwell those slumbering powers;

powers that would astonish him, that he never dreamed of possessing; forces that would revolutionize his life if aroused and put into action”

## MONGEZI

It been overly two weeks already and the funeral preparations were paused as my uncle – father – has been on a war with his in laws who were not happy with how their daughter died and therefore they wanted to be the ones who takes over everything with regards to the funeral preparations but my uncle, I cannot call him my father, its very hard. He stepped down and fought tooth and nail since Kefiloe was his wife but eventually things fell into place so here we are today saying our farewell to a woman who couldn't handle the betrayal from what she called a friend and her husband, therefore she took her own life.

I still point fingers at me with the turn out of events

that day when she pointed the gun on her head with a hands trembling and water beads involuntarily streaming down her face. Then a gun shot and the whole white floor was covered with a pool blood as she fell on the floor like a small bird beaten by the storm against the wall, dead, you cannot put that memory into trash when its freshly stored in your mind.

The reality slowly sinks in that this woman who was once like a mother to me is gone looking at the picture in the front, as she showed her teeth and looking sophisticated as always; she had an immaculate sense of style that her manicure used to match what she was wearing. Funny enough she was like everyone's stylist as she will force everyone into wearing a certain way for a certain event.

There by her picture is a gleaming coffin with flowers at the top that looks like the rest of the

flowers in the front and the candles that are shining brightly there. The sweet symphony is playing alongside a breathy falsetto from a woman with long red hair, holding a microphone at the front, she is shaking her head with tears appearing behind her glasses as she sings – that's her daughter, Asaki.

When I hear maMkhungo sobbing next to me, I pull her closer so she could lean on my shoulder with our fingers intertwining. I take her hand and rubbing her fingertips against my lips as she continues silently crying.

I have slowly unfolded so many layers to this woman right here that I am falling in love with every time when I watch her sleeping with her mouth opened slightly and her lashes resting at the bottom of her cheeks like a brush against canvas. One of the layers I got to explore is that she is not this heartless and cold hearted person she always

portrayed herself to be, not even close, but she always lays down a mat for other people to be comfortable while she lies down on the gravel.

The sombreness is just wheezing in the air until we finally have to go to the cemetery then back home, where it's just family and no one else and sharing the beautiful memories of Kefiloe and her crumbly sense of humour, it was dry like brown bread but we still laughed.

Bongeziwe doesn't look like his normal self though, he has the most diabolical look plastered on his face, leaning back on the couch with his leg crossed. His injured arm is resting closely to his stomach with a sling while his other hand rests absently on his chin. "Want to go outside?" I ask him and he doesn't answer with words instead he grabs the small glass of alcohol he has been drinking from and walking out of the room. No one asks anything with that look on his face, you wouldn't dare.

My cousin, well sister, Asaki has disappeared around the house with maMkhungo they pretty much seemed to be getting along. Surprising since Asaki hardly gets along with anyone even people from this family.

They're people who are walking up and down the house as we meet them while walking out we have to create unnecessary conversation before walking pass until we are outside by the garden and Bongeziwe clicks his tongue and furiously shoving his hand in his pockets coming back with a pack of cigarettes, taking one out and putting it in his mouth then he tells me to spark it.

“Kwenze njani?” I ask him what happened as he inhales the cancer stick in his mouth and flaring his nostrils. Seeing Avulele walking towards us, he becomes livid and clenching his jawline.

“I knew I will find you guys here. Bongeziwe can I have a smoke?” He looks utterly lost since he lost his mother, he is not himself. The colours on his face has been drained out.

“Chabo” Bongeziwe responds poisonously with his tone thick and screaming danger. I look at him and then Avulele who chuckles, thinking he’s bluffing maybe? What comes after that is unexpected when Bongeziwe’s knuckles touches his face and immediately he bleeds stumbling backwards. Then he picks his head up clearly surprised by the lightening that stroke him, holding his bleeding nose. “Do not laugh when I talk to you” Bongeziwe says untrapping his sling and setting his injured arm free. “Ungangijwayeli kabi [Do not patronise me]”

Avulele opens his mouth to say something but he does not finish as another punch surprises him, followed by two, three more but this time he fights

back. It is as if he poked a lion in the eye because Bongeziwe punches him, I cannot count how many times, Avulele falls on the ground and Bongeziwe places his knee on his neck, I pull him back but he pushes me aside. He is like a beast that has gained superpowers and then people who were inside the house runs out, exclaiming. I pull back Bongeziwe but he fights me instead, we stare in each other's eyes intently as I hold him. "Ngiyeka Mongezi!!" He tries escaping my grip, yelling that I should leave him alone but in that moment maMkhungo comes and stand between us and separating us.

Bongeziwe clicks his tongue, bleeding from his wound through the white shirt he is wearing. That's where I mistakenly gripped on. I was about to murmur my apology but he walks away and then half way he turns back. "We are not done" He says to Avulele who is nothing but a pulp covered in blood.

What is going on?

Now everyone is asking what happened, I choose to walk away from the scene and I can hear maMkhungo following behind me, her shoes clicking on the floor perfectly and her fruity scent fills my nostrils.

I wait outside the car as she was fetching her bag inside then she clambers in before we manoeuvre the car on the road. “You won’t find him at his place” she says silently.

“And how do you know that mfazi wami?” I glance towards her turning the steering wheel to the left and focusing on the road again.

“Because...” she knows what was that about. “Remember at the hospital when I punched Avulele?” she asks me. How can I forget

Mayweather? We just never revisited that conversation cause it slipped my mind. After shaking my head in agreement, she looks at me reading my reaction while I impatiently wait for her. “Stop looking at me like that!”

How am I looking at her?

“I am sorry, talk to me” I have to apologise, these days her moods becomes autumn leaves out of nowhere and for absolutely no reason.

“Fine. Avulele was going to get married with Onalenna but on the wedding day he did not show up instead he got married to Azande, same colour theme and everything” she tells me. To say I am shock would be an understatement. I do not blame Bongeziwe for acting animalistic. I would have done the same and more if ever someone did that to maMkhungo, now I regret holding him back. He should have punched him to death. “I am sure he is

with Onalenna so give them space”

“I need to know if he is okay”

“He will call you when he has calmed. Just let him be for now” then her stomachs growls. I look at her intently, one thing we fight about all the time.

“Kwanda did you eat?”

She looks at me with the corner of her eyes, “I do not have appetite bhuti” she responds.

“Ishonephi? [Where did it go?]” I ask calmly. She just looks at me and then outside the window without responding. “Kwanda” I call her out.

“Hmm” she murmurs batting her lashes at me like a toddler and chewing the insides of her cheek.

“When was the last time you ate?”

“Last night”

“Last night?” I challenge my eyebrow at her.

“In the morning”

“In the morning?”

“Fine. Last night bhuti” I sternly look at her and she turns her body facing the front and fiddling with her fingers as I drive through the nearest restaurant and we both step out of the car at the same time, circling my arms around her waist. She looks up at me and smiles, I do not smile. No matter how beautiful that smile is, but no.

No one manages to make me angry yet so calm at the same time like this woman right here. She keeps smiling at me until I accept the defeat and smile back shaking my head, as we walk through the glass door to a restaurant and a waitress leads us to a table for two. I pull out a chair for maMkhungo and she sits down, before I settle opposite her to stare at that button nose and bow shaped lips.

She has the most flawless and smooth skin. “Let’s pretend we are on a date and we do not know each other” she grins flicking her dreadlocks.

“We will go on a date tomorrow, not this” I grin back leaning forward on the chair to closely look at her.

“Nope. This is perfect for me, so what do you say? Two strangers on a date?” I dart my eyes between hers, a smile manages to escape my lips looking at

her ecstatic mood as I agree to this.

She grabs the menu and going through it, before the female waitress stands in front of us and taking our order then she leaves and suddenly Kwanda is bittersweet. “Are you okay?”

“No. I am dizzy from all the flirting you were doing with her” she says thickly, haibo. When did making an order became flirting. “Must be nice” she mumbles sardonically.

“I was not flirting with her” I defend.

“I want to go, I have lost my appetite”

“You have to eat!”

Women are confusing.

“Fine then, I will have a takeaway but I will not sit here and watch you flirting now that won’t happen” at first I thought she was just joking but she is not, a spitting dragon just appeared from nowhere. She gets up and grabs her small bag. “You will find me in a car” then she walks away.

Hhayike.

[01/24, 07:40] : 38.

“The eyes, you’d think you’d shake your thighs,  
In a room full of fallen hope and tainted skies”

BONGEZIWE

My anger feels like something spikey crawling out

of my skin and looking like thorns on a rose, impatiently waiting for the elevator that eventually makes the ping sound, the door made of steel automatically opening.

I stand at the door not knowing whether to knock or turn around and return back to my car but also I want to see her, she hasn't said anything to me nor have been taking any of my calls since that day she spent the night at my house.

Eventually after hesitating I knock twice then I hear movements from the inside before she appears behind the door, wearing a romper that has cartoons as decoration and she is carrying a teddy bear warmer in her hands. Her hair looks nappy and it seems she has been curled up in bed all day.

“What are you doing here?” I cannot read her facial expression “Bongeziwe you are bleeding” she cares? I hope so. “Come in” I guess she won't let me speak as she stands aside allowing me walk in and then

she disappears around the house leaving me behind. Then she comes back with a basin and warm water.

No words exchanged. I slowly take off my shirt, from that one sleeve where I am bleeding and she looks away to avoid eye contact with me when I am done taking off my shirt, I clear my throat. The atmosphere is making me very uncomfortable with its intensity. When she places her hands on my arm, my manhood pumps and I search for her eyes until I find them but she looks down, patting the warm towel in my wound. The ointment she is using smells like freshly brewed herbs and then she badges my arm before she disappears again and comes back after a few moment sitting on the couch uncomfortably. “Do you think not taking any of my call and trying to avoid me will lessen how much I care about you and also my affection for you?” I drawl through the tensity between us and she grabs her warmer and placing it by her stomach after whimpering. “Are you okay?”

“Yeah”

“This thing of lying to me, izosixabanisa”

She opens and closes her mouth. Last time I had to do something I was not planning on doing anytime soon for her to tell me what was on her mind —sex was not part of —okay I am lying because the truth is, I found her sexually attractive before realising she could be more to this than that after we spent a day together and watching corny movies.

“I am on my periods so I have cramps” she tells me and then stretches on the couch to sleep in a most comfortable position.

“Is there something I can do to help?”

“Leave” she then closes her eyes. I get up from where I was sitting striding towards her, “Don’t touch me Bongeziwe!” she yells as I pick her up from the couch, she fights me but my grip around her waist and behind her knees tightens taking her to her bedroom and gently placing her on the bed. I walk out leaving her about to say something to the kitchen and I boil water in the kettle while mixing coffee and sugar in a cup —this is what my mother drank all the time, when she was experiencing these pains, speaking of that woman, okay never mind, I have nothing to say honestly.

I return back to her room and she fallen asleep, for someone who was jumping like a toddler in my arms she looks peacefully sleeping with her mouth tightly closed. I softly shake her and she opens her eyes slightly then she takes a cup from my hand taking slow sips. “Ngiyabonga” she thanks me, she can barely sit up straight.

“You haven’t been taking my calls”

“I’ve been busy”

I furrow my eyebrows, she is very feisty and she is making sure that she keeps her face sternly to scare me? Only she knows —very funny but adorable since she is looking like that popeye she is wearing.

“Busy being busy” she shrugs her shoulders.

“Clearly you don’t want me here so I am going to leave and when you are ready to talk to me then call me” she looks at me and swallowing the liquid inside her mouth. I challenge my eyebrow at her and she keeps flapping her lashes towards me.

“What happened to your arm?”

“I had a fight with Avulele”

“What are you crazy? You cannot be going around and fighting people when you practically have one arm. Uyahlanya? What if he broke your stitches? What is wrong with you?” she is yelling at me.

“Is this a way of you saying I shouldn't leave by changing the topic?” she tugs her lower lip in between her teeth. I press her against the mattress after taking her cup away and placing it aside, she breathes heavily underneath me when she tries touching my face I grip her wrists on top of her head with one hand and the other hand around her neck, almost choking her and she gasps arching her back to meet my groin. “Why you always want me to do this for you to talk?”

She just breathes, no response, my hand around her

neck tightens and intently looking into her eyes as a moan escapes her mouth. “Onalenna” I call her out.

“Hmmm” she murmurs.

“A response is what I am expecting from you”

“I don’t want you to leave”

“Why you’ve been ignoring my calls?” she blinks and I start to move slowly in between her legs and dry humping her, my groin meeting her entrance that is covered with the fabric that she is wearing and she gulps down some air.

“I am on my periods” she tells me “please stop” My rhythm becomes faster. Up and down and her eyes are watery. Getting to taste something you won’t be able to eat sounds like a great suffering huh? “I was scared. I was scared. Bongeziwe stop!”

“Of what?”

“I think I am going to come”

“Of what Onalenna?” My voice becomes sternly.

“Getting hurt again”

“You are comparing me to him again?”

“I...please stop and I will answer all your questions” a drop of tear falls from the corner of her eyes and my tongue sweeps her mouth and she moans, trying to escape the grip around her wrists so she can touch me. Growling low in my throat and I slid my hand over her stomach, going lower and over until I cup her pussy from outside her fabric and she gasp rolling against my hand urgently.

Removing my hand and returning it back around her neck and thrusting harder than before and she moans louder and when I feel she is close. I stop and pull away from her, she gasps and flutters eyes open catching her breath. “You stopped?”

“You asked me”

“I don’t want to get hurt again so whatever that we have here it should end” she says catching her breath and pulling down her sleeves.

“So you think there’s something here?”

“You are always pushing me in a corner”

“I am not perfect. I don’t want to sit here and lie to you. I will never intentionally hurt you. But if it ever happens that I do and you want to leave, I won’t

blame you. Just delete your past from your mind and start afresh with a new mindset”

“You make it sound easy”

“Holding to what happened won’t take you anywhere either. You will miss out on a chance of finding something genuine and the person you are busy weeping about is happily married and planning to have kids already. He is able to control your life while he is not even around. Don’t give him that power over you”

“I need time”

“What time?”

“To think”

“About what?”

“Us”

I throw my hands in the air, “Fine. I will give you ten minutes. While you are it, I will be in the living room and ordering something we can eat”

“Haibo Bongeziwe!”

“Your time starts now” I walk out of the room as she was about to say something. She wants to ask for time and then ghost me until the next lifetime when we have turned into butterflies, not happening. I am not leaving this place either without getting to call her mines. I sit on the sofa taking out my phone to make an order when I see an incoming call from Mongezi, at first I ignore him but he is not giving up.

“Finally...” He breathes the moment I answer “I need your help”

“What is it?”

He clears his throat, “You know I have never been in a serious relationship right like ever?”

“Hmmm”

“And you know I have never been in a situation whereby I have to figure out a woman when her emotions spiral out of control right?”

“Get to the point Mongezi”

He sighs, “Its maMkhungo”

“Umenzeni?”

He huffs, “Literally nothing. She just accused me of flirting with a waitress...”

“But did you?” I interject.

“No! I was ordering food and that waitress was doing her job, smiling to the customers and that is when I was accused. MaMkhungo has been acting like this since this week started, nami angazi. As we speak she has locked herself up in the bedroom crying”

I laugh, “Mongezi you are whipped!” the frustration in his voice.

He clicks his tongue, “Are you going to help me or not?”

“I am coming with Onalenna”

“Thank you” He says then hang up immediately as I am still laughing. Women really walk into your life and turn it upside down just like this one, who just walked in and stand in the middle of the room with her hands against her hips.

“I need an hour not ten minutes” she says.

“That’s okay with me. Do you mind coming with me to my brother’s place. Kwanda is there”

“Let me change” she disappears and comes back in a nylon tracksuit. We leave without any other exchange of words so she can drown in her own thoughts until we are parking outside Mongezi’s underground garage. The moment we ring the bell he immediately appears and breathing out.

Onalenna leaves to see Kwanda since I told her what happened and she said something about premenstrual syndrome —PMSing —the other gender always has fancy words for ukuhlanya, trust me.

Mongezi hands me one of his black shirts to wear since mine has been stained with blood. He is physically here but his mind is in his bedroom with Kwanda figuring out what is wrong. “Miss being a fuck boy?” I chuckle and he gives me the most diabolical look.

“Mxm” He leans backwards on the couch, he is so agitated and clenching his jawline. “Do you think she is still crying?” But I am here with him.

“How will I know?”

“Think Bongeziwe, cabanga”

“Yeah, she must be crying especially the moment she saw her friend. Her tears flew even more” I tease him and he gets up from the couch and attempting to go to his bedroom where Kwanda is but I hold his hand. “Ngiyadlala. Relax, she is with her friend and she will be here in no time”

“I will never flirt with a waitress or any other woman in her presence you know that right? Even if she is not there. I will never do it Bongeziwe” Gone, gone, gone and not coming back.

“Relax, I know that”

He takes another deep breath, “I am going to make tea. Do you want tea or beer?”

“Beer and relax”

[01/24, 07:41] : 39.

“The night sky is a mirror in which we can see the reflection of our true self. All of the splendor of the universe, that is you”

MONGEZI

Out of all women I chose to fall for the crazy one with puzzling mood swings. One morning she could wake up with her mood resembling rainbows, sunshine and unicorns and then within a second she becomes a heavy thunder with a full blown rain, from nowhere. Her tears can become a river or waterfall somewhere in a forest.

I have been walking barefooted on lava around her since I was accused of flirting with another woman, there's this look she gives me —he he he —she looks at me with the corner of her eyes when we

come across a random woman. That look is so intense that I feel guilty of something I did not even do, or something I was not even planning on doing.

My mother is still at the hospital breathing through the machines, I haven't had it in me to walk through her ward and sit beside her with sombreness and sorrow wheezing in the air. A part of me believes she deserves everything that is coming her way and yet still to come maybe its because I am consumed by anger but I don't really care what happens to her like how she did not care about what happens to me when she was flushing my memory; so many people lost their lives because of her.

And then my uncle, I am not accepting him as my father either – he does not deserve that much from me honestly. He came to my house days ago begging me to see my mother since he believes my presence alongside Bongeziwe could make a difference with her progress like we have some sort

of healing superpowers, shame.

A knock interrupts me as I was drawing few sketches and picking my head up, she is here, standing by the door and wearing a linen loose white dress and sneakers. She is wearing white more often as if she knows how mesmerisingly beautiful she looks in this colour. I should be keeping a stern face since last night she fought me for answering her call at third ring — besides the moodswings, she has become very needy and all my attention should be focused on her, nothing else.

A smile creeps through my lips and almost touching my eyes seeing her leaning on the door and closely looking at me focused on the pencil in my hand and sketch books. “Woza la mfazi wami” I smile taking off my glasses and placing them on a wooden table. I am back to work but currently working from home since I am not mentally ready to be around that kind of environment and people – I haven’t fully

recovered as yet.

She shakes her head in disagreement and chewing the insides of her cheeks. I take a deep breath and getting up from the chair striding towards her.

I already know this look, she is about to cry.

I stand in front of her and circling my hands around her waist and she looks up at me with tears streaming down her face like raindrops on a windowpane then I cup her face with both my hands after swiping her tears through her cheeks with my thumb, kissing her forehead and then both her eyes with wet eyelids.

How did we get here again?

“What’s wrong maMkhungo?”

“You are mad at me bhuti” Very true, but I am not about to say that now.

“I am not mad at you” she challenges her eyebrow at me. Oh she is not crying anymore but giving me attitude? “Fine, mfazi wami you raised your voice at me last night” I say calmly.

“You were not answering your phone”

“I answered my phone”

“At third ring bhuti”

I take a sharp in take of breath, “Ngiyaxolis a” my only way out, “I missed you” her cheeks slowly spreads showing me all her teeth, pink glitter shinning on her face and her eyes looking like pink

skies.

“I missed you too but I am leaving just now,  
Yolokazi is waiting for me outside”

“You are not staying?”

“No, I will see you later. I have decided to finally talk to my mom. We cannot runaway from reality forever, maybe I will find something out about my real dad. And my dad is gonna be there he wants us to talk about Sambulo” she shrugs her shoulders and looking up at me. I stare into her eyes wondering how she does it? – I have only seen toddlers being the only people who can forgive so easily and move on like nothing ever happened. You can beat them up now, they would cry and scream their hatred towards you but an hour later wrap their hands around your neck, giggly and laughing loudly.

“If ever you change your mind or feel uncomfortable please call me and I will come and fetch you maMkhungo”

“There is no need for that bhuti. I will be fine” she assures me, I will do anything to protect her sanity because its essential.

“Maybe you should cons...” I know where she is going with this already. I kiss her, my lips trapping hers while my tongue gently twirl circles around hers. Her hands rest on my shoulders, her smooth nails dig into my skin when I push my groin against hers and she stiffens around my arms. The animal inside me is going berserk wishing to take her now but not like this. The hoot coming from the outside disturbs us and she pulls away. I kiss the tip of her nose.

“Ngiyakuthanda mfazi wami” My love for her hit me heavily than her punches and her lips curves.

“Ngiyakuthanda nami mnyeni wami” Something tugs in my own belly and electrifying sensation shoot through my bloodstream and she slide up her hands up my chest and wrap her arms around my neck —she has never called me like this before, and the velvety tone made it more special.

“But consider it” The car outside hoots again and she darts her eyes between mines and taking my hand so I can walk her outside. When we get outside she walks away from me after kissing my cheek then pauses middle way and turning back. “I am ready bhuti, please make it special tonight” she says that with a heart warming smile and walking on a faster pace getting in a car after waving and they hoot before the car drives out of the gate leaving me temporarily paralysed and my feet planted on the spot.

Tonight? He he he.

As I am about to walk back inside the house another car drives through, this person only gained access because maMkhungo and her sister were driving out. I stand here but to my surprise Asaki comes out of the small black and white car and I cannot read her face to understand what brings here, she walks towards me and the moment I can closely see her face that is when her mouth slits forming a smile, we have a strong resemblance. And I hope her father did not send here. “Mongezi” she says standing in front of me, we are same height and for a woman she is very tall with long legs. “Can we talk inside?” She has a very serene and calm aura as well that mirrors mines. “Please” she pleads.

I shake my head in agreement and leading her inside where she takes a sit on a couch, taking off her shoes and making herself comfortable. “Tea or juice?”

“Beer” she opts “A cold beer” she continues saying with a grin and I tug my head in disappearing to the kitchen and taking out the green bottle that I always keep for Bongeziwe when he comes around and returning back to the living room and she thanks me, while she opens the bottle and taking few sips then she leans forward.

“What brings you here?”

“You are hard to talk to, why?”

“I do not understand that question. And you cannot answer my question with another question” I calmly say to appear more welcoming.

“You see what I am talking about. Although you are very calm but there is something about you...” she pauses running her fingertips on her bottle, “I am

getting cold feet. It's easy talking to Bongeziwe than you"

I chuckle, "talk to me Asaki"

She breathes out, "I found out about everything that happened that day my mother died. Although dad did not want me to find out"

"So you are here to what blame me?"

"No, no, no. Why would I blame you? You did not do anything but I am here to find out how are you doing?" Very new to have someone rather than maMkhungo wanting to know how I am doing.

"I am fine" I answer dishonestly.

Every time when the truth came into light everyone wanted to use me to punish my parents for their

sins as if I am the one who sent them to do the ungodly ghastly things together, so why am I being crucified?

“I know you are not” then why she asked then? “I just wanted to hear you say it. I am sorry for how everyone treated. And my mom trying to harm you. You didn’t deserve that” I understand this is coming from a pure heart. I really appreciate that but this is not the conversation I want to have right now. I have a special night to prepare for. I have rose pedals to scatter in this whole house and have thousands of white roses surrounding my bedroom with scented white candles. I have flowers to sprinkle into a bathtub for a beautiful ritual, so maMkhungo can soak to relax before we drift emotionally and physically into the connection we both have been waiting. This is not the conversation I want to have especially since it needs me to open up a bottle of emotions I am not yet to touch.

“I appreciate this but we can touch this conversation some other day?”

She smiles warmly, “I understand, I will leave” she announces and standing on her feet.

“Wait...” I stop her “Do not leave” I clear my throat “I will like you to help me with something”

“You want my help?”

“Yebo”

She cannot hide her excitement, and rubbing her hands together as I tell her what I am planning then she comes with suggestions before she starts making calls, in less than an hour we have people walking in and out of this house and my bedroom looks like a florist heaven surrounded by white

roses and scented candles.

Its already dark outside and the house is dimmed illuminated by the candles. I keep looking at the set up and shaking my head while mumbling under my breath. This is me? Doing all these things, heart is a stupid organ trust me on that one.

I am interrupted by a phone call, while doing final touch ups here and there with Asaki who has been taking pictures and videos for maMkhungo.

“Mongezi, its Kayise” he drawls through the call, “Kwanda is being taken by the paramedics. You need to come here”

What?

“What happened?”

“I was driving her there. And she said she wanted something to eat so we passed by the mall she kept complaining about feeling dizzy and the heat then she fainted”

[01/24, 07:41] : 40.

“New life,

It blooms like a flower in spring ”

The eerie silence in the room is very uncomfortable with my aunt opposite me with her glass of her special drink which is vodka and orange juice, she has her blue eye shadow and silver silk dress looking like a character in a retro movie. “You said you wanted to give one of us away for adoption because you couldn’t manage raising the both of us right? Where was our father, why he didn’t help you?” Yolokazi breaks through the silence asking her mother who just hiccupped and taking another sip from her glass.

“Menzi doesn’t know we have children together. We happened to have sex together on the night before his wedding the following day. It was a mistake and I got pregnant. I was ashamed especially since he made me feel like it was all my fault” she says shrugging her shoulders.

“And all these years you still didn’t think he deserved to know about us or we deserved to know the truth?” I ask, sudden anger I do not know where is it coming from erupting —actually its puzzling emotions since there are gray clouds hanging over my eyes and if I blink four times it will start raining.

She takes a deep breath, “your mother and I both agreed that the truth will only come out when one of us dies. That was our agreement. I couldn’t just snatch you away from her because she loved you in a way I would have failed to. I am not a great mother, ask your sister she will tell you. I am not

perfect. Never been. I don't want to be and I will never be but I love you Kwanda just as much as I love Yolokazi because both of you are my daughters. If you want to meet your father and have a relationship with him that is okay with me. I have nothing against that" the moment she finishes her sentence, I am already carrying a tissue in my hand that is already soaking and mucus is blocking my nose. The way I am such an emotional prick these days, it even annoys me so much. I do not understand them myself or maybe its because my cycle is changing since my monthly visit has not come for a show, which is totally normal by the way from my research.

Yolokazi clasp her hands from her thighs, "What happens next after this?" she darts her eyes between the both of us. My aunt who now has her arms closely to her breast with glistening eyes and sniffing and then me sitting uncomfortably on the couch because of the burning back pains.

“I just wanted to say I am sorry to both of you. I know I am not worthy to be forgiven but from the bottom of my heart. Ndicela uxolo. I would love if three of us could work towards having a rela...” The door opens and Kayise walks in. His scent fills the entire room and something press hard in my stomach. So hard that I feel an urge to spew. You know after drinking too much alcohol and needing to throw up all of your insides, that is exactly how I am feeling but I swallow it back.

He apologises for being late, my father who said he was coming to the meeting as well is nowhere in sight nor did he call or sent a message. Kayise comes and sit next to me, tickling me like a toddler and when his scent fills me my nostrils again, I do not get a chance to become an athlete and run to the bathroom instead I start throwing up on the marble floor and he yells out. “Yeses Kwanda!” He screams and a gut wrenching sob leaves my mouth and my vomit comes out of my mouth as if I am a drawn anime character spewing spaghetti or

noddles. He helps me get up and taking me to the bathroom while my aunt and Yolokazi get up to clean up my mess. “Have you been drinking?”

“No!” I respond defensive and washing my mouth turning to him to take a sit on a toilet seat and catching my breath. Throwing up is painful. They make it look like its something really fun to do and try out in movies but there is absolutely nothing fun about this. “I am feeling sick” I tell him.

“What is wrong?” I cannot explain it. But I am feeling sick and also I want to sleep otherwise I am going to have my eyeballs falling to the ground because my eyes will be floodings from tears.

I shrug my shoulders and pushing my dreadlocks back “I really don’t know Kayise” I tell him once again. Its so many things at once sometimes I have period pains whilst the cow has not been slaughtered. “I want to go” I start crying.

“Where you want to go? Let me take you to a doctor”

I shake my head in disagreement, “Please buy me something to eat and then take me to Mongezi’s house please” He looks at me speculatively and I am sure the doctor in him wants to say something but instead he comes and kneel in front of me, cupping my face and kissing my forehead.

“Moon you know you can tell me anything right? And I am doctor so you cannot really hide this from me” He says and I furrow my eyebrows looking at me straight into those hazel eyes, they are sparkling. “Am I going to be an uncle? Because if—”

“Kayise!” I punch his chest and he groans in pain before he chuckles softly. “I haven’t done it as yet” I tell him and he has confusion plastered on his face

then he clears his throat before silence jumps and down between us. Then we both erupt with laughter shaking our heads.

We both get up and share heart warming hug before following each other out of the bathroom to the living room that now smells like lavender. “Are you okay?” my aunt asks me and I shake my head vigorously as she looks at me as if she is searching for something, somewhere in my body before she takes her glass and sip smirking. “Yolokazi had to rush back to work” she tells us.

“We can talk some other time” I tell her and grabbing my bag before walking out with Kayise as we are about to get in a car my aunt appears standing by the door.

“Kwanda!” She shouts and I pause looking towards her. “Ngiyanithanda” she says both to my brother and I. Kayise smiles at her and so am I before we

get in the car and drive off.

The music loudly playing in a car makes me feel as if my ear drums are going to bleed. “I was thinking that you should take the car that belonged to uma” Kayise says changing his gears and looking at the rearview mirror before he glances at me.

“Are you sure?”

He nods his head, “Yeah. You always loved that car anyways but if you are uncomfortable with using it then I can buy you a car”

“I will think about this right now I need meat” I say and he chuckles shaking his head, moving the steering wheel to the right. “Have you spoken to Khethelo?”

“Leave it Kwanda”

“Hawu why?”

“Because...” He scoffs “Your friend deserves better than what I can offer to her”

“The ex who is she?”

“None of your business”

“You are hiding things from me?”

He breathes, “When the time is right I will tell you but not now. Come let’s get you some meat” He says already parking outside the mall and then we both get off the car. I am suddenly feeling flustered. It feels as if I am going to melt because of the heat. And the people who are busy walking up and down are making me dizzy and nauseous.

I take a deep breath slowly. “Kayise are you not feeling hot?” I ask him and he glances at me as we walk inside the store. The moment he is about to say something my knees knock each other, like over cooked pasta they wiggle and in that moment everything around me starts buzzing; falling to the ground and my eyes shut.

My eyes shift left and right yet they are still closed. I flutter them open and the smell of vaccine dances around my nose, peeping sound close to my ears and a needle injected in my hand —I hate this white four walled room. Immediately the door opens and Mongezi walks in looking scruffy. “You are awake...” He breathes “maMkhungo” He smiles.

“How long I have been here?”

“Just few hours. I have been waiting for you to

wake up so I can be the first person you see when you open your eyes. And wena you choose to wake up while I went to the toilet” He says and smiling. Then he sits next to me and kisses my cheek. “You scared me mfazi wami” Oh the fear is so visible in those black eyes.

“I am okay”

“The doctor will tell us that, let me call for him” He sounds like a strict parent now disappearing behind the door and coming back with a man in a white coat wearing big glasses with grey hair. He smiles at me carrying a board in his hand. “Doctor what is wrong?” Mongezi asks impatiently as the doctor is doing check ups and asking how am I feeling while writing on the board. He has fatherly instincts as he keeps calling me his daughter.

“In the early stages of pregnancy this is normal...” He utters but Mongezi and I exchange looks then

looks towards him again. Shame he is old so its understandable that he might have made a mistake. I glance towards Mongezi again who is pressing his lips together and holding back his laughter. I am also suppressing mine. This is funny. Seeing a doctor making a mistake.

“I think you are making a mistake, she cannot be pregnant” Mongezi says with laughter in his voice.

“The results came out positive. Miss Mkhungo is three weeks pregnant” We fail to hold it back instead we both erupt with laughter and I even clap my hands together. The doctor looks at us frowning but he ends up laughing as we sound like deranged chimpanzees in a zoo. “You sound so sure that she cannot be pregnant, are you not intimate?”

“I’m a virgin” I say boldly and catching my breath from laughing.

He looks at Mongezi and then me, “So you have never ever been intimate nor have done oral sex?” He asks and I look towards Mongezi, the humour that was dancing on his face has been wiped.

Okay, what is wrong?

Mongezi clears his throat, “We have done oral a couple of types” He responds with a deep voice.

“You are aware that if a sperm comes in contact with a vagina a woman can conceive so in this case that is what happened” I am confused.

Mongezi glances at me once, “You said she is three weeks pregnant?” No, I am not. I giggle once again. He is no longer laughing but he is wearing a serious face mask. And also he looks worried about something.

“That is correct”

“The baby is okay?”

What baby?

“Bhuti I am not pregnant!” I say. They are starting to annoy me talking about babies and pregnancy. Oral sex? What is that? The rubbing? That is impossible. I cannot be pregnant. Me? No.

“The baby is fine but I am going to keep the mother for few days because I am not happy with her blood pressure”

“Who is the mother? Because it cannot be me” I say annoyed.

The doctor looks at me then Mongezi.

“Congratulations and you can now pop the cherry”

He smiles.

“Thank you” Mongezi says and the doctor leaves after saying something about vitamins, iron and enough sleep. I want to leave. I want to go home.

“Bhuti..” I call him. He is scared to look at me but he rotates his head facing towards me. “I am not pregnant” I tell him.

“MaMkhungo do you know what is ukusoma?” He asks me. And I shake my head in disagreement.

He takes a sharp intake of breath, “Okay fine. So you see when I rub myself against you?”

“Hmmm”

“That is what is called ukusoma sthandwa sami and its possible that a woman can get pregnant and in this case that is what happened” He explains. I am going to kill him. I am going to kill Mongezi. Why is he smiling?

“Leave!” I say sternly.

“MaMkhun—”

“Leave Mongezi! Hamba! I don’t want to see you again so please leave”

“Haibo ingane yami?”

“There is no baby here so please leave”

“Kwanda...”

“Leave!”

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“Reborn”

MONGEZI

Bongeziwe is looking at me and laughing his intestines out. His shoulders are moving up and down after telling him about the news. “Manje eh” He starts laughing again after he has caught his breath and this time he chokes on his saliva and coughing rapidly. “She kicked you out at the hospital?” He asks and I click my tongue. There is absolutely nothing funny about this, nothing at all.

“Mxm, can you please leave my house”

He breathes out and pressing his lips into a thin line. “Okay fine, sorry ke” he says and raising his hands in the air. He is not using his sling anymore yet he has not healed. “So vele ushaye iqanda without entering? Awu izinja mandoda, haibo J oseph. [So you got her pregnant without penetration?]” Did he just call me J oseph? As in J esus’s father. I was not planning on laughing actually.

“Bongeziwe please leave” I say laughing.

“I promise I won’t say anything anymore sorry” But he has been saying this and then says something. “So what are you going to do now?”

I shrug my shoulders, “What must I do?” I am really clueless. It is even hard for me to wrap my head around the pregnancy, it been overly twenty four

hours already. But the idea of becoming a father is exciting.

“Take all these flowers and have them delivered to the hospital with a card apologising. Or buy her flowers and those giant teddy bears and take them there yourself. Use your brain Mongezi” The house still pretty much looks like how it looked yesterday when I was planning her special night. “Actually let’s go there together with all these flowers” He suggests.

“That is not a good idea”

“Trust me if you don’t go to see her now then she will get mad at the fact that you did not go there. I have been here before you know that” I never thought one could get pregnant without penetration. But from my research it states that when a sperm get into the vagina or on the vulva —and eventually up through the cervix into the uterus then the

woman could get pregnant.

Taking a sharp intake of breath we pack all these white roses with their glass vases at the back of Bongeziwe's car before we drive to the hospital and I am listening to him talking. He seems happy these days, smiling and laughing more often and happiness looks good on him. "I went to see mom" He says after we have been laughing at something that he said and immediately my cheeks slowly fall. I look at him once and face forward focusing on the road since I am the one who is driving. "You won't ask me how is she doing?" I ignore him and the tall man with three eyes and long lashes, changes colour to red meaning the car needs to halt. No timing or whatsoever. "Mongezi"

"I don't want to talk about her"

"She is our mother!"

“I don’t care Bongeziwe” I snap.

He breathes, “I understand that...”

“I did not ask you to understand”

“I do not like your tone” He utters.

“If you did not bring her up then we wouldn’t be arguing about this. I do not care about what happens to Mihlali so please do not mention her name to me ever again” The tall man blinks green and I continue manoeuvring the car on the road. The eerie silence is very uncomfortable with my hands tightly gripping the steering wheel.

Getting to the hospital we ask a security guy to help us with carrying all these flowers to Kwanda’s ward

and he then calls his other friend to help us. Getting into her ward she is not here —strange. As soon as we finish surrounding her ward and making it look like a florist heaven she walks in, wearing a gown and being helped by a nurse.

She comfortably sleep on the and face towards the wall to avoid seeing my face. Bringing Bongeziwe was a bad idea because he is busy laughing under his breath. “How is she?” I ask the nurse, stealing glances towards Kwanda who just covered her face with a blanket even the nurse is giggling.

What I did to deserve this?

I decide to walk outside with the nurse leaving Bongeziwe behind. “She is fine. Give her time to accept this but she will be okay eventually” the nurse tells me.

“Did she eat anything today?”

“Yes but the throwing up hasn’t stopped either”

“Okay thank you” Returning back to her ward she is talking and even laughing with my brother but the moment she sees me her lips starts to tremble then she starts crying.

Somandla!

“MaMkhungo...”

“Leave!”

“Can we talk?”

“No. I want you to leave!” she says with a shaky

tone. I look at Bongeziwe who mumbles that I should leave. My stubborn feet plants themselves on the floor but seeing her crying like this leaves me with no other choice but leaving to wait outside for Bongeziwe. I think I am going to lose my mind here. Waiting. Pacing up and down. My head feels crowded. How long are we going to go on like this?

Her friends find me standing outside. “Is Kwanda okay? Why are you standing here?” Onalenna asks concerned.

“She is fine, just doesn’t want to see me”

“What? Why?” Khetelo.

“She will tell you” They look at me once and then walk inside. In that moment Bongeziwe walks out, laughing at me and patting my shoulder. “What did she say?”

“She hates you”

“Ha ha so funny Bongeziwe”

“Haibo she hates you”

“She really said?”

“I'm joking, she told she is mad at you and she feels you did this on purpose but she will come around. This is going to be a long ride for you, she has psychopathic hormones. Right after you walked out when she was crying, she wiped her tears and laughed. Kwanda loves you Mongezi do not do anything that might cost you losing her”

“Is that what she said?”

“I saw it. Asambe” He walks pass me. Leaving a smile crawling out of my mouth and spreading my cheeks apart.

Instead of driving back to my house we drove back to his. I am planning on going back to the hospital tonight when she is sleeping. I just want to hold her hand and inhale the universe inside her skin.

We find Bongeziwe’s daughter sitting outside on top of her bag and it seems as if she has been here for too long. She has tears dried up her face and the moment she sees us, she gets up running towards her father and hugging his legs. “Namisa what are you doing here?” Bongeziwe asks taking her into his arms, she is six.

“Mama left me here” she nuzzles on his neck. He clenches his jawline and we walk inside the house

after grabbing the bags on the floor.

He has disappeared somewhere in the house with his daughter and I am making something for her to eat. He comes back after a moment clicking his tongue. “What happened?” I ask him. He is angry. Taking out a beer from the fridge.

“She said she was late for her flight” She is referring to the mother, their relationship is like fire ice, that blame is not on her though. Bongeziwe didn’t treat that woman right.

“Flight?”

“She is relocating with her man, Mongezi”

Hah!

“And she left Namisa?” He shoots me a look. This is a rhetorical question. “I think leaving Namisa behind was a good idea though because you would have...”

“Onalenna doesn’t know I have a child” He interjects.

“Manje?”

No really, so?

“What if she doesn’t accept my daughter?”

“Then focus on you and daughter” I shrug.

“Thank you very much bhuti wami that was very helpful” He says sardonically and taking the plate on the table with a sandwich and attempting to

leave the room. “If the roles were switched would you have accepted her daughter and be honest”

“I love Onalenna”

“You are not answering what asked you. How did you pass at school?”

He flares his nostrils, “I would’ve accepted her daughter” He answers.

“Why?”

“Because I love her and everything that comes with her”

“So what makes you think she won’t accept Namisa?” He shrugs his shoulders. “Stop being an

imbecile for two minutes of your life, please. And  
mina as a father.. ”

“You are not a father yet Mongezi”

“Mina as a father of a three weeks old I am saying if  
she cannot accept your daughter then that is totally  
fine. Move on. Focus on your daughter and bond  
with her, this is the perfect time for that”

“The baby is not even born yet” He laughs.

So? I am still a father.

“A father of a three weeks old is about to eat a  
sandwich with a cup of tea therefore please do not  
disturb” I say to him. And he roars laughing and  
shaking his head.

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“She gives herself unto her spiritual Lord  
In ecstasy that doth all flesh consume;  
Her soul, incorporate in the Heavenly Word  
Already leaves her body in the tomb;  
So sweet, holily, have I been stirred  
No unaccompanied in the vacant room”

I know I said I do not want to see him anywhere near my sight but that doesn't mean he should stop making efforts to see me right? —I was discharged later this afternoon and I was hoping to see him with bouquet of flowers or maybe roses since he has been having them delivered to my ward.

But no, he did not show up or even called.

I am manoeuvring the car on the road as if I am

being chased by demons. The moon is shining brightly in the dark sky looking like canvas. I am going to his house. To give him a piece of my mind? Yes and then after that I am going to end things between us.

That is what I am going to do dump him. I do not even want to touch the topic of having a whole human growing inside of me. I was scared to do an ultrasound so I am ended up not doing it. I am not ready to come into terms with the fact I am a pregnant virgin.

Who would have thought? That the girl who was once the life of the party in short dresses and showing too much skin, jumping fences and running away from dogs would become a mother?

Me? I hate Mongezi Ndamase, I hate him.

Getting off the car the night sea breeze welcomes me warmly and my draped polka dot dress dances along with it.

I do not knock on the door the moment I realise the door is not locked, walking in I take off my shoes so my footsteps won't make any noises whenever I take steps.

The more and more I am walking closer to the living room a song that emerges as warm, open and soulful is playing and he is seated on the rug with what looks like a notepad and a pencil in his hand drawing — His head moving along to the rhythm of the groovy and foot tapping song. There is a cup of tea on a coffee table.

I watch him with his eyes focused as his hands move along to the white paper and he looks delicious not wearing black but instead he is wearing faded skinny jeans with frayed hems

alongside a white top —new.

When he picks his head up and sees me, he frowns first reading my facial expression then his lips spread into that charming smile that attracted me the night I saw him across the room wearing a black suit. “MaMkhungo” His says sultry and I keep my hard face. He is making this so hard as he slowly gets up. I stare down at his feet, they are so beautiful compared to mines that are shaped like nik naks. “How did you get here?”

“Do not come near me bhuti” I do not want him anywhere closer to me. He will slay me with his good looks and poisonous touch then I will forget to be a spitting dragon. He pauses distance away from me, there is space between us but not too much. At the same time enough to feel his effect on me. “I drove” I say swallowing.

“Alone? At this time of the night?” Oh no, he cannot

be mad at me. He has no right to be mad at me  
infact he is the last person to furrow his eyebrows  
at me and giving me that intimidating look on his  
face.

“If you came to see me at the hospital then I  
wouldn’t have drove alone at this time of the night”

“You did not want to see me Kwanda”

“I am Kwanda to you now?” I challenge my eyebrow  
at him.

He is so calm as the usual. It is so frustrating  
because you cannot read what is he thinking. His  
thoughts and feelings are never lucid, ever.

“Ngiyaxolisa mfazi wami” He apologises with a  
calamity seductive tone.

He is taking steps closer to me. One at a time. The more he steps forward, my breath is being knocked out of my lungs. “I hate you bhuti” I utter the moment he stands close to me and my chest almost touching his. The only thing I am inhaling is his scent. It is so intoxicating. I look up at him. The intensity of the atmosphere makes me shiver like a leaf. “I hate you” I repeat again.

He takes a deep breath. Not touching me. Keeping his hands to himself and it feels like a punishment. “Mina ngiyakuthanda” He velvety says that he loves me. “Kakhulu” My world stands still, tilts and then spin on a new axis and I savor the moment gazing into his sincere, beautiful black eyes. “Yezwa Nokwanda” He leans closer and his breath trails itself on my face while his hands are around my waist. His inflaming touch makes me gulp for air. “Ngiyakuthanda” He nuzzles on my neck and I can feel his smile there, his fingers touches my stomach. I am feeling a pleasurable ache deep in my belly. I gasp when he gently bites my earlobe

and his lips brushes my ear.

“Bhuti”

“MaMkhungo”

“I don’t hate you” I say to him and he looks at me. We both chuckle softly and then he cups my face in his hands. And he kisses me. His mouth clinging into mines and pouring all his emotions and words he can never say into a kiss. Then he sweeps me into his arms carefully. I can feel the movement with my legs locked around his waist.

Gently he places me on the bed. My body pressed against the crispy white duvet and this time he is kissing me more tenderly. Taking his time, kissing my mouth, my eyes and pulling up my dress up to my waist. He kisses my shoulders. He is treating every surface of my body like an erogenous zone

that he wants to gently stimulate. Squeezing my hips and thighs. Running his fingers along the waistband of my underwear. Slipping his fingers down my panties and feeling how warm am I getting but then slide them back out to continue exploring my body. Running his fingers back across my labia majora and I am breathing heavily.

He starts stimulating my clit and his other hand is caressing my breast, he hasn't stopped stroking and playing with my labia minora. A smooth touch that feels so good. Light and slow. It is so intense. He takes my nipple between the warmth of his lips through the linen of my dress and he sucks. I shudder as the pleasure shoots through me. A deep throb begins inside me.

He takes off his top and the movement makes his chest expand and flatten my palm over it. He shudders. I lean forward and kiss him and breathing him in, the essence of him is the very opposite of

me somehow.

He takes off my dress and leaving me naked. My breasts flapping their lashes at him. I fight the urge to cover myself. Is my stomach showing that I am —no I am not. I meet his gaze. Heat flame in his eyes as he looks at me. “You are beautiful ” He says with a voice ragged with passion looking over my plank shaped body. His mouth claims mines and then his hands stroking and teasing, my breasts, my bottom, my belly and stroking fire inside of me, tightening the knot inside me. Making me moan and clutch at him.

“Bhuti” I call out his name.

“Hmmm” He murmurs.

“I am scared”

He pauses and looks down at me. His fingers are lost inside my dreadlocks. “What are you scared of sthandwa sami?”

“Being a mother. I am scared” I confess.

“Me too” He chuckles “Of being a father” He kisses my forehead. “But we are going to make it work together. We are going to mess up. Every parent does. We are not perfect but we are going to make it work. I promise” I believe him. Every single word he uttered. Then he kisses my breast again. They are painful but it feels good. His mouth is hot in my nipples then my stomach and then down. I cry out in surprise when I feel him already —there —crying with delight as his tongue works its magic. The knot inside me unravels too fast for me to stop it. The pleasure comes in pulses of such intensity that I arch my back under him. “Ah!” I scream out. He nibbles and suck and kiss. My body starts to tremble. It feels as if I want to urinate but also want

to fart but also needing to cry. All at once and before I know it liquid gushes out from my vagina but he does not stop. His fingers working along his tongue.

He get up on his feet. I look at him with a wet chin as he sucks all the juices and he undoes his jeans, revealing him naked and fully aroused. I gaze at him unshamedly and fascinated. I reach out my hand to touch him. His silken skin. You cannot expect those hard muscles to feel so sultry. I wrap my hands around him and feeling him throb. I slide my hand along the length of him and feeling him throb again. “MaMkhungo” He says hoarsely. “You said you wanted me to make your night special. We cannot do this now” He wants to rub himself and make me pregnant again? No.

“This is special bhuti”

“Are you sure? You want to do this?” My hands slide

down and cup his buttocks. I have become brave and comfortable. I smile at him, a deliberately sensual smile. It is as if something possesses him and he covers my body with his. Flesh on flesh. Skin on skin. We kiss, tongues tangling. And he eases my legs apart, tilting me up. "If I hurt you, tell me stop" I shake my head in agreement. My heart is beating in my head. I feel myself tensing up all the same as the tip of his shaft touches me. And he enters slowly. He kisses me again and then ease in deeper and cry out.

Yoh!

"Stop!" I cry out. I want to catch my breath.

"Are you okay?" Yes, yes. No I do not want him to stop. I miss that stinging pain.

"Now" I say and wrapping my legs around him and

he thrusts slowly. I groan under my breath feeling something tearing apart. It is as if something is being split into two. I open my eyes and watch him. The tension on his face and the colour of his cheeks, his dark eyes, his pupils dilated. He thrusts again and my nails dig deeper into his skin. He thrusts again and again. The pain. The pain. The pleasure. But mostly pain. And pleasure. All confusing. The climax is over burgeoned again as we move together slowly. It shakes me to the core this time, sending me out of control. My nails dig deeper into his skin and I can see the pigmentation slowly changing. I scream out so loudly. Tears falling at the corner of my eyes. He moves faster but not too fast as my cries increase then he groans loudly.

He takes my hand in his, our fingers entwines and our breaths mingling, expression sated in the aftermath of our love making. Smiling insanelly and at peace for a moment. "You are my eternal sunshine" He says his thumb swiping through my

tears.

[01/24, 07:42] : 43.

“Come out of your shell, you are too comfortable”

KHETHELO

Getting home the house is dark which means no one is around, this is something I am starting to normalize myself to —sigh —I flicker the lights on and the brightness fills the room as I am about to close the door, Yolokazi blocks the door with her feet.

We both erupt with laughter because she almost fell since she is wearing olive green strappy heels showing white painted nails. “Is Kwanda around?” She asks, not walking in but standing on the door step. Looking really sexy in a leather jacket and

pant combo that can garner audible gasps. Her look is inspired by badass biker.

I shake my head in disagreement, “I just got here and she is not around” I tell her and she takes a deep breath.

“Go change we are going out” Is she not gonna ask whether I want to go out or not? I think not because she has a straight face plastered on. No smile. No giggling.

“I can’t I have wo...”

Before I can finish, she immediately interjects “Me too. Everyone has work tomorrow. I just said go change and for once in your life please do not wear a long dress. I am going to hang myself with a wet tissue. I will wait for you” she pushes me inside and walks in shutting the door close.

I look at her and taking a sharp intake of breath, “I cannot be late for work tomorrow nor miss it because its my big day please understand” I try to atleast reason with her instead she gives me a questionable look taking a sit on a couch and crossing her long legs tugging the strands of her dreadlocks behind her ear.

Yes! I am being promoted from a teacher to a school principal.

“We are going to my uncle’s place. He invited us over and I thought Kwanda was around. I will make sure you are back home before midnight and you do not miss your big day” she says emphasizing on the last three words. I want to ask if he is going to be there but also either of the responses will make me wanna run far, far away where I won’t be able to find my way back.

And also you cannot say no to this woman looking at me with brown and blonde dreadlocks, she has a powerful personality with an essence of greatness and so ethereal. “Fine!” I dramatically roll my eyes and she claps her hands together.

As I am about to disappear in the corridor her voice chases behind me. “No long dresses, please. Help me!” she says and I chuckle walking into my room.

I grew up in a household where women were not allowed to wear pants nor we were allowed to use any chemicals on our hair or extensions. We are not allowed to use jewellery either, yes that is how strict my father was that even after he died we continued following this moral compass as a sign of respect.

I remember when I pierced my ears, my mother screamed with both her hands on her head and shouting my father’s clan names —a drama queen by nature —she did not talk to me for two months

but eventually came around since I am now grown but when I go home I wear studs as a sign of respect rather than having something dramatic hanging on my ears and then my sister, a rebel that my mother has given up on her.

I have been digging in my wardrobe that I was finally about to give up when I come across a brown linen dress. I think this could work with weird shaped earrings and my hair loose around my shoulders.

Perfect!

After dappling lip gloss on my lips, I walk out of my room confidently and the moment I appear Yolokazi spills her drink and starts coughing rapidly.

What? I look good? That is a reaction they always give in those fashion shows.

After catching her breath she looks at me from head to toe, I think that is a disapproval. “Were you swallowed by a cow?” The smile that was on my face disappears like a deflated balloon and I look down over my dress and sandals.

“This is the best that I have” I defend.

I look pretty, I think.

“Then clearly we need to do some shopping if that is your best. Yoh Khethelo!” she claps her hands once and throwing them in the air before she disappears in my room and comes back with a black short textured dress that I have only worn once. I do not like this dress. My sister bought it for me. It shows my legs and my thighs. It is not tight but rather flowing. Even if that is the case, no.

Yolokazi gives me a murderous look and I have no other choice but to wear it with strappy heels. “Better, as ambe!” I keep pulling down my dress because I feel almost naked.

The moment she starts her car my eardrums bleeds from the music that is throbbing up and down. I think this is trap because it has a lot of vulgar and talking about drugs. And guess what? Yolokazi is wearing sunglasses at night they are stylish though as if she is part of the cast in The Matrix.

We drive through the gate to the mix corrugated steel, plaster and concrete for perfect blend of modern and homely. A two storey residence on a flat pot of land.

Yolokazi knocks on the door rhythmically and singing along before the door flutters open and her uncle appears dancing while he screams, Thokazani. I remember him from the gathering they

had at Kwanda's house. "Come in!" He says standing aside after he attacked us with the most welcoming hug. I pull down my dress walking into the home that has a lot of black furniture going on and a thick aroma wheezing in the air. "Where is Kwanda?" Thokazani asks, they are close.

"With her man" Yolokazi responds.

"Mfundisi?" Thokazani scowls.

"No, she is dating a peng ting now" Yolokazi responds. I am happy its just the three of us here and I am slowly becoming comfortable with the music softly playing at the background as we sit on on the couches. They said Thokozani's boyfriend is in the other room.

Thokazani sticks his tongue out and flapping his long lashes decorated with pearls in the corner and

he cannot hide his excitement about Kwanda breaking up with Sambulo. “Kayise bring a bottle of wine please” He yells out and immediately my hands become cold as chicken feet in a fridge and the pigmentation changes. Everything freezes. My brain. My heart. My blood flow.

He is here? I cannot see him. I mean he cannot see me. We cannot see each other. He will think I am following him around, when that is not the case.

“Can I got to the bathroom?” I say after clearing my throat. I need to leave this place before making a fool out of myself in front of someone who has made it pretty clear that they are not interested or whatsoever. This one time he walked into me wearing an underwear and a vest. I wanted to hide. But also had to pretend that I was so confident by putting a brave smile on my face.

Thokazani turns to me, his make-up is

sophisticatedly done. “Okay darling. Kayise will show you to the bathroom” He smiles at me.

“I need to go now!” I get up pretending I am an urge to urinate and even jumping up and down then he gets up to take me there himself but in that moment he walks into the room and he was laughing at something as he was appearing but the laughter turns into a smile. A beautiful smile. My heart drums loudly against my chest. My mouth is not producing enough saliva.

He is about to say something. “Bathroom!” I remind Thokazani and we walk pass him. Before he can uttered a word. The moment I walk into the white bathroom design that is weighted by dark elements around its lower third. I take a deep breath and leaning over the charcoal vanity unit merges with matt charcoal panels.

What is my next move?

Jumping outside the window?

It been three weeks after sending him a message and telling him that I have feeling for him, embarrassing I know but he left me with no other choice since the chemistry was there and we are compatible in so many ways but he was not making any moves.

And yes, he never responded to my message, laugh with me. Ha ha ha, I am that person with a red painted nose.

I wash my face even though there was absolutely no need for that then I stare at myself in the mirror. I have been here for close to an hour or more.

When a tentative knock disturbs me. “Khethelo!”  
Jesus Christ its him. I look at myself in the mirror

then towards the closed door and then the mirror again. “Khethelo!” He repeats again. I open and close my mouth but words do not come out. “I am kicking down this door” He says sternly and immediately I unlock the door. We stand face to face with my chest rapidly rising up and down. “Are you okay?”

“I am okay” I say quickly. Silence. Just staring in each other’s eyes. “Are you?” I was not supposed to ask him that especially since he did not respond to my message. “Never mind” I attempt to walk pass him but he grabs me by hand. My breath hitches.

I turn to look at him and expecting him to say something, anything but he doesn’t. “I am sorry” He says and slowly let go of my hand. Arg, what the hell actually? “You can go” he steps back and I walk away from him. Not even once looking back. If he thinks he has an effect on me then he is right, sadly. I can feel his eyes behind my back until

disappearing and shockingly the house is almost full.

Oh the queer energy dancing in the atmosphere its so beautiful and the moment Yolokazi sees me she gives me a devilish grin and I sit next to her, she hands me a glass of wine. “Just one glass. How was it?” She asks wiggling her eyebrows. “Rough or slow?”

“What are you talking about?”

She comes closer to my ear, “The quickie” she looks into my face and winks. “I know you were doing it in that bathroom. I wanted to check on you and he stopped me”

“We didn’t do it”

“Okay he fingered you?”

“No!”

“Eat you out?”

“Yolokazi!”

“French kiss?”

“No!”

“Blow job?”

I erupt with laughter and end up drinking from the glass of wine I was not planning on sipping. “No. We didn’t do anything” I tell her and she looks at me shaking her head.

“Are you guys not dating?”

“Chabo. I just like him and he doesn’t”

“How do you know he doesn’t?”

“I sent him a message telling him how I feel and did not respond”

“I am coming back. I need more wine for this” she says getting up and disappearing. She has taken off her shoes and walking barefooted.

When she comes back she is followed by Kayise behind who is laughing and then she takes my hand and leading us outside since the music is loudly playing. I was not planning on drinking but I am on my second glass already as we sit on the chairs in

the balcony. He is opposite me. I ignore his gaze by focusing on the glass in front of me. “So you said he ignored your message?” The tipsy Yolokazi asks. I grab the glass and gulp it at once and pour another one. What kind of demonic work is this?

“Malume is calling you inside” Kayise says to her.

“Are you asking me to leave?” Yolokazi.

“Leave” Kayise laughs and they fist bump each other before she gets up after she kissed both my cheeks and returning back inside the house.

I can hear Yolokazi and Thokazani screaming together, there is also loud laughter as well. I wish I was that intoxicated right now as an eerie eternity of silence moves along with the breeze.

“You look beautiful” He compliments. Something tugs in my belly and my intimate parts scream for attention.

I take a sip on a wine, “Thank you”

“Can we talk but not here”

“Here is fine”

He clears his throat, “You are mad at me?”

“Why would I be?”

“You can tell me”

“You ignored my message. If you are referring to that then no, I am not mad” I am furious and I want

to grate you.

“Your eyes says the opposite”

“You could have replied Kayis e” I murmur.

“I did not want to hurt you Khethelo”

“Hurt me?”

“Look thing is...” He pauses “I am still trying to move on from someone. And by moving on I mean I am still in love with her so I am learning to let go. If I say let’s try this out I wouldn’t give you the best version of myself that you deserve and I am not going to say wait for me either because that will be unfair on you. I have so much going on in my life and I am still trying to swift through my thoughts”

“What if I want to wait?”

He takes a deep breath, “Like I said that will be unfair on you so don’t”

Bury me!

[01/24, 07:43] : 44.

“we meet strangers in the most strangest places at the right time”

YOLOKAZI

I run out of the house with my shoes in my hand while on the other hand I am trying to fix the strappy knit mid dress that I found in my wardrobe —it was the first thing that I set my eyes on and doesn’t need ironing. I am late by four hours to work and I was woken up by countless phonecalls, shoot me

for drinking when I have an early morning shift.

I cannot play music because the muscles in my head are tightened and throbbing. It feels as if my brain is wearing a corset and my stomach is growling loudly so I have no any other option but start at the store to buy something to eat and painkillers, yes, I am late for four hours yet I still have time to pass by the stores.

I walk down the corridor at the store grabbing a bottle of water and immediately drinking from it because my throat felt like I had biltong stuck there or maybe dried fruit and I have been feeling an urge to throw up. That is what happens when you mix alcohol.

Last night I was planning on having atleast three glasses of wine if not four, or the whole bottle obviously. But I ended up drinking shots since there were games being played and then I opened

another bottle, guess who was twerking and doing splits? Not me —but Thokazani —you thought it was me right? I was just standing aside spanking his buttocks and hyping him.

I grab another bottle and drink from it, gulping it all at once when a woman in black uniform walks towards me and she has nice maroon short hair with impeccable make up. “Sawubona” The way she just greeted me tell me I am about to throw these plastic bottles at her. I just nod my head and continue drinking water and taking another bottle that I will drink throughout the day. “You are not allowed to do this” she says with a cheeky tone looking at me from head to toe with a nasty attitude.

“I am not allowed to do what?”

“To be drinking that water before you pay for it and therefore if you do not pay then you will be arrested” she says and I am wondering if she really

thinks that I cannot afford to pay for the three bottles of waters —she has been looking me from head to toe, to what? Judge me and come into that conclusion? What next now? Do I slap or punch her.

“And you think I cannot afford these three bottles of water?” I smile sardonically, that treacherous smile you give an enemy before unexpectedly attacking.

Another trailing blaze from my white painted nails all the way to my dreadlocks. I learnt from Kwanda of whom I have discovered that she is my twin sister that I need to make sure that my toe nails and hands are painted at all times, she preached that all the time that at times she would force me into it and I ended up normalising making sure that my nails are always looking pretty with a white gel or bright colours you can never go wrong.

We used to spend too much time together when they were family gatherings and we were

inseparable, we still are. We would wear matching outfits and excitement would erupt from our stomachs when people said we had a strong resemblance that I ended up crying to my mother that I also wanted dreadlocks, she did not fight me either but she grabbed a wet towel and green sunlight bar soap then she twisted my short hair. They were looking like tiny sausages and I cried my lungs out but I was told to be patient.

Yes, I had to be patient with tiny sausages in my head and they were taking too long to grow. I would come back from school and sit in front of the mirror to see the growth and weep. Then eventually they started growing. Thicker. Longer. And I fell in love.

Kwanda and I used to steal half empty bottles of beers at the functions and cigarette then hide in our backyard. We would drink those drops and come out pretending to be drunk, stumbling, speaking in riddles and even dancing to the rhythm of the music

holding hands. Her presence filled me with amphetamine and I felt full, that I was not surprised nor shocked that we shared a womb because of the connection we shared.

“You words not mines sisi” she responds.

I chuckle. I have completely forgotten about being late to work and I do not think I am still going there. I feel sick in the stomach not to mention the headache that is banging in every corner of my head. I am literally trembling from the hangover and then this one standing in front of me, she is making me angry. “I would love to speak to your manager” I say and she tugs her head in.

“There is no need for that. I will pay” A voice says from behind. It is not deep nor husky. But there is something about it, so sensual. I turn around to come face to face with a man wearing nylon shorts that matches the tropical shirt that he is wearing

showing his firm and bowed legs. His skin is smooth and matte pitch black if that makes sense. And no, he is not that type who makes you want to drop your underwear and spread your legs apart at first glimpse. Nor does he look like a cover page of a magazine, okay he could be on a cover page of a magazine because even the not so good looking ones are plastered there with an amazing aesthetic. His dreadlocks look unkept but they are clean. No beard. Just smooth skin. Not good looking, but he has that thing —he is attractive or maybe it's those teeth and the gap between them or the bushy eyebrows?

Most definitely not my type though.

He looks like those men who were wearing purple suits in the front row of Black Is King jumping up and down —that scene was such perfection with nothing but gorgeous black men in all shades.

The woman in a black uniform has walked away leaving me with the stranger that is looking down at me with his hands on his pockets. And no, I do not find this charming. “And I asked you to pay for me?” I ask him “Ukuphapha izinto zakho?” No really, he is forward just like his girlfriend that just walked away.

“I think she might have assumed that you cannot afford paying for your water because one you are wearing your dress inside out. And then your shoes, you are wearing right on the left and left on the right. Can you blame her? At your age uphendukezele ingubo” I look down at my shoes and my dress. At this age, hah.

I do not even want to look at him anymore instead I shove the bottles of water at him since he said he will pay. “Enjoy your day” I click my tongue and walk away from him. I walk out of the store and explained to the security who asked me about the water I was drinking. I do not have time to talk

anymore. Making my way to the car parking I call at work making an excuse about family responsibility.

“Dr Y. Ntuli!” I hear someone screaming from me and I turn around to see the ugly but attractive man walking towards me, making me wonder what does mubiza want from me. I pause from walking waiting for him walking towards him.

When God was creating him he said “I am going to give you the perfect body, you will be slim but muscular, not too much brazo it will be just damnably sexy, with firm and bowed legs. And then you are going to have the most smoothest skin with rich melanin dripping on you and perfect teeth. Bushy eyebrows too but the face? Soze” And then the angels in heaven begged him to give him the face but he just added one teaspoon of that spice and said it was enough. That is what happened here, no other explanation or whats oever.

“You dropped this” He hands me my badge.

“Thank you”

“You’re a doctor?”

“A dentist”

“Dokotela wamazinyo?”

Haibo wenja!

“A dentist” I repeat what he said but in English since he wants to go back and forth about this.

He smiles, “Enjoy your day as well” that all he says pushing the strands of dreadlock that was falling on his face and he walks away from me. Disappearing

somewhere in the car parking.

Mxm, my heart is not even beating loudly —ha ha why should it be beating loud?

I get in the car and take a deep breath before starting the engine as I am driving off. I see him again on his phone, laughing loudly as he is walking in between cars. His laughter is echoing the whole car parking. A hoot from a car behind me demands for my attention.

I should I have taken one of the bottles of waters. I am thirsty. In less than a minute I am driving through at Kwanda's apartment hoping to find her there. Knocking twice Onalenna appears behind the door. "Come in so you can help with the set up and tell me why are you looking like a child from creche" she says laughing "Kwanda come and see this!" Erupting with laughter. I click my tongue at her and Kwanda appears in a white loose dress, she is

always wearing this colour now.

Ha ha I am the joke here.

I wear the dress the way I am supposed to before joining them in the kitchen as they are cooking and chopping. Onalenna pours me a glass of wine. “What happened to you?” She asks laughing. When she hands Kwanda a glass of wine, she raises a glass of juice and drinks from it.

We both look at her. We are preparing for Khethelo’s surprise celebration party since she got promoted at work.

Back to Kwanda she has a bowl of fruits next to her eating from it and drinking juice. The same person I used to steal the empty bottles of alcohol with is drinking juice and eating fruits. Her skin is glowing. “You? Not drinking? Eating fruits?” Onalenna

“Actually why were you admitted at the hospital?”  
The other day she was throwing up — wait, no ways!

“Kwanda!” I say first “Are you pregnant?”

“Am I what?” She roars with laughter.

“Pregnant?”

She is still laughing, “Three weeks but do not tell anyone guys”

“Hai wena you had sex once and got pregnant before knowing all the fun of having sex? Kwanda! Uyabhayiza” I laugh and choking on wine.

“I got pregnant while still a virgin from oral sex. I only broke my virginity last night” I almost fall from

the chair because of the laughter. Onalenna is running around the room laughing. This takes the cup. You see this —he he he. “This is not funny” she says also laughing and tears spilling out of her eyes from the silent laughter.

“Mongezi is my guy that one!” Onalenna says.

“Congratulations though sweetheart, I cannot wait to plan your baby shower” I say first getting off the chair and embracing her warmly. We share a hug together and then she starts crying.

Hormones, shame.

“Back to you what happened?” Onalenna says to me after we have catch our breaths and continuing with the preparations.

“Woke up late for work and I grabbed this dress and wore it inside out. I realised when a stranger at the store told me” I tell them. Thinking of him. Who was he? “He was ugly but in a good way. In a perfect way”

“Ugly in a what?” Kwanda.

“Good way” I respond.

“How is one ugly in a good way?” Onalenna says laughing, she laughs at everything this one.

“It is when you are ugly but when I look at you for atleast three hours you automatically become beautiful” I tell them.

“Haibo Yolokazi!” Kwanda says laughing. The laughter that is filling this room. Onalenna cannot

stand still, she is leaning on the kitchen counter and trying to catch her breath.

“Is he sexable?” Onalenna

“Yes. He is perfect in every way and he has those unkept dreadlocks. You know when you do not comb your hair and it naturally becomes dreadlocks? He is like that. You just need to give him time to see his good looks but also he has that thing”

“You took his number?” Onalenna

“What for nina? He is not my type” I say.

No really, not my curry that one.

“Doesn’t look like it to me” Kwanda.

“Look like what Mariya?”

Onalenna bangs the kitchen counter laughing, “You did not just call her Mary!” Her shoulders are moving up and down.

“Uyaphapha shame” Kwanda says wiping her tears.  
“To me it looks like you like this guy”

“It looks like it to me too” Onalenna

“Just because you guys are dating that doesn’t mean everyone wants to date”

“Let’s say he walks in here now. What would you do?”

“Haibo nothing”

“Really?” Kwanda.

“Really. He is not my type”

[01/24, 07:43] : 45.

“In your lifetime you will find and meet one person who will love you more than anybody you've ever known.

They will love you with every bit of energy and soul.

They will give, surrender and sacrifice so much that it scares you.

Some day you'll know who that is.

Some people realise who it was.”

ONALENNA

The aroma is hanging thick in the kitchen and they are balloons hanging from our roof. The music is softly playing in the background, and we have knocks after knocks since we have people from Khethelo's work place coming over. I am so proud of her achievement, she deserves it with her calming and forever pure aura.

And those kids are blessed to have a principal like her.

Kwanda is the one who fetched her from work so we can buy time and then she'd force her into wearing something different from what she left wearing going to work. "Let me get that" I say doing a marathon all the way to the door and there he is. The man who gave me an hour to make up my mind whether I want to be with him or not. It was the toughest decision to make especially since I had to travel through my thoughts while he was in my presence. He sat on the opposite couch with his

legs crossed and a glass of cognac in his hand, smirking and winking at me making it hard for me to focus on the decision that I had to make.

We sat in the room and it felt as if everything else has shrunk around us. I completely forgotten about my friend who was sobbing next to me after accusing her man for cheating and everything in me focused on him. The time was moving slow—my mind was made up. Although I sat there and looked at him as he kept staring at the expensive watch on his wrist but my heart knew exactly what it wanted to be fed and after an hour he got up excusing himself saying he needs fresh air.

I followed right behind him taking off our shoes and walking on the sea sand listening to the shores, the sound was so peaceful. He held my hand as if he was afraid that if he let go I would run and never look back. How I wish I could do that but my heart will drag me back to him. “Onalenna...” He started to

talk but I immediately interjected before he could finish his words. I needed to tell him right there at that time before everything in me became temporarily paralysed.

“If you hurt me Bongeziwe...”

“You will open a whatsapp group chat with your friends?” He challenged his eyebrow at me pressing his lips together to suppress that stupid, stupid laughter of his that forces you to laugh even when you were not planning to do so. His sense of humour is one of my favourite things about him. I know he says something funny to hide his nerves behind a joke. “Ngiyadlala. I will never hurt you” I knew exactly he was joking. I was sulking, lips pouted and my hands against my chest then he pulled me closer to him. One hand on my waist and mine on his chest. Looking up at him. With a lush smile, showing his teeth. I love his rabbit teeth. And that sharp nose. “You made up your mind?” I shook

my head in agreement.

I darted my eyes between his, “But I want us to take it one step at a time”

“I have two feet, I cannot take one step at a time I will fall Onalenna” see? He was hiding his nerves. I laughed loudly and shoving him playfully. “But if that is what you want then fine” He smiles.

“Thank you”

Mongezi appeared behind the sliding door holding a cup of tea in his hand and watching us. “You guys can leave, you are not needed here anyways” He screamed at us. Yes, that is how he thanked us after he was looking like a frustrated teenage boy who cannot use condoms. “You will find your keys here Bongeziwe” He said and waved at us. His brother cluck his tongue at him —they have a

beautiful bromance.

He is standing on my doorstep with a smile on his face and his brother looks at me then him. “Kwanda is back?” He asks without greeting or anything maybe he did greet. But I was lost in those brown eyes and smile.

“No but they are on their way”

“Weh! I’ll be in my car” He says and winks at me. I thought he was joking but he is really going back to his car because his girlfriend is not here, what voodoo did she use on him?

“Sawubona” I finally greet Bongeziwe who has been gazing at me with a smirk on his face —it is mischievous making him look like a dare devil.

“Nkosazana” He greets back.

I step aside and allowing him to walk inside then he follows me to the kitchen. As I am opening the fridge to grab a bottle of beer, I feel his hands wrapping themselves around my waist and he nuzzles on my neck, pushing my fresh blonde braids aside so his lips can brush just behind my ear. “You look beautiful” He says inhaling my scent and his one hand squeezing my breast almost violently, warmth spreads all over me before he spins me around and pinning me against the fridge. “I missed you” He tells me.

“I missed you too” I really did.

“Are you okay?” He asks tugging the strands of my braids behind my hair. “This colour looks good on you.”

“Gold?” I laugh cause that is how he calls it.

“Blonde” He smirks, “so are you okay?” He asks again pressing himself against me and I feel his groin and I look at him reflecting the lust in his eyes and we both giggle before I push him away and grabbing a bottle of beer from the fridge handing it to me.

“I am okay. Are you okay?”

He clears his throat, “Not really”

“Oh” I pause “Want to talk about it?”

“Not now and not here”

“When?”

“Tomorrow. If you are not busy I would love to take you out”

“I would love that” In that moment Yolokazi walks in announcing that Khethelo and Kwanda are here, before she tells everyone else and therefore we all gather at the living room waiting for them.

She opens the door and we scream at once, “Surprise!” She almost jumped out of her own skin before she starts crying and smiling. I do not know where the man I am dating has disappeared to or maybe he went outside to his brother.

She makes a nice short and sweet speech before the music starts to throb and the celebration continues. Yolokazi grab our hands and leading us to the bedroom. “Kwanda tell Khethelo, she was not here” she says, already half tipsy. Even I am. We

have been drinking wine since early hours of the afternoon as we were preparing for this.

“Tell me what? Is Kayise okay?” Khethelo asks sounding rather concerned than anything else. And we ogle her. Waiting for her to tell us something we do not know. “Not now. Tell me Kwanda” she says shifting the conversation and it seems like the topic of Kayise is a no go zone, I wonder.

“I am pregnant” Kwanda announces. I still cannot believe she fell pregnant over oral sex. No penetration, nothing, just vibes. Khethelo screams in a tiny voice and holding her mouth.

“It does not end there” Yolokazi.

This my favourite person right now!

“Are you getting married?” Khethelo.

“Khethelo uyaphi lapho? No really where are you going?” Yolokazi she is holding her glass of wine in her hand then she hand it to her and she then tell Khethelo about Kwanda getting pregnant before breaking her virginity and laughter erupts in the room.

This becomes funny all over again when Kwanda says it because of that grumpy face she has plastered on her glowing face. We return back to the living room where they are guests.

Mongezi finally came out of his car after his girlfriend fetched him and they are outside with Kayise busy with the meat.

On the other hand ever since Kayise got here Khethelo has been gulping down glass after glass,

she is not that much of a drink but tonight she is absolutely going in.

We serve the food then after hours the guests are leaving and congratulating my now drunk friend. After the guests have left we decide to gather in the living with the music still softly playing. I am drunk and seated on Bongeziwe's lap under the blanket because of the confused weather and his hand is resting in between my legs.

He dips his fingers inside me once in a while, thrusting in and out but when my walls clenches around his fingers he immediately stops. I am enjoying all this torture.

It is much fun now with this intimate vibe and soft music playing with loud laughter filling the room as we are listening to Yolokazi and Bongeziwe talking—they're so funny.

Khethelo asks Kwanda to accompany her to the bathroom because she can barely walk. “I can take you there” Kayise insist.

“No, no, no” Khethelo mumbles under her breath and chuckling “So you can tell me all over again that nywe nywe unfair this and that” she says and flick her dreadlocks “Thank you. I am fine shame” I am really tired of laughing and it even hurt from the stomach. Kwanda gets up laughing and taking Khethelo with her.

“Why did you nywe nywe her?” Bongeziwe

“He even this and that her” Mongezi. I have realised that this one is more open and out spoken when his brother is around and today he has been drinking.

You know, I am leaving this room before I turn into a

tiny insect from laughing. I follow right behind the other two to the bathroom. And Khethelo is in the bathtub while Kwanda is standing by the sink watching her crying and wiping her tears. “Yoh uKayise!” That all she keeps saying and shaking her head. At this point I do not know whether to laugh or cry or comfort her. I don’t know. “Your brother Kwanda. Tjer! J esus God me help me” she shakes her head. Kwanda is gonna go in early labour.

The door swings open and the moment Kayise appears Khethelo starts hysterically crying and hiding her face behind her hands. “Kayise what did you do to her?” Kwanda.

“Can I talk to her?” Kayise.

“Hhayi! Hhayi! Do not leave me Kwanda. Onalenna don’t leave me” Khethelo.

“What happened?” Kwanda.

“Khethelo can we talk two minutes?” Kayis e.

“No” Khethelo.

I keep shifting my eyes between both of them.

“Please” He is begging with his eyes and voice.

“Fine two minutes” She says getting up from the bathtub but she almost falls. Immediately Kayis e holds her in his arms and they stare in each other’s eyes. For so long that they completely forget that we are here. He takes her and they leave us in the bathroom with questionable looks.

“What was that?” Kwanda.

I clap once, guys!

[01/24, 07:44] : 46.

“We made a fire, we down in flames

We sailed the ocean and drowned in waves

Built a cathedral, but never prayed

We had it all and yeah, we walked away”

KHETHELO

My bloodstream has absorbed the alcohol and my it's dramatically slowing down my nervous system. I am feeling buzzed up, not even needing a reason to kick the bucket of water in my eyes. He is holding me and leading me to my room carefully with his hands around my waist. When we finally get there he gently makes me sit on the edge of the bed. “I am going to get you some water” He tells me

already standing by the door.

“I want more alcohol” I blink my eyes. I can hardly keep my eyes open. I swallow my saliva “I do not want water” His lips spreads to a smile before he leaves the room. Actually water sounds like a good idea. I do not like the way I am feeling anymore. My head is suddenly heavy and my brain is slowly becoming foggy, I cannot think straight.

My breath hitches when the door opens and he walks in with a bottle of water in his hand closing the door behind him then he opens the cap and handing me the bottle. “Thank you” I say now avoiding eye contact. My eyes feels swollen. It must be the crying that I have been doing. Even now my brain is screaming that I should cry. I choke on water as my tears involuntarily starts falling.

He takes the bottle away from me and gently patting by back then he kneels in front of me, taking

my hands to his and looking up at me. “My intention were not hurting you” He says softly and my heart yells that he is lying. He knew exactly that he was hurting me.

“Well you did” I look back at him.

“And I am sorry”

His hands are so warm on mines. “The chemistry between us, was I seeing things?”

“No” He answers simply. “I care about you”

I chuckle sardonically, “You are confusing me Kayise. What makes you think I am going to hurt you the way she did? I am not her. You don’t even want to talk about this. How are you going to heal?” I look straight in his eyes. He takes a sharp intake of

breath, letting go of my hand and something in me shatters. He stands on his feet attempting to walk out. “I am going to move on like how you asked me to but before that I want you to tell me if that is exactly what you want me to do. Is that what you want Kayise?” I also stand on my feet, hardly standing.

He leans his forehead on the room. “Khethelo...”

“Is that what you want? I do not want to hear anything else from you” I have become a brave, brave girl who would have killed Goliath with just one stone, standing tall in the room with an off shoulder draped dress —it is so short and not something I would wear on any given day but right now at this moment I am glad I wore it.

He stands in front of me and his hands tightly gripping my hair and his lips are mines, and his tongue forcing it way into my angry mouth. Yes, I

was angry because he is confusing me. He places his one arm around me so that I am trapped in his embrace and a feeling of comfort covers my body. What the hell is going on? We are supposed to be arguing and him giving me answers not indulging each other. Every part of my brain is fighting him but every part of my body cannot get enough of him. I feel like I would start my own little waterfall in the moisture between my legs. He picks me up and my legs are tightly wrapped around his waist. I want him badly – so bad. I have not done this in three years. He lays me gently on the bed with the bulge in his pants firmly against my kitten. I want him even more. “What are you doing to me Khethelo?” His breath is ragged. We share a mind fucking eye contact.

I arch my back from the bed to meet his bulge with my mouth slightly opened, trying to get enough air into my lungs. “Let me in” I say softly. I pull off my own dress and throw it across the room and his eyes travel all over my body, everywhere his eyes

travel something in me burns, it feels like a scorching sun before he grabs my thigh and I gasp for air breathing heavily. He runs his fingers down between my breasts and pause at my matching underwear.

“We cannot do this not when you are drunk”

“I am conscious” I answer

He moves his eyes between mines, “Khethelo...”

“What did she do to you?” Instead of responding, he places a kiss on my throat, another one on the rosy tip of each of my breast. I inhale sharply at his intimate touch and I touch his shoulder and sliding my hand across his chest and pulling off the knitted top he is wearing. “Tell me” I say. He kisses me. Then he dip his head to my breasts once more wrapping his tongue around my hardened tip and

pulling on it lightly until I gasp. He pauses and looks at me, just looking, no words, nothing. I open my mouth in silent surrender and he teases me with his tongue, brushing my lips before exploring my mouth. I boldly meet his tongue, mimicking his moves until he slides his hands between my thighs. I nervously look at him. He cups me and finds me already damp and ready. He shifts until he is kneeling between my knees. I have completely forgotten about the people talking in the other room and laughing.

He has taken off his clothes and he slowly ease himself inside me and stop. “Are you virgin?” He starts to withdraw as I wrap my arms fiercely around his neck and my legs around his hips, locking my ankles.

“Haven’t done it in three years” I murmur. Then he starts to move again. I whimper meeting his succulent thrusts. He lowers himself and I meet him

with a strong thrust of my hips, wresting control of our joining. He unintentionally goes deeper until he is fully seated and scream loud enough to be heard on the other room.

“Haibo!” I hear someone says in the other room clearly shocked by my screams.

When Kayise feels me flinching he holds himself still. “Did I hurt you?” He asks. I shake my head in disagreement. He rests his forearm to protect me from his weight. He leans down and gives me a quick kiss, his tongue circling my lips. “I know I did and I am sorry” He places tiny kisses along my temple and jaw. “I don’t ever want to hurt you Khethelo” I gaze at him and he is more relaxed than I have ever seen him. His profile could be found on many Greek statuaries. I envy him the long, black eyelashes that framed his expressive eyes.

“I know” Do I really know? I swallow my saliva again

and again and again. His fingers flex around my hips and then he slams into me, the force rocking me forward.

“Yesssss!” the sound is ripped from my throat raw and unedited.

“I am leaving” I hear Bongeziwe says.

“Right behind you” Mongezi. In that moment loud laughter follows. We hear movements and the door closing then the house is silent. And we are left alone. Kayise swivels his hips before withdrawing and tunnelling back in. My lids falls heavy over my eyes, a sheen of perspiration slicks in my skin as my body welcomes the stretch. His hand skating around my hips onto my sex and his fingers drawing circles on my clitoris matching it with the rhythm on his long measured strokes. In no time at all the desire’s escalated to knife edge. Then I scream coming. Loud wet and joyously, right along

with him.

We collapse on the bed and him on top of me. He rains reverential kisses on my neck, cheek and temple while he gently kneads my shoulders and upper arms.

Waking up in the morning I have expected a pair of hands around my waist and breath on my neck but I wake up to the sun blinding me escaping my curtains. I get up from the bed grabbing my robe searching around the house and there is no one around – okay.

I prepare myself for work and after getting ready. I pack my bag and get going, gospel music filling my car singing along loudly and drumming my fingers on a steering wheel. I had people watching me whenever I would stop after the robot has turned red —I am in a good mood.

He surely left early because he had to work.

Getting to work I was introduced as the new principal at the assembly, the kids clapped their hands joyfully then our day starts.

I am seated behind the wooden desk in my office that needs few changes here and there. My phone on the table, waiting for his call. Impatiently and I keep checking every second and finally when my phone rings, I almost fall off the chair answering it quickly. “Khethelo” my mother says on the other side. Disappointment wrap itself around me.

“Hello ma”

“Your sister told me you have been promoted” she sounds delighted.

“I was going to call you”

“Oh I am so happy for you mntanami, you must come home so we can celebrate” she says then ululate happily. I laugh but our call is cut short as I hear a knock from the outside. I hang up. Fixing my dress. That must be him maybe he wants to see me after last night with a bouquet of flowers or lunch maybe?

“Come in” I shout from the outside.

The door opens and she walks in confidently wearing an olive green female, with long braids that almost touches the floor. Her scents smells fruits. Looking sophisticated. “Miss Ndlovu” she smiles, showing her dimples. “You are young and beautiful” she says to me with a smile still on her face. “Oh. I am sorry. I am Miss Bhengu. The new teacher”

[01/24, 07:44] : 47.

“I’m the mother  
Paintings from the past  
In the gutter  
Glitter on my wings  
Through the fire”

This is one thing I have been running away from and I think he is fully aware of that because this will come crashing into me like a tidal wave that I am really pregnant – ultrasound. My morning sicknesses are not so kind with me nor are my hormones and I do not have those exaggerated cravings as yet like eating apples and jam, we are not there as yet hopefully we do not get there.

Mongezi is filled with ecstasy as we walk into the consultation room together and this morning he

went to get a haircut since he does not want his child to see him scruffy and it does not end there, he is wearing one of his designs and overdressed.

I step behind the curtain and getting ready on the bed with the modesty blanket provided, quelling the nausea and fighting the anxiety. My palms are sweaty and so are my armpits.

The doctor pulls the curtain back and Mongezi comes and stand by my head. Not even once looking away from my face, taking my hand firmly into his. A reassurance I was not aware that I somehow needed. He brushes my fingertips against his lips watching the doctor spreading the gel on my tummy to the do a Doppler ultrasound. The concept of having a human occupying my body is frightening, very. "That is really cold" I complain and Mongezi looks down at me with guilt and fear dancing in his face.

“MaMkhungo are you okay?”

“Of course she is” The female doctor says at him. “Oh here we are” she says and I tense feeling Mongezi’s hand tightening around mine. I see a flash in his eyes as the doctor continues. “Take a sit Mr Ndamase and take a look at the monitor” The doctor does not sound concerned rather kind of self assured.

Mongezi does not want to sit nor let go of my hand around his with our fingers intertwined. The doctor moves the probe over my belly and pretty soon the sound of the heartbeat fills the examination room. “Can you hear that?” He looks down at me with a delighted smile.

“There you see heartbeat” The doctor says. I am not even looking at the screen anymore. But the joyous on this man’s face. His black eyes are shining brightly and joyously. I stare at the little blob. We

cannot see anything as yet since the baby is still the size of a seed. I am fascinated, I can feel my heart pull.

“I can see the head and legs” Mongezi says next to me with his eyes focused on the screen. Where can he see the head? And the legs?

I look up at him suppressing my laughter because of the seriousness on his face and he looks down at me, winking and kissing the back of my back.

“Thank you” He murmurs to me and we continue looking at the screen.

“Your baby has a good and strong heartbeat” the doctor says and Mongezi is mesmerised.

“Is she okay?” He asks anxiously and that question echoes in my head. At this moment I do not know what questions to ask or what to say at this

moment. It feels surreal all of it. And he referred my child as a she?

“The baby looks fine” she continues to probe and my eyes are filled with something watery and salty. After few minutes of Mongezi pointing out eyes and nose that are not there the machine is turned off and the doctor hands us the photos.

Mongezi asks that she gives us two minutes alone and she just shake her head in agreement with a smile and leaving the room. He sits on the chair next to me my hands still on his. “How are you feeling?” The happiness is still there on his face not even once disappeared.

“Pregnant” I answer.

He take a deep breath, “I wanted to thank you maMkhungo of course we were not planning on this

to happen anytime soon but I want you to know that I happy. And I am going to be here throughout our pregnancy. Lord knows how are annoying you are these days but I love all of it” I also breath in deeply and needing an extra dose of oxygen to help me clear my head. “But I want to know if you are happy” My smile has been reflecting his.

“I am happy bhuti”

“Ngiyakuthanda yezwa. Ngiyanithanda” Oh he is referring to his baby now since his hands are on my stomach with a glimpse of light on his face.

“I love you too” The doctor comes back after few minutes to advise us that I need a plenty of rest and take iron and vitamin pills —sigh —I hate having to swallow a pill but these days I have to drink those and they make me cringe. A reminder of how dangerous sex is. We also have to set up another appointment, getting pregnant is like getting

employed, work.

He makes me sit on the couch comfortably placing the take away we bought on our way back then he sits on the couch across me with the black and white pictures in his hands. The smile is still there on his face —I let him have his moment with glistening eyes but then a knock interrupts and he gets up to get it and hearing how his voice sounds so sternly I know who ever it is, they are unwelcome. I just wanted peace for only three minutes and that is too much to ask.

Mongezi walks back into the room clenching his delicate jawline and then there is a sound of clicking shoes before an old woman walks in wearing a dress that holds her perfectly and showing strands of her grey hair under her headwrap, so sophisticated, immaculate and classy without any doubt this is his grandmother. “Gogosi this is maMkhungo my girlfriend and maMkhungo

this is my grandmother” That look she has on her face tells me she has been poisoned against me. I attempt to get up and shake her head but Mongezi tells me not to stand, something about his child needing to rest.

“She has trapped you with a baby?” The grandmother asks, sardonically chuckling.

“In my house no one says anything negative about this woman and if you have a problem with that you can kindly leave. If anyone trapped anyone here its me” He says with a perilous tone.

The grandmother looks at me in a most diabolical way. I try to offer her something to drink but she takes my offer and throw it outside the window with the most polite smile. “Mongezi your mother is awake” she tells him and I get up to excuse myself. I do not want to be part of their family matters but no, this man here doesn't want me to leave.

“Siyambongela” Mongezi responds.

He really said good for her? Not bothered how is she doing or anything. I have tried to get through to him but the topic about his mother is like that one room that no one goes close to.

“How long are you going to be angry at your mother?”

“Has long as I want” How is he is still so calm, collected and charming?

His grandmother leans forward. “Your mother told me everything that has been happening. You really think that this girl loves you when she took a job to be your friend? You think she loves you? She is after your money”

“I am surprised you finally came into realisation that she is your daughter when you were never there for her all these years and clearly Mihlali didn’t tell you everything. You have never been part of my life so you are the last person to meddle yourself into my business” That was —I have no words. The grandmother looks at him deflated like a balloon before he stands on his feet. “It was great to see you after all these years but I think its time for you to leave” The grandmother looks at me and clicks her tongue. What did I do? I am not the one kicking her out.

Mongezi accompany her all the way to the door and returns back to sit next to me grabbing a picture of the scan and pretending as if that didn’t just happened.

“Don’t you think you were harsh on your grandmother?” I look at him before leaning on his

shoulder and we both stare at the black and white picture that has my name and today's date on it.

“We need to frame these scans we gonna be taking for the whole journey of this pregnancy” We are changing the syllabus are we?

“Bhuti” I call him.

“MaMkhungo” He kisses the top of my head.

“Talk to me”

“No one get to say shit about you and get away with it especially under my roof. Not happening”

“They are looking for someone to blame”

“I don’t care mfazi wami”

I take a deep breath, “Remember when we were sitting in the living room. Eating noodles and you had a cup of tea on your hand? Remember what you said about forgiveness? Start practising what you preach”

“Mihlali almost killed me”

“But she didn’t right? And she wanted to make sure that you are in good space by hiring me”

“No, she wanted to bring me closer so she can poison me again. Mihlali doesn’t care about other people but herself, she made her bed and now she can sleep on it”

“And she paid for her sins bhuti. She almost lost her

life and she lost her unborn child. Do you really want her to lose more than that?”

“She can lose herself for all care” He shifts and then cups my face into his hands rubbing his lips gently onto my mines. And then he darts his eyes between mines. “I really appreciate what you are doing” He smiles warmly “But nothing you are going to say or do that will make me change my mind”

I really tried.

[01/24, 07:44] : 48.

“Loving actions. Loving words. Loving reminders. Loving vibrations and solutions that are deeply grounded in love”

YOLOKAZI

I am exhausted of hearing old men crying and screaming as I take their teeth out today. It is mostly ooMzwanele who sits at the corner of the tuckshop everyday with a brown bottle of intoxicating liquid arguing about how many women they have slept with and also slut shaming them. Yes —they are the ones who scream the loudest here and calling me “my sister” with swollen cheeks and rotten teeth then they ask for my numbers after they have been helped.

“Next!” The nurse who works along with me screams, she is such a sweet heart and makes sure that our patients are not uncomfortable when they enter this room —we are both new around here. I prefer working with her than the other old nurse with grey hair who draws her eyebrows into a thin line with a saddening hairline. And she is always wearing glasses and red lipstick with a grumpy face.

When I pick my head up my eyes are out of their

own volition when I see him and his cheeks spreads into an unexpected smile. He has such beautiful teeth, honestly — men with amazing teeth are attractive excluding him since he is not my type. Maybe we can include him on the list. “What are you doing here?” I ask him pulling down my mask.

“Ngizokhipha izinyo” He answers, saying he is here to take out his tooth. His facial expression is enough to send my heart racing like a sport car. For what reason, I do not know maybe I am hungry because I haven’t went on lunch, that is a valid reason.

His wearing dark blue nylon shorts with matching shirts and sneakers. Le Bron really did something with this new trend. Is this like a two piece? Maybe but it looks good on him and does nothing to hide those firm and bowed legs, they are shinning.

His dreadlocks are not long but they just look like

unkempt natural hair — afro — I find this look really captivating.

I look at him and he looks at me, we look at each other. “Okay I am not here for that actually” He says and his voice is sultry and lush. The nurse looks at me with a smile before she focuses on the tall frame standing in the middle of the room with a smile I would love to wipe away with just one slap. “I am here to fetch my money” Haibo, haibo.

“What money?” I ask him.

“Le engikhokhe ngayo amanzi” No, I did not ask him to pay for those bottles of water, he insisted. I didn’t run to him. Why is he acting like I was on my knees with my dress worn outside out begging him to pay for me.

I look at the time and it’s already my lunch time. I

announce to the nurse that I am going on lunch before asking this ugly attractive duckling to follow me. I want him to get a piece of my mind and by the time he leaves, he will be look able.

We stand outside with him. His scent dancing on my nostrils and I hope mine does the same and I do not smell like sanitiser and vaccines. “Umuhle” He compliments me the moment I was about to open my mouth and say something. He will not defeat me. No ways.

“Angikubuzanga [I didn't ask you]”

“I didn't say you asked me either Dr Ntuli but I was just complimenting you and if you don't want to take it then fine”

“What do you want?”

“I said you are beautiful”

“Ngiyazi [I know]” He smiles, what a dangerous smile, very dangerous “Again. What do you want?”

“My money”

“I didn’t ask you to pay for me”

“You looked like you needed help”

“Why because I was wearing banana and my dress was inside out?”

“Your words not mines”

I chuckle sardonically and grabbing my wallet from my pocket and looking for any notes. And yes, I just

embarrassed myself because I do not have money. I am only getting paid in three days. Who needs a uniform to the clownery club? Yes, me.

I clear my throat and look up at him and he challenges his eyebrow at me with a smirk. I want to slit his throat right here at this moment. He must be feeling superior. "I am getting paid tomorrow" I murmur lying.

"I can give you my banking details"

"For R50"

"More than that actually including the money I am going to use right now to buy you lunch"

"I have my own lunch"

"Really?" Why is he smiling like that? If my my

cheeks disappoint me and I smile back I am going to throw myself against these walls. I swallow the smile that wants to crawl out of my mouth.

“Really”

He shoves his hands in his pocket and comes back with a phone that has four plate stove and half eaten apple. And he says he doesn't have money, nice one. “Can I have your number so I can send my banking details?” Without paying attention I sing the ten digit numbers and then he shoves his phone back to his pocket. And steps closer to my space looking down at me as I bravely look back at him taking in a stunning sight at him then he smiles again before he walks pass me, mxm.

He is not getting a cent from me!

I had a brown paper bag that was delivered to me

as I was at the canteen and it had a note with banking details and calculations of how much I owe him. I took time to look at the clean hand writing on a white paper shaking my head. I have been trying to figure out who is this person from their initials but I cannot seem to tackle who he might be.

How did he know where I work?

The girls asked me to move in with them at their apartment since the other two dating are pretty much not always around, Kwanda specifically because her man wants to make sure that she and the baby are okay. He is treating her like a fragile adolescent and that is beautiful but when it comes to commitment, I am not coming. I have tasted all kinds of penises from different shades and sizes. I have never been naive. I think one of the reasons is because as I grew up, I used to hang out with a lot of older people than me that I ended up missing going through the stage of being a child and a

teenager but I have always seen myself as a “woman” and I ended up losing my virginity at fifteen and it was just a one night stand.

I have never been in a serious relationship before probably because I saw ooZanele down the street romanticizing abusive relationships. They made it look like a norm to have a blue eye and broken lip. I have never never experienced a heartbreak. And I didn't grow up on an environment where I witnessed love blossoming right in front of my eyes.

I won't stand here and lie, saying I have been hurt by men and they changed me, no, miss me with that motivational speaking Ted talk.

Walking through the door there's an aroma hanging thick in the room and Khethelo and Kwanda are in the kitchen while Onalenna is with them talking. “You are back!” Kwanda says sashaying herself around the kitchen. The topic about our father is the

one we have not brought up. I would love to talk about it but she doesn't seem ready to touch it.

I take a deep breath and taking off my shoes. "And then what happened?" Kwanda asks closing her pots and leaning on the kitchen counter.

"Its Mubiza" I drag my feet and throwing myself on the couch groaning.

"The one who is ugly in a good way?" Onalenna.

I pick my head up and looking at her, "I said in a perfect way, why are you changing my words?"

"You said good" Kwanda comments laughing.

"Fine I saw him in different light today"

“Today?” Khethelo

“Unless you are deaf then I am going to repeat myself but if not forget it” I throw myself back on the couch.

“What did he want?” Kwanda asks and all three of them come and join me in the living room with their eyes focused on nothing but me and legs crossed.

“His money that he used paying for my bottles of water. Imagine? Yazi umubiza” Onalenna is the first one to erupt with laughter. Before the entire room is filled with roar laughter.

“But did you pay him?” Onalenna chokes.

“With what money when my wallet was empty” I

should try stand up comedy. Look at them with tears glistening in their eyes from laughter.

“Did he see that?” Kwanda.

“Mariya” I look at her and take a deep breath “I took out my wallet so confidently and I only had coins. He took my number and he said he will send his banking details so I can pay him after getting paid”

“He is sleek” Onalenna

“What?” I frown

“You are so slow Yolokazi. He was indirectly asking for your number and you gave him just like that. Give umubiza his crown” Kwanda.

“You don’t get to call him like that” I say.

“Who is this guy?” Khethelo

[01/24, 07:44] : 49.

“If you cant live, you dying  
You give or you buy in  
Keep it real, keep it moving  
Keep grinding, keep shining”

Every day for me is a revelation of how dangerous sex is, from the time I wake up running to the bathroom feeling an urge to throw up and something pressing hard against my stomach to fighting with the man who made me pregnant over nothing, absolutely nothing —that sometimes he just stares at me as I rap on with a smirk on his face. To waking up in the middle of the night and tip toeing to the kitchen just to make something to eat

and end up not eating it because of how it either smell or tastes.

What I have noticed is that Mongezi is enjoying and loving this journey that comes with different experiences every day and we also get to explore ourselves and different layers to us in a very different way.

He loves holding my hair as I bend in a toilet seat or sink letting out a gut wrenching sob with watery eyes while screaming how much I “hate” him in between. He loves tugging the strands of my dreadlocks behind my ear after I have wiped my mouth then he hands me a bottle of water as he kisses my forehead and holding my hand back to the bedroom.

I have seen it in his eyes, the joy, the brightness and the happiness. As I look up at him and my eyes slightly opened, fingers digging deep into his skin

while the pigmentation changes. I can hear from the way he groans as he rhythmically moves in between my sweet and tender thighs and how his fingers dip in my tea and suffice my need for honey.

Oh he is so succulent and passionate!

I walk through the glass door and the smell of brand new clothes dances around my nostrils —I am here to do shopping for my friends, but not myself, I just discovered that I enjoy buying clothes it makes me happy and it made me wonder what if this is my gift? Because we are differently gifted.

I know a lot of people hate shopping and standing in long queues, but I love every moment of it and just getting to feel the textures of different fabrics on my hands. I think I want to be a buyer if that makes sense, have my own cute boutique at the corner of some boujee location painted in white, black pictures hanging on the wall with beautiful

poetic quotes because my love for poetry is still there. Where I get to buy clothes for people and they just come to my shop to pick them up and then leave.

Wouldn't that be great? I mean it could be a win from both ends because I'd get to do something I truly love and that makes me happy and getting paid for it.

I think I am adulting now, funny enough.

I walk pass the mirror and I get a glimpse of myself, I do not look pregnant as yet and I am showing too much skin today because of this sunny weather. I am wearing a white short mini skirt with a slit by my thigh and white shirt tugged in with black strappy heels well my nonexistence buttocks look like they exist. "Nokwanda!" I hear someone shouting my name and I look around without seeing anyone. I continue walking around the store and wandering

my eyes. “Kwanda!” someone pats my shoulder and I quickly turn around in defence. “I didn’t mean to scare you” he says spreading his cheeks into a smile and not even once do I smile back instead the disgusting memory of him pounding my father from behind and his buttocks doing “tsipa-tsip” pays me an unexpected visit, that memory feels freshly restored.

I flick my hair, “Sambulo” I say with a marble face and he looks at me from head to toe before darting his eyes between mines.

“You look beautiful” he compliments me and I just stare back before walking away from him. I do not have the time for this khumbaya conversation and compliments. I have nothing to say to him really when he wanted to paint himself as the good guy all along when he was not even close to that. You cannot be that judgemental when you have you own skeletons in a closet, he made me question my

moral compass so many times so I am not about to go down that road again with him or anyone else for that matter.

He grabs me by hand and I pause walking, I even stumbled a little “Sambulo let me go!” I say treacherously and looking straight into his eyes “Let go of me Sambulo!” I warn again and slowly he removes his fingers from me and stands distance away taking a deep breath.

“About what you saw that day—

“What I saw?” I challenge my eyebrow “what are you talking about?”

“We cannot have this conversation here so can we go somewhere?” He looks at me with begging eyes that matches his tone.

“I have nothing to say to you Sambulo”

“I just want you to hear me out, thats all Kwanda please”

“You slept with my father” I say whispering, I am not about to scream on top of my lungs and I am trying so hard to keep my composure so that people standing from the distance will see this as a normal conversation. I am even smiling slightly “so what is there to talk about?”

He takes a deep breath and shoves his hands in his pockets, “That was not me. I don’t know what happened to me that night. The devil just...”

“My father is the devil?” I ask him.

“He is not your father”

“That has nothing to do with you; he is still my father and if you want to blame all of this on him then work on yourself”

He takes another sharp intake of breath and running his hands behind his neck, “I am not gay”

“Great!”

“I mean it Kwanda. Even now I do not know how that happened, I have been meaning to get hold of your father and just find out what happened but he keeps running away from me. I have nothing against homosexuality hear me out but I am not gay so can we please meet when you have time so we could talk? If possible please bring him” his story sounds so convincing because of his tone, body language and facial expression even a blind man could possibly believe that he might’ve been

drugged or something and ended up having the best sex of his life – I am saying best because of those animalistic sounds they were both making.

I do not say anything just standing here and looking at him, “You have my number so when you are ready to have this conversation then we can talk and maybe we can talk about us”

“There is no us Sambulo” I spit “And I have nothing to say to you”

“You are in love with him are you?” Oh the look on his face, the sadness dancing right there.

Feeling bad? Yes, because even though I knew that I have no romantic feelings for him or whatsoever but I continued dragging him in whatever that was between us but also we were both lying to each other so I am not to blame right?

Right!

“Makoti wami” The moment I hear his voice my heart immediately starts to swim in my stomach before feeling him standing behind me and looking towards Sambulo who is also keeping a stern face as if something was happening between us and Bongeziwe interrupted that. “What is going on here?” he asks, with no sense of calamity like his brother but one wrong word from the man standing opposite me then a fight will erupt. “Makoti” he says to me.

“You have a new man?” Sambulo says “Usuyafeba Kwanda?” That all it took for him to get a punch across his face that was so unexpected.

Did he really ask if I am bitch now?

“Bongeziwe!” I pull him behind although he wants to fight back but he looks at my stomach, I think it came as a reminder that I am pregnant and if he pushes me back or anything then something might happen instead he clicks his tongue.

“Asambe makoti” he says to me and I do not have it in me to argue with him.

“But I still wanted to do shopping”

“We will go to another store, let’s go” I follow right behind him and the direction that he takes is not to another store but instead he is walking outside to the car parking. He was walking fast but he pauses along the way since I am walking like a super model on a runaway show. Now he is behind me grabbing out his phone from his pocket and I am sure to call his brother. I do not know why I am worried as if I did something wrong, I didn’t do anything wrong.

Bongeziwe opens the car to a passenger seat for me and I clamber in, and right after that he slides behind the wheel and manoeuvres the car on the road with music filling in the car. I think this is deep house, sounds like it with an essence of soulfulness. “Mina Bongeziwe I didn’t do anything” I speak out first, the silence is so thick and uncomfortable making me feel like a toddler who was caught stealing brown sugar and standing on top of a chair.

He looks at me once and then focuses on the road while drumming his fingers on a steering wheel, “Hmmm” that all he says before he turns to the left, he is driving straight to his brother’s house with no questions asked “you will tell Mongezi that, he is waiting for you makoti” he says and then the pink elephant comes back again, dancing and shaking its hips left, right and centre.

We park at the garage and I am the first one to get

off before he can even open my door, I am walking behind him as he leads me inside the house.

Mongezi is not around and I am guessing he might've have went to work since he has been going there these days to check how is everything but he is mostly working from home.

Bongeziwe is drinking a beer from a bottle and comfortably sitting on the couch while, I on the other hand on the edge of urinating myself for absolutely no reason.

After what felt like an eternity of silence and uneasiness we hear the door opening then footsteps when I look up Bongeziwe has a grin plastered on his faces then he winks at me and by the time Mongezi walks in the room looking gorgeous in a black suit and flat ankle boots with buckles, my armpits are already sweating even under my breasts. "MaMkhungo" When his voice

washes over me the taps around my eyes are immediately opened and he looks towards his brother who just shrugged his shoulders and continues drinking from the bottle. “Woza la mama” He calls me and I spring out of the couch to throw myself in his opened arms and he embraces me then he takes my hand leading to the kitchen where he pours me a glass of water and lemon.

We return back to the living room, I am avoiding eye contact with Bongeziwe. “I didn’t do anything...” I say after gulping a glass of water “I walked into the store and then he called out my name and when I turned around it was him. He told me he doesn’t remember the night with my father and he thinks he might have been drugged. I didn’t want to talk to Sambulo, bhuti” His facial expression just changed as if he doesn’t know what I was talking about.

“You spoke to Sambulo?” He furrows his eyebrows and leaning forward.

Oh, no.

look towards Bongeziwe, “I didn’t tell him anything”  
did I just —oh yes, I did.

“Nokwanda Mkhungo” he calls me, velvety than  
sternly.

“Bhuti”

“I am waiting for an answer”

“Chabo”

“Chabo?” He raises his eyebrow.

“I was just...”

“Did you or did you not talk with your ex?” it was better using his name than calling him like that now my guilt is flapping her lashes and waiting for a response.

I swallow, “when he was talking I closed my ears with my hands” I lie and Bongeziwe erupts with laughter and choking on his drink, I hate him so much for making this situation worse and he walks out of the room.

“Really?” Mongezi asks sardonically.

“We spoke”

“And you believed what he told you?”

“I don’t know”

He smiles, not a genuine smile “You what?”

“I dont know”

[01/24, 07:45] : 50

“If I’m going to die. I’d like to actually live first”

He just stares at me as if I am a complete imbecile he has ever come across then shakes his head with his hand under his chin, I wonder how he keeps his fingers so perfectly manicured and clean —I find the veins in his hands very attractive they scream masculine. “Is my baby hungry?” The conversation is shifting. Although his face stays opaqueness but his eyes are smouldering with suppressed anger.

“I am not hungry” I respond with a smile, a very

charming one and although he wants to keep a marble face but he is failing instead he grimaced and leans backwards on the couch and attentively looking at me, making sure that the smile is wiped off my face and uncomfortability finds a way to wrap itself around me.

“Are you my baby?” He smirks when he finally sees that his mission to make me feel out of place is working as I chew the insides of my cheeks blinking at him.

“Are you mad at me?”

“Very” He says, the way he said it sounded more sensual than poisonous or venomously. “But we are going to work around that”

“Sex is not a punishment”

He tugs his head in with a sardonically smile “And you thought I was going to punish you with sex?”

“You won’t?”

“Ngobani?”

I don’t understand what that question supposed to mean.

“You are being mean to me bhuti”

“You want my face to turn red for you to see that I am mad at you?” He pins me with a dark look. His tone is stern and my sex clenches violently.

“That is not what I said” I say .

“You know what pisses me off Nokwanda? Is that you see absolutely nothing wrong about this. You sat there and confidently told me that you don’t know if you believed the story that he told you or not. And to me it seems as if you believed him. You are so gullible. Uyangicasula” He says politely and I feel the blood slipping from my body and turning my skin unusually pale and then he gets up from the couch and leaves the room disappearing somewhere. He walks with confident and you can even hear it in his footsteps.

If his emotions were luminous rather than vague, I would have known that he was not flirting with me or have forgiven me for that matter —sigh—I sit here in the living room disconcerting and not knowing whether to follow behind him or leave.

I think his brother left right after erupting with laughter and choking on his beer, mxm.

After taking off my shoes I stride to the kitchen and sashaying myself around as I start cooking. It is so quiet that the only thing making noise is the pots and the water running in the sink.

Oh and the sound of my drumming heart against my chest that feels as if it will come out of my mouth if I mutter a word.

I am stirring a pot when he walks into the room and he has a towel wrapped around his waist with a droplet of water on his skin, falling from his head to his face all the way to his chiselled chest and the tiny minimal tattoos on his body are all visible.

I pray under my breath as he ignores my existence and walking towards the fridge —oh he is not talking to me?

He grabs a bottle of water and opens the cap taking

a gulp and I watch his throat slowly moving up and down including Adam's apple. "Bhuti" I call him out and he looks at me, not saying a single word just looking.

I blink once and then twice, count that three times and squirming and I am sure I have caused my own waterfall in between my thighs if not a flood. "Your food is burning Nokwanda" He says then walks out of the room.

What satanism is this?

I grab the burning pots that burns my fingertips causing me to scream, loudly and dramatically as I open the tap in the sink. "MaMkhungo" He yells out striding towards me and taking my hand to his "What happened?" I just look at him with my burning finger and my eyes filled with unnecessary tears.

He wipes my tears with his thumb — He is more concerned about my finger than being mad at me. After wiping my tears he sucks my finger into his mouth wrapping me with his warmth then he walks out coming back with a plaster. I do not have neither a scar nor a wound by the way. “I am coming back” He says then leaves. Leaving me wondering where do we stand since my finger has been sucked? Am I forgiven? I am sure I am not.

He comes back no longer half naked and he continues with the cooking. I guess we are not talking. “Bhuti..” I call him out and he looks towards me while he starts chopping. “Ngiyaxolis a” I apologise. It was hard spitting those words. They were strangling my neck and squeezing my oesophagus.

He pauses clasping his hands on the kitchen island and looking straight into my eyes. “I don’t want us

to have this conversation again Nokwanda” When he is mad at me, he calls me by my full name, noted. “Ever. Especially about that guy who is trying to manipulate you and use you. He slept with your father we cannot change that and you cannot unseen that. He doesn’t want to take accountability of his actions as always and now he wants to pin point this on someone else. Mina ke I won’t allow him to take advantage of you. I will let him get away with this now but if he dares try coming next to you again Nokwanda...” He doesn’t finish his sentence instead he smirks devilishly and continues chopping his vegetables. I felt his wrath and the threatening. It did not sound like an empty threat either.

We are disturbed by my phone ringing from the living room in my bag. I get off the chair to grab it out my bag when my brother’s name flashes. “Kayise” I answer and I can hear sirens in the background and different voices talking at once.

“Kwanda where is your boyfriend?”

“He is here, what happened? Are you okay?”

“Give him the phone”

”Not until you tell me what is happening”

“Mooncres I don’t have time for your stubbornness so can you please give your man your phone so I can talk to him”

“What have you done?”

“Kwanda!” Okay, Okay. I rush to the kitchen and hand Mongezi the phone and the moment he presses it against his ear he walks out of the room.

What is happening?

[01/24, 07:48] : 51.

“Everyone is capable of something”

ONALENNA

It was a lovely afternoon sun out and shining brightly in the sky that looked beautifully blue and I woke up with a throbbing headache from the previous endless drinking and the gales of laughter. Having his fingers dipping my tea under the blanket as we sat on the couch with everyone, he was drunk and so was I—I think that was the very moment I realised that I might be falling in love with him, every moment as he whispered in my ear compliment my new freshly done blonde braids and his warm breath caressing me mixed with the whisky that he had been drinking and the cigarette he has been smoking.

He reminded me over and over again about us going out the following day and although he sounded very ecstatic about it but there was some sense of nervousness in his voice, which is very unusual.

I gracefully clad myself in a red mini dress with short puffy sleeves and white strappy heels, that morning I was feeling uneasy I don't know why but my anxiety was just strangling me, making my hands turn cold as a new fridge until they were changing pigmentation.

I thought it was because I haven't sat opposite a man under a chandelier with a bottle of wine in between us and just exchanging smiles while my face is covered in kaleidoscopic hue in a while.

Truthfully speaking I thought this was one of those

three minutes relationships I have been jumping into from time to time because I either lose interest since I do not feel neither chemistry or connection, and sometimes it's just me letting go so I don't have to let my guard down.

But with Bongeziwe—he makes this love thing feel, taste and look like a breeze.

A knock came through my door as I was dappling lip gloss on my lips and I grabbed my handbag that matched my shoes including the dramatic sunglasses that made my whole outfit scream nothing but classy. “Hey” I said opening the door only to find a tall frame, looking dangerously handsome as always carrying a young girl in his arms that had a nice wild natural hair that was tangled yet looked beautifully on her— she was clinging onto him.

Strange how she looked exactly like him but the difference was the upturned eyes.

I looked at Bongeziwe who had an apologetic look plastered on his face and the young girl who was later introduced as Namisa, who prefers being called Zendaya because that is how her father named her.

He stepped closer to kiss my lips but I gave him my cheek instead, he just gazed at me with that charming smile he always gives me when he is about to fuck me senselessly. “Are you ready to go?” I faked a smile; it was so plastic before nodding my head and closing the door behind me.

The young girl looked beautiful, you can tell when she grows she’ll know her sense of style as she was wearing a red dress and white sneakers, with earrings shaped as unicorn in her ears.

We clambered in a car and at first she had an

argument with her father about having to sit at the backseat, Bongeziwe just spoke once with a stern tone and immediately she ran to sit at the backseat and started hysterically crying and eventually calmed down because her father was not having it.

I then later discovered that I am not just a girlfriend but also a step mother to a young girl who has made it pretty clear that she hates me and I am not her mother, never have I told her father about this.

I am not the one to come between the father and his daughter, not now, not ever.

Anyways I just got a call from Bongeziwe who was already on his way back here just minutes ago, he left the house going to buy us something to eat and I am guessing he was buying the food in another country since he left hours ago, he asked me that we come to his brother's house since something has happened and Kwanda is going to need

us—and by “us” I mean her friends.

I don't know what really happened because he didn't want to get into details. “Zendaya!” I call out for her so we can leave. I have already packed her bags just in case we happen to sleep over at her uncle's place.

No response!

I walk around the house looking for her only to find her in her room speaking on her phone with her eyes filled with tears and the moment she sees me, she then wipes them. “Bye, bye mama I love you” she says, at her age I didn't have a phone or even knew how to use it.

I lean against the door and watching her, “Why are you crying nana?”

“Nothing”

“But you are crying”

“I said it’s nothing, yoh tshin’ thiza!”

O-kay

“Since you don’t want to tell me then I am going to tell your father maybe you might tell him what is wrong with you”

“I hate you!” she says again.

No matter how many times she says those words but they still have a way to stab right through my heart with a cold knife and the coldness penetrates my mind.

Maybe if I was aggressive towards her or not even trying to build a relationship then it wouldn't have hurt as much but right now I don't even know what I did wrong to her.

Is it because I made her sit at the backseat?

Is it because she once caught me kissing her father?

Or does she somehow feel I am here to replace her mother?

I can feel my own tears burning my eyes, they feel like powerful acid. "You will meet me in the car your father said we must meet at your uncle's place" even this conversation, it feels as if I am talking to a first wife and I have to walk around egg shells for her to accept me.

I walk out of the room and that's when my tears caress my cheeks, I quickly wipe them off and grabbing the car keys and her bags to the garage.

After what felt like an eternity of crying in a car and banging my head on a steering wheel, the princess eventually comes out banging the door and making herself comfortable on the leather seat. “Why are you driving my father’s car and not yours?” she asks as I start the engine and reversing out, I am so close to beating the shit out of Bongeziwe’s daughter trust me.

Instead of answering I turn on the music and completely ignoring her, if she doesn’t want to act like a seven year old but a grown woman then so be it.

Finally we drive through Mongezi’s gate and the salty breeze dances on my nostrils as we both get off the car and taking her bags and making our way inside the house.

After knocking twice Bongeziwe is the one to answer the door instead and his daughter jumps in his arms and nuzzling on his neck. He attentively look at me. I hate being under his intense gaze so I am avoiding eye contact with him otherwise I'll end up crying right here and right now. "Zendaya go inside, I am coming princess" he says kissing her forehead and she giggles jumping off his arms and running inside the house.

The moment she disappears he shuts the door and we both stand outside, the cold breeze making the hair at the nape of my neck stand as we stare at each other. "You were crying again" his tone is not so polite, "And this time if you dare lie to me Onalenna soxabana" I tightly hold the handbag in my hands and looking away from him, "Onalenna" he calls me. He wants me to look at him, I won't.

"Hmmm" I murmur.

“Look at me” I swallow the humongous lump on my throat and involuntarily the water beads touch the tip of my mouth. “Mama” he says softly and placing his index finger under my chin so I could look at him.

I look at him—I am so mad at these traitorous tears.  
“Khuluma nami phela”

“It’s nothing. Is Kwanda okay? What happened?”

“You know how much I hate what you are doing right now”

“I told you it’s nothing baby”

“But you’re crying?”

I take a sharp intake of breath, “I just...can we go

inside?”

“Not until you tell me what happened otherwise I am going to find out myself”

“I want to go inside” Intently he looks at me and then step aside so I can go inside as I attempt to walk pass him he grabs me by arm and causing a collision on his chest.

“Ngiyakuthanda” he reminds me that he loves, and God knows how much I believe every word coming from his mouth as it slowly melt in every corner of my brain. “Yezwa Onalenna”

“Ngiyezwa”

“Wena awungithanda? [You don't love me?]”

“Ngiyakuthanda Ndamase” I smile warmly, the smile just creeps out of my cheeks unplanned.

“Please tell me what’s wrong or at least promise you will tell me”

“I promise”

“I will take that” a slight kiss on my chin and closer to lips making me beg for more and we both walk inside the house.

It feels as if something inside me shatters when I find Namisa with her head on Kwanda’s lap who is now braiding her hair into Bantu knots, so that means I’m the problem?

“My sweetheart!” Kwanda says and I bend in front of her so I can kiss her cheeks. “You look beautiful”

she compliments and in that moment Khethelo and Yolokazi arrives and the men leaves.

We leave Namisa in the living room watching cartoons and making our way to the kitchen,

“Does anyone have an idea what happened because bhuti is leaving me in the dark” Kwanda asks, she has been hiding how she is feeling about this whole situation of being left in the dark.

“Bhuti is Kayise?” Yolokazi.

“No, Mongezi” we all erupt with laughter. Whatever happened to pet names?

“Hehake you call him bhuti because that is the closest thing to bhebi?” Yolokazi.

Kwanda shakes her head; she is not her usual self even her laughter is not as loud. “I just can’t get myself into calling him baby or anything along those lines”

“Is Kayise okay though?” Khethelo

“You are still there?” I ask her first—heart is a very stupid organ I am telling you.

“Yoh guys leave me alone”

“I don’t know anything I was just called to come here and that was it” Yolokazi shrugs her shoulders.

Silence!

It’s tense.

“By the way Onalenna what is wrong honey you seem off” Kwanda

“There is nothing wrong”

“There is absolutely no need for you to lie” Yolokazi

“Well she told me that Bongeziwe’s daughter hates her” Khethelo

All eyes on me, “And you smacked her right when she said that? And threw her in a three leg pot?”  
Yolokazi

“I am not leaving my child with you” Kwanda

“No really that was very disrespectful, did you tell Bongeziwe?” Khethelo

“Guys no, I understand why she is being like this. Her mother left and she needs to adapt to this new environment and worse I am in her father’s life. There is absolutely no need for her to be thrown in a three leg pot”

“I still say you should throw her there though”  
Yolokazi

We sit here in the kitchen for couple of more minutes, Kwanda is longer talking that much and the atmosphere has become even more tense especially as we look at the clock ticking and the men are not back as yet and not even calling.

Namisa has fallen asleep so I take her in my arms to the guestroom and gently place her on the bed stroking her hair back and kissing her forehead. “Mommy please don’t leave me” she murmurs in

her sleep and holding my hand tightly.

I lay next to her and throwing my arms around her, when the muscles around her face relaxes and her breath calms I get up from the bed but almost land on the floor to find Bongeziwe leaning against the door watching us. “You are back!” Jesus, I was worried.

I need to stop reading these novels about gangstas in suites because I automatically assumed they were part of that category.

I throw myself in his arms and blessing his face with kisses. “You thought I was not coming back?”

“Yes, what happened?”

“Kayise has been arrested”

“Arrested?”

“Attempted murder but Kwanda doesn’t know as yet so please don’t tell her anything until we do something about this tomorrow morning”

“Wait, what are you saying”

“That’s all I can tell you for now s thandwa sami”  
Attempted murder? As in he almost killed someone, never not him. “Why were you crying?”

“Bongeziwe, Kwanda needs to find out about this”

“Onalenna please we are not about to argue about this. Kayise asked us not to tell her and Mongezi doesn’t want anything happening to the baby as well, I wasn’t supposed to tell you”

”But you already did”

“Why were you crying?”

“It was nothing”

“You are fully aware that I can make you talk right?”

Attempted murder?

[01/24, 07:49] : 52.

“we are magical, higher than heaven”

I am standing in front of the mirror and lathering my skin with a moisturizer in between my breast while watching his movement through his reflection and then he pauses when our eyes meet. “What is that

you are hiding from me bhuti?” I ask him, moving my hands in between my thighs and spreading the moisturizer.

He dramatically gasps “Hiding? Haibo” Oh he knows I cannot read his facial expression neither can I read his mind since he knows how to stay calm and collected even in a sea full of sharks.

Mxm!

He has a coy smile plastered on his face. “We are hiding things from each other now?” I ask him.

I stop breathing as he keeps taking steps toward me. He still has that very same effect on me. Where it feels as if something intoxicating is shooting through my bloodstream and someone is pressing their knee on my chest, making it hard for me to take a breather. In and out.

His palms graze over my hips, then over my hardening belly. I ease back to rest my head against his shoulder and lace my fingers behind his neck. It brings my breasts tantalizingly higher.

We both watch our reflection in the mirror with anticipation as his hands cup each sensitive orb. His fingertips brushing softly over my nipples. My eyes shut and a gasp escape my lips. Then he drops his head down to nibble and lick at my neck while gently rolling the peaks of my breasts between his thumbs and forefingers. “What makes you think I am hiding something from you mfazi wami?” My head flies back as I cry out and my breasts press harder into his hands. My fingers paw desperately at his neck. “Hmm?” he whispers. While his one hand still cups my left breast, the other travels down to my stomach. “maMkhungo” His fingertips press beneath the tobacco silk of my panties and dip between my thighs.

“Bhuti” I cry out as his fingers gently sought out and stroke my most sensitive parts.

“I am listening” he says into my ear. My wet heat welcomes him and urge him on. He continues to watch the two of us in the mirror. My eyes close, my chest rising and falling rapidly with my shallow, quick breaths.

“I know you are hiding something from me” I say, my muscles tensing as I near the edge. “Yes! Please don’t stop”

“You like that?”

“Hmmm”

“I can give you more”

“Please”

“What makes you think I am hiding something?”

“Because. Ah!” I scream. He cradles my body against his as I come, absorbing the violent spasms of my orgasm. When my cries subside and my body slumps against his, he pauses.

“We are just getting started sthandwa sami”

He bends to kiss the nape of my neck, sliding the night dress off me with both hands.

“Please tell me the truth” I sigh as his arms encircled my waist and he presses himself against me. His face is buried in my dreadlocks as his hands slide up, exploring me with eager fingers. He

caresses my nipples, feeling gooseflesh rise under his touch. He slips one hand inside my panties once to run his fingers through my moist.

“What if I am really hiding something to protect you?”

“So you are hiding something?” I turn around in his arms and reach for his top. I have learned so well the ways to entice him, to tease him, and ultimately to satisfy him.

I pull off his top then reach for his hand, kissing his palm so languidly he shivers and clutches at my shoulder with the other one, sliding my hand down the front of his trousers and smiling wickedly as I gently squeeze his erection. I unzip his trousers and let them fall around his ankles. His penis pokes through his white branded briefs.

I smile and stroke it. He wraps his arms around me and carrying me to the bed. I struggle against him, giggling, and gasping as he drops me across the bed and bending over me, urgent kisses covering my mouth and stilling my giggles. “I am hiding something but to protect you Nokwanda” Is he mad? He calls me with my full name when he is mad– but the seriousness of his face is sexy and intruding.

What could that possibly be?

He pried one of his shoes off with the other, letting them both drop to the floor. I sigh at the feel of his breath between my breasts. His chin brushes my breast and my nipple rise.

He catches it with his lips and suck hard.

“Mongezi” I gasp.

He keeps sucking in strong little waves and sliding his fingers back inside my panties. I rock against him, a quiet moan peaking with each thrust of my hips. I am hot and wet already, and then his hand is drenched in warmth as I grip his neck and let out a long, low moan.

When I loosen my hold on him he removes my panties, then his boxers and his socks. He returns his fingers inside me, starting all over with light, teasing strokes. I spread my legs and he moves between them, still stroking while he teases my other nipple.

If he thinks after this I'll completely forget about what he is hiding from me then he right, absolutely right.

“Yes. Oh, yes” I breathe as he sucks and stroke, slowly penetrating me with one finger, then two. I am panting, my hands stroking his back, gradually

settling for longer periods on his buttocks.

I am wide open to him, hot and wet, my musky scent filling the bedroom. He moves his fingers and enters me slowly, continuing to caress my labia as his penis fill me. "Lord, yes" I breathe again, thrusting my chest toward him, "It feels so good"

His mouth sought mine, completing the chain of our bodies, taking my probing tongue and grasping lips.

And then we begin to move. Slowly at first, rocking together, creating a hot little friction that spread quickly along tingling nerves. He withdraws a little and plunge deeper and I groan with pleasure.

And he does it again, covering my breast with his hand so that his palm pinch the nipple.

“Oh Godness!” I cry out. My hips rising beneath him. He presses them down. He begins thrusting, and twisting. Hard and fast. Both hands on the mattress on either side of my head. My legs wrapped around his waist keeping him from pulling out too far, but even so I moan each time he does, squeezing his buttocks to bring him back in.

The jolt of ecstasy take me by surprise. His back archs and he raises his head, gasping for air. I am gasping as well. My hands running up his back to hold onto his shoulders as I pull myself against him in a long blissful shudder.

He lowers himself to his elbows and press his lips to mines. I am still panting and he chuckles as he kisses my cheeks and my neck, and I chuckle too at the sheer pleasure of our joining.

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It's the morning when I purposely interrupt him peacefully sleeping —he is beautiful with both his eyes closed and the eye lashes resting at the bottom of his eyes like a crescent. His mouth slightly opened. His breathing sounding like a rhythm needed in a orchestra somewhere in a Latin country.

His hands are around my stomach. “Bhuti wake up!” I say shaking him again. And he slightly opens his eyes and then close them again, groaning. “Bhuti” I call out and instead of opening those eyes he smirks, clearly knowing why I am waking him up and slowly his face muscles relaxes once again which means he has fallen right back to sleep.

That was very adorable.

Now I cannot wake him up because the smirk he

had on is still there and slowly but surely evaporating.

I guess, I am not finding out what is that he is hiding from me.

I kiss his eyes, nose, cheeks and mouth before getting off the bed.

I should be sleeping a lot but he does that than me these days.

After washing my face and brushing my teeth I walk out of the room putting on my dress, we have guests so I have to take care and check up on them. "Makoti" Bongeziwe says when he sees me. Forever jolly and he is in the living room drinking a cup of coffee.

I don't want to talk to him and he got me trouble.

I look at him, "Wena you got me in trouble"

"You got yourself in trouble. Mina I wasn't going to tell him. What does my nephew eat in the morning?" He smiles—these brothers, hhayi.

"A boy? I am not carrying a boy" Ah, I'd go mentally disturbed. I am not ready to raise a boy child. I don't want to raise a boy child actually.

"My niece ke" He shrugs.

"What are you hiding with your brother?"

"Omelette?"

“I don’t like eggs” I respond “What are...” Kayise appears, he has a smile on. I am guessing the Ndamase genes are showing themselves with that charming smile. He looks out of place since he is shirtless.

I cannot help but throw myself in his arms and he welcomes me warmly, embracing me.

I love my brother, so much.

He asks if we can go talk outside. Of which I agree too leaving Bongeziwe who is preparing something for his niece and everyone.

Oh they love their way around the kitchen these men. I am glad. I hate cooking, not really hate but I have my days.

We sit outside, on the chairs opposite each other. The powerful smell of the sea breeze is making me nauseous but I soldier on and sit here looking at my brother who is avoiding eye contact. “What have you done?” I ask him.

He glances up at him and taking a deep breath running his hands on his face. “I am in love with you friend” He tells me hoarsely.

“Khethelo?” He nods. “Oh and why you haven’t told her?”

“I keep messing up. Well I have been sleeping with my ex”

“Which one? The one you have been whining about?”

“I was not whining”

“You were sounding like a teenage boy who fell in love for the first time. If this woman really broke you as you did then why have you been sleeping with her?”

“To use her” He shrugs.

“I cannot believe you just confidently said that and I want to slap you so bad”

He looks up at me, “I don’t blame you”

“Since you have been busying using your ex than what do you want from Khethelo? You cannot be playing with her emotions like that Kayise. She loves you. I can see it. You can see it. Everyone can see it and you are taking advantage of that?” I look

straight at him, not with my friend, no “So where were you last night? Using your ex?”

“Mooncres listen...”

“Listen to what?”

He leans backwards on his chair. Why is he even shirtless? The bruises on his face, what is going on. “Kayise what is happening?”

“I was arrested”

“You were arrested?”

“Attempted murder”

Jesus Christ!

I open and close my mouth.

Words are gone, yes

Tears stinging my eyes, yes

Heart beating loudly, yes

Hotel, Trivago.

“It weren’t supposed to turn out that way trust me Mooncres” He says. “Yezwa. Please don’t cry” I just gaze at him.

“Who did you try to kill?”

“My exe’s husband he...”

“The ex you were using is married?” I yell out.

“I am still explaining”

“I don’t even want to hear it anymore Kayise!” I yell again. “What is wrong with you? You go around using and killing people now?”

“No, come on!”

“And then Khethelo?”

“I told you I love her. I just need to sort out my issues for me to be with her. Everytime when I try to keep a distance I end up hurting her. It’s not intentionally trust me. But it keeps happening”

“You don’t deserve her”

“True. But I love her”

“Suddenly? Because things didn’t work out with your ex?”

“No. Because even when I was with my ex, I felt guilty doing whatever I was doing regarding the fact that we are not together with Khethelo. Yes, I fucked up. That I admit and probably don’t deserve a chance with her. But I am saying now I want to make things right. It may be too late. But I want to make things right” But also he can sleep with whomever he wants because they are not together with Khethelo right?

“I won’t let you treat my friend like a second option so it’s either you want to use your ex or you make things right. No in between” I point at him with my index finger. “Did Mongezi know about your arrest?”

“I told him not to tell you”

Surprise!

Did you like it? Oh really.

Thank you.

I get up from the chair gun blazing and making my way inside the house. But a door bell interrupts me. I stride towards the door swinging it open. “Avulele!” I freeze.

No, not when Onalenna and Bongeziwe are here.

[01/24, 07:49] : 53.

“unders tanding, mis unders tandings”

ONALENNA

Waking up in the morning, I hear the sound of the ocean wailing softly and the salty strong smell is hanging thick in a white painted room—I wonder out of colours why Mongezi chose to go for a white interior design, is it because he is always wearing black and the colours always perfectly blends?

The other side of the bed is empty and the manly hands are not wrapped around my waist, he did mention he will have an early morning.

My left foot followed by the right touches the wooden floor before taking a deep breath and padding to the bathroom washing my face and my mouth.

My eyes are swollen and my face is puffy probably from the crying.

Last night after Bongeziwe was on top of me

gripping my hands on top of my head, looking down at me with so many emotions in his eyes and his hips moving rhythmically on top of me and making me scream, yell, shout, cuss and plead– a thought crossed my mind as he held me into his arm while we caught our breaths and covered in a sheen of sweat.

I cannot help but feel that Namisa is going through so many emotions, and so many questions going through her head about why her mother has up and left leaving her behind mostly. And maybe she feels I might be the reason her mother left.

After washing my face I walk into her room to find her sitting by the window, a huge window with a perfect view of the ocean and she is staring outside looking adorable in her anime pyjamas and Bantu knots. “Can I come in?” I say after knocking on the door and she turns looking towards me, I cannot read her face but she has the most welcoming and

warm smile. “Good morning” I greet her and sitting on the carpet with my feet beneath me.

Oh what a view!

It’s so calming.

“Morning” she says her eyes focused outside. The reflection of the ocean looking beautiful in those hazel eyes of hers—her beautiful face features screams how beautiful is her mother.

“How is your morning?” I half smile, fearing that my smile would be wiped with just three words that always sound so poisonous and hurting.

“Great” At least I am getting responses.

And then there’s silence looming between us as we both stare at the shore, “let me leave you”

“Please don’t leave” her voice trembles.

“You don’t want me to leave?” this is shocking, surprising actually.

“Ewe” she says coming closer to me and she places her head on my lap and closing both her eyes, no words exchanged.

I am frozen that I don’t know what to do with my hands but eventually I stroke her hair backwards before feeling something watery in my cloth and when I peek through she is crying silently “talk to me nana why are you crying?” I ask her and she keeps shaking her head, left and right, again and again while her tears touches the tip of her mouth. “Zendaya” I bend over and kiss her cheek before wiping the salty waters off her face, it’s so smooth and clear.

And then what feels like a bonding moment is

interrupted by noises, it sounds like screams and yelling coming from the other outside and in that moment Zendaya gets up looking at me with her eyes swimming in tears, “sit here and don’t come out okay” I instruct her and she nods her head rapidly, clearly scared.

I wipe the tears off her face and kissing her forehead, she doesn’t fight me nor has she spat her hatred towards me. Then I pick her up gently placing her on the bed, “I’ll come back okay”

“Okay” I look at her once wondering what has happened before walking out of the room and closing the door behind, padding to the living room where the havoc noises are coming from only to find everyone outside and Bongeziwe is on top of someone punching violently and gritting his teeth. His brother is not doing anything to stop the fight, even Kayise.

And the women are screaming and yelling aside excluding Yolokazi who thinks this is wrestling because there she is whistling and clapping her hands together.

I cannot believe this!

“Ndamase!” I call for him, he keeps throwing punch after punch. Ignoring my high pitch voice.

“Bongeziwe Ndamase!” He pauses with his fists balled in the air and turning his head towards me before getting up and gazing at me with bleeding knuckles, broken lip and half closed eye.

“Mama”

“Are you crazy? Busy fighting and scaring your daughter what is wrong with you? What happened to your brain?” I know how much he hates it when someone raises their voice at him. But here I am

yelling at him.

Everyone is watching us until the person who was laying on the floor covered in blood, I don't get a chance to see their face as they attack Bongeziwe from the back but he turns around in such a fast pace and he punches and kicks.

I stride towards the two wrestlers but Mongezi grabs me by my arm and pulling me back and he looks calm as ever. Instead he is the one who separates the fighters, my heart drums loudly and faster and roughly seeing him looking roughen up, a pulp covered in blood. When our eyes meet he opens and closes his mouth. "Onalenna" he says my name—oh those bugs and insects I used to feel whenever he calls my name are not there anymore. I don't feel any euphoria shooting through my bloodstream.

I have no words to say to him instead I walk back

inside the house and I can feel Bongeziwe following me right behind, his scent is right behind me and he is breathing heavily like a dragon ready to spit fire as I am about to reach the door and he grips my arm and pushes me against the wall looking straight into eyes, my traitors tears crawl catwalk out of my eyes.

I think they are filled with anger, hurt, pain and other mixed emotions.

My chest heavens up and down. “He started the fight” he explains.

“Unamanga!” I know he is lying.

I can see it in his eyes.

He takes a sharp intake of breath and then he

smiles—what a devil, he has such an infectious smile and he knows it.

“I need to check on Namisa, she was scared”

He clenches his jawline. Once. And then twice. “He hurt you”

“And that gives you a right to punch him every time you see him”

“At least I haven’t killed him” the sound of his voice menace.

I hold on to my breath and blinking at him, “You wouldn’t kill him”

Kwanda is walking towards us I can see she is

fuming with anger and her man is following right behind her shouting “MaMkhungo” he calls out and she is ignoring him “mfazi wami” silver tonguing is their thing, now I see.

“Don’t talk to me bhuti, don’t!” she yells out  
“Onalenna take Namisa and we are leaving, we cannot stay her with people who are capable of murder”

“Haibo!” Bongeziwe exclaims, everything is a joke to him I swear “What should we do when people come at us? I didn’t do anything”

Kwanda gives him the most diabolical look and here I am pinned against the wall, “Bongeziwe move away from Onalenna” Kwanda.

“We are still talking” Bongeziwe

“MaMkhungo can we also go and talk”

“I am not talking to him” I answer instantly, I have nothing to say to him.

He challenges his eyebrow at me and I look away escaping his grip and he step backwards.

I walk away from him and entering the bedroom and Namisa jumps off the bed, hugging my legs “You came back!” she hold me tightly, so tight.

“Yes nana, I’ll never leave you” I assure her “do you want to come with me to my place and we will watch Naruto and eat spicy noodles?” I ask her, she loves those anime although I find them very dark but they watch them together with her father cuddling in a couch with their iris focused on the screen on the wall with nothing but silence looming in the room.

“You will watch them with me?” she asks me

“Yes and aunt Kwanda too” I didn’t expect her to agree coming with me without her father in presence—this is new and very heart-warming that I feel like someone is going to pinch me and wake me up from the dream. I grab her bag and throwing it over my shoulder before picking her up into my arms and she nuzzles her head into my neck, her hair smells like strawberry and cream.

Getting back to the living room the men are sitted together mumbling to themselves, but as soon as I appear the silence starts moving around the room and then the other girls also appears, Yolokazi is not about this leaving business she still wants to discuss Bongeziwes punches and kicks.

I wonder where did Avulele dis appear to, I hope they

buried him in the backyard.

“Let’s go” Kwanda says grabbing the car keys.

“Nokwanda you are not driving!” Mongezi gets up from the couch.

“Don’t talk to me”

“I don’t care how angry you are at me but you are not driving and that is that otherwise no one is leaving here”

“I’ll drive” Khethelo

“You are not driving” Kayise says, haibo “Not with those swollen eyes”

“And who to blame about that?”

Another fight erupting, maybe?

Are they dating?

They are complicating.

“We are staying ke guys because Bongeziwe is going to say the same thing to Onalenna kanene and mna I don’t want to drive” three of us look at her “we can stay in the other room and stay angry there. Take a bath and wear some of Kwanda’s clothes and we all look like angels in all white since we didn’t bring our clothes here” she shrugs her shoulders.

What a traitor!

“I am driving so can we leave” Khethelo spits before she walks out of the house and Kayise follows right

behind her, you know what clarity is clear to see here, we are not leaving.

It been overly hours and we haven't left, yes.

An argument about who will drive and who won't haven't stopped either. Kayise and Khethelo are not back as yet outside, maybe they left.

“Jongani guys. Everyone relax and let's all take a bath, shower, whatever and then we will prepare a lovely lunch, drink alcohol and have an amazing afternoon. We can deal with the rest tomorrow maybe, I am not in a mood for arguing ke mna yoha.a” Yolokazi

Instead of just standing here and listening to these people I take Zendaya and we both make our way to the bathroom filling the bathtub with warm water and stripping off our clothes and getting inside

facing each other, her giggling is echoing the entire bathroom. I haven't seen her filled with this much ecstasy ever since I met her.

I have seen her smiling and laughing loudly from her belly button but not like this, "sis Ona ndicela uxolo" she says to me unexpectedly apologising.

"For what sweetheart?"

"Disrespecting you, it was wrong and daddy told me that you are not here to take my space" He knows?

He knew?

How?

"Daddy?"

“Hmmm we spoke last night after he was reading me a bed time story and he told me you love me”

“That’s true, I love you”

Bongeziwe knows, but how?

She smiles, “you won’t me?” her face falls.

Does this mean when we somehow happen to break up her father I will have to fight for custody. I wouldn’t mind keeping her; she is such a beautiful flower

“I will never leave you”

“Mama left me alone and she is not taking my calls anymore, I call her everyday”

I pull her closer to me wrapping my hands around her body and kissing the top of her head, “she will come back but for now you have me and daddy” she looks up at me.

“You are very beautiful sisi Ona”

“And so are you Namisa, come let’s come out of the water before you catch cold”

My phone starts ringing as I am lathering her body with a moisturizer and quickly I grab it from the table and answering the call from unknown number, “Onalenna, hello”

“Dating my cousin to get back to me is that what you doing Lenna? To ruin the relationship that we have with my cousins who are more like my brothers and my life? Are you aware of what you

have done?” His voice drawls over the phone.

“Where did you get my number Avulele?”

“That doesn’t matter anymore, look I don’t want any trouble so can you please just talk to your boyfriend for me. I am going to lose my business here, he has beaten me enough please Onalenna just talk to Bongeziwe” I love the sound of his voice. The inferiority that wheezes in it. Hearing him begging. Oh how I wish I could see him on his knees and with his head bowed.

“You deserve everything coming your way Avulele, this is just the beginning”

“Can we meet so we can talk? Fine what I did was unforgiveable and from the bottom of my heart I am sorry, really sorry. The truth is I loved you and I love Azande as well”

“Good luck with everything Avulele”

[01/24, 07:50] : 54.

“slowly your memory will fade and your soul will become empty again”

BONGEZIWE

We get off the car, and I glance towards my brother whose face is calm and considerate —he is very strange, you can hardly read his thoughts or feelings of which at home we always believed that it's dangerous because once anger wrap itself around him you will never know, he comes striking like lightening.

I have witness that side of him and it's not a very pretty sight covered with roses and pearls.

The are little flowers coming white on the grey  
alyssum that hangs over the stone walls as we take  
each step towards the door.

Mongezi has been mostly silence as if his thoughts  
strays in his mind, we got a call from our  
grandfather this morning as he was calling for an  
urgent family meeting —from my father’s side —  
you can never disagree on anything with that old  
man, never.

My grandmother appears on the door, with a sweet  
smile plastered on her face, wearing a dark blue  
dress with runches of blue and green linen lace in  
the neck and sleeves, and emerald green stockings.  
Her grey hair is kept sleek and shiny. “Bafana” that  
is how she calls us, probably because she has  
forgotten our names. Her arms are opened  
welcoming us warmly for a lovely embrace as she  
pat our backs. Kissing our cheeks, forehead and

even lips before she steps aside allowing us to walk inside.

Surprisingly as we walk into the living room we find everyone here, some leaning forward on the sofas and some leaning backwards. Legs crossed and uncrossed. Hands on their chins and some on their thighs.

My mother's face brightens when her eyes meet with ours but her youngest son doesn't acknowledge her existence in this room, the hatred he has towards her is beyond how I thought it was.

Her head hangs low as she swallows what I believe might be bitter against her tongue and her mother places her hand on her thigh in consolation.

"Sit down!" My grandfather says in thick tone, bold and scary. We do not get a chance to greet as we

make ourselves comfortable on the empty spaces  
“Women leave!” His face is frowned and his  
forehead is furrowed. Patriarchy is wheezing in this  
atmosphere.

One by one they get up on their seats without  
asking any questions, my mother is using  
crunches—oh she lied when she said she won't be  
able to walk again, she wanted us to feel sympathy  
for her. “Makoti bring whisky for us here” he instruct  
my mother, his eyes are poisonously wandering at  
each and everyone of us.

“Tea for me” Mongezi says softly and that is when  
they all disappear leaving eerie silence looming in  
the room. And my grandfather tapping his fingers  
on the side of his sofa, his face is kept stern.

I lean forward balancing my shoulders on my knees  
and facing downwards, to avoid the anger that is  
erupting inside me. Seeing Avulele makes me

wanna wrap my hands around his neck, tightened.

Few minutes later, my mother followed by Azande walks back with a tray in their hands placing it on the table then they walk out. Everyone grabs their glasses and cup, taking sips to burn whatever emotions they have burning inside them. “What is going in this family? What is this that I hear?” My grandfather says, holding his glass in an impeccably mannerism.

Our heads rotates towards my uncle who just gulped his drink and then grabs the bottle. “Sonke uzodakwa la? [you came to get drunk here?]” my grandfather asks him.

He shakes his head in disagreement, refilling his glass and throwing in some ice. His son with bruised and swollen face is giving him the most venomous look. “It’s a long story baba”

“What is long there that you have been sleeping with your brother’s wife and you are the reason behind he died or the long story is the fact that your wife took her own life because of you, which one is it Sonke?” Hmmm.

He rubs his fingers on his nose, “Things were not meant to end up that way” he justifies.

“Oh how they were supposed to end then boy?”

He clenches his jaw, so tight and aggressive. “I don’t know” he says, his eyes shimmery.

My grandfather chuckles jeerfully “you don’t know? My son is not coming back because of you. Someone’s daughter is not coming back because of you and you want to sit there and tell me you don’t know?” The tenseness of the atmosphere is

unbearable. I attempt getting up from the sofa, feeling suffocated needing to catch a breather “Hlala phansi wena, hlala phansi!” he yells that I should sit down. “Sit down Bongeziwe!” Unlike my grandmother he remembers all our names.

I return back to my sit, and leaning backwards. Everytime when the conversation about how my father died some emotions I still don't understand erupts inside me. “Mihlali!” He yells out angrily. “Weh Mihlali” He shouts again and my mother appears in her long dress and head wrap, she respectfully sits down.

“Why are your children using your surname? Are you not married to this family?” he asks her.

“That is something we both agreed on with my husband”

“Which one ke? That one there...” he points my uncle “Or the one who died?”

“Qophelo” she answers.

My grandfather shakes his head, taking a sip from his drink. “You are going to feel his wrath. You and Sonke. He is not resting. He won’t rest until he has finishes what he started. You see that boy there...” he points at Mongezi who seems like he is here physically but mentally he is not. I have seen him like this before. The confusion plastered on his face as if he is trying to tackle something in his mind, but I do not want to believe we are taking that step back again. “He is the one who will suffer for your sins” It is then when this room is filled with hysteria.

Mongezi looks like his normal self now, maybe I was seeing things. He gets up from the couch. “I won’t sit here and listen to all of this so with all due respect mkhulu, I am leaving” he says in the most

calmest tone. It makes sense why he stays by the ocean. His aura represents that kind of serenity.

“Haibo Ngezi! Haibo! Your stubbornness will get you in trouble. I called this meeting so you can get helped. You father is not...”

“He was not my father!” Mongezi interjects immediately “I don’t have a father, so please excuse me” he walks out of the room leaving my mother shouting for him and even my grandmother comes out.

“Bongeziwe follow him, he cannot be on his own” my grandfather, what is that supposed to mean?

“What is going on?”

“Hamba!” I follow right behind my brother, who just

got in a car. I open and instruct him to go on the passenger seat. He doesn't fight. Instead he is calm as ever, for someone who was told he will suffer.

Along the way he is not saying anything, the more I steal glances the more I see him slipping right in front of me. His eyes becoming darker and darker. But I brush off that feeling as his favourite song is playing softly in a car by Hablot Brown, eyes shut and slowly breathing.

Getting to his house he is the first one to get off the car and I follow right behind him. "Bafo uright?" I ask him after we have entered the house.

"Yeah, just have a throbbing headache. I need to lay down" A terrible storm comes over me, as if I am drowning.

"Have you been taking your medication?"

“Bongeziwe I am fine!”

“You heard what umkh—”

“Make yourself comfortable. Or you can leave if you want. I am going to lay down”

“Your nose is bleeding Mongezi!” he presses his finger on his nose. Then he sees the red liquid on his fingertips. “Mongezi!”

He smiles softly, a convincing smile. “I am fine. I will take my medication and rest that is all I need. But I am fine nothing to worry about” he convince me. Okay he seems perfectly fine. Maybe I am overreacting because of the fear that has been injected inside me. Nothing is going to happen to him.

We share a hug and fist bump then he disappears.  
“Oh I will spend the night here” I shout and my voice chase him.

“Okay”

[01/24, 07:50] : 55.

“Trying to navigate this life and I get hurt at least every time I’ve been burnt”

BONGEZIWE

I wake up to strange noises that forces me to get up from the bed and my feet touches the floor, doing a marathon to his room that is just across the guest room that I am using since I spent the night here, Onalenna asked me to bring princess to their apartment last night since she was crying asking

for her—I am glad we’ve got to that point. I know their relationship started on the wrong foot but she was very patient with her.

I find him on the floor wearing a black suit and crispy white socks with his head in between his legs and I can hear a gut wrenching sob coming from “Ngezi!” I call him out standing at the entrance of the door and I do not hear a response from him just snuffles “Mongezi!” I call out again and slowly he picks his head up facing towards me, his nose bleeding and hands trembling, chest moving up and down like he is being controlled with a machine.

Everything around me moves in slow motion, it feels as if my world is being frozen and my heart is pumping faster, harder and uncontrollably. “What is going on?” I walk towards him and kneeling in front of him and cupping his face on my hands “Talk to me Ngezi, what is going on?”

“Angazi” he says with his lower lip trembling “I don’t know what is going on, I feel lost” he tells me clenching his jaw so painfully “Ubaba...” he pauses “...he is gone Bongeziwe” That is when my inside turns and twist themselves, it feels as if something is poking and scattering me.

“He’s been gone Mongezi” I try to explain.

“I know” he looks up at me “I haven’t lost my memory if that is what you think but the pain suddenly feels brand new, I don’t know what what is going on, please help me Bongeziwe” he holds me into him, in a way he hasn’t held me in a while. He reminds me when he was younger and would run to my room after school to give me a heart-warming hug but this is different, it is filled with different emotions has he gripped me tightly into him.

“Let me call umkhulu maybe he can help us, okay” he repeatedly shakes his head nodding “Do you

want me to call him?” he shakes his head once again in agreement, he looks delirious.

I look at him, feeling disconcerting seeing the wistful look on his face as I am about to walk out of the room he calls out for me, roughly wiping his tears.

I turn looking at him, “call MaMkhungo first, I want to talk to her” he says and I nod before walking to the room just across and making the two important calls then I return back in his room to find him pressing a white towel on his nose that is covered with blood stains.

I take a sit on the edge of the bed and clasping my hands on the sides, “tell me how you are feeling in each detail, do you feel like you are slowly losing your memory?” I ask him, everything inside me is trembling as if I am stuck in a cold room.

“I don’t know Bongeziwe”

“What if umkhulu was right yesterday? Fine Qophelo might’ve not been your father but he raised you that make him your father as well that is one thing we cannot run away from Mongezi”

“Why should I suffer for my parents sin, it doesn’t make sense, does it make it sense to you? I am not the one who sent them to sleep together” he says taking a sharp intake of breath although he is clouded with some sort of darkness and sadness in his eyes but I can see a thunderous anger in his eyes.

“What are you hiding from me?” I can tell he is hiding something from me.

I search for his eyes but he is avoiding eye contact

with me, taking off his black blazer and putting too much pressure on the towel on his nose, “I am not hiding anything from you”

“Asingaxabani yezwa Ngezi” I threaten him, “do not dare me because you have been hiding whatever that you are hiding from me for too long now you better tell me what is happening?” we are interrupted when we hear a car parking outside and I turn to look at him, “we are not done with this conversation” I clench my jaw and walking out of the room.

I find our grandfather already here with his wife, he never knocks and never bothers and in that moment Kwanda into the room heavily breathing—I shouldn’t have told her over the phone what is happening, actually my brother is going to murder me since she had to drive in this state, her face is looking puffy with red coloured eyes and her bowed shaped lips are swollen.

“What is going on, where is bhuti?” Kwanda asks all at once ignoring my grandparent’s existence, I am guessing she did not see them when I fail to provide her with an answer she drops her handbag on the floor and rushing to his room.

My grandmother turns her head towards me with an impressive smile on her face and placing her purse on the couch and tugging her grey stranded hair behind her ear, “uyena makoti lo? [Is this the girlfriend?]” she asks making herself comfortable on the couch and crossing her legs and when I shake my head in agreement she smile a little, “wena?” she challenges her eyebrow at me.

“Ukhona” I tell her that I have girlfriend, “But I didn’t call you here to talk about that gogo” her husband is sitting right to her with a smirk on his face, enjoying listening to the sound of her voice.

“Where is she?”

“Ubani?”

She pats her husband's thigh and chuckling, “intombi yakho and pour your grandfather some whiskey” are we here to talk about serious issues or our relationship status “and go take a shower Bongeziwe” is this old woman indirectly saying that I stink?

I chuckle softly under my breath and getting up from the couch pouring my grandfather the drink he has requested and placing it on the table, “hambo yogeza and then come back so we can talk”

I have just finished taking a shower and returned back to the old couple reading one of Mongezi's collections, speaking of him he is not here and his woman as well.

“Take a sit and tell me how long is she?” my grandmother says.

I take a sit, “who are you talking about?”

“Umakoti, how long is she with her pregnancy?”

You really cannot hide anything from these old women.

I shrug my shoulder, “I don’t know”

“Oho, u girlfriend wakho yena?”

Let me change this conversation, “Is he going to be okay?” I ask my grandfather.

“He is going to be okay but are you?”

“What is that supposed to mean?”

“Not only is he going to suffer but you as well as your other brother, our ancestors are not happy Bongeziwe, they are not happy with you using your mother’s surname and what she did to your brother” he takes a sip from a glass that he is holding in a most impeccable mannerism.

He places the book aside when Mongezi walks into the room he has changed the blood stained shirt and looking rather rough than his usual crisp and clean self—but he could wear anything he’d still look good.

“Sanibona” respectfully he greets.

“Sit down and tell me when were you going to tell me you are going to be a father?” my grandmother is not letting this one go I am telling you, “Where is she?”

“I was going to tell you when the time is right and MaMkhungo fell asleep”

“Has the time ever been wrong kodwa. Shame poor girl let me prepare something to eat for her, she didn’t look okay” she kisses her husband and walking out of the room—she seems so calm and collected regardless of the lava we are walking on barefooted.

Our grandfather leans forward and balancing his elbows on his knee, “I want Kayise here and Avulele” I am not sitting in this meeting or whatever this is, I want to know what is happening with my brother so why the other person should be here?

“I have to go to work” I utter.

“The stubbornness that runs in this family is the reason why we are here Bongeziwe, so you will sit down as we wait for the other two to get here” he spits poisonously “I am not going to repeat myself wena” he points at me with his index finger and flaring his nostrils, I have no other option but to sit here like a sulking teenage boy and folding my hands against my chest.

We spend overly three hours waiting for the other two in a very tense atmosphere filled with the aroma coming from the kitchen as my grandmother cooks up the storm and that is when Kwanda appears holding car keys in her hands, almost immediately her man gets up from the couch blocking her “we spoke about this mfazi wami” he says in a soft tone, pleading with his eyes, “Kwanda the family is going to handle this please go back to

our room and rest”

“I want something to eat” she says “I am going to the garage”

“My grandmother is cooking in the kitchen and then you are going to eat maMkhungo, ngiyakucela”

What is going on here?

And that is when she turns around and returning back to her room—so we thought—but the moment her man takes a sit on the couch she runs out of the house and my grandfather widens his eyes before erupting with sonorous laughter and clapping his hands together, “why are you looking at me instead of following right behind her?” he says laughing “Nkosikazi, come here, you won’t believe this” he calls his wife, who appears quickly “hambani nina, make sure nothing happens to that girl” now I am

laughing at this old man who has turned into a tiny insect from laughing.

I am still catching my breath from laughter as we get in the car. My brother slide behind the wheel, gripping the steering wheel and he is fuming with venomous anger “Ngezi what is going on?” he ignores me pressing an accelerator.

“The more you hide things for me, the more you are going to keep drowning on your own; I wont be there to save you”

He glances at me once and then focuses on the road, we see Kwanda crossing the red robot I am shocked.

My brother here clicks his tongue doing pretty much the same thing as we follow right behind her I am surprised seeing that we are parked outside my

mothers house.

We quickly get off the car, she has went inside the house and the moment we walk in we find Kwanda standing in the middle of the living room shouting for my mother who appears limping and tugs her head in when she sees all three of us, as she is about to open her mouth Kwanda kicks her straight on her stomach and she stumbles backwards “you did this to him again didn’t you Mihlali?” she yells out kicking again and my mother lands on the floor “I am so sick of you, I have had it with you!” Kwanda screams grabbing my mother with her hair that comes out and she throws it aside.

This woman is crazy

kwanda is crazy!

Mongezi grabs her from behind his hands around her waist “MaMkhungo!” he pulls her aside and

pinning her against the wall while my mother struggles on the floor, I am not helping her.

“Bhuti please let me go!” Kwanda yells

“Nokwanda, you are pregnant have you forgotten?” I walk towards them.

“Mongezi what is going on?”

“Tell him bhuti, tell him” Kwanda

“Nokwanda!” he warns

”Tell him or I will, and then move away from me” she says trying to push Mongezi away.

“Ngezi!” I yell at him.

“Mihlali poisoned me and that is why I lost my memory and I think she did again, because she made me tea yesterday and then this happened”  
Mongezi

“I didn’t do it” my mother says from the floor.

“Bhuti move! I will make her tell the truth mina with just one slap” Kwanda says to him.

I turn to my mother and looking at her, “Did you do it ma?” I ask her.

Tears stream down her eyes, “But not this time Ziwe, I swear I wouldn’t do anything like that again” her voice trembles.

“You poisoned Mongezi?” I find my hands wrapped

around her neck tightening and her eyes slowly turning red while I stare at them, burning her with my gaze.

[01/24, 07:50] : 56.

“Here I stand all alone

Staring at the mirror

Looking into a face that will never show its true features”

MONGEZI

I have an angry pregnant woman trying to escape my grip, yelling her threats on top of her lungs with salty liquid blurring her vision while her chest heaves rapidly up and down, up and down. And oh she looks so beautiful as her dreadlocks bounce up and down, licking the saltiness of her tears on her bowed shaped lips that are now swollen. Her button

nose covered with mucus. “Bhuti if you don’t let me go I swear I am going to turn into a superwoman and I will fly across this room all the way to your mother and I am going to kill her” she threatens choking in between her words, sounding so adorable as she darts her eyes between mines. They are full of anger, not so scary as she thinks she looks. I find myself smiling at her for being so overly protective towards me. I am lost in her eyes. “Bongeziwe stop!” she yells, I quickly turn, my head to my brother who is strangling his mother. The veins in his arms are now visible while my mother is trying to fight him by pinching and pushing away the hands around her neck, her eyes have turned red like beetroot water and hoarsely yelling “bhuti stop him!” Didn’t she want her dead just minutes ago?

I take a step back and watching how this unfolds in front of me, not willing to be a hero who somehow saved the day until Bongeziwe let her go groaning, getting up from the floor and leaving the room.

He is burning inside, volcanic anger is erupting inside him and it wants to come out in a most violent way.

I look at my mother on the floor, holding her neck and coughing as she cries a river with ragged currents flowing down her cheeks.

Kwanda takes steps closer looking down at her with her lower lip trembling. “Is this how you wanted things to be? Losing your sons the only family you have because of your narcissism? Are you going to live with yourself everyday knowing both your sons hates you? Is that what you wanted?” her tone is pained than angry, saddened. All these emotions coming from the depth of her heart. “I hope one day when you look at yourself in the mirror you forgive yourself. Forgive yourself for hurting both your sons. Forgive yourself for this anger and hatred you have built inside them” she wipes her tears at the

corner of her eyes and walking out of the room after an intense gaze that she gave my mother.

I stand here searching for that woman I once called my mother, surely she must be somewhere. “I swear I didn’t do anything this time Mongezi” her tone is coarse, she is still holding her neck.

“Then explain why am I feeling like this? Like my mind is in a battlefield? Why do I feel lost?” I ask her calmly, my tone is not thick nor bold.

“I have nothing to do it. Your grandfather said your father is not resting maybe it could be that but I didn’t do anything. How was I going to poison you when everyone was in the kitchen as I prepared your tea?”

“How did you do it before?” I crease my eyebrows, with my hands shoved on my pockets.

I glare at her as she coughs, “that was before”

“And what the difference?”

“I know how it feels losing you. I wouldn’t do anything to cause the drift between us” I shake my head smirking at her. No words form inside my mouth then I turn on my heels and walking out of the house finding my brother being comforted by my woman and when Bongeziwe sees me he gets up charging towards me clenching his jaw and the moment he halts in front of me he grabs me by my shirt, intensity in his eyes as we both hold a scorching eye contact.

“Bongeziwe!” Kwanda yells out trying to stop him as he balls his fist in the air, his knuckles ready to meet with my nose.

“MaMkhungo get in a car” I say in a controlled voice, my eyes only focused on my raging bull brother.

“No, what...”

“Now!” I command “Manje Nokwanda” my are eyes guarded and dark.

“Fine I will go in the car but Bongeziwe if you punch him I am going to come out of the car and I am going to punch your pretty face and make it look rearranged, you won’t believe it the moment you wake up in hospital and that goes to you as well bhuti. No fighting” that all she says before walking towards the car and she keeps turning back to see any movement being made while she is facing ahead. Then slowly she gets in the car.

“You didn’t tell me!” Bongeziwe says gritting his teeth. “Why?”

“I didn’t want you to hate her”

He chuckles sardonically letting me go and stepping backwards “uthini?” he furrows his eyebrows “hate her?” he says jeerfully “I have every reason to hate her”

“She is your mother”

“And she poisoned you and you forgot your memory. Ungangicasuli!” he warns. “How long were you going to hide this from me?”

“Long enough”

“Long enou...” he pauses and chuckles with laughter. “So what know? You are going to forget your memory again and like all these years I have to

be there for you and completely forget about everything?”

“I am not losing my memory”

“It started with nose bleeding and then the headache. Oh don’t forget the vivid dreams and then after that you will be lost in the dark. Did you consider that woman in that car?” she points towards Kwanda. I look over the car and she waves her hand. Her eyes are swollen, it seems as though she is crying in that car. “And your baby? You are going to have a family. Oh I forgot that you might wake up tomorrow not remembering any of that shit”

“I am not having this conversation with you Bongeziwe”

“Because you know I am telling the truth? Open

your eyes Mongezi. This is reality. Mom never cared about us, and we both know that. She never did. She never raised us”

“She cares!” I defend. All the hate and anger towards her sits down for a moment clutching their hands on their chests.

“Really? Where was she when we were growing up? Who was attending our school meetings? Soccer matches? Who called you gay when you chose fashion designing? All she ever wanted was to make her precious ex boyfriend jealous by making him believe that she has her shit together and perfect family when she doesn’t. All she ever wanted was to prove to Syre Khuzwayo that she was doing well without him when he doesn’t give chicken shit about her. I am tired of cleaning up after everyone’s mess so I am out of here” he clicks his tongue and getting in the car we both came with and leaves.

Fuck!

I slide behind the wheel in car and Kwanda covers my hand with hers as I manoeuvre the car on the road with only silence wheezing in the air. I glance towards her and she gives me one of her contagious smile and kissing the front and back of my hand. “Everything is going to be okay” she comforts me sweetly. Her words wrap themselves around my brain, sweetly and velvety and very believable.

All I can offer her is a smile as she comfortably leans back on the chair and falling asleep.

I avoid every single thought and emotion, shoving them in a back somewhere.

Getting home I pick her up in my arms, walking

inside the house and watching her peacefully sleeping. My grandparents left —I am glad as I currently cannot offer great company especially because of the chronic headache.

I gently place Kwanda on the bed covering her with a blanket, it's the early hours of the afternoon. The sun brightly shining and birds are chirping. I stare down and watching her nostrils flaring slowly as she breathes. I am about to get off the bed when she holds my hand. I look at her and her eyes are flutter opened. "Don't leave" she says whispery and my skin heats looking at those beautiful eyes.

I smile laying right next to her and placing my hand on her hardening stomach and I inhale sharply while her lips twitch into a smile, "you scared ain't you?" her voice is mild. I lift up her chin and plant a soft sweet kiss on her lips and pulling her into an embrace,my chin resting on her head. "I am scared" she says.

“Me too” I confess truthfully and she looks up at me, she can barely breathe as she rests her hand on my face. “you are so beautiful”

“I hope you remember this face in your dreams”

“I always dream about you”

She lets out that carefree laughter of hers, it echoes beautifully “ave unamanga” she says I am lying.

“I love you”

“I love you too”

“And I want to make love to you”

“What is stopping you?”

“The fact I want to watch you slowly taking off your clothes” she gets off the bed and stands in the middle of the room. She looks even more beautiful, barefooted in a black dress that shows in between her breasts and her dreadlocks tugged behind her ears. I love the nervousness plastered on her face and the tiny smile with her hands trembling while she peels off the straps of her dress. Taking her time and something drums loudly against my chest, so loud.

“Like this?” she asks.

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“We need that touch from the one we love, almost as much as we need air to breathe. But I never understood the importance of touch. His touch. Until I couldn't have it”

My dress falls down while I stand paralyzed under his gaze. It falls and pools at my feet so that I'm standing with my matching underwear before him. He strokes my face with the back of his knuckles, and his touch resonates in the depths of my groin. Bending, he kisses my lips briefly.

“I am stuck in between fucking you for risking your life and my baby, driving like a lunatic or making love to you for caring so much for me” he murmurs, his eyes darkening, burning into mine.

“Do I get to choose?” I whisper.

“Choose what?”

“Between getting fucked or making love”

“You’ve become very bold maMkhungo”

Is that bad? I don’t think so he has this charming look on his face and a corner smile.

“You look impressed”

He’s standing in front of me, gazing down at me.

“Are you sure?” he breathes and reaching over the straps of my brallette.

My heart is in my mouth. I am sure—Not really that sure—but you understand what I am trying to say.

I tear my gaze away from his spellbinding look.

“I want you Nokwanda” he murmurs. “I want you in

every possible way”

“Then have me” I whisper feeling my own saliva moving in zig zags on my throat.

His proximity is overwhelming, exhilarating. The familiar pull is there, all my synapses goading me toward him

He’s so close, but he doesn’t touch me. His heat is warming my skin.

“Let’s say you had an option of which you don’t have by the way” he says softly. “What would you choose?” I dart my eyes between his before my lips twitch into what I can call a sadden smile as I stare into those beautiful, beautiful eyes.

I’d choose both but right now I only want one

because I may not get to do it again, stare into those eyes that evokes a kaleidoscopic feeling inside me as my nails dig deeper and deeper into his soil until he changes pigmentation. The sounds that escapes our lips sounding like an orchestra on a lovely morning while the sun slowly rises, dogs barking and kids giggling. Feeling his movements inside me, in and out, deeper and succulently. The salty beads on his forehead falling to my chest.

“Make love to me” I blink looking at him under my eyelashes.

“Why?”

“Because it might be the last time you get to make love to me bhuti” What I read in his face is unexpected. It grips my heart, squeezing like a vise. His eyes glimmering with a sheen of tears mirroring mines. “I don’t want to lose you” I breathe. Lifting my hand, I caress his cheek, and run my fingertips

across his stubble. He closes his eyes and exhales, leaning his face into my touch.

He leans down slowly, and my lips automatically lift to meet his. He hovers over me.

“You know what scares me Nokwanda?” he whispers.

He is calling me by my full name, this is very serious, so serious as I am standing here in my white underwear while the sun is setting outside and it casts an eerie red glow up the white painted walls.

“No”

His mouth softly closes on mine, coaxing, coercing my lips apart as his arms fold around me, pulling

me to him. His hand moves up my back, fingers tangling in the dreadlocks at the back of my head and tugging gently, while his other hand flattens on my behind, forcing me against him. I moan softly.

“If I do forget everything you won’t remind me how much you mean to like the last time you did instead you will walk away leaving me behind battling with my mind and my heart trying to understand why it suddenly beating so loud at the sound of your voice, the warmth of your eyes and your staggering beauty. I am scared of seeing that pained look plastered on your face again mfazi wami more than anything”

“I am going to make you fall in love with me everyday”

He chuckles softly, “surely I will with your stubbornness”

“I am not stubborn bhuti” I protest.

He looks at me for a moment, just staring and feeling the softness of my skin. “I love you so much” he says.

“I love you too” I say in a velvety tone “I love you so much”

“You don’t have a choice”

“I have many choices”

“A hard fuck is what I should be giving you actually” he says unravelled “I am going to fuck you then make love to you” he picks me up in his arms unexpectedly and gently placing me on the bed like a fragile feather. “You are so beautiful” he says and

with that he crawls on to the bed, up my body, and straddles me. He lowers himself to me, so close that his warm breath is the only thing I can feel on my face. His mouth almost on mine, I expect him to take ownership of my own mouth but he doesn't instead he climbs off me and bends to give me a quick peck on the lips. Then he stands and lifts his t-shirt over his head. He undoes his jeans and drops them to the floor.

Abruptly my mouth is dry. He really is beyond beautiful and I will never get used to it with all those tattoos in his body.

What I love the most is how some of them are just tiny and minimal.

He has a physique drawn on classical lines: broad muscular shoulders, narrow hips, the inverted triangle. I could look at him all day.

I observe as he draws vague line between her breasts and down her stomach.

He looks up at me and smirks stroking my inner thighs until I spread my legs. Then he dips his head and unexpectedly licks me. I shiver beneath him, but try to hold still. He slides his tongue into me in and out, caressing my clitoris until it hardens. My vagina floods with warm fluid and he licks me more, teasing me with his tongue until I come.

“Ah bhu—Mongezi” I groan as he puts his tongue on the line on my stomach and begins to lick his way up. He pauses to breathe down my ribs all the way to my hard nipples and I cannot hold still. My back arch towards him as he sucks and nips and kisses my breasts, then moves up to my throat, and finally my face. He circles his fingers inside me, around and around, while his thumb strokes my clitoris, back and forth, once more. It’s the only point on my body where he’s touching me, and all the tension, is

concentrated on this one part of my anatomy as he stares straight into my eyes and his jawline clenched.

“Roll over” he says, holding himself above me, his lips caressing my ear. I roll beneath him and he reaches down to press his hand between my thighs, pressing his thumb into me, forcing my legs apart. He kneels between them and lifts my hips. I draw up my knees, rising to him and turning my face in the pillows. I clutch at them in anticipation of his entry into me.

He hesitates and I look back over my shoulder to see him. He catches my eye and grins and I shake my head ruefully. He parts me with his fingers, stroking me from behind in a way that always drives me quickly to frenzied arousal. I moan into the pillows. He penetrates me, slick and cool at first, then hot and solid, forcing in deeper, nudging against my cervix so that I cry out little yelps of

pleasure. They incites him, driving him to sharper, harder strokes until I wiggle my ass, breaking his rhythm and sending him over the edge. I moan as I come in long, surging contractions that he matches with squirming, pulsing thrusts until he is drained once again.

“Fuck!” he moans as he slips out of me, reaching around me to stroke the fronts of my thighs, then up my torso, bending over me to cup my breasts. I stretch my legs out beneath him and he slips to the side, holding me from behind.

We lay spooned together for a long while, our hearts pounding in a syncopated rhythm as our breathing gradually calms. Finally I roll away so that I can face him. He frees his arm from under me and brushes a lock of hair off of my face. “Water?” he already knows, I shake my head at him and he kisses my forehead before getting off the bed. I watch him wearing his jeans and glancing towards

me with a smirk.

I wink at him and he actually erupts with unexpected laughter making me laugh and shaking my head. “What?” I ask him.

He shakes his head, “nothing. You are beautiful” I did not expect that one. I cover myself with a white duvet before he pulls it down looking at me. Then he disappears and comes back with an old polaroid camera and taking pictures of me as I loudly laugh, giggle, smile, pose and even standing on my feet on top of the bed to show my growing stomach in a very artistic nudist way.

The pictures came out of the camera same time in a clip art, they are retro and beautiful, very.

Finally he disappears, I watch him as he takes one step at the time and he has three pictures in his

hands that he said are his favourites.

What a man!

If I could compare him to anyone I'd say he is a black combination of Hero Fiennes Tiffin and Cole Sprouse—he the characteristics of being a bad boy in a film, darker and brooding.

My phone starts vibrating and Yolokazi's name flashes on the screen and I answer pressing the gadget against my ear. "I forgot to call you earlier. Mom was at the apartment this morning" Oh I guess she is not greeting and won't bother.

"Yolokazi hey"

"If I wanted to greet I was going to greet. Anyways did you tug me to bed last night?"

“What did she say?”

“Hey Nokwanda”

Good girl.

“I didn’t tug you but you called your man to tug you when you were drunk” I can hear her cussing under her breath “What did Mom say?”

“Dad wants to meet us, tonight at dinner which is in like three hours”

“No”

Silence.

“What you mean no?”

“I am not ready to meet him. I am still coming into terms with everything so no”

“This is not about you but us Yomelela”

“Who is that?”

“Your name”

“That is not my name”

“That is your name” her tone is very serious, which is very unlike her “please come tonight”

“What you are asking from me is hard—

“Please” she pesters.

“Fine”

“Wear something else than white we do not want him thinking you’re saint than me”

“I am Mariya after all it only makes sense”

She laughs “I will pick you up then,bye”

Meeting my father? I don’t know.

[01/24, 07:51] : 58.

“Acceptance”

I stare at myself in the mirror as the lip gloss brush moves along my lips making them shimmery and glistening, funny how I am dressing to impress someone I rarely even know and not willing to acknowledge as my father, not today or ever for that matter. I think I want things to be as they were and stay as they were, I wish the truth never came out now that is one thing I never talk about.

I feel like everything is being shoved down my throat so I can accept it as it is—acceptance again. “You look beautiful mfazi wami” he says and I search for his reflection in the mirror to find him standing by the door leaning on it with pictures in his hands, I am guessing he was taking pictures again while I wasn’t paying attention.

Our eyes meet and my lips slowly spread into a smile before looking down, something acidic moves around my eyes and my iris pumps. Oh he can feel it, he is my own reflection. What I feel he feels it and

what he feels I feel it. “MaMkhungo come here” he says in a softest tone, so gentle like he always is with me. I pick my head up again to look at him and his arms are open waiting for me to throw myself at them so he can wrap me up.

I get up taking one step at the time towards him and in a blink of an eye I am already in his arms and he holds me tightly kissing the top of my head while his other hand runs through my dreadlocks grabbing me so he can bring my head much closer to his chest. I can hear his heart, pounding and drumming and singing. “I love this dress on you” He compliments, I feel more comfortable on dresses these days. This one is a midi dress with long sleeves. Featuring a gathered detail on the front, front slit at the hem and invisible back zip fastening and I matched them with minimalist leather high heel sandals.

“Even though it’s not white?” I chuckle looking up at

him.

“Every colour looks beautiful on you” he says his fingers running against my lower lip “What is wrong?”

“Everything”

“Tell me one thing wrong”

“I don’t think I want to accept how my life turned out. My mother not being my mother. My father not being my father. My brother being my cousin. My cousin being my twin sister, it sounds crazy” I scoff.

“Life is crazy. But also do not rush yourself into anything or to feel anything. If you are not ready to accept fine, then don’t and when you feel you are ready we will take it one step at a time” he said “we”,

it's heart melting how he uses plural in every case.

“And tonight?”

“Go”

“But...”

“This means so much to your sister, something that she really wants. She is longing for her father's love because she never had that, you did. Sometimes we have to compromise”

Compromise? I don't know.

“Sometimes I do not want to attend these family meetings that has been happening nor wanna be part of anything happening in my family but

because Bongeziwe wants me to be there then I compromise. Because he is my brother and I love him, care for him and respect him just go there if anything you don't agree with call me and I will fetch you" he kisses my forehead and in that moment we are interrupted by a long annoying car hoot. Trust Yolokazi to do exactly that. I am sure she is banging her hands against that steering wheel while erupting with loud ugly laugh.

I take a deep breath and Mongezi takes my bag and accompanying me outside with just silence in between us and his hand laced around my waist, my shoes clicking at each step and my head leaning on his shoulder until we are outside in that moment we find Yolokazi's upper body outside the window of her car and she yells "Hurry up!" she says clapping her hands together. "Hello bhuti wakhe" she greets Mongezi who softly laughs and shaking his head before he waves at her.

I turn to him, “I love you” it comes whispery.

“I love you too now leave before I drag you back inside the house, remember to call me okay” I shake my head at him rapidly. Then I kiss his eyes, nose, cheeks and mouth before walking towards my dearly sister who is screaming.

I get in a car and sit comfortably turning my head towards her as she catches her breath from all the screaming she has been doing. “You are not wearing white” she says as she manouveres the car outside the gate.

“You asked me not to”

“I am surprised you listen”

I glance towards her, with her lips painted in nude

making them look like she had fillers then I face forward. “You are not okay”

“True” I am not about to beat around the bush, I am joking “hormones” from now on I am gonna be blaming everything on them, even minor things.

“It is nice being pregnant huh? Always have something to use as an escape goat”

“Mxm” I chuckle.

“Talk to me”

“Not now”

I glance at her again to see her reaction and her lips are down turned into a scowl but her eyes are

focused on the road, hands gripping tightly in that steering wheel.

Finally we are driving through our small yard, my aunt has moved into my mother's house since Kayise asked her to. Being here in this yard, the house and hearing the noises from the drunkards on the road is so nostalgic. It brings all memories who were neatly stored somewhere in my brain.

We are welcomed by loud laughter and an aroma hanging thick in the room, only to find my aunt—mother—in what I think is brand new dress and it is surprising seeing her without her ridiculously funny make up but instead her face is bare, smooth and flawless that I had to blink few more times.

She is seated in a ladylike manner but her small bottle of vodka is in her hand. "They are here!" she says joyfully and as we sit there he is. I have

expected something different. A man with a big pot belly you can learn how to punch on, wearing a silver suit and carrying a Bible everywhere he goes. And whenever he opens his mouth all he spits is a verse but he is totally different from that. A bald headed muscular man, with a grey beard and I am sure the worship team throws themselves at him at every service, spreading their legs apart and pretending that the holy spirit is in presence.

Yolokazi lied when she said our father is Sambulo's father in spirit, this is not him.

We cannot deny the resemblance here and there as we sit opposite each other and he smiles at us, but I don't smile back.

Then my aunt clears her throat taking a sip from her bottle and the strong smell of the intoxicating drink fills the room. "This is him, your father, my one night stand" she says humorously.

My one night stand? We are the result of one night stand, ha ha ha.

He looks at her sternly before and she tugs her head in. “You wanted me to say you were the love of my life Thabiso?”

“Can we not go there again not now when the kids are already here” he says, I did not expect that voice from him. Not deep or husky but a mixture of feminine and masculine stirred up together. “Your mother told me alot about you”

“I wish I can say the same” I say leaning backwards on the couch.

He is caught off guard by either my response or my tone. “You paint your faces?”

Excuse me what was that now?

“Thabiso!” my mother warns, is this the reason why she is bare today?

“You want to be painted nawe?” Yolokazi.

“I am not surprised both of you turned out like this. You were raised by your mother after all but we can work on that”

“Work on what exactly?” I ask furrowing my eyebrows.

“Teaching you my moral compass and how to carry yourselves. You are my daughters and there is a certain way you guys need to act”

“Daughters you never cared about?” I ask him.

“I didn’t know about both of you”

“And after you knew? You didn’t bother” I crease my eyebrow at him.

“I had to take time to allow everything to sink in. I thought your mother was just pulling out one of her strings. And I had to talk to my wife about this”

“Must be nice being you”

“Kwanda, stop it” Yolokazi warns me, her reaction is totally opposite to what I have expected from her. The one I know she’d be roaring and erupting with anger.

Silence!

I get up, “Fuck this! I am leaving” I am not about to sit here and listen to someone who has judged me the moment I walked through the door. I grab my bag ignoring the voices calling out for my name until I am outside.

“Kwanda stop!” Yolokazi screams and I pause ignoring the chilly weather against my skin turning towards her. “What was that?”

“What was what?”

“That shit you did”

“You paint your faces? Really? And you want to stand there and tell me I did some shit. When we

were told we need to be taught moral compass, be disciplined and be taught how to be respectful by someone who barely even know us? You want me to sit down and listen to that?”

“It was a joke”

“A joke? Are you fucking kidding me Yolokazi”

“Fine! Fine then. But I want to make this work maybe we are not seeing eye to eye now but I want to make it work”

“Are you longing for his love so much that you gonna sit down for all of that?”

“Yes”

“Goodluck then, I am out of here”

“This is the Kwanda I know. Who cares nothing about anyone but herself. You want to run back to your little boyfriend who might not remember you tomorrow? Then go on. But I am going to make this relationship with my father work, something you’ve never had”

I look at her, flapping my eyelashes. Opening and closing my mouth.

“Kwanda I didn’t mean that”

“Fusegi!”

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"One day your fear will come knocking at your door, what would you do?"

My anger is erupting like a volcano and wants to come out in a roar, or maybe in a most violent way. My shoes keeps clicking against the concrete as I take one step at a time, walking faster than I normally do. If it was any other day I would have walked into that house across the street where they're two women standing outside with a bottle of ciders and yelling on top of their voices singing along to Jerusalem and dancing to it.

My heart is pounding faster and harder.

The streetlight on top of my head keeps blinking on and off and the breeze is chilly against my skin. I grab out my phone from my pocket, instead of calling my boyfriend who promised to fetch me when things go wrong but I call my brother.

"Moonceres" he says with something that smells and tastes like happiness in his voice, these days he is like a hippie man wearing a rainbow hue

clothes and ends each sentence with "love and peace", happiness is oozing around him.

"I need you" my voice trembles, I do. I miss running in his arms like a toddler and nuzzling on his neck as he comforts me then unexpectedly he tickles me making me erupt with laughter. Thinking about it now Kayise has always been the father to me than "my father". He has always been overly protective when it comes to me like I am a fragile egg. He'd sacrifice his last cents when we were kids so he could buy me sweets or chips as I hysterically with mucus all over my nose.

Oh how I miss my mom!

I know exactly she would have whispered words that were coated with honey and milk in my ears then stare into my eyes and warmly smiled.

"Where are you?" The concern is laced in his voice,

"Kwanda where are you?" he sounds like he is moving now and his voice keeps rising higher and higher.

"Five houses away from home, under the street light"

"What are doing under the streetlight Kwanda?" Oh he is yelling at me now, "I am coming" he says after few seconds of yelling then he hangs up his phone. I keep looking left and right, the streets are full. You can tell that the festive season is slowly approaching. In any novice the different music playing in different houses would've sounded annoying against my eardrums. The street smells like burning meat coming from the orange painted house.

My stomach is growling, I have forgotten that I am pregnant but who wouldn't? After getting pregnant without penetration.

And actually did penetration after the pregnancy?

They said it's called popping the cherry, funny.

My phone has been ringing and my dearly sister has been trying to contact me, I have nothing to say to her really not now because I also might end up spewing bitter words into her mouth. I have a very sharp tongue and I know for sure whatever will come out of my mouth will destroy the relationship that we have been working on.

I am talking to an elderly woman who knew my mother, she found me standing here and she asked how long I am with my pregnancy which makes me wonder how they actually see it?

Can they smell it from afar?

Old people will surprise you.

I did not answer her though I just erupted with uncomfortable laughter because I was taught not to trust anyone when it comes to pregnancy.

Ah!

Finally my brother is here with a stern face and he bought me food, he is not talking but the moment I get in the car but as we move he opens his mouth, "Usuyahlanya Kwanda?" he glances at me once asking if I am crazy. I look at him opening the brown paper bag before looking ahead since this is not what the baby growing inside my stomach wants – we want dumpling and mince not burgers.

"I had a fight with Yolokazi" I tell him.

"And that means you must go and stand under a streetlight in the dark?" Well I was angry, can you blame me?

I catch a quick glimpse and he is frowning, weird enough he looks so much like Bongeziwe especially after shaving his head. "I wanted space" I defend.

He shakes his head in disapproval "Why you fought with Yolokazi. I thought you guys were doing just fine"

"Well her mother introduced our father today remember when I told you earlier about the meet up and he said some things"

"What things?"

"Like he knew that Thokozile won't be able to raise

us and he is going to teach us his moral compass since we need to act a certain way since we are his children. He went as far as asking if we paint our faces"

He chuckles softly, "that is ridiculous" he turns the steering wheel after changing the gear "and then why you fought with your twin sister? I am sure she choked that man to death"

"Shame, she defended him, going as far as saying she is going to make the relationship with him work since that is something I have never had. And she said I am selfish for standing up for myself"

"That's hectic, and you guys didn't physically fight? Both of you are always ready to throw punches" I give him the most diabolical look before playfully punching him. "Jokes aside, I understand where she is coming from though just leave out the fact that she was being a bitch for saying those things to you"

but you had what most people refer as happy family. You had mom and dad but no one really knew what was happening, you understand. So she feels it was easier for you to just walk away at that moment because you've had a father your entire life when she didn't. When you've calm down just sit down and talk to her like two grown adults. Make her understand you also didn't have a perfect father figure. She was wrong yes, but I really understand her emotions and I also understand where you're coming from as well"

"Whose side are you on?" I joke.

"You guys are practically one person so both" what an easy get away "How is your boyfriend? We tried calling him today and he didn't answer. Like an hour ago"

"He is fine"

"You're lying".

"We are both worried about him possibly losing his memory again"

"You do know his mother had nothing to do with this right? But it's ancestral and this whole thing is going to be hard because your boyfriend made it clear he doesn't believe in these things "

"Mihlali had everything to do with this "

"You need to talk to Mongezi because he knows everything"

"What do you mean?"

"I just talk to him. All I am saying is his mother has nothing to do with this and he knows that" He tells me right after he has parked at his underground parking. Grabbing the brown paper bag that has food that was bought for me and my purse "Come inside so you can eat and stop over thinking that is not good for your baby" he says with a slight smile. I am trying to process what he just told me before following right behind him.

I comfortably take a sit on the couch and taking off my shoes when he comes and places the food for me on the table. "Please eat" he instructs.

"I want dumpling and mince"

"I will cook dumpling for you but for now eat this, your stomach has been growling and I am tired of pretending like I cannot hear it. Come and sit with me in the kitchen" He says and I stick my tongue out at him as he disappears around the house

taking my phone out to call Mongezi but his phone goes unanswered, strange because he always answers at first ring.

Let me call his brother.

"Makoti" he sounds panic.

"Hey, have you spoken to Mongezi?"

"Uhm yeah, I am with him right now"

"Why he is not answering his phone?"

"He is...napping. He complained about the headache but don't worry he'll be fine. I am here"

"Ask him to call me when he wakes up and tell him I

am with Kayise"

"Okay makoti, bye"

"Bongeziwe"

"Hmmm" He murmurs.

"I know you are hiding something from me"

He laughs, "Hide? Me? Never. He is really sleeping I can send a picture if you want me to"

"No need, bye, bye" I hang up the call feeling rather uneasy after the phone call.

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I wake up to an annoying alarm and the sun escaping through the window making my vision blurry and darker, the sleep is still dancing around my eyes as I rub it off with the heel of my hands. Taking my phone to see a reminder that today I have an appointment with gynecologist, strange enough they're no missed calls or whats oever from Mongezi not even a message instead the call that comes through is from Onalenna.

"Sweet cheeks " she says in a high pitch tone.

"So early in the morning" I chuckle.

"We were thinking of joining you with Khethelo today for your appointment, she still hasn't took the test so she wanted to found out if you're becoming an aunt while you're around, if you don't mind of course. And ubhuti suggested this"

"Mongezi?"

"Yes"

"He called you"

She clears her throat, "he sent a message last night actually that he wanted us to share this moment with you. So be ready we are coming to fetch you with Khethelo" At the end of the call I try calling my man again and once again his phone goes unanswered, or maybe he hasn't woken up.

I had to wear my brother's clothes since I don't have my clothes around here, everything looks baggy but rather adorable. In a car they are having a conversation with music playing loudly and I sit just here not uttering a word staring outside the window and catching glimpse at my phone waiting for a call.

"Onalenna please drive to Mongezi's house" I bluntly say. And they both turn their heads with Khethelo to look at me.

"And the appointment"

"Drive to Mongezi's house" They are hiding something from me, all of them.

"But I also want..." Khethelo

"Please" I pester.

The atmosphere in the car changes and becomes rather intense as we change the route to Mongezi's house. And the moment we get there my heart becomes so heavy, as if it's bleeding clots.

Walking through the door I find Bongeziwe, his mother alongside their grandparents in the house together in a living room looking scruffy. "Makoti!" Bongeziwe exclaims.

"Where is he?"

They are avoiding eye contact with me.

"Bongeziwe!"

"In his room" I didn't know I was holding my breath until now and in that moment he appears wearing all black as the usual, looking attractive like the first time I saw him. And that ring he was wearing the other night our eyes met for the first time is back on his finger--it belonged to his father, black in colour. He took it off after everything that has happened.

And in that moment my worst fear comes knocking on my door, there is nowhere to run and nowhere to hide.

"Mongezi" His mother says getting up from the couch. My chest is heaving up and down, slowly then faster. Harder and rapidly. My mouth is not producing enough saliva. "This is Kwanda your gir..." I am surprised that Mihlali would introduce me that way especially since this is her chance to get rid of my existence.

"Business partner" I say quickly. He looks at me from head to toe, at least I am still wearing the high heel shoes from last night so this look might as well look like a streetstyle.

Bongeziwe throws me the most diabolical look and the grandparents gasps for air. "And we had uhm...a meeting" I say quickly, my lies strangling my throat.

He is closely looking at me. I know that look trying to figure out who am I in his head. Probably fighting with a thousands of thoughts in his head. Something powerful and acidic stings my eyes.

"We can go to my office then" He says with that charming smile that causes warmth in between my legs as he walks out of the room first ignoring the existence of his family. And I am left behind with everyone casting their eyes on me with questionable looks. They shouldn't dare look at me like that when they were hiding this from me.

I said I'd make him fall in love with me all over again right? That is what I am going to do then.

Wait what business do we have together?

Shit!

Having him investing in that business idea that I had?

What if this backfires?

I find him leaning on the matte black table facing towards the door and the moment he sees me he folds his arms against his chest. "You don't look prepared for a meeting" he says in a soft tone.

"And you do?"

He smiles, I can tell he is pretending to have everything under control. "Have sit, will it be a crime to compliment my business partner?" he points a chair right in front of him.

I smirk slightly, "Depends"

"On what?"

"How you compliment your business partner"

"You're beautiful Miss..."

"Mkhungo"

He furrows his eyes and tugging his head in tapping his fingers on the table before he goes around taking a sit, confidently leaning backwards.

"MaMkhungo..." he pauses.

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"I guess that's just part of loving people: You have to give things up. Sometimes you even have to give

them up"

Strange enough the intense and cosmic chemistry is floating in the air, making it hard for me to breathe through my nose and to distract myself from his menacing eye contact I sweep my dreadlocks back into a ponytail making myself rather comfortable on the chair in an impeccable and professional mannerism, crossing my legs under the table. "MaMkhungo" he inhales swiftly and his eye narrow until they look like slits on his face. Hearing him calling me like that feels like the first time I heard him saying it. It turns my insides out and my intestines into pink mars hamellows. His tone coated with honey and something exotic.

I nod my head waiting for the next words to swiftly leave his mouth, his calamity makes my anxiety finds a way to grip itself around me, it feels as though my ability to speak, breathe and think is no longer functioning as it normally does.

Ridiculous isn't it?

"I'm sorry I completely forgot about the meeting. You can say I am having a bad day since I cannot seem to find my phone nor keys to my room and last night I fell asleep at the guest room, weird enough. And then this morning my family showed up uninvited" he says his negative smile widening. A slight part of me is throwing a party somewhere at the corner of my brain about the loss of his phone. It would have put everything in jeopardy because for one my picture is gracefully blessing his wallpaper, looking rather like an adorable teenager seated by his huge window that has a contrast to views of untamed branches and ample greenery. In a white dress and facing towards his direction with my mouth widely opened as I was laughing my livers out as something that he had said and my hands in the air with a perfect acrylic manicure.

How was I going to explain his "business partner" being his wallpaper.

Playing with fire, am I?

"I understand" I smile sweetly and flapping my lashes at him as he reveals his teeth that could be an ad for cosmetic dentistry, and I feel as though there's a waterfall stuck in between my legs in there somewhere on top of the greenery mountains. This feels like this is the very first time I sit opposite him, like his sperm hasn't swam to my eggs and a something has a size of raspberry is growing inside my me. "I wasn't well prepared myself and I came here rushing" I add.

He laces his fingers together and creating a tent under his chin, the perfect manicure he had done few weeks ago looks perfect on his veiny hands decorated with a blank ring. The sound of his chuckle reverberates through me and manages to

send some sort of electric wave and alerting my clitoris to jump up and down. "I can tell, something to drink?" he asks "I am thinking we can go to the restaurant five minutes away from here. They sell really healthy food from garden and farm at the back. No preservatives or whatsoever" he says as if the healthy eating topic will somehow be impressive to me, maybe if I wasn't pregnant but right now a giant burger would do "I am uncomfortable knowing my grandmother and mother are here, they can walk in any time" A sparkle of light I have never witnessed before appears in his eyes and his face brightens up at the mention of his mother. Although my heart swims in anger and rage whenever I think of the things she has done to him, but that look managed to melt all those emotions. It was real, raw and honest. Maybe just maybe this is the only time his family can be normal for once. Everyone can manage to put a smile on their faces without worrying about the next visitation of tears, bitter words exchanged that leaves everyone emotionally exhausted and barely even breathing.

"Fine by me" I say. I'd love to get away as well so I don't have to worry about Bongeziwe walking through the door gun blazing and his potato head sweating and telling his brother the truth. That look on his face few minutes ago tells me he disapproves this.

He looks at me pointly "Let me go get the car keys" Before he perks up the chair, he attentively looks into my eyes. I boldly hold the magnifying eye contact that fills me with colours only he can paint but I immediately clear my throat remembering this is not "ubhuti" but my so called business partner. He flashes a smile and disappearing, leaving a whiff of his cologne that he had stopped using because it makes me nauseated. Luckily there are bottles of water here. I quickly grab one and gulping the liquid that freezes my throat as I catch my breath Bongeziwe walks into the room and my subconscious prepares me for a long lecture.

"I know you don't like what I am doing" I take words from his mouth.

"Then why are doing it Kwanda?" Oh suddenly I am not "makoti" anymore.

I shrug nonchalantly "Imagine waking up with your memory completely gone and then you are being told you have a pregnant girlfriend. All of this is shoved down your throat at once. Think about it Mongezi"

"Angifuni" he says, his tone brittle with annoyance and then glance towards the door "I don't want to think about it. Because he wanted me to shove that truth down his throat when things get to this"

"Let me handle this my way"

"And when it blows up what is going to happen? What if he goes out there and fall for someone who is not you? You want me to sit down and watch that? Watch you losing a piece of yourself. You think he will forgive me when finally remembers everything Nokwanda. This is not about you, not about him but the child you are carrying inside you. You are going to be a mother of his child. At this moment we don't really know when he will regain his memory so how long are you going to keep up with this?"

"Mongezi is my eternal sunshine Bongeziwe"

"I know that, I am asking how long are you going to keep with this nonsense you're doing. Because this Kwanda, this..." he points the air like he can see and touch the nonsense "This is nonsense"

"This is traditional. I'm sure something can be done,

right?" my voice is gravelly and my tongue feels like fury, dirty old piece carpet.

"No" What is that supposed to mean? "Nothing can be done. We had time but since your man is pig headed as you are we have run out of time. All we we have to do is wait for ubaba's wrath to pass then we can find a way forward but right now nothing a cow and goat or even a prayer can solve"

"So we are just going to sit down and let him suffer?"

"He is not suffering"

"Are you kidding me right now? He is basically caged not remembering anything but whatever he is forced to remember and you are saying that is not suffering? The confusion and lost in his face that is not suffering?"

"Kwanda he needs to know the truth, and that stands" he says in a tone that is hard to decipher clearly not giving chicken shit about what I just said to him.

"And I am saying we are going to do things my way. We are going to do things my way not yours or anyone for that matter. We're leaving and heading to the restaurant down the road. I want you to take everything that belongs to me to my place. Everything Bongeziwe and it should be like whatever happened to us was nothing but a dream. I know you have his phone and keys to his room. Remove my picture has his wallpaper and delete my pictures"

"Nokwanda..."

"Onalenna will help you pack my things" I bring the

bottle of water close to my lips and feeling everything in me trembling with fear and in that moment Mongezi walks into the room with car keys in his hands. His brother makes an excuse that he was looking for him and wanted to find out if he has found the keys to his room and phone.

I wonder where he slept.

When did this whole thing happened?

After I left? I mean he bled from his nose earlier on, I shouldn't have went to that dinner or whatever you call it.

"We can go" Mongezi announces bringing me back from wandering to Venus with my thoughts and wild imagination.

I am the first to walk out and he is walking behind me. I can feel his tall frame matching my footsteps and luckily his grandparents and his mother are

nowhere in sight -- funny how I always meet them under these circumstances and I am sure they must be thinking I am disrespectful since I am always spitting like a dragon at my arrival. Shouting for their grandson and sometimes my tears being the make up on my face.

In less than five minutes we walking through the wooden door to a small but elegant restaurant decorated with pink, pastel pink and turquoise flowers and the naked walls give it that nature feel.

We sit opposite each other and there haven't been silence between us, has words has veen exchanged from the moment he opened the door for me, to the time we both sang to Hablot Brown with tiny and loud laughter in between -- I had to blunty lie and say they're my favorite musical group whereas he is the one who made me fall in love with their eminenty sophisticated music.

"What are you having?" he stares intently at me instead of the menu in his hands as the waiter in a denim apron and jeans, unruly hair and mustache stands patiently in front of us with a warm smile.

"Rooibos tea with a slice of lemon and mint" He tugs his head in before he orders the same and sesame noodles chicken stir fry.

"We tend to have a lot in common" he says leaning back.

"Not really" I just happened to fell in love with a lot of things that you actually like and we both ended up being one. From the way our shoulders move rhythmically when we laugh, the way the sound of our laughter blend together to the way we both sing loudly in the kitchen in the early mornings while he prepares the food.

But I can't say that now.

"I have never seen anyone I am working with comfortable around me as you are" he says observing after the waiter disappeared.

"Are you expecting me to walk on egg shells around you?"

A deep chuckle find its way past his diaphragm and into his throat "You are not walking around egg shells but there's more here maMkhungo" he says in a sensual tone that always makes my mind run a riot. My jelly bean trembles and ululate all at once on the other hand something warm and exotic wraps itself around me like a blanket and anticipation tugs in my belly.

"Anyways last time we spoke I told you about my business plan idea that I wanted you to invest on

and you were still thinking about it" I manage to drive the conversation to the south after regaining my voice.

"We are not officially business partners?" I fight the butterflies that his intense stare release in my stomach.

"You should know"

He smirks mischievously "Can we recap from our last conversation" Last conversation? Gladly.

I was right beneath you with my hands on the either sides of your face as we stared at the galaxies in each other's eyes. Our bodies moving together, rhythmically and beautifully like a perfect orchestra in London. Your tears covering my chest and mines at the corner of my eyes. No words were exchanged but our fears were visible, and so transparent. My

nails dug deeper into your skin a I felt you at an entrance of my womb. My moans sounded like a perfect soprano, before our arrival in a land of pleasure and orgasm.

Ah!

The waiter places our small white cups on the table and the sachets of sugar, we thank him before he announces our food is coming. "On our last conversation. I told you I want to be a buyer. Basically most of the garments will be bought from you. And when my customers wants something exclusive I can collaborate with your designers and we can also work with television productions"

"So you're not just a buyer but a dresser and stylist" he says sounding impressed, stirring his cup of tea and bringing it closer to his nostrils for the aroma.

I stir my cup as well after throwing the sachets of sugar inside before nodding my head and bringing the cup closely to my lips and I get burnt. I whimper in pain. He jumps off the chair as if someone shot off my lips to check the damage the hot liquid has caused, running his warm and long fingers on my lips, my heart squeezes.

"Are you okay maMkhungo?"

I try to calm myself down from having his fingers on my lips and a part of me wants to throw my hands around his neck and nuzzle. That is when everything comes crashing and thrashing like a tidal wave that I am in a horrendous dream. My tears threaten to come out like a dam and a humongous lump strangles my throat. My hormones also want to spiral out of control but I get my act together and fake smile in a way I have never before.

"I am okay" my lie is accompanied by slight laughter that makes everything believable. And he returns back to his chair, sinking slowly and when I attempt grabbing the cup of hot liquid again and bringing it closely to my burnt lips he gives me a stern look and no one tells me to put down the cup.

"You want to burn yourself again?" he reprimands making me feel as though I am a teenager caught trying to jump the fence.

"Chabo"

"Put that cup down ke" his tone is calm as ever but thick and stars swirl in my chest. He sounded like "ubhuti" for a moment there. "Where were we?"

"I was explaining how things are going to work" this harsh reality is hard to swallow.

"My designs and garments are expensive and for a start up business I am not sure if you are making a right decision with wanting to collaborate. Investing yes, I am interested in doing that but how about you work with cheaper brands and thrifts for a start up and I am not underestimating you because you are wearing oversized clothes right now, no offense"

"Offense taken. I have a great sense of style just so you know and secondly my target market is as expensive as your brand"

Our food is here!

He swirl around his noodles on chopsticks before shoving it inside his mouth and chewing. Nothing therapeutic as watching the movement of his lips while he's at it. "Where are you going to be working?"

"I need to find a building and work around that"

"Hmm" he grimace "Let's say I give you a building not so far from mines. Would you work around that?"

"Depends"

"On what?"

"What's there for you?"

"Am I not investing? Nothing is there for me"

"Try again"

He pauses then smiles, a charming smile "three dates with me"

"A building for three dates?" Trying to woo a woman you've woo'd long time ago, very funny.

"Yes"

"No"

"What?"

"I'm saying no to three dates"

"Free food and great company, you're saying no?"  
he says witty.

"Great company?" I chuckle.

"I have great company maMkhungo, I am fun actually"

"Hard to believe"

"Take the offer"

"Let me see the building"

"Let's go"

"Slow down tiger, tomorrow is another day"

"See. You are pretty much enjoying my company and you want to see me again"

"My boyfriend won't be happy about this" I taste the waters.

"I feel sorry for him" he said the same about Sambulo – deja vu.

Feeling sorry for himself? Ha ha ha.

"I feel sorry for you" I tease poking the noodles.

"You shouldn't feel sorry for me. But also I want a proposal from you, let's say next week I'll set up a meeting then we can take it from there"

Proposal? Oh this is getting serious.

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"You better run from the devil"

Driving back home it felt like that day when I was

divided into two. My mind, heart and soul yelling for a man who made me feel foreign things for the first time. I could feel his warm breath against my skin even though he wasn't there, my imagination felt like an engine, overly working. His laughter that flowed over the table like a gem studded Caribbean waters, broken up occasionally by deep booming belly laughs. His voice so wonderful, intoxicating combination of maleness and sensuality. His touch, I could feel it as if he was still standing behind me with my eyes fluttered closed. His eyes took everything in with an open level of serenity that I'd never witnessed in a man before. It was as though I can actually see into his head. He had this dangerous and delicious effect on me, but now there's no antidote that could save me not that I want to be saved.

I was stuck between a man who just walked into my life and made me want to explore dark, dark places I have never imagined. A man who made me want to lay down on my bed, facing the ceiling with my legs

spread apart and my fingers feeling the wetness, slickness and my own flavored juices in between my legs that he had caused, a flood. And on the other hand another man who was my cute walking Bible and never made me felt euphoria nor his touch ever felt electrifying, he was also there invading my mind. Suddenly the sound of his voice made me wanna open my skull and take out my brain and throw it away. Something pressed in my stomach and I'd feel an urge to spew at how he called my name, it wasn't as smooth as the stranger called me. The sound of his voice wasn't as wonderful as that stranger who wore all black gracefully and beautifully. His brown eyes were not as dreamy as those black eyes that stared beyond my own, beyond my skin and bones.

This time I am stuck between harsh reality and my own reality that I have created to push away all these emotions I do not want to feel at the back of my brain, I should be returning back to my apartment but I know Onalenna is going to hover

over me and Khethelo will countlessly ask if I am okay with teary eyes, she is very hormonal but still doesn't want to accept we'll be holding hands at a labor ward screaming on top of our lungs until our voices disappear. I don't want to count Kayise because he'll shove food down my throat until I cannot take it anymore.

And Yolokazi, mxm.

When it comes to facing my own fears and reality, I am quite an athlete probably have countless gold medals hanging around my neck.

Face it? Me, never. Not something that I can hit my chest proudly about. But running always seems like an easy escape goat than having to face and dance with your own demons.

And also on the other hand life is too short, you can

procrastinate dealing with your problems now and then one day you wake up and you cannot deal with them anymore.

"Nokwanda!" my aunt says as she sees me appearing behind the door, you cannot miss how surprise she is to see me from her tone. Her widened eyes. Her face looking beautiful and her skin looking like satin fabric, no dark circles under her eyes. Her breath doesn't smell like vodka but rather fresh and warm. "What's wrong?" there's something about her voice that reminds me of that woman who raised me. Very velvety and soft. Like that blanket we only take out in winter because it's very hard to wash.

"You sound like your sister" I say with a smile and she chuckles. The sound of her chuckle so deep, resonant, earthy and real.

"Stop playing, come sit here" she pats the space on

the sofa after she has shift making a space for me. I stride towards that direction before sinking my non-existent buttocks facing towards her. Her eyes darts between mines, she has one beautiful eyes and high cheekbones. Her face doesn't need a contour and she has nice bowed shaped lips just like mines. This woman is actually beautiful when she doesn't have thin lined drawn eyebrows and ocean blue eyes hadow, I am mind blown "Kwando, what's wrong?"

What's wrong?

Why you're beautiful?

"Nothing" an unexpected smile just creep out of my lips as we stare at each other. The mother and daughter connection is there. It cannot be ignored as we both have sphinx like smiles on our faces. "I'm sorry" I unexpectedly say.

"Nokwanda..."

"I heard you named me Yomelela, it's a beautiful name"

"I just like you"

"You did what you thought was the best as a mother and I understand really"

"I could have done something to raise both of you"

"You practically did. You handed me into a warm home and hands, I am grateful. I am sorry I haven't sat down and talk to you. It has been hard for me to wrap my head around everything, I just needed time"

"What matters is you are here now" she says and I hang my head low. Her hands covers my own, tenderly "You cannot runaway from your problems forever Kwando sometimes you have to face them. No matter how hard it is, everything passes whatever you're going through it will pass. Pray. Nothing beats a prayer, get on your knees and pray. God can see your heavy heart and tears and he will comfort you"

"I can't pray" I say.

She chuckles, "Everyone can pray. Lock yourself in a room and talk to God" she brushes my knuckles with her fingers "everything will be okay eventually"

"Is your sister speaking through you?" I laugh softly.

"It seems like it. Before I befriended alcohol I was a woman of God, I prayed more than anyone in the

world but after what happened with your father, the shame and guilt I couldn't bring myself into kneeling again. I didn't feel worthy. I felt as though God was going to turn his back against me so to fill in this void I just drank but where did it get me Nokwanda nowhere? But last night after everyone left I sat in this very same sofa and I realised that I have been judging myself too much that I forgot that He loves me no matter what. He forgives. He comforts and regardless of my sins my worth has never changed and he still pretty much loves me the same"

"So you don't drink anymore?"

"Only on special occasions" she says with a humor in her voice before we both erupt with laughter.

"What a bore!" I joke.

"Have a party atleast once a week ke"

Another laughter comes from my mouth. Not in a strained way but with genuine, deep down, raucous laughter. "Hawu woman of God"

She shoves me playfully and catching her breath from the laughter that has been echoing the room, "I want to be a better mother to you and Yolokazi as well as Kayise"

"Td love that. I want to be a better daughter as well"

"That makes me happy, Kwando. Whenever you want to talk I am here. You can bring a bottle of wine sometimes, God will understand especially after he turned water into wine"

I chuckle, "I thought you said you are not drinking

anymore ma"

"Having a heart to heart conversation with my daughter is a special occasion" I needed to come here. I needed to sit here with my hands covered with hers, loudly laughing from our belly buttons. Tears that are threatening to spill any seconds dancing in our eyes. Her radiant face is what I needed to see, this is what I needed. "I cooked steamed bread and sugar beans, are you hungry?"

"I am dying" I confess and my stomach immediately growls -- this baby is actually forward "Can I stay here for few days?" I surely should go for shopping before the stores closes, especially since I cannot show up with another set of baggy clothes tomorrow. It would be lovely to actually take my aunt--my mother--along with me.

"You don't have to ask, come let's feed you and your baby before your charming boyfriend kills me"

"Okay but can we pray mama?" Now that she has mentioned him.

"When?"

"Now?"

She tugs her head in, "Yoh hhayi Nokwanda"

This woman!

"Woman of God!" I laugh.

"I said lock yourself up in your room and pray, not randomly asking for a prayer"

"I am kindly asking for a prayer"

"Yoh!" she claps once, "this feels like an unprepared speech" we laugh so hard, a good, crazy, down-to-the-soul laughter.

"Unprepared speech?"

"Shut up and let's pray" she laughs.

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“People think that a liar gains a victory over his victim. What I’ve learned is that a lie is an act of self-abdication because one surrenders one’s reality to the person whom one lies, making that person one’s master, condemning oneself from then on faking the sort of reality that person’s view require”

The tiny drops of water falling from the sky keep

slapping the windowpane, I sit up straight on the bed and watching the gloomy weather outside until I decide to get up and rather stand by the window for a clearer view.

Sigh!

I haven't slept, I sat on this bed and watched the sky turning from dark to gray while I toss and turn on the bed, ignoring the growling stomach and trying to focus on all these emotions that needed my undivided attention but my focus seemed to be thrown out of the window.

What if this really blows up on my face and I'll have to watch him fall in love with another woman right in front of me and all I can do is smile widely while my heart is heavily bleeding and hands resting on my humungous stomach? What will happen when? What if it takes him three years to actually remember everything?

I return back to the bed as my eyelids becomes heavy and my brain is suddenly foggy and the moment my head touches the pillow everything around me becomes dark. “Kwando” a soft voice says and my door creaks “Nokwanda” it repeats again.

I moan under my breath not willing to open my eyes but the duvet is peeled off my body “wake up someone is here for you” my mother yells.

I open my left eye to catch a glimpse of her and my vision is blurry then I flutter them close again. “Nokwanda wake up, you’ve been sleeping” this time I groan forcing my eyes to open and blinking twice then she shakes her head.

“I am tired” I complain.

She has a disapproval look on her face “you have a visitor” she says with a warm smile “I am sure you’d want to take a quick shower”

Oh we had fun last night reconnecting after we came back from shopping—I watched her swimming in ecstasy as I was picking and choosing clothes that would suite her and colours that would complements her, I learnt from that experience that green is her colour.

She’d walk out of the changing room swirling around before she places her hands against her hips and waiting for reaction and comment on how she looked, I enjoyed every moment.

Remember when I said this is my calling? Well she said the same right after she held both my hands and asked for my support and patience as she made a decision of going to rehab since she believes she’s an alcoholic.

That's a start right?

“Who is that?”

She shrugs her shoulders and now holding the door knob, “I don't know” Visitors at this time, yikes.

“I am coming mama” she smiles once before she closes the door behind her and I can hear her footsteps slowly fading in the corridor, I take a deep breath before getting off the bed and padding barefooted to the bathroom to take a shower.

I cannot be meeting visitors with crust around my eyes and my mouth smelling like an apple cider, ew.

The warm drops hit my skin and my muscles relaxes and flexes, unexpected laughter erupt from my mouth when I think of the fact that he would've

shout at me if he found me under this spray of water because he has been so cautious ever since he discovered he was going to be a father, he feared I was going to slip and fall then something will happen to his child.

Deep sigh!

I get off the shower wrapping a towel around my body and returning to my room, lathering my skin with a moisturizer when my door opens and it's my mother again—I am normalising calling her my mother than aunt now, “Oh you're almost done, I am leaving”

“Where you going?” I ask glancing at her and putting on a pair of white sweatpants.

“Somewhere, I have given your visitor something to drink, bye” she doesn't wait for me to ask any

more questions as she evaporates right in front of my eyes with her laughter tiny as a bell.

I shake my head grinning and catching a glimpse of myself in the mirror while tying my dreadlocks up.

I should be sitting in front of this same mirror dapping a lip gloss on my lips and preparing myself to see the building but the throbbing headache at my temples and hormones that are spiralling out of control won't allow me to be around his presence otherwise tears will spill out of my eyes and I will throw myself in his arm right after bluntly telling him the truth.

I make my way to the living room and my eyes almost fall onto the ground as I am about to take a turn and return back to my room to look for something to wear when he rotates his head towards my direction and he is carrying my baby

photo in his hand. For someone who confidently said they have a great sense of style I am pretty much wearing baggy clothes quite a lot.

“What are you doing here?” I ask standing by the entrance immobile as a statue.

He has a lascivious grin on his face. I stop breathing all at once and blink feeling something sexually poisonous travelling through my body.

“We were supposed to meet this morning and you didn’t show up”

What’s the time now?

“Why?” he asks.

I look at the watch hanging on the wall and it just blinked half past two in the afternoon, ha ha ha, I really overslept didn’t I.

“How did you know where I stay?”

“You’re not answering my question” His expression is vague, I can hardly see through those eyes as well.

“I am sick” I tell him honestly, really I am sick.

What is that? Is that concern laced on his face  
“What’s wrong? You should’ve at least told me?  
Have you seen the doctor?” does he remember  
something maybe?

This is scary!

“I just woke up few minutes ago, I was going to call you” I pause “I am sorry” I feel a need to apologise.

“You don’t have to apologise, I thought maybe I made you uncomfortable by asking you out on a date”

“It’s not that” I chuckle.

He takes a sharp intake of breath and looks down at my picture again before he averts his intently look back at me, “I dreamt about you maMkhungo” my heart drops into my stomach.

I blink twice; “maybe you were looking forward to the date” I smile uncomfortably.

“Maybe it’s more than that”

“Oh” He places my picture back and shoves his hands in his pocket, I can feel the tiny drops of

sweat forming under my armpits and the hairs at the nape of my neck standing, “she looked just like that” he smiles weary “very beautiful”

“Who”

“The baby you were carrying in my dream, weird right?”

“Very” I chuckle

I feel like a mouse being trapped with cheese.

He glares deeply into my eyes and silence looms between us, it’s not uncomfortable, awkward or even weird but sensual energies are wheezing in the air and I am sure he can hear my very own beat since is loudly beating while my chest heaves up and down. “My brother told me” he says and the

church bells in my head starts ringing, his scorching gaze hasn't moved away from me, "you asked how I know where you stay, my brother told me"

Jesus!

I almost fainted thinking he told him everything.

"Oh" He takes a step forward and instead of taking a step back my feet are planted on the spot not willing to move "and he said you can explain the dream to me" His eyes are dark making me wish the ground could open up and swallow me. My breathing is shallow feeling his scorching gaze all over my body.

I am going to kill Bongeziwe!

I scoff, “how I am supposed to explain that dream, that’s strange”

I can’t breathe, I am holding in my breath as he keeps taking steps towards me one step at time and I am the centre of his attention.

Now he right in front of me, so close and I look up at him flapping my lashes at him and he looks down at me, forever so calm and charming with his breath warming my face.

My heart is pounding and I am feeling a pull, the delicious electricity between us charging and filling the space between us with static. I decide to flutter my eyes close, I cannot look into those gems that belongs to him otherwise I’ll start singing the truth like that worshipper who has no clue about Sambulo’s sexuality, shame man I feel sorry for those women who always fall on their feet just for him.

I am trying to distract myself by this.

I feel his hands against my face, his fingers rubbing my cheeks “Ngicela ungibuka” he asks me to look at him and I swallow my saliva, it’s hardly even there “maMkhungo”

Don’t call him bhuti—my deity reminds me.

“Hmmm” I murmur.

“Look at me” he says gently and softly.

“I can’t”

“Please” he pleads, “just once and then you can close them again” Breathe slow, in and out—my deity advices.

My chest is moving faster than before, I should be breathing but I can't, not now when I am intoxicated by his scent, touch and breath tickling my face.

“You should leave Mongezi”

“After you've looked at me”

Let me breathe before I die here!

My eyes lock with his, searching his expression for his thought, “Done, leave” I say sternly.

“No” he says and then smiles, “do you know how beautiful you are?”

“Mongezi..”

“I found out i have lost my memory” he interject.

“I am so sorry” give me my award.

“I don’t know what is everyone hiding from me but I am going to find out and I can only hope that you are not hiding anything from me because you didn’t seem surprise when I told you my brother told me where you live, I can only hope that was nothing but a dream maMkhungo because if that’s not the case...” he pauses, how can he be so calm and collected? “..please see a doctor you mentioned you’re not well and I will see you later today”

“Were you threatening me bhu—Mongezi?” my voice come out hoarsely.

“Please see a doctor” he just smiles “Oh and I

brought you something to eat, I have to go” he removes his hands from my face taking a step back before he gives me that intense look once again as though he is searching for something into my eyes then he walks out of the door without saying anything.

Jesus Christ!

I cannot tell him the truth, not now. Nxarga Bongeziwe!

I look over the coffee table and he really bought me something to eat—thoughtful.

I stride to my room to get my phone so I can call Bongeziwe and he picks up when I was about to drop the call, “Makoti” he answers.

“I asked you not to tell him anything Bongeziwe”

“What are you talking about?”

“You’re really going to act dumb?”

“Weh Nokwanda, I don’t know what you’re talking about so stop speaking in riddles. You asked me to give you a chance with your plan and I did that now hat are you talking about?”

“He was here and he said you gave him the directions”

“Where is here, I’ve never been there”

“Bongeziwe this is not a joke”

He chuckles softly, “Fine, he was at your apartment?”

“My mother’s house”

“When?”

“Just now”

“And what did he say?”

“He said he has lost his memory and he feels we are hiding something from him and he can only hope that I am not hiding anything from him. And he said he dreamt about me carrying a baby”

“Shit!” he curses “we have to tell him the truth, I never told him anything”

“Then who told him where I stay if you didn’t?”

“I don’t know, look I am going to talk to him and see where his state of mind then I will see you see later so we can talk but we have to tell him the truth”

“You cannot see me late because he is coming here and you cannot tell him the truth”

“Nokwanda Mkhungo uyahlanya? He knows or found something and you want to continue lying? I ask you what will happen when this blows up on your face?”

“We will figure something out”

“We?”

“But...”

“No buts, you’ve never seen him angry, really angry and I have so please Kwanda”

Ah!

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“The truth will set you free,  
But first it will piss you off”

BONGEZIWE

UNEDITED

My personal assistance walks into my office

having a difficult time with the high heel shoes that she is wearing and pushing her huge round glasses from the bridge of her nose and when I pick my head up to look at her, she almost falls “Mr Ndamase someone is here for you, I did tell him you’re busy but he won’t listen”

I balance my elbows on the table, “who is that?” I ask her.

“Your brother” I almost tug my head in at her response but instead I lean backwards as though someone punched me, taking a deep breath, “should I let him in?” she asks me, after a moment of silence in the room instead of giving her a response, I nod my head and flashing a half smile.

“Okay” she drags the word in a sing, sing song and snorting with a slight chuckle walking out like a chicken and I perk up the chair to the corner of the room to pour myself a glass of water when the door

thrusts open and my assistance walk back in but this time followed by brother, who is expressionless.

“I wasn’t expecting you” I say meeting him half way and we share a hug then he makes himself comfortable on a couch in my office and crossing his legs while his hand is resting under his chin.

“I thought I should pass by and see you” he smiles.

“Something to drink?” I ask him.

“Tea is fine” he responds and I turn to my assistance who is still standing in the middle of the room then she disappears once again.

“Your space is beautiful” Mongezi compliments.

“Thank you but I know you didn’t come here for that” He smirks at me and relaxes on the couch—I can only expect the unexpected from him especially after finding out minutes ago that he may know something—his calamity and vague expression forces you to sit on the edge of the mountain only hope nothing goes wrong.

“Am I not allowed to see my brother at his workplace?”

Try again baba.

I stare at him “I am not sold”

“How long has it been since I lost my memory?”

I tighten my jawline “and who told you that”

“Why does it matter who told me?” This feels like I am playing a chess game with an old man wearing a brown suit and matching hat smirking at me devilishly with a glass of cognac in his hands, waiting for me to make a move that would make me lose the entire game.

“I want to know” He tighten his jawlines and rubbing his fingers across his mouth “I went to work today and I was told I have been working from home for more than a year since I lost my memory, well my personal assistance, Luthando told me and about an accident”

I rub my fingers through my nose wincing, “I wish we were not having this conversation here”

“Out of all people, wena Bongeziwe you are hiding things from me?”

The door thrusts open again after a short knock, and it's my assistance again with a tray carrying a cup of tea and she places it on the table before she mouths her apology, I guess for interrupting the conversation then disappears behind the door again. "I am not hiding things from you but we thought it was the best thing to do as family"

"Best for whom because it's not best for me"

"We want you to remember things on your own"

He takes the cup on the table and opening the sachet of sugar "how long this has been going on?"

"You lost your memory after an accident then you regained it then it happened again"

“How did it happen?”

“The doctors are still doing their research” I lie looking straight into his eyes and in that moment guilt burns my inside and I cool it down by taking a gulp of water.

“Hmmm” he murmurs acknowledging my lie “is there something important I should know beside this?” there’s confusion and loss looming in his eyes.

“No, not really”

He brings the cup closer to his lips “I was thinking we should go out tonight with Avulele, I want to unwind. I’ve been feeling like something is missing maybe going out and getting laid could help”

No!

Now I am being pushed into telling him the truth because there's no way I am going out with that thing he just mentioned and secondly no one is getting laid here, not under my watch.

“You can come to my house and we'll call people over and have something small”

“That sounds perfect, I should go” he places the cup back on the table standing on his feet and attempting to walk out but he pauses on his tracks, turning on his heels to rotate his head towards me “you wouldn't hide anything from me would you?” intently he looks into my eyes—I wouldn't not ever, but right now the circumstances are forcing me to.

“Is this a movie scene?” I joke.

“No” he laughs softly “but I want to know”

“No, I wouldn’t and you know that”

“Great” he nods his head and winces

“I had this dream” I already know what happened since makoti told me after she called me and accusing me of telling Mongezi the truth and from where I am standing it all seems blurry with what he knows because he lied to her about me telling him where she is staying and to me he is telling me that his assistance gave him some information.

See, we are all stuck in the dark.

“What happened?”

“We’ll talk tonight, let me get going”

I am watching my woman sashaying her hips around the kitchen in an apron, she was ecstatic when I called her while I was at work and asking if she could help me prepare something since I’ll be hosting and then I made calls and inviting everyone to come over, including Kwanda.

“What are you thinking about?” Onalenna asks stirring the pot and the inviting aroma is hanging thick in the room, smells scrumptious.

“Mongezi wanted me to invite Avulele” I tell her and expecting another kind of reaction besides that smile that just break through her cheeks, her face forever so radiant.

“Why you don’t call him over then? We don’t want him suspecting something; maybe him being in a

very good space could help him regain his memory”

“This is not medical mama”

She closes her pot, “I know Ndamase, but please comprise”

“And what about you”

“About me? I don’t care about Avulele and his presence won’t bother me, it shouldn’t bother you as well sthandwa” she says in very mellow tone, and tugging her braids behind her ear “comprise”

“I am not compromising” I watch her striding towards me until she is standing right in front of me then reflexively, she wraps her warm around my neck and moves her face closer to mine. Yet even

Although the insides of my mouth are within reach all she does is to gently tangle her tongue into my gums and slowly rub it all over, a strange sensation pierces through my entire being.

An overwhelming feeling of satisfaction assaults me from all directions as I give in to the pleasure and sublimate my body, mind and soul at the same time then she pulls away and stares at me, “still not compromising?”

“Is this how we’re playing now mama?” she slowly trail her hand down my side and stopping at the elastic of my pants and then her hand slip under the elastic band and moves further down my body and slips the thick fabric of my briefs to the side runs her fingers softly over my skin. I bite my lip trying to stop myself from groaning, “Onalenna”

“Hmmm”

“I am not compromising” she cups my crotch and smirks mischievous “azosha amabhodwe njalo [your pots will burn” I warn her reflecting the very same smirk, instead of getting a response she pulls down my pants and going down on her knees, she runs her hands up my thighs. My hard-on is just tenting through my brief and when she gets closer so her head hovers above the big tent my penis makes under this underwear, she pulls them down and my penis springs off and pointing right at her face then she starts licking with long strokes of her tongue and I shiver out some sexual sounding form of her name as she slurp greedily and gives me a gentle squeeze. Her tongue licks through my mushroom head and I grunt out.

I start controlling her head as the warmth of her mouth covers my head, sucking harder and faster, spitting and licking and not forgetting to make a dangerous eye contact and when my juices ooze

out she drinks all of them and swallowing then we hear footsteps, it's already too late.

“Whoa!” Azande says covering her eyes with her hand, “I am so sorry” she chuckles under her breath and walk out of the kitchen, erupting with laughter.

Onalenna and I both look at each other as she get up on her feet continuing swallowing like that didn't just happen. “It seems Mongezi has already invited them, be good” she kisses my lips and walk out of the kitchen.

How can I not be good after that?

I compose myself and also walking out to the living room to find them comfortable on the couches, Onalenna must be in the bedroom or somewhere around the house. “Azande I am sorry about what you saw” I apologize and all she does is grins and

rubbing her hands together.

“Don’t worry, is it safe to go help in the kitchen”

“Sure” she perks up on the couch after turning to her man who pretty much looks uncomfortable at my presence, then she pats my shoulder.

“I will bring something to drink and play some music, we are here for a party” she says in a high pitch voice and disappearing to the kitchen, leaving a pink elephant sitting in the corner of the room and gazing at us. Me then him. Him then me. I and him.

I tighten my jaw and balling my hands into a fist, taking a sit on the couch after playing music softly. “How you’ve been?” I ask him, trying to create a conversation although it’s unnecessary..

“Been okay and how about you?” Oh he can smile now? Suddenly he has teeth he wants to flash on my face.

“Okay” I answer.

“Ziwe, look I...”

“Not tonight, sobuye sikhulume [we will talk some other time]” I interject almost immediately, I am not about to have this conversation with him now, here? After getting a good head as a bribe to act right, no.

Azande walks into the room with bottles of beers and bowl of snacks before she walks out returning to the kitchen and that is when we hear their laughter echoing.

The other one sitting opposite me is not

comfortable about this, maybe because his wife might find out the truth, surely. “Onalenna won’t say anything” I tell him and he hangs his head low with his shoulders falling. We are saved by a door bell and I get up to get it, Mongezi appears behind the door alongside a woman with long silk black hair and colourful make up, she is wearing a nude short dress that reveals her long legs and matching shoes —her skin looks silky and dark.

What the hell is this?

“This is Lulu and Lulu this is my brother Bongeziwe, can we come in?” he smirks at me, I turn to look at the woman standing next to him, with his hand resting around her waist. I tighten my jawline and stepping aside and allowing them to walk in but I grab Mongezi’s hand. “Yindaba?”

Is he really asking me what is going on?

Haibo lo mfana!

“Who is she?”

“My personal assistant”

“What is she doing here?”

“Hawu” he chuckles but when he sees the seriousness on my face he pauses “We had a late meeting so I thought I should invite her over”

“I don’t want her here”

“Awume kancane Bongeziwe” that all he says before he yanks himself away from me and walking inside the house, I warned Nokwanda this will

backfire.

Instantly Kayise arrives alongside Khethelo and Yolokazi who doesn't bother greeting me but walks inside the house already dancing to the music with her hands in the air, and screaming walking pass me.

“Hello Bongeziwe!” she only greets when she has already entered the house and disappeared somewhere. Very funny. I let them walk in before shutting the door behind. I am trying to keep my composure returning back to the living room where there's only the men and the women are loudly laughing in the kitchen and my dear brother is not drinking tea but beer.

Have you seen umlingo? Magic? This is what I am witnessing right here.

Oh Kungawo is also here, but the only person I am expecting is nowhere in sight.

After hours the women walks back into the kitchen, they are not really happy about the stranger's presence who goes straight and sit next to my brother, with a glass of wine taking a fast sips seeing that she is an intruder that is not needed here.

Finally Kwanda is here, I was not aware that I have been holding my breath seeing her appearing behind the door with a smile on her face made me calmer. "Makoti" I say and she shoves me playfully then we walk together side by side to the living room. In that moment Mongezi spills out his drink with his eyes wide open, getting off next to the woman who had her hand hooked around his neck and walking towards us.

"MaMkhungo" he says.

“Mongezi” she smiles, it’s like everything has shrunk around them —the chemistry is so undeniable.

Nazoke!

The night is proving to be amazing, we all have put our differences aside. We have created the dance floor by removing the coffee table. The other two have disappeared, somewhere around the house that is filled with throbbing music and loud laughter.

I have forgotten that at some point I wanted to kill Avulele, it must be the alcohol.

When Kwanda and Mongezi returns from only God know where we decide to go sit outside around fire since the weather is very cosy. Onalenna hands out blankets for everyone, and everyone seem to get

along with Lulu.

“Is it weird that even though Mongezi is suffering from memory loss but they still have this undeniable connection with Kwanda which means they were meant to be” the drunk Yolokazi bluntly says and burp “you two are going to be amazing parents”

Haike!

“Everyone seems civilized here tonight yabona but wena Avulele I hate you for leaving Onalenna at the altar for Azande but since she's beautiful and they are getting along then I can consider forgiving you and since everyone is merry”

“What did you say at first again?” Mongezi asks frowning.

“What are you talking about Yolo?” Azande.

Yeah neh.

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“All truth passes through three stages

First, it is ridicule.

Second, it is violently opposed.

Third, it is accepted as being self evident”

MONGEZI

I walked through the door after an old woman in a black and white uniform warmly welcomed me stepping aside and manoeuvring me into the living room, “I am going to call your mother” she said a smile still emanated on her oval shaped face, she was treating me as if I am a fragile feather, “would

you like some tea?” she glanced anxiously at me and fiddling with her fingers.

“No, thank you”

“Are you sure?” I flashed a half smile and assuring her that I was fine.

I didn't come here for a cup of tea but answers!

Disappointed she walked out of the room disappearing somewhere around the house giving me a chance to take a sharp intake of breath, running my hands over my head and impatiently waiting for my mother who later appeared looking sophisticated as always and using crunching sticks, “Ngezi” I perked up from the couch meeting her half way and I hug her tightly, at first she is taken back but eventually she wraps her arms around me.

She feels so good and welcoming and home. Reluctantly, I relinquish her taking a step back to see tears shimmering in her face and I use my thumb to wipe off her tears before she holds my hand as we both take a sit on a same couch exchanging warm smiles, “Why you’re giving me that look?” she asked searching for my eyes, surely for some sort of emotion to understand what brought me here.

“I want you to tell me the truth”

“What are you talking about?”

“I know something is happening here and I want to know the truth” I stared deeply in her eyes as fear appears slowly and starts to dance before she squeezes my hand.

“What do you want to know?”

“Everything but firstly this...” I take out two pictures from my pocket of a beautiful naked woman and her hand are covering her tiny breasts which I find very attractive while her other hand is resting on her stomach with a thin dark line. Her dreadlocks are falling over her shoulders and she has a smile on her face, a beautiful, beautiful smile that snatches your soul and takes you a world you never thought existed before, her skin looks silky and stunning and then another picture of a scan.

“Who is she?”

She swallows her saliva and staring down at the picture before she picks her head up to look into my eyes, “she is beautiful, isn’t she?”

“I didn’t ask for compliments, I asked who she is”

“Kwanda...” she then paused “Kwanda Mkhungo”  
Oh she knows her—interesting.

“When she came to my house you knew who she  
was?”

“Mongezi I—

“The truth”

She gapes “yes”

“How”

No response.

“Ma”

“You guys have been together for a while” she takes a sharp intake of breath “..she loves you Mongezi”

“I haven’t asked if she loves me or not, so everyone pretended as if they had no idea who she was that day when she called herself my business partner, why is that?”

“You lost your memory and...”

“I already know that but I am asking why”

“I wanted to tell you...”

“Don’t exclude yourself in this because you lied

just like everyone else, if you wanted to tell me the truth you were going to tell me right?”

“Mongezi it’s complicated”

I clenched my jaw “I am listening” she opened and closed her mouth before her hands starts trembling as if when she utters a word someone will walk through the door and stab her with a sword straight into her throat.

I leaned backwards intently looking at her before she called for the same old woman asking that she brings

her a glass of wine then she got up from the couch to stand by the window, needing to catch a breather since it seemed oxygen was not enough in this room, “Mongezi I lost you in the past months”

“I remember some things”

“What do you remember?”

“I am not here to take you down the memory lane but I am here to find out the truth” she gulped down her saliva and glanced at me once then looked outside the window with a perfect view of the garden and blue skies.

Finally her glass of wine arrived and she brought it closely to her lips, taking gulps instead of sips then she start talking I listened to her carefully and making sure I don't miss a single word coming from her mouth as she told me what has happened in this family in these past months. Her ghastly secret coming out and what was once her best friend taking her own life because of the betrayal, this is not something I was interested on really—not after everything she has done—things are the way that they are because of her and my uncle who turned out to be my father.

My warm and loving gaze as I looked her turned to scorching, wary as I stare at her. But I was not really angry because of that but my girlfriend who decided to call herself my business partner and going as far as hiding our pregnancy, hmm.

Lies are lies, no matter how innocently they are.

The chemistry and connection that was wheezing in the air as we sat opposite each other at the restaurant now makes perfect sense, I felt a pull towards her, it was so unexplainable.

“So I am suffering for your sins?” I murmur as my heated blood coursed through me.

“I am sorry” she cried

“What for ma?”

“Everything”

I shook my head and chuckling sardonically, “thank you”

“What for”

“Telling me the truth” I perked up the couch and taking my car keys attempting to walk out but she stops me by calling out my name before she strides towards me and placing her hands on the either sides of my face.

“Kwanda loves you; she’d turned heaven and earth just for you”

“But she lied”

“She had reasons”

“I have to go”

“I hope one day you find it in your heart to forgive me”

“I hope”

“I have someone who can help us out of this”

“Who is that?”

“Hinata Palm”

“I thought you hated her family”

“But she can help us Mongezi, I want to see you getting better so I am willing to put my pride aside”

“I will think about it”

“Fine”

Now here are outside my brother's house around the fire place after the truth found a way to come out although I have been pretending as though I am still in a foggy place hoping she can tell me truth but she never did and that what angered me more, she had so many chances. I grab my car keys after sharing a heated exchange with my brother and her walking out of the room and her scent tells me that she is right behind me until we are both outside, the stars twinkling on top of our heads, “Mongezi!” she calls out.

“I don’t want to hear anything from you right now Nokwanda so go back inside that house”

“I was doing what is best for you”

I pause to turn back to her, “best for whom?”

“I thought...”

“You made this about you when it wasn’t that what makes me angry and you don’t want to own up to it”

“I wanted to make you fall in love with me, I didn’t want you to love me because you found out we’re together”

“How can you make someone fall in love with you

when they're already in love with you?" her mouth narrows and her eyes gleam "exactly this was about you wanting to do things your way and not considering anyone else and how it will affect them so help my soul maMkhungo and return back inside that house because it's cold"

"I don't care about being cold"

"Well I care so go"

"I'm sorry"

"Inside the house Nokwanda" she stubbornly plant her feet on the ground, well I am going to make things easier for her and be the one who leaves.

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"When you are wondering if loving someone is

worth it -- ask yourself this

If you could go back in time, if you could do it all over again, would you?

Would you choose that person, would you choose that hope, knowing that you would also be choosing that hurt?

Knowing that at one point in time, you were going to go through hard times with them, you have to struggle with them?

Would you still risk for them? Would you still love them?

Would you still stay up until 4am with them on the night you first started talking, letting yourself fall?

Would you still get on the plane?

Would you still forgive, and trust; would you still make the memories, would you still give them a home in your heart?

See, if the answer is no, then maybe what you have is not love, maybe it is a lesson. Maybe you can find closure in that.

But if your answer is yes, then --- do not doubt if it is worth it.

Do not make it any less beautiful in your mind, do not turn it into something you can choose to forget.

No, if you would do it all again, despite of all the hard times and difficulties, if you would still choose to go through all of that again just to relive the moments spent with them, then you had something most people never find in this lifetime.

You have something worth the fight. Don't ever forget that.”

MONGEZI.

A woman in a tribal printed long skirt and a top that flaunts her flat abs, since her bare stomach is showing while her braids that are decorated with beads fall like waterfalls on her back is leading us through a vast all white hallway and she has kept her smile from the moment she was waiting for us

outside—there's a giant white wall built around the house that is painted in earth brown, from the outside you literally cannot see a thing, nothing.

Something is so enthralling and pacifying about this house, it's homely.

And she manoeuvres us into the living room and I lose my speaking capacity at the beauty of it.

Each piece of living room furniture captures the eye with sculptural appeal. Plush elements invite comfort and cut a clean minimalist profile, like the round ottoman coffee table.

This piece is especially engaging – the Spun chair designed, the piece of functional interactive art, rolling and its unique top-like shape.

Next to the sofa, there's an adjustable wall light provides directional illumination where needed.

It is dominated by low-profile furniture, even casual pieces like this pouf lounge feel right at home.

The spacious living room opens into a kitchen at the left.

The artwork is placed in prominent areas to become the focus of attention rather than simple décor.

“Undlunkulu will be with you in few hours” the woman who never bothered telling us her name announces showing her white ivory teeth then disappears leaving silence looming between my mother, brother and I. It has been this way from the time I asked my mother to take me to the woman who she believes could be the only person that could help me after everyone has failed. And since I

made that decision I needed my brother alongside with me although our relationship is still edgy at the moment but I still need him, always.

“How long are we going to wait?” my mother huffs, she’s surely bringing her differences she has towards this family at the wrong time. Not what I need right now. I might’ve made a mistake bringing her here but one thing I cannot brook is her being callow, when Bongeziwe shoots her a diabolical look she clears her throat and lean backwards on a coach. Three women dressed like the one from earlier walks in carrying trays on their hands and they just placed them on the table, and leave —no words, nothing, just showing their amicable smiles.

The charcuterie board has meat, all kinds of cheese, grains, fruits, nuts, savory, sweet, spreads, pomegranates and figs. It evokes all my sense as it looks mouthwatering and delicious, there’s a Chinese teapots and small cups—that represents

Chinese culture like the interior design. “Don’t touch that!” my mother warns when I lean over to make myself a cup of tea and the smell is something I’ve never smelt before.

Bongeziwe gets up from the couch and grabs her arm, dragging her out. I’m not about to intervene into any of this. I came here for healing. A moment later Bongeziwe comes back alone, I’m perplex and he returns back to his seat and helping himself with a platter. “Uphi umah?” I ask where’s our mother.

“Gone” he responds nonchalantly “I am not about to let her ruin things for you because of her pride, no” he says sternly and waving his hand “I asked her to leave” I just nod my head and taking my first sip from the cup, this is delicate, it should be the best tea I’ve ever drank.

“Mongezi” he calls out for me.

“We’ll talk just not now” I know exactly where he wants to drive this conversation.

“I just wanted to say I love you” he says with a daft smirk and chewing the blue cheese in his mouth.

I look at him behind the cup and hiding my smile, what a dumbskull. “Mongezi” he annoyingly calls me and waggles his eyebrows.

“Leave me alone!”

“Ngiyakuthanda bhuti wami [I love you my brother]”

“Nami ngiyakuthanda [I love you too]” I mumble under my breath.

“Serious?”

“Mxm” I chuckle and shaking my head.

“Ngampela?” he hovers me again.

“Hmmm” I murmur and his smile widens on his face but that moment is interrupted by a clicking of shoes, before she appears her scent captivates my sense with a fresh formula of peony, pink currant musk and then she graces us with her presence in a loose fitting texture white dress, there’s something about women in this colour. A quintet of onyx feather, an optical illusion detailing. There’s something about her presence that brings fervour and tranquil.

We get up on our feet and extending my hand, when our skin touches her warmth travels throughout me, her hands are soft and her nails are painted in

yellow. You'd think she's my age because of that emollient and those unibrows. I flash a nervous smile at her before she goes and handshake my brother when I glance towards him I see my reflection mirroring his. "I'm sorry for keeping you waiting" she takes a sit and clasping her hands on her thighs and you cannot miss that yellow diamond on her finger.

Hinata Khuzwayo-Palm. The first born of Khumo and Thato Khuzwayo and she was the chosen one from all the generations to sit on the throne, not only that but she has gift as well —she can see the future from what I heard, she can communicate with the deaths and she has the power of healing, sounds surreal right?

She got married to Kaito Palm who is also the chosen one from his tribe and also has a gifts, I have never met him before but seen him gracing our magazines, television screen and all over social

media alongside his wife and children.

“A queen is never late” Bongeziwe.

Her laughter is eerie as the sound escapes her plump glossy lips. “I guess” she blushes “I am Lisakhanya Hinata Naomi Khuzwayo- Palm” she takes a long breather “that was long” our chuckles erupts “anyways you can choose however you want to call me, I’m only a queen at a palace not at my house”

“I’m Mongezi and that’s my brother Bongeziwe”

“You have a lovely home” Bongeziwe fawn.

“Thank you” yeah no, this woman is beautiful “Both of you tell me why your family is so undivided?” I eyeball my brother, whose jaw is wagging, how

does—although her face and tone is warm but you cannot miss the seriousness on her face.

I clear my throat, “the way things ended between my father and my mother, the secrecy caused that” I tell her honestly.

“What have you done to bring the family together?”

“Nothing” I hang my head low.

“And your girlfriend, where is she?”

I clear my throat “back home”

“Why she’s not here?”

“I didn’t think she’ll be needed”

“Are you saying you don’t need her?”

Why I’m being fired?

“No, I need her”

“Then why she is not here?”

“We are fighting”

“Fighting?”

“I found out that she lied to me”

“So?”

“She lied to me”

“Your idea of love is flawed if you think love is all about the beautiful butterfly feelings. Because it's not.

You need to understand that if you are committing yourself to someone through the bond of love, you are accepting everything that comes with it including the hard times and difficulties. You just cannot step back when the inconveniences would occur, you have to deal with them.

And that's how love stays.

Love stays for people who go through good and bad times together and yet never give up on love. She lied to you? Have you spoken to her about this?”

“Not yet, I wanted to heal first”

“When your heart hasn't healed from the fact that she lied to you?” she crosses her legs “and your

mother, where is she?”

“She left”

“Hmm” she murmurs “I cannot help you...” she pauses and my heart leaps out my mouth and blinking rapidly “today, but from tomorrow we can start your journey when my husband is around who’ll be helping us”

I breathe out long and hard.

“He will regain his memory back?” Bongeziwe cannot hide how elated he is.

“I’m not promising anything” she smiles “but I’m going to need your mother here”

“We have differences” I tell her

“I know that’s why I need her and your father as well”

“Can’t we do this without them?” Bongeziwe.

“Then we’ll be wasting each other’s time”

Yoh!

“I will call them” Bongeziwe.

“I am not going to heal you physically and mentally only but also spiritually including you Bongeziwe...”  
she looks towards him “and therefore your cousin is needed as well”

“I’m sorry but...”

“Do you want your brother to heal?” her brow crease  
“In fact your other brother should be here, I have  
enough rooms”

“I want him to heal but...”

“Then follow my instructions. All these people  
should be here before the dawn...” how come her  
voice is still so sweet “I will show you the rooms  
you’ll be using. Please warn them that my husband  
can read minds and energies and therefore if they  
bring anything negative in this house then you won’t  
get helped Mongezi”

“Noted” we say with Bongeziwe in unison.

“I will show you the rooms you’ll be using. It’s going

to be a long three days”

Three days?

“But tonight, we are going out” she says in a high pitched voice “What? Don’t give me that look and get up, asambe”

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“One of the best feelings is finding someone who really gets you.

A person who let's you be vulnerable and honest.

The kind of person who encourages you to push past your flaws because they accept you as you are.

Someone who never tells you that you are too much of this and too little of that because to them you are just enough of everything they love.

And it's actually beautiful finding someone like this to whom you will never fall short of anything.

You will just be enough”

MONGEZI

We grow up being told about queens, princesses and goddesses, whether in your favourite fairytale story, movies, cartoons or books. And they're always swish in dazzling gowns, their hair perfectly styled and bodies adorned with bright, shiny gemstones. They're defined with sharp nose and not button nose, thin lips and not plump lips and they mostly have waxed eyebrows and not unibrows.

They are so perfectly defined without any imperfections and most of them have sweet singing voices and they are never husky.

I wish they could be given a description of this woman in pink dress with matching glossy pink make up and unibrows unplucked. Maybe girls and

women in our society wouldn't have to grow up with the mentality that you have to be perfect, walk, talk and laugh a certain way to be a "lady". If we were educated that being yourself is enough because no one can take that away from you, I don't think anyone would've planted self doubt in their heads because they're intimidated about another woman across the room.

I can rave on about her every feature but I would be doing my whole country a disservice if I don't mention the beauty of this woman opposite me with soft glam skin and she is swish in a long black dress showing off her wonderfully sculptured frame and her dreadlocks have been curled, she looks mesmerizingly beautiful with an enchanting smile on her face speaking to Hinata who is mirroring the same reflection on her face before they both approach towards the living room and she sits opposite me and her eyes hiding under her lashes, she glares at me and my heart almost leap out of my mouth—capricious—I've expected to keep a hard

stoned face towards her, I have expected my heart to drum loudly with rage, I thought I'd be callous but instead that one look evoked emotions I thought I'll be able to shove at the back of my brain. "My husband will be here anytime then we can start" Hinata announces crossing her legs and she's the only person who has a delighted genuine smile on her face, I think she's enjoying how everyone is walking in lava right after that announcement.

Who wouldn't be when someone can literally read your mind and hear your thoughts?

Avulele is like a bull seeing red at the kraal whenever his eyes averts towards our Bongeziwe who doesn't seem bothered, it been only few minutes since they got here and I already feel like in these three days we'd be returning with body bags back home.

"Can I talk to maMkhungo?" she eyeballs me clearly

surprised by that.

“Oh no, no, you don’t need permission. We will wait for you when he gets here” she responds although her voice is husky but it tends to sound as though it has been coated with honey. I glare towards her and she clears her throat perking up from the couch and tugging the strands of her dreadlocks behind her ear and walking out of the room, if she was wearing shoes than they would’ve been clicking against floor but we were asked not to wear them.

I watch her sashaying her hips left and right while her dainty buttocks are following the patterned recurrence of her footsteps until we are both outside, the sun dances on her skin and this alone elicit unusual fervour and I am filled with euphoria.

I watch her flapping her lashes and swallowing her saliva, and her moist throat moves up and down so, so smoothly and I find myself lost in her eyes so

much that I lean forward and kiss her. She meets my gestures and enchants me with the most sensational kiss, I slide her hand on my chest while slowly sliding my own from her back all the way down to her back and bringing her closer, she smells so divine and her scent. I break away from the kiss, the moment I feel my very own pre-cum oozing inside my pants and she moans. “Bhuti” she murmurs under her breath with her eyes still fluttered close before she opens them slowly, like that slow motion effect in a movie before she looks at up me “I’m sorry” she apologises.

I like how she called me, is that how she calls me?—bhuti.

“Why did you lie to me?”

“I was scared...” her hands are resting on my chest  
“...that you won’t love me the same”

“And when you realised that the chemistry and connection is undeniable did you have the same fear?”

“Just a little but I wanted everything to happen naturally”

I breathe out, long and hard “how is my baby?” I say now smiling and softening my eyes to lighten the mood between us. I see a couple of his teeth gracing me behind his lips and I fall to hide that awe clouds my eyes.

“Your baby?” she creases her eyebrow with humour dancing in her eyes.

“Our baby ke”

“We are fine”

“I didn’t ask about you”

“Well I am telling you now”

“Promise me one thing that no matter what the circumstance you will never lie to me Nokwanda” I stare intently into her eyes “I don’t like how you handled things, there were so many ways you could have handled it not this one”

“I thought about myself without considering you and I’m sorry” she speaks now further drifting into swamp of emotions, I want to remove that facial expression from her face “And I promise”

“Ngiyakuthanda” I smile at her.

She smiles back at me, “I love you too, now let’s go back”

Returning back the only person we’ve been waiting for has arrived bespoke on a brown suit and sweatshirt, his intimidating aura is wheezing in the air and the eerie silence is unbearable even my own mother who always has something to say has kept her mouth glued.

Hinata chuckles softly glancing at her husband, “are you scared of him because he’s Chinese or because he reads minds?” she darts her eyes between the all of us.

“Probably both” Kaito responds chuckling with her, with a light in his eyes as they stare at each other “I am not bad as how she portrayed me, she’s the one you should be scared of” I hear people around the room taking deep breathes they’ve been holding back.

“I’m scared of the sword on the wall” Kayise confesses with humour, silent laughter erupts in the room.

Hinata attentively looks at him, “you remind me of my uncle, he probably would have pointed that out” she says with melancholy of sadness and I swear I saw her eyes glossy but she quickly hides it with a smile and glancing towards her man mirroring the same facial expression. “We are going to be honest with each other, if I point you out you’ll say what is in your heart remember lying won’t bother me, nor it will cause problems in my sex life or marriage but the problem will be left with you” she says then shrug nonchalantly “I hope we’re clear?”

“How is that going to help Mongezi regain his memory?” my mother asks.

“Unless if you have a problem with this then we can stop all of this, how about that?” Kaito sternly says, intently looking at her.

Did he read something?—I hope my mother is not ruining this for me.

“No, no, not at all” she clears her throat.

“I’m glad we are clear on that one” Kaito.

Eh!

And he said he is not bad?

“Bongeziwe you have something to say?” Hinata looks towards him and she crosses her leg.

“I am sure he has a lot to say” Avulele comments.

“Is your name Bongeziwe?” he directs his eyes towards him, leaning forward and balancing his elbows on his knee “I don’t understand why you opened your mouth cause the last time I check your name was not Bongeziwe”

“Don’t you have a lot to say?” Avulele.

“Even if I do what does that have to do with you?” I smell something volcanic and dangerous erupting right here.

“You took everything away from me!” Avulele yells out and Bongeziwe sardonically chuckles looking around the room before he returns back his attention towards him.

“You took everything away from yourself, no one did that and I haven’t got up from this couch to punch

you because I am here so my brother could heal but rather than that your nose would be bleeding by now” I am surprised seeing him this calm for the first time ever. Bongeziwe this calm?

Avulele gets up and charging towards him but Kayise holds him back.

“Let him go!” Kaito instructs “If you both want to fight then how about we go outside and you will have more space?” he continues.

“I am not here to fight” Bongeziwe

“Your mind says the opposite, let’s go outside” Kaito

Yeh!

Hinata is not interfering into this or whatsoever she is just leaning backwards on the couch so calm and looking how everything unfolds.

“Actually I would love to fight him, rearrange his face but what will I gain after doing it?” Bongeziwe  
“Nothing so I am not about to waste this time, fighting when we could be doing something that could help everyone in this room rather than having to nurse someone’s feelings and feed their egos”

Kaito himself looks impressed by this!

Avulele is still trying to escape Kayise’s grip but when he releases that he is not being entertained he calms down.

“Do you want to go outside and fight on your own?” Kaito asks Avulele and he doesn’t respond “I guess no, now sit down and wait for your own turn to get a

chance to speak”

And they said he is not bad?

His phone rings and he whispers on his wife’s ear and walking out of the room. “He’ll be back later, Bongeziwe you can continue” Hinata says.

Bongeziwe breathes out and rub his hands against his pants wincing “At first I was mad at him but I’d say angry mostly not because of how he treated the woman I’m in love with” he pauses and glances at Avulele “That’s one of the reasons but not the main reason why I was angry. It was because we were never taught to treat women like that, we’ve never seen our fathers treating women in that manner. They had their own flaws of which we found out about when we are already grown and wise but I’ve never been about treating a woman to a point where she questions herself and worth. Maybe I did and I am not aware of it cause I am not perfect, nobody is.

But I cannot tolerate that behaviour. But that is not something I want to dwell on anymore, I'd love to say thanks to him" he points directly at him "because if he didn't leave her at the alter we wouldn't have crossed paths, I wouldn't have tasted love and I also want him to know that I am going to treat her the way he was supposed to" he says then leans back placing a finger against his lip and I know I am not the only one flabbergasted about how he's reacting to this. I've imagined him being the first one to roll up his sleeves the moment they were asked if they wanted to fight outside, not this.

And wasn't he a bit shady at the end?

"Anything to your mother?" Hinata asks him.

"I hope she looks at herself in the mirror one day and see that she's the problem not that she has one and after that I hope she forgives herself"

“And what about you? Have you forgiven her?”

Another question is being thrown at him. Somehow I’m enjoying this—should I call it a session?

The raw emotions and intense atmosphere, glossy eyes and scowled faves. Some swallowing the bitterness of the bile against their taste buds. The colours on my mother’s face has been drained out and she’s now gloomy.

“Yes” Bongeziwe responds “But forgiving her doesn’t mean I’m okay with what she did. But I’m doing it for my own peace and serenity and it also doesn’t mean she should try shoving love and peace down my throat because I’ll choke then the relationship will die forever” he says, no humour, no smile, no smirk, nothing.

“Anything else?”

“Beside thanking Kwanda for walking into our lives, nothing really” he runs his finger against his lip—his face is still stern as a marble.

“Why you want to thank her?”

“My mother cause a drift between Mongezi and I so I wouldn’t find out about what she was up to but Nokwanda being in my brother’s life brought us together. Even with Kayise I don’t think we would’ve had a solid relationship has brothers if it wasn’t for her, she could have easily turned him against us but she didn’t”

“I deserve a thank you because I am the one who brought her into your lives” my mother comments

“you want to thank her when she is the one who caused more drama into our lives?” she spits

“Kefiloe died because of her, my baby died because

of her, she took both of you away from me and even attacked me in my own home and now everyone should bow down to her for what Bongeziwe?" she tugs her head in, words bitterly rolling out of her tongue.

"Kefiloe died because of your betrayal and maMkhungo had nothing to do with that and I dare you to say those words again trying to pin point this on her" I say calmly but my words clear as the water at the lake and dangerous and sharp as they sounded when they rolled out of my tongue.

"Are you threatening me Mongezi?" dramatically her lips tremble "After everything. You are threatening the only person who had guts to tell you nothing but the truth"

"Why did you tell your son the truth Mihlali, about everything that was hidden from him?" Hinata uncrossed her legs.

“Because he deserved to know the truth” my mother tugs her hair behind her ears.

“We both know that’s a lie unless if you want me to tell the truth in your behalf”

“Whatever makes you sleep at night Hinata” They exchange an intense eye contact and this is when I get to see the sovereign in Lisakhanya when my mother hangs her head low succumbing to her.

“You are pushing away people that loves you and care about you and you are going to die lonely and miserable. And the only person who was trying to help you will be with her family, her children and her husband, in a warm home. I think you’re forgetting that I am not the one who needs this but you do more than anyone in this room. I can heal your son and he will regain his memory but you know what is

going to happen after that? He will heal mentally and spiritually and he will leave my house with people that truly wants to see him well. People who loves him. And those people are here and you are not one of them. And you know what will happen after that? You will wish you used every second here making amends but it will be too late for you because all these people will shut the door on your face when you try to make things right because you had time. I am not here to nurse your feelings. I am not here to beg you to work with me and mostly I am not here to be friends with you because I already have enough of them. If you think I am going to walk around egg shells around you because of what happened between you and my brother then you need to think twice and if you don't want to be part of this journey with your son then leave before I make you" her tone is so thick and I felt my own bowels clenching on my mother's behalf.

"Do I need to say more?" she challenges her eyebrow towards my mother who shakes her head

no, her voice has been snatched away from her. “And lastly you will not disrespect me at my own house as if we are the same age. You can talk however you want but not here and I am not only saying this to her but each and everyone of you here. I hope we’re clear. Be glad that Kaito walked out of this room otherwise all of this would have ended long ago”

“We clear” we all say like a well rehearsed choir.

She perks up from the couch and walking out but pauses and turn around taking a deep breath as though she is trying to calm herself—her aura demands so much respect.

“I grew up in an environment whereby my family was united and there’s always been so much warmth and love. But it always wasn’t like that. They were fights ofcourse and division but my mother brought everyone together and we became

one big family from different races and background. It wasn't just relatives but friends as well, you couldn't tell because of how everyone was so united. From generation to generation. We became one big circle. We found brothers, sisters and love. I am one of those people who found love" she smiles, I think she is calming now "We fought each other. We fought against each other like any other family but it never lasted a second because it will be sorted out within a second. That's how I learnt the importance of having a family. Because my mother planted that seed, that even when she died I knew I still have mothers. Although they were not Khumo but they love me as much as she did. Even when my father died I knew I still have fathers, although they were not Thato but they were just as over protective as he was. My mother would have lived even my aunt but upon learning their husbands were no more they gave up on life for love. Mongezi would've walked here and I would've healed him in that moment and took money if I was someone else. But I don't want your money, you cannot afford me, no one can. But I hate this undivided spirit

wandering here. Busy pointing fingers at each other about who did this and that. When they did that, what did you do about it?” she darts her eyes at each and everyone of us. I swear my uncle—father—seems like he is not even here. “You can ask Kaito he will tell you how undivided was his family. Upon hearing how bitterly they treated him I still brought unity amongst everyone and harmony but mostly peace into him. You don’t have to be okay with people who’ve done you wrong. You don’t have to share the same table as them but forgive them. And move on. Yes some people are not worthy of it. But forgive yourself for allowing them to treat you like that. You won’t stop breathing. And mostly learn to apologize. Look at yourselves. You guys are so beautiful and make such an amazing family yet some of you are failing to do, one thing. Just one, humbling yourself cause you were wrong and secondly apologising. That’s why we are here. Come on. You can do way better than this. You are more than this. I am going to heal Mongezi and he will regain his memory, not tomorrow, not any other day but today and it is all up to you what you want

after that. Do you want to stay here and also heal? Mentally and spiritually? But now I'd love to go and check on my husband and when I get back Mongezi prepare yourself"

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"One of the best feelings is finding someone who really gets you.

A person who let's you be vulnerable and honest.

The kind of person who encourages you to push past your flaws because they accept you as you are.

Someone who never tells you that you are too much of this and too little of that because to them you are just enough of everything they love.

And it's actually beautiful finding someone like this to whom you will never fall short of anything.

You will just be enough"

It been overly hours of sitting and standing, pacing

up and down, chewing on my nails and biting the corner of my lip, crying and going silent for couple of few minutes. I endure hours of inner turmoil wondering what is happening in that room he has been taken to.

Is he going to regain his memory?

We have created so many wonderful memories together and I'd love for him to regain his memory, I'd love to see him back in that state of nirvana where he laughs more with a ridiculous sense of humor where the perplexed expression is wiped off his face. Where he doesn't have to stare into your eyes trying to figure out who you are and what you are to him, not forgetting the pain in his eyes after trying to crack his skull and he doesn't figure it out.

Bongeziwe keeps stealing looks towards me and hanging his head low swallowing what surely tastes like sandpaper against his tastebuds then he decides to disappear alongside my brother. I am left

here with Mhlahli whose finessing her phone screen avoiding creating conversation with anyone.

“Kwanda can we talk?” I am disturbed by a very calm tone, it comes so soft like a silk fabric against your skin and picking my head up I am surprised.

He wants to talk to me?

I glance at him once before getting up from where I am now sitting and the woman she has been sleeping and caused all this mishap with gives me a tense eye contact, shame.

We walk around the house until we find ourselves at what looks like a sunflower garden, it so beautiful and yellow. I inhale deeply and facing towards him as he shoves his hands inside his pocket, his son really took after him and I am left wondering how did his brother didn't see this?

All the face features and characteristics from Mongezi just screams the man standing right in front of me even the intimidating aura. “I just wanted to know if he ever said something about us working things out in future? Maybe building the relationship as father and son?” I am stuck between being brutally honest and selling him dreams in a plastic bag. “And be honest with me, I’m an old man I can take it” Okay then, we are telling him the truth.

“No” That’s the only word I manage to say and all the colors on his face are drained out, he is left sombre and gloomy. I blink at him and he hangs his head low. “But maybe after this his views might change remember that’s why we’re all here to heal”

“Sometimes I wish the truth never came out, things were better that way” Until you chose to continuously sleep with your brother’s wife, what you thought was going to happen?

“The truth also finds a way to come out”

“True” he winces and takes out his hands out of his pocket “we have lost so much already in this family and now I am begging you not to take him away from us” just like his son, he has an impassive expression across that face that gets finer as wine.

“I don’t understand what you mean”

“He’d do anything for you and since you and his mother are not getting along you know very well they will never amend while you’re still around. Why don’t you walk away from him?” he pauses “I’m sure you can find any man like him that comes from a rich family and will take care of you isn’t that what you want?” he insults me.

I glare at him before erupting with sonorous laughter and tugging my head. “The day you decide

to knock on my door and ask for forgiveness for what you just said just know I forgive you” I flash a serene smile at him “And if you think me walking away from him will bring peace into your family then clearly you don’t know what we share with your son. I am not at fault here for what is happening or what has happened but look at the man in the mirror and forgive him just like how I forgave you, you were there when we were being taught about forgiveness” I can tell my words came as punch in his balls because he opens and closes his mouth probably trying to find words to say but his tongue has been cut into two. I walk pass him without saying another word going back inside the house. I have been insulted enough by his “wife” and now him? I am not about to take it anymore.

Why they can’t own up to the fact that things are the way they are because of what they both did?—I am grateful that even though they caused a sin but they brought a gift into life that brought light into the darkest parts of my life.

Rich family?

And who said I need money? At home we were not wealthy but my mother made things happen for us that woman might've had her flaws but she was a superwoman or maybe even a magician but she made things happen that I felt as though I had everything in my palms: the world, galaxy even the sun and the moon. She didn't have all the money in the world but her words weighed so much wisdom.

Don't tell me about money when you never taught your children the right teachings about what money cannot buy.

Hinata walked into the room asking for Bongeziwe and Kayise because their father had something to say to them. And she never mentioned anything about Mongezi and regaining her memory.

They have been gone since forever and Mihlali seems like she wants to rip off the hair from her scalp because she wasn't part of the people her husband wanted to talk to, I don't know what can we do to help that woman it feels as though the words that changed the atmosphere didn't sting her as much it stung the rest of us and made us reflect with ourselves but rather she is unbothered sometimes we tend to think what happened in our pasts changed who we are or because of traumatic experiences but with this woman right here, nothing happened to her. Nothing. No trauma, nothing she is just callous and that's it. We cannot always look for reasons about how people behave or act a certain way because we want to pin point it on those things. Not everyone will be the prettiest crayon some has to be the brown crayon, some black, some white and some purple—do I make sense?

After what felt like an eternity I feel bugs and other animals walk up and down in my stomach filled

with rapture when he walks into the room alongside his brothers and showing his naked and deliciously looking feet and he has a smile emanating his face. “Mfazi wami” he hasn’t called me like that since he lost his memory—wait, wait, wait!

He opens his arms Bongeziwe is reflecting my very same emotions with a grin on his face as he sees tears shimmering in my eyes and my buttocks plants themselves on this couch, scared to get up because of my rubbery knees and I might fall.

“Nokwanda come here” he commands but his tone is gentle. His mother cannot believe it. Her eyes are widened out. Hands trembling and lower lip trembling just like mine as I shake my head no.

“Ngiyakucela” he pleads. I soldier on as my legs wiggle themselves left and right striding towards him and throwing myself on his chiseled chest. He welcomes me and embrace me warmly. So tight and suffocating and I swim on his chest gripping him tightly as if I will never hold him again and a gut wrenching sob escapes my lips. Lord knows how

much I have been praying for this. He knows how much I needed this for him. “Hhayi, hhayi MaMkhungo” he is surely not happy about the way I am crying as if I lost a husband. “Look at me” he looks at me and picking my head up but I refuse and bury myself on his chest, I don’t want him to see me covered in tears and mucus.

His hand is under my chin forcing me to look at him as he rapidly blinks his tears away, his eyes are glossy but he is trying to hide it and his Adam’s apple moves up and down as he swallows his saliva. “You don’t have to cry everything is okay” he says cupping my face into his hands right after wiping my tears. They are big and warm engulfing me.

“I was scared” I hiccup.

“I know baby” he says.

“What your father said?” Mihlali interrupts from behind and Bongeziwe just stares at her in a most diabolical look that causes her to hang her head low.

Hinata walks into the room alongside her husband and she has a smile on her face “my work is done” she says—what a powerful woman. After everyone said nothing could help Mongezi but she did what others failed to do, she is really is the chosen one.

Bongeziwe smile “Thank you” he thanks her. I wish I could kiss her feet “And about the journey of healing you wanted to take us through we would love to stay”

“What are we staying for? Mongezi has healed there’s nothing more needed here” Mihlali comments.

You see what I said?

“You can leave ma and we will stay behind”

Bongeziwe responds not aggressive, no. And that is what anyone would've expected from him but he is calm. He has been like this. Now you don't know if he is being sardonic or just genuine about what he says.

“I am staying” Avulele says.

“I'd love to stay” The uncle/ father says and glancing at me and I stare back at him until he chooses to look away.

“Great then we will continue with the journey tomorrow morning but I'd love to talk to Kwanda in the morning and Kayise before our session”

“Me again?” he utters “I am still recovering from what happened in that room” he says the colors on his face has been drained out and he looks like a deflated balloon.

What happened?

I look at Mongezi hoping he tells me and but his face stays impassive.

“What happened?” I ask

“You will see tomorrow when you get to talk to your mother” Hinata responds “but for now I have to snatch Mongezi away we are not fully done” I am just glad that he recovered and what happens next then I am good.

“I’m leaving, I have business to take care of” I really

don't know what to do with Mihlali anymore, I honestly and genuinely don't know.

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“I want to be the one you think of when you listen to love songs

The one who fills void in your heart, and the spaces between your fingers.

I want to hold your hands right when we watch sunsets, and tighter when we are caught in a storm.

I want to dive into your soul first and love you in a way you forget what not being loved feels like.

Would you let me?”

It feels as though the pain, hurt, neglect and questions that were hanging on my shoulder just dehumidify and a sense of serenity that I never thought ever existed washes over me right at this moment lifting my hands and bringing my palms

together and slowly inhaling then exhaling, my feet are beneath me sitting on a yoga mat and the smell of rose stick incense dances around my nostril.

“Hmmm! Ahh!” I imagine myself in a forest with tall greenery trees wearing a white long dress that drags the orange leaves scattered on the grounds along with me. The birds chirping on top of me creating melodies and the sky looking brightly blue. The breeze against my skin, moving sensually and the hairs at the nape of my neck stands. The crystal water invites me to be touched staring at me glittery like. “Hmmm! Ahh” As I take a step closer to the water he appears clad in black sheer shirt and black linen pants walking barefooted and showing his naked delicious feet. He waves at me and the tattoos on his fingers appears on my eyes. Then he flashes an enchanting smile. My bare feet keeps touching the ground. Oh his laughter sounds so far, it’s fading slowly so is the picture of him becomes blurry as I blink one, two, three then I flutter my eyes open and looking around the room as everyone else slowly open their eyes taking one last sharp breath as if they just came back from their nirvana.

“How was that?” Hinata ask looking enthralled in teal two piece seamless active wear after we have been meditating, she said it was for the heart chakra. Oh it takes knowledge to learn and understand spiritually but once you’re in tune with your spiritual self you learn the beautiful it is.

This morning I was like a soccer player quivering taking a bath in a bathtub filled with ice cubes when we walked into an heavenly room painted in white and scented candles shone brightly, there indoor fountain that Kayise calls a waterfall is breathtakingly beautiful as we sat in the room while she had a note pad in her hand, unexpectedly I heard my mother’s voice coming out from her mouth, “Kwanda” she said as a whisper first and my eyes popped out of my head while my heart leaped out of my mouth. I pat Kayise and poked him with tears clouding my eyes. Oh I had so many questions for her but in that moment the words left my mouth disappeared to sit on my canines. I felt

her presence. I felt her touching my face and wiping my tears.

I stared at my brother looking like a beautiful flower that needed to be watered since it was dying, little by little.

That was an experience!

I don't care about what happened in the past anymore after she apologized for taking her life in that manner and mostly for the lies and secret. All of that didn't matter to me anymore, it wasn't going to change anything but I wanted to hear that she was okay where she is.

“It felt amazing” Avulele is the first one to utter those words with a rosy tinge marking his cheeks. You'd stand in court denying that him and Bongeziwe used to fight with each other, throwing

powerful punches and kicks until their faces bled and bruised up. These days we wake up to four of them including Kaito gathered in a garden laughing from their belly buttons with a cup of tea in their hands. They're such beautiful, beautiful men that deserved to be scattered on each and every page of a magazine. I wasn't that close to Avulele but we have formed a relationship somehow, he is not that bad, surely an antagonist in my best friend's story but we all have mistakes right?

He told about how his wife went to meet up with Onalenna while we are here and my dear friend said she will tell me this once I got back—I've been trying to milk her the news but she prefers if we have the conversation so I can see her expression and body language then she told me they spent a night together, no fighting or argument erupted.

“I am glad, that was our last session” Hinata smiles that she downturns her mouth “but I am sad you

guys are leaving” Even me, I enjoyed being here. The tranquil atmosphere that dances in the air and the warmth. We got to meet her children, they are so adorable and I hope my genes are that amazing. I expected them to be spoilt bratz but they are not even close, they look so much like their father and the only thing they took from their mother was skin tone and plump lips.

Speaking of leaving—Mihlali really left, she packed her bags because there was an emergency at work which left me wondering what’s so importance than being with your family and making peace? Trying to speak to that woman is like throwing water in a duck’s back, I am telling you.

I’ve given up on her and her sons have let her go in their hearts.

“Not sad as I am but it been a journey” Bongeziwe winces and chuckling under his breath—oh yes it

been a journey. A hard one but as easy. Forgiving and talking about what hurt you is not easy. It feels as though you are digging the healing wound. The misery it comes with is perturbing and agonizing.

“I’m glad everyone feels that way” she pauses  
“Kayise” my brother picks his head up, he’s only here physically but he’s mental state is somewhere else. He has been like this since that day it was announced that their father wants to talk to them. He doesn’t want to tell me either what happened or what he said nor does Bongeziwe wants to share anything with me but he hasn’t been okay ever since and then Onalenna told me Khethelo packed her bags and left, maybe something huge happened between the two. But for Khethelo to even risk her dream job? This is looks serious, doesn’t it?

Kayise flashes a smile at her “you know you will have to come back right?” she asks him and my brother nods his head rapidly, “Great then, how

about we have breakfast together before you guys can leave?”

Why is he coming back?

Is something bad happening to him?

Everyone agrees with having breakfast including the father that has been avoiding making eye contact with me or even being left alone with me in a room after that conversation we had. We perk all at once and folding the mats. My mind is not here, why Kayise has to come back?

I haven't realized I have been absent minded as I stride to room until I get there. “MaMkhungo” his voice washes over me and resonating my body turning around there he is standing by the door, in all black active wear that holds him like his second skin. Then he closes the door behind. We haven't been in a room together, alone, like this—just

us—since he fully regained his memory.

“Bhuti” that comes out as a whisper, my breath has been knocked out of my lungs and it feels as though someone kicked me in my solar plexus.

Is this a butterfly effect?

Sexual effect?

Love effect?

All effects?

What is this?

His eyes drop to my roundish stomach and his lips curls into a smile before he finds my face again, my feet are planted on the same spot trying to normalize breathing again. “I missed you” I am soulless thing just standing with her mouth slightly opened after he has snatched my soul from me, “ngiyakhumbula mfazi wami” he repeats that he

misses me.

“I’m here” I smile.

I can feel the flush working its way up from my collarbone. Shifting awkwardly in my too-tight active wear and I look up to find him watching me, and it happens again. Time freeze. My breathing becomes fast and shallow. My pulses begins to race. The way he is looking at me make me hot all over. I ache. Feeling the second pregnancy approaching. I never thought desire hurts like this. “Woza la” he commands me to take a step closer, his voice captivating and charming as ever—so is his face and beautiful, beautiful smile. I exhale sharply stepping closer to him. Then he wraps his hands around my waist but also massaging my stomach, staring deep into my eyes. His throat is moist and the Adam’s throbs up and down. “What’s bothering you?”

“Nothing” I answer quickly

“We said no more lies, right?”

“Right”

“Talk to me”

“I am worried about Kayis e”

“Why?”

“Why does he have to come back something must be wrong”

“And he will tell you when he’s ready. You’re always worrying about other people and never yourself. You’re pregnant, you need to look after our baby”

Our, that sounded just right.

“He’s my brother” my cousin actually.

“I understand that” he runs his index finger on my lip purposely so I can forget all about this and run away with him to the sexual land “And I said I miss you” now his tone is becoming velvety soft.

“Bhut—bhuti”

“MaMkhungo”

“We—we can’t do this here”

He leans closer so close that his breath is dancing all over my face, and I can inhale the sweetness of it and his lips are so close for mines to touch and

sync “do what?” his tone reverberate behind his throat.

“I have to take a shower”

“I’ve been watching you in these tights...” he runs his fingers along my waist band and the physical contact feels like the summer sun in Cape Town. Then he grips my dainty buttocks and I gulp in some air and shutting my eyes “...you know what I thought?” he asks running his tongue at the nape of my ear, I shake my head no rapidly “the look on your face when I take them off”

“Bhuti”

“Mamkhungo”

“I can’t breathe” I confess honestly.

And then it happens again. A hitch in my breath as time seem to stop. The flare of heat in his eyes. My heart bumping, then fluttering. The slow, irresistible pull that brings our lips together in a kiss that starts as a butterfly kiss and then goes straight to my head.

His mouth is a sinful delight. His lips are velvet on mine, his hands cradling my face. I sigh as he runs his tongue over my lower lip, teasing my mouth open, tilting my face to deepen the kiss. His fingers flutter over the sensitive spot behind my ear, the equally sensitive skin on the nape of my neck. I twine my arms around his neck, pulling him closer and aching with pleasure as our tongues touch.

He trails kisses down my neck, his tongue licking into the pulse which beat wildly in my throat, to the mounds of my breasts at the seamless crop top. I moan, a guttural sound which I find strangely thrilling.

Running my hands over his shoulders, feeling the ripple of his muscles in response. He looks down at me, smiling at me, his cheeks slash with colour, and kiss me again, full on the mouth.

It changes then, that feeling. Not an ache, but an urgency, like a knot twist too tight inside me. His hand cups my breast, so gently, too gently. My nipple peak under his touch, craving more. His breath is shallow and fast as mines when a knock comes from my door before it swings open and turning our heads it's one of the maidens wearing her beautiful traditional print dress.

“I am sorry” she apologizes and hanging her head low feeling rather abashed and so am I “I didn’t...”

“It’s okay” I say first

“Ndlunkulu said the breakfast will be served outside the garden in fifteen minutes be there sharp” she

flashes a ravishing smile and closing the door before I can say anything to her.

I turn to him as he smirks “We have fifteen minutes maMkhungo” he peels off my seamless crop top and my breasts hang before he unexpectedly picks me up and I wrap my legs around his waist as he makes his way to the bathroom.

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“Another man’s trash is another man’s treasure”

ONALENNA

I am in a train of perturbed emotions and floating in a boat of anxiety and disquietude. The night seems longer than the usual these days and even the sound of the chirping birds in the morning doesn’t sound so exciting anymore. There’s no sense of

elation wrapped around me or what's ever since Bongeziwe announced that he was leaving to help his brother with healing well that is not what has been bothering me. But it's getting a call from him and alarming me that he'll be under one roof with the man that makes his anger erupt like something volcanic and he becomes a thing with animalistic characteristics. He allows whatever anger that has been brewing inside him to come out in a most violent way and that what scared me—not knowing what will happen when they are together.

Fear of them coming back with a body bag with one of them inside. The thought of being a widow sounds poignant and bitter against my own tongue.

Namisa is slowly falling asleep on my lap as we are watching one of her dark anime and they are killing each other with swords, bodies scatter in half and blood is splashed everywhere when a soft door bell echoes entire the house.

Bongeziwe asked me to stay at his house in the meantime while he's gone because it will be much easier for me to prepare for work and also for our daughter to school.

Yes! This human right here with beautiful natural hair that makes her look like an enthrall flower blooming in summer and hairs all over her face with her full lips have become something so, so special to me. Her bitter words that she used to throw at my face have become soft as a feather words.

She runs into my arms in the middle of the night when she's having night mares mostly after watching those scary anime of hers.

My parents are not happy with me staying here and even taking care of Bongeziwe's daughter. I've taken her with me to my house; severally and my

mother adores her because apparently she makes her feel like a grandmother that she longs to be—that woman and her dramatic traits. And then my father, ah, he feels as though I am being turned into a wife because I am taking care of my boyfriend as though I am taking care of my husband. “When you two get married what will be your duties when you’re already doing wifely duties Ona heh? Your mother never stayed at my place for more than a day, never!” my father had said shaking his head “I need to meet this boyfriend of yours, this is unacceptable Onalenna” he pointed on the coffee table as though what is “unacceptable” was placed there and lucid. He made it crystal clear that through heavy rains and sunshine Bongeziwe should be at his doorsteps first thing when he comes back.

I stride to the door wrenching the door open to see an unexpected visitor standing at my door steps. I have expected her face to be marble one day when we unexpectedly come across each other. Or

maybe a menacing look laced in her eyes but instead she has a smile, not a hellish one. I'd be lying. It's soft and sweet as her scent. "Azande" I say holding onto the door and blinking at her. Oh what a beautiful, beautiful woman. It makes so much sense why I was left at the altar stumbling and wavering. But you know what they say, other man's trash is another man's treasure.

"Onalenna" she keeps her smile "can I come in?" What if she is being so warm and welcoming so I can allow her to come in then she murder me? "I just want us to talk" it is as if she was reading my mind. I step aside and letting her walk in. She steps inside and wincing looking around the house.

"Let me take Namisa to bed" I turn to Azande who has made herself comfortable on the sofa while I pick up the beautiful sleeping princess in my arms to her room snuggling her under the cover. It's my lucky day today because I don't have to read her a

bedtime story.

Her favorite book is about girl called Kwakuhle and it's shamelessly mines too. It's beautifully written by Lia Butler without any romantic twist and different from typical fairytale stories. And ever since her father bought her that book she has been Kwakuhle since then and she wears pink all the time, not forgetting that she started appreciating her natural hair that she used to call a steel wool before.

Returning back I find Azande sitting in a same position as I left her. “Do you want something to drink? Wine maybe?”

“No, no wine for me” she smiles shyly “I'm pregnant” she announces and I rapidly blink before a smile crawls out of my mouth—oh, oh, oh okay.

“Congratulations!” I don’t know what to say, those are the words that seems and sound right at this moment. I have so many things scattering in my mind. One I hope that congratulations didn’t sound cold and I may seem jealous. And secondly I hope it doesn’t sound like I am hurt or anything. I am not, really.

“Thank you” she clutches her chest and my dream ring is flashed right on my face. Now that, that hurt me. It tastes bitter on my buds. It makes breathing a travail. “Well Avu...” she pauses and blink at me “I’m sorry” she apologizes.

“No it’s fine” I smile and taking a sit.

Is it really fine?

“He doesn’t know” she takes a sharp intake of breath “But I am not here for that” Okay “I just wanted to talk to you”

“Talk to me?”

“Yes”

“About what?”

Her head hangs low while she fiddles with her fingers then she whips it up to glance at me with an indescribable look plastered on her face. “Did you love him?” her voice was soft and if she wasn’t the center of my attention I wouldn’t have heard.

Did you love him?—That’s one question I’ve never dreamt of being asked by the woman who I practically planned a wedding for. Ever. Never imagined sitting opposite her so calmly. I had other plans. I’d be lying if I said at some point I didn’t want to wrap my hands around her neck and tightly just grip and squeeze while watching her eyes turn

to the back of her head and saliva spilling in bubbles from her mouth until she takes her last breath after begging me to let her go. I'd be telling nothing but lies if I say I didn't want to take my aunt's advice and go to a famous sangoma and do something sorcery.

My anger was like that dangerous thunder after a sunny day.

And today I am being asked by the same woman If I loved the man that pushed me into thinking so many things that were atrocious if I loved him? Oh life, what unexpected thing you are.

“Yes” I say simply.

“Whu!” she winces as if she just received an electronic slap on her face and facing the aftermath “I don't know what I expected asking that”

“Closure”

“Maybe” she breathes “I’m sorry Onalenna”

I tug my head in “What for?”

“Everything. You didn’t deserve that, no one does actually. I also didn’t know and maybe if I knew I wasn’t going to snatch him away from you like that”

“I am glad you did” I smile “because I wouldn’t have met Bongeziwe. You honestly don’t have to apologize. We were both victims”

“Do you think he loved you?”

“You don’t treat people you love like that. I’d hate to

believe that he did”

“I wanted to leave him...” she tells me “...but I can’t”

“Heart is a very stupid organ Azande”

She chuckles “True” then she pauses again “I love him Onalenna”

“Then don’t leave him if you want to leave him because you think he still loves me or I still do then you’re breaking your own heart. Leave because you want to. Personally I don’t have a problem with you or him for that matter. I was angry for years, of course. Any woman would be angry and be filled with hatred. Being left for another woman on your wedding day? It left me with self doubt and so many unanswered questions. Those questions are still there stored in my brain but they don’t need answers anymore. It doesn’t matter anymore

because I've made peace with that happened. If he really found genuine love in you and you in him then who am I to stop that?"

"But you didn't deserve that"

"True but you know what I deserve?" she shakes her head waiting for me to continue "The love I found after being drowned in pain, hurt and sorrow. I deserve all of this happiness. This is what I deserve Azande. Don't shoot yourself for what happened"

"Your wisdom is heart warming"

"Thank you" I chuckle

"And I hope that God grants you with all you've ever wished for, that's another thing that you deserve"

“And so are you”

“I should leave”

“At this time? No, sleep over”

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“I no longer believed in the idea of soul mates, or love at first sight.

But I was beginning to believe that a very few times in your life, if you were lucky, you might meet someone who was exactly right for you.

Not because he was perfect, or you were, but because your combined flaws were arranged in a way that allowed two separate beings to fit together.”

We are back!

I should be floating in a boat or even diving in an ocean of elation since the man I would really love to think is my soulmate has regained his memory but instead I am enervated—it's nothing deep. It has nothing to do with that journey we had to take but it brought me so much serenity and all my unanswered questions were finally answered. But I am just worn to a frazzle that sometimes I want to go at my apartment and be alone, not that I haven't tried it and drive back in the middle of the night missing being in his arms, feeling his chest heaving up and down or just his warm and tranquil breath fanning my face while his big and soft hands engulfs what he calls a tiny body.

It been overly three days being back and all I do is lock myself in his working room that has mannequins, fabrics and stretches hanging on the wall. Every morning I come and sit here all alone with a bowl of fruit and burn an incense and putting together what he has already designed into a perfect and wonderful outfit then come out at night

when we are already about to go to bed. I have no explanation or whatsoever behind this and he hasn't done anything wrong or maybe there is something—sigh. Ever since he has fully, fully regain his memory him and Bongeziwe have been having conversations behind close doors including Kayise and Avulele, yes that satan thing has become a huge part of them. Well he is still a nemesis regardless of them kissing and making up. And whatever that they are hiding it's not minor and I can sense from the way he tenses when he sees me approaching their direction and how he deeply stares into my eyes making sure that I am the first one to look away from being intimidated.

This morning I woke up and went to check out the building that has been given to me. My dream is slowly becoming reality and I'll be owning my own store and officially become a buyer, dresser and stylist—sounds surreal doesn't it.

The straight black lines on the all-white background seem very simple, but never bored. Only by moving a step forward, you get a different view – the scene changes from every angle. The interior designer plays with the infinite shapes of 2D pattern in the 3D world, making surprises in each detail. When light is added, shadows layer the scene with clear silhouettes. The small space turns out to be simple, unique, delicate and modest. I love every single details that has been made at my store.

Instead of driving back to his house since we are practically staying together I decide to drive back to my apartment and I left with one of his precious sport cars. I am about to close the door behind me when someone blocks it with their feet and a cold metal is placed on my forehead. A gun, I have a gun on my forehead. I cannot even gulp down for air nor try processing what is happening around me as a man in a red wine suite smug at me. “Go inside” he instructs but I cannot move. I am transfixed like a vegetable. “I said go inside!” my stubbornness yells

that I should be fierce. Mongezi is going to murder me before this man does. Mainly for leaving the house without telling him and also putting my life and his child in danger—I am going to be an ancestor.

I have no choice but to take steps back and going inside the house, before I can utter a word this house is full of men wearing black suits and dark aura dancing around the room while I am being forced to sit on the couch with my urethra full.

“Where is your brother?” One man asks clad in a grey suite and crossing his legs. He has fresh bruises on his face. “Where is Kayise?” he asks me again and I just blink at me.

“You can’t speak?” he asks me and all I can do is shaking my head in agreement. Words cannot seem to spill out of my mouth but my tears are floating dangerously on my eyelids threatening to burn them.

“You cannot speak?” I shake my head again and he

takes out his phone typing before he hands it to me asking the same question he asked the moment he opened his mouth. I said I cannot speak not deaf. I whip my head up looking at him before shrugging my shoulders. “You don’t know?” I shake my head vigorously. He looks up to the guy standing behind me and chuckles darkly “you don’t know?” attentively he glares “Firstly you are making me a fool by lying and saying you cannot speak Kwanda...” he pauses. Oh, no, no he knows me. “And still you are lying to me about your brother’s whereabouts” again he looks at the red wine suit man who then presses a cold metal on my neck. I am trembling. I am shaking. I am crying. But my voice—she has made it clear that she is not coming out of this throat even though I am crying but a gut wrenching sob that should come out of my mouth is nowhere in sight.

“One more time where is your brother?”

“I don’t know” that comes out raspy and I blink few times “I am pregnant please don’t kill me” I plead. Arg if I didn’t have my big head growing inside me I’d surely be spin kicking these people.

“My wife was pregnant” he utters “And you want to know what she did?” I don’t want to know about him and his wife or any of his marriage problems but I want this gun removed from my neck. I want Mongezi to walk through that door and hold me in his arms and embrace me succulently while he calmly reprimands me for putting my life in danger. “She aborted all because of your brother. He slept with my wife and it didn’t end there, he sent me, me to coma” Oh Kayise!

And what this got to do with me? I was not holding a candle. “Make her talk!” he roars and that is when a slap that sends me to my mother’s grave and my father’s church whom I never, ever knew existed. This time he hits me with the back of his hand and

the ring on his finger manages to break my lip.  
“Where is Kayise?” I am going to die. I am dead. I can already picture everyone wearing all black and staring at my white gleaming coffin surrounded by fresh flowers and scented candles at my funeral singing amagugu.

“At work” he should be there “he is at work”

He smirks devilishly—he sucked from the same breast as satan himself. They should be relatives.  
“We both know he is not there. I would’ve known”

“I don’t know then” I am not about to answer his stupid, stupid questions. If he really wanted to hunt him down he would’ve looked somewhere for him. A slap is about to meet my cheek and my eyes are fluttered closed trembling when the door touches the ground. And Bongeziwe appears first before his brother behind. I want to get up from here and run into his arms and apologize, I don’t know for what

but I can sense that I'll be doing more of that whether while digging into his skin and apologizing closely to his ear or with him looking down at me with an impassive expression on his face. When our eyes meet I met with an expression I have not expected from him, glossy and dark eyes that dehumidify every emotions in me. Oh that look, it's also menacing and a clear indication that I have a lot of explaining to do.

“Get your hands off her!” his tone is so calm, calm but it screams too much authority. That's one thing about him. He demands that without a murmuring a single word.

He has a gun in his hands!

Holy mother—he has a gun? Mongezi has gun? A metal that has bullets inside and also poisonous. He has a gun Jesus Christ! A weapon that kills people and sometimes leave them paralyzed. A gun?

A pistol? The forever so calm bhuti knows how to hold a gun and yet his perfectly manicured fingers makes holding it looks attractive.

I had expected this man to be stubborn but instead Mongezi charges towards him and starts punching him and using the gun to hit him in the head while the blood that matches the suit that this man is wearing covers his face. “How dare you touch my wife?” He has a gun? Mongezi has a gun and just called me his wife. What’s more? “How dare you?” I blink and stare, no words coming out.

“Bhuti...” Finally I get to speak “you have a gun?” Wonderful Nokwanda out of all things to save that man who is a pulp covered in blood you asked that.

“I am not trying to cause trouble I just wanted Kayise” this man is still cool as a cucumber on the couch, what a brave, brave ugly duckling. Even Avulele is holding a gun and Bongeziwe!

“By holding my wife at gun point?” Oh that man is too calm. He should be screaming those words with veins popping up from his forehead and arms. His eyes bloodshot red from rage but instead he screams power and tranquil—what a man!

“Whatever amount you can accept as an apology, I’d deliver” Is this the same man who was giving instructions about me being slapped?

“Stay the fuck away from my brother!” Bongeziwe

“He slept with my wife” he responds. Ah his two men that had guns have their hands in the air succumbing.

“I don’t care...” Bongeziwe spits “Now if you know what’s good for you you’ll walk out of here and never look back” he seems to know them. And fear

them. He smirks perking up from the couch fixing his blazer.

“Your father taught you well” he says “I’ll wait for your message with regards to what you’ll accept as an apology. I don’t want trouble. I didn’t know he was related to you” then he averts his eyes towards “my queen forgive me” Oh no what the hell is going on? They walk out following each other and I am only left with these three men. I eye ball them with the guns on their hands.

“MamKhungo”

“Bhuti”

“Asambe!” This says there’s no further discussion and like a tamed zombie I get up from the couch and following him as he walk out the door, the other two hasn’t uttered words to me. I keep gripping my

dress following his fast pace. He opens the door for me to the car.

“I can explain”

“Get in Nokwanda” I should be mad! Not him, he has no right when he practically owns a gun. I clamber in the car and the bang when he shuts the door makes me crawl out of my skin before he slides behind the wheel and maneuvers the car on the road. “Nokwanda usuyahlanya?” he asks if I am now crazy. Me? Me? No.

“You own a gun” I fold my hands against my chest.

“I don’t own a gun Nokwanda”

“Have you shot someone?”

“Yes”

I gasp and almost choke “How many?”

“That doesn’t matter”

“That means you own a gun”

“You” he looks at me “you have no right, no right to ask me questions” come on scream at me, shout, yell, just do something so I can understand whether you are burning with anger or what so I can start coming up with my powerful lies but now, I cannot understand you. “No rights Nokwanda” he’s mad, very.

There’s uncomfortable silence until we are at his house, no matter how mad he is but he still opens the door for me and then leave me behind making

his way inside the house and I take a deep breather.

He is not here!

I take off my shoes at the living room and he comes from the kitchen with his peppermint tea when I attempt to walk out of the room he looks at me intently and I have no choice but sinking by buttocks back to the couch and hang my head low while he takes slow sips from his cup, leaning back so lithe like a predator. “I went to check out my store and I wanted to see how far are they with everything then I decided to go to my apartment because I’ve missed being there” I explain.

“You’ve missed being there?” he creases his eyebrow “you left without telling me where you’re going? Is that how we do things now Nokwanda?”

“No”

“No?” I shake my head at him “then why you did that? To test me?” Ah no.

“No”

“Loyo no uzongicasula [that “no” is going to piss me off]”

“I am sorry”

“For what MaMkhungo? What are you sorry for? Putting your life and Mcelu heir in danger” Oh yes that’s his father’s surname and soon after the ceremony that will be held he’ll be changing surnames, regardless of him not wanting to do so before but he has no choice. It has a perfect fit into his name as well. “You made me hold a gun Nokwanda. I hate guns, I hate them so much”

“But you’ve shot someone”

“Don’t try to be smart with me”

I blink “You own a gun?”

“I told you, I don’t own a gun”

“Then whose gun was that?”

“Avulele”

“He owns guns?”

“Yes” he answers simply as if he just said Avulele sells dry scones at the side of the road. “It is his line

of work, legally”

“Is he a police?”

“No”

“You’re not a criminal bhuti, are you?”

“For you Nokwanda I could be anything even a murder” What is that supposed to mean.

“You wouldn’t kill for me Mongezi”

“Then where is Sambulo?” he says still calm and then gets up from the couch with his tea and disappears around the house.

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“I know how sometimes days could offer nothing but tiredness and nights could be longer and harder to pass

But I want to let you know that no matter how the days are, I'll be there for you, always.

So I want to be the person you could find your peace in.

I want to be the person on whom you could rest your head and escape from the world.

I want to be the place you could breathe out for a while

I want to be the hug you long most after another day of pretending strong.

I want to be those arms where you don't have to hold yourself together anymore.

Because even if you shatter in my arms, I'll be there to hold you back together

I know the world is too much already and a battle field for you but I won't be another battle you need to win

I will be your home. A home where you can rest.”

Breathe, breathe, breathe!

Just breathe dammit!

This is actually not the perfect timing to be craving for that carrot cake he bought for me when we came back just three days ago. Now I don't know if I should follow him and grab that cup of tea in his hand and throw it against the wall demanding answers or stride to the kitchen and devour that carrot cake with nuts. I am perturbed and suddenly sweating from the follicle of my hair all the way to my white painted toenails. I want to rip off my hair from its own root because it has suddenly become annoying for me.

He has a gun? A gun? Oh Lord please help me and not be one of those women in books who were once innocent and never knew anything about penis and

how it tasted and when they finally did, they found a dangerous, dangerous one. That disappears in the middle of the night and comes back with cold hands, hugging you from behind and nuzzle on your neck. I am talking about that one who makes you dodge bullets for the rest of your life.

I cannot believe he sat there looking gorgeous with a cup in his hands as if he was invited by Vogue magazine and then spat those words so calmly and infectious and somewhere they sounded like summer breeze at night, so airy and beautiful. And you'd say he just announced that his new collection of clothing is coming out soon. But no, no, no he clearly uttered dangerous words. A murder? For me? Oh Lord of heavens help me.

I get up instead of looking for him around the house I am digging for the carrot cake in the fridge and making my way to his working room and locking the door. I don't want to see him or even talk to him.

The sound of his voice will snatch my breath away from my lungs and those beautiful animated black eyes will hypnotize me and I will forget all about it.

I cannot believe he can hold a gun!

But now it makes sense all these questions I should've asked myself were just shoved at the back of my brain. "penis" my brain lights up a bulb on top of my head. Ah dangerous, dangerous thing. That made me pregnant without any penetration but just rubbing and now I have a whole human that soon will have two eyes, two ears, two hands and feet and a nose and surely a penis too growing inside me.

Uninvited tears drowns my eyeballs as I chew and swallow what taste divine against my taste buds. I don't really know why I am crying. Surely because my once upon a time handsome walking bible could be dead or because Mongezi can hold a gun so

sexily or because this cake is delicious or because these dreadlocks are piqued at this moment.

Where did Kefiloe got that gun? Why it didn't come as a surprise to me that in that house there was a gun laying around and someone committed suicide with it and then we moved on from life like nothing ever happened.

Oh scissor!

I grab it and start cutting of these annoying things hanging over my head and now they are scattered all over the floor and I am left with what looks like an afro before continuing eating the carrot cake with salty beads laced on my cheeks.

Outside, it's a cold and wet morning. I shimmy over the window and stare out the scene. The sky and sea are a dismal grey, and the wind battering and sculpting the greenery line path of trees to the

beach. I find it magical. Somehow it represents him. The way the waves moves at the shore and the reverb sound of an ocean. It's all him, so, so calm and yet dangerous but beautiful at the same time.

Eh so last night he didn't come looking for me and banging on that door and threatening to break down this bloody door down before he scoops me at takes me to bed because of my lately tantrums. He is surely mad at me then. Very mad. I walk out of the door pushing my belly bump to our bedroom and he is not here, the bed hasn't been touched which means he didn't sleep here.

Where did he sleep?

After taking a shower I am wearing his sweatpants and black shirt, a combination of clothes that doesn't make sense and then my hair what a beautiful mess with drops of pearl earrings hanging on my ears. I am angrily shoving my clothes into a

bag when I hear his foot steps. Just those steps alone before he can appear my knees are already wiggling left and right and the moment I see him my hands stop themselves from shoving these white fabrics into my bags.

He glares at me, eyes focused on my hair than anything else. Oh he is nonplussed. “What happened to your hair MaMkhungo?” Okay he is bewildered. I just look at him with that imagination from yesterday of him carrying a gun with those beautiful, beautiful hands.

“I decided to cut it”

“You look beautiful” I did not expect that from him mainly because I am not anywhere near that word because I look like I have been eaten by rats. “And what happened to your lip?”

I cannot look into his eyes. I can feel the tears prickling at the corner of my eyes. The denim that I've swallowed is stuck on my throat and nothing liquidity can remove it. "That—that guy he slapped me and..." I stutter and almost immediately a frown appears on his face "broke my lip. He slapped me so hard bhuti and I saw stars" I tell him dramatically.

He chuckles sardonically. I don't know why. Is it because I was slapped and saw the stars or is it my hair? Or how I narrated everything to him?

He is calm though, very calm for my hormonal self "so he slapped umfazi wami and it didn't just end there but he broke your lip?" These days when he calls me his wife it holds a different meaning. Normally he just says it as a pet name. Okay or maybe I felt that way. But the way he said it holds so much power. I am feeling like he has paid chicken and rats for me already. "He walked into your apartment and slapped you MaMkhungo? And

slapped you? My wife?”

“I am not your wife” He must know that just because I haven’t hovered him with endless questions doesn’t mean I am not mad at him. I even shaved my head because of him he shouldn’t dare me.

“You are my wife Nokwanda” he is telling me.

“I am not bhuti” I blink rapidly. The denim on my throat wants to be smoothen by my saliva watching him taking steps towards me.

My body is on fire, my blood drumming through my veins. Watching him standing right in front of me and I looking up at him, this is phenomenal. He leans forward and cupping my jaws with both his hands and he pulls me into a sweltering kiss. “I want to make you my wife” One hand slip from my

jaw to my neck down my chest spreading his warmth all over me. “Yezwa MaMkhungo”

“Then you’ll have to marry me” I whisper

“That’s what I am going to do and all you have to do is say yes” he breaks our kiss and direct his full focus on me.

It’s now or never Nokwanda!

“Bhuti...” I call him and his gaze is searching, drilling into mine to see what is that I want to say to him. “Did you kill—I cannot even finish uttering those words. “You didn’t right?” I pray and hope that deep down he’d say he didn’t. His tender gaze turns intense. And before I know it I am on the bed beneath him while he looks down at me. He position his hands on the sides of my body, resting over my ribs, but I know the stillness of them is deceptive.

These fingers could stroke with love just as much as they could tickle with merciless incursion – all at the drop of a hat. His light touch is not fooling me, not with the digits poised for torment and slowly the clothes that belongs to him I being peeled off so succulently but he has not yet broke away our eye contact.

Already I can feel my orgasm brewing, building, every stroke and kiss charging it.

He drops to his knees, wrenching off my panties with zero regard for the delicate lace. He fuses his gaze to my mound, his level stare burning as much as his touch would. My head lolls restlessly against the bed covered in white as I mewl my impatience. Again my fingers sought the grip of his head, wanting to force his mouth already onto me.

“I need both hands free mfazi wami, you need to help me out” I want to correct him again that I am not his wife. The way it holds so much power it

makes my body burn. The low rumble of his voice is insanely erotic as he guides my hands to the sides of my sex. I can feel his freighting breaths tease me, hot and damp as he folds all but two of my fingers away then places them right beside my glistening lips. I copy what he'd done on the other side so I am bracketing the swollen folds with both sets of fingers.

“Pull up and hold baby” he commands and when I comply I damn near convulsed at the reveal, the tremble leaving my legs like jelly. My gasp are more like a pathetic whimper of need. They aren't shy anymore, hiding between my legs but voluptuous and plump, popping out like lips puckering for a kiss. Not only they directly in front of his ardent mouth but in my full view as well. I can see the sheen of my arousal, the juicy centre poking through the cleft in spite of the fullness of the outer rounds.

I am not getting any answers instead I'll be rewarded with countless orgasm and screams until my voice turns raspy—well played bhuti.

We gape at the view for a long minute; shallow breaths gusting before he tears his hooded stare away. Turning those molten pools onto me he watches through his lashes as he drags the flat of his tongue along the length of my slit, so agonisingly slow it feels as though my skin is burning, melting. The sensation is astonishingly different, as if moving the nerves altered the way they respond.

“Aaaahh” I ripe in a breath, something to help me survive the sensations lighting up the pleasure centres of my brain as it fire along my spinal column. It takes that second to realise how ensnare I am, in spite of not being bound I am no more mobile. My back is pressed against the mattress and my feet spread wide to accommodate bhuti’s kneeling form. There is no way in hell I am moving my hands and with his face buried in the apex of my thighs the only real purchase I have is to tilt my hips to increase the pressure of his ministrations but I doubt that he’d let me get away with even that.

Again he licks, starting with a tiny swirl of his tongue at the heart of my opening before sliding it up and up, the brief contact with my clitoris jolting as a sensual shudder ride me hard. His left arm snake up my body where his fingers find the taut pike of my nipple, tweaking and rolling. I am close, so close as the sensations crash through my body, everything converging in that demanding bundle of nerves that cools the moment the blanket of his tongue sweep away from it.

It is the maddening lapping, the contrast between the heat of his mouth and the cooling contact with the air, the view I have from my vantage point as he watches me watching him lick me, the tugging at my nipple and finally the leisurely finger he pushes inside, rimming just inside my entrance. I want more of everything but at the same time fearing the force of what I can feel breaking over me.

He groans his delight before rewarding me with another long lap, this time gently suckling my clitoris into the wet fever of his mouth. He holds it there, sweeping his tongue along the underside in rapid flutters while his finger, only first knuckle-deep, stretched and slowly circle the edge of my opening.

“Oh, oh!” my breaths stutter. “Please!” I am hovering at the verge of a vortex of conflicting desires. I want to remain like this – forever – melting from the inside out with the sheer pleasure of it but I also want that pleasure to come to a head, to tear me out and away from myself with the blinding explosion I could feel was fast coming my way.

“Say yes MaMkhungo!” his throaty rasp barely audible above the pounding sound of my roaring blood before he apply his tongue again. This time in earnest as he double his tempo, the flick of his licks growing shorter, hot and focussed on where I need

it. There is nothing I could do to hold back the brusque stiffening of my legs and core when he switches the lazy stroke of his finger to a hard and fast pump.

Yes?

Yes to what?

Yes to he killed him? Oh, no, no I am not about to admit his sins for him.

The orgasm overtakes me, like a full body spasm it coils tighter still, curling in on itself then snap with a stunning burst as I surrender, letting it shudder through me with the force of a 1000V jolt. The earth shake then, quaking just for me as he draw every last contraction with a tongue intent on the cream of my release.

“Yes! Yes! Yes! Yes!” That’s all I scream. As to what, I don’t know. My head was indeed spinning but I

had no time to dwell on it.

“Ngiyabonga” he thank me his lips curling into a smile already standing and then he disappears in the room and I do is flutter my eyes closed catching my breath.

Really? I fell asleep after screaming “yes” to something I don’t know and not even aware of, shameless.

I get up and the sun is now slowly setting outside the window bringing my hands closer to my face to brush off the sleep from my eyes.

What is this?

I have a ring on my finger—ha, ha surely dreaming. I return my head back to the pillow and close my eyes, opening my left eye to check my finger again and it stares back at me. A natural gemstone,

champagne morganite and sterling silver ring on my finger.

No, sleep Kwanda!

Okay I cannot sleep. I get off the bed and putting on my clothes that I was wearing and they're neatly folded.

I've never in my life dreamt of becoming a wife but instead I imagined myself making those people's lives a nightmare but walking into a room and showing too much skin while their husbands drool over me. Then they visit my room, sweat and scream on top of me before they return back home to their wives and kids smelling like sex with marks on their backs—Life, life, life. Now a man who is always wearing black just wooed me and turn my world around. I don't dream of standing in a room full of people doing a poem anymore. Or swinging in a strip pole. Anything exotic. Swinging in a strip

pole for him, yes!

“Bhuti what is this?” I walk to him in the living room, oh he seems as though he was waiting for me.

“A ring” Of course I can see that “I told you I want you to be my wife” I thought you were joking you stupid, stupid man “And you said I should marry you I am doing that”

“A wife? Me?”

“My wife. My eternal sunshine”

I flare my nostrils. I cannot be mad at him now can I? Otherwise we are going to have another sex right here. “You want to marry me?” It’s now sinking in. I am going to be someone’s wife and cook stir fry noodles for him and make him tea for the rest of our

lives.

“I am going to marry you”

“If you want me to marry you then I want the truth from you bhuti, nothing but the truth. Did you call Sambulo yes or no”

“I don’t know” Oh J esus save me!

“Mongezi Mcelu” He is surprises. I have never ever called him like this. It’s surely the ring on my finger giving me super powers “Did you?”

“No”

“You said you’d be anything for me even a murder what was that supposed to mean?”

“I’d kill for you”

Don’t just sit there and be calm.

“So you killed him?”

“No”

“What did you do?”

“I am not answering that question”

“Okay so you didn’t kill him but you did something to him?”

“Yes” Now I am curious. I wonder what he did to him. At least he is not death.

“Are you a criminal?”

“Haibo Nokwanda!” Oh he’s going to act surprised now? “I am not a criminal, never will be and not planning on being one what do you take me for?”

“The gun?”

“I was protecting my stubborn wife. You wanted me to show up there with a stick like Moses?” Now his tone is firm, indicating I should know my place.

“No” I answer him.

“Exactly. That gun was not mines”

“Bhuti”

“Moonceres” Oh is mad, mad, mad

“I love you”

His lips curl into a smile, “come here” I walk up to him before he pulls me to his lap and his hands around me. “You drive me crazy Nokwanda”

“I know, you too”

“You are yet to know me, the real me Nokwanda. Not that man you met in a very dark place and trying to help himself out”

“You don’t do any shady business and burying people in our yard right?”

“MaMkhungo, I am nowhere close to being a criminal or doing shady things” Okay great “but I am possessive very, I am very gentle. I will never ever make you doubt how much I love you or make you feel any less of a woman. But I am a ruthless man. Not revengeful but I despise betrayers. If you mess me with me” he shrugs his shoulders nonchalantly “I am a protector. I sacrifice and I love. I am not doing anything shady or whatsoever that you’re thinking but if anyone, anyone touches you or even look at you than I can be anything” Who is this man? The one I met cannot even kill a cat. Wait he kills this kitten in between my legs always. Oh, but who is this? There’s something—something about him. I love it. Oh, no, no it’s not dark like those men you always fall in love with in books and movies but this one here makes me want to submit to him and wrap my head with a cloth and call him “baba”.

“Can you deal with that mfazi wami”

“Hmm” I murmur

“Great, you need to do something with you, I don’t know why you cut your dreadlocks” It’s you, all you.

“But you said I’m beautiful”

“Your hair doesn’t define you. But my wife cannot be walking around looking like she has been eaten by rats. Let’s go”

“Where we’re going?”

“To do your hair unless if you want to meet my grandmother like that” I always meet that one at the wrong time, when I am angry or crying.

Why I am meeting her?

Oh God! I am getting married to Mongezi.

[01/24, 07:59] : 69

“Life is unpredictable, not everything is in our control but as long as we are with the right people, you can handle anything”

My brother still haven't been located, he hasn't communicated with anyone and that has left me perturbed because he's that one person I really had a strong and unbreakable bond with—I think he understood me better than anyone in this world, he still does which is why it was more easier to just run to him all the time when I was drunk or when I felt like my mind was in a very crowded space. And for him to just close all those doors on my face somehow makes me wonder if ever we would be as we were before everything and discovering all lies and deceit and dishonesty that has been happening in our family.

On the other hand my friend is also nowhere in sight, not taking anyone's calls or responding to our messages. Just last night I managed to have a conversation with her mother who assured me that wherever she is—she's fine and safe, from what? I don't really know. It was then I was turned into a postman at that moment about talking to my family about the damage my brother has done and that regards to the pregnancy.

But now here I am in my brand new braids that have been curled up at the ends and Mongezi has been completing me from the time that lady braided just one strand and he was hovering me with countless compliments, isn't he dramatic?

Sadly I had to cover them with a head wrap.

I am in a boat of anxiety and floating as we walk

through the door to Mongezi's grandparents house and his grandmother appears in a beautiful dress—you surely think this woman is wrinkled and walking like a penguin don't you? I don't blame you. But she's so gorgeous with her white hair and pearly earrings hanging on her ears "Finally I get to meet you when you're not a spitting dragon" she teases me and welcoming me into her warm arms. It feels motherly and warmly. I cannot stop myself from laughing "Hamba wena, hamba nje" she chases Mongezi who has a smile on his face and he leans over kissing me before he disappears around the house and leaving me covered in a rosy tinge. His grandmother scrutinize me before a smile appears on her face "come with me Nokwanda" she takes my hand. I thought she was going to take me to the kitchen but our feet are propelling us outside the patio where there's a makoti galore. All the wives and girlfriends of this family are gathered together the alcoholic ones—okay let me say one is unapologetically drinking from her glass of wine looking beautiful as always makes me wish her heart was as beauty.

This simplistic design patio lets the highly manicured garden topiary and large garden sculpture take the limelight.

I can see my friend as well, Onalenna with her daughter who's on her lap and then Azande who's laughing with them. Namisa jumps off when she sees me running to wrap her tiny arms around my legs, my poor white dress. "Aunt Kwanda!" she smiles showing me her missing teeth and her hair is freshly braided. I would love to applaud that woman I call my best friend for being a mother to this child. And till today Namisa's mother hasn't said anything. No calls, nothing.

I pick up the princess into my arms as we stride towards everyone and Mhlahli dramatically rolls her eyes seeing me and taking a long gulp from her glass before she refills it—I am ashamed that I once laid my hands on her regardless of how my anger

was brewing inside me I shouldn't have done that.

Before I can let my dainty buttocks sink into the chair I ask to speak to her privately and she tugs her head in before perking off the chair following me behind as we walk distance apart, the grandmother has an impressive look plastered on her face.

“Thank you” those are the first words I utter to her as she flicks her hair and holding her glass closely to her mouth.

“What do you want Kwanda?”

“I wanted to apologize” she seems taken aback by that, she surely thought I wanted to fight, yell, blame and point fingers “It was wrong of me to come to your house and fight you more especially since you're grown enough to be my mother. I was out of hand and I am sorry and if ever I've hurt you somehow I am sorry” she blinks at me sizing me up from my manicured toes to my satin head wrap “I

hope you do find it in your heart to forgive me”

“I forgive you” she looks at the ring on my finger then takes a sip from her glass “congratulations” that all she says before she walks away from me and sashaying her hips left and right returning to everyone—sigh, talking about a hard nut to crack, this one right here.

I did what I felt was right and whatever happens after this then okay, I tried, everyone has tried.

Mrs Mcelu pats the empty space right next to her for me to sit and she has a kind smile, “I made scones with jam for you and Azande, I used to eat a lot of them when I was pregnant with your father in laws” she says and glancing at Azande who’s shyly smiling—oh she’s also pregnant. I grab a the scone that is designed like a heart and taking one bite that takes me straight to heaven, this is delicious they’re not dry like the ones your aunt always bake when

there's family functions. "Anyways we are all here as Mcelu wives including myself. I was as young as all of you once before marrying to this family. Sadly Kefiloe is not here, I am not going to blame anyone nor point fingers about what happened, that's not the time. You, Onalenna..." she looks towards her "you are not a wife as yet including Kwando who just has a ring but both your men have spoken to me about their true intentions which is why I invited both of you here. I don't talk to girlfriends, no, no, no unless I know what are your men planning" she speaks in the most silky tone "I know what happened with you Onalenna and Avulele and also about the conversation you've had with Azande, I applaud you for how you chose to handle things"

Mihlali attempts to get up but she gets the most devilry look from the grandmother and she immediately returns back to her sit, "no one is going to beg you Mihlali, no one. We've done a lot of that in this family and now I've had it with you. You don't want to be part of this conversation? Then fine

leave. We all have our problems here and we cannot keep nursing you, no, no, I am not going to do that. I won't nurse uMcelu then nurse you" she sounds like a person who has reached her breaking point but this conversation we were about to have is interrupted when Bongeziwe walks towards us and standing behind his woman massaging her shoulders, they are affectionate hmm? And then he announces that we have been called inside.

Mrs Mcelu is holding Onalenna and I as we walk inside and the smile has not been removed from her face, she said we are her favorite grandsons' wives.

The grandfather is sitting with his legs crossed and his hand resting on his chin, he seems unimpressed by something in fact he looks rather livid as we make ourselves comfortable on the couches and his wife sitting next to him. The moment she rubs her hand against his knuckles he calms—this is beautiful, they are in love—they steal glances

towards each other and that all it takes for him to smile. “I am not going to greet ngoba ngicasukile [because I am mad]” those are his first words. “If I could I was going to grab imvubo and hit your men one by one” not ubhuti.

“Nokwanda looks like she wants to fight you baba” Mrs Mcelu teases me.

He looks towards me and a frown on his face disappears “eh makoti is always fighting, she’s carrying a true Mcelu there” oh at least he found that funny cause his shoulders are moving up and down.

Ah what is that look on bhuti’s face? Now I am just covered in a rosy hue. I wish I was sitting right next to him, for weird reasons I miss him, strange isn’t it? I miss being with him alone in his presence.

I see him getting up from where he is sitting in all black as if he can read my mind he comes and sit next to me, our fingers intertwining and God knows how much I needed this. My hands are trembling against his. He brings them close to his lips and rubbing the back of my hand there now we are the television screen everyone was watching.

“You see in life we tend to do things when we are young all in the name of being young and reckless without thinking of the consequences of those actions and aftermath. We do things for the now, now, now and not tomorrow. And when tomorrow comes everyone around you has to suffer. And us elders who were not there now have to run around like headless chickens and apologizing to ancestors for nonsense people did alone while I was with my wife and drinking tea” aww man they’re so adorable. I want this for myself when I grow older “I was not there when Avulele did what he did was I there?” he looks towards him and he hangs his head low after shaking it “I was not there

now we are facing the ancestors' wrath all at once because they've had enough" he spits "I was not there when Bongeziwe impregnated some girl and never paid damages nor said anything to us. Bengikhona Ziwe?" Everyone's dirty laundry is being called out.

"I wanted to go there and make things right mkhulu" Bongeziwe defends himself.

"But you didn't so what's the point?"

Yoh!

"Her mother didn't want me to as speak she left her behind and I don't know where is she" oh he can speak for himself.

"But you know her family hmm?" the grandfather is

not backing down either. Bongeziwe hangs his head low as well succumbing. “Exactly don’t try defending yourself la” this old man is mad, mad “Your fathers were doing yonke imkhuba le [all the unthinkable things ] and now they have children all over South Africa. And we have to find those children and bring them home. As we speak no one knows where is Kayise. An incest happened right under our nose when Kayise slept with his sister and it’s not his fault. He didn’t know either but who to blame there? Qophelo and he’s gone resting in peace and leaving us suffering” his anger is valid “Now I hear Sonke also has a son somewhere in the world. The ancestors wants him home, what are you going to do wena?” he looks towards him and as always he has gulped down three glasses of whiskey.

Who is the sister Khethelo? It cannot be Khethelo, I doubt it is.

“I tried communicating with him but he wants nothing to do with me at the moment since he knows a different story about how he was conceived when his mother left him at the orphanage but I will make things right”

“What happened?”

Qophelo and Sonke were wild, tjer!

I heard about their three sum scandals and one night stands, you name it. Old generation were the biggest players, I tell you. If you think your man has embarrass you then clearly you haven't met men for the 80s and going down.

“And stop drinking that thing, stop it and start talking” Mr Mcelu is not having it today not at all “busy drinking my whisky, shiya leyonto ukhulume [leave that and talk] because that's the first

grandchild of this family, your heir”

“It was my bachelor party when I met his mother at the hotel and she was a cleaner then things led to the other”

“And you didn’t condomise just like you did with that one” she points Muhlali. We are not beating around the bush here “Is there any other child we need to know? What was the story that woman made at the orphanage?”

He clears his throat “she said she was raped so they could take the child. This happened upon discovering that I was married because that night I lied and said my friend was”

“Whose child are you?” the grandmother asks now “I never raised you like this. Maybe your father did but I didn’t”

“Haibo MaNcwane!” Mr Mcelu exclaims “I was drinking tea in the bed with you when they were busy doing these things” oh now I see what’s the tea. “What’s the plan with Mihlali? You want to continue sleeping with her behind close doors noma uyamngena? [or you’re marrying her]”

“We haven’t had that discussion” Sonke

“Oh but you discuss sex?”

Ha, ha, ha, hhayi this old man!

“Chabo” Sonke responds

“Mihlali” he calls out for her “your children said they acknowledge you as their mother but it doesn’t go beyond that, what is that?”

She uncross her legs “if that’s the decision they’ve made then there’s nothing I can do”

“There’s so much you can do but you chose not to do it, don’t dare say that” Bongeziwe seethes.

“Who said you can talk wena?” Mr Mcelu asks him then clicks his tongue “You’re saying you’re okay with not having relationship with your children Mihlali?” no response just fiddling with her fingers “When it comes to this I won’t bother interfering because everyone has tried with you. We tried reaching out. I don’t know what demons you are fighting with but mntanami you’re at war. And now, you see now after literally everyone has given up on you, you are on your own. I never wanted it to get to the point where I decide to sit back and watch you but I’ve had it with you” that all it takes for her to hysterically start crying “MaNcwane please take her with you” they walk out with Mihlali while she’s in

her arms and then Mr Mcelu breathes out “this weekend we are having a ceremony. I want all my grandchildren and great children here including the ones inside those stomachs” eh eh eh “All of them here” he repeats “Sonke you bring your son here because he also has to be introduced as Mcelu as Mongezi and Bongeziwe and Kayise. Not that white surname he’s using” I wonder who is the new son now. “Nina” he points his grandchildren “You will find Kayise and that pregnant girlfriend of his, they must be here for the ceremony”

“Yebo” they say in unison.

“Mongezi” he calls him—what is his dirty laundry?

“Mkhulu?”

“Are you white?”

Ha ha ha ha ha!

“Chabo” he responds.

“Exactly then you must go to MaMkhungo’s family and do the right thing, that ring means nothing. When are you going there?”

“After the ceremony this weekend”

“When are you sending the letter”

“This Sunday”

What? That’s in six days, it still haven’t sunk in that I am actually getting married and becoming someone’s wife—six days?

“Bongeziwe”

“Mkhulu”

“Is Onalenna your nanny?”

Yoh!

“Chabo”

“Then stop making her one and do right by her family. Avulele you must go to that girl’s family and ask for forgiveness right after the ceremony on Saturday I hope we are clear”

“Yebo” Avulele

“Good then. Kwando please make me tea and

Onalenna I'd love to talk to you privately about something. Sonke go get my grandson. I am out of here"

[01/24, 08:00] : 70

"Let bygones, be bygones"

ONALENNA

I am a ball of nerves following this old man in a simple denim jean and white shirt, how can someone his age be that attractive and stylish? my grandfather doesn't look like this, not even close. This man right here gets fine like wine, even the way he walks it screams power and authority. We are making our way to the patio and he's already sitting with his legs crossed like he's on a cover page of a high-end glossy magazine.

I am already feeling out of place because of my blonde hair, I wish I wore a headwrap but Bongeziwe didn't want me to—he's fascinated by my choice of color and when I bleached my natural hair he went as far as saying blonde is my color and I totally agree with that but this old man here might disagree. "Onalenna" he murmurs my name like something sweet on his lips "what's your surname?"

"Mmolawa" I respond nervously.

"Oh umsuthu [you're Sotho?]"  
typical Zulu man isn't he? he he he.

"Mosotho eh"

He smiles charmingly "so you speak isuthu?" even after politely correcting him he doesn't bother, he doesn't seem fazed either.

“I don’t speak SeSotho but my father was from Lesetho and my mother is from KZN”

“Oh your father is the blanket wearing one?” Just great old man, just great. He has humor dancing in his face clearly teasing me and all I do is to laugh slightly and shaking my head nodding.

This is very intense for me being under his gaze and he whips his head towards Kwanda who has a tray in her head, looking stunning in an asymmetric knit dress and satin head wrap on her head, one thing about Kwanda is she’ll dress to kill regardless of the occasion. When she dress she makes sure, she makes sure—talking about dressing to impress. What she once said is “when you die that outfit you’d be wearing is your ghost outfit, keep that in mind” she sealed it with a smile.

“Thank you Kwando” Mr Mcelu says taking his cup on the tray that was placed in front of him. “Go and feed my grandchild now” he smiles at her and she mirrors the same reflection before she walks away and he looks at her until she disappears, they truly adore her in this family. “Now back to you MaMmolawa” he brings the cup close to his lips “Where are your parents?”

“They stay in New Germany”

“And what do they do?”

“My dad is a principal and my mother teaches online, children with her condition” I tell him and frown appears on his face then he tugs his head in narrowing his eyes “ahem...she has a life-threatening sensitivity to sunlight. A disease called xeroderma pigmentosum”

“How has that been for you?” This old man finds interest in my life and knowing me, that’s strange.

“It always been challenging but I managed to adapt to how things are at young age and she asked me to never look or treat her differently because of her condition that’s what we always do, one thing she taught me is being strong regardless of how many lemons are being thrown at me”

“Hmmm” he murmurs and taking another sip “and about what happened with Avulele how do they feel?” I don’t really like touching this topic again but I have no choice.

“They were sad as I was, any parents would be”

“You love Bongeziwe huh?” Now he has placed his cup aside, meaning the conversation is getting serious. I’ve been thrown in a closet and

suffocating from trepidation, after shaking my head up and down he attentively looks at me “He has made his intentions clear right?”

“Many times”

“You see Onalenna right now as a family we are facing a lot of anger from our ancestors, mistakes that were done by the parents and children are suffering from them and now I don’t want this to move from generation to generation. I want to make things right now while I am still alive cause when I am gone no one will. You will suffer. Bongeziwe will suffer including the children you’ll bear in that womb” he says “I want to apologize for what Avulele did to you, I know it’s a very sensitive topic but I am sorry my child” my tears pricks anew and I try to ignore the acidic, salty and watery thing dancing around my eyeballs by blinking them away. The sound of his voice is warm and consoling enough. “I want you to speak to your father for me

so we can apologize in the right manner, can you do that?” I shake my head vigorously.

“Yebo” I sob and wiping tears at the corner of my eyes.

“Great another thing. I don’t want you taking care of Bongeziwe’s child until he makes the right thing, it’s not your job. Don’t cook for him. Don’t stay with him. Don’t make tea with him. You can once in a while but it shouldn’t be your job and when he has a problem tell him he must come to me, are we clear?” But I do those things willingly not expecting anything. “Are we clear Onalenna?”

But what is making tea?

“Yebo”

“You and Nokwanda are the chosen ones to the Mcelu family after my wife. This hasn’t happen since MaNcwane and that’s why I want what’s best for the both of you. Don’t let any man treat or make you feel like a second choice mntanami if ever Bongeziwe treat you like that come to me and I’ll write a affidavit for you to leave him. You are beautiful with that old woman hair, don’t settle for less and don’t sell yourself short, are we clear?” I shake my head again—my blonde hair is old woman hair? Wonderful “Great let me leave and call your man so he can comfort you. I don’t comfort any woman either than my wife” he chuckles causing me to do the same and he gets up taking his cup and patting my shoulder and leaves—he really didn’t comfort me, what? This old man.

I take a deep breath and allowing his words to sink into my head before Bongeziwe walk towards me looking rather panicked “mama” he comes and sit right next to me and breathes long and hard, cupping my face on his face “umkhulu said you’re

crying, he said you want to leave, what did I do?”  
that old man, nci, nci, nci. I bark with laughter and it  
only hit Bongeziwe that his grandfather was just  
pulling his leg. “I got scared” he sighs. “Are you  
okay?”

“I am fine”

“I love you” he says unexpectedly and gazing into  
my eyes “I am in love with you Onalenna”

“And so am I Ndamase”

“Mcelu baby” he smiles “My grandfather was  
preaching about doing the right thing earlier” he  
tells me kissing my forehead, my nose, my eyes, my  
cheeks and lips “But I want to know if that doesn’t  
scare you? After what happened?”

“You’re not him”

“Onalenna”

“Hmmm” I murmur

“I love you”

“Your grandfather really scared you” I laugh at him and shaking my head “I am not leaving you”

“What did he say?”

“A lot” I say in a sing song “We are not having sex anymore”

“Ah no, he was actually serious about this” he breathes “but he wouldn’t know right?” he smirks

mischievously.

“Sadly God is watching”

Avulele clears his throat behind him, our eyes meet. We have been civil towards each other, talk when needed. And I have made it clear that I have nothing against him. “How are you Lenna?” he asks me.

“I’m okay, wena?”

“I’m great” he clears his throat again “Ziwe, umkhulu wants us to leave and look for Kayise now”

“Okay I am coming” he tells, I am so proud of this one.

Avulele turn on his heels and then pause returning

back with his hands shoved in his pocket “Onalenna, I am sorry” somehow all the stones my heart was carrying disappears. That all I needed from him. Not a brand new house or car. But a sincere apology, coming from the heart. It was just three words but they were meaningful, so, so meaningful.

“Let bygones be bygones. You got yourself a gemstone” I smile at him.

A smile appears on his face as well “thank you” he turns around and leaves me under this man next to me scorching gaze.

“You’re amazing” he says and then pause “so we are really not having sex?”

“Bye bye” I laugh.

[01/24, 08:00] : 71

“With the right person you don't have to work so hard to be happy. It would just happen, naturally.

You don't have to find your happiness precisely, you would just feel the happiness by yourself.

And with the right person, you don't have to force yourself, they would embrace you and everything about you without any doubt.

Because the right person won't ever make you feel that you are hard to love and you would be just happy with them.

No reasons, no description and no excuses, just happy”

Oh Thank Jesus!

We looked for him—let me not use a plural, but after the search and leaving every stone unturned Kayise is the one who reached out and announcing that we should stop looking for him and that he is coming

back tomorrow before the ceremony in four days and then we are all driving to eNdwendwe where everything will be taking place. Last night we returned back to their grandparent's house for preparations. I cannot make traditional beer but Mihlali is hands on with everything—I don't know but I think those words from Baba Mcelu really had her reflecting with her self but horror-struck had me on her behalf because it might be a little too late since her sons have pretty much made it clear that they respect her as their mother but there's nothing more to that.

Rather than that everything is happening in harmony around here, just yesterday we had a goat slaughtered as Baba uMcelu was asking his ancestors that they make this ceremony a success. I grew up going to church, all I knew was going on a knee with my hands together and praying so all these things are foreign to me but also I have to adapt since this is going to be my new family—My new family, hmm, my brain cannot stop humming

that over and over again and it echoes.

I am really going to get married, I really have a diamond ring on my finger. I wake up in the middle of the night everyday to just stare at it without blinking until ubhuti scolds me to sleep. My stomach is now showing that I am pregnant my feet are starting to get swollen and what was once upon a time non-existence breast, shame they are fuller and swollen now, I can even wear a bra like other women all though the bra is not needed but I can proudly wear it.

“Nokwanda make tea for my husband, he says he likes tea made by you and I am having a tough competition” MaNcwane says walking into the kitchen, yes I’m the tea girl now in this house. Without hesitation I get up from the chair chuckling and pouring water in the kettle while patiently waiting for it to boil when we hear noises coming from the living room. We eye ball each other with

Onalenna who is busy with the dough before we follow behind after MaNcwane who walked out the moment she heard the first yelps. “Haibo Sonke!” she exclaims “What happened? Sonke! Sonke” she shouts and holding her head looking at her son who had been beaten up to the pulp with his left eye swollen and close and blood dripping from his forehead. Now everyone is at the living room, shocked at what happened to him. “Mihlali go get the bowl with warm water and Azise hurry up with first aid” Baba uMcelu is hovering his son with questions he just wants to know who did this and that’s it, how much he is bleeding or if he’s having a hard time breathing doesn’t really matter to him.

“Who did this to you Sonke? Who did this?” he asks sternly yet sitting on the couch calm as a cucumber. The nature of the men in this family will surprise you. He’d be breathing fire yet the tone and body language stays calm as ever.

“I did” A deep baritone and sultry voice says from behind. Our heads rotate towards the door seeing him in white round neck tee and washed out tee with tabi loafers—the most expensive shoe yet it ugly but attractive on a man. He is dark as a beautiful night with his skin so pristine with high cheekbones, as if he’s sucking on his cheeks and natural pouted lips. I am surely over admiring him but this right here is Greek god with a combination of all the men in this family, the resemblance is completely undeniable.

I’ve seen him splashed in magazine and gracing our television screens alongside his wife, but seeing him in person—ah.

Everyone knows him. I know him. You know him. We know him. We all know him.

He is a famous and well respected business man. And married, to a beautiful fashion designer Lulama Gum who also made a name for herself in the

industry—she's my role model honestly. No one knows anything else about their private life because you cannot invade into their privacy. We know what they want us to know and that's it.

He strides towards us, its deadly silence we are just listening to his foot steps as he keeps walking, "this is your son?" he asks Baba uMcelu standing in the middle of the room demanding every single attention on nothing but him. And I think it only hit Baba uMcelu who he is to this family, it shouldn't come as a surprise because of the resemblance. "I guess the silence is your response"

"Young boy you don't talk to me like that and you will listen to me" Baba uMcelu spits venomously perking up from the couch and they stand facing each other. Eye to eye. He is taller than Baba uMcelu. The intensity of this eye contact shocks everyone in this room.

Mongezi and Bongeziwe are not here!

“If I was a young boy surely I would’ve listen to you but I am not a boy so you will listen to me” Ah, ah, ah. Have you seen two bulls in a kraal? I am witnessing that right in front of me “Tell your son to stay away from me or if he doesn’t next time he’ll be delivered here with a body bag. I don’t need him now, I don’t need him ever”

“My boy we are trying to do the right thing, the ancestors...”

“Your ancestors never done anything for me so tell them to also stay away from me”

“They protected you!”

“They never protected me. The family that raised

me while your son was busy gallivanting protected me. I grew up and protected myself. I am still doing so now. I don't need you. I don't need your ancestors. I am doing better without you and I am still going to do better so we are going to continue living our lives the way we were. But dare bother my mines" he winces and takes out something on his pocket placing it on a table, a whole bullet then a gun "Next time your son bothers me this is what will take away his life. He never cared, he shouldn't start now" I hear gasps. I cannot breathe, I hate the sight of that metal thing.

"Don't make threats in my house!" Baba uMcelu points at him with his index finger.

"I am not disrespectful, never have been so with all due respect now, stay out of my way and I'll do the same and regards to the ceremony you're doing. Good luck but don't bother trying to change my mind" And that's just about it. He leaves the gun

and bullet on the table and leaves everyone's jaws jagged as he walks out of this room and not even turning back—Bambatha, that's his name.

“Mcelu is that a gun?” MaNcwane asks.

Eh Mkhulu is looking towards the man that just disappeared with a smile, a proud, proud smile before he shakes his head “it's a toy sthandwa sami” he says, it really is a toy. He grabs it and a real bullet looking towards the door as if Bambatha will appear again. “He should've killed you wena Sonke” Hawu mkhulu. I cannot believe this because he actually has a smile on his face, an impressed one once again “I like him” he smiles again and returning on the couch “Kwando I am waiting for my tea” We are pretending that didn't even happen, great.

“Mcelu who was that?” Mancwane

“Your grandson” he responds “there is something about him man, something that reminds me of myself”

“There’s nothing there, nothing Mcelu” Mancwane says, she is shaken up as I am actually. “That boy threaten us. Have you threaten your grandparents? Hhayi”

“You will see it sthandwa sami. Let’s go to the bedroom and talk while Kwando makes us tea” yes the beaten up son is not being given attention anymore because apparently he deserves it. But Mihlali is nursing him as he groans and yelps and cries until she takes him to his bedroom.

We return back to the kitchen with Onalenna and Azande to continue with whatever we were doing. The drama in this house never ends but this one,

takes the cup for me. “Was that Bambatha? Bambatha one and only?” Azande is the first one to whisper. The kitchen is where we always gossip. It feels like the wives from the rural areas, sometimes we text each other in the middle of the night to meet at kitchen—we gossip mostly about Mihlali.

“Yes” Onalenna says as she continues with her dough “I cannot believe this. Bambatha is related with this family?” she shakes her head “but he’s damn attractive”

“Who is damn attractive?” Bongeziwe walks into the room and leans against the wall. No timing or whatsoever. There is my friend there swallowing rocks. “Onalenna I am talking to you”

“We were talking about a movie” Azande comments.

Bongeziwe darts his eyes between us before calling

his brothers who walks in following each other. I am not going to get in trouble for something I didn't do. "I found them talking about attractive men maybe they might give you guys right answers because they don't want to answer me" he's actually mad. I cannot believe this satan. Now I am avoiding making eye contact with my soon to be husband who just standing there with an inscrutable expression plastered on his face.

"MaMkhungo" I am going to cry once and for all.

"Bhuti" I gaze up at him.

"You're talking about attractive men?"

"Haibo!" I defend "I didn't even look at him. I never said he was attractive" Attentively he looks at me and shaking his head with a smirk, my lies are lucid. Mxm. But I never said anything about his looks, not

even once.

You said he's a Greek God—my subconscious reminds me, she better shuts up.

“Can we talk privately Nokwanda” Ah, ah. I am thankful because we are interrupted by their grandfather calling them upon hearing they are here. The sound of celebration that erupts after they walked out of this kitchen, shame.

I am coming back from serving the tea when my arm is being pulled and when I turn there he is with his eyes glowing. “Bhu—bhuti” I stutter and flap my lashes. I have been trying to avoid him. I flush under his heated stare, and my pulse quickens. He pulls me into his arms, his fingers tangling in my hair, and kisses me, long and hard. We're both breathless when he pulls away.

“I haven’t forgotten that you find another man attractive Nokwanda” he says then walks away from me, leaving me dragging my very own vagina on the floor.

“Bhuti” I call him when he’s about to disappear and he turns around facing me. “No one is as attractive as you”

He smirks and creases his eyebrow “Really?”

“I love you” I confess to him.

“I love you too mfazi wami” he smiles “but that doesn’t mean I am letting this one go” We stare each other, just exchanging smiles with me holding a tray and him with hands against his chest. “Don’t give me that look Nokwanda”

“MaMkhungo” I correct him and another smile with a look I truly adore appears on his face “bhuti”

“Mfazi wami”

“I miss you”

“But I am here”

“No, no. I miss us together at home and alone”

“I miss you too” he tells me “do you want us to go home today?” I love the sound of home. It’s our home. The way we both emphasize that word makes me so warm and fuzzy inside.

“But you are needed here”

“You come first”

“We want to go home today” I tell him.

“Okay I’ll get you from the kitchen in five minutes. Umkhulu is still talking about what happened when we were not here then we are leaving. What do you want in the meantime? Did you have the carrot cake I bought you?” he asks me and I shake my head nodding at him. “I’ll get you just now baby then we leave okay”

“Okay”

“Stop finding other men attractive and I love you yezwa” he is not letting this one go.

“Hmmm” I murmur.

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“I think we like to complicate things when it is quite simple.

Find what it is that makes you happy and who it is that makes you happy.

Try not to lose them over anything because happiness is what matters.

If you can't be happy, you aren't truly alive so stand by your happiness and you are set. Promise.”

You should see him, swimming and diving in euphoric as we drive through the gate to his ancestral home. I keep stealing glances at him and shoving my very own perturbation emotions at the back of my brain about being here—at my in laws but how can I not get intoxicated from his elation? The whole way he was listening to his favorite band and tapping his fingers on a steering wheel and singing along. Until we drove through the dusty road and houses that have such huge yards. The young children stood on the side of the road seeing

many cars following each other and they had grins on their faces—that picture was nostalgic. When we used to sit by the street and yell “imoto yami, le!” as expensive and gleaming cars would pass by. Oh man the fights that would erupt right after that over cars we didn’t even know whom they belonged too.

I need to take a deep breather!

I catch him gazing at me as I unfasten my seatbelt then a smile forms on his lips before he gets off the car striding to my side and opening the door for me, “umuhle maMkhungo” he smiles—surely because I am wearing his favorite color, black, from the head wrap to my shoes. “uyazi umuhle kanjani mfazi wami [do you know how beautiful you are my wife]” he has a boyish grin on his face. Arg he must stop. I am already covered in crimson.

“Weh Mongezi we are not here to watch you having sex with maMkhungo” his grandfather says with a

smirk walking pass us with his wife holding hands. Ah but we are not even exchanging saliva or our tongues in sync. “Stop staring at each other” he shouts over his shoulder. This old, old man is such a character. That day when we wanted to leave he told us to stop chasing making children, we still have time. He was convinced that we wanted to leave so we can have sex—which is true.

The ceremony is tomorrow, they were held back since the heir of this family doesn't want anything to do with them, and it seems as though his threats are not empty, they are not at all because everyone fears him. I don't know much about him really, I just know he is Bambatha.

Our fingers intertwine, they have a very beautiful gigantic house surrounded by roundvelds and then there's two kraals, their yard has green beautiful grass and high trees. This is why I want to move to rural areas. The atmosphere is so refreshing and

beautiful. “u-Azise is going to take MaMkhungo to your roundvel, I just spoke to Ziwe and Kayise as well because they cannot enter the house since they’re not the wives officially otherwise the ancestors will show us flames” MaNcwane says to us as we were about to enter the house, this man right next to me frowns in disapproval, clearly not agreeing with this “I will explain later Mongezi but you must come inside the house immediately” now this part is totally what he is against because his frown just furthered. It’s him having to leave me behind while he has to walk inside the house. I squeeze his hand gently and looking up at him. Oh here we go, that calm look is dancing on his face. The one facial expression that I truly adore.

After he cupped my face into his big and warm hands his lips touched my forehead and then he strokes his fingers on my belly bump communicating with his child—a daughter apparently from what he has said, she only listens to him, she bothers me and punish me with heart

burns and back pains when I yell at her and the moment her father speaks to her, she calms down, I already know that she's going to be a daddy's girl.

I am going to be a mother and wife—ha ha ha ha isn't it surreal? I keep saying this but this is not how I imagined and planned my life and adulthood.

I unlock the door to the roundvel, it felt like I was walking to my neighbor's house that is five houses away but just walking in the same yard. And this roundvel looks like an open plan apartment than anything else, makes me wonder how luxurious the house should be. I take a look of my surrounding and adjoined sleeping area, kitchen diner and lounge. A patterned rug makes an island for the sofa, nesting coffee tables and cabinet opposite. "Gogozi said I should ask you to quickly refresh and come to the house, there's a meeting" Azise says making herself comfortable on the couch and placing a tray of jam scones and tea.

“A meeting?” I tug my head in, I thought we were not allowed in but okay.

“Yes” she shrugs nonchalantly “umkhuluza wants to talk to everyone” she calls her grandparents in a most adorable way. I nod my head at her and still wandering my eyes around. Taking in the beautiful interior design that screams ubhuti in every way.

The sleeping area is partially screened from main entryway by sculptural partition wall. A portiere hangs the bedroom door. A soothing shade paints the wall and the ceiling of the grey living room. And the bar stools stand high dining bench, which attaches the countertop of the kitchen island. A white dome pendant marks eating area. Then the light grey kitchen cabinets runs the L-shaped arrangement around central island. “She was good wasn’t she?” Azise asks as she sees me admiring the interior design and I am guessing she is

referring to the person behind this work.

“Yes, yes, yes” I pause “but why you’re using the past tense?”

“Well....” she grabs the scone that belongs to me and taking a bite “sadly she passed away” her tone is suddenly saddened “after that Mongezi was never the same, he’s only recovering now that you’re with him. We haven’t seen him like this since she died” what is that supposed to mean? “he loved her but he seems to be...in love with you” my stomach free falls. Oh, no. Oh no, this was design by his dead girlfriend?

“Oh” I flounder

“He was broken, utterly broken, they loved each other you know” my stomach tugs into the basement and I can feel sharp pains everywhere.

The thought of him being broken sounds bitter and the thought of him being in love with someone else, is not so tasteful, past or not.

“This was decorated by his ex?”

“Hmmm” she hums “even inside the house. Everyone knew her, we loved her. I am sure Ngezi told you about that once upon time part of his life” no, he never did actually. This is foreign to my ears. I look around the room again and then excuse myself to the bathroom in a sweet pastel pink that comes in form of heated toilet rail beside vanity mirror.

It’s a revelation to me that I know absolutely nothing about his past and dirty laundry, he has been my perfect prince charming that I never bothered to know about his past—should I know about his past? I don’t know, I don’t feel a need to but I am feeling a pang of emotions as I peel of my dress and opening

the tap to the bathtub—she came up of this idea of this tap too? I don't like it in fact the whole interior design is just disgusting, I mean who wants a pastel pink bathroom?

Okay I am being petty for absolutely no reason!

My hands are on my stomach with my fingers stroking there gently, my hormonal self wants to cry and the acidic, salty water around my eyes is threatening to spill. A moment later I can hear voices exchanging from the living room. I have been here for almost an hour and my hands are now wrinkly. The door opens before he appears with an impassive look, I hate that sometimes I am not able to read his face surely because he's always calm. He doesn't say anything instead he grabs the towel and pull my hand up draping it around me like I am toddler, he searches for my eyes until he found what he's looking for then I am already in his arms to the bedroom and he places me on the bed.

He goes to my bag and taking my toiletry bag then he takes out a moisturizer after patting me dry, lathering the lotion on my skin quietly. “What are you wearing?” his hands are now in between my thighs moving succulently. Up and down. I can hardly breathe because of the tingly feeling that has become erotic. “Nothing?” he creases his eyebrow.

“Bhuti”

“MaMkhungo”

“I think I am hurt”

He smiles, stupid, stupid man “what hurt you mfazi wami?”

“That your ex was behind the designing of this room,

it's beautiful really and I don't want you to change anything but it's how I found out about her that somehow hurt me”

“Nokwanda” we are getting serious now. “I didn't know you wanted a list of my exes” then a frown appears “you are telling me you are hurt over my dead ex?”

I gape “there's a list” Oh jesus!

“A long list” he smirks, he's purposely doing this, to see me tip toeing around lava, “but that doesn't matter does it?” he creases his eyebrow.

“No” yes, it matters “you loved her?”

“Yes” Another response I didn't want to hear now I have to be taken by an ambulance to the hospital

because I can hardly breathe. I am suffocating. “I can never lie to you Nokwanda you should know that” now there’s some sense of seriousness in his tone, the humor that was dancing on his face is long gone.

“I know” that comes out as a whisper “what happened to her?”

He breathes long and hard “let’s talk about when we come back from the meeting, you’re needed inside” I cannot wait that long. I’ll be drowning in my very ocean of anxiety and overly thinking.

Hmm!

I thought we were being called for the meeting but all the women are here in the kitchen while the men are busy talking in the living room, it seems like a serious conversation. I look around the elegant

kitchen with a dining island. The flooring changes here mark the transition of purpose, halting light wood chevrons to give way to hardy grey tiles—she also did this? Well she was talented. And for some reasons the more and more I think about this it feels as though she is somewhere sitting in the corner with her legs crossed and smirking at me. Surely because even in her death she has managed to torture me. Her face is blurry, I don't know what she looks like anyways just a picture painted on my face, my great antagonist.

I keep chopping these vegetables and my mind also traveling all around but we are interrupted by the door opening and Bongeziwe is the first to walk in and he has an indescribable look on his face before unexpected people appear behind him—how did he? no wonder he has that complacent smirk on his face.

Bambatha appears wearing full umblaselo and

sneakers, the look is modern, stylish yet traditional all at once along with a brown shirt. He is holding a cute little boy in his arm in earthy brown, he must be three with his natural hair becoming free form dreadlocks. Imagine carrying someone for nine months to look like his father, eh. Then his wife is right next to him, they're matching in her tailored made dress that's somehow is used with the same fabric that was used for what he's wearing—she's a designer she must've done that, it's stunning. And she's also holding another baby boy that is a duplicate of his father and young girl is beside them with cornrows and the line in between has crystals even her forehead, she's so adorable and it's strange that she looks biracial when both her parents are black but also at the same time she has her mother's features, she must be five or something around that age.

Lulama is mesmerizingly beautiful with her vitiligo patch looking unique around her right eye and the head wrap on her head makes her grace us with her

egg shaped face and a ravishing smile appears behind the glossy lips.

“The meeting has started?” Bongeziwe asks, that smug on his face. I don’t know how he has that look on his face when Bambatha has kept a marble face only his wife looks more amicable.

“Where is the meeting being held?” Bambatha asks with his baritone voice so sonorous and the grounds vibrate—sorry that was dramatic. Everything about him screams money, power, control and intimidation.

“The living room, second room on your right” Bongeziwe answers him and after that he doesn’t bother hearing anything else but strides off after greeting everyone with his face still hard stoned.

“We’ll do the introduction later” Bongeziwe says

following right behind them and leaving nothing but an eerie silence.

Whatever the nyanga Bambatha goes to is powerful I am telling you, no one demands that much authority beside my man. With him it's different, he is so powerful.

MaNcwane walks in the kitchen with Lulama and her sons, they're laughing loudly when Azande dramatically rolls her eyes and then she turns stirring the pot—and then what was that?

“This is Lulama, umaGum and she's the daughter in law of this family as well. Be kind to each other” MaNcwane says and taking a sit on a chair with the little boys on her lap, they're so adorable that I want to hold them then the girl walks in patting her mother before she whispers something to her and they both smile to each other—I want to get pregnant all over again.

“How can I help?” Lulama asks smiling. Oh I am so in love with her. Imagine being in the same roof as your role model? I am surely dick riding right now but I do not really care.

“Please help with this” Azande says giving her a butter nut and a sharp knife. I wish Onalenna and Khethelo are already here but they’ll get here tonight.

Lulama grabs the knife and she’s now hands on that butternut and the conversation starts to flow in the kitchen with nothing but gales of laughter. I have one of her sons on my lap and he’s now falling asleep as I keep stroking his hair, his name is Leago and the other one is Lizelande there’s a one year gap between them which means their parents had sex after two months the other was born, I don’t know what kind of freakish sex they’re having, then her daughter is Ama Qamata.

We can hear loud noises coming from the living room and we exchange looks. “Leave the Mcelu men alone. All the bulls are in one kraal let them be” MaNcwane says drinking from the cup of tea. I am not happy about this. Oh my poor, poor man. I wonder what is happening in there. “Lulama and Nokwanda take the tea there those men love tea” Its a generational thing? We are following each other with Lulama with tray of cups and teapots and our feet propelling us there while we complain under our breaths. The sonorous voices fades as they see us appearing. The rage on everyone’s faces disappears and they try to stay neutral, surely so we don’t know what is happening here.

Lulama is on her knees as she exclusively makes the cup of tea for her man, the way he likes it. Who still drinks black tea with no cream these days? not even those fancy teas with robes Mongezi drinks. This is such a beautiful sight to watch a woman submitting to her husband, he leans forward and accepting the cup from him before they mind fuck

with their eye contact right in front of everyone and then Bambatha winks at her before her lips curl into a smile.

I have no choice but going on my knees as well to serve bhuti his tea, the way he prefers it. This is uncomfortable. How do people make it a thing to kneel?

The look on his face as I hand him the cup, I think I might kneel every time I serve him. “Kwando you’ve met Lulama?” Baba Mcelu asks me holding his cup in his hand—it’s a tea galore here.

“Yebo baba”

“I’m your grandfather not your father, here is your father there” he points Sonke, ah then he chuckles taking another sip. This old man would amaze you. “I want all of you to get along. That what builds a

home it's great hearing laughter coming from the kitchen MaMkhungo" he takes a sip from his cup "you saved Mongezi and she brought Bambatha home. Both of you are important in this family. And then the umsuthu girl where is she?" that should be Onalenna.

"They're coming with Kayise" Bongeziwe is the one who answers.

"Oh that's wonderful news. Is Kayise's girlfriend coming? I haven't met her. I want everyone here. No one is going to waste someone's daughter time. Either you marry her or let go"

"She's coming" I answer.

"Lulama thank you for what you've done for us. We were talking with your husband here, we are planning that you two should have a traditional

wedding so you can be properly introduced to the ancestors” he smiles “how do you deal with him? hhayi hhayi this one” he must be giving them a hard time with the argument. “But I am glad all along he’s been using his surname that’s why our ancestors been protecting him, we have differences but he respects them” but that day when he—never mind.

Lulama chuckles covered in crimson as they make an intense eye contact with her man, the sexual attraction between both of them is undeniable. Even when he’s keeping a straight face but you can tell inside he’s painted with pretty colors “I have no problem at all with the traditional wedding but I’d really appreciate it if would be sooner for preparations”

“We will have to do it before Nokwanda’s wedding since you’re the elder makoti than her and then the umusuthu girl. Bongeziwe where are you going there again?” wait, wait what is that supposed to

mean? “Bomakoti you can leave” alright it seems we are not supposed to hear the rest of the conversation.

“This is such a big family” Lulama winces as we walk out of the living room “this is all he ever wanted” I am thinking she’s now talking to herself, in her nirvana. “How many daughter in laws do they have here?” she looks at me.

“It seems the number keeps increasing” I look towards her and chuckling.

“A wedding season”

“I am glad you are my sister in law because now I’ll have you designing my dress” I take this chance, I wanted her to be my design anyways, her work is truly impeccable and sophisticating.

“Oh yes I’d love that” she chuckles and then searches for my eyes “what’s bothering you Kwanda?” she asks me “I see you’re pregnant, happily in love, healthy, beautiful and getting married but something is eating you now. What is it?” oh she can see that?—is it visible.

“It’s nothing” I smile, we are now standing at the corridor indirectly running away from the chores in the kitchen.

“You don’t know me, I know that but I am the most trustworthy person in the world”

We both laugh quietly “so...” I start and she attentively look at me, she’s has a unique beauty “I found out that this house was decorated by my future husband’s ex” I pause and breathe “dead ex”

“Kodwa Nokwanda” she has been holding her

breath then she laughs once again “you are subconsciously competing with someone who’s dead?”

“I think so”

“You shouldn’t baby, not because she’s dead no but because she’s the past and you are his present. There’s so much to stress about than this. You have a wedding to prepare for. You’ll be yelling and screaming at labour ward in months to come. Tomorrow is a big day. And this? Last thing you should be thinking about honestly” she says in a most sweetest tone “take this as she was just an interior design and stop doing this to yourself. First time I visited Bambatha at his house there was an ugly vase that his ex bought for him and I broke it by “mistake” and no she’s no death” she’s funny.

“You were screaming in labour ward?”

“Yes and my husband was threatening to kill people if they don’t numb my pain as if those doctors had the power to do that” she dramatically rolls her eyes “you stop thinking about dead people, let’s go”

We are now outside already preparing for tomorrow, chopping the vegetables and the meat. Two cows were just slaughtered right now and the ululating erupted. I expected the atmosphere to be so intense that you can hardly breathe from those men but it seems they shoved their differences aside for this day to be a success, my brother is finally here. I haven’t spoke to him as yet.

And then my friends as well sharing this whole experience with them makes me less nervous, from sharing alcohol to becoming wives soon—well excluding Onalenna who doesn’t know as yet and she’ll be awaken by people outside her gate. And with Khethelo, I don’t know as well but Baba Mcelu

made it clear no one is wasting someone's daughter's time.

Bambatha is walking towards us with a chair in his hand and he has blood spilled on what he is wearing "Lulama Gum" he says behind his wife who turns swiftly. "Your sons are calling you in the bedroom" he says that with a sensual smile "and also you've been standing far too long, here's a chair, please sit. Don't you think you've chopped enough vegetables? You recently did that manicure baby"

"Leago and Lizelande are calling me?" she creases her eyebrow.

"They said they're hungry" but I am the one who was feeding them minutes ago before their grandmother took them.

“They just ate and their grandmother took them Bambatha”

He shrugs nonchalantly “they must be hungry again” this is so funny because humor is dancing in his eyes yet his face is still marbled.

“I am coming just now” she smiles at him.

“Okay” he smiles back and then kisses her cheek before he disappears around the yard and our laughter erupts after as Lulama shakes her head.

I am also fetched by ubhuti a moment later, it’s nice having a husband. If I was at home I would’ve been chopping until the early morning birds start to chirp. He’s carefully holding my hand, so cautious as we walk to his roundvel. I am so tired, exhausted in fact.

The moment we get in the room he makes me sit on the bed and kneels by my feet taking off my shoes and massaging them “tomorrow you’re not doing this chopping business and walking up and down maMkhungo” he’s crazy.

“Tomorrow is the big day...”

“And that’s why I am saying you’re not over working. I cannot have a wife running up and down mina”

“Bhuti that is impossible”

“I said what I said”

He’s crazy, Mongezi Mcelu is crazy.

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“You can keep loving a person but that won't be enough if you don't like them anymore.

You might still be in love with a person but it won't matter if you feel exhausted dealing with them everyday.

Loving is important but so is liking someone with their flaws.

Because when you stop liking someone, you start noticing their flaws more and it creates a distance.

A distance where you fail to acknowledge anything else other than their flaws.

Love probably won't let you turn your back from that person but liking them will make you want that person.

Understand when you don't like them anymore, learn the difference”

He looks like he just stepped out the high end glossy magazine, advertising traditional wear. No one should look this good—he's not wearing his

favorite color today, but umblaselo as well and his white sneakers are all dirty and somehow that is so attractive, holding a knife that is oozing with blood from cutting the cow that is lying dead and his hands are also bloody. The tattoos on his arms and fingers makes him even more beguiling. And the new hairy watch in his wrist.

The whole yard is buzzing with elderly men sitting around in a circle and drinking from umqombothi that was prepared by Lulama and Azande seems to be a little jealous of her for some reasons, she's been making comments.

I have been up and down serving people, and wrinkled women in the kitchen have been praising my good looks, it sounded sardonically though as they were going on and on about the previous makoti—the dead ex—from what I heard she was from here and moved to the city.

Last night when he was amorously massaging my feet he told me about her—her name was Balungile. He didn't hide from me that they were in love and how hard it was for him to let go of that part of his life. Although I don't know about her death and what led to it but I know she was extremely ill and that he knew she was going to leave him before she actually took her last breath because of the conversation they had a night before. How she told him that she was going to meet someone—who'd love him better than she did.

The ceremony was such a success, before the chickens crow they were already in a roundvel "emsamo" with a goat and making amends with their ancestors, before the surname changing part and introductions of the two sons in this family, and well their sister who happened to do an incest with her brother cannot be found, and the ceremony cannot be postponed either but they're searching for her, the incense scent wheezed in the air. I was not there by the way but already in the kitchen

where everyone was hands on with the pots.

Bambatha knew long time ago about this family and he has been using his real surname since but he wanted his father to find him not the other way around—which is why he made it hard for him. Sonke is still pretty much still rearranged.

Mihlali is also here and less bitchy but showing her teeth more, drinking from the mug filled with wine. And yes, they're making things official with her man from the closed doors as they were granted the blessings, I think that's one of the reasons she has been effervescent.

And on the other hand Bambatha wanted to leave right after the ceremony in the morning, making it clear that him being here didn't necessarily means we are becoming one big family. It seems as though all his emotions were just concealed and his anger is valid, honestly. But his wife spoke to him,

that's the only person who can calm him, she makes it look so simple, no words were used but she sweetly called him by his name before she smiled looking up at him and flapping her lashes—I was standing right behind them by the way. And that was it, they're still here and he's not happy about his wife whom is overly working than anyone here, I even feel guilty for not working much. He searches for her every second so she can take a break.

I am with Onalenna around the three legged pot and preparing dumpling with tribe and the aroma is so inviting. I keep stealing looks at her, in her blue and white dress with traditional prints from her tribe without any knowledge or whatsoever that our negotiations will be held on the same day, the difference is I am aware about it and she's not. Yeah shame Bongeziwe is brave for doing this as a surprise because what if she says no? When his uncles are already outside the gate and shouting her clan names. “What are you hiding from me?”

she wipes her sweat from her forehead and closing the pot lid. In the morning it was raining, the weather here will leave you flustered because now we can hardly breathe under the scorching sun.

“It’s nothing”

“I know you, what are you hiding?” the horse is literally kicking my chest.

“Mamkhungo!” I turn my head around and there he is calling me. This one knows me, huh? “Ngicela usondela mfazi wami [please come here my wife]” I glance at my friend winking at her and walking away meeting with the life saver half way. And he takes my hand, taking me to the kraal and we just stand outside looking at the cows with long horns and they’re so fat with hanging necks. “That one right there, is Nkosazana” he points one of the cows with a smile “I named her” our fingers are intertwining.

“Why Nkosazana?”

“Because I knew one day she’ll represent me to my wife’s family” he glances at me, he’s totally different from the picture I painted of him in my mind when we first met—a snob. “I was manifesting my wife in a sense, inkosazana yakwa Mkhungo” and then he pulls me closer to him, my back leaning against the kraal of mowing cows and his hands around my waist “making you my wife is not a mistake Nokwanda”

“I know that bhuti”

“I’m glad, you must keep it in your mind at all times” he strokes my abdomen “And I don’t want you doubting that even in your sleep”

“I love you” Oh I do, I really do. I never knew what

love is but now I know. The beauty of it. The taste. The feel. Everything. “I’m in love with you” I place my hands on his chest and looking up at him and a smile tug on his lips.

“And I am in love with you baby” I take in his virile maleness, not for the first time marvelling at the fact that he is mine. I meet him eagerly, kissing, tasting, loving the feel of his lips on mines and we both groan together as our tongues lick deeper, and him pushing into my mouth.

“Today I found out my brother owns a farm” he pauses and smiles. They all seem jubilated about their older brother being home. For some reasons, they connected instantly. “Let’s go” he takes my hand after glancing at the cows once with a grin on his face, he’s totally in his element today. I return back to helping cooking dumplings and tribe. And then you have Khethelo, she has the most wild hormones and so emotional. Instead of being vocal

she chooses tears. Like in the morning when she was hungry instead of telling us she went on to sit outside alone, crying and she was found by one of the aunts, only her man knew what was wrong because he quickly made something for her before fetching her—one thing about these men is they will love you and you won't believe it you'd think you are dreaming.

We urgently called inside the house for a meeting, we leave the pots and guests outside making our way to the airy luxury living room that is a polished ensemble of designer pieces, brought together inside one colour palette with complete finesse. The grey walls and curtains draw powder grey shades down the vertical planes, whilst black anchors cross the baseline of the scheme. A black border encapsules the ceiling space, and a stretch of marble sends a storm of black and white across the back wall. To the side of the designer sofa in the lounge, two black and gold accent chairs stand as though in guard of a glass wine store. Black marble

travels the width of the television wall, mirroring the marble backsplash in the kitchen that's on the opposite side of the room. A gold unit slices through the seat cushions of the modern sofa, forming a convenient side table and magazine storage nook. Golden hued scatter cushions complement the precious metallic addition. A glossy hallway runs the length of the living room, defined by its tile floor and stunning lighting solutions that integrate with sleek ceiling recesses and textured wall panels. Low level lighting stretches along the length of the hall too, making a runway toward a dramatic bust sculpture.

Women should be sitting on the reed mat but Baba uMcelu allows us on the sofas because our modernize mentality and how we would've complained, but he made it clear that next time our buttocks will be sinking there. I am sitting right next to bhuti and he takes my hand to his, there's total silence here. "Hhayi..." that's how Baba uMcelu start the meeting already from his tone this is not

good news “the ceremony was a success. And I wanted to thank omakoti for being helpful. I made it clear to these boys that the day they go to your homes they’ll be an extra cow as an apology that their daughters were doing wife duties without being married...excluding uMaGum. And thanks to you for finally carrying this surname boMcelu abahle. In this generation of Mcelu family we’ve never had a girl child” he has a proud smile on his face and clasping his hands on the side of the chair he’s sitting on. What about Azise? Many, many secrets in this house “Kayise khuluma [Kayise talk]”

Everyone is now eye balling him with curiosity “I’ve been trying to search for Tumelo and I wasn’t able to locate her since that task was given to me. I hired someone and I just got the call...” he hangs his shoulders low “...her husband killed her and then he ran away, the day after attacking Kwanda”

“Wait he has attacked someone in the family and he

is still around?” Bambatha narrows his eyes as though Kayise just grew two penises on his forehead “I don’t understand, please make me”

“I dealt with someone who laid hands on her, this guy was going to pay as a way of an apology after the attack” Mongezi responds, he dealt with him, when? And why is he suddenly looking like that, scary.

“Accordingly?” Bambatha creases his eyebrow.

“Accordingly” bhuti has a complacent smirk.

What is accordingly?

“Bambatha don’t bring your street attitude, one thing I won’t allow is you being a bad influence to my son” I spoke a little too earlier about her. Mihlali

spits uncrossing her legs and leaning forward “I’ve been looking at you. You are coming where you’re coming from and now you want to rule everything. Heir? You’re a heir” she pauses “mxm” then she leans backwards.

Bambatha narrows his eyebrows and chuckling sardonically “who is she?” he asks instead.

“Your aun...” I’m about to respond

“He’s being sarcastic” Lulama wants to laugh at me but also she looks pretty exasperated to let out that sound.

“I won’t let you speak to my husband like that and with all due respect you know absolutely nothing about him, nothing” Lulama says in a calm tone “you were not there when this man wore umblaselo to feel like he’s belonging to something because he

was being judged for being too white in a black community and too black in a white community. You were not there when he'd listen to maskandi to feel at home. You were not there when I was comforting him. He was not raised by the street. He had a life before this so don't dare to talk to him like that because if I ask him to deal with you accordingly no one will save you here, not a single person" it's getting tense "and that was your first and last time you talk about him like that" she stands up for her man.

"And one more thing you have no business into either my life and Mongezi, you're our mother by name so next time just try to hold yourself back because you made your choice" Bongiziwe responds "Can I talk to my brothers privately mkhulu?" he turns to Baba uMcelu, he's not interfering, he only does when needed.

"Please don't allow them to leave this room mkhulu"

Onalenna speaks out and her man gapes.

“I agree” Lulama

“Me too” Khethelo

“Nami” Azande

The men eyeball me and waiting for me to say something but Mongezi is giving me that I-am-going-to-fuck-you look.

Dlisa the team or not dlisa the team?

“I also agree” not dlisa the team.

“Your women have spoken” Baba uMcelu smiles.

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“I love you more than once, a thousand more  
lifetime”

I can hardly breathe, stuck in a bedroom and draped  
with a blanket around my shoulders in this  
scorching sun. My uncles could be ruining my life  
as we are speak. They could be chasing away my in  
laws.

I need to breathe!

I need to breathe!

The door wrench open and my twin sister walks in  
with two bottles of water. You'd swear these are her  
negotiations the way she's agitated but also she's  
good at eavesdropping before the planning of my  
negotiations we also had her ceremony to change  
her surname and us being twins. My uncles were  
delighted when they received a letter and started

planning how many cows they wanted. Two is enough but these men wants more than ten.

We haven't had any sort of communication with my father and I want it to stay that way and then pink tie, I haven't heard from him too. I am not willing to change my ways because of him.

“Not your uncles fighting about your virginity in the other room” the way she just said that it's like they're throwing around my hymen across the room and fighting over it. “They're saying you were sealed it's like you are tin fish” I look at her standing by the door before dramatically rolling my eyes and then she laughs loudly handing me a bottle of water and also taking my hand maneuvering me into sitting on the edge of the bed. “Relax everything is going just fine” she tells me and smiles.

I feel suffocated, how can they make a pregnant woman put around a blanket on her shoulders in

this weather? They want to kill me on purpose.

I cannot help but also wonder how Onalenna is feeling right now, maybe she fainted and I cannot call her because I might jinx things.

We came back two weeks ago and no one from the Mcelu family was allowed at the funeral regardless of trying to make amends but Tumelo's mother made it clear that we are not allowed but Baba Mcelu and his wife still went there regardless and helped with funeral preparations. And I also got to speak to my brother just leave the fact that we are cousins but he'll always be close to my heart and no one can ever fill that space. I was able to navigate his feelings and so did he with mine—he seems to be at peace about the turn out of events with his life. This may sound gruesome but. . . apart of me feels things happen for a reason and maybe Tumelo's death happened for a reason.

I guzzle down the bottle of water and taking a long and sharp breathe watching Yolokazi looking outside the window then she glances at me “your man is here” she tells me and winks “take your phone text him” she has been keeping my phone since this day started. My mother asked her too and speaking of her, she’s back from rehabilitation center and better. You should see her running around the house like a headless chicken. I am glad she doesn’t wear those glittery heels of hers anymore. I threw them away and bought her new ones in fact a whole new wardrobe and my business? Hmm opening in a weeks time.

‘Please tell me everything is going well’ I text Mongezi and finessing my phone screen, impatiently waiting for his response.

‘Please tell me you’ve eaten soon to be Mrs Mcelu’ Eh, this is not the time for him to worry me about food.

Our texting is interrupted when my mother calls me to go and sit on the room outside, I don't know for what reasons but this gives me a perfect chance to sneak out using the back gate—he's here!

When he seems me approaching he gets off the car immediately and strides towards me so we can meet half way. We distance away, standing under the tree and I know, I know he's about to reprimand me for coming out of the house.

He dis appoints me by smiling and wrapping his arms around my waist, my belly bump keeps him distance from me, it's growing day by day. From my waist to cupping my face and gracing my forehead with a kiss and I flutter my eyes closed.

“MaMkhungo” The reprimanding is coming, just wait for it. My heart is loudly thrashing against my chest. It's like tiny drums. It's so loud. I flap my eye lashes at him. “You shouldn't be here”

“I had to see you” my voice comes out as a whisper.

“What?” he frowns “you’ve changed your mind?”

“No, no” I respond quickly and breathe out. My hands are sweaty and cold, changing pigmentation. Tears prickles at the corner of my eyes and concern is lancing through him before it appears on his face “I love you” I tell him. I never meant these words like I do before. I look at his forever calm muscles around his face and serene smile. “If I could turn back the time I wouldn’t change anything”

“Not even losing my memory?”

“Not even that. I learnt that loving someone means you should be there whenever. I could lose my ability to see now but I know I’d see the beauty of the world through yours. You could lose your sense

of hearing but I'll hear for you. You lost your memory but I was there to store all the memories for you" I tell him and I learnt that only I can make him cry. There he is attempting to blink his tears away but it's already too late because they're drowning his eyes. His Adam's apple is moving up and down while he darts his eyes between mines. "I will never change anything bhuti" I repeat again and this time my voice comes out raspy.

"I love you too MaMkhungo" that's all I wanted to hear, nothing poetic from him. I just wanted those words and that drop of tear and that smile. And also get a whiff of his scent, that's all. Before he could say anything I escape his grip and walk away from him more like running and he stands there watching me with a smile plastered on his face until I disappear and his frame becomes smaller and smaller.

I return back to the room more calmer, less

sweating, less agitated.

‘Today you reminded me that I am not making a mistake maMkhungo’ a message comes from him and I smile to myself before a call comes in it’s Onalenna—Omg, I have completely forgotten about her. I immediately pick up the phone and all I hear is sniffs and sobs.

“You knew didn’t you?” there’s ululation at the background. Thank God, I have been holding my breath about this.

“Yes, congratulations mama” I laugh.

“Thank you. I have to go, bye and I love you” I guess the negotiations are still taking place.

Okay back to mines!

Yolokazi walks back and telling me my uncle who has been drinking traditional beer since the week started is demanding Mercedes. I am going to shoot myself. This imbecile I call a sister is laughing and choking with tears streaming down her face.

And finally we are being called so the Mcelu family can choose their flower. I am invited by marbles faces in the room as we sit on the reed mat and my eyes are looking at nothing but the white clean tiles.

Oh yes, finally!

I can now breathe and I have been asked to go call their son in law outside to come and eat. The house is filled with ululation and laughter and clicking of glasses. It's a glorious occasion.

I have to serve him on the table and he seems nervous being in this house. He's getting compliments from my aunts I never knew existed and cousins who wants to know if there's any more men in his family. And then my dodgy male cousins who smells like beer and nicotine who've suddenly became closer to him. I am sure because he just bought them alcohol and now my poor man is forced to laugh at their dry jokes and also my uncle demanding for a car no one has ever owned in this house but rather than that I am happy.

They're about to leave and bidding farewell. He's being praised for doing the right thing by everyone. They seem to like him shame, I don't know how many hugs and handshakes he has received.

He leans against his car while I stand facing him and the sun is slowly but surely setting and creating a beautiful orange hue picture yet the sky is blue. I can see few birds flying freely. I love being in his

arms. “You looked beautiful today” he says his chin on top of my head and I pull away to look at him.

“Any other days I am not beautiful?”

“You were not Mrs Mcelu on those days”

I laugh “Listen to you bragging”

“I have to” he chuckles “The worse is over, you’re now Mrs Mcelu, my eternal sunshine”

“Your eternal sunshine” I murmur repeating after him.

The End.