

FATHER AND SON

LOVE, MONEY, POWER

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CHAPTER 01

•AFRIKA

Just like the continent, I am as rich as they come, my intelligence scares everyone that tries to safeguard it, they tell me I will be the biggest thing to happen to the world but isn't it the same Africa that the rich and powerful steal from? They all make me think about all sorts of possibilities, they make me believe that I can be anything that I want, they believe in me more than I actually believe in myself but what hurts more is that the one person I want to be proud of me doesn't give any care in the world about me, all that is important to her is the alcohol and different men she brings to the house with each passing day. At 18 years I have seen more than most adults and I still don't understand why I never opted for suicide, maybe because amid everything my sister fights for me. She takes it all so I can be okay, Amanda is all the strength I need even though she doesn't live here with us, she makes it her point to see to it that I have everything that I need. I have been on my books for hours now, final exams have started and I have to study. It's a Saturday and the neighborhood is very busy, people are going up and down drinking and having fun, the door opens and my mother walks in with one of her usual's. They are both holding 2 bottles of beer, I sigh because I know the peace in the house just went through the door

when she walked in. She stops by the table and roughly closes my book and tears a page of the school textbook

Ma "School work stays at school, don't bring this uselessness into my house, when are you going to understand my house rules?"

Me "Final exams have started ma if I want to make to varsity next year my marks need to be high"

She laughs and looks at the man she came with.

Ma "Did you hear this fool, you are walking right in your father's path Afrika, the same journey, and it's going to end the same for you too!"

Me "Why can't you just be like other mothers and support me?"

Ma "Having you made me like this!"

I never cry when my mother speaks like this, at least not in front of her, I taught myself to never show weakness to those who deliberately want to see me breakdown.

Me "Then just tell me who my father is and I will go find him, maybe he will love me!"

I felt a hot slap across my face.

Ma "He didn't give a shit about you! He decided to use his intelligence to create a deadly substance, he made So much noise about how it will make him millions until it got him killed!" this was the first time I was hearing about this.

Me "You told me that my father was a married man and you never told him about me."

She laughs

Ma "Oh, well, now you know the truth. He is dead and if you don't stop this university nonsense you will follow him too. You will use those brains of yours the same way he did and die."

Me "All I have ever wished was for you to be a better mother to me and Amanda that's all!"

Ma "Oh well baby girl, stop wishing because this is not a fairy-tale."

Me "I know that now mama."

Ma "Just start with the pots and dish for us immediately when you are done."

Me "We don't have any food in the house."

She shot me an intimidating look.

Ma "Amanda is trying me now, what the hell does she think we are eating here? Send her a message on those things of yours and tell her to send us money at Shoprite before they close!"

She looks at her boyfriend who has opened his beer and is relaxed crossing his legs on the worn-out couch balanced with bricks on one side.

Ma "Heii wena the bedroom is that side, come." she says and the man stands up and follows her.

•AMANDA

My vagina was on my fire but I had to see this through, I had to let him have his way with me so that he can pay me every single cent we agreed on, I have been here since morning and it's around 1 pm now. My mind is not here at all, I keep on thinking about my little sister, I haven't been home in 2 weeks and I know by now she doesn't have food and that woman must be giving her a tough time. My mother and I don't see eye to eye, she is emotionally and physically abusive. She did that with me and I couldn't take it, So I left home and found myself in this big city, no matric meant I couldn't get a proper job. I help out at the salon as the nail tech but my real money comes from prostitution, that was the easiest market to access and it makes me enough money to take care of myself and my sister. I take extra clients So I can save up Some money for her to buy things for when she is going to varsity. I am grateful because her teacher helped her apply for NSFAS and Some bursaries. Afrika is So smart and I know that she will make it

out of that shithole, she will have a better life than me and I am eternally grateful that she wouldn't need to live like me to make ends meet. She doesn't know what I do for a living and I intend to keep it that way.

I feel this man tighten his hold and I let out more fake moans, there is no pleasure here just pain that I have to suck up. He takes his final thrust and he is undone.

Him "Fuck I didn't believe my friend when he said you are a beast now; I see why he is always here."

Me "I am glad you are satisfied"

He smiles.

Him "More than satisfied, I think I will even tip you!"

I laugh.

Me "You are really pleased."

He nods and takes out a brown envelope and hands it to me.

Him "R10 000 like we agreed on, thanks for making me live my fantasy baby girl, things like this we don't get to do at home, I should talk to Mike for a threesome."

Me "Just know it won't come cheap."

Him "For you to grace my bed I would pay absolutely anything", he says and disappears to the bathroom and a second later the shower tap is running. I use that time to count my money, it's complete. I will go to see my sister tomorrow. He comes back and gets dressed

Him "I have to go now, I had fun and Mandy believe me I will be back soon."

Me "I will be waiting for your call then."

He nods and walks out. I head to the bathroom too and luckily this hotel has bath salts. I stay in the water for a while and once I am a little Soothed down there, I get my things and leave. My friend and I stay in a two-bedroom apartment, the rent is fair and the neighborhood is not that bad. I get home and Dineo is on the couch watching Something that has to do with beauty and clothes.

Her "Finally home! You've been out for hours now."

Me "That guy was having the time of his life babe."

Her "I am just happy you got paid hey."

Me "Not as happy as me Dee, I had to get money for Afrika"

She rolls her eyes.

Her "I always tell you that your family will suck you dry, and Afrika is now a woman Amanda she should come here and work just like you!"

Me "I have always told you that I live for my baby sister Dee, and never again suggest that she comes here and be a prostitute. Afrika will go to university and make Something out of her life. I will make sure of that even if it's the last thing I do!"

She shakes her head.

Her "I was just saying."

Me "You can say anything, but not about my baby sister living this life."

Her "Calm down Mandy, I've heard you", she says and looks at the TV. She just pissed me off really, I stand up and make my way to my room.

•MR MDLALOSE

I have been hit three times now, these bastards found a way to hack our highly encrypted messages. I have lost 25 million worth of drugs and this problem is nowhere near fixed because we don't know who keeps doing this to us. I produce a drug that nobody else produces, it's one of its kind and it sells like fat cakes on a cold day. They have tried finding out what ingredients are used to make it and I know for a fact that they will never find it. All I am happy about is that my labs are not in the firing line. We have ceased all operations for now So we can fix this problem. One of my sons works at the university, he is intelligent

but stupid when it comes to the streets, that bloody fool wants to be mafia but he is too righteous he will never survive!

Then there is my boy, I know for a fact that he will succeed me and take this business higher and higher. He is currently taking care of business in another country but as soon as we get in the New Year, he will be home running things with me, side by side. The study door opens and Mzwakhe walks in.

Me "You don't know how to knock now?"

Him "Baba I have a solution to your problem." I laugh

Me "What do you know about the streets wena? Stick to teaching those university students and enjoying my money and spending it on your white slut!", he clenches his jaws.

Him "I will never understand how you hate my wife but love our kids."

Me "Because those children have my blood running through their veins, they are Mdlalose children!"

Him "Yazin baba forget I was even here."

I chuckle.

Me "Exactly why you will never be able to succeed me."

He smiles.

Him "No baba! I will never succeed you because you hate that I married a white girl, I will never succeed you because I never let you dictate my life the way you do your precious Son!"

Me "You are just weak, that is your problem simple."

He laughs

Him "I have more balls than you can ever imagine."

Me "I honestly thought your balls were in your wife's hands boy."

Him "I don't need this", he walks out and I follow him.

Me "Grow the fuck up and stop letting that gold digger wear the pants in your marriage!"

Him "Respecting and cherishing my wife doesn't make me weak baba but of course it different for you, you treat my mother like trash!"

My wife appears in the kitchen.

Her "What are you two bickering about now?"

Him "Your husband is a bastard ma that's what."

Me "You are insulting me now? In my house?"

Her "Mzwakhe you don't talk to your father like that."

He laughs

Him "Why am I surprised? When are you going to realize that you deserve better?"

Me "Get the hell out of my house before I do something I will regret!"

Him "You are a sad old man baba."

Me "Yet you always want my approval, who is the sad one?"

Her "Khaya, stop it!" my wife reprimands me.

Me "Waze wang'yenzela isyoyo So mfana lana Nomalanga (you gave me a fool for a Son Nomalanga)!"

Him "Mama goodbye."

Her "Goodbye baby, I will come and see you tomorrow, greet Emily for me."

Him "Okay I will", he says walking away and I shake my head.

Her "Stop abusing my Son. You couldn't poison all my children; God wouldn't allow you to render my womb rotten."

Me "Nomalanga", I try to warn her but she raises her hand.

Her "Mzwakhe is your Son, and you will respect his life choices and stop pressurizing him'.'. She walks back to the kitchen.

•AFRIKA

I woke up early, around 7 on Sunday and tidied the house. My mother and her boyfriend had a party here last night, bottles of beer and cigarette stubs everywhere. We do not have beautiful furniture So the house must always be neat. I managed to hide a little powder Soap when Amanda brought groceries last time, So I managed to wash my uniform and the little laundry I had. By the time I was done, they had woken up already discussing which tavern is open. My mother never ceases to amaze me, we slept hungry last night but they kept buying beers like nobody's business. I was sitting on the Sofa listening to them talk. My mother made her way to the pots and opened them.

Her "Where is the food Afrika? Why are you sitting there and not cooking?"

Me "I told you last night that we don't have any food", I say not looking at her.

Her "And I told you to tell Amanda to send us money, didn't I?"

Me "I didn't have data."

Her "I have never seen a more useless child like yourself in my life, you have a gold mine between your legs and you still struggle with things!", she clapped her hands. The door opens and Amanda walks in, I quickly stand up and go hug her.

Amanda "Hey baby, unjani (how are you)?"

Me "I am very well, I just missed you."

Amanda "I know I have been too silent these days, I have just been busy."

Me "It's okay I understand."

Amanda "Come to help me take out the groceries from the boot", we walk out and I see the polo TSI parked outside our gate, that's one of my teachers Mr. Mafa, he is in love with Amanda but she never gives him the light of day. When she is around, he is forever available to help her out with transport. I greet him and take the groceries inside, once every plastic is in, I start unpacking. Amanda walks back in after bidding Mr. Mafa goodbye, my mother is folding her arms looking Sour, she and Amanda don't get along very well.

Her "I told you to stop buying groceries and give us money, we know what we need not you!"

Amanda "Give you money So that you can go spend it all on alcohol? I don't think so Ma."

Her "Just because you are the one buying food here doesn't mean you must disrespect me in my own house."

Amanda "I am not in the mood to fight with you, just take that old dirty man and leave to get drunk because that is what you do best."

Her "When I get back you better be gone!", my sister just remains silent; my mom takes my sister's bag attempting to take money but not Amanda, she charged towards her and snatched her purse.

Her "Asambe wena" she says pulling that man with his shirt.

Amanda "Mama will never change Afrika and I feel So bad for leaving you here with her."

Me "I am used to her now; she doesn't get to me as she did before."

Amanda "And to think she was the best mother when I was growing up."

Me "At least you have happy memories of her."

Amanda "I am sorry my love."

She hugs me.

Me "I have you, that's all I need."

Amanda "I am glad to hear that"

Me "Sis, what do you know about my father?"

Amanda "Memories of him are vivid nana, I was 7 when he died, you never ask about him why now?"

Me "I didn't even know he died, mama always said she didn't tell him about me because he was married!", she laughs.

Amanda "You should have asked me you know how mama is Afrika."

Me "I just didn't care enough back then, what happened to him?"

Amanda "People say that he was the smartest man in this neighborhood just like you, but he wanted fast cash just like most people. Apparently, he then invented a drug and it started gaining momentum, that's how he managed to buy this 4 roomed house, but as soon as the big drug lords heard about it, they offered him a deal and he took it. Little did he know that they just wanted to learn his recipe then they killed him, and mama hasn't been the same since", this was not an easy pill to swallow.

Me "Okay", that's all I managed to say.

Amanda "Look at what I got you", she hands me a plastic from Mr. Price.

Me "Ngiyabonga sis wam", I give her a hug.

Amanda "I will do anything for you Afrika, all I want you to focus on is passing matric and making it to university."

Me "I will make you proud I promise."

Amanda "And yourself too nana" I smile and start looking at the clothes she bought.

•MPILO

Last stroke and I am done! One of the nicest things about Colombia is that the women and Bogota have the sexiest. I am here to ensure that our lab is up and running since the demand for our product has increased in South America So we needed a lab here to also avoid being under police watch. Everything is going well and it is selling fast, at least the operation here is helping the cash flow since we were hit three times back home. As much as I love women here, I miss home, I miss my family. She tries to touch me but I quickly yank her hand away.

Me "You know that bullshit is not allowed now you want to touch me like your asshole!"

Her "Oh, come on Life, me touching you doesn't mean I want a relationship; I understand what this is."

Me "Good to know, now you should get going, I need to work", she gets off my bed and puts on her clothes.

Her "I will see you later."

Me "Yeah sure, I say lighting a cigarette by the balcony", my phone rings as she walks out and it's my mom, a smile creeps on my face.

Me "Mawami, unjani?"

Ma "Mfana wam, I am okay, how are you?"

Me "I am well thank you, to what do I owe this phone call So early?"

Ma "It's after 7 Mpilo, it's not that early, I miss you."

Me "I miss you too Ndlunkulu yakwa Mdlalose."

Ma "I need you to call your father." I sigh

Me "What has he done now mama?"

Ma "He fought with Mzwakhe again."

Me "I will talk to him to lay off my brother, those two must just let it slide already."

Ma "I am tired of them manje it has become too much."

Me "I will call baba now don't worry."

Ma "Wrap things up that side Mpilo and come home, only you can get them to be civil with each other"

Me "It's almost done sthandwa sam."

Ma "Okay let me leave you to have Some breakfast."

Me "Okay I love you."

Ma "I love you too Son", she hangs up and I wonder what those two fought about.

CHAPTER 02

•AMANDA

I decided to stay a week with my sister just to show her that I still care and to just give her a break from having to deal with our mother alone. I know how she gets and Sometimes you have to stop yourself from trying to just slap her back into reality. My sister is the smartest person I know and if my mother gave herself a chance to see that, if we helped and supported her, she would get us out of this shame. People look at our family like we are nothing, and who can blame them because mama gives them Something to talk about every day. I woke up and lucky enough I did the dishes last night, immediately after eating, with Afrika at school, I don't know what to do with myself, I can't even buy her a TV because my mother will just sell it. I look for the novels that I normally bring Afrika and find them hidden under the mattress. My mom and I bump into each other when I walk out.

Me "Sorry."

Her "When are you leaving Amanda?"

Me "I'm not here for you ma, I am here for my sister, she needs me."

Her "Afrika and I are doing very well without you, remember you left us!"

Me "I left because I couldn't be in the same house with you, you made my life a living hell just like you are doing with her", she smiles.

Her "What did you want me to do, treat you two like princesses?"

Me "Since that's impossible for Someone like you, the least you could have done is treat us like humans!"

Her "I gave birth to you Amanda"

Me "And how I wish you didn't ma! Do you know how many times I tried to kill myself? But I couldn't be selfish like you and leave my sister all alone! I am all she has; me Ma, I had to be that girl's mother while you went out every night getting drunk! I had to see to it that she ate, bathed, and gets to school! I couldn't chase my dreams because I had to step up for you!"

Her "I never asked you to do all that girly", I laugh and wipe my tears.

Me "Yes, you didn't, I just chose to love my sister!"

Her "I am happy for you."

Me "You can do anything you want with me ma, but when it comes to Afrika, I will kill you myself if I have to and I will not even shed a tear after doing it. Stop making her life a living hell, you made your life choices, stop this! When I leave this place, mama, you will behave and give her the support she needs to finish her exams!"

Her "You are threatening me, Amanda?"

Me "No mama I am just warning you, don't dare me."

Her "Hee I am going straight to the police station to report this, they must know that if anything happens to me you are responsible for it!"

Me "Yaz come to think of it, you don't deserve Afrika and me, you deserve to be alone and sad!"

Her "I don't need the two of you, you have been nothing but a burden to me, I regret ever having the both of you! Your fathers were useless pieces of shit and you are just like them!"

Me "I am taking my sister with me Soon as she finishes her exams", the shock on her face!

Her "You are not taking my daughter anywhere" she shouts

Me "Oh, now she is your daughter? mxm", she holds my hand tight and tears form in her eyes.

Her "You can't take my Afrika from me Amanda please", I shake my head

Me "You don't deserve her mama", I yank my hand away and go back inside the bedroom, I couldn't contain my tears. I don't understand how my mother one minute she doesn't give a shit the next she does.

•AFRIKA

We wrote the exam in the morning and I didn't go back home afterward instead I went to the library to practice mathematics since it's the next subject we will be writing and I need to have the highest marks since I was accepted to study Actuarial Science in varsity with my grade 11 marks. Such things need a person to focus, I might be intelligent but I need to focus and study regardless. I look at my phone and there is still nothing from Larona. She is my best friend and we are two different people; she is the most carefree person I have ever known. She promised that she was going to come So we can practice for paper one together, I continue practicing with the new CASIO calculator Amanda bought for me since the one she bought at the beginning of the year got lost. I felt So bad because she does So much for me to be So careless. After about 45 minutes she walks towards me, chewing the life out of that bubble gum.

Her "Tsala", I roll my eyes

Me "You are late."

Her "I know and I am Sorry please, Bafana called and asked to see me before I study since he will be busy later."

That's her boyfriend, he is Amanda's age and he works at Some firm as an artisan.

Me "Books before boys."

Her "Really Afrika? I know you are a nerd tsala but you need to live a little it's not like you need to practice like this, wena you got brains babe you do Something once, you master it, you are not like us, slow learners."

Me "I told you to stop saying that, you just don't give yourself enough time to practice, mathematics and physics need time."

Her "I am not studying difficult things next year like you, all I need is 50%, more than that I will be showing off!" I laugh.

Me "Which part do you need help with?"

Her "All of it but you need to rest a bit man you have been in here for hours, I got you Some food." she takes out a McDonald's paper bag.

Me "We are not allowed to eat in here you know this."

Her "Just bend the rules for once! You haven't had anything to eat", I give in and start eating, she is right, I am famished, the entire time she is on her phone busy giggling.

Me "All done, let's get on with the work."

Her "Before that, we are finishing exams next week So Bafana asked to take us out to celebrate finally being done with the uniform."

Me "You know I don't go out."

Her "Afrika please just this one time."

Me "Not my scene and you know this, plus I don't want to give my mother any reason to fight with me and tell me that I am useless."

Her "We will tell her that we are sleeping over at my house, please Afrika, I want to celebrate with you, remember you didn't go to our matric dance when you promised me you would be my date. You left me stranded at the last minute"

Me "I told you a month prior Larona and I didn't want to burden Amanda with all of those things, she does So much for me already."

Her "Make it up to me then."

Me "God! Fine Larona, I will go out with you to that stupid place."

Her "Oh, yes thank you babe, you are going to have So much fun", she says excitedly.

Me "Now can we go back to mathematics?"

Her "Okay help me with financial mathematics then functions and graphs, I have the others covered."

Me "Okay, I have previous question papers." I take them out of my bag pack and start working,

•MPILO

I had just gotten out of the shower, it has been a long ass day, making sure that the operations are running as they should. Trying to find Someone who will look after the business this side when I go back home is proving to be a challenge. I need a man that will be loyal to me and never share the ingredients of our products with anyone even when threatened. In simple words, I am looking for Someone who will die for our family and when they do, they must rest assured that those they leave living will be taken care of and they will never have to work another day in their lives. When I step in my lounge Mariana is already waiting for me.

Me "I never called you to come here."

Her "Oh, come on Life, you were going to call anyway", I sigh.

Me "I thought you said you understood what this is?"

Her "And I do, perfectly so."

Me "Then why do you want to act like my girlfriend?"

Her "Get over yourself Life, yes, you are a beast in the sack but you are not the type I would want to date. You are too arrogant for my liking, it just works for me in bed", I smile.

Me "From the yes sir, no sir, girl you were when I started fucking you, I must admit you have grown Some balls", she chuckles.

Her "I had to grow a thick skin to your bullshit", I smile.

Me "I see, but unfortunately for you, I have Someone else coming through tonight."

Her "Good because I'm not here for that." I sit naked on the couch and cross my legs

Me "Then say what you want baby girl", she comes and sits on top of me, grinding on me.

Her "I heard you are looking for a second in command."

Me "Where did you hear that?"

Her "I have my ways Life, I am resourceful, and word has it that you can't seem to find the perfect person for the job."

Me "Whoever is feeding you this information is crazy", I play my bluff

Her "I want the job", she says firmly and I laugh.

Me "What job now?"

Her "Don't play dumb with me, it doesn't look good on you, train me Life, make me your second in command, I will run everything for you, I will be loyal to you all days of my life. I will protect the operation with my life, I will grow it and make you proud. I don't have anyone, no family, nothing, it makes me the perfect candidate, the enemies will have nothing to make me submit to them", she was making So much sense. I know I've had her investigated before and I think I should do it again just to look deeper and be sure if I can trust her enough to be my second in command. I mean they would never think that a woman would run the show. Mariana is a strong woman a little training will make her the perfect woman to run my show.

Me "You are being crazy honestly because I don't know what you are talking about really", she laughs

Her "Think about it and call me", she stands up.

Me "I will call you but there is nothing to think about really."

Her "Enjoy the pussy", she walks to the door.

Me "I doubt it's going to drive me insane like yours."

Her "It's a pity because the dick I am going to drives me crazy, and he is a few inches larger", I quickly stand and block the door already attacking her lips, pulling the dress up, she is moaning in my mouth, I am going to fuck those words back into her mouth.

Me "You are going to forget about every man that came before me". The one coming will just knock and get rid of herself. This Spanish Mamacita is gracing my bed tonight.

•AFRIKA

On my way from school, I met with Mr. Mafa and he asked me to give this takeaway and R500 to Amanda because he was outside the house and he tried calling her but it isn't going through. He is such a gentleman, I don't understand why she doesn't want anything to do with him, she is single and he loves her, she must just give it a shot really and be happy. I get home tired as hell and the house is dead silent, could it be that she has gone back to the city? I get to the bedroom we share and she is out of it, sleeping like a log. I try to be silent while changing my school uniform, I drop Something and it wakes her up.

Me "I am Sorry sis"

Her "It's okay nana, I had to wake up anyway, Mafa said he will be coming to see me."

Me "I met with him and he said he has been trying to call you but you were not picking up and he didn't want to come inside the yard, he asked me to give you this", I hand her the money and food.

Her "Oh, boy, I feel So bad, I will call him, he probably thinks I played him"

Me "He is such a good man."

Her "One of a kind Afrika."

Me "Then why don't you give him a chance sis?" She looks down, sad.

Her "Because I am not good enough for him nana, he is all that is good in the world baby girl and me on the other hand, I am just", she stops and sighs.

Me "He doesn't care about anything; he knows everything about our family and yet he still wants you regardless, take a chance with him and be happy."

Her "You wouldn't understand Afrika."

Me "Then make me understand, all you do is work sis and make sure that I am okay but what about you huh? You also need to be happy and I can see that he would make you happy mntasekhaya."

Her "When did you become So smart?" I laugh.

Me "I am 18 you know", she shakes her head.

Her "To me you will always be my baby Afrika, the fact that you are growing up scares me So much."

Me "We can't run away from it but no matter my age I will forever be your nana" she hugs me.

Her "I love you So much Afrika more than I even love myself."

Me "I know Amanda and I am grateful for everything you do for me, all the sacrifices you make, I love you Mandy and I will make you proud, when things start to look up I will take of you like the Queen that you are."

Her "I know you will my love, listen after writing I want you to come and live with me until you move to res in January then you will visit me from time to time and during the holidays."

Me "Seriously Mandy?" she nods and my excitement is cut short.

Her "What's wrong?"

Me "What about mama?" she sighs.

Her "Afrika as painful as it is, you need to understand that mama doesn't care about us, we only have each other and I am tired of leaving you here with her knowing full well that she can never be a mother. I had to raise you and with that, I am not only your sister but I am responsible for you, if you stay here with her you will end up believing every negative thing

she says to you just like I did, and look at where that got me nana, I amounted to nothing”, I shake my head.

Me “Don’t say that please, you are the strongest woman I know Amanda.”

Her “For you yes I am and I couldn’t be prouder of the work I did with you”, she says with tears.

Me “I will move with you”, she smiles when I wipe her tears.

Her “Enough with the crying let's eat!"

•MZWAKHE

I chose a different path, I chose to be good, I know my family makes their money from selling drugs and I learned to accept it, after all, I lived a luxurious life and still do because of it. My mother tried, by all means, to shield my brother and me from the family business but my father had other plans. He only allowed my brother and me to study and we had to choose something that would benefit the business. We have always had brains. I decided to study Mathematics and Mpilo went with Chemistry. I was to help with the numbers and books and ensure we can launder enough money my, brother is responsible for trying to cook a new product or improve it, but, when I was done with school, I decided to pursue my Honours then Master’s degree. My father still had no problem but immediately when I opted to be a mathematics lecturer in the field of Actuarial Science, he lost it and I was never good enough again. I came up with a plan to help him deal with moving information since technologically they can beat his encryptions; I was taking him back to basics and they would never think about it, but as always, he doesn’t want to listen to anything that comes out of my mouth. I just want him to accept me and believe that I can help with the business and be a lecturer. I love what I do and I wouldn’t leave it for anything, plus its insurance for me and my family. I can’t be reckless like Mpilo because I have a wife and children; speaking of which Emily walks in wearing her gym clothes.

Her “Hey babe.”

Me “Honey.”

Her “You look lost in thoughts.”

Me “My father babe”, I say clenching my jaws.

Her “Mzi, babe, I told you to stop doing this to yourself please.”

Me “Baby you don’t understand.”

Her “He keeps on hurting you love, making you feel worthless, he will never see you like his golden Son Mpilo, or his princess Sbahle, you will always be an outcast to him, love.”

Me “I need to change all of that Emily, I want my father to be proud of me, I want to be part of the business too.”

Her “We have enough money saved and the university pays you well baby we can survive.”

Me “Emily it’s not about the damn money”, I shout and she jumps a little.

Her “I can’t talk to you when you are like this.”

Me “Babe I am Sorry; I didn’t mean to raise my voice at you.”

Her “My mother will drop the kids Soon; I am going to yoga.”

Me “Baby please!”

Her “Later Mzi”, she says and walks out.

CHAPTER 03

•AFRIKA

Finally, I wrote my last exam and I couldn't be happier; I am just So excited about moving to my sister's flat and going to university next year. I believe that from next year everything will start looking up for Amanda and me. I was waiting for Larona by the library, that one writes till the time is finished. I was taking five, trying to cool down because this sun is blazing hot. I was standing alone and a group of my classmates was busy writing their shirts, they are So excited, I wish I was as hyped up as they are. I feel Someone pulling me by my afro and I know who it is.

Her "We are finally done with school tsala."

Me "With high school yes", she rolls her eyes.

Her "Do you always have to be this technical Afrika? Geez!"

Me "I was just saying."

Her "So are you ready for tonight?" she says and I can't miss the excitement in her voice

Me "I don't know."

Her "Please don't tell me you've changed your mind please."

Me "No I haven't, I am just not over the moon."

Her "After tonight trust me you will be begging me to take you with me every weekend!"

Me "I doubt that very much."

Her "So make sure that you are at my house around 5 So I can help you with Some makeup."

Me "Okay, can we go?"

Her "Yes, Plus I need to go do my nails", we started walking hand in hand and when we got to the junction, I took the street that takes me home and she went to the direction of the salon. When I get home, I find my mother alone with a bottle of Hansa on the table, I sigh.

Me "Sawbona mama."

Ma "Afrika, unjani?"

Me "I am well thank you, wena?"

Ma "I am okay. I cooked should I dish for you", I stop and look back at her shocked.

Me "No, I am fine thanks", she takes a deep breath.

Ma "I made rice and chicken, your favorite."

Me "I will eat but that's not my favorite", she looks down embarrassed and stands up to dish up for me. I sit down and she hands me the plate and I start eating.

Ma "Amanda says she is taking you."

Me "She told me."

Ma "Is that what you want?"

Me "Yes, I want to be with my sister."

Ma "Kodwa Afrika what about me?"

Me "What about you Sibona?"

Ma "Who am I going to stay here with" I laugh.

Me "Who did I stay here with when you'd leave me to go drink with your boyfriends?"

Ma "I know that I haven't been the best mother" I stop eating.

Me "With all due respect Sibona, you have never been a mother to me, you just gave birth to me, Amanda is both my mother and sister and when she says jump Afrika, I ask, how high?"

Ma "Give me a chance to fix all of that."

Me "Too little too late", I stand up and go to my room, fix my things since Amanda wants to take me.

•MPILO

I found deeper information about Marianna and fuck; indeed, she is the perfect candidate to be my second in command for the Colombian operation. She lost her parents at the age of 10 and she was taken in by her uncle who turned out to be a mother fucker So she ran and lived on the streets. She survived on her own 'til she started working for a drug cartel as a mule. Out of everyone from that cartel she was the only one who survived after the

government gunned them all down. She is like a chameleon she blends in everywhere and that has ensured her survival. I just need to test her loyalty and once she has proved It, I give her the reigns So I can go home and be with my family. My brother Face Times me and I accept the call

Me "Bro bro", I say as soon as his face appears on my screen.

Him "You look fat man", I laugh.

Me "Yeah I've put on Some weight, don't get time to work out."

Him "I thought you have found yourself a Spanish Mamacita to help you with exercising."

Me "I have a few buddies you know me."

Him "Will you ever just give up the playboy ropes?"

Me "Women these days are not made like mom so Nah, I would rather have these no strings attached escapades, than take a snake in my house and call it a wife", he chuckles.

Him "You are stupid man."

Me "How are my nieces and Emily?"

Him "The girls are great bro, they just fight a lot just like we used to do growing up, and my wife man eish, we kind of fought."

Me "You see this marriage thing mxm..."

Him "How is everything that side?"

Me "I found Someone to take care of things So I can come home but I need to train her first."

Him "A woman?" the shock on his face!

Me "Don't be shocked, she is perfect I tell you!"

Him "I hope your father approves."

Me "I don't need pops' approval Mzi, all I am going to do is inform him."

Him "I wish I didn't yearn for his approval."

Me "What do you mean?"

Him "I went to see him and told him I have a solution to his problem, he didn't even wait for me to say, anything bro, he just started insulting me and my wife."

Me "Eish baba"

Him "I don't know why he will never see me as a son too."

Me "I will talk to him for you, okay?"

Him "No Mpilo, I will get that man to listen to me, he will see me and see that I am also an asset and a full member of the Mdlalose family."

Me "Okay I will back off."

Him "Thank you."

Me "But when you talk to him, take all the power"

Him "I hear you, bro, just finish up and hurry home yeah"

Me " month end January I will be home trust me"

Him "two months not bad"

Me "bro I got to go"

Him "yeah sure"

Me "later man" I hang up and go pour myself a glass of milk

•AFRIKA

I am all done and ready but we are waiting for Larona, she has been applying make up for forever now God, she wanted to give me a face beat too but I just couldn't deal being careful with my face all night, so, I asked for lipstick and mascara. My stomach is in knots I won't lie, I have never gone out partying in my life, I don't even know what to expect there but I know I need to be extra careful. She finishes and she looks amazing, she has always been about beauty this one, I am not looking as fancy as she is but I am presentable and comfortable. Her parents are never home, it's just her and her big sister most times and she is also a

party animal. We walk out and Bafana's car is parked outside her house, not even at the corner, she hurries and hugs him, he is with another guy

"babe you remember my friend Afrika, right?" Larona asks

"yes, baby I remember her, Afrika nice to see you again, and this is my friend Senzo, man this is Afrika and you know my woman" we greet each other and get into the car, Larona is in the front with her man and I am in the back with the friend, they give us dumpies of savanna

"I don't drink but thank you" I decline the drink

"Oh, come on Afrika, let's just have Some fun, you will limit plus you are with us you are safe" my friend says convincing me, I don't want to spoil their mood So I just take a sip, the car drives for a while and we finally, see So many lights, we park and by this time Larona is hyped up, dancing to the beat from the club, we get out of the car and go to the entrance and they pay for us to get in since it's an event, I don't understand why we have to pay when they are going to be buying alcohol, but hey what do I know, we find a table after a while, I don't think I have ever seen So many people in one place like this, I am out of my league here, these girls have expensive hair on, their clothes and nails to match, I feel really small I won't lie, Larona is used to this So she looks exactly like them, Bafana speaks with Some guy and he comes back with alcohol, the Senzo guy opens the champagne which Larona screams to all excited they pour two glasses and she takes them and hands one to me, I drink it and the taste is horrible God, a Song plays and she starts dancing for her man, I am sitting there lost honestly, she comes to me and frowns

"can you please pretend like you are having fun Afrika geez" Larona says

"I have never done this before you know" she sighs and stands up whispers Something to her boyfriend and in response, he calls the waiter who comes back after a few minutes with shorts

"This will get you in the mood" she says and the guys are looking at me, they take one shot each and they look at me

"now it's your turn, you have to take all three" Senzo says, I won't lie at this point I know what peer pressure is, I down all 3 and they cheer me up, a few minutes later I am starting to feel woozy, I let loose and I don't know why but I start enjoying myself, the next minute I am on my feet dancing like tomorrow doesn't exist. I start feeling sick like I want to throw up, I feel light-headed

"Larona I am not feeling okay please help me to the toilet" I say whispering in her ear since she is sitting on top on Bafana

"Afrika the toilet is just over there" she points and Sounds bored by me; I navigate my drunk self but the queue is too much and the vomit is near, So I quickly rush outside and I find a dark alleyway and vomit when I am done I balance with the wall and start giggling until I feel Someone run their hands on my thighs, I turn and it's Senzo "what are you doing" I ask with panic in my voice and he smirks

"I couldn't wait any longer to have you, baby girl, so I will just take a round here and then we will get to proper business Soon as we get to my place" at this point I am so scared

"no, I don't understand what you are saying, Larona and I are going back to her place" I defend

"Afrika stop playing hard to get with me, we are both adults here" his hands on my breasts

"no stop I don't want this please" he kisses my neck and I just start crying

"I am entitled to this; you have been drinking alcohol and eating food that I bought with my money" he says and I will never miss the anger in his voice as he tries to overpower me from fighting him off

"If it's about the money I will ask my sister to pay you" he laughs

"no, I want what's mine for the night, your body and I hear you are as pure as they come"

Senzo please I cry harder when his hand moves to my private part, my head is spinning and

I think I am going to faint, but the thought of being raped made me try by all means to stay awake I start screaming for help but he covers my mouth quickly, he is much stronger than me and the fact that I am drunk is not helping either, I don't know from where but a guy comes out of nowhere and pushes Senzo from me and starts punching him, Senzo couldn't fight that guy So he went back inside leaving me with him "are you okay" the stranger asks and I shake my head no and he turns my head to face him the shock on his face "Afrika" Mr. Mafa says and I am So embarrassed, my head is still spinning and I was about to thank him when I went blackout.

•AMANDA

I have ignored this call 3 times now, who the hell would call me at this God-forsaken hour, I didn't even try to look at the screen, but man this person is persistent, I sit up straight annoyed as hell and take my phone, it's Mafa, God what does he have to say at this time though. I sigh and pick up "hey" I say with a sleepy voice "Amanda open the entrance gate please" he responds "Mafa did you see what time it is" I say "I wouldn't be here if it wasn't important please, it's Afrika" he says and at the mention of my sister I didn't wait for him to say more, I went out like a speed of light and went downstairs to open the gate, his car is parked Soon as he sees me he gets out of the car and opens the passenger door and get's Afrika in his arms, she is passed out, my hands automatically move to my mouth "Oh, my God what happened to my sister" I ask "please let's get inside first, please lock my car" I do as he asks and he walks up to my apartment and I follow them, he places her on my bed and sits on the chair and I go sit next to Afrika "I was at some club and I was about to leave but decided to pee first, when I got to this alley I saw a guy trying to force himself on the girl, I went there and stopped him only to find out it's your sister, she was So drunk she passed out, So I decided to bring her to you" tears on my face "What was she doing at the club, who did she even go there with" I ask feeling myself boil "I honestly don't know; it was my first time seeing that guy" "why didn't she tell me she wanted to explore such things, I would have taken her there" I say " Maybe they were celebrating that they are done with exams" he says "she should have told me, I made sure that I talk to her and make it easy for her to talk to me, I should have never left her alone, anything could have happened, I don't think I would have been able to live with myself if anything happened to her" I say crying harder "hey don't blame yourself please, you go over and beyond for her and this is a mistake she made as a child, it doesn't reflect on how you raised her Amanda, I am in awe of how she turned out because of you, you did the best you could, this is just a mistake, let's not think of what might have happened if I didn't get there when I did, the fact is that bastard didn't do anything to her" he says and comes to give me the warmest embrace, I felt so safe first time in my life a man held me because he cares not because he wants to get between my legs.

CHAPTER 04

•AFRIKA

I open my eyes and my head is spinning, I immediately remember what almost happened, fear creeps in but I remember that Mr. Mafa helped me out, I will forever regret allowing Larona to convince me to go out with her, her man's friend almost raped me and that would have been the most painful way to have my innocence, I look around and wonder where I

am, So I quickly sit upright and my head is heavy, I swear it feels like I was hit by a bus. I turn my head and Amanda is sitting there looking at me with a straight face, my heart starts racing. She wipes her tear and guilt consumes me.

"I am Sorry Amanda" that's all I managed to say but she keeps her expression

"We just went out to celebrate that we finally finished with high school" I continue

"And you didn't care to let me know" she finally responds

"I am very Sorry"

"do you know what almost happened to you last night Afrika" she says and the pain in her eyes

"I will never do it again I promise" I say

"it would have killed me to know that I wasn't there to protect you from that monster, Afrika man out there are heartless, they see women as nothing but sex objects, you are a beautiful young woman and you were drunk, that man saw that and almost took advantage of you" she says with tears forming

"I have learned my lesson sis"

"I would have never forgiven myself Afrika, my Job is to protect you and last night I failed at my job, I failed and that is killing me with each passing minute" I quickly go and kneel in front of her

"I know I disappointed you and I am very Sorry"

"I told you to talk to me about everything, if you wanted to celebrate and go out, I would have taken you myself Afrika, I know that I can't always protect you and I also know that you are growing up and it's normal for you to want to explore things, just let me in So I can advise you, I don't want to be hard on you nana" I lay my head on her lap and weep while she brushes my afro

"I honestly didn't want to go but I just wanted to please Larona" I say

"you were with that girl" she asks and I remain silent

"Afrika how many times have I told you that Larona is not Someone you should trust nana, she is jealous of you and everyone in our neighborhood can see that but you, I am not one to judge because I am far from perfect, but you are perfect and she can see that she can see that you have a bright future and she wanted to destroy that for you" she continues

"I saw that from last night sis, she was a different person, she just didn't care and it hurt" I respond

"I don't want to choose friends for you but Larona isn't Someone to associate yourself with" she says

"I know that now, from what happened last night I don't think I want to be her friend" I say

"you are going to have time to party and drink alcohol but right now you need to focus on fighting for a better life for yourself, the last thing I want is you ending up like me" she advises "and I will prioritize our future I promise"

"your future, when you make it I will be the happiest woman to live in this universe" I wipe her tears

"When I make it, I make it for the both of us, you have carried us long enough" I say and she smiles

"I will never tell you how to live your life but I will call you out when you do the wrong things" she warns

"I appreciate it and I am So Sorry"

"it's over now, we will get through it, for now, go take a shower and I will make you something to eat,

Mafa will be here to pick us up, we are going to get your clothes"

"Okay then" I say and stand up heading to the bathroom after she tells me where it is

•MR MDLALOSE

I get to my house and stay in the car a while, the thought of going in and fighting with my wife is just going to sour my mood, I had the best night with this other lady I have on the side, she is a lot younger than my wife and she offers me more than what my wife can in bed, we all know Noma is older now and she wouldn't try anything new in bed, to be honest, I am only sleeping with her because it is my duty as her husband, don't get me wrong, she is the perfect wife and mother but a man like me needs someone to keep me on my toes. What I know is she will never leave me because she knows what would happen if she did. I finally find strength and walk in the house I pass by the maids busy going up and down and head straight to our bedroom, I find her still in her nightwear and she is looking at her reflection in the mirror

"Sorry I stayed out, I had something to fix at the lab" I say and she chuckles

"you do know that I graduated first of my class at university and I helped you build this empire" she asks

"I know that Nomalanga" I respond and she turns and looks at me

"then why do you think I am stupid" she says and I sigh

"What are you talking about now" I say sounding bored

"I am the lawyer here so I know when someone is trying to bullshit me, and you, my dearest husband are trying really hard to make me look and sound stupid" she says

"can you please just tell me what you are talking about" I respond

"you have gone back to your filthy ways right" she asks coming to me

"Nomalanga I was at the lab" I defend and she smiles

"I can smell her cheap perfume all over you, the only decent thing you could do is cheat on me with a classy lady Khaya, not some young girl who is only with you So you can buy her fake hair and LV bags" I remain silent, she grabs my manhood and I hold my breath

"stop showing these little girls that I am living with this embarrassment, with this little thing you keep distributing around like you are SASSA, it doesn't even dish out orgasms, the only thing good that came out of this pinkie finger is my 3 babies and for those girls is the money you rain on them, there is nothing special about your sex, just thank God you are rich, and I made it all possible Mdlalose, I made sure that you don't go to jail So many times I have even lost count" she says with a smirk and my ego is bruised I don't even have a comeback

"Nomalanga show me some respect" I roar

"it's earned darling not demanded" she replies

"what happened to my sweet wife who showed me respect always, because this woman here I don't recognize" she laughs at my statement

"that foolish woman died a long time Khaya, she was a weakling who took all the bullshit you threw at her all in the name of love, she is dead and never coming back" she says with so much hate in her voice

'you are just being paranoid" she squeezes my balls

"Nomalanga" I warn

"you shouldn't be worried it doesn't get the job done, it will be good riddance to bad rubbish really"

She says, I was about to answer when our bedroom door opens and our daughter walks in, my wife lets go quickly

"Oh, baba you are home, Sorry for barging in, I thought ma was alone, anyway breakfast in ready" she says and my wife pecks me on the lips

"Oh, princess dad is tired spend the whole at the lab, there was a problem that needed his attention, love just take a quick shower and join us okay" I fake a smile all confused

"okay I will be right down, you look beautiful Sbahle" I say and they both smile sweetly at me and walk out, my wife is a psychopath, I am still shocked at how she changed from being a lion to a kitty

•AMANDA

After what almost happened to Afrika last night, I am not taking any chances with her anymore, living her here all alone is not an option I am willing to consider again; I would have hated myself the thought of it makes it hard for me to even consider myself a good sister, she didn't trust me enough to tell me her plans which means I must be doing something wrong here, she tried to convince me that it wasn't my fault and So did Mafa but my love for my little sister surpasses everything and anyone even myself when I say I live for that girl I mean it. Mafa came to pick us up and drove us home there was silence in the car but the radio was playing, you know the Sunday jams metro FM blesses us with. The car parks outside my house and there is chaos going on there, it's packed, my mom has people over and they are getting drunk and busy dancing, I don't know where they got the speaker they are using for music, I sigh

"nana go in and pack, don't forget your ID and important documents" I say

"you are not coming in?" she asks

"no, I don't want to fight with Sibó, but if she gives you any problems come to get me" I respond

"Okay then" she says and walks out the car

" my children will have the best mother ever; your strength is everything I swear" he says dragging me out of my thoughts, I smile and look at him

"your kids huh" I ask and he nods

"I am going to marry you one day Amanda, whether you like it or not" he says and I just can't help but cry, he is the only man who has ever loved me So much, who cares about me who helps me

"I am not good for you Mafa, I am not who you think I am, trust me you don't want a woman as broken as me to be a wife, I wasn't born for that, my job is to make sure that my sister is okay" I say

"but who makes sure that you are okay Amanda, please you don't have to be superwoman, let me help you carry this burden you think you have" he says and I can't help but fall in love with him more

"you are a dream I have every night" I say and he smiles

"it doesn't have to be a dream baby; give us a chance I promise you will never regret it" he says taking my hand into his and just continue to stream down my face

"if only you knew who I am, I have a lot going on in my life, I am the exact opposite of who you are and I can never be good enough for you" I say

"that is not your decision to make please, when I look at you, I see beyond everything you think, Amanda you are beautiful, strong, resilient and exactly who I need in my life"

" maybe one day when I have my act together" I say

"I can help you get it together" he says and wipes my tears

"Mafa please" he kisses my knuckles

"Just call me Lethabo, calling me by my surname makes me Sound old" I giggle

"you look beautiful when you smile" I blush

"thank you" I manage to say

"just give us a chance please" he says and I was about to respond when I hear Afrika screaming, I look out the window and my mother is fighting with her, pulling her bag trying to refuse her to leave" I sigh and quickly get out of the car

"Sibó just leave us please leave us we want to go, stay here in your house and continue hosting parties and getting drunk, you said we are a burden So let us be" I scream and yank the bag, I am boiling mad

"Afrika is my child and you are not taking her; Amanda go and make your own children leave my daughter for me" she says and I laugh, to avoid being physical with my mom, I take

my sister's hand and walk away, she is busy cursing us out and throwing stones at us, it is taking everything in me not to react to this crazy woman but I am keeping my cool, Mafa, I mean Lethabo is already out of the car opening the boot.

•LETHABO MAFA

If I had siblings, I swear I would want to treat them the way Amanda sacrifices for her sister, I have never even anything like her, she is selfless when it comes to Afrika, I swear I have never seen anything like that, Amanda loves her sister more than she loves herself and I suspect that she doesn't want to give me a chance because she feels like she will give me attention and neglect her sister's needs and I need her to understand that I have already accepted that Afrika will always be her priority and I could never ask her to do otherwise, I just like everyone in the neighborhood know their mother and how she doesn't care about them and we know how Amanda had to give up her life because of that so help take care of her baby sister, to be honest, I think this is the reason why I fell for her So much knowing the kind of person she is for family, I have been with a lot of girls who just got with me because my mom told them to or they just want me for my money. The atmosphere in the car is awkward, the sisters are in the back of my car crying and they are breaking my heart, God bless me with children that will love and protect each other as the Mbatha sisters do. we finally get to her flat and they walk out of the car Amanda opens the boot and gives Afrika her bag and gets into the front passenger seat and the first things she did was lean in for a kiss and God no woman has ever poured out her entire soul as she did through physical contact I am left breathless when she pulls out

"I love you Lethabo" she says and I am shocked but the joy in my heart

"I love you too Ama So much it scares me" I say and I see her blush

"I just wish this was a different time and I was the kind of woman you deserve" she whispers

"I wish you could just tell me what you mean when you say that" she quickly wipes her tears

"I don't want you to hate me yet" she murmurs

"I could never hate you my love" she smiles sweetly at me

"let me make sure Afrika settles in well" she changes the subject and I sigh

"okay I will come to see you tomorrow after work, is that okay?" I ask

"it's okay" she says and I smile and reach for my wallet and take out a few R100 notes

"Lethabo you don't always have to give me money" she says

"I know, just use this and order Some food and bond with your sister cooking will take time" she smiles

"thank you, you are very considerate" she says and this time I am the one to kiss her and she paces her hand on my face and moans a little sending me to my own personal heaven, she pulls always

"have a goodnight beautiful, I love you" I say and she gets out of the car and leans in

"call me when you get home" she says and closes the door not waiting for me to respond, I drive off when she has gotten in. I get to the township in no time, my heart is So happy I don't want to lie, I get home and open the gate and garage with the remote and park my car then close I walk around and go to the kitchen entrance, I find my mom making coffee for herself, I go and kiss her cheek and she smiles

"you are in a good mood considering that you are going to work tomorrow" I laugh

"I found my wife mama she is the most perfect woman God has ever created" she gives me a look

"haibo Lethabo, what about me your mother" I laugh

"Ma God made Ama especially for me to birth my children and be my wife, I have never seen anything like

her God knows my heart beats for that woman” she smiles
“bring her home for dinner next weekend” I chuckle
“ ma I don’t want to rush her So I will invite her when we are both ready” I defend
“hao I thought you found a wife” I sigh
“I did but even so, we have to take everything at our pace ma please”
“ho lokile Lethabo ke ya utlwisisa ngwanaka (it’s okay Son I understand)”
“kea leboha mme waka (thank you mom)”

CHAPTER 05

•AFRIKA

I don’t think I have ever been So happy in my life, staying with my sister has to be the most peaceful time in life, we have always been close me and her but right now we are beyond the word, I have come to fully realize and understand how much my sister loves me and that she has dedicated her whole life in making sure that I am taken care of and I have everything that I need, and So help me God once I make it Amanda will never want for anything, she won’t even have to work a day in her life, she will come first the way I do in her life. She left early in the morning and said she has Something to take care of; and she has been gone since I took this time to clean around the house and also do our laundry and lucky for me he has a washing machine. The way her flat has many things the salon must be paying her enough, I finished and made myself Something to eat then went and sat in front of the TV and watched some series playing on one of the channels I have become a fan of these things than movies. The door opens and I smile thinking its Amanda but her friend walks in instead and I sigh, I suspect that she doesn’t like me much
“you don’t look pleased to see me” she says
“it’s not that I just thought you are Amanda” I say and she laughs
“Oh, dark Barbie Mandy won’t be home for hours” she says
“ do you know where she went to” I ask and she narrows her eyes
“she went to hustle for you Afrika, and I will never understand why she would put herself in the line for another woman who can do the same job she is doing” she says leaving me confused
“but I don’t know how to make peoples nails” she chuckles
“for someone as smart as you right now you are dumb, do you think Amanda makes all the money to buy you clothes, food, data, and take care of herself as well from being a mere nail tech” I stand up
“Then tell me, what does she do” she shakes her head
“Your dearest sister doesn’t want you to know how she suffers to make sure that you are okay. All I want you to know is you and you mother are selfish Afrika, poor Amanda is suffering all alone to make ends meet for you and what do you want to do, go to university and then she has to work extra hard so you can be like those boujee girls who think they are better than the rest of us” she says
“I am going to university So that I can change our lives so that she can finally live her dream” I say
“ do you know Amanda can’t buy a pair of shoes without thinking, I could use this to do this or that for my sister, that is no way to live, she has devoted her life to you and that is no way to live her life if you love her to leave her alone So she can live her life and be happy. You are too much for her and she thinks its love but as time goes on she will hate you I promise” she says licking her lollipop “you don’t know anything about my sister and me, you might have

been staying with her for a while but you know nothing” I say with a breaking voice “I know enough sweetheart” she says “what is your problem with me” I ask “I have a problem with you using your sister to get to the top and when you are there we all know that you won’t give her the light of day; I don’t like you because you are selfish you are here staying in the apartment Amanda is paying and eating the food she bought, you are 18 and you can help her work, you can work for your money and see yourself through university it shouldn’t be Mandy’s responsibility to take care of a grown-ass woman, your parents failed to raise you and if I was Amanda, I would have Sold you and made a quick buck for myself” she spits that poison from her mouth leaving me shocked
“I am glad you are not my sister, and one day she will see you for the snake that you are” I say and walk to our bedroom and wonder why she hates me so much

•AMANDA

I left early when one of my regulars who is obsessed called me to come to the hotel, these married men are a serious problem I won’t lie, they want to meet up early because they lie to their wives and say they are going to breakfast meetings, I knew he wanted to play real bad because he hasn’t been around much lately and boy that man wore me out and he made So many requests that will cost him more and he doesn’t mind one bit, I am just glad that I will be able to buy Afrika her eyes glasses because her eyesight has been poor these past few months. We just left the hotel and he didn’t have any cash on him So he made the payment via the phone app, it’s going to be enough for a while. We were in his car driving because he said he wants to have lunch with me.

“You not afraid of bumping into your wife” I ask and he chuckles

“you are the breakfast meeting client I was meeting but no she went to visit her family in west rand, probably thinking of leaving and coming back to Jozi” he answers

“Is that why you wanted to meet early” I question

“I left my house the same time she drove off so I can go back soon as she is on her way back home, I have missed you Mandy” I roll my eyes

“I am aware” I answer coolly

“So, you still won’t allow me” I sigh deeply because I know what he is asking me

“Mike you are asking me to be exclusive to you while you have been sending me your friends” I ask

“and that stopped Mandy because I realized that only you can take care of me in that way So stop this and be exclusive to me” I shake my head

“I will take care of you” he says and I laugh

“ I will think about it” I say but deep down I know I am not even considering it once I am exclusive to him he will think he owns me, we get to the mall and walk out when we are making our way to the restaurant I spot Lethabo from afar, I start panicking, I need to disappear before he can see me because he asked me to go out and I said I am not feeling too well

“let me go to the bathroom I will find you at the restaurant” I say and he tells me which one and goes n, I try to hide by Woolworths pretending to be looking at clothes little did I know I was going to bump into him in there

“Ama” his voice says and hand patting my shoulder, I quickly turn

“hey you” I say Sounding surprised

“I thought you were not feeling too well” he says narrowing his eyes

“I came to the pharmacy to find Something then I saw these nice dresses” I say

“Oh, okay let’s get to the pharmacy” he says and I just want to get the hell out of this mall

“We can just go to the pharmacy near my place” I say and he smiles

“okay no problem” we get out of the mall to the parking lot and my breathing goes back to normal when he drives away, my phone keeps ringing and I ignore it

“avoiding Someone” I hold my breath

“ my mother keeps calling to insult me for taking Afrika” I lie and guilt eats through me I feel filthy for sleeping with another man no rephrase for selling my body to another man and coming in contact with his perfect man that loves and respects me this much, I don’t know why I can’t just stop this job and give Lethabo a real chance to let him love me. it Sounds So easy but finding a well-paying job that will allow me to pay rent buy groceries and take care of my sister doesn’t come by easy I have tried but no one wants a girl that didn’t even finish high school. He doesn’t push with more questions but rather he keeps on stealing glances and smiling like a man in love, I wish I was perfect for this man; he deserves more than a high paid prostitute with a burden. Mike keeps calling me and I end up putting my cell on flight mode, trying to come up with symptoms I am going to give the pharmacist to get Some meds

•MPILO

I finally decided to show Mariana the lab and explained parts of our operations to her, I wanted her to understand the depth of what we are doing here and she must know how risky this job is because other drug lords want to get their hands on the formula of making this multimillion substance so she has to be prepared always. We have been having a problem, someone has been stealing drugs and selling them off to make extra cash I don’t know why because I made sure to pay these people well so that we avoid all of this but I just don’t know what got into that man, we installed cameras in the stash room,

where we keep the final product ready to be distributed, and I caught the culprit I never thought he would do me like that but I will make an example with him today, I called a meeting and everyone had to be present from my cooks to the connects on the streets and I took Mariana with me, she was in the highest heels ever and she looked like a badass bitch right now I could fuck her all shades of black, we get to the lab and they are waiting

“Sorry I am late” I say and they all give me their attention

“it’s all good Jefe (boss in Spanish) we wait for you not the other way around” one of the connects says

“with that said, let’s get to business gentleman, where is my money” I ask and the distributors bring forward duffle bags full of money

“Now that you have all given Cesare what belongs to him, we can get to the business of the day, as we all know we have been having a minor challenge, someone is stealing my shit straight from my yard, gentleman and ladies, do I underpay you?” I ask and they all shake their heads

“I am going to give the culprit a chance to come forward and explain to me why they did it and I swear I won’t do anything to that person, I will understand and give them a second chance” I say and the room goes dead silent, no one willing to own up to their mistake “okay since well no one wants to own up to their shit I will just go straight to the person because I already know who it is” I say and start going straight to the culprit and this fucker is already sweating

“why, why did you do it man” I ask in a low voice but the look on my face deadly

“I am Sorry Jefe” that’s all he managed to say and I nod

“kneel I want to address everyone else he does as I say

“gentleman this lady next to me goes by the name Mariana and I am pleased to inform you that she is my second in command and she will be running the show when I go back to South Africa, Mamacita these are your people address them” I step back and she walks forward her heels making noise in the silent room

“everyone who feels like they won’t report to a woman please step forward now and kindly leave what is ours and vamoose” she says with her Spanish accent and I smile, one fool

steps forward and Mariana laughs when he puts our phone and gun on the table, he attempts to leave but this woman takes the gun and shoots him in the back and shoots the one who stole, I am left shocked but impressed too "now that we have gotten that out of the way, I want all of you to know that loyalty is everything here, we are not just business associates we are a family here, and anyone who isn't loyal will be killed and so will their family, we can't have disloyal people on earth, with that said I hope we will work well together, I believe we will use the same system for now but if there are any changes, I will let everyone know, keep your phones near and charged at all times" they clap for her

"thank you for welcoming her and Mariana with being the second woman after Griselda Blanca to run a successful drug cartel in Colombia, she is your leader and follow her and we will all be rich I promise you and from now she will be known as the drug queen" I say and they bow chanting

"Reina de las Drogas" they all say bowing to her

"Oh, well Queen here are your people" I say and walk out, I think I will be going home earlier than I anticipated.

•MR MDLALOSE

My wife hasn't even given me the light of day since that morning; she only plays a happy family in front of our daughter and the staff when we are in the bedroom, she doesn't even look at me twice. I am not sleeping on our matrimonial bed anymore, she told me she isn't sleeping with filth in her bed and I have been sleeping on the couch in our room because I am about to expose our issues to the staff and Sbahle. Nomalanga has never acted this way before she would get mad but getting her to forgive me has always been easy, I tried the diamonds, flowers, large amount deposit but nothing is working. I need my wife back without her nothing fully functions. I get home earlier than usual and I find her in her rose garden

"Noma" I say and she gives me a look and goes back to what she was doing I sigh

"what do I have to do to get my wife back" I ask and still nothing

"Nomalanga I have tried with flowers, gifts, and money but" she cuts me

"do I look like a slay queen to you" she says

"then what do you want me to do Noma" I ask

"I want the drug lab in Colombia the entire operation" the shock on my face

"but Nomalanga that lab is not even fully running" she laughs

"I want it still, run it the way but all its profits come to me, I will even find ways to launder it" she says

"We have companies to launder money nje" I say and she shakes her head

"I told you the old and stupid Noma is gone and this one is no fool, the only way to redeem our marriage

is if you give me what I want" she says bold and confident

"I will start processing everything then" I say because

"don't try and bullshit me" she says

"can I sleep on our bed now" I ask

"I bought you sunlight green bar that is the only Soap that will wash away the dirt you picked up from all

those hood rats you slept with" she says and leaves me there. I never thought one day my wife and I will

be here and negotiating drug labs to fix our marriage.

•AMANDA

I get home and Afrika is in the lounge watching Some TV, the look on her face bothers me a lot So I quickly put the takeaway Lethabo bought and the medication and join her
"nana what's up" I ask and she looks at me
"what do you do for a living Amanda" she asks and my heart almost stops I look at her shocked
"you know that already Afrika" I say in a very low voice
"your friend says you are working another job you don't want me to know about, she called me selfish and said I could also be able to do the same job and get myself through varsity" my blood was boiling how dare she, she had no right to say that rubbish to my sister
"So, Amanda what do you do" I sigh
"nana I also clean white people's home for a quick buck, I didn't want you to know because I was ashamed Afrika, that job for Someone my age is embarrassing, I didn't want you to see as a failure" I say
"you could never be a failure Amanda, you are the perfect sister and I appreciate all the efforts sis, you do this to take care of me why would I be judgmental" she responds and it cuts deep
"I love you Afrika and everything I do I do it for you, for us" I say with tears and take her in for a hug
"I know and I love you too" the lies are becoming too much now; I am lying to the two people I love the most in the world I am just scared of how they will react if they find out the truth. That slut I call a friend will know me well when he gets back home nxa the nerve

CHAPTER 06

•AMANDA

I stayed up the until very late last night but Dineo didn't come back home, So I woke up again in the morning and after Afrika woke up, I convinced her to go to the mall and go watch a movie and eat something then maybe window shop, I gave her R500 it is not going to set us back since Mike paid me a lot more for the session we had yesterday. I just needed Afrika to leave the house so I can be able to deal with that snake. I am on the couch impatiently waiting for her to walk in through that door, and after what seemed like forever, she walks in
"Yoh, tsala you don't want to know about the night I had shame" she says and I stand making my way to her I couldn't contain my anger towards her I just gave her a slap
"bathong Mandy why are you slapping me" she asks one hand on her cheek
"How dare you, to talk to my sister about me" she sighs
"I just don't like how she treats you" she says
"you had no right to try and tell my little sister about what I do, no right. It shouldn't even concern you, I decided to sleep with men for money So I can be able to take care of Afrika, you decided to sleep with a man for a flashy life, get that we might be doing the same thing but our reasons are different, don't you dare try this nonsense with me again, I will more than just slap you" I say
"I knew that she would come in between us" she says
"what the fuck are you talking about"
"Everything was fine between us Amanda until you brought her here, she is trying to get in between us" she says and I chuckle
"Afrika is my little sister Dineo my baby she is my priority" I say
"you always said I am your sister or has that been thrown out the window"
"you threw it out when you tried to get between Afrika and I"

"I am trying to protect you; can't you see that"
"protect me from my own blood sister really" this girl is delusional
"you will see her for who she really is one day and I hope it won't be too late"
"what is it that you have against Afrika tell me please" she laughs
"she acts like she cares about you; she acts all innocent but she is a snake, she is a wolf in sheepskin, and deep down you know that she will hate you if she knew the truth and you selling your body would have been for nothing that's why you don't want her to know" I laugh God I can't believe this
"you stupid bitch, I don't want my little sister knowing because I don't want her to think this is any way to live, I didn't want her to take an easy way out thinking it's a way out of the shitty life we lived with our mother, I am not telling her so that she can think to go to university is a waste of time if she could easily make money from selling my body. If she hates me after finding out the truth then that is okay with me I would have fulfilled my purpose in life I would have been able to shield my sister from it all, I would have gotten her out of the gutter and even though she hates me she would have made me happy by being better than I ever was, that is my purpose in life" I say tears streaming down my face fearing the possibilities of my little sister hating me when she learns the truth, I wouldn't know what to do with myself really
"Mandy I" I cut her off by raising my hand
" don't try this bullshit again Dineo or don't hold me responsible for how I react the next time"
"I am sorry Mandy please" she says trying to hold my hand but I quickly walk away. I need to get out of this life and quick, I have enough saved up for us it will get us by till I get a proper job or even start my own business. I need to think of Something really quick

•AFRIKA

I got to the mall and I decided to start with the movie and lucky for me there was a romantic comedy to show so I opted for it, I am a romantic and when I start dating, I want Someone who will know this, I want to be spoiled with time, flowers, chocolates and forehead kisses here and there holding hands. I think reading all these novels written by the likes of Charlotte Bronte and Thomas Hardy made me this way, I avoided dating in school because of my background and mostly because I didn't want to end up being a teenage mother and derailing my dreams. The movie goes on and on and I shed a tear a few times, it ends and we walk out of the cinema. I go around from shop to shop looking at clothes but at the end of the day I find a bookstore and I go in, God this is heaven for me, I find a corner for marked down books and they go from R30 to R50 rand, I decide to buy just two and I leave and make my way to spur they take me to a table for one, I order Some ribs, buffalo wings and chips with onion rings, this is what Amanda used to bring for me. My drink comes first and it's just coke.

"Afrika" a voice says and my eyes shoot up panic comes
"I am going to hurt you please calm down," he says raising his hands
"please I won't hurt you please Afrika," I calm down and look at him
"Senzo what do you want," I ask coolly
"Can I please sit with you and talk" I was about to decline
"please I won't be long" I sigh
"fine" I say and he quickly takes a seat opposite me
"first of all, Afrika, I want to apologize for my behavior, I violated you in the worst possible way, I didn't have the right to even think that I am entitled to your body because I bought you booze, honestly, I wasn't in the right frame of mind, things between my girl and I haven't been okay and she was just acting like a spoilt brat, I got on with Bafana and Larona before the day we went out and your friend told me she has a friend who wants to have

Some no strings attached sex since she didn't want a boyfriend and didn't want to go to varsity still a virgin So with the stress I was under I decided to just have some fun when you went to the toilet she told me you whispered telling her I could accompany you and I thought that was your way of saying we should talk or Something, that's when I followed you outside I was drunk and already horny and she kept feeding me all this information, So I ended up thinking with my penis not my brain, I am honestly glad that man stopped me Afrika because I would have hated myself with each passing day. I just wanted you to know that I am very sorry and I hope you find it in your heart to forgive me" I was shocked I didn't even know what to say to him

"I don't know what to say" I make it known

"you don't have to say anything really but Afrika stay away from Larona she is not a good friend, the things she was saying about you, that is not how a friend speaks about you" the hurt in my heart

"I thought we were the best of friends" he laughs

"you can never be friends with Someone who wants to be you Afrika" I am shocked to say the least

"thanks, and you must avoid going out when you are stressed" we laugh

"Not when I have a girlfriend like Sbahle she is a beautiful demon but honestly lesson learned I am not putting myself or another woman in that position again" he confesses

"I am glad to hear that" I say and my food arrives

"let me leave you to eat I already had my meal when I saw you sitting here"

"thank you for apologizing Senzo" he nods and walks away then comes back

"give me your number So I check up on you now and again" I nod and take his phone and punch in my number and hand it back to him

"Thanks, keep safe okay, and don't trust anyone" he says and leaves.

•MZWAKHE

I hate it when we have to mark second opportunity exam papers, these kids know that the second exam paper slaps more but still, they do not put in the effort, I don't know if they think you can pass Actuarial Science and graduate if you don't put in your best, the last time the school saw a cum laude was about 5 years ago. I am at home marking the last script So I can take them to the moderator first thing in the morning, at least most of them passed, but the others I will see them again next year no stress. The is a knock on the door and my wife walks in before I respond

"babe your mother is here for you" she says

"Oh, what a lovely surprise tells her I will be with her in a minute" I respond

"sure" she closes the door and walks out I finish this last script and put them all back into my laptop bag and go find my mother, I get to the lounge and she is playing with my daughters, they always like it when my mom visits them, my wife is not comfortable with them visiting my parents at their home but honesty she is unnecessary my father adores these kids and would never do anything to harm them

"hey ma" I say and she stands and gives me a hug

"hey baby, how are you" my kids giggle

"What are you laughing at you two" I ask

"Gogo called you baby daddy" my eldest daughter says

"that's because he is my baby forever even, he is your daddy" ma says and they giggle again

"come let's go to my study" I say and she follows me

"your father as started again with these little girls" she blurts it out and I sigh

"baba will never change mama, just leave him already" she laughs

"I am never leaving that man so that another woman Sbahle's age can come in and inherit all that I have worked for" she says

"you just don't deserve all that bastard is doing to you ma" I say and she smiles
"I know that baby but now he is going to give everything that I want and he has started preparing the first thing that I have requested" I narrow my eyes
"what is that you have asked for ma" I ask
"the Colombian lab Mpilo is getting off the ground it is standing because it makes So much money"
"what baba agreed to give it to you" I am shocked
"I told him he can continue running it the way he sees fit but all the profits come to me" I am beyond shocked
"mama that is a lot of money though you will bring attention to yourself"
"I will clean that money and save it for you and your siblings and your children, anything could happen and I want to make sure that if this whole drug empire comes crashing down you have enough clean money to get by. I will use Some of it and change lives of the less fortunate, travel the world and maybe get a ben 10 and spoil him rotten" she laughs
"I would burst him balls" I say
"hey, language" she hits me
"I am Sorry mama but no young boys" I say
"I am still young myself So why not" she says
"I can't believe he gave you Colombia"
"let him continue cheating and when he realizes I will be the sole owner of this cartel" she says and I hand her a glass of cognac
"to you Ndlovukazi" I say and we toast
"I might just rename this whole cartel NDLOVUKAZI CARTEL" I laugh
"it would piss him off So go ahead" she chuckles

2 weeks later

•LETHABO

I have given Amanda a lot of time, yes, I don't want to pressure her into a relationship with me knowing she isn't ready, but she did say she loves me and she must trust that our love will get us through everything, I love her yes but it hurts me to always be around her knowing that she doesn't want me in that way, it is not only heartbreaking it is me wasting my time, but I am also a man who wants to settle down and start my family and this running around with Ama won't get me there, I will always love and care about her but if she isn't ready to give me what I need then it's truly time I moved on from her. We were sitting in my car, her legs on my thighs as we are having pizza and wine parked at Some nice quiet park.

"Lethabo are you okay" she asks and I look at her and give her a faint smile

"Ama we need to talk" I say and the smile on her face disappears and she puts the pizza back into the box and wipes her hands not taking her eyes off me

"it Sounds serious" she says

"it is and I wish I didn't have to do this" fear comes to her eyes and I feel bad

"I am listening" she says with a breaking voice

"Ama you know how much I love you" she nods

"And I love you too" she says and those words bring joy to my heart but I wish it was enough

"but not enough to officially be my woman, not enough to want to build Something Solid with me, Ama I have chased you for 3 full years without giving up, I tried dating but it just doesn't work out and trust me not because of those ladies but because my heart wants you, I want to settle down Amanda I want to start talking about my future and planning it but you are not ready for that, yes you love me but just not enough, I don't know if I can wait for you to want me the way I want you anymore" tears stream down her face and I feel so bad

"What are you saying to me" she asks

"I am saying I want you to love me and be with me be in love with me Ama or let me go and be with someone who will because waiting for you is breaking my heart" I say

"I can't do that Lethabo I just can't" she says

"can't do what exactly" I ask her

"I am scared okay" she says

"I know that and I have never asked you not to be scared but allow me to help you get through it whatever it is Amanda, love isn't supposed to hurt like this, or be uncertain the way you are, Ama its either you love me or not, I am not pressurizing you or anything but you also deserve to be happy and I

know I can make you happy always" I say

"I know Lethabo" she says and takes my hands

"I knew this day would come where you would be fed up with trying to show me how much you love me, you are always available for me and you never judge or make me feel worthless, you care for me so much it is so foreign to me yet it feels So good, whenever I am around you I feel so safe I swear you are home for me and the fact that you never ask me to choose between you and Afrika makes me fall in love with you more, I am sorry I made you wait so long but I truly appreciate your patience. I love you so much Lethabo Mafa and I hate the fact that you had to tell me these painful words before I could be honest with you but most importantly honest with myself. Don't ever mention wanting to start a future with another woman because that would kill me, today I tell you that I love you and I am in love with you and I want us to fully give this beautiful thing between us a proper chance, I want to be your girlfriend and I pray it's not too late" she says squeezing my hands and I just smile and lean in for a kiss

"I love you Ama and thank you for being honest baby, you won't regret it" I say and she shuts me up

with a kiss, I must say this has to be the happiest day of my life.

CHAPTER 07

3 weeks later

•AMANDA

My relationship with Lethabo has gone from good to amazing; he makes me So happy just like he promised he would, the next day after making our relationship official I changed sim card So none of my clients reach me, I am done being a prostitute it has gotten me this far but it's time to let it go now, I have a man that loves me wholeheartedly and going forward he will be the only one I share my body with, and no, we haven't been intimate yet. To address the elephant in the room, I have been thinking about telling him about what I used to do So that we can start on a clean slate but honestly, I can't find the right words or time to tell him, it might sound easy but it isn't, I just found him and I am scared of the possibility of him hating me and wanting nothing to do with me, I am sorry for being selfish but for once in my life Someone made me a priority Someone wants me and only me and I just want that a little bit longer. I was just lazing around the house Afrika was out with Some boy she insists is just a friend; I trust my sister and I believe she will share with me if they were more than friends. There is a knock on the door and I stand up to go and open, Soon as I open the door, he pushes me and walks in

"Why the fuck did you change your numbers Mandy" he screams and I sigh

"How did you know where I live Mike" I ask irritated

" don't try and change the subject here" he roars

"because I am no longer in the business" I say

"but I never got a call from you telling me this and telling me that we are finally exclusive"
he insists
"that is because we are not exclusive Mike what is your problem" I shout back
" my problem is that you decided to leave the business without telling me" he says
"I don't owe you anything, why are you acting obsessed" I ask
" Mandy please you know you are the only woman who can take care of my needs in that way" he says
"you are fucking married Mike; you shouldn't even be here okay you are acting crazy" I say
"you make me crazy Mandy; you know we can be good together I know this" he says
"well I don't share the same sentiments Mike" he sighs
"you found a boyfriend" he asks
"that is none of your business" he clenches his jaws
"Amanda who the fuck is that creep, I will fuck him up" he threatens
"try to do that Mike and see me walk straight to your wife and tell her about your tendency of buying hoes,
and kiss all the money goodbye" the shock on his face
"yes, you think I didn't know that your wife is the one with all the money and that her father would fuck you over if you ever hurt her" he blinks
"Mandy don't do this" he says
"you are at my house trying to threaten me what did you expect me to do, I am a street hustler Mike I make it a point to know things about my clients" he sighs
"I will leave you alone just make me feel good for one last time baby, please. It will be our goodbye" I chuckle and show him my middle finger
"go fuck yourself Mike" I say
"you know what Mandy I will find a way to be with you again, you can't introduce me to something and leave me just like that" he says
"be careful of what you are saying to me please" I say and he walks out leaving me scared as hell. Why do I have psychos in my life, first it was Dineo now it's Mike, I never told him where I live for that matter? he must have followed me here. I sit down and bury my head in my hands

•AFRIKA

I don't know how but Senzo and I have grown So close, it's really easy to talk to him and he has the best advice. He calls me now and again and we talk almost every day on WhatsApp and it feels good to have a friend again, he called me last night and asked that we meet up for lunch and drinks afterward and I agreed and asked Amanda if I could go and she didn't have a problem with it. He wanted to pick me up but I said I will meet him at the mall. When I got there a text from him came through telling me where to find him. I got there and he was busy on his phone.

"hello there" I say and his face moves from the phone to me and smile
"hello hi Afrika, how are you" he says and I take my sit
"I am well thanks, yourself?" I exchange the greetings
"I am fine thanks; I didn't think you were going to come" he says and I laugh
"why is that" I asked confused
"you refused me coming to pick you up and I just thought Oh, boy" he says chuckling
"I am sorry I didn't want you to go out of your way when I could have just taken a taxi" I justify
"you are So considerate thank you but next time let me come get you okay" he says
"yes sir" I respond and the waitress brings our drinks and it's a cocktail, he sees the panic in my face

" don't worry it's a virgin cocktail it doesn't have alcohol" he says and I sigh
 "thank you" I say and we place an order for food
 "So are you ready for next week" he asks me about the matric results
 "I am so nervous really; I had such a lovely festive season and now I am stressed wondering if I made got the marks to get into actuarial science" his eyes pop
 "what you going to study that" he asks shocked
 "yes, I am" I answer him and he gives me a high five
 "you must be smart then damn girl" I laugh
 "what did you study" I ask him
 "I studied Information Technology" he says and he suddenly looks behind me and closes his eyes
 "Afrika, I am sorry okay" he says and I am left confused
 "I thought you were going to meet up with a friend" a female voice says and she appears in my view,
 she has the longest lashes and hair I have ever seen; her clothes scream expensive
 "Yes, babe I said that and I am with a friend" Senzo says to her
 " Do I look stupid; do you see a fool when you look at me" she yells and people start looking at us
 "Sbahlle you are causing a scene over nothing, I told you I am meeting Afrika a friend of mine and this is Afrika So why are you tripping?" he says to her and I am sitting there scared as hell
 "So now I am tripping, you didn't mention that this Afrika is a woman" she says
 "she is a friend none the less" he says and she laughs
 "honey, do you hear that he is denying you in front of me his girlfriend, the one his heart beats for so do yourself a favor and don't be a cum dump for people's boyfriends"
 She says giving me attitude with her private school English
 "Uhm Senzo I think I should get going, we will talk on the phone" I say and she chuckles and takes the cocktail I was drinking and pours it all on my face I gasp for air shocked as hell
 "Sbahlle, why would you do that come on now" Senzo yells at her and I take the napkins and wipe my face and the people start looking at us
 "lose his number bitch do you hear me" she says flicking her weave, I am So humiliated when I walk out people are giving me looks like I am the other woman
 "Afrika I am Sorry and I will call you okay" he shouts but I don't dare respond to him his girlfriend might just come at me again.

•LETHABO

It's January and that means going back to work and I am not looking forward to it, don't get me wrong I love what I do but Some kids are just hard to handle and Some parents don't assist us is ensuring that their kids take schoolwork seriously and to even teach them respect because wow Some think they are all grown up and the government did say corporal punishment should be canceled So the law is n their side and we the teachers have to tread carefully around them. I am lazing at home watching some Soccer, I decided to give Ama a breather today and not go see her, we spend So much time together I figured she needs time to herself. My mom walks holding a tray of food, she places it on the coffee table and goes back to the kitchen and comes with a basin and a dish towel
 "Here is your food ngwanaka" she says and I sit upright and wash my hands and she hands the plate to me and I am salivating already
 "you made my favorite thanks ma" I say
 "I wanted to do Something special for you since you are home today, you spend so much time out these days Lethabo, you don't have time for you mother anymore" she says
 "Oh, mama you know I have a girlfriend now and I have to spend time with her" I say

"But I also need my Son's attention, you've always given it to me" she says
"mama that was before I had Someone, you've always tried finding me a woman and now I found one and relationships need quality time" I defend
"I hear you maybe I just didn't think you would neglect me that's all" she says and I sigh
"mama don't be like that please" I beg
"when am I meeting this Ama of yours again"
"I will be asking her to join us for dinner this weekend" I say with the widest smile
"So just tell me in time So I can start with the preparations" she says
"I will mama, I will talk to her about it when I go see her tomorrow"
"Lethabo ngwanaka I just hope this girl is good enough for you" I sigh
"she is more than good enough for me, mama, she is perfect" I emphasize
"you know my prayer is for you to find a good woman, who will take care of you the way I do" she says
"Mama Ama will take care of me the way a wife takes care of a husband, you are my mother and honestly Lerato laka we can't compare you and here" I say
"Lethabo I might Sound difficult but you are my only child, I went through So much to ensure that we have a better life So I just want the best for you" she says
"I understand mama and I appreciate all you've done I just pray too that you give my girl a chance and get to know her better and please remember that she makes me happy and that should be enough
right" I say to her and she shrugs her shoulders
"we will see Lethabo" she says she stands starts walking to the kitchen by stops by the door
"papa please drive me to the mall tomorrow I need to do Some groceries then, drop me off at church you will pick me up around 5 pm, we have a meeting with the women's fellowship" I sigh
"I will mama but could you please try to catch a lift back with one of the ladies because I need to go see Ama at around the time you need to me to pick me up," I ask politely
"tjo I guess I should just go back to driving myself because I see I am going to struggle now" she says
"mama we just spoke about this though" I say feeling defeated
"I didn't say anything Lethabo, I am going to do your laundry" she leaves me there shocked, my mom is going to make this hard for me, why can't she just understand I have a girlfriend now, feels like she will be competing with Ama all the way. I understand that it has been us for a long time, but I am growing up
now and I need to start my own family too, mama just needs to understand that I won't be her little boy forever I am a man now and she has to be proud of that, I continue to eat

•MPILO

I just landed at OR Tambo and I must admit it feels fucking good to be back at home, no one at home knows I am coming; I just wanted to surprise them. Everything in Colombia has settled and Mariana is doing a very good job I trust her capabilities and her equally So the was no need for me to stay there any longer, I can't wait to see them all, to just relax and get back into the groove here, I need to get with my boys so they can show me a good time, 2 years away from this city I bet you a lot has changed, from the clubs to the women. I take a taxi and give the driver my address, the drive is quick and must say with regards to the infrastructure nothing has changed much, the taxi parks outside and the house and I get out, the security guard opens for me and he doesn't believe his eyes. He helps take my bags inside. I walk to the lounge and everyone is sitting in the lounge having breakfast
"ola Familia, Mpilo Esta en casa (hello family, Mpilo is home)" I say and they look back
"Oh, my baby boy is back Oh, thank God" my mother says already on her feet
"hey Ndlovukazi yam" I say receiving her warm embrace

"why didn't you tell us you were coming back son, I would have prepared a feast for you and a celebration to welcome you homeboy" she says
"I wanted to surprise you guys" I say
"And we are surprised brother trust me, come here I have missed you and I hope you brought me Something" Sbahle says and hugs
"I missed you too princess and yes I got you Something, I wouldn't dare come here empty-handed, I love the peace you know" they all laugh
"My boy is home, welcome back Dikane" my father says
"ngiyabonga Mgabashe" I say and we shake hands
"sit down, I will fix you a plate" mama insists and I oblige
"after here I just want a long hot shower and a bed" I say
"I will ask one of the helpers to get your room ready" Sbahle says already on her feet
"once you wake up, we have a business to discuss Mpilo" baba says
"He just got home for goodness sakes, Khaya give my Son a break will you" mama fights
"mama can you just prepare a feast and call my brother to bring his family I want to have dinner with my everyone" I say and mama smiles
"I am happy to hear that fana I will get to it now okay" I say and the smile on my mother's face.
"So how are things in Colombia" baba asks
"Everything is going well baba" I say
"business on your own time please" my mother says and I sense a weird vibe between them.

•AMANDA

I have been walking around town for hours now trying to drop off my CV at any place where they can take it, but the requirements all say minimum requirements are grade 12 and that is Something I don't have at the moment but I won't give up, my luck will come from Somewhere. I decide to buy myself a plate of food from the women selling at the taxi rank and I eat, I was famished haven't had anything since the day started and it's already after 4. I need to get home because Lethabo will be coming to see me, he didn't come through yesterday and it felt So weird because we spend So much time together. I finish eating and make my way home when I approach my flat, I see Lethabo park he tries to call me but I don't answer and just make my way inside his car
"Hey babe" I say
"hey beautiful, where did you come from" he asks
"I went job hunting babe" I answer
"what happened to your job at the salon" he enquires
"the clients no longer come babe So it's a bit tough at the moment" I reply
"have you thought of opening your salon" he asks
"There are a lot of salon's around here love it won't be profitable" I say
"We should try and think of Something you can venture into" he suggests
"Yeah, I was going to start jotting down a few things and see how profitable they would get"
I say
"I will chip in a few ideas too and in the meantime, I don't want you to worry about the rent and groceries I will help with that okay" he says
"you don't have to baby" he says
"I know but I want to and I am not taking no for an answer Ama, I am your man and I have to be able to help you when you are in need" he says firmly and I just nod
"Oh, by the way, my mother invited you to dinner this Saturday" he says with a smile
"Oh, really" he nods

"Please come, baby, I am serious about you Ama and I want you to be able to come home and look for me and spend time there with me too" he says
"it's okay love I would love to come" I say and his eyes just smile
"thank you" he says and leans in for a kiss

•MZWAKHE

I didn't know what to say to my wife anymore, we have been fighting ever since yesterday when my mom extended that dinner invitation, Mpilo is back home and he asked that we come to have dinner with him because he misses his family, mom called Emily directly and my wife gave her an excuse saying it's last-minute I didn't understand why she would do that really; we have been quarreling ever since
"Mpilo is back and you will go back to being a nothing in your family" she says
"Emily watch your mouth" I warn her
"I am just telling you the truth" she says
"Why the hell did you reject my mother's invite" she sighs
"you wanted me and my children to go there and listen to your father belittle you while making Mpilo
Sound like the best thing since sliced bread" she says
"Emily you know very well that I know how to protect you when it comes to my family, he is a monster yes, but when he is in front of our kids he behaves" I say and he laughs
"Mzi please don't defend" she says
"no Emily you go around as my family hates you and you know very well that my mom and siblings adore you and protect you from my dad, whilst your whole family hates my black guts but because they are your family and a part of my children I go there and suck it up, from when they converse in Afrikaans knowing fully well I can't hear it too insulting me every minute reminding me how they will never see me worthy of you, my family asks to have dinner with us once in a blue moon and you refuse but drag me to your family every chance you get. This is a marriage Emily I can't be the only one compromising really" I say and walk away
"Mzwakhe we are still talking where are you going" she yells
"I am going out Emily out for Some fresh air and peace" I say and bang the door

CHAPTER 08

•AFRIKA

Amanda and I were sitting in the bedroom, she is trying to find Something to wear to dinner with Lethabo's mother, she is So nervous I swear I have never seen her freak out like this, she is normally So confident and ready for everything. I am just happy my sister finally gave love a chance if it's Someone who deserves happiness it's my sister. She has been through So much for So long it's time she puts herself first I am growing up now and I must learn to take care of myself too.
"now that looks sexy" I say and she frowns
"Afrika I am not trying to be sexy I am meeting my boyfriend's mother" she says
"But you can't hide the fact that you have a beautiful body now can you" I argue
"I am not saying I want to hide my body I just want to dress appropriately" she responds
"then wear that African print floaty orange dress with nude block heels" I say trying to annoy her because I know she hates that dress
"you are a genius, that's the outfit baby, I knew that dress will come in handy one day" she says already pulling it out of her wardrobe and fitting it and I must say I don't know why

she hates this dress I swear it was made for her, her beautiful thick body is not entirely exposed nor is it hidden "you look amazing sis" I say in total admiration
"thank you nana, now what am I going to do with my hair" she says
"I can lend you my afro if you like" I offer and she laughs
"it would just complete everything God" she murmurs
"Just don't try to impress her more than you should, you already compromised with your outfit don't with your hair, I mean you love weaves So put one on" I say
"you are growing up and it scares me like hell" she says and I stick my tongue out. My phone vibrates and it's a text from Senzo asking to come to see me I sigh
"your male friend?" she asks with a smirk
"yeah he wants to visit" I reply
"that's what friends do right" she says and I laugh and send him my location, he blue ticks me and after like 10 minutes he texts me that he is outside, I leave Amanda ironing her dress and go outside he is leaning his car and I open the door and join him
"hey" I say and he looks at me and sighs
"I want to firstly apologize for how my girlfriend acted the other day" he says
"you don't have to apologize; you did nothing wrong" I say and he smiles
"okay now that we got it out of the way how are you" he says
"I very well thanks and how did you get here So quick" I ask
"I was in the neighborhood Afrika that's why" he says and we both laugh
"Okay then" I reply
"I am famished, what do they sell around here" he asks brushing his belly
"Uhm by that corner they sell iKota" I reply
"is it nice though?" he queries
"the best I've ever had actually" I say and he nods
"Then what are we waiting for let's get a bite" he says pulling my hand
"Okay then" I say and go to the container we place an order and then sit and wait for it while talking about general stuff

•MPILO

I have been back home for a few days now and my brother hasn't been around to see me when I try him on the phone he doesn't pick So I just decided to give him Some time, I won't lie though I am wondering if I did Something to offend him, I can't recall anything that I might have did. I finish taking a shower and decide that it's time baba and I had that business talk since mama has been forbidding it. I opt for just sweatpants and a vest and walk barefoot, one knock on the door and I walk in, he is standing by the window looking at the garden
"women or business problems" I say and he turns back to look at me
"Mpilo I didn't hear you come in" he says
"I can see that man what's going on problems with the wife" I ask and he smiles at me
"ai uMa wakho has changed Son (your mother has changed)" he says
"Ndlovukazi is not one to change for nothing Dikane what did you do to her" I ask and he shakes his head chuckling
"eish Mpilo I stepped out of my marriage for Some fun and took it far" he confesses
"kodwa baba why, mama is a great woman" I ask
"I was just looking for Some fun Son and I messed up again" he says
"remember the last time you did this she walked out and it took you a long time to get her back is that what you want futhi?" I ask
"you know that's not what I want" he says and I raise my hands
"I am not playing the marriage counselor, I am a bachelor, after all, make things okay no mamami baba"

I say and he sighs

"I am trying Mpilo" he says and I nod

"So how is business this side" I ask

"We are still being hit Son I don't know what to do anymore" he confesses

"Mzwakhe told me he came to you with a suggestion" I say and he laughs

"nothing good can come out of your father, he married a white bitch after all" he says

"baba his choice of a wife shouldn't be a concern, he has a plan to help you, could you just put off the hate you have for Emily aside and let your Son help you" I ask and he frowns

"I just wanted him to be like you" he says and I shake my head

"you wanted two hot-headed Sons who would have never settled down but move from woman to woman, then where would you get grandchildren to inherit all of this, embrace him for what he is baba stop trying to change him, he is trying to be what you want and who he is at the same time, it's hard on him to man up give him a break" I say

"did he at least tell you this plan" he asks

"no, he didn't pops he wanted to tell you his father he wanted you to give him Some attention and the benefit of the doubt, but your pride won't allow you just give him a chance or we will keep losing money like this I tell you" I say and go pour my drink

"I will try" he says

"don't try baba just do it" I say and he narrows his eyes

"I am still your father Mpilo" he says

"I know that Mdlalose" I say and walk out of the study with my drink in hand

•AMANDA

Lethabo wanted to come and get me but I didn't agree to it wouldn't have made sense driving to get me and having to drive back So I told him I will come in a taxi; I was looking presentable and I felt good too, I just pray that his mother loves me and this whole night goes on well, he is the only child and I know how much his mother means to him and he must mean everything to her that's why I am praying So hard for it to go well. I get off the taxi at the stop sign and text him on WhatsApp he tells me to come straight and he will wait for me at his gate, I take my time walking and eventually get to him, his smile is infectious gets me blushing, I hug him and he takes in my scent

"you look amazing Ama" he says

"thank you love" I say and he takes my hand and we walk in; his house is those big one's in the neighborhood, it is beautiful and well-kept but just walking into this yard I could tell they were well off but I thought he was just a teacher. He opens the door and the kitchen is breathtaking God, he looks at me reassuringly and we walk to the lounge and an older woman who still has her groove on is sitting on the couch

"sawbona ma" I greet and she looks at me from head to toe before responding

"dumela usi" she says in a low voice

"mama this is my girlfriend Amanda, baby this is my mother"

"it's nice to meet you ma, Lethabo has told me a lot about you" I say

"same here, papa show the guest to the dinning because the food is ready we are just waiting for the meat to finish grilling" she says and we go to the dining and God each room looks amazing in its own right, my man pours me Some juice and sits next to me, his mother walks in

"it won't take long just 10 minutes, hao Lethabo you normally sit here as the man of the house," she says and I am shocked

"I am comfortable near my girl mama" he says kissing my hand

"family tradition papa I am sure Ayanda won't mind" she says and gives me a faint smile and I know from this moment that this woman hates me

"its Amanda mama" he defends

"that's what I said" she argues
"you said Ayanda mama" he says giving her a chilling look
"I am Sorry darling she says and sits down pointing to the chair where she wants' Lethabo to sit and I am left speechless when he stands and goes to sit, I sip my juice
"So, Amanda what did you study, are you also a teacher" she asks and I feel exposed
"I work at the salon ma; I am a nail tech" I respond
"Oh, I see" she says Sounding disappointed and looks at her Son
"We are in the process of coming up with a business she could start and own" he says to his mom to defend my honor and I appreciate it with all my heart
"And where will you get the capital, have you started looking for funding"
"I will be funding her mama, after all, I am investing in my future wife" he says and I blush
"So, you will be the one who holds the relationship financially" she asks and I don't want to lie things are getting awkward
"yes, until she finds her feet, I don't mind ma" he says and I feel like they should have had this conversation without me here
"So, tell me about your family and where you from" she goes on with the interrogation
"Uhm, I was born here in this neighborhood in K section near the church my mother still leaves there and I stay with my little sister Afrika at my flat in town" I say
"I go to the church in K section and I know the families in that street So where is your house" she asks
"ka Mbatha, the corner house front opposite the shop" I say and her eyes pop
"your mother is that drunkard woman" she says and I nod
"mama stop hao" Lethabo comes to my rescue
"I was just trying to get to know her is that a crime" she says and sips her drink
"can I use the bathroom please" I say with a shaky voice
"2nd door on your right babe" he points the corridor and I quickly stand making my way there Soon as I lock the door, I cry my eyes out, I have never been So humiliated in my life, this woman made it her mission to reduce me to nothing and today I felt that, even the man that use to pay to pleasure themselves with my body gave me a little ounce of respect. Lethabo's mother doesn't like me and it's clear.

•MZWAKHE

I was tired of ignoring my brother's calls, I came up with a good excuse that I will give him as to why I didn't show up to see him, I have decided that tomorrow we are going home to see my brother whether Emily is for or against it, I am tired of letting her dictate what should happen in this house, I get to our bedroom and she is applying lotion on her naked body, we haven't spoken since the argument we had
"Emily" I say and she remains silent
"it's fine you can be mute long as your ears listen. I have tried to be the best husband to you but all you want me to do is turn my back on my family and I have done that for a while and still, it didn't seem to please you. Mpilo hasn't been home for 2 years and I haven't been to see him because you told my mom that we can't go for reasons known to you. I have let this go on for long enough and I don't blame you but I blame myself, I gave you the go-ahead to wear the pants in this house thinking I was just a loving husband but it's clear you saw nothing but a weakling So it stops today it stops now, this is the Mdlalose house and you are married here to me, from now onwards you do what we do here if that is too much for you, there are many doors that exit this house and please do leave my children" I say and she gets up quickly and looks at me
"What did you just say Mzi" she asks
"I know I didn't stutter and you are not deaf" I say stripping naked

"you would throw me out of our house because of your family the same one that treats you like shit" she asks

"well your family treats me like shit 100 time more So what are you saying" I ask

"This is not about my family baby" she agrees

"it's about mine and I want to fix things with my father Emily and if you are my wife you should encourage me not remind me every two minutes how they prefer Mpilo over me" I say

"I can't believe you Mzwakhe" she says with tears

"well believe it honey believe it. Tomorrow we are going to my parents' house and you better have the prettiest smile on your face do you understand me" I say and the shock on her face, I peck her lips and go to our bathroom

CHAPTER 09

•LETHABO

I have never been So disappointed in my mother, what she did to Ama hurt, after she came back from the bathroom I could see she was crying and that broke my heart I have never felt So guilty, I don't know what had gotten into her she is a wonderful person why she would be So mean and judgmental of my woman really buffers me I swear she hated her even before she met her, the rest of the dinner was awkward, we just ate and Ama asked to take her leave, she didn't even want me to take her home, I don't know how she got to her place because it was late and there were no taxis, I was worried sick been trying to call her but she isn't taking any of my calls, I wish I had Afrika's number because I am losing my mind, I get out of bed after texting her and go brush my teeth when I get back to my bedroom I check my phone and luckily there is a text from her:

I am fine, slept at my mother's I sigh in relief but become more pissed because I know she never

wants to go to that house and my mothers' actions made her spend a night at one place she doesn't want at all, Ama doesn't have fond memories of that house So I know how difficult and desperate it was for her to go there. I make my way to the kitchen to get a glass of milk and she is already making breakfast, I don't even say to her, I just take out the milk and pour myself a glass

" morning papa, how did you sleep" she says and I just remain quiet

"Lethabo I am talking to you" she continues but I don't give her any light of day

"you have never disrespected me like this, ever since you met that girl you" I cut her off fast

" don't even think of bringing Amanda into this please don't mama" I say

"Oh, you now speak to me because you want to defend her" she says

"Just stop it okay just stop" I say and attempt to walk away

"She is not good enough for you Lethabo, she doesn't have any university qualification, she doesn't have a stable job what is she bringing to the table" she says and I laugh

"she brings happiness, love, peace, emotional stability, advice, respect, sense of direction, will power, she wants much more than she has, that's what I need from a wife my wife her money or university qualification will not raise my kids or make me happy they will just be a bonus to what she already has

that I am all about" I say

"Lethabo I just want the best for you papa" she says

"and if you could just stop and look for a minute you will see that Amanda is what is best for me" I say
"I wish I shared the same sentiments"
"When did you become So petty and judgmental" I ask
"I will not have you disrespect me like this" she says
"and I too will not have you treat me like a child mama, I am a grown responsible man, I have never given you any problems mama, never disappointed you even on a single day, I did everything you wanted me to ma, can I at least have the privilege of choosing my own wife?"
"I don't want to see you make a mistake" she says
"then it is my mistake to make mama isn't it?" I say
"I wish you could stop being stubborn" she says
"There are a lot of things I never asked you about Ma just to keep the peace could you stop trying to mess up what I have with Amanda So we can keep the peace too, do you think you can do that for me, could you love me enough to be able to understand that I love that girl?" I ask and she remains silent with a blank expression and I leave her standing there.

•MPILO

I was lazing around the house with a deadly hangover, I went and met with my boys last night and they made me go in too deep I won't lie, got home at around 5 am drunk out of my mind, I think I am still a little drunk even now, I am just surprised that I didn't come home with a woman, this is the longest I have gone without sex and man I hate beating meat, I prefer a woman over masturbation so I have one more task at hand to find myself Someone to take care of my specific needs, I have a different taste when it comes to sex than your average man, I don't just sleep with anything in skirt. My mom stands beside me
"I thought we were over clubbing until morning" she says stern
"I am Sorry mama, eish the boys organized a welcome home Something and the turn up was lit" I say
"Mpilo you have to grow up you know, find a good girl and settle down and start a family of your own" she says and I laugh
"I am not about that life Ndlovukazi, good women ended with your generation" I say and she shakes her head and smiles
"if that were true people wouldn't be getting married" she justifies and I laugh
"they are just under pressure trust me, we party with a whole lot of men with rings on their fingers and they don't even want to go home to their wives so no thanks I don't want to waste the woman's time
with my BS Ndlovukazi" I say and drink my hangover concoction, we hear noise in the house and we both make our way inside and it's my brother and his family
"hey asshole" he says approaching me and we hug and laugh
"you prick, what's up" I say and we start punching each other like we normally do
"hey Mpilo welcome home" Emily says and I go hug her
"Thanks Em, feels good being home really" I say and she smiles but the tension between her and Mzi is obvious, my brother is not the usual lovey dovey
"and where are my princesses, where are my angles" I say referring to their 2 girls who are hiding waiting for me to find them
"they are invisible do you know" my mom says joining the play session

"Oh, that will make it impossible to find them" I say and they giggle and come out running to me
"uncle Mpilo" they scream and I kneel to be their height, we hug and I kiss them all over the face
"girls go find grandpa he misses you too So much" mama says and they run to find him
"mama if you don't mind, I would like to borrow your kitchen and the staff So we can cook Sunday lunch for everyone" Emily asks and I am shocked
"you don't even have to ask baby this is your home do as you please" Ndlovukazi says
"I will go get the groceries from the boot" she says and walks out
"not that I am happy to see you here, but what happened to your wife" I ask
"I would also like to know" our mother says
"let's just say she got reminded that I am her husband and she is a Mdlalose" he says and I laugh
"that means you fucked her into submission" I joke
"fuck you Mpilo" he says
"Hai, Mpilo don't speak like that and wena Mzi language" she says
"Sorry Ndlovukazi" we both say and Sbahle walks in
"Oh, I see it's a full house, it's going to be a great Sunday I should just go put Some champagne
"hello to you Sbahle" Mzwakhe says
"Oh, Sorry brother, hey there and where are my girls" she asks
"they went to find dad" I say
"my Instagram is in need of their cuteness" she says and goes to find them

•AMANDA

I don't even want to talk about last night, all you need to know is it became awkward by the moment and after I ate, I just left and came to sleep at home, as always Sibho had people over and they were getting wasted, nothing has changed in fact it seems worse, I just went to the room Afrika used and luckily she was still a bed and it seemed clean, I locked myself in and slept, when I got up tidied the room and my mother had passed out by the door and the kitchen door was not even locked, I shake my head, I might act tough but I love my mother and seeing her like this hurts, I went outside and swept the yard and cleaned her bedroom and the one I used then the lounge, by the time I was to tidy the kitchen she woke up looking like hell, I ignored her and continued what I was doing "ufunani lana Amanda (what do you want here)" she asks
"I was in the neighborhood" I say
"where did you leave my daughter" she asks
"she is at my flat Sibho" I answer
"bring my child back to me or I am taking you to court" I laugh
"I will wait for that ma" I say and decide to just take my things and leave, like always she rains insults on me and the neighbours are already outside looking and laughing and it hurts because this is one of the things Lethabo's mom judged me for, like I asked to be borne by a drunkard, I wiped my tear and went to find a taxi, I was waiting at the stop sign when his car parked near me
"baby" he says and I just close my eyes
"hey" I manage to say, he gets out of his car and hugs me

"I was worried sick Ama, baby I am So Sorry for what my mother did, I am Sorry she treated you like that" he says and I just cry
"I never wanted you to cry because of anything that concerns me, I promised to make you happy and I hate the fact that I failed you baby" he continues and I am weeping in his arms, not giving a damn if people are looking at us
"please let's get in the car baby" he says letting me go and opens my door and I get in, he does around and gets in and starts the engine, we are silent the entire drive and he goes and parks at a park
"Ama" he says and I look at him
"I love you Lethabo" I say and he smiles
"I love you too babe and I am very Sorry" he says again
"she will never like me" I confess
"I will talk to her but please don't let her come in between us, it took us years to get here Ama please, we make each other happy and no one has the right to come in between this" he says taking my hands
"she will forever see and treat you like a child" I say
"I spoke to her this morning and she will back off babe" he tells me
"Lethabo how am I supposed to visit you and sleep over knowing fully well that she hates my guts" I say
"then I will move out the house and go rent Somewhere" he says and I am shocked
"and have her hate me more" I say
"I need to find a balance though love" he says and I remain silent until an idea hits me
"you can have your privacy and still live with her in the same yard" I say
"you wouldn't mind me moving in the backroom" he asks and I nod
"I wouldn't expect you to help me with rent and groceries and expect you to go rent Somewhere again, it would be selfish and inconsiderate of me" I say and he smiles
"then we will go shopping for essentials during the week and we can have our privacy" he says
"I would love that" I say and I can see relief in his eyes, I wouldn't have held him responsible for his mother's actions, he stood up for me most times and I appreciate it and him for that

•AFRIKA

Amanda didn't come home last night and it must mean that the dinner went well that she decided to sleep over, I am happy everything is going well for her, she deserves all the happiness, tomorrow is the day and our results are coming out, I am starting to be really nervous now, the university even sent me an SMS telling me that I should bring my results immediately after I have them So I can be able to accept or reject my application because my status currently is accepted on condition that I pass my NSC with the required marks. I am a stress eater So I have been eating since this day started, I get out of our bedroom

and go find Something to eat and Dineo is in there, I try to quickly return to the bedroom

"Afrika, can I have a word please" she says and I look back at her

"Oh, okay" I say and fold my arms

"I am Sorry for all I said to you, I didn't have any right to act like I know Mandy more than you do" she

says and I am not sure if she is sincere or not

"okay" I say coolly and she sighs

"listen it has always been Mandy and I for the longest time, I guess I thought I am losing my friend since

you got here, and I should have never tried comparing sisterhood and friendship" she says

"I understand, we cool" I say but I don't mean any of that, I don't believe she is sincere, Something in

my spirit tells me she is not to be trusted

"thank you, nana, I made lunch enough for two, join me and we can watch Something together" she says

"yeah sure" I say and sit down, she brings the food and says I can choose the movie

•MR MDLALOSE

After the lunch my Sons and I went into the study, and I must admit, I am having a good time having my family under one roof and just having a great time together even though things between my wife and I are still rocky

"So Mzwakhe we are still being hit, and now I have lost So much money" I say

"I have a Solution to this problem" he says

"I would like to hear about it" I say and Mpilo smiles

"Oh, okay So the plan is..." he explains it to me and I must say I have never been So impressed by anything Mzwakhe has come up with

"this is genius Son" I say pat his back

"thanks baba" he says smiling

"So, in other words we have to put a hold on the production and distribution till university opens and

you identify the candidate" Mpilo asks

"that is correct bro" he says and fist bumps his brother

"that is old school and perfect and they will not even think that is the way we are shuffling everything" I say and sip on my drink

"exactly baba" Mpilo says

"how did you even think of this Son" I ask Mzwakhe

"It just popped up" he says

"ngiyabonga and ngiyaziqhenya ngwawe Dikane (thanks and I am proud of you)" I say and he bows

"I am glad I managed to help" he says and I can see how happy my Son is to have helped me

"to Mzwakhe" Mpilo says raising his glass and we toast to his brother

CHAPTER 10

•AFRIKA

I was already up just waiting for 5am to hit So Amanda and I can go to the patrol station to go buy a newspaper, I am freaking out I swear and Ama is sleeping peacefully next to me, I wish I could swap places with her right now, I check my phone and the time is 4:17, God can it just move a little faster hell.

I try preoccupy myself with Facebook and a few minutes later Amanda's phone rings and she wakes up and answers it, when she hangs up, she is already on her feet running out of the room, she comes back a few minutes later.

"I have the paper nana come let's find you" she says and my heart starts racing

"how did you get it" I ask

"I asked the uber guy who picks up the girls next door to bring it for me on his way here" she says and I

nod and rush to her, she hands me the newspaper and I start looking for my exam number, it takes me

a while and I can't find myself I start to panic

"Afrika calm down first and navigate properly" she says and I take a deep breath and slowly look for it

and a second later I find it and it's an A with 7 distinctions I scream and show Amanda who takes the

paper and circles my number with a pen, I run around the house excited out of my mind, I did God I did

thank you, my sister is silent So I look back and she is on her knees crying So painfully, I quickly make my way to her and hug her

"what's wrong sis" I ask and she just continues to cry, I let her go on for a while

"You did it Afrika! I am So proud of you" she says and I can't help but cry with her

"all my sacrifices were not in vain, you made it and I am crying because I am happy, I am proud of you,

you have made it far than I could have ever, always remember where we come from nana when you get

to university remember your purpose, don't lose focus" she says and I tighten my hug

"I won't I promise" I say and she smiles

"God I am So happy Afrika you made me proud, you have removed shame from us, you have proved

that being born in a dysfunctional home doesn't mean anything if you are determined, I am even

inspired by you" she says

"this is both our victory Amanda; I couldn't have done this without you" I say

"I have a present for you" she says and takes out the suitcase in the wardrobe and opens it, she takes

out a huge wrapped box, I get excited

"what is it" I ask and she smiles

"here open it" she says and I take it already unwrapping it, my hands move to my mouth when I see

what it is

"Amanda this is a laptop and they are expensive" I say and she smiles

"yes, it is, but I saved up for it for the longest time, you are going to need it at university"
she says

"thank you So much sis" I hurry and hug her

"you deserve it my baby, you made me So proud sthandwa sam"

"ngiyabonga sis wam (thank you my sister)" I say

"my sister passed matric ya'll with 7 distinctions" she screams and I laugh

"Mandy people are sleeping" I say giggling

"I don't care I am So happy right now; the world must know"

"okay then let me leave you be"

"do you want a cup of coffee" she asks

"yes please" I say and she goes to the kitchen and I take my phone and update a status on WhatsApp about passing and my distinctions

•EMILY

I am panicking right now; my husband and his father are on good terms and that is not good for me and

my children, Mzwakhe was supposed to hate his father and that could have guaranteed our safety but his

desperation for his father's affection ruined everything for us. I woke up and took the kids to day care,

thank God it's January the girls can be a handful Sometimes, after dropping them off I made my way to

my parents' house, I had to talk to my father. When I got home, I found them in the front porch having tea

"goeie more (good morning)" I say and my mom smiles

"more mei kind (morning my child) she replies

"Emily" my father says

"Pa, I need to talk to you" I say Sounding unsure of myself

"vrou (wife) excuse us asseblief" my father says and ma just leaves without saying a word

"pa everything is a mess" I say and rub my forehead

"What happened" he asks and I exhale

"My husband and his father made amends, he is back in business" I say and he places the cup down

"what? How the hell did you allow that to happen Emily" he asks

"I don't know Pa; he has been desperate for his father validation more than ever these past few weeks and that good for nothing brother of his is back in the country and he is going to ensure that his father and my husband stick together" I say and he takes the cup and throws it to the wall

"your job was to make him hate his father enough to switch sides and give me all the information I need to get that bastard behind bars, and that was the second plan since you didn't follow the first one" he breathes fire

"I know I messed up by falling in love with him and even giving him children" I say

"yes, you did, we wouldn't be here if you stuck to getting married to him just to spy on his family, we wouldn't care if he was part of the cartel but now, we do because you insist that you won't have the father of your children in jail" he says

"I know you don't want to hear this Pa, but I love Mzwakhe and he is an amazing father to our children, I will get him to turn on his family again and give you all you need to lock up his father and that son of a bitch Mpilo" I say

"Are you still saving money" he asks

"yes, we are and we already have enough in the offshore accountants" I reply

"Good, you and your children and that black boy still need to survive after his father's drug empire is destroyed forever" he says and I nod

"yes Pa" I respond

"I mean it Emily do everything you need to do for that boy to turn on his father" he says

"I will Pa, for my children's sake I will" I say

"because if you fail Emily, I will arrest every one of them including your husband, don't forget what they did to

our family" he says and I feel myself get emotional

"you don't have to remind me Pa" I say and he nods

•LETHABO

Ama came up with a good suggestion, we will never have our privacy and space if I continue to live in the house with my mother, she proved that she doesn't like my girlfriend much and I doubt that is going to change anytime soon, So the best thing is for me to move in the backrooms, at least I will still be in the same yard as her making sure that she is alright and that will mean everyone will be happy. I got home from work since we were handing out the statement of results, our school did very well of course our golden child made us proud, she aced every subject and when I called Amanda I could tell how happy she was on the phone, I send her money to take out her sister So they could both go out and celebrate. I find my mom in the lounge reading the bible and I decided to just tell her my plans, I sit on the couch opposite her and clear my throat to get her attention

"I have something I need to discuss with you ma" I say and she removes her reading glasses

"I am listening papa" she says and I sigh

"I am a grown man ma and I introduced my girlfriend to you So that means we are going to need our privacy and space like any other couple" before I could finish, she interrupted

"So that girl convinced you to move out and leave me here alone, Lethabo bathong" she says

"mama can you wait for me to finish speaking then chip in your opinion, I wanted to move out and go rent but Amanda convinced me not to, So Ma I will be moving in the backroom" I say

"This house is big enough for us Lethabo" She says

"will it be big enough even when Amanda visits me let's say for a couple of weeks" I ask and she remains silent

"I thought so, so ma, I love you that's why I am moving out to keep the peace between us" I say as I leave.

•AFRIKA

After collecting my statement of results, I decided to go see my mother and tell her the good news before heading back to my sister she called and asked that I come home So we can go out to celebrate this, a laptop and outing in one day she must be proud of me. I get home the neighbors are sitting outside, I greet them and quickly walk away before they can ask me 100 questions, I open and find my mom in the house sitting with her boyfriend, they are drinking as always

"sanibonani" I greet them

"Afrika mntanami (my child)" my mother says Sounding happy to see me

"ninjani (how are you)" I ask and she smiles

"I am well thanks wena" she says

"I am well thanks; I came to tell you that I passed my matric with seven distinctions" I say with a smile and she frowns

"you came here to tell me that nonsense" she says and I look at her with pain

"but ma, can't you be happy or proud of me" I ask and she laughs

"proud of what, the fact that you are being foolish thinking school will take you out of this life, proud to know that you have the same brains that killed your father" she says

"I am not my father though" I shout

"you are acting just like him Afrika and the world will use you for it" she says with bitterness I cry
"Why did I bother coming here, nothing I do will ever be good enough for you" I say and walkout
"ya hamba Afrika go you are just like him; go and think you are better than us, he thought So too and he died because of it, the world will show you how cruel it is" she shouts and I don't look back.

•MDLALOSE

I haven't been going to the office trying to give my wife Some attention but she is having none of it, I don't know what to do any more, the only thing going well for me right now my relationship with my children, we are at a better place, I guess Mpilo made me realize that Mzwakhe can still be a part of the family business while having a life of his own, I should just let go of my hatred and constant suspicion of Emily, I will give myself time to get to know her better as my daughter in law and maybe once I do that Mzwa will open himself up completely to me and the business. We were in the bedroom with my wife, she re-arranging her closet and I was just on the couch looking at her
"things between Mzwa and I are looking up" I say
"good for you" she says
"I thought you would be happy" I say and she laughs
"what do you want me to do Khaya, applaud you for being a father to your son" she says
"I am not saying that Noma, please" I reply
"Then what are you saying" she asks turning to look at me
" do you think you will ever forgive me Nomalanga, I made a mistake and I am really sorry"
I say
"I have heard that before Mdlalose, and the only reason I am staying is to safeguard my children's money, if it wasn't for that I would probably be Somewhere on an island with my toy boy" she says and I felt my heart racing
"are you indirectly telling me that you are having an affair with a boy" I ask with fury
"a lady doesn't kiss and tell, Dikane" she says and goes back to what she was doing
"Nomalanga" I warn
"uyarasa man Khaya (you are making noise)" she says completely calm and I am boiling with anger, I decide to leave before I do something I might regret and she giggles as I open the door

•AMANDA

My boyfriend had just sent me Some money to take Afrika out and celebrate her achievement, I don't want to lie, in Lethabo I have found the perfect man, he is everything a girl could ever ask for, he is my dream come true I won't lie. I have already taken my bath and I am ready just waiting on my baby sister, the door opens and she walks in
"Finally, I have been waiting" I say and she remains silent I look at her and her eyes are bloodshot red
"nana, have you been crying? What's wrong Afrika talk to me, who hurt you?" I ask
"I went to see Ma and she couldn't even be happy; she said the most hurtful things" she says and I sigh
"Oh, nana I am Sorry" I hug her and let her cry
"why is Sibona like this, why can't she be like other mothers Amanda" she asks and I wish I knew
"I know it hurts Afrika but Sibona doesn't care about us nana, we both know that and it's understandable that you still want your mother, after all, you are young but if you continue

chasing after her she will break you nana when it comes to that woman you need to grow a thick skin and be immune to her bull or you will always be hurt by her words and actions, I am not asking you to be inhumane I am asking you to try and get her out of your system, love her from a distance, I do that and it keeps me sane” I say

“I will try sis” she says and I wipe her tears

“now cheer up I am taking you out and buying you a few outfits, my boyfriend gave us a little something to celebrate you and treat you like a princess for making us So proud” I tell her and she smiles

“thank him for me sis” she says and I kiss her

“I love you Afrika” I say

“and you love me enough to fill every void, I don’t know why I love giving Sibonambi power over me, I love you too” she murmurs and I hug her. Damn you Sibonambi damn you for hurting your daughter like this.

CHAPTER 11

•LETHABO

My girl and I are going to buy Some furnisher for our room, we agreed that we are only going to buy a bed, a fridge an L-shaped couch and a TV then subscribe for DSTV, then we will buy more with time, after all, Rome was not built in one day. I was in the room we were going to use; it is big enough to be divided into two rooms, honestly, I am starting to be excited, the thought of us being locked up in her cuddling and enjoying our private space, my mom walks in and I sigh

“everything okay” I ask

“can you please come in the house for a second” she says and walks out I sigh and follow her when I get in the lounge I find my uncle in the drinking juice and having biscuits

“hao Malome lekae (uncle how are you)” I say and stretch out my hand for a handshake

“Lethabo, I am very well thanks, yourself” he says shaking my hand

“I am well thanks” I respond and take my sit

“that is good nephew, I will just get straight to it because I have Somewhere to be” he says

“okay malome” I say and look at my mom who is folding her arms looking Sour

“your mother tells me that you brought a girl home and after that, you have started disrespecting her” he says and I look at my mom

“disrespecting her how” I ask

“Ask him what is the meaning of moving out of the house to the backrooms” my mom says

“malome, I brought my girlfriend home to introduce to mama just like a responsible Son would do, my mom acted up and judged my girlfriend, according to mama Amanda is no good enough for me, malome I am wanted to move out and go rent Somewhere but my girlfriend stopped me, I am grown Malome and I am respecting mama by moving out of the house” I say

“respecting me how Lethabo” she asks and I sigh

“mama I am going to be having sex with my girlfriend and I want to be free doing it, I don’t want you complaining and telling me that we are disrespectful” I say bluntly because I am annoyed and my uncle laughs while shaking his head

“Lethabo show Some respect, by my sister I hear what this boy is saying and honestly, he has a good reason, we can’t pretend that he won’t be sleeping with that girl, you have to be happy that they are trying to respect you and your house, that shows you the character of that girl” my uncle says

“thank you malome” I say

"I don't see why this had to cause problems between you two, the boy is growing up and it's natural for him to want to move out of your nest and I must say it took him long but I am glad he got this girl, yes he is your only child but don't treat him like one, he is a man and you must accept her, Lethabo thank you for finally getting a wife, I hope I will be going to negotiate her lobola soon" I smile

"Sooner than you expect malome trust me" I say and we both laugh

"that's good, we don't want you wasting her time and sleeping with her knowing full well that you don't have any good intentions with her" he says

"trust me I am serious with this woman" I say

"I am proud Son, now go and continue what you were busy with, I want to have a word with your mother" he says then sips his juice, I stand up and get out, can you believe my mother calling my uncle for me, this is outrageous I don't know what has gotten into my mom, her behavior these days is shocking

•MZWAKHE

A week to go and it's back to work, registrations have already started but I called in sick, I am not about to help with those, they are just chaotic, I will just go to my doctor and ask for a letter that says I was incapacitated to be able to report for duty, I will only go there when classes resume, at least the plan I have will be in motion then, we are losing a lot of money since we closed down shop, we are not worried about our distributors going to another supplier since we are the only one's producing this kind. I was just watching National geographic wild at my house, and Emily was in the kitchen cooking, ever since I reminded her of who is boss, she has been behaving as a wife should, she appears from the kitchen

"Hey babe" she says

"love" I say back

"you are snakes God" she says and I laugh

"intriguing species" I say and she shakes her head

"How are things between you and your dad" she asks and I smile

"Everything is going well hey babe, dad even gave me more responsibilities" I say

"that's very good to hear" she says and I smile at her

"you don't know how happy I am that he finally acknowledges me" I say

"But why the sudden change of heart" she enquires

"honestly love I don't even care, I am just glad he treats Mpilo and I the same" I say and she nods

"I just hope he is being sincere really" she says and I narrow my eyes

"do you think he is not being real" I ask

"I am not saying that babe, all I am saying is it's sudden, I feel he just wanted to know your plan and once it has been executed, he will go back to treating you like nothing" she voices

"I don't think that is the case Em" I say and she nods'

"I am not being negative or anything I am just looking out for my husband that's all" she says

"I appreciate it babe but it's no need, Mdlalose and I are in a good place right now" I say

"Okay, let me go back to my cooking" she says and pecks my lips and walks away, I don't know why but I sensed a weird vibe from my wife but she is adjusting well to everything I shouldn't overthink things right now

•MR MDLALOSE

Nomasonto is getting on my last nerve now, I have apologized a thousand times, I don't know what she wants me to do anymore, if she thinks I am going to run after her any longer then she is mistaken and if she thinks she can step out of our marriage and go around with little boys spending my money on them, she has another thing coming, I won't sit back and

watch her make a fool of me if she is cheating on me she will see another side of me and it's not going to be pretty, I was in the study and a knock came through
"yes, come in" I say and one of our helpers walks in
"I am sorry sir but Someone by the name Mike is here to see you" she says
"are you new here" I ask because I have never seen her around here before
'yes, sir I started a week ago" she says and I look at her from head to toe, she is exactly the type I like
"What is your name" I ask
" my name is Buli sir" she answers
"come see me in my gym, later on, okay" I say and she nods
"yes, sir I will" she agrees and I nod
"tell Mike to come through" I say and she walks out. A second later Mike walks in looking like money
"that woman's money looks good on you" I say and he laughs
"it sure does sir" he says
"I have a job for your son" I say and he nods
"I am listening" he says taking a sit, I trust this boy and I know he gets everything done
"I need you to tail my wife, I think she is having an affair" I say and he narrows his eyes
"That doesn't sound like Ndlovukazi" he says and I sigh
"I would have laughed if Someone said my wife could be cheating weeks ago but right now that woman is not my sweet wife, she is Some monster I created and honestly I fear her" I say and he chuckles
"I hear you Mdlalose, I will get to it then" he says
"I trust you to be discreet" I say
"always sir, uyazi" he says and stands up
"I will put your fee in your monthly payment" I say and he nods
"no problems and my rates are going up as of February 1st" he says and I laugh
"for Someone swimming in money you can't seem to get enough of it" I say
"look who is talking" he says and walks out leaving me laughing

•MPILO

I was on a video call with Mariana to find out how things are going down there and I'm glad that she still has everything on lockdown, the guys work well with her and I couldn't be any happier that I gave her the ropes, she knows her business, when our conversation concluded, she gave me a striptease and fuck she made me hornier but it was worth it the girl even went to get a vibrator and started penetrating herself, I am finding it difficult to breathe, I am in the balcony of the upstairs lounge and she instructs me to give myself a handjob and she made me think that she is the one doing it, this woman is a Goddess fuck. I was about to come when Someone hit me with a broom, I drop my phone and zip my pants quickly, when I look back it's my mom
" ma what the fuck" I say and she hit me again
"you are nasty Mpilo man sis" she says and the look on her face
"Why are you eavesdropping on my conversations" I say
"that was no conversation sies man, that was live porn in my house" she says and I laugh
"unga hleki wena (don't laugh)" she says and hits me again
"enough with hitting me ma come on" I say moving away from her
"if you can't approach a woman and express yourself why don't you just go buy from Hilbrow" I laugh
" ma, are you listening to yourself kodwa" I ask and she laughs
"is it working though Mpilo or are you experiencing problems when you are in the same room as a woman, kune Mans Clinic sthandwa sam" she says and I burst out laughing

"I am not having this conversation with you ma please" I say and she laughs
"You are showing us things Mpilo, go make me Some tea and wash your hands with bleach"
she says
" Dramatic much Ndlovukazi" I say rolling my eyes
"I don't think So, and I take two teaspoons of brown sugar" she says and I adjust my pants
and walk into the house, okay but my mom is a weird specie, why would she walk in after
hearing the line of conversation. Now my phone broke eish yeses.

•AMANDA

I accompanied Afrika to her registrations, and Yoh, the queues here are long and I am glad I
came with her, she finished with academic registrations and she has her timetable, luckily
when she went to take her timetable I went to queue to get her res key and we were out of
that place, I don't think I have ever been So excited, my baby is a registered university
student, I thank God I sacrificed at least one of us is going to be Something and Lord knows
how I struggled to raise my sister, but I did it, I got her this far and I thank God that she
never made it ant hard on me, she never rebelled against me and because of that we find
ourselves here "I think we should just go look at your room since we are already here" I say
and she smiles.
"yes, we should, luckily it's on-campus res" she says and we walk to the security guard and
ask for directions, he helps us and we make our way there, it a bit of a stretch though, we
finally arrive and find her room, I unlock and walk in, it's spacious and there are two beds in
there and both sides have wardrobe space, a desk and shelf, I got more excited
"This is fancy" I say and she laughs
"I can't believe it sis" she says
"well believe it Mrs. University" I say and we both laugh
"I hope I get a good roommate" she says
"you will nana I pray you do" I say
"I will move in when NSFAS has made the funds available, for groceries" she says
" don't be silly, I will buy you Some groceries and bedding and Some utensils" I say and she
smiles
"thank you Mandy" she says
"We should get going, we have been here for hours, I know I am dying of hunger" I say
"That makes the two of us" she confesses
"I saw a McDonalds we can rush there" I say and we walk out and lock the door

•AFRIKA

I kept on looking at my student card not believing that I made it here, God knows the kind of
home I come from and he made it all possible for my sister and me, Soon as I make it
Amanda will want for nothing, she left early and said she had to go see Lethabo, I was alone
in the house and Dineo hasn't been around for a while, my phone beeps and I power the
screen on
CONGRATULATIONS, you did it tsala, I am so proud of you it's a text from Larona
commenting on the
status on WhatsApp of my student card
thanks I say
I went to register yesterday she texts back
that's good I say
we should completely hang out Soon Afrika, I miss you, you have been such a stranger she
replies
I don't think we should, not after what you did the last time I say
what are you talking about she asks

continue playing dumb, but I know everything you did that night I say and she goes silent for a while

Afrika can we meet and talk she texts back

there won't be any need, I don't need friends like you in my life Larona, just know that I truly loved and cared for you like a sister but you didn't have my best interests at heart. Leave me alone and I will do the same, take care and all the best with your studies I text and block her and I feel very good I won't lie.

CHAPTER 12

•AMANDA

I came to visit my boyfriend and I won't lie having our own space puts me at ease and lucky enough I haven't bumped into his mother and that's cool with me, we were chilling on the couch eating iKota from his hood, its edible just not mind-blowing, we also having Some coke to go with it, we were watching Some action movie from marvel, we ended buying everything we agreed upon but when we got to the store he told me we could also buy a microwave, a kettle, and a small kitchen cupboard, he also allowed me to buy some decorations to make it feel more homely and honestly that has been wearing heavy on me for a few days

"is the movie boring you? We can change it" he says

"Oh, no love it's okay" I say

"Then what's wrong, and don't tell me it's nothing" he says and I sigh

"not to sound like I am belittling you or anything, but babe, you are just a teacher and I know you earn enough but Lethabo not enough that you could be able to buy everything in here cash and be able to give me money now and again, now you also paying my rent and giving me money for groceries, and

paying your car and you buy expensive clothes for yourself, don't get yourself in debt trying to please me love I don't want that" I say and he has a smile on his

"I understand your concern babe but trust me you don't have anything to worry about" he says

"you are not saying anything to me Lethabo, are you doing Something illegal from the side Lethabo" I ask and he laughs

"I could never my love I swear" he says and kisses me

"So, tell me how you afford all of this" I say

"okay let me put you at ease. Babe my mother was a principal and she worked for more than 30 years, she retired when I started working, she was earning at a higher level So when she retired she got all her pension money, and it was enough babe, I have been working for 5 years Ama and I did nothing with my money, my mom bought me this car cash, all I do with my income is buy petrol, buy myself clothes and that's it, she buys groceries, pays the utility bills and everything else, Sometimes she gives me a little Something too, I invest a little of my money then that's it" he says and I am shocked

"wow your mother loves you" I say and realize how Some kids are blessed; my mother wouldn't even give us R10 for bread.

"I am the only child babe and she didn't have the best growing up So she wants me to have a comfortable life but I guess that also meant she will want to baby me all my life" he says.

"she will adjust love; it's just been the two of you most your lives" I say and he nods

"I hope so babe, so don't worry Ama, when I help you out it's because I can afford to" he says

"and I appreciate you, and Sorry I thought you were in debt or doing Something illegal" I say

"I would have been worried if you didn't ask, but don't worry okay" she says and I smile

"Never will I worry again" I say

"I am responsible when it comes to my finances babe so I promise we will never go broke; he says and I laugh

"I trust in you, but I won't be depended on you forever okay" I say and he smiles

"I didn't expect that, I know you love your independence babe So don't stress, decide on what business you want and I will fund it for you and you will have your independence" he says and I nod. "I will let you know and it's a loan, I will pay back every cent" he laughs.

"Ama you don't have to love; I am just investing in you because one day you'll be my wife" he says and I blush like a school give. This man is amazing Yoh,

•MPILO

I am the mall to buy a new one since I dropped mine yesterday when my mother became an intruder. In my conversation with Mariana, I walked straight to apple I store and bought their latest release, okay maybe my mother walking in and me breaking my phone was a blessing in disguise, I needed to get an upgrade. They set it up and it's good to go. I walk out of the shop busy browsing through it, I must say it has nice features, I bump into Someone and my new phone falls.

"ahh fuck I just got this now, can't you watch where you are going" I say

"I am Sorry, really Sorry" I Soft angelic voice says and I quickly look up and what I saw was perfection God, she is a chocolate and her afro makes her the most beautiful woman I have ever laid my eyes on. She has eyeglasses on and on a normal day I would find this nerdy as hell but right now I can't imagine her without them, I stare at her for a while and I am shocked wondering how God made her like this, man must throw themselves at her feet, I know I want to right now, I finally snap out of my thoughts and shake my head

"Uhm I am Sorry for being rude, I was the one on my phone I wasn't watching where I was going" I say and she smiles, I instantly feel butterflies in my stomach, no woman has ever made me this nervous

"it's okay no big deal" she says and I nod. I get down and pick up her plastic and hand it to her and our hands touch a bit, I won't lie I felt this electric current flowing between us it's shocking, she quickly retracts her hand

"thanks" she takes her plastic and walks away quickly and I turn and stare at her walking away, she is now out of sight but I can still see her in my head, I finally snap out of it and look at my phone and luckily it's not broken or anything, it hits me that I didn't ask for her name or number. I am stupid for real. I leave and drive to my brother's house, I press the intercom and Someone opens up, I drive in and park in

the driveway and walk in, I walk in and my brother is already by the door waiting for me

"What a lovely surprise" he says

"that's Some white tendencies" I say and he laughs

" don't be stupid Mpilo" he says and we walk in and go to his lounge, he pours us a drink and hands mine to me

"not that I am not happy to see but what brings you here" he asks

"I was in the neighborhood bro" I say and he nods and I don't know why but my mind drifts back to the perfect chocolate woman I saw today

"earth to Mpilo Mdlalose" he says drawing me back from my thoughts

"eish Sorry man" I say

"seems like you have a lot on your plate" he says

"I think I am in love" I blurt out and he laughs

"say what?" he asks amused

"I have never seen anyone like her God" I continue. He puts his hand on my forehead checking my forehead and I laugh
" don't be stupid I am not sick" I say
"good to know, who is this woman" he asks
"I don't know, I have never seen her before" I say and he narrows his eyes
"are you for real" he says and I nod
"I met her at the mall less than an hour ago" I tell him what happened and he just laughs at me
"I never thought the day will come when Mpilo Mdlalose aka Mr. Player falls in love with a complete stranger" he says and I shake my head
"if you see her you will understand" I say and he chuckles, damn woman who are you and how the hell do I find you

•MR MDLALOSE

I was sitting in my study and Buli the new help was under the desk giving me a blowjob, I won't lie I feel like this girl came here to be my saving grace, Nomalanga is being difficult and she won't sleep with me, and I can't step out and go get my needs met because I have a feeling she is having me followed too, So I will just sleep with Someone under her roof and she will not notice a thing. There is a knock on the door and I thought this girl was going to stop but she just went on and on I swear I am going to ejaculate in her mouth, I don't respond to the knock but the door bursts open and Noma walks in
"We need to talk Khaya" she says
"Noma not now please, I am not in the mood to fight with you right now" I say hoping she will walk out because if she could see what was happening under the table, she would kill us both
"I believe now is the right time" she insists
"I will come to find you when I am done in here Nomalanga please" I argue
"you don't seem too busy; I mean look at how you are relaxing" she insists and I gently push away Buli's head So she can stop and I can give my wife attention
"okay fine I am all ears" I say taking a deep breath
"I haven't received my money from the Colombia lab" she says and I sigh
"Nomalanga you know that the lab here is not operating and that means we are depended on the money we are making from the Colombian lab, I have people to pay and the money also needs to be cleaned So I can move it here" I say
"Now you are making your problems my problems Mdlalose, I told you not to try and bullshit me because I will fuck you up, be careful Khaya" she says and exhale
"I know this but I am just asking for a month Noma then the plan your Son came up with will be in motion and then the lab here will operate again" I say and she stands up
"you better keep your word because if you don't, I will burn this whole cartel up in smoke and you will be in the center of it all" she says and I feel chills running down my spine
"I will Noma, you know I am good for it" I say and she laughs pointing her well-manicured finger at me
"I am going to court I will see you later" she says and walks away
"Fuck it Nomalanga" I say hitting the desk after she walked out. I move and go lock the door
"Buli come out" I say and she comes out from under the desk
"I better not hear what my wife and I were discussing anywhere because I will not be happy about it, are we clear" I say
"I will never sir I promise" she says

"you are a beautiful and resourceful girl and I am going to enjoy spending Some time with you and it would be a shame if I had to kill you because you couldn't keep your mouth shut"
I say

"I won't say anything to anyone, from what I heard to what we are doing I promise" she says

"good girl, come get the money for your mother's medical care on Friday when you leave for weekly visitation okay" I say and she smiles and nods

"I will and thank you again" she says and I check the coast before letting her walk out. I got her to agree to have an affair with me after she told me that she took this job to take care of her sick mother, I promised to pay her mother's treatment if she took care of me in that way and she jumped at the opportunity, her mother will also be a way to keep her in line when she wants to grow some wings

•AFRIKA

I got home and my heart was still beating fast, I have never been taken by a boy like that, corrections he is not even a boy, I never thought I could feel that way about any man, but when we accidentally touched I felt this electric current and it made me feel Some type of way I swear my heart stopped for a nanosecond, I didn't understand why I would be drawn so much to a stranger and like it. The first thing I did when I got home, I went straight to the fridge and drank Some water to calm down, and after I went to the bathroom and changed my underwear, it was Soaking wet from when his warm skin touched mine. I know am inexperienced but I can tell that my hormones went crazy. I couldn't get his picture out of my head. He has tattoos all over his upper body and his dark skin just make them look nicer they were visible because he had on a vest, I always thought I am against guys with a beard but he just made it look like Something every man should have, his thick lips look juicy and I wanted to ask him to kiss me instantly, he is So tall I had to look up a bit to be eye to eye with him. The thought of him leaves me disorientated and hot. I splash water on my face and go to the kitchen to start with supper. Dineo walks in after a few minutes

"Something smells nice in here" she says

"I am making supper" I say

"Can I please have a plate" she asks

"sure, why not" I answer

"where is Mandy" she asks

"she went to see her boyfriend" I say and the shock on her face

"what Mandy has a boyfriend" she says Sounding mad even the expression on her face has changed

"Yeah she does" I say and I won't lie I have never seen Someone change that quickly, she sees that I noticed her reaction and she tries to hide it with a smile

"that is shocking hey, she never wanted a relationship So Sorry for my reaction" she says and fakes a

laugh

"it's cool" I say

"So, who is this guy" she asks coming near the kitchen counter"

"I don't think it's my place to tell you such information, she will tell you when she is ready" I say

" Did she tell you to keep this from me?" she asks

"of course, not Dineo but I just can't put Amanda business out there" I say

"Oh, I see, and forget about that plate I lost my appetite" she says and walks to her room

"okay I will just dish it and put it in the fridge" I say

"whatever Afrika" she says and I am left confused.

CHAPTER 13

•AMANDA

My man and I managed to take Afrika to res and got her everything she needed, the house is already So quiet without her bubbly self, I am already So bored out of my mind, Lethabo had to take his mother Somewhere and I don't have a problem with that at all. I am lying in bed and I don't know what to do with myself, the plugin my bedroom is not working So I charge either in the lounge or the kitchen, I get up to get my phone So I can browse through Social media, when I open my door I find Dineo holding my phone and browsing through it, she has her back to me So she can't see me

"Dineo what are doing," I ask and she jumps

"Oh, Mandy uhm I" she mumbles

"What are you doing with my phone," I ask again and take it from her and she had already closed whatever she was looking at

"Someone sends me airtime so I was just using your phone to jot down the numbers," she says

"You didn't ask for my permission," I say

"I am sorry I didn't think you know would mind really," she says

"Well I do" I reply and she sighs

"Mandy, I hate how things are between us, we used to be so close like sisters," she says

"And who ruined everything," I ask

"I know I messed up Amanda and I will always be sorry for what I did, I thought I was trying to protect you," she tells

"By causing a rift between my sister and me" I ask

"I am sorry Mandy please I miss my friend; can we just try going back to where we used to be please" She pleads with me

"I don't think I can trust you again Dineo," I say and she starts crying

"I love you Amanda and I don't want to lose you, give me a chance to make things right please" she continues and I just shake my head and go back to my bedroom.

•AFRIKA

Lucky for me Lethabo put Some good movies and series on my laptop and I am glad he did because I would have been out of my mind, they dropped me off and Ama helped me set up everything from hanging my clothes to making my bed, and they got me takeaway and groceries they also got me a bar fridge and I am grateful, I even have a bank account now and my sister said she will be sending a little. Something every now and then. Someone unlocks the door from the outside and it can only be my roommate finally I get to meet her, I am So excited, she walks in and my face falls

"Oh, my God no ways," Larona says and I wish the ground could open up and swallow me

"What are you doing here," I ask

"This is the room I got tsala I guess we are roomies," she says and I swear this is the worst news ever

"Oh, I see," I say

"You don't Sound excited tsala remember how much we wanted to share; this is a dream come true," she says

"Not after what you did to me, this is a nightmare," I say

"Afrika what did I do to you because you even blocked me," she asks

"Babe come help me," Bafana says walking in

"Just a minute babe I am having a word with Afrika," she says to her boyfriend

"Oh, hey, nice to see you again," he says and I don't greet back

"What do you think I did Afrika" she continues

"Senzo came clean about everything," I say and she blinks a couple of times

"Afrika he is lying" she defends

"Yeah I am sure he is," I say and go back to watching my series

"Can we talk please" she begs

"I told you to leave me alone and I will do the same," I say and she sighs and goes out with Bafana to go get her stuff, I need to go see if I can't change rooms, I won't be able to live with this snake

•MPILO

I think I am going out of my mind, I honestly can't shake off that girl, the more I try the more I want to find her, I have search Facebook and Instagram but nothing, I used hashtag melanin hashtag afro hoping she once used them, I have never spend So much time online and here I am trying to locate this woman, I even went back to the mall earlier on hoping to bump into her again but nothing and it's frustrating me, I am used to getting what I want. A video call from Mariana comes through and I accept it and this time I am in my bedroom

"Hey sexy," she says

"Hey," I say coolly

"Did I disturb you maybe?" she asks

"No not at all, everything okay," I say

"Yeah everything is cool I just wanted to run Something passed you," she says

"Sure, go on" I reply

"Nah it can wait; you seem preoccupied maybe next time," she says

"No stress then"

"Are you okay, you are not your usual self?" she asks and I sigh

"Yeah I am cool nothing too hectic," I say

"I know Something that always cheers you up," she says in a low sexy voice

"And what is that," I ask just to humor her

"Sex, we never got the chance to finish our phone session that day," she says and I laugh

"Yeah my mother walked in," I say

"So, let's continue," she says and I sigh

"Nah I will pass," I say and she narrows her eyes

"That's a first Life" she says sounding surprised

"I am shocked myself" I confess

"You are killing my mojo let me leave you be," she says

"Call me tomorrow about what you wanted to discuss okay," I say

"Sure, I hope your mood would have improved," I say

"Hopefully," I say and she rolls her eyes before hanging up. I get out of my room and go get Some milk and I find Sbahle shouting at the helper

"And then what's going on in here" I ask

"Can you believe that she poured sugar in my tea?" she says and I roll my eyes

"It was an honest mistake. You don't have to be a bitch about it" I say and realize after

"What did you say to me Mpilo," she says

"Princess I am sorry," I say and she storms out

"Sorry for her behavior," I say to the helper

"Thank you Mr. Mpilo," she says and walks away. Fuck I need to find this girl before I cause more damage.

•MR MDLALOSE

I went to meet with Mike So he can tell me what he found; I was tired of staying in that house. Trying to please Nomalanga who is obviously not going to give me the light of day So it's time I accepted that she will never go back to being my sweet submissive wife. I got to

the bar and he was already having a drink flirting with the waitress, soon as he sees me, he dismissed the poor girl

"What do you have for me," I say

"You are in a mood," he says

"Mike I am not in the mood," I say

"Obviously," he says

"You tend to forget that I am your boss, not your friend," I say

"I am sorry grootman" he says

"So, what did you find on my wife," I ask again

"Well Ndlovukazi is not having an affair," he says and I take a deep breath

"Are you sure?" I ask

"Her routine is always the same" he assures "She has never met with a man a younger one in particular?" I ask

"Not at all sir I swear she isn't cheating, I even looked at her phone records there is nothing suspicious," he says

"Okay then, but keep watching her," I say

"Sure boss," he says and I get up and leave

•EMILY

I came to see my mom and I am glad that my father went to the station today I was not ready to meet him because he would expect a report and at the moment, I have nothing.

"What time is he coming back," I ask

"Emily mei Kind, why are you doing this," she asks

"For my brother, your son ma," I say

"I know Peters death affected you both but he wouldn't want you two to do this," she says

"My father in law is a monster ma, he used my brother then killed him". I say

"I know that but my Son was. An addict even before he wet them, Emily, he decided to be their drug mule" she says

"I know that mama but he didn't ask them to kill him, they killed him because they feared he would rat them out to the cops," I say

"You are married to his Son and you even have children Emily think about it, all this plotting conniving won't bring my Son back," she says

"I will protect my husband from this and pa assured me," I say

"All this is going to backfire Emily," she says and I sigh

CHAPTER 14

•EMILY

I didn't go to work today because I had to take the dog to the vet, she hasn't been feeling well lately and when I went to check up on her this morning she was weaker, my girls even went to school with a heavy heart, she got Some shots and the vet said she will be as good as new by tomorrow. I took this time to actually clear out my closet, I have So many clothes I don't wear anymore, I will give them to my house helper lucky for her she is my size. Speak of the devil she walks in

"Sorry to disturb Mrs. Mdlalose but Mr. Mdlalose is asking to see you," she says

"Just tell my husband to come in here and why is he home So early," I say

"No ma'am it's Mr. Mdlalose senior," she says leaving me shocked

"My father in law Oh, that is shocking," I say and follow her out, I find him standing in the lounge starring at the huge picture of myself Mzwa and the girls
"Hello," I say and he looks back at me
"Emily, how are you?" He asks
"I am very well thanks, yourself?" I ask
"I am well thanks; this is a beautiful picture," he says and I just smile
"Can I get you anything to drink?" I ask
"No thank you," he says and buries his hands deep in his pockets
"I actually went to see you at work and they told me you didn't come in" he continues
"Oh, yes, I had to take Coco to the doctor," I say
"Coco?" He asks confused
"Oh, sorry she is our dog," I say and he chuckles
"Oh, right, not to waste any more of your time Emily I just came here to apologize for how I treated you in the past, my Son and I are in a better place and I see that you make him happy and that you don't mean any harm, I am done telling Mzwa how to live his life, he is his own man and I respect that," he says and to say I am shocked would be an understatement
"Uhm wow sir I don't know what to say really," I say
"I understand I just hope we will have a better relationship going forward," he says
"We can work on that I guess" I manage to say
"I appreciate that and from today it's Baba no more sir," he says and I fake a laugh
"Yebo baba," I say in a suffocating Zulu accent
"I have a meeting So I should get going," he says opening. His arms and I go in for a hug we break it and he bid me goodbye before walking out.

•AFRIKA

My classes are a stretch, Yoh, my last class is at 4-5 pm after a 2-hour break, I came back to my room to have Some lunch before heading out, I am sitting on my bed having a sandwich with Oros and the door opens, I take a deep breath and continue eating. She gets in and closes the door
"I had a day from hell God," she says and I ignore her
"Afrika," she says feeling defeated
"What do you want Larona what," I say Sounding annoyed
"I am sorry okay," she says
"For what exactly," I ask
" What happened that night okay, I thought I was doing you a favor, I thought that you needed a boyfriend but clearly not," she says and I laugh
"That is not the story you Sold Senzo, I almost got raped because of the nonsense you fed him" I scream and she looks down
"I am really sorry babe," she says and I pop the last of my bread in my mouth and gulp down my juice. I place the glass and plate in my cupboard and lock it as well as my fridge, she is looking at me the entire time. I take my bag and walk out and head straight to res office, Luckily the queue is not long, I wait and I still have 40 minutes before my class. It's finally my turn and I walk in and find Some guy who is still young
"Hello how can I help you," he asks
"Hello, I would like to change rooms," I say and he narrows his eyes
"What is the problem with your current room," he asks
"Me and my friend, actually ex-friend don't get along," I say and he smiles
"Has it become physical or life-threatening?" He asks and I shake my head
"No, it hasn't," I say and he sighs

"In that case sisi we can't help you, you will just have to find a way to co-exist in peace if things get out of hand you can come back and find me," he says and I sigh
"Thank you," I say and walk out disappointed, I make my way to campus and get in the auditorium and the lecture is already inside with a couple of students, he looks really young God, I expected a maths lecturer to be an old white man with a beard

•MPILO

My day was just the same I was back on Instagram and Facebook playing detective, trying to find this perfect stranger, and just like the past few days of trying I couldn't find her not even a cold trail, and to tell you the truth it's frustrating me. I am sitting outside and I see Sbahle's car driving in. I get up quickly and rush to the house and get the flowers and the Luis Vuitton bag got her, peace offering for what I did on Saturday, I didn't see her yesterday and I know she is mad at me, she walks in and tries to walk past me
"Princess," I say and she continues to walk
"I was an asshole I admit," I say and she turns to look at me with what is supposed to be an intimidating look, I suppress my laugh
"I got you this to show you how Sorry I am," I say and hand them to her
"What was your problem Mpilo," she asks smelling the flowers
"It was just one of those days" I lie because I am not about to tell her what was going on because she would tell this whole house
"Oh, you were on your period," she says
"I know I am apologizing but don't push it," I say and makes a face
"Thanks, I love the bag, where are those maid's my flowers need water," she says
"In all honesty, though you need to stop acting like a brat to those ladies Sbahle, show them Some respect please," I say
"It's their job," she says
"I think you can manage to get your flowers in water," I say and she rolls her eyes
"So, much for an apology," she says walking towards the kitchen.

•MZWAKHE

Back to class back to business, I am hoping that these new students will have a genius amongst them So that our business can start operating again and Mpilo can have Something to do because he is going crazy being at home. I check my watch and it's 4 pm on the dot, the is chatter in the lecture hall, I walk to the podium and switch on the mic
"Okay everyone, settle down please" they stop talking and give me their attention
"Thank you, My name is Mr. Mdlalose and I will be teaching you mathematics for this year and we will meet again when you are doing your 3rd year of BSc Actuarial Science, this is not an easy course and you will have to work hard to be able to pass, So remember why you came here and don't let the parties and lifestyle confuse you. So I prepared a little test to see if you are ready to be here, it is out of 30 and it will be for 45 minutes" I say and hear Some students complain, I start handing out answer sheets with question papers inside, this is my way to point out the most intelligent in class then I will monitor them for a few weeks and I will decide who is good for the job.
"Okay we have 5 minutes before you start, this is the textbook we are going to use this whole year but there will be an additional one for the second semester. Okay then you can go through the question paper I will tell you when to start. GOOD LUCK" I say and start walking around, it's not a huge class since this is not an easy course many drop out even before first semester ends

•AMANDA

I won't lie I have a feeling that Dineo was looking for Lethabo's number on my phone, I don't know how she could have founders out about him because I haven't said a word to her and nor has she seen us together So now I am scared that she might have taken his number So she can tell him all about me. I have been having sleepless nights wondering if I should tell him or not. I am in his room and he just got back from work

"Did you stay well?" he asks

"Yes love, I did, how was your day" I respond

"Hectic, the principal wants us to grade 12 teachers to start with extra classes," he says

"He means business huh," I say and he laughs

"I guess so love," he says

"Did you receive any weird texts or call today" I try and fish

"Nah just irritating salespeople," he says and I exhale in relief

"Why love what's up," he asks

"Just received crazy texts but I deleted them" I lie but a part of me convinces me to tell him the truth, he loves me and he will understand why I did it

"Babe come sit here," I say

"Want me next to your curve," he says and I fake a laugh with my heart beating like crazy

"I want you to know that I love you Lethabo and I did it before I could get with you, I did it for Afrika, I had to for her babe and with no grade 12, I couldn't get anything better to survive. I don't want to keep secrets so I need to let you know and I hope you find it in your heart to forgive me" I say and his mother's voice disturbs me

"Papa I am sorry to disturb but can you quickly come to help me with something in the house," she says

"Okay I am coming, Babe askies I will be right back" he kisses my forehead and walks out. I put a hand over my chest and feel my heart it is beating So fast I swear it would beat out of my chest, I let out a tear and realize how scared I was, I thought I could tell him but I honestly can't, I just have to find a way to keep this secret and get everyone who knows about it to take it to the grave, I am not ready to lose him or have him look at me differently. I am sorry but I just can't. He walks back in and comes to sit next to me

"Sorry babe, where were we," he asks and I can't continue

"Please make love to me," I say, it might be a way to destruct him but I have wanted this to happen for a while now

"Are you sure, I don't mind waiting a little longer Ama?" he says

"I am sure babe, make love to me" I repeat and he brings his face to me and our lips touch and I know I want to give myself to this man fully and wholeheartedly.

CHAPTER 15

•AFRIKA

Settling well into being a university student, It didn't take me long to get used to the pressure and I am glad that I have already come up with a study time table for when I am at home, one of my lectures mentioned that here at University you shouldn't study but smart and that is my motto going forward, it's a Wednesday and I had back to back classes but luckily by 2 pm I am out. On my way to res I bump into someone who has been a stranger, he is leaning on his car arms folded, Soon as I laid eyes on him, he made his way to me

"Are my eyes deceiving me or something?" I say and he laughs

"Not at all it's me in the flash," I say

"Where have you been," I ask

"Been away because of work, everything just happened so fast I am sorry I didn't tell you?"
he says

"It's no biggy I was just wondering if we fought or something," I say and he laughs

"No just work, congratulations by the way on passing and making it here," he says and I smile

"Thank you Senzo but how did you know where to find me," I say

"You posted on Facebook and I decided to come to surprise you," he says

"Oh, okay, maybe I should slow down with the posting," I say

"You are just excited Afrika it will blow over Soon anyway I came bearing gifts," he says walking back to his car and comes back with a gift bag and food paper bag he hands me the gift and I peep through and see a box containing a watch, a perfume, and a gift card

"Thanks, but you didn't have to," I say

"Of course, I did, where can we eat, I am starving," he says and I laugh

"Come let's go to my room," I say we get in and she-devil is not the luckily

"Your room is So nice suits your minimalist self" he compliments

"Thanks, and guess who is my roommate," I say

"Barack Obama," he says and I burst out laughing and his sense of humor

"I wish but no it's Larona who insists that you are lying against her, she is trying to downplay this whole thing," I say.

"I am not surprised hey but please be careful of her"

"I am being more than careful hey," I say and the door opens and she walks in and laughs when she sees Senzo and claps

"Bathong tsala you are busy giving me a tough time kante you know you are dating him; you are supposed to be thanking me for bouncing a man your way," Larona says and I sigh

"Something is not right with you wena, you lied to me about what Afrika wanted for that night and the worst almost happened because of it and you had the nerve to say I lied to her, what is your problem?" Senzo says

"You don't have time for Bafana anymore telling him you are busy but you have time for my friend here" she tries to change the subject

"Mxm Afrika let's go eat in my car just bring cups, he says and we walkout

•MZWAKHE

I finished marking the papers and they all performed well but there are 3 students, in particular, they managed to answer the trick question I set to see how they think and I am shocked, the two went about answering it the high school way but there is this one who did it the way I would have answered it and it left me wondering if this is a fresh student from high school because no even my 3rd-year student still find it hard to Solve this, I look at the name AFRIKA MBATHA and wonder if it's a girl or boy. I have to start looking at all three closely and make a wise decision, the study door opens and Mpilo walks in

"Just tell me you've found our brain," he says

"We've only been open for three days Life" I respond

"I know that but you can tell Someone is genius from a mere conversation man Mzwa, I need to work I am losing my mind and that girls picture in my head is not helping either So you need to get make a choice," he says Sounding frustrated

"I have pinpointed 3 students I just need to do a background check on them and then we take the weakest link one we will be able to control easily," I say

"That Sounds like a month or so," he says

"If we are to make this work, we must not rush it bro or it will come back to bite us," I say convincing him

"Fuck this," he says

"We need a chemistry Tutor at work," I say and he laughs

"I would fuck all those horny university girls Mzwa" he says

"Yeah that's true, listen bro use this time to regain your strength you worked 2 full years in Colombia without a holiday just relax and I promise in no time you will be working again," I say

"Yeah I guess So," he says

"You really need to get laid you are becoming aggressive for my liking," I say and he shows me a middle finger before leaving

•EMILY

I am not sure yet if my father in law was sincere or not when I told Mzwa what happened he was So excited but why the sudden change I mean that man hated my guts and to suddenly want to have a relationship with me is alarming, call me paranoid but I can't let my gut down even for one minute, I drove straight to the police station to see my father, he will tell me what to do, I walk straight to his office and he is looking at a docket.

"Pa," I say

Emily what are you doing here" he says

"It's an Emergency Pa," I say and he gives me attention

"I am listening," he says and I tell him what happened

"So, I don't know what to do," I say and he smiles

"This is exactly what we needed, your stupid husband was going to take time flipping on his family now you will go back to spying, be there good little daughter in law and gain his complete trust them to start fishing and hunting for information, documents, emails, names everything that will help us to destroy Khaya Mdlalose" he says

"I hope my husband will still be protected from all of this," I say and he rolls his eyes

"Even though him going to jail would mean you finding a good Afrikaner boy to marry I will keep to my word and keep that boy out of this"

"Thanks, Pa, I appreciate this"

"Use this opportunity to our advantage mei kind" he pleads

"I will make you proud, we will get our revenge for Peter," I say.

"Now that's my girlie," he says

"Let me get going I am sure the girls are giving Mzwa a headache," I say

"Okay kiss them for me and tell them oupa loves them," he says and I nod walking out.

•NOMALANGA

Mdlalose has been keeping his distance these days and it can only mean that he has found Someone who takes care of his sexual needs, but what confuses me is the when because this man is always in the house and the PI I got to tail him hasn't reported anything from when he is not home, I am hoping to catch him red-handed this time So I can take him for every legal business he owns then I know I will have him by the balls then, and I will control all that happens from what he eats and wears to who he is not supposed to look at. I am going around my house trying to check if the helpers did all I asked from them when I get to the corridor that leads to the gym and Mpilo and Mzwakhe's rooms the new maid Buli appears fixing her uniform, she almost faints when she sees me

"Mrs. Mdlalose were you looking for me," she asks in a panicking voice

"No, I was just looking if you and the others did what I asked from you," I say

"Oh, yes ma'am we finished everything," she says failing to look at me in the eye

"Buli are you okay sisi," I ask

"Yes, ma'am I am fine, can I get you anything," she says

"No thanks I am fine," I say and she walks away and Mpilo appears putting on his t-shirt

"Ndlovukazi," he says leaning in to kiss my forehead, and I hit his arm

"Yaz Mpilo you are nasty mntanam," I say

"What have I done manje ma?" he asks

"You are now sleeping with the help in my house, Mpilo what if you impregnate her," I ask

"What maid ma, why am I always the horny one in this house," he asks

"The new girl appears from the direction of your bedroom fixing her skirt and you appear a minute later putting on your shirt," I ask

"Really ma, I know you've caught me a couple of time getting up to no good but geez will that follow me all my life," he asks

"I know you, Fano, you find it hard keeping it in your pants," I say and he groans in total frustration

"Bye Ndlovukazi," he says as a way of telling me the conversation is over

"Just use a condom because I know you won't stop," I say and he starts making meaningless noise I laugh, Mpilo will be the death of me, I just wonder how he hasn't fathered the whole world.

•DINEO

Mandy gives everyone else a chance except me a chance, we used to be So close but ever since her sister moved in with us she changed, now she left prostitution and she didn't even bother to tell me this, after all, I got into this because of her, even though she doesn't know, I left my well-paying job and my family So I can be with her but she doesn't see that the same way she sacrificed for Afrika I did the same for her, I love her as powerfully as she loves Afrika, and she decides to have a boyfriend, when will she see me, when will she love me. I gave her time to see me but she never did So this time I will make her see me. 5 years and still nothing. I am standing outside my parents' house afraid to walk in because they might want to send me back to that place but this time, I know how to be normal without the Dr or the pills. I press the doorbell and my mom opens

"Oh, my God," she says tears already formed

"Hi mom," I say and she attacks me with a hug

"Oh, Dinny baby where have you been," she asks

"I went to get help mom and I am better now," I say

"Oh, ngwanaka, five years Dineo why didn't you reach out to us, we thought you died baby," she says

"I wanted to be better ma; I was tired of being the odd one out," I say

"I am just happy you are home babe thank God," she says

"I have missed you," I say and she smiles

"Come in baby, your father will be So happy to see you," she says and takes my bag inside

CHAPTER 16

•MZWAKHE

I got to class late and my students were already waiting for me, I am handing them their scripts today and then I will get to put a face to the three names I pointed out, I take out my teaching resources and turn on the mic at the podium and they have their eyes on me

"Good afternoon everyone, sorry I am late I had a meeting with the department HOD, and these things tend to stretch longer than scheduled, none the less I am here now and I have your scripts with me, I must say the marks are not so bad but some of you really need to put effort but I will just assume that you were scared and not prepared, but I am going to tell you when it comes to me and my module always be prepared for anything guys, I have three students who passed really well, 2 got 84% and 88% and then I have a 100% which is

shocking but impressive at the same time," I say and start handing out their scripts and keep the three scripts of those who did well

"Okay, can the 3 who didn't get their scripts see me after class," I say and start with the lesson of the day, we go on and when my hour passes I let them go and I am left with 2 boys and a girl, she is a pretty young thing I must admit but I wouldn't go for my students plus I love my wife.

"You 3 performed really well, congratulations and I hope to get my distinctions from you, keep up with the good work, and don't get lost along the way" I hand them the scripts and I learn that Afrika is the girl. I give them more words of encouragement and they thank me and turn to leave

"Afrika can I have a word please," I say and she comes back fixing her glasses

"Yes Mr. Mdlalose," she says

"I am really impressed at how you answered the questions you didn't use the normal and simple way, you chose the more complex methods, that's unusual for a student who comes straight from high school," I say

"I love math and I used to practice every day and when high school math no longer interested me, I went on and did complex maths from the internet," she says and I am shocked

"That's good, so how did you do in matric," I ask

"I got 7 distinctions sir" I nod

"Just humor me, take this and when you are free to try solve this and derive an equation from those one's," I say and hand her a paper from my file, this is complex mathematics and if she can Solve it, I will give it to her

"I am free now; I can do it now," she says and I smile

"Okay take a sit and start then," I say and she takes a seat and takes out her book, calculator and pen and starts working, I am looking at her the entire time and saying I am shocked would be an understatement this girl is a genius, I have never seen anything like her, I couldn't derive that formula until I was doing my masters, she struggles here and there but she finds her way at the end

"All done," she says handing me the paper and I look at it and go compare to the one I had already Solved and she only got one thing wrong, I am shocked out of my mind

"I am impressed I won't lie, which bursary are you using," I ask

"The bursaries I applied for haven't gotten back to me, I am using NSFAS at the moment," she says and I nod

"I have a bursary for you, let me just make a few calls and I will get back to you," I say and the smile on her face

"Oh, my God thank you Mr. Mdlalose" she says unable to contain her excitement

"You may be excused," I say and she leaves a happy person. I am done looking around she is perfect for the job. I take out my phone and make a call to Some PI I know, he answers after the first ring

"Hey listen I need you to find everything you can on Afrika Mbatha, hack the university database and find a little information on her, she is studying actuarial science," I say and he says okay and I hang up

•EMILY

I went to Some online auction and bought my father in law a 50 years bottle of whiskey, he is a collector So I know he is going to appreciate this, in order to gain full access to him I will need to be the perfect little girl and get him too put his walls down and when he does I will be waiting by to get every piece of evidence to put him behind bars for a very long time and I hope he takes Mpilo with him. The bottle got delivered and I decided to take it to him, Mzwa did mention that he has been working from home So I am headed there, when I get

there I find my mother in law in the kitchen with her suit on and I know she is coming from Court.

"Hey ma," I say and she turns and looks at me closing the fridge

"Oh, hey Em what a lovely surprise baby," she says and I go hug her

"How was work," I ask

"Busy as always baby you know there is no rest for a prosecutor," she says

"Maybe it's time you retired," I say and she laughs

"Trust me I am thinking about it," she says

"Is baba in ma" she narrows her eyes and nods

"Yes, he is in his study, everything okay?" she asks and I smile

"Everything is perfect, I just came to give him the gift I got him, 50 years whiskey," I say

"He is going to love that," she says and the confused look on her face is not lost in sight, clearly her husband didn't mention us letting bygones be bygones. I make my way to the study and knock, he shouts come in from the inside, I open I walk in

"Baba," I say

"Makoti, how are you?" He says with a smile

"I am well thanks how are you," I say

"Ngiyaphila, this is a nice surprise," he says

"I am actually not here to stay I came to drop off this," I say handing him the gift bag and he takes it and opens it and a smile creeps on his face and I know I have him

"This is amazing one of the best, thank you makoti," he says eyes on the bottle

"No problem baba, I need to leave the girls will be home soon," I say

"Come by Soon for dinner, inform me So I can tell your mother to prepare in time," he says

"Or you guys can come to our place," I say

"Sounds good," he says and we hug and I leave

•AFRIKA

I couldn't contain my excitement really getting 100% on my first test in university is amazing and getting the lecturer to take it upon himself to get me a bursary really says a lot about the potential he sees in me since math was my last subject I decided to straight to res and pack a change of clothes and toiletries, I am going to share this great news with my sister and sleepover. My first class on Fridays is statistics and it starts at 11 am So I will make it on time, I finish packing and decide to change shoes that's when the door opens and Larona walks in, she notices the small overnight bag on my bed

"Going Somewhere?" She asks

"That is none of your concern," I say and she giggles

"Oh, you sleeping over at Senzo's place, finally giving it up," she says and I just decide to ignore her, I don't owe her an explanation after all" I tie my laces and take my bag after ensuring that my fridge and cupboard are locked, I take my phone and walk out. I request on my way to res gate and the Bolt is 1 minute by the time I get to the gate the car is already parked. I get to the flat in no time and get in. Ama is sitting on the couch watching TV

"Nana what are you doing here did Larona do something," she asks panicking I laugh

"I know how to handle that one sis don't worry, I am here to share the good news," I say and she exhales

"Out with it already," she says and I show her my script and tell her what Mr. Mdlalose said

"So, I might get a bursary Sooner than expected," I say

"Oh, thank God, continue performing like this baby, I am proud of you," she says

"I will Amanda, I will make you proud come hell or high water" she smiles and hugs me

"I will have a glass of wine to celebrate and juice for you," she says already on her feet

•DINEO

My parents were happy to see me and they just bought my story of being in Cuba undergoing a trial that is meant to help cure bipolar, I told them that I was the only one who survived out of 7 people who signed up willing, I told them that I am completely healed and I looking forward to getting my life in order and they were more than happy to help, my father is a wealthy pastor, and no he has businesses he doesn't scam poor people from the congregation, he runs his Church in the township, and he always gives back to his members, being a preachers kid has always been hard because of my condition. I didn't come home because I wanted to, I came here because they are a means to an end, an end that will ensure that Amanda finally sees me. My mom walks in with a glass of juice

"I brought you some juice baby," she says

"Thanks mom," I say taking the glass

"I was hoping to take you shopping for some clothes and other things you might need," she says

"I would appreciate that," I say, it has been a while since I went shopping and buying expensive brands

"You will tell me when you feel comfortable going okay," she says

"We can go tomorrow maybe, and I would also love to go to church on Sunday," I say and she smiles

"Your father will be So happy to hear that and the congregation will rejoice too, they have been praying for us to find you and for your safety baby," she says wiping her tear

"I am your only child and it must have been hell not knowing what happened to me, Sorry for being selfish I just wanted to be better mom" I say and she smiles shaking her head no

"It's okay baby, you are back home now". She says and we hug

•LETHABO

I was in the house waiting on my food when Ama is not around I eat and watch TV in the house and sometimes I sleep in my room in the main house. My phone rings and it's my girlfriend, I smile and pick up

"Hey babe," I say

"Hey love, how are you," she says

"I am good just missing you," I say

"I miss you too hun, but we counting down the hours," she says

"I know, I am picking you up Soon as I knock off," I say

"I will be waiting for daddy," she says and there is Something that turns me on in that statement

"I love you Ama," I say blushing

"I love you too boo," She says making me turn more red

"I am going to call you before I sleep okay?" I say

"Okay sharp," she says

"Okay. Later baby" I say and she hangs up leaving me smiling from ear to ear

"You really love her don't you," my mom says standing by the door with my plate of food in her hands

"I do mama, she makes me happy," I say

"Then I will accept that and try building a relationship with her," she says and the joy in my heart

"Seriously ma," I ask

"Seriously papa, we won't be the best of friends immediately but we will get there eventually," she says

"Thank you, ma, thank you so much mme waka" I say already hurrying to hug her

CHAPTER 17

•NOMALANGA

My marriage is going up in flames with each passing day and I am afraid there is nothing I can do to fix it, it seems like Khaya doesn't care to fix it either. Things between us have gone from bad to worse and what hurts is he seems to be comfortable with how everything is going and that's more reason for me to believe that he is having an affair, my gut feeling has never lied to me before, yes I have been acting tough these past few weeks but honestly, it is eating me up inside, so many years with this man and we share beautiful children, I just never thought one day we will reach this point, I just wish we could go back to how things were, before all this money and power. Someone walks in the lounge and I wipe my tears quickly

"Mama are you are you crying," Mpilo says taking a seat next to me

"No Fano I just have something in my eye," I say smiling and he sighs

"Ndlovukazi, I am not a child anymore," he says

"I know Mpilo," I say and exhale

"Then tell me what is going on?" He says

"This is between your father and me," I say

"Not when you are crying anywhere in this house, khuluma ma" he insists

"Everything is just falling apart in my marriage Fano that's all you need to know," I say

"Just don't let it take away your happiness ma," he says

"Easier said than done," I say and he takes my hand and kisses it

"Go tall Buli to make me a snack," I say and he stands up and leaves the room. It is time I mourn the end of my marriage fully and stop holding on to the good we once shared, I will live in this house to protect my interests and those of my children, let him live his life the way he sees fit but he better not cross me while doing it. I am letting go of all hopes of getting my Khaya back, from here onwards, we are just roommates, I will not even divorce him to save myself and my children from the humiliation I would bring, I will find a way to be happy in the same house as him just not with him.

•AMANDA

I am sitting in my boyfriend's room in a floaty comfortable dress watching a movie and waiting for him to come back from the mall around here, he went to get us something to eat and some alcoholic beverages, we normally indulge while watching movies late at night, I never thought that being in a relationship would be so fulfilling. There is a knock on the door and I wonder who it could be because his mom can see that he went out since the car is not here and Lethabo doesn't have friends who visit him much, I open and to my surprise, it's his mom, we share at each other for a while

"Uhm Lethabo went out," I say

"I actually wanted to talk to you," she says and I am shocked

"Oh, okay ma, come in" I move out of the way and she gets in and goes to sit on the couch and I join her

"Amanda, I don't know if my son told you that we had a talk about you and your relationship," she says and my heart is beating faster

"No, he didn't mention anything ma," I say and I wonder why Lethabo kept it from me

"I can see that my Son loves you and that you make him happy, and I want to support both of you and because I love my Son Amanda, I want to build a relationship with you, it would make Lethabo happy. I am sorry for how I treated you since we first met, I hope you will consider getting to know me too" she says and I couldn't hide my shock

"I really appreciate this ma, and I would love to get to know you," I say and she smiles
"Since tomorrow is Sunday when I get back from the church how about you help me prepare Sunday lunch, we will make his favorite and you will know how it's prepared," she says and I smile
"Okay I can't wait ma," I say and she nods and stands up the same time as the door opens and Lethabo walks
"Oh, did I disturb something," he asks
"No papa not at all, Ama and I are done talking. I will see you tomorrow after church" she says and walks out
"What was that all about," he asks and I smile
"Let's just say your mom and I are starting on a clean slate," I say and he smiles
"So, she did as she said she would," he says
"Why didn't you tell me though love," I ask
"I didn't want to get your hopes up and then she decided against it, I wanted it to happen this way," he says and I understand
"I appreciate you so much babe," I say
"Show Daddy how much you appreciate him," he says and I giggle, ever since we became intimate, he can't get enough of me and I love every moment of it too.

•AFRIKA

I am walking back to res from the campus library, it is So quiet you'd swear it's not chaotic during the week, there are a few students on sight and most came to the library like me. I stop by the cafeteria to get Something to eat since I am not in the mood for cooking, I get to my room and before walking in I hear banter and music from inside, it's not too loud though, I open and get in and Larona is with 3 girls I haven't seen around here, one is sitting on my bed they are drinking savanna smoking hubby. I get in and just stand and stare at the one on my bed
"Excuse me," I say and she gets off
"You are back early tsala, I was expecting you much later, do you want a drink," Larona says
"No thanks," I say without looking at her
"You mzala your roommate is cold shame," one girl says
"She is a stuck-up nerd," the other says and they all burst out laughing
"Could you please take your party somewhere, I am tired I want to rest?" I say opening the window to get rid of the smoke in here
"Hai mzala let's go to our room," one of the girls say, and they pack up their things and the girls exit leaving me with Larona
"Did you really have to be bitchy Afrika?" she asks
Next time when you have visitors please keep them to your side, let's respect each other's space" I say and she claps
"You think you are all that ne," she says
"Your friends are waiting for you" I say and start removing my shoes, she clicks her tongue and walks out. I go lock the door and switch on my laptop preparing to watch Some series called Orphan Black

•MPILO

I have tried finding this girl but nothing, I guess she was just a stranger I had to come in contact with and forget, to remind me that I am human and I am capable of feeling Something for Someone, I guess the universe was just trying to get me off my high horse. From now on I am going to put all my focus on work and making sure we run the biggest and most successful drug cartel in the world, I will work on ensuring that people tremble at the mention of the Mdlalose surname. I find my father in the garden smoking a Cuban

"Let's expand to North America," I say and he looks at me confused
"What are you talking about," he asks
"Let's move the drug business to Mexico," I say and he laughs
"Slow down tiger, that is not an easy country to infiltrate," he says
"I can go up there and do Some research," I say
"You just got back Mpilo, if you leave again my wife will blame me for it," he says
"I will leave for a short while pops," I say
"Why are you So keen on this," he asks
"I have nothing to keep me here pops," I say
"You have us your family son," he says and I sigh
"Pops just" he cuts me off
"Mpilo it's too soon no," he says and I sigh and walk back to the house

•MZWAKHE

The private investigator called and told me to meet up with, I couldn't leave my house because the girls would have insisted on going with me So I told him to come to my house and I was hoping for good news, I was standing outside waiting for his car to arrive, I packed up and down for Some time till I saw his car at the gate, I opened and he drove
"Hey man," he says and we shake hands
"Sure, you were fast this time around," I say
"The wasn't really much to find out," he says
"I am all ears," I say
"Mother is a drunkard who doesn't give a damn about her kids, she changes man more than she changes her bedsheets, father died when she was a baby, the isn't much information on him, Then she has a sister by the name Amanda, she is a prostitute, left home 5years ago, she is the one who takes care of the subject word is they would kill for each other that's how tight they are .they are just a messed up family, the only way to redeem herself is if she works hard in school," he says and this is music to my ears, I couldn't have chosen a better person
"Thanks man," I say and he hands me the file and I hand him the envelope with cash, we shake on it and he leaves.

•DINEO

I am bored out of my mind, I have always hated church, this is one place where you find all Sorts of hypocrites, my father just told the congregation about my return and they cheered and thanked God for it, I couldn't help but mentally roll my eyes the entire time, after church all those who think are important came and welcomed me back, finally the one I wanted came to my mom and me
"Ao mamoruti we thank God for her return," she says
"Indeed, and your prayers made it all possible, my daughter is home safe," my mom says and I smile
"Dineo welcome home baby," she says
"Thank you ma" I respond and she smiles
"Do you still remember Ms. Mafa she is the leader of the women's movement here at church?" my mom says and I nod
"Keep safe and stay in the Lord, I need to get going my Son's girlfriend is waiting for me at home we are making Sunday lunch together," she says and I feel like exploding
"Oh, how nice is that forming a bond with your future daughter in law, I am yet to wait for Dineo to introduce a Young responsible man to me and her father," my mom says and I fake a smile, it's a she, she's named Amanda, the same one your women's movement leader is talking about

"With time she will mamoruti, let get going bye," she says
"Okay bye see you next week," ma says and takes my hand we walk to the back of the church to find my father and head home

CHAPTER 18

•AMANDA

I honestly couldn't believe that my boyfriend's mother and I are on good terms, I helped her prepare Sunday lunch yesterday and we all sat at the dining room table after eating she started telling me about Lethabo when he was growing up, even got a chance to see his baby pictures, he has always been so cute, She even came clean about his father and apparently this was the first time my boyfriend heard his mom speak about his dad, it was emotional for a while but we went back to having a cheerful banter, she even said I could invite Afrika Sometimes, I don't know why she suddenly had a change of heart but thank God for it, the tension was wearing him down even though he didn't want to show it, I could see it. I finish taking my bath and gather my things then get out of the room and lock, I get inside the main house and find ma reading the Bible

"Mama," I say and she looks at me

"Ama," she says

"I am leaving now," I say

"I thought you will be waiting for Lethabo to take you home" she murmurs

"He will be back late ma; he has an afternoon class," I say

"Oh, yes he mentioned that," she says

"Goodbye ma," I say

"Bye baby, stay safe I will see you on Friday," she says

"Friday it is," I say and walk out to the stop sign for a taxi

•MZWAKHE

It is official Afrika is the brain that I have chosen to help us move information manually to avoid a paper trail and being hit. My father made Some funds available So we can be able to find her studies, we just need to ho inform NSFAS to stop paying for her, and once they do, we will pay her tuition and res in full for this academic year. I asked her to come to see me in my office, and she is due at any moment now. A knock comes through and I know it's her "Come in" I shout and she walks in

"Afternoon sir," she says

"Afrika hello, I hope I am not keeping you out of class," I say

"I have statistics now but the lecturer isn't around today," she says and I nod

"Okay that's better, I wouldn't want to keep you out of class, So I have your bursary contract here, my father's company Mdlalose holdings will be funding everything, your stationery allowance will click Soon as you give me your banking details and your monthly allowance is R5000 and you will receive it on the 25th of each month, then tuition and res will go straight to the university," I say and she has a smile on her face

"Thank you Mr. Mdlalose" she says

"You can Write me your account number and sign these two contracts and keep a copy," I say and she signs

"You won't be needing my documents," she asks and I shake my head

"No that's okay," I say

"I truly appreciate what you have for me," she says
"I just wanted to give you a chance to study without having the stress for money and food, maybe your sister will stop being a prostitute to make ends meet," I say and the smile on her face disappears
"What did you say, Amanda a prostitute," she asks
"You didn't know, God Afrika I am sorry, forget I said anything," I say and she packs the contract and stands with tears in her eyes
"Thank you sir," she says
"Afrika wait," I say but she doesn't look back at me rather she walks out.

•AFRIKA

I felt like my chest was closing down on me, I couldn't breathe, I ran out of his office and went straight to the toilets and lock myself in the cubicle and just cry. People back in our neighborhood used to say that my sister is a prostitute but I didn't want to believe any of it but now that my lecturer said it took away the doubt. Why would she get into prostitution when she has a job at the salon, why would she even get into a relationship, now I understand what Dineo meant that day, I stop crying and request a Bolt, I quickly go to the gate and it takes me to the flat, when I get there I find her dancing to Some Song in the lounge looking So happy, Soon as she sees me she pauses
"Afrika, you are supposed to be at school, what are you doing here," she says, looking at her I can't see how it's possible for her to be selling her body
"Why Amanda, why did you do it," I say and she narrows her eyes
"What are you talking about," she asks
"Why prostitution," I say and her eyes pop out, the shock on her face
"I am lost Nana," she says with a shaking voice
"Don't lie Amanda, why did you do it?" I say
"Who told you?" She says
"Someone who has no reason to lie, why Amanda" I shout
"Because I was tired of watching you go to school with torn school shoes and uniform 3 sizes smaller than you, I was tired of wiping tears on your face each day after school because the other kids were making fun of you, I Sold my body because I was tired of your innocent face looking at me and asking for food knowing that we don't even have salt, I was tired of how Sibon didn't care, I had to fucken let go of my dreams and step up to be a parent to you, you think I wanted to do this Afrika, I wanted to be Something but I had to give it all up So you can have a better life, and you know what I would do it all over again, for you Afrika I would take it all," she says with tears streaming on her face, her Sobs were heart breaking, I couldn't believe she did this for me, she collapsed to the ground crying her pain out, her hand was on her chest as if it's hurting her, I have never seen her break down like this. I get down and hug her while crying with
"I am so sorry Amanda, I am sorry you had to give up everything for me, I am Sorry I was a burden to you," I say
"You were never a burden to me Nana if you were I wouldn't have sacrificed myself for you, you are my baby and I did what any parent who loves their children would do," she says between Sobs and breaking my heart, I don't think I will experience a love So pure again in my life
"I am sorry sis; I appreciate you so much Amanda," I say
"I am sorry Afrika, please don't hate me" she begs and I tightened my hands around her
"I could never hate you, in fact, my respect for you has multiplied, I love you So much Mandy," I say and she squeezed me while letting it all out. God give me the strength to make it through school and give my sister the life she deserves

•MPILO

I am blowing some steam in the gym, I woke up feeling so horny, a cold shower couldn't even help So I decided to try the gym and I think it's working a bit but I really need to get Some action or I am going to be grumpy, the door opens and Mzwa walks in

"Did you get more tattoos?" he asks

"I got one yesterday, was too bored," I say

"It's dope man," he says

"Thanks bro," I say

"Let me cheer you up a bit, our brain is ready. You can go on with production and take orders, then give the list to me with drop off places and dates and I will get it in the number sequence form then I will get her to memorize it So long" he says

"Fuck yes now you are talking, but will she be able to memorize all the sequences," I ask

"That girl is special Life she will trust me," he says

"So, our clients know how to interpret numbers to words," I ask

"Dad said they know," he says and I nod.

"Damn I am finally going back to work," I say with So much excitement.

"Maybe you will stop being a grumpy bitch," he says and I laugh

"Fuck you wena," I say

CHAPTER 19

•AMANDA

I won't lie I was shocked when Afrika confronted me and as much as I wanted to keep this away from her a part of me is relieved that she knows, I can now share everything with her with no reservations, I just wonder how she found out, I was not myself yesterday that she decided to sleep over, we spoke all night and only slept at around 5 am, I woke up at 10 am and she was still out of it, she missed 3 classes already. I am making breakfast and she walks in rubbing her eyes

"Morning Nana," I say

"Good morning Mandy, I missed classes," she says

"I feel bad for that, I am sorry," I tell

"Don't worry I will catch up!" she says

"Thank you for not judging me," I say

"That would make me a hypocrite and I love you beyond everything," she says

"How do you want your eggs today madam," I say and she smiles

"Scrambled please," she says

"Okay then," I say

"Mandy, does he know, does Lethabo know," she asks and I sigh

"I tried telling him but I couldn't" I confess

"Secrets have a way of coming out, look at how I found out through my lecturer, and how he knew I am yet to find out. Amanda just be truthful, if he really loves you, he will understand why you did it" she says

"Afrika I really love him and I don't want to lose him," I say tears already threatening

"I understand sis but please come clean it would be better if it came from you than anyone else," she says

"I will think about it Nana," I say and her phone message tone beeps and she gasps for air

"What's wrong?" I ask

"Take a look at this" she hands me her phone and the shock on my face
"R25 000 book allowance," I say
"That is a lot for textbooks Mandy, I know my books are expensive but I just needed R9800," she says
"You can save the rest nana," I say and she nods
"I should eat and get going, I will practice back at res in my room," she says
"Okay," I say and continue

•MZWAKHE

Afrika didn't come to class and I got a little worried there, I decided to ask the girl he normally sits with in class where she stays and she told me, I just finished for the day and I decided to go check up on her at res and find out why she didn't come to class. I navigated the rooms till I found hers, I knock and a young girl her age opens, she looks a little forward though

"Can I help you?" She says with an attitude
"I don't know if I have the correct room, but I am looking for Afrika," I say
"Oh, yeah she is my friend and roommate," she says
"Oh, good thing I am not lost, is she in?" I ask
"She didn't come back last night, maybe she slept over at Senzo's place," she says
"Who is Senzo?" I ask
"Her boyfriend," she says and I don't remember the report the PI gave me talking about a boyfriend at all
"Oh, I see," I say faking
"So, she is two-timing you and Senzo, wow Afrika always pretending to be this innocent sweet girl" she says and I narrow my eyes, don't girls have a code or Something, what kind of friendship is this
"Fortunately, not, I don't date my students, can you please tell her Mr. Mdlalose was here to see. Please give her this card and ask her to call me" I say
"No problem, my name is Larona by the way"
"Make sure to give her the message," I say and walk away

•NOMALANGA

Khaya and I are sitting in our bedroom and the tension in here is So thick, I could actually cut it with a knife, he feels So cold, So distant. It's like we are complete strangers, not two people who were completely in love and got married all those years ago, even got blessed with 3 children.
"I don't want a divorce". I say and he turns and looks at me
"You want us to work on our marriage," he asks
"No Khaya we have tried working on our marriage for years now but we end up here all over again and I can't take it anymore," I say
"What do we tell the children," he asks
"Nothing we go on as usual in front of them but we will both know the truth," I say
"So, that means I can sleep with whoever I want now and you wouldn't care," he says I laugh and
feel hurt a little
"That's all you think about Khaya," I say
"Nomalanga you said our marriage was over So what do you want me to do beg you Some more," he asks
"Maybe I didn't expect your first question to be about sleeping with whoever you want," I say

"We'll get with the program and answer the question," he says and the annoyance in his voice feels like Someone stabbing me in the heart

"You can do everything you want Khaya just keep it discreet," I say

"Good then. By the way, you will start having your money from the Colombian lab this month, the operation here is running again" he says

"Thank you," I say

"I will see you later dear wife," he says walking out

•AFRIKA

Before heading to my room, I started at the bookstore and bought All the textbooks I am going to need for the entire year then I made my way to my room, I walk in and find Larona in their drinking Some wine and watching Something on her laptop

"Afrika the playgirl," she says

"You can't seem to leave me alone can you," I asked rolling my eyes

"I never thought you had it in you, two-timing Senzo with that yummy lecturer," she says and I sigh

"What are you talking about now," I ask

"So, me guy who claims to be your lecturer was here, he asked you to call him," she says handing me a card

"Mr. Mdlalose". I say

"You don't have to pretend in front of me you know," she says

"Mxm" that's all I managed to say

"I never took you for a bad bad," she says and laughs

•DINEO

I went to the women's movement weekly prayer meeting alone, I needed to find a way to get close with Lethabo's mother, I stay through the entire thing and like any other church thing I am bored out of my mind. When they are done, I help two ladies to serve them some juice and biscuits. I decide to go sit on my own by the window and Mme Mafa comes and joins me

"It was nice for you to join us ngwanaka," she says

"I am just trying to build a relationship with God ma, after what I've been through," I say and she smiles

"It's always a good thing when a young person seeks God's face," she says

"You should come with your son and his girlfriend too," I say and she smiles

"Lethabo would just give me an excuse but I will bring Amanda sometimes," she says and the mention of her name brings about peace to my soul

"You sound really close with her," I ask

"Not from the start, we recently only started to get to know each other, she makes my Son happy and I realized that it's the only important thing," she says and I take a smile

"That's nice ma," I say

"Let me go talk to the ladies say bye before you leave okay," she says.

"I will mama," I say and she walks away

•MPILO

It was the three of us in the study, and my father's mind seemed to be far from what we were discussing. I am just happy to be going back to work and my brother is happy that the initiation stage of his plan was going really well. I am proud of how he is dealing with this whole thing

"So, do you have those orders," he asks

"Yes, here you go," I say handing him the piece of paper

"I will work on turning these into number sequences tonight, how far is production?" he says

"We were boiling today; I think they will be mixing tonight, then by tomorrow evening they will be crystalizing it and cutting the other one" I inform him

"Okay I will get Afrika to memorize this list quick," he says

"When are we meeting our transporter," he asks

"In due time bro," he says and looks at our father

"Baba did you catch what we were saying," Mzwa says

"Oh, yes son, good job you two," he says and sips on his drink

"I should get going it's date night and if I am late Em will have my balls," he says and I laugh

"Kiss the girls for me," I say and he nods before heading out and I am left with baba who is clearly miles away and I know it has something to do with what Ndlovukazi said to me

CHAPTER 20

•AFRIKA

Mr. Mdlalose asked me to go and see him when my classes are over and I wonder what is it that he wants to talk me about, I decided to go see him before my last class, I have a free hour before it starts, I got to his office and it looks like he had just finished eating as he is wiping his hands with a napkin.

"Oh, Afrika thanks for coming through," he says and I nod

"No problem sir," I say

"You can take a seat," he says and I sit

"So, what can you help you with," I ask and he sighs

"How would you like to make R5000 a month," he says and I am left confused

"And what would I be doing for that 5000 Rand," I ask

"I can't really get into it but I am working with a couple of guys, we trying to create a Software So we need to keep it top secret, we can't communicate via technological means So we need Someone who can move our number sequences," he says

"You could just send them via post you know rather than waste R5000," I say and he chuckles

"We can't risk that Afrika if we crack this, I swear we are going to make millions, So R5000 is just an investment," he says

"So, how do I move these numbers," I ask

"All you have to do is memorize a maximum of 10 sequences a week and deliver them to 10 different people in that week, the first sequence will go to the first name on the list I will give you, then the 2nd sequence to the 2nd name on the list and So on, if you agree you will receive sequences every Friday after our class and a list of names that go with it and you will have to know it by head by Tuesday," he says

"This sounds like something done in the movies," I say and he laughs

"So, what do you say Afrika," he asks

"I don't know sir," I say

"R10000" then he says and my eyes pop, I could really do with the money since Amanda left prostitution she is going to need the money and a job is hard to find these, she sacrificed a lot for me So I can do this one thing for her, she takes this R10000 and I keep my R5000 allowance from my bursary.

"You could help your sister with the money, I would give this job to Someone who is experienced by I decided to give it to you to help your sister," he says and I know I am thinking the same thing

"Speaking of which sir how did you know," I ask

"The company had to run a background check on you before giving you the bursary, and I am sorry I told you I honestly thought you knew," he says

"It's okay I understand," I say

"So, what do you say," he asks again

"I will do it sir, you are right it will help my sister, she has done So much for me it's time I helped her out," I say and he smiles

"Thank you, here is there first 10 sequences and the list of people you will take the numbers to, it has their addresses they will be waiting for you," he says and hands me the paper

"Piece of cake," I say

"Listen Afrika you can't disclose these sequences to anyone else but the intended recipient," he says firmly

"I am going to have to tell my sister where I take R10000 from," he says

"Just explain to her that you are helping my father's company to create a Software, it's not far from the truth," he says

"Okay then," I say

•NOMALANGA

I am having tea in my beautiful garden thinking about all the good times I have had in this house with Khaya, I wasn't aware how hard all of this is going to hit me but it is and I am trying, by all means, to pretend to be okay, to give my children a happy mother, but deep down I am doing a slow painful death.

"Ma'am can I bring you anything else," Buli asks me

"No sisi I am okay," I say

"My mother asked me to greet you," she says, I met Buli and her mother at work, I was the. The prosecutor on her father's case, he was murdered in cold blood by their neighbor

"Oh, how is she doing," I ask

"She is taking it a day at a time ma'am," she says and I nod

"Take good care of her okay and remember if you need anything just let me know," I say

"I really appreciate everything you are doing for me and my mom," she says

"It's the least I can do sweetheart," I say smelling at her and Khaya appears

"Buli" he shouts

"Yes sir" she answers

"I need your service," he says

"Go, baby, we will talk later," I say and she nods like she is embarrassed about Something

"Okay ma, shout if you need anything," she says

"I am fine baby just make sure my husband is alright," I say and she nods and walks away, she is just a sweet girl, I should invest in taking her university she is way too young to be a maid

•EMILY

My father just called and told me he is almost at my house, and that was a surprise because pa never comes to my house, I quickly boil water for tea So I can serve him Soon as he walks in, he loves his tea that one, the buzzer at the gate goes off and I look at the video camera at the gate and it's him, I open up and he drives in, I make his cup quick, and I am done soon as he walks in through the front door

"Hi Pa," I say and hand him the cup and he grabs the hot beverage out of my hand

"I am not here for tea Emily; I am here for results," he says sounding angry

"It's still early, I haven't gotten him to trust me completely," I say
"That is not good enough, I need information and I need it Soon," he says
"With all due respect pa this is not as easy as taking candy from a baby, if it was you would have them behind bars already," I say and he clenches his jaws
"Watch your mouth young lady," he says
"You are putting me under pressure now," I say
"That's because I am under pressure myself, my supervisors want answers Emily" he roars
"I need a little more time pass," I say
"They gave me 6 months to lock them up with concrete evidence, you have 4 months to get me everything are we clear," he says and I nod
"Good, kiss my grandbabies for me," he says and leaves

•LETHABO

There is peace in the household now, my mom and girlfriend get on well now and I won't lie I was skeptical at first but she kept to her word and she is really trying to get to know Amanda and it's really going well. I just got home from work and it was a long day, these extra classes are going to kill us really. I went to take a shower in the house and when I was done, I found a plate of food and a glass of juice on the table I start eating
"Who said that's your food boy," she says and I laugh
"It's just us ma so it was obvious," I say
"I should really find myself a good man of God and bring him here," she says and I laugh
"That would be the day mom," I say
"Do you think Amanda would like to accompany me to maMofokeng's birthday braai on Saturday I don't want to go alone, those women bore me with gossip I want to sit far from them," she says and laughs
"I will ask her when I call then let you know," I say
"Okay boy I will wait to hear from you then," She says
"Thank you ma," I say
"For what now?" she says
"Giving Ama a chance, " I say and she smiles
"She makes you happy Lethabo," she says and leaves the lounge

•AMANDA

I went to the mall and I Mr. Price had a very generous sale I managed to buy Afrika Some dresses and shoes, she is in university now she needs clothes, I don't want her feeling pressure from other girls around campus and start doing silly things for money, I look at the time and it's after 5 pm, she must be in her room now, I request quickly and go see her, I get to res outside her door and knock, she opens after a minute.
"Mandy what a nice surprise," she says with a smile
"Hey baby," I say walking in and there are books all over her desk clearly, she is busy studying
"What are you doing here?" she asks
"I brought you these," I say handing her the plastic
"Oh, thank you so much, Mandy, I will fit them later," she says
"No stress Nana," I say
"Oh, by the way, I got a job," she says and I frown
"No Nana you need to focus on school," I say
"Calm down Mandy I will actually be doing math, Mr. Mdlalose's family's company the one funding me for my studies is creating a Software and they asked me to help," she says
"It's not going to affect your studies," I ask
"Not at all sis actually it's going to help train my brain and it's paying well," she says

"Immediately when you start getting anything less than 80% you are stopping, are we clear?" I say
"Crystal clear sis, I will be sending you the R10000 they are going to pay me okay," she says and I am shocked
"That much Afrika?" I say
"I was shocked too," she says

•MR MDLALOSE

I was kissing her neck but the way her body was stiff annoyed me, I tried touching her where I know her body responds to no matter what but she was just off.
"Buli what is your problem?" I say
"Mrs. Mdlalose's is right outside," she says
"She is always somewhere in the house each time we have sex," I say
"I know but," she says
"But what Buli man" I half shout
"She is a good woman Khaya and she has helped me and my mother, she even gave me this job," she says
"Is she the one paying for your mother's treatment?" I ask and he shakes her head
"No, you are," she says
"Exactly you should be worried about making me happy not my wife, our marriage is over," I say
"I just feel bad," she says
"Well doesn't she know I am getting sex somewhere?" I say and pull her to me again. I want to hurt Noma in the worst way possible, I want to show her than I can move on faster than she anticipated and with Someone she never expected.

CHAPTER 21
A FEW DAYS LATER

•AFRIKA

I memorized all the sequences but I am really panicking I just hope that I won't forget them when I get to the people, I am supposed to take them to. After my last class on Tuesday, I requested on Bolt and in no time, I was on my way to Sandton, the taxi drops me off at Some mansion, wow people are living out here. I go to the gate and a security guard with an AK 47 approached and I almost peed my pants
"Can I help you?" he says
"I, uh, I am" I mumble
"Ntombaza khuluma man (speak girl)," he says annoyed and I swallow
"My name is Afrika and I am here to see Mr. Abrahams," I say
"Oh, he is expecting you," he says and the gate opens and he leads the way inside, we walk in and the inside looks amazing, yoh! A colored lady walks in, she is it the flashiest outfit.
"And then who is this,?" she asks looking at me from head to toe
"Her name is Afrika Mrs. Abrahams she is here to see the boss" he says and a man appears wearing a suit
"Babe who is Afrika and why is she in my house?" the wife says
"Oh, she is here finally, she is sent by the Mdlalose's" the man I assume is Mr. Abrahams says
"Oh, finally they get their shit together," she says
"This way little girl," he says and I follow him, he opens the door and I get in and he follows and closes the door

"Let me grab a paper so you can give me the sequence," he says and I nod
"You can sit down," he says and I take a sit
"You can go on," he says and I start reciting his sequence until the last number and I stop
but he doesn't stop he continues writing and stops after a minute
"All translated, I never thought a transporter would come back to the game in this day and
age," he says
"Can I leave?" I ask
"Oh, yes you can, I will communicate with Mzwakhe," he says and I nod and walk out, I have
9 more sequences to deliver luckily, I told the driver to wait for me

•MZWWAKHE

I was with my father and Mpilo, we are patiently waiting for all the 10 clients to send the
SMS's to confirm that they got the sequence and managed to translate it. I just hope Afrika
didn't mess up the entire thing. My father is pacing up and down
"Are you sure that this girl will be able to do this Mzwakhe?" Mpilo asks
"Before she left, she recited all the sequences to me bro," I say
"Then where are the confirmation SMS's?" baba asks
"Just try and restart your damn phone Mzwa," my brother says and I do as he advises and I
guess the network was acting up because like floods the SMS's start coming in and they all
say one thing the number 87
"It's all systems go, she did it," I say and my dad starts punching the air in victory
"Fuck yes!" Mpilo says
"I am proud of you Mzwa you pulled it off," baba says shaking my hand
"Yeah bro, you came through for us" my brother adds
"Thank you gentlemen, and that is my cue, I have a wife and kids I need to get home to," I
say
"Drive safely and greet Em for me," baba says and I nod

A month later

•DINEO

I have managed to worm myself into Ms. Mafa's heart, I am this perfect little girl she has
started to like me, it's just a matter of time till I hammer the final nail and get my girl back.
It's a Tuesday and around 10 am and I decided to drive to the township to see her. I got
there and found her busy hanging the laundry
"Dumela ma," I say and she looks back at me
"Hao Dineo dumela, I didn't know you will be coming," she says
"I was just in the neighborhood ma and I couldn't leave without coming to see you," I say
and she smiles
"Oh, baby girl that is very sweet of you," she says
"I didn't know you would be busy, let me help you," I say
"You are my visitor Dinny," she says and I shake my head
"I would love to help ma don't worry," I say
"If you insist Nana," she says
"What should I do?" I ask
"Please get in Lethabo's room and bring me the laundry basket," she says and I go to the
room, it is becausey I must say, I notice. A photo collage on the wall and it's Mandy and
Lethabo, they are kissing, laughing, hugging, making funny faces, she is So beautiful God, I
quickly compose myself and take the basket and walkout
"I didn't mean to prey mama but is that Lethabo's girlfriend on the pictures," I ask
"Oh, yes that is Ama, she is beautiful isn't she," she says
"Indeed, she is ma," I say

"If you came yesterday you could have met her, she left late," she says and I fake a smile
"But I think I know her from somewhere," I say
"Hao where?" She asks
"I am not sure, but I will remember," I say
"Okay Dinny," she says
"Let me put these in the washing machine ma," I say walking in the main house

•NOMALANGA

I have accepted that Khaya will never be the man I married all those years ago, I have started pouring my energy into my work, and that has helped me a great deal because I can cope with what is happening in my marriage. I get home at around 6 pm and I go get Some water from the fridge, and there are two sticky notes on the fridge one from Sbahle who says she went out with Senzo and she will be back late and Mpilo said he is at the lab and won't be coming back home, this one works like there is no tomorrow. I go to the bedroom and change into my gym gear, I have started being a gym freak to reduce my stress levels, when I open the door to the gym, I was never ready for what I saw. I felt like my heart was about to jump out of my chest. Khaya was on top of Buli who is moaning to the pleasure my husband is giving her, tears streamed down my face, I couldn't find my voice I stood there for a minute watching this disgusting thing.

"Did you have to do this filth in my house Khaya?" I say and they both jump and Buli hides her naked body behind Mdlalose

"After everything I have done for you Buli, you thank me by sleeping with my husband," I say

"I am very sorry ma'am I didn't mean to betray you like this," she says

"Why are you apologizing Buli, Nomalanga and I are just in this marriage for the show," he says

"Khaya," I say shocked

"What Noma, you said you don't want to be in this marriage So what is all this drama about," he says with So much annoyance I am left feeling like Someone is throwing daggers at me

"Get out of my house Buli and never come back do you hear me" I shout like a madwoman and she takes her clothes and hurried out after I hit her with my small fists

"You ungrateful man-" I say and he stops me

"Hai Hai Noma Don't act crazy with me, ngizo'kshaya mina(I will beat you)" he says putting on his clothes and walks out, I sink to my knees and cry out the pain, yes we are done but how dare he gets into this filth in my house my children live here I live here, he humiliated me and now Buli thinks we are equals. I don't think I have ever been So hurt

•AMANDA

this flat really feels empty, and I get bored doing nothing, it's time I get my business off the ground. The only thing I look up to is Friday So I can go see my boyfriend, I was tempted to go see Afrika but this is her test week and I don't want to distract her, she has been performing really well and I guess this job is not shifting her focus, she really gave me the R10000 paid her and I saved it up since Lethabo helps me out financially. The door opens and Dineo walks in, I haven't seen her in such a long time, she just sends me a text a while ago telling me she went away to get her life in order then send me her share of the rent

"Hi Mandy," she says

"Hey Dee," I say and I must admit she doesn't look like the Dineo I know

"It's nice to see you it has been a while," she says

"Same here, where have you been?" I ask

"I went back to my family and left prostitution, they welcomed me back and I am just trying to get my life in order," she says
"That's really good hey, I am happy for you," I say
"Thanks Mandy, how have you been?" she asks
"I have been really well hey no complaints, I also left prostitution," I say and smiles and high fives me
"Way to go," she says smiling and reminds me of the Dineo I met 5 years ago
"Yeah it was about time," I say returning her smile
"And Mandy I am sorry for everything that happened in the past," she says sounding sincere
"Don't sweat it," I say and she nods
"I will be in my room," she says and I nod.

CHAPTER 22

•NOMALANGA

It has been a few days and I can't seem to get over what I saw, the same girl I brought to my house helped my husband to betray me, to say I wasn't hurt would be a complete lie, I am not coping at all, I even took a few days off from work, I have been closing myself in this bedroom and Khaya sleeps in this very bed with me as if nothing happened. The door burst open and my Son Mpilo walks in
"Okay Ndlovukazi what is going on?" he says going straight to the window to open the curtains
"Mpilo my bedroom is off-limits" I say
"Not when you are closing yourself in this room asking the helpers to serve you alcohol," he says folding his arms
"Just stop okay just get out Mpilo now man" I shout and this stubborn boy shakes his head
"No ma, what is eating through you? Talk to me please it's a matter of time till my siblings notice this" he says
"Your father is a dog and he will rot in hell," I say and she narrows his eyes
"Wenzi ubaba (what did dad do)" he asks and I take a sip straight from the whiskey bottle
"I found him on top of Buli, imagine a mere maid, a girl I took from out there and helped" I say chuckling and attempt to drink again but he quickly takes the bottle from me
"Oh, Ndlovukazi," he says folding me in his arms
"Don't ever fall in love Mpilo never give your heart to Someone, never give Someone So much power of you, love makes us weak Fana, rather just have children and focus on work, pour all your energy on work and your children when you have them, love doesn't exist it's a trap meant to hurt us beyond recognition," I say looking at him straight in the eyes
"I hear you mom," he says
"Good," I say
"Now pick up yourself Ndlovukazi show baba that he doesn't have a hold over you sthandwa sam, get it together you are stronger than this," he says wiping my tears
"I will try son." I say
"You need to sober up ma, so rest a bit I will wake you after a few hours and bring you something to eat," he says and I nod

•AFRIKA

I decided to spend this weekend with Amanda, I haven't been around lately and I have missed our sisterly talks So I came to the flat yesterday after classes. We are watching Some movie and it gives reference to her situation, the couple had a beautiful relationship but it was ruined because of lies. The movie finished and I looked at her

"You see she came clean and the guy forgave her because he loves her," I say

"Afrika this is just a movie," she says

"Yes, it is but the lesson is real Mandy, you need to come clean to Lethabo," I say and she sighs

"I wish it was easy," she says in a low voice

"It will never be easy Ama you are disclosing a painful part of your life that could possibly ruin what you have with him but better now because if you keep it longer, I don't know Amanda," I say and she sighs

"You know besides you no one has loved me the way he does and I feel like a queen when I am with him, Afrika I have never been at the top of the list for anyone but him nana he makes sure I am okay always, he loves me So much I am afraid to lose that," she says and I can feel the pain and fear laced in her voice

"I understand you but you don't want to keep him with a like Amanda, tell the truth and you will have no reservations," I say and she wipes her tears

"Okay then babe I will go see him tomorrow and come clean about everything I swear," she says and I smile at her

"He loves you and I believe he will understand why you did it," I say

"I pray he does," she says and I give her a hug

•MPILO

If this is what love turns a person into then I don't want it, I grew up in a loving home and my parents loved each other and worshipped the ground they both walked on, how do they go from that to this, to hurting and hating each other So much it's confusing and I am glad I never got myself in this love thing and thank God that I never crossed paths with the perfect stranger again. My mom is right, love makes people weak and I don't want to be a weakling. I find my father in his study and I wish I could charge to him and beat the living shit out of him but my mother taught us to never take sides between her and dad

"What you did to Ndlovukazi is not fair Dikane," I say and he sighs

"She did say she doesn't work on our marriage," he says

"But didn't give you a right to sleep with your toy in her house baba," I say and he sighs

"Mpilo you have no business in my marital affairs," he says

"I know that Dikane but-" I say and he stops me with his hand

"But nothing. How are things at the lab" he says and I chuckled

"I am heading there now I will call you," I say and exist the room. Baba is not even showing remorse for what he did to his wife, I know I am an ass but my father takes the cup

•DINEO

Today is the day and I am not backing out, from today onwards she will see that she needs me in her life and that no one will accept her past but me, she will learn that no man will see her for nothing but a prostitute, immediately after church I went to find Ms. Mafa.

"Hey ma," I say hugging her

"Baby girl, how are you?" She says

"I am well thanks, yourself?" I ask

"I am fine Dinny," she says

"Ma please don't take this the wrong way but I am just trying to help, I have taken you as my second mom and I would do anything for you and your family," I say

"What's going on?" she asks

"Remember I said I knew Lethabo's girlfriend from somewhere," I say and she nods vigorously

"Yes, yes I remember," she says

"Well I remembered and it's shocking," I say

•AMANDA

Today I am coming clean to my boyfriend, Afrika is right he needs to know and I am not keeping anything from him again, I love him and he loves me, I know we will get through this together. I get to his place and the car is outside thank God he is home because I didn't tell him I was coming. I get to his room and find him moping while listening to music and singing along.

"Baby," I say already shaking, he stops and looks at me with a smile and lowers the music

"Hey wifey, what a lovely surprise babe," he says smashing his lips to mine

"Tell me you love me Lethabo," I say

"I love you so much Amanda," he says and I just break down and I cry

"Hey, what's wrong babe?" he says helping me sit

"I am sorry I kept it from you, it should have been the first thing I told you before even getting in a relationship, I was just scared off losing you and hating me. I need you to understand that I did it to be able to do it for Afrika" I say and the door bursts open and his mother walks in screaming his name

"Lethabo," she says and her eyes land on me giving me a death stare

"Ma, can you give us a second Ama is trying to talk to me," he says

"Good thing this piece of trash is here," she says and I feel my skin crawl

"Mama don't start please," he says

"No papa this girl has been deceiving us, I can't believe I was letting her in and loving her. She is nothing but a prostitute" she says and I close my eyes feeling my heart shatter

"Ma please watch your mouth" he defends me

"No Lethabo if you don't believe me ask her," she says and my boyfriend looks at me

"Ama, what is she talking about?" he asks and I swallow

"I am So Sorry love; this is what I was trying to tell you just now," I say and he closes his eyes

"Amanda," he says in a low voice

"Baby please," I say and he opens his eyes and tears fall

"How could you do this to me" he says and my heart breaks further

"I am really sorry baby please let me explain," I say

"Explain how you are selling your body for money?" his mom says

"Baby please listen," I say trying to hold him but he recoiled from my touch

"Don't touch me, Amanda, you have been betraying all this while pretending to love me while sharing your body with me and every other man, we have never used a condom Ama do you understand that??" he says shouting, tears streaming down his face

"I swear I never slept with anyone since I met you, only you baby and the truth is you are the only man I have never used a condom with I swear" I confess

"And you expect me to believe you, Amanda do you know how much I love you and how you just broke my heart," he says and I know because I can see the tears streaming down his face and how his voice is breaking, he can't even look at me

"Lethabo I am so sorry," I say

"Leave Amanda! Leave and never come back, I can't stand to look at you or be in the same room as you," he says and his mom pulls me roughly

"I am Sorry baby and I never meant to hurt you, I swear I have always been exclusive to you Lethabo, I love you and that is the truth," I say before his mom can throw me out and I fall

on the ground, I don't stand up I just sit there and cry wishing I had told the truth earlier. Now my worst nightmare is here the love of my life hates me and I don't have anyone to blame but myself

CHAPTER 23

•AMANDA

I picked up myself and didn't even care to wipe myself off the dust I just couldn't care about that right now, the pain I was feeling was too much to care about that, I walked to the stop sign with tears streaming down my face and people were looking at me but I was dying a death only I could understand inside, I am just thankful that Afrika left couldn't have her see me in this state again. When I got to the flat, I just broke down once again, losing Lethabo was my worst nightmare and I am living it right now and the pain is killing me to the deepest part of my Soul. I screamed thinking that it would feel better but it didn't help, I felt Someone wrapping their arms around me and I could tell it's Dineo because of the scent.

"Amanda what's going on" she asks

"It hurts Dineo it hurts so much," I say

"I can see that, but what is it, talk to me please," she says

"I don't know how she found out," I say in between jobs

"Who Mandy what are talking about" she continues

"He didn't even give me a chance to explain, it hurts," I say and it feels like Someone is ripping my soul out of me

"Don't cry please it's all going to be okay" she comforts me

"Not without him Dineo, I love him So much" I confess

"You are speaking in riddles right now but once you calm down you will explain to me," she says rocking me back and forth

"I wish I just came clean before I fell for him so hard," I say holding on to my dress hoping that when I let go, I will be feeling a lot better

"Mandy please get up So I will make you sugar water," she says helping me up and I sit on the couch, she goes to the kitchen and I break further when I imagine the pain that was in his eyes.

•LETHABO

The thought of the love of my life being touched and poked by other men for money was killing me, I love Amanda but this is taking my soul away from me, I didn't think one day I would be told that the woman I sleep with and make love to was an object to other men for money, I have never been So hurt and disappointed and humiliated in my entire life. I had made a promise to myself that I will love this girl till the day I die but this whole feels like mist blocking my way, I chased her for 3 years, 3 full years and when she finally gave me a chance, I was more than happy. My tears were flowing uncontrollably and I was trying So hard to tap into a point where I could hate her but I was failing rather I was just hearing her Sobs wondering how I still love her. I stand up and go stare at our photos on the wall and her. Her beautiful face stared back at me and I don't know why I suddenly imagined her with all those men, anger confused me I took the picture at through it across the wall "Ahhhhhhhhhhhh" I scream and start punching the wall, the door opens and my mom walks in

"Lethabo, you will injure yourself stop it," she says

"Why ma, why would she do this to me?" I say

"You did nothing boy she is the one who did this". She says
"I love her ma; I love her So much the pain is excruciating," I say
"It's normal papa but she doesn't deserve your tears," she says
"I thought I made her happy, I thought I was enough for her," I say
"Don't do this to yourself papa," she says
"I wish I didn't love her so much," I say
"You will get over her," she says and I don't think I want to get over her, I have loved
Amanda for the longest time but I don't think I can move past it
"She didn't deserve you," she says and I wipe my tears trying to act tough
"I need to be alone ma," I say
"Okay son, but please don't hurt yourself," she says and I nod then she walks out. I walk to
where the frame broke and take the first picture we took as a couple and look again, and
fresh tears form
"Why Ama why did you break us like this," I say

•NOMALANGA

I woke up immediately after Khaya woke and went straight to the shower, I have an hour
before breakfast is served, today the pity party I had for myself for this past few days comes
to an end, I gave Khaya the satisfaction it's enough it's time I take my power back, I am
Nomalanga Mdlalose one of the most powerful women in the country and I will be okay. I
wear my black mini suit skirt and a white shirt and tuck it in, I go to the boxes that store my
hair and take out the black Bob weave and quickly do my make-up I step into the highest
pencil heels I have, I look at myself in the mirror and smile
"You are Nomalanga Mdlalose nothing keeps you down," I say and I must admit I look as
powerful as I feel. I take my laptop bag and my handbag and walk out, I find the 3 of them
already at the dining table, Mpilo whistles as soon as he sees me
"Ndlovukazi, wow you know I could have hit on you if I met you in the streets," he says and I
laugh
"Feeling better ma?" Sbahle asks
"Much better sthandwa sam," I say and she smiles
"Where are you going dressed liked that Noma" Mdlalose asks
"I work Khaya you know I am a state prosecutor," I say
"Admit it daddy ma looks like a badass" my daughter says
"Not for someone her age," he says and I laugh
"Jealousy makes you nasty" Bahle says chuckling
"Okay family I will see you later," I say
"You're not having breakfast?" Mpilo asks
"I will grab Something on my way, I am starting to build a very strong case against Some
man and I can't waste time, I want it to be in court in a month," I say and Khaya gives me a
questioning look and I walk out swaying my hips

•DINEO

I have her right where I want her, that stupid relationship of hers is over and the is no way
Ms. Mafa will let her Son get back with a prostitute, last night we slept in the same bed and I
comforted her until she passed out. I took a picture of us and I must admit we look really
good together and in no time, she will realize this too, I get in her room with a tray of
breakfast and she is already up, he eyes swollen
"You are awake," I say and she gives me a faint smile
"I wonder how I even fell asleep," she says
"I made you breakfast," I say
"I don't have an appetite but thanks," she says

"I understand but at least have Some eggs and bacon then and this glass of juice" I insist
"Okay, okay," she says and starts eating
"Whatever it is it will pass Mandy and I am here for you anytime," I say
"I don't think it will hey, I love him too much," she says and I try by all means to keep a Soft expression
"I promise you will be okay; I will be here every step of the way," I say
"I appreciate it Dineo," she says and looks at her phone
"Afrika called a million times last night she must be worried," she says
"You'll call her once you are done eating," I say and she nods.

•AFRIKA

I am really worried about Mandy, she wasn't answering her phone last night, I hope she is okay, I pray Lethabo understood why she did it and she spent the night with him hence she didn't answer my calls. my bolt driver draws my back from my thoughts
"Sorry sisi we are here," he says
"Oh, I am sorry," I say and pay him and get out. I needed to deliver one sequence and that is unusual because I normally make deliveries on Tuesday and it's Monday today. I get to this unkept block of flats, it's my first time here and I am scared out of my mind, I walk in and the guy by the gate blocks me
"Hey where are you going?" he says in a West African accent
"Uhm I am here to see someone," I say and he laughs
"Little girl, do you know where you are?" he asks
"I am here to see Preacher I was sent by Mzwakhe Mdlalose," I say
"Oh, why didn't you say so?" he says takes my hand and we walk in, there are prostitutes everywhere and it smells of pee he opens a door and the apartment we step into looks nothing like outside. The furniture in here is nice and expensive, we walk in further till we get to a room with two guys and there are guns on the table and my heart starts beating faster
"Boss the transporter is here," he says and I frown, why is he calling me a transporter
"Oh, yes I have been waiting, please sit," he says and I sit on the single couch
"Here is a pen and paper" the one who walked me in says and I start writing the sequences and I hand it back to him and he hands it to Preacher and he starts writing on the paper, why do they all do this
"Text Mdlalose 87," he says
"Sure boss" the guy from the gate says. What is Mr. Mdlalose doing with foreigners with guns and staying at a place full of prostitutes, Something I isn't right here, I must talk to him I don't think I am comfortable doing this job
"You know you can come work for me I will pay you more than Mdlalose," he says, work for him why if I already work with all of them I mean they are already working together on the Software unless I am missing Something
"No thanks," I say and he laughs
"Think about it, you are an important person in this operation transporter," he says and I am left confused and scared

CHAPTER 24

•AFRIKA

I didn't sleep a wink at night I kept tossing and turning Wondering why they called me the transporter and why the Preacher said I was the most important person in the operation. When my alarm went off at 6:30 am I got off the bed and went straight to the shower, I got back to my room and it was slightly after 7, I took my sweet time in the shower, I wear Something real comfortable and warm since the weather a bit chilly. I make my cereal and eat it quickly by 7:40 I was out of the door. I have an 8 am statistics class. The lecture takes forever and when he is done, I make my way to Mr. Mdlalose's office and knock, he shouts come in and I get in

"Good morning," I say

"Afrika, morning," he says

"I need to talk to you about something," I say

"Sounds serious, please sit down," he says

"Why do you associates call me the transporter and when did he say I am the most important person in this operation, what operation is he talking about," I say and he laughs

"Oh, it's just a name they decided to give your position Afrika and yes he told you the truth you are the most important person in the development of this Software because without you we wouldn't be able to move the sequences around undetected," he says

"I hear you but I don't think I am comfortable doing this job anymore, the guy you sent me to was creepy, he stays in a brothel and he has guns, why would you associate yourself with such people?" I say and he blinks a couple of times

"He came with one of my associates Afrika I don't personally know him or what he does for a living all I know is he is good with encryptions," he says

"I hear you but I don't think I can continue," I say and the panic in his eyes

"Afrika please without you this whole thing is going down, please I will no longer send you to that place alone I promise I am Sorry" he begs

"Mr. Mdlalose I..." I say and he stops me

"I will make it R15 000 that's how much I need you Afrika," he says and my eyes pop

•MDLALOSE

I won't lie I am panicking from what Noma said yesterday about working a case, I pushed her and this might be a way to retaliate, sending me to prison, she is scorned and she might be out for my blood, Nomalanga knows too much about me and she is a badass prosecutor she would be the death of me. My phone rings and it's Buli

"What do you want?" I say

"I was wondering what happened to you last night, you said you were coming to pick me up," she says

"I am a busy man Buli!" I say

"Am I seeing you today?" she asks and I roll my eyes

"No, you won't be seeing me today or any other day for that matter," I say

"Khaya!" she says sounding shocked

"Little girl I am a married man, go find a boy your age," I say and hang up, imagine this girl nxa I walk to our bedroom and find Noma sitting on top of the bed with files open Soon as she sees me, she closes them quickly

"I am going to ask you once. Noma, are you building a case against me?" I say and she laughs.

"I am not allowed to discuss cases with anyone," she says

"You never had a problem with that before," I say

"And for that, I probably deserve a disciplinary hearing," she says

"Noma if you take me down you taking our boys down with me," I say
"I am so good at my job Mdlalose I would make sure that my babies are not implicated in anything," she says and I swallow
"Noma" I warn
"Haibo we nja" she says taking her files and leaving the bedroom. I take out my phone and call my lawyer
"Khaya," she says
"I need you to ask your source at NPA if they are building a case against me," I say
"You live with a prosecutor in the house, I am sure Ndlovukazi would have told you," he says
"Dammit Razor man just find out". I say
"Don't raise your voice at me Khaya I am not your skivvy!" he says with a stern voice
"Sorry man I am just panicking," I say
"Sure, I will get back to you," he says and hangs up.

•AMANDA

I have tried calling and texting him but he doesn't respond or take my calls, I just want to explain to him, I miss him So much and I just need a minute to talk to him, I know this is a lot to take in and he is shocked and I am probably selfish for wanting him to be okay just like that. I haven't woken up or got out of bed, I am trying my all means to nurse this broken heart but I just can't, it hurts more with each passing minute, looking at pictures of us happy is killing me more because I am responsible for what we are going through right at the moment, I withheld the truth from him, I took his choice from him and I am paying dearly for it. I hold the phone with his picture displayed close to my heart and just cry

"Mandy" Afrika's voice says

"Nana," I say and she quickly comes to me and holds me tight

"What happened mtase'khaya" she asks

"He hates me Afrika he hates me," I say and the words take a part of my Soul

"Oh, sis, I am So Sorry, I am sorry Amanda," she says rubbing my back

"I couldn't even tell him myself his mother beat me to it Nana, I don't even know how she knew, he didn't even give me a chance to explain," I say between Sobs

"He is still in shock sis he will calm down and give you a chance to explain," she says

"And what if he doesn't Afrika?" I say

"Then you two were never meant to be, it will mean that you will have to stand up and dust yourself and be the strong woman that you have always been, you will be grateful for experiencing love and happiness," she says

"I love him Afrika and I want a future with him and only him Nana," I say and. I mean it

"I know sis and I pray he comes back to you. He loves you and you love him and I hope it will be enough for him to understand" she says and I cry in her arms a while

"Please go and take a shower and I will tidy up in here and make you something to eat," she says

"Okay thanks for coming, I needed your presence," I say and she smiles

"I will always be available for you my love and we are going to get through this," she says and I nod

•LETHABO

I am not coping, I am failing to keep it together, I thought work was going to be a good distraction but nothing, all I was is to sleep and have Someone wake me up and tell me

that this is just a bad dream and the love of my life isn't a prostitute. I am standing by the window watching the rain, the weather is a bit chilly today, this is our favorite weather, we would cuddle watch some great series and make love but all this will be a memory, she will be a memory and it breaks my heart even more.

"Hai you are making noise man," I say turning and throwing the duster at them and luckily it didn't hit any learner and they instantly went quiet; I look at the door at my colleague is standing there

"Everyone better be done with those sums equations when I get back and if you got them wrong you will regret it trust me," I say walking out

"Paul," I say

"You don't seem okay Lethabo, is everything okay?" he asks

"Yeah I am cool," I say

"Don't lie, I have never seen you lose it like that man," he says

"These kids can be annoying," I say

"Listen I have an afternoon class but tomorrow we are both free, we are going to have a few beers and you tell me what's going on," he says

"I would appreciate that man, I need to vent," I say and he nods

"Calm down when you get back in there," he says and I laugh

"Sure," I say and walk back in

CHAPTER 25

•DINEO

Mandy and I are at a better place better than when we first met 5 years ago. Soon as she gets over Lethabo, her and I will start a life of our own and be happy like we should. I went back to my parents' house yesterday morning, I don't want them to start sniffing around and asking me questions. When I woke up, I was all alone in the house so I decided to just drive down to the hood and see Ms. Mafa. I got to her house and she welcomed me

"I just came to check up on you ma," I say

"I appreciate it," she says

"How is he holding up though?" I ask sounding concerned

"He is not okay hey he really loved that girl," she says

"It's sad but she didn't deserve him ma," I say

"You could say that again baby, but he will be okay and he will meet a good girl worthy of his love," she says

"He definitely will ma, we should just pray on it," I say and she smiles

"Exactly nothing beats God," she murmurs

"Do you need me to help you with anything around the house?" I ask

"No baby but thank you," she appreciates

"I will just make you tea then," I say and she chuckles

"I would love one thank you" she confesses and I go to the kitchen with my heart at ease, there is no hope for them and that gives me joy

•EMILY

I have nothing yet and time is not on my side, already I am halfway through the second month and in a blink of an eye my father will be here for answers and I will be in deep shit. Mzwa came home early and he has been locked up in his study since I need to find

Something no matter how small, and maybe it might lead me Somewhere. I get in and he has his head buried in his hands
"Hey babe," I say and he looks up
"Hey Em," he says
"You don't look okay is everything okay," I ask
"Yeah I am good," he says and I narrow my eyes
"Mzwa babe I am your wife and I know you like the back of my hand," I say
"Something might go wrong in the operation," he says and I take my sit
"Talk to me I might be able to help," I say
"So, we decided to go old school and use a transporter for delivery of drop off dates and places and she is not aware of what she is doing but one of the clients slipped and hinted something to her, she is too smart I am scared she will put two and two together and find out what is really going on," he says and I am left confused
"What is a transporter again" he sighs and explains it fully to me
"Oh, my God Mzwa," I say
"If she pulls out, we are fucked because I would have to find another person to do this, and changing people puts us at risk," he says
"You are using your students for your drug operations Mzwa," I ask shocked
"Em please I was desperate," he says
"So, you decided to use an innocent child to gain your father's favor, we have two girls what if something like this happened to them" I say not believing the kind of man my husband has become
"Please Em I don't need you judging me," he says and I stand up shaking my head

•LETHABO

Indeed, after school Paul and I drove to some local place for a few beers, I needed to vent to someone who is nowhere near the situation, I need someone who is not going to be biased. He comes back with an ice bucket full of Coronas and I sigh
"Now tell me what is going on," he says and I explain everything to him and when I am done, he sighs
"Huh that's a steep one," he says
"I know Paul and I love this girl with all my heart, I tried to hate her but all I feel for her is love but I don't know if I am going to be able to look past this," I say and he sighs
"I know what you are going through, I have been through it myself," he says
"What do you mean?" I ask
"I dated a girl for an entire 4 years and she lied to me about her age, she was 5 years older than me, she didn't even come clean to me about having 3 kids, one was even born during our relationship, she cheated on me with the father of her children and got pregnant with the baby, she didn't even show, her sister help her raise the child while she continued to lie to me, I wondered why she never wanted me to come to her place but she would make excuses that I would understand until a relative of hers told my sister to tell me to look into my so called friend, and that is how I found out the truth. I was beyond broken, Lethabo, just like you, I wondered why I couldn't hate her, to tell you the truth besides her lies she was the perfect partner, she advised me well and never asked anything than I didn't offer, I gave her a chance to explain and I am glad I did, as sick as what she did to me was, she had her reasons and she loved me" he says and laughs
"Where is she now?" I ask and he smiles
"She probably just got home from work; she teaches at some private school," he says
"You still keep in touch with her?" I ask
"I am married to her dude," he says and leaves me shocked
"What, how?" I say

"I took my time Lethabo and learned to accept the situation before going back to her, I didn't want to go back and continue looking at her while seeing her lies, I decided to block out everyone and their opinions and thought about what I want and it was her man I didn't care I just wanted her and that was it," he says

"And her children," I ask

"Our kids, they live with us and I love them, they are a blessing to me because I can never have children of my own So my wife gave me a chance to know how good it feels to be a dad"

"Wow man I don't know what to say" I confess

"Give her a chance to explain Lethabo then take your time and block everyone and then make a decision. I advise you to be honest with yourself" he says

"Thank you man, I needed to hear this," I will go see her tomorrow," I say and he fist bumps me

•NOMALANGA

I was busy in the study; I hate bringing my work home but I didn't have a choice I am swamped and I am appearing in court Soon and I need to put these rapists and child abductors in jail. My phone rings and its Razor, I laugh because I know Khaya has been in touch with him

"Motaung," I say

"Ndlovukazi," he says

"I take it my husband has been in touch," I say and he chuckles

"You know how he panics that one So?" He asks

"Nah I just want him to sweat a little and maybe shit his pants too but we are not building a case on him, just don't tell him," I say

"I won't don't worry just turn on the heat a little and make his burn, I am also mad at him for what he did," he says

"Will do just that, greet Siza for me and kiss those cute rascals of yours," I say

"Will do bye," he says and I hang up, and Mpilo walks in

"Oh, sorry ma I was just looking for baba," he says

"Come in for a second," I say and he closes the door and comes to sit down

"I said Somethings to you Soon and I shouldn't have, I should have never poisoned you against love, I am Sorry Mpilo, I experienced love in its purest form and, sadly, it had to come to an end in the most toxic way. I should have never told you to never love Someone, just because I failed, it doesn't mean you are also going to fail. Give yourself a chance and if you took what I said to heart please look past it. Love is beautiful thing Son" I say

"I hear you ma," he says

"Good now out I want to work," I say and he stands up smiling

"I love you Ndlovukazi," I say

"I love you too sana lwam. (my baby)"

•AMANDA

I just switched off the lights and went to bed, I am all alone and that's when my pain consumes me, guilt runs through me and I miss him more than anything, I listen to the voice notes he sent via WhatsApp just to hear his voice, I am disturbed by someone trying to open the door by I quickly remember that I left my key at the door, I quickly go to open

"I am sorry Dee I thought you were not coming back," I say and open the door and the face I have been longing to see is standing right in front of me

"Ama," he says and a tear escapes his eye. He is drunk out of his mind

"Baby," I say and he attacks me with a hug and I just let it out and So does he

"I wish I could hate you but I can't," he says and holds on to me for dear life

"I am so sorry Lethabo," I say
"It's breaking me Ama," he says
"I see that love I am Sorry," I say
"I can't get the image of men touching you and treating you like an object out of my head while I see you as my queen," he says slurring his words
"Babe you had too much to drink please sleep it off and we will talk in the morning," I say and lead him to my room, I can't let him drive back in this state. I help him out of his clothes till he is left in his boxers, he gets under covers and mumbles a few things to himself
"Sleep please," I say
"I love you," he says and passes out. I get in bed and hold his hand wishing we were in a better place. Thank you, God, he is willing to hear me out even if it means getting drunk first.

CHAPTER 26

•LETHABO

I wake but don't open my eyes I am feeling like shit I went hard yesterday when Paul left I ordered a dry gin and I was out of it, I don't even know how I got home and it's clear I won't be going to work I will just call the principal and tell him I am sick. I open my eyes and I realize that this is not my room, the door opens and Ama walks in
"Oh, you are awake," she says and I start to wonder how I got here
"Yeah just woke up now, how did I get here?" I ask
"I am also wondering how you managed to drive all the way here because you were drunk," she says and I sigh
"I am sorry," I say
"No, it's okay," she says and comes to sit on the edge of the bed
"I failed grade 10 because of the pressure at home being a child and a parent was not easy, my mom she was never home and when she was she was drunk out of her mind, when I was in grade 11 the pressure was too much I had to drop out, Afrika I was 18 then and Afrika was just 13 at that time, she would come back home crying because the other kids made fun of her, they would laugh at her torn school shoes and the small uniform she wore, and that broke my heart, I started doing basic jobs at people's houses to make ends meet but it wasn't working the money was too little because we would run out of food before my next gig then she would come back home and ask me for food and as the eldest, I had to provide for her but I couldn't and that took away a piece of me, you have to understand that I love Afrika more than I even love myself. One day I went to town and saw women by the streets and men were picking them up it was shocking, I was scared and desperate I approached one and ask her how they did it and she explained, and asked if I wanted to join and what choice did I have my baby was my priority, I was tired of them laughing at her for being poor and having a drunkard as a mother as if she chose it for herself so I didn't think twice I agreed, she offered me a place and there was no rent since it was occupied by people So the owner left it and I had to give her R150 from every client I had, I packed up my shit and told Afrika to be strong because I was going to hustle so she doesn't have to, I remember my first night, I was still a virgin I was in the most reviling dress ever, a guy came through and he spoke to the lady I was staying with and she came to me and told me I have my first client, I left with him and that man did unspeakable things to me and when he was done he handed me So much money and told me he will be back, I felt so dirty but I had the money, first thing the next day I went home and bought Afrika groceries and toiletries even gave her money for lunch at school, and with time I learnt to take it all I got used to it but I still didn't like it. I got the hang of things and I used my money wisely managed to get out of that place

and got this place, I even had a certain type of clientele just to make my job more bearable. I met you and I kept on chasing you away but you just kept on coming back, I couldn't give you a chance because I didn't want to taint you, Lethabo you were so perfect you deserved better than me and I knew that but not my heart, my heart wanted you and only you, when I decided to be with you I left prostitution and I haven't gone back since. I always used a condom with all those men that I can promise you, even though I did a dirty job I am clean, I tested regularly and I am clean. The truth is I did what I did for my sister so she can focus on what was important, school, I didn't want her to start doing things so she could fit in so I sacrificed myself for that and I don't regret it and if I had to I would do it again, I am just sorry that I didn't tell you the truth in time So you could make your choice and for that I am sorry. I love you Lethabo and I didn't tell you because I was scared of losing you scared that you were going to hate me" she says with tears streaming down her face. I was looking at her shocked, I moved from where I was to her and took her in my arms

"That was very selfless of you Ama, your sister is blessed to have you," I say and she holds on to me for dear life.

"I am sorry Lethabo, I love you so much," she says and I close my eyes

"Look at me," I say to her and she does

"I love you too Ama with all my heart but I need time, I need time to take all of this in. I understand your reasons and admire you as a person but I need to be able to look at the woman I love and have not had images of other men pleasing themselves with her like she is some object. I don't want to say it's okay we can continue and then I end up punishing you for your past because I didn't deal with it on my own" I say

"I understand," she says

"I just need time to think and make a decision I know I will be able to live with," I say

"You deserve that much, thank you for coming," she says and I kiss her

"I am glad I did," I say and get out of bed and start putting on my clothes and she stands up and we share a hug

"I am sorry," she says and I sniff her hair

"I know you are, I just need time," I say and let go of her and leave, I am feeling a bit lighter now that I know the truth.

A WEEK LATER

•NOMALANGA

I asked my children to avail themselves for dinner and they all did, I am sure that they are all wondering why I called them here, I have an announcement to make to everyone, to others it might be shocking but in all honesty, it is long overdue, I was supposed to have done this year's ago but I decided to hold on to hope and it never paid off, I had it bad, harder than the first time. I look at myself again in the mirror and I look amazing, the bald head suits me well and I feel on top of the world. I am in a short cocktail dress that just made me look younger than I am. I walk out and make my way downstairs to the dining room and everyone is having a drink enjoying their light banter

"I missed having everyone under the same roof," I say and they all look back at me in shock

"Is that you Ndlovukazi" Bahle asks

"It's me in the flesh baby," I say

"Wow man you look amazing," Mzwa says everyone agrees with him well of course except Khaya.

"Thank you babies, let's sit and eat," I say and everyone takes their sit and we start dishing and eating over a light conversation

"Why did you cut your hair though? Don't get me wrong you look amazing" Mpilo says

"You will all know why in a second," I say and he nods, we have dessert and when we are done I move to the bathroom to cry, seeing them all here and happy makes it hard for me to

want to tell them but I have to I have put it off for a while now. I walk back after fixing my face can I please have your attention guys. I want you all to know that I love you So much and what I am about to tell you is not going to change anything. The past 7 years have been hard on me, I smiled so much in public and in front of you guys but I have had nights where I had to cry myself to sleep. I have been thinking for a while and I didn't just come to this decision. You kids are grown now and you know how the world works So I believe you will understand better now. I have been a mother, a wife, a prosecutor, an employer and more but I forgot to be Nomalanga, and it is the worst thing to ever go through, losing yourself is suicide and it takes everything in a person to be able to pull themselves out of the deep dark pit. I shaved off my hair to represent a new beginning. I am sorry to you my children if my decision is going to hurt you but it was time, I chose myself. Mdlalose you gave me our beautiful kids, a beautiful life at the beginning, and I wouldn't have achieved much without you but it hasn't been rosy and it has cost me my Soul for most parts, that is why I decided to ask for a divorce" I say and hand him the brown envelope. The kids were all shocked

"Ma no," Sbahle says

"Princess wait a bit," Mzwa says to her

"This is not fair," she says crying and she stands up and walks away

"Bahle," I say

"I will go talk to her Ma," Emily says already on her feet, Khaya hasn't moved his eyes from the envelope but he does after clenching his jaws.

"Boy's excuse us, your mother and I need to have a word, Noma my office," he says already making his way there, I gulp my champagne down and follow him.

•AMANDA

After my talk with Lethabo I felt light, he knew the truth now and he had the opportunity to choose for himself. I asked him to stop sending me money, I want him to take all the time he needs and whatever he decides on I will accept it because I love him. After all, when you love Someone you want them to be happy. The money Afrika gives me will be enough to keep me on my feet till I start Something. I am queueing up waiting on my turn, it's time now that I claim my life back in order don't have any excuse

"Next," one of the ladies say and I wasn't aware it was my turn I stand up and go to her

"Good morning," I say

"Hello how can I help you today?" she says

"I am looking to register with you to be able to write my matric," I say and he smiles

"Good choice sisi, congratulations on the decision you took. So which grade did you stop at" she asks?

"Grade 11," I say

"Do you have the final report with you?" she asks and I am glad I took all. My documents when I left all those years ago.

"Yes, I do," I say handing it to her.

"You have a choice of going forward with these subject or changing but I would advise you change looking at your results," she says.

"I would love to continue with those subjects, I want to study Nursing after here and I need the subjects to get in," I say.

"In that case, you will have to put in effort into your work," she says and I nod

"Definitely," I say.

"I am going to need your ID and proof of residence and R1500 registration fee," she says and I hand everything to her, she clicks on her computer a while.

"And done, this is your time table, we will be preparing study material for all your subjects but you have to return them when you are done with your final exams. You will receive an

SMS from Umalusi confirming that you have been registered to write your NSC exams" she says and I smile.

"Thank you so much," I say.

"Classes start on Monday, and all the best," she says and I leave, I feel excited, I finally have the chance to chase my dreams too.

•DINEO

I am driving Ms. Mafa home, we went out to lunch after the women's movement weekly meeting and prayer. We have grown close, me and her. We get to her house and her son's car is parked and he is washing it. We both get out of my car and walk in the yard

"Hai papa you are home early," she says

"Hey Ma, I didn't have an afternoon class today," he says

"Oh, okay, I didn't leave any food for you because I didn't know you will be home early what did you eat," she says and he laughs

"Ma I am a grown man; the fridge is full of food I made something for myself," he says

"Okay, oh, papa meet Dineo, ke ngwana wa moruti (she is the pastor's daughter)" she says and he looks at me, I must admit he is good looking. I understand why Mandy is crying So much

"Hi, it's nice to meet you," he says extending his wet hand and I smile and take it

"Hey, it's finally nice to meet you, your mom has told me so much about you," I say

"All good things I hope," he says and I laugh

"You are a responsible child papa, of course, it can only be good things," his mom says

"I am not a child ma," he says rolling his eyes

"Hai Dinny let's go before we put him off. We will be preparing supper outlwa papa" she says

"Sure ma," he says and we walk away after I steal the last glance at him.

•AFRIKA

I was busy helping a few of my classmates with maths things have started to heat up in all our classes, so they asked me to explain to them and give them pointers.

"Wow Afrika you make it look so easy," one says

"You just need to practice every day even if you think you know it," I say

"Can we please have a study group?" another says

"Yes, please Afrika help us please" the first one begs and the others look at me with pleading eyes

"It's okay I don't mind, but we can do it 3 times a week," I say

"Thank you So much we appreciate it," one says

"It's okay I am glad to help," I say and my phone rings and I go stand aside

"Hey sis," I say

"Nana I hope I am not disturbing you," she says

"Not at all what's up miss me," I ask

"Yes, I miss you but that's not why I called, guess what," she says

"You and Lethabo are back together," I say

"No, I told you he asked for Some time, but your sister went to register to write her matric final exam," she says and I scream and everyone is looking at me like a mad man

"Oh, Mandy this is good news I am so proud of you mtaka ma," I say

"Thank you, Nana, I am so excited," she says

"As you should Mandy, I am So happy" I confess

"Let's go to Pannarotis to celebrate," she says

"I am game, let's do it," I say

"Meet me at the mall in an hour," she says

"Okay sharp," I say and hang up. Way to go Mandy!

CHAPTER 27

•NOMALANGA

That day Khaya and I didn't talk about anything we just shouted each other and it got us nowhere I wasn't arguing with him, I said I am starting on a clean slate and not even he could pull me back into the toxicity, I have been avoiding him for a few days I have even used one of the guest bedrooms. I get to the bedroom we used to share to get something to dress and find him buttoning his shirt, I walk past him and he holds my hand

"Can we talk?" he says

"If you are willing to talk to me like a civilized human being then we can talk," I say and yank off my hand

"Why are you doing this Noma, you said you didn't want a divorce," he says

"And I was wrong for that, being married made me feel like I have some sort of entitlement to you and that wasn't healthy for me," I say

"This is breaking up our family, Bahle needs both her parents," he says

"She is 19 Khaya she will get over it," I say

"I can do better," he says

"You don't have to; in fact, I don't want you to," I say

"Noma," he says in a low voice

"No, I am not going to change my mind," I murmur

"Then who is moving out?" he asks

"I am not leaving my house," I say

"Neither am I," he tells

"I never asked you to though," I say

"So, what is going to happen, how is all this going to work?" he asks

"I will be moving my things to my new bedroom and don't bring your floozies around my house or my children," I say

"Then everything stays the same," he asks

"I don't see why not So yeah; the only difference now is we are just housemates who share 3 children," I say walking to the closet

"Okay" he shouts loud enough for me to hear him

"I will start moving my things this evening," I say

"I will make myself scarce and go see Sbahle," he says and I nod. She decided to leave and go live with Em and Mzwa for a while

•LETHABO

I don't know yet what I am going to do because I am still fighting a battle between my mind and my heart and until I settle for one, I am staying clear of Ama, but that doesn't mean I don't love her. We haven't communicated since that day. She just sent me an I love you text the other day and I responded the same because that's just the truth. I miss her I won't lie but for now, I need time to myself. I was sitting in the office I share with Paul having lunch and he walks in

"Yeses I hate that I didn't bring my lunch box," he says sitting down and open his Kota

"You forgot it?" I ask

"No, my wife is not around with the kids So I had takeaways last night, she must just come back already," he says and I laugh

"Where is she?" I ask
"She went to see her sister; she isn't feeling too well," he says
"Oh, okay," I say
"How is Ama," he asks
"Haven't spoken to her man, I am taking time to think," I say
"Take all the time you need, don't rush your decision because you are the one who will have to live with it. Don't even discuss it with anyone So long as you still feel conflicted continue taking your time" he says
"You advise me well man thank you," I say
"From one brother to the other man. Normally Society thinks we don't have feelings and when you include them in your decision making you will end up with what makes you look good not what makes you happy" he says and I just nod vigorously
"Really appreciate your wisdom," I say
"Respect grey hair laitie," he says and we both laugh

•EMILY

I get to my kitchen and find dishes in the sink and packets of snacks everywhere, there is an open bottle of wine and there is still some left inside, this is my expensive stuff. I sigh and start cleaning, I am pissed because I respect my space and I expect the next person to do the same, even my daughters know better, what Sbahle did is just rude really. My husband walks in and tries to kiss me but I move away
"What did I do now?" he asks
"You need to talk to your sister," I say
"What did she do now," he says
"She left this whole kitchen looking like a pigsty, who does she expect to clean after her, our girls don't even behave like that," I say
"She is having a rough time babe you know with my parents divorcing and all" he defends
"That is no reason to disrespect Someone's house like that," I say
"Okay, I will talk to her," he says and a second later she walks in and just places the glass of wine and the box of crackers on the counter and goes to the fridge and takes out fruits
"Hello to you Sbahle," his brother says
"Oh, hey, sorry Instagram is too lit," she says and walks back, I am looking at Mzwa boiling with anger
"I will remove them babe," he says and I chuckle
"I want her out of my damn house Mzwa," I say and walk out.

•AFRIKA

I get to my room after going to a quiet place to memorize the sequences for the last time since I am doing drop-offs tomorrow, I am just so tired because I had a long day working on assignments with my group. I take off my clothes and I hear Larona crying so painfully in her bed, I tried to pretend like I am not hearing it but I just couldn't, it's not who I am. I went and sat on her bed.
"Larona are you okay?" I ask and she just cries
"Talk to me please," I say after a minute
"I am pregnant Afrika," she says and the shock
"Oh, congratulations!" I say and she shakes her head
"No this is not good news," she says.
"What do you mean, you have Bafana and he works I am sure his family won't mind looking after the baby while you come to school or the baby could just travel with you parents," I say.

"My parents didn't raise us, they told me that if I get pregnant I am on my own Afrika what is worse is that Bafana wants nothing to do with me, he told to go and abort because he is not about to lose his woman just after he paid lobola for her," she says and I move my hands to my mouth

"What Laronna I am so sorry," I say

"I can't believe I was this stupid," she says between Sobs

"It's all going to be okay, you will find a way to raise your kid and stay in school," I say and her phone beeps and she cries harder after reading it I decide to check what it's saying

Get rid of that thing growing inside you, or be ready to be a single parent and what does a loose panty like you know about being a parent, I will send you money to get rid of that pregnancy it reads and I am left with a bitter taste in my mouth

"Why couldn't I wait like you did why did I have to be forward," she says full of regrets

"It will all be okay I promise," I say

•AMANDA

I was sitting in the lounge with Dineo watching Some movie, she cooked So we are eating, she made a nice meal, I must admit she knows her way around the kitchen. I finished my plate

"That was delicious thanks," I say

"Anything for you babe," she says

"I am cooking tomorrow," I say

"Oh, babe that's sweet but I am going home tomorrow my mom called," she says

"Oh, okay that's nice," I say

"How are you holding up," she asks.

"Taking it a day at a time and school will be a good distraction," I say

"I am proud of you for going back to school," she says

"Yeah it's time I got my life together, my baby is all grown and in university, so I can take time for myself and chase my dreams," I say

"You deserve it Mandy," she says we sit a bit and watch the movie till it's done and I yawn

"Hai let me go to bed Yoh," I say

"Okay babe goodnight," she says

"Night Dee," I murmur and go to my room. I open the drawer and my eyes land on two sealed packets of sanitary pads and I freeze

CHAPTER 28

•AMANDA

I didn't sleep a wink last night, I laid there waiting for morning to come, I can't believe I missed my periods twice and I wasn't even aware of it. I am panicking I won't lie, things between Lethabo and I are not good at all and he might think I want to use this child to trap him, God I can't be pregnant, no, please. I have been thinking about how this could play out and every scenario leaves me out of breath. I walk in the flat and go straight to the toilet and pee on all three tests and place them flat on the bathtub. I look at my watch while biting on my nails. I have never been So anxious in my life. Just when I try to get my life together this happen God. 15 minutes pass and I take them all and I feel the air leaving my body

"No, no, no," I say after seeing two lines on all 3. I am pregnant God no. What am I going to do with a child right now, I mean I don't even have a job, the father and I are not on good terms this is just bad timing, I wipe my tear and just stare myself in the mirror, can't I just

catch a break. How do I even tell him this, how do I even go about my life now and at that moment I realize that I need my mother more than ever, I wish she was Sober and she cared for us, I wish I could go to her and know for sure that she will tell me what to do, I cry because I am pregnant, I cry because I miss him, I cry because I wish Sibó was a different person.

•MZWAKHE

Emily isn't happy with me and I know that my sister can be too much at times and since this is my wife's house, I need to get her in check, she needs to respect Em and our house and how things are done here. I knock on the room she is using and she shouts come in, I walk in and it is a total mess, clothes everywhere, the bed is not made and there are bottles of wine and champagne with that hubbly thing of her insight

"No, no, Princess no, absolutely not!" I say

"And then wena?" she says

"Aa watch your tongue" I warn and she rolls her eyes

"Mzwa what's up?" she asks

"This is not how a girl's room should be, no!" I say

"I was going to ask Em when is the maid coming because wow, I can't find my shoes in here anymore," she says carefree and I laugh

"Are you hearing yourself?" I say

"Is that a rhetorical question?" she says

"Obviously, you can't expect our house help to come and clean up after you like this, we don't even do that" I argue

"That is her job mos, the maids at home do it," she says

"This is not home Sbahle, this is my house and my wife welcomed you to come and process the whole divorce thing not turn our house into a pigsty," I say

"Oh, wow Mzwa really?" she says

"Yes, really Bahle, get with the program or go back home," I say and she chuckles

"I will be out of here before you come back from work," she says

"Mxm wena you must just come back down to earth," I say and walk out, Sbahle is a spoilt brat and we are all to blame in how she turned out really, I just feel for that boy she is dating

•AFRIKA

After I went drop off the sequences. I decided to go to the mall and get Some groceries, I have been living on take outs and I am having no more, I bought So much food I had to call Senzo for a lift luckily, he wasn't that far or busy. I am So tired I just want to cook eat then sleep, tomorrow is just another long day, I just can't wait for Friday So I can go see Mandy.

"Can I stay for a plate?" he asks

"Why not?" I say

"What are you making?" he asks as we park at res

"Quick stir fry," I say and he nods, we get out of the car and take the groceries out of the boot and walk inside, we walk in and place my plastics near the study desk when I turn, I see Larona. On the floor

"Oh, my God," I say quickly going to her

"Fuck, is she breathing?" Senzo asks and I nod. The is So much blood, it came from her private part

"Oh, no Larona why?" I ask

"Let me carry her quick she needs to go to the hospital," he says and I take her bedding and wrap it around her then he picks her up bridal style and runs out, I take my bag and lock the door and run after them, he has already gotten her in the back seat and I get in the front. He

drives out like a maniac and we get to the hospital and the nurses run to us Soon as we walk in the Emergency Room.

"What happened to her?" the nurse asks

"She told me she is pregnant yesterday I suspect she had an abortion," I say and they nod and wheel her off

"What she is pregnant? Does Bafana know?" Senzo asks

"That dog is the one that told her to abort," I say

"What no man that's messed up," he says

"He even told her that he wasn't going to lose his woman after paying lobola, Larona has her faults but she doesn't deserve all of this no woman does," I say

"Definitely," he says and we are shown the waiting room. We waiting and waiting. I feel Someone wake me up

"Hey the Dr is here" I move my head from his shoulder and lookup

"How is she" I ask panicking

"Well, she had a backstreet abortion and she was 6months, unfortunately, she didn't just lose her child she lost her womb too" the Dr explains and I am shocked

"Can I see her?" I ask

"Yes, you can," he says and we follow him and get to the room, she is looking the other way and she is crying So painfully, soon as she senses our presence, she looks back at us

"Afrika," she says and I quickly go to her and hug her as she cries harder

"I am so sorry," I say

•LETHABO

Mama asked to have a word with me, I just wonder what she wants to talk to me about. I am in no mood to talk about Ama and our relationship with people especially not my mom, I feel like that is what she wants to talk about. I get in the house and she is not in the lounge I go to her bedroom and she is packing

"Hao where are you going?" I ask

"That's what I wanted to talk to you about," she says

"Okay I am here," I say

"I received a call from my brother your uncle," she says

"Okay," I say impatiently

"Our cousin in Thaba-Nchu died, we will be driving there today," she says

"Oh, that's sad ma," I say

"Too much but she was sick at least she is resting now," she says

"That's true" I agree with her

"So, I will be gone for a while to help them, I am the only elder left in the family So it's my responsibility to ensure that the funeral goes well and that the children are left well after the. Funeral" she says

"Understandably so," I say

"So, Dineo will be coming by to help clean, cook and do your laundry," she says and I sigh

"That won't be necessary ma," I say

"Lethabo don't argue," she says and I hold out my hands in defeat

"It's your house," I say walking out to make myself Something to eat

•MPILO

I just got home after I went to the club last night, I have been cooped up with Some girl I met last night and we had our fun, finally got laid now I can think straight now. I get in the kitchen for Some snacks before I head to bed, I didn't get much sleep at all. I find Ndlovukazi having tea.

"And the prodigal son returns," she says

"Oh ma," I say
"Where did you sleep?" she asks
"Out ma, out," I say and she gives me a look
"Haibo someone has a girlfriend," she says and I laugh
"She is not my girlfriend," I say
"I will never understand why these girls sleep with your big head because you never even take them out for a pie," she says
"Yoh, ma this is not the 80's. Girls these days want champagne and hair" I say
"Because men like you exist," she says and I roll my eyes
"I would argue that men like us exist because of women like them," I say
"You losing the plot now," she says and we both laugh
"How are you holding up ma?" I ask
"I am a happy single woman boy; I am starting to live my life for me," she says
"So, when is he moving out?" I ask
"No one is moving out Mpilo we just changing rooms," she says
"Why is that?" I ask confused
"Because we are a wealthy powerful family and people must never know of our problems because they would capitalize on that," she says and I shrug my shoulders
"Okay, I am off to bed," I say and leave my mom, I honestly don't understand how they divorce and still live in the same house but if they think they can make So who am I to judge.

CHAPTER 29

•LETHABO

I must admit today is one of those days where I miss Ama terribly, I wish I could just pick up my phone and call her just to find out how she is doing, but I don't want to confuse her So I will just suck it up like a man. Thank God it's Friday I am tired and these extra classes are just adding to everything. I get off the bed and decide to go bath in the house, a bathing dish can be a lot of work especially when I am tired So I will just get in the shower. I take my toiletries and walk out with just my PJ pants, the security door is open and there is a car parked in the yard, I walk and find that pastor's daughter

"Morning," I say and she smiles

"Oh, you finally awake," she says

"Yeah I am going to work, what are you doing here so early?" I ask

"Your mom asked me to help look after you while she is away," she tells

"I am not a child and I am sorry on my mother's behalf she can be too much at times, I am sure you have your own life too," I say and she laughs

"I don't mind helping out," she says

"Oh, okay then," I say

"I am making breakfast; I hope you are not allergic to anything," she says

"Oh, Nah don't worry I don't and thanks," I say

"No problem and please leave your key so I can tidy up and do your laundry," she says and narrow, my eyes

"Don't worry about those I got them, you just hold the fort in the house," I say and frowns

"Please let me keep the promise I made your mom," she begs

"Okay I will leave it," I say and head to the bathroom

•AFRIKA

After my last class, I went to the hospital and I stopped at the supermarket and got her Some fruits and yogurt, I couldn't go see her yesterday because I was busy. I made sure to take her toiletries and her pajamas with me, not forgetting her phone and charger. When I got to her room, she was just staring at the ceiling she looked So lost and broken I have never seen her like this. Larona is just a bubbly carefree person

"Hey," I say walking further

"Oh, Afrika you came," she says with tears in her eyes

"I am sorry I couldn't make it yesterday I was swamped with school work and group sessions," I say

"I understand," she says

"How are you feeling today?" I ask taking a seat beside her

"I hate myself for what I did," she says and blinks her tears

"You were scared Larona and you felt alone," I say and she shakes her head

"That's no reason at all, I knew I wasn't preventing Afrika yet I agreed to sleep with him without a condom, what did I think was going to happen huh, I was going to get diamonds and not a baby," she says

"Don't do this to yourself," I say and she wipes her tears and sniffs

"Thank you for saving my life I don't want to think of what could have happened to me if you didn't get to the room on time," she says

"Don't sweat it, I brought your phone So you can be able to call your parents," I say

"No Afrika my parents can never know about this please it has to remain between us," she says Sounding scared and panicked

"Okay calm down I won't tell them, but how are you going to pay the bill this is a private hospital," I say

"I have my medical aid babe, please bring it with next time you come it's in my purse," she says

"Oh, yes," I say

•MPIILO

Mzwa asked to meet up for Some drinks and he picked out a night club and I just laugh, that is not his scene at all which makes me wonder what kind of bull he is probably going through to go to one place he never enjoys no matter how much I would convince him. It's still early around 6 when I arrive, he is drinking wine, I roll my eyes

"You can't be drinking wine at the fucken club man, you and these white tendencies of yours," I say and he rolls his eyes

"Don't be stupid," he says and I raise my hand politely to call the waiter and he comes

"Hello how can I be of help?" he says

"Can you please take this pussy drink out of here and bring us Some matured expensive whiskey with Some Soda water, and bring us your meaty platter"

"Okay sir, should the platter be mild or hot," he asks

"Make it hot," I say and he walks away

"You are just too much Life," he says

"And you are just too less Mzwa So we balance each other out yabo," I say and he laughs

"I will take your shit because I invited you out," he says

"So, I guess you got the bill too bro," I say and he chuckles

"Obviously," he says

"So, what's eating you up?" I ask and he sighs

"Couldn't go home and hear my wife complain about Sbahle one more time, your baby sister is just too much Mpilo she said she will be leaving on Wednesday after I addressed that she shouldn't just eat and leave her things around like she has a maid she drinks Emily's expensive bottles and smokes that thing of hers in the house too it's just chaos," he says

"Just throw Sbahle out, Emily can't be complaining in her own house because of Bahle who needs to grow up and learn some manners," I say
"You should talk to her," he says
"You mean I should slap her back to her senses," I say and he laughs
"Whatever you can man," he says
"How did Ndlovukazi go Soft on Bahle she used to whoop our asses I mean ma didn't take shit," I say and he
"It's all baba's doing," he says and I nod

•AMANDA

I am staring at the abortion clinic website wondering if I should book an appointment and get rid of this pregnancy fast, I have already filled in my details but I am scared to press submit. Something in me is refusing me to go on with this, but I am not ready to be a mother, I don't have anything, I am not stable with regards to anything. How the hell will I ensure that my baby has everything he or she needs. The door opens and Afrika walks in
"I thought you no longer coming," I say
"Sorry I stayed longer than expected at the hospital," I say
"What were you doing at the hospital?" I ask
"Oh, Larona is admitted," she says
"Is she okay? What is going on" I ask
"She went for a backstreet abortion and she lost her womb Amanda if I didn't get to the room on time she could have died," she says and I cringe
"Oh, that's sad," I say
"She is regretting her decision it's So painful to see her like that" I nod and feel my heart about to beat out of my chest, I take my phone and quickly exit the abortion clinic site
"I feel for her, no woman deserves this," I say swallowing
"I just wish she didn't go on with it she could have just raised her child and found a balance between motherhood and school, she could have made it work," she says sounding down
"I am sorry baby girl," I say.
"A child is a blessing no matter the circumstances, they are a blessing," she says and I feel her words hit home.
"I am pregnant Afrika" I blurt it out, she looks at me and her hands move to her mouth
"What did you say?" she says coming towards me and I sigh
"I found out today that I am pregnant," I say
"Oh, Mandy congratulations," she says hugging me
"I am not sure how I feel about this," I say
"What do you mean?" she asks
"Lethabo and I are not on good terms what if he doesn't want me back after he is done taking his time," I say
"Then we raise this baby Ama. Lethabo is an amazing guy and I doubt he would turn his back on his baby, he is responsible and look at it this way if he doesn't come back to you, you will always have a piece of him forever" she says and I smile.
"Oh, Afrika, so what do I do in the meantime," I say
"You adjust your plans to fit in this new life and I do the same. Keep chasing your dreams don't let this baby be the reason you give up, let the baby motivate you, let him be your force" she says and I smile at how my little afro baby is so grown
"So, should I tell him" she shakes her head vigorously
"Not yet, give him time to make his decision then tell him, we don't want him to decide because now the is a baby involved, this will stay between us no one else should know," she says.
"That's true," I say and hug her

"I can't believe I am going to be an aunt God," she says with the widest smile making me excited too.

CHAPTER 30

•MPILO

I got home in early hours and Mzwa was there the entire time, Sbahle must really be making Em go crazy. I need to talk to my mom about this she should go and get her daughter before she causes unnecessary drama in Mzwakhe's house. I wake up and put on my shorts and vests and go to my mother's new room since it's not far from mine, I just open and she is still in bed with a novel in her hands

"Just because you know I don't have a man next to me doesn't mean you should barge into my room like that Mpilo," she says

"Oh, sorry man I thought the dynamics have changed you know," I say and she rolls her eyes

"What do you want wena ngepana (big head)," she says

"You should lose the name now Ndlovukazi," I say and she laughs

"Okay I will so what do you want?" she says

"When was the last time you spoke to Bahle," I ask and she sighs

"She doesn't take any of my calls," ma says

"You need to go get her back ma, she is causing problems between Mzwa and Em. You know your daughter is a spoiled brat" I say

"What did she do" I explain everything my brother told me last night

"Oh, God, Khaya messed up that girl buka manje," she says

"So, will you go, I will accompany you if need be," I say

"Okay thank you Fano we will go later on," she says and I nod

•AMANDA

Afrika is so excited about this baby she making it so hard for me to grumpy, we only found out but I bet you my baby already feels all the love in the world. I am still scared I won't lie but with her love and support I am going to make it through. I just finished the breakfast she brought me in bed I am even being spoiled here she walks in wrapped in a towel

"Amanda get up we are going to the doctor," she says and I laugh

"You are so dramatic," I say

"Nope I read somewhere that immediately after you find out you are pregnant you must start antenatal and start taking supplements for the development of the baby," she says

"Why would you read about pregnancy though?" I ask

"It's good to be informed about everything, you never know when it will come in handy," she says and I roll my eyes

"You were just bored Nana," I say and she laughs. I get off and go take my bath and we go to the Dr not far from the flat, she was affordable we got in and she did an ultrasound, and it looks like I got pregnant the very same day we got intimate. She gives us a photo of the baby and we pay and leave

"I can't believe I am going to be a mother in 6months," I say in disbelief

"You are going to be the best mother to your baby Amanda, he is blessed to have a mother like you," she says

"I just hope I don't fail him," I say going with the assumption that it's a boy

"You didn't fail ma Mandy so you won't fail this one," she says rubbing my belly and I smile

"He is really in there," I say already imagining him looking like Lethabo

•DINEO

I got to Ms. Mafa's house early to clean and cook Something for Lethabo, I am going to make sure that I cook enough for the entire weekend because tomorrow I won't be coming through, I have been neglecting Amanda now and that is not how you treat Someone you love, but then again Lethabo also needs me, I think I am starting to feel Something for him. It's possible right? Loving two people at the same time, I mean he is a good person I guess since Mandy was with him but he wasn't good enough for her, I am the only one worthy of Amanda and because I broke them up I guess I should just be here for him too and maybe feel the void deep inside of him. I will replace him in Amanda's heart and I will replace Amanda in Lethabo's heart. They will definitely forget about each other because they will both have me. His car drives in and he gets in the house after a minute

"Oh, hey Dineo," he says and he is wearing his gym gear

"Hey, I didn't know you work out" I say and he laughs

"I do once in a while" he says

"I should join you Sometime" I say

"Hahaha if you can catch up, my girlfriend hated gym" he says and I frown

"I didn't know you were dating" I say and he rubs his head and sighs

"Argh my tongue slipped" he says and I sigh in relief

"What y'all broke up" I ask

"It's a long story" he says Sounding sad

"I have time" I say

"I'd rather not hey" he says and walks to the bathroom I assume

•NOMALANGA

Mpilo drove us to his brother's house after what he told me we really need to get Bahle home, Em can't be living like that in her own home. She is grown up now she can't be acting like a spoilt brat all her life. We get there and find her in the lounge with her feet on the couch, she is smoking that thing of hers that makes smoke and drinking champagne

"Sbahle" I say and she looks at me

"Ndlovukazi" she says

"Unjani" I ask

"How do you expect me to be ?made" she says

"Cut the attitude, you not talking to one of your friends here" Mpilo says next to me

"What are you doing here, Mzwa is not here" she says

"I am here to see you baby, to take you home" I say

"Will you forget this whole divorce nonsense?" She asks and I hold my breath

"No Bahle I am going through with the divorce; your father and I are done" I say and she laughs

"Why did you find a boyfriend now you want to give him my father's money" she says coming towards me and God knows I am trying to keep calm Mpilo and Mzwa have never spoken to me like this

"Watch your tongue" I say

"No ma, I will not watch you do this to my father, you are breaking up our family because it's only now that you want to go back to being a lose little girl" she says and I just slapped her hard twice across the face and she looked at me and cried, she attempted to say Something but I held by the throat

"Listen here little girl, we have endured you bullshit for far too long now, you are not the next best thing after sliced bread even if you we birthed by me a queen, if you think I have been quiet because I am scared of you then you don't know me at all. That father of yours you are talking about is the one who messed up your family not me. You better go and get

your manners and respect where you shoved them because with this new Ndlovukazi you will surely need them my dear. Now clean this mess and go upstairs and pack you shit we are leaving, make sure you leave Emily's house just how you found it, you, you arrogant ungrateful brat" I say and let go of her she sits down and coughs trying to catch her breath "Move your ass Sbahle Mdlalos" I scream and she gets off the couch and hurries upstairs. Mpilo laughs uncontrollably
"Now this is the Ndlovukazi I know, fuck it has been a while since I saw you like this" he says and I hit him with my bag
"Language wena" I say

CHAPTER 31

•AFRIKA

Today they are discharging Larona, the doctor said they have no reason to keep her any longer, she can recuperate from home and since she can't go home to avoid her sister asking questions she will gather her strength at res, I even went as far as going to ask her classmates for what they did the entire week So she could catch up. I asked Senzo to accompany me to get her and like always he was available, we are in his car driving to the hospital

"Even after everything you did you still support her like this" he says

"You can't really return evil with evil" I say

"I would argue with you on that but hey you are a special human being" he says and I laugh

"You telling me you would have left her like that" I ask

"I would have taken her to the hospital like the next person but this running back and forth nope, I am even just doing this for you, I don't like this girl and you need to be careful around her" he says

"Oh, come on Senzo this experience has changed her" I defend her

"One of the things I love about you is that you are So innocent but be careful that you don't end up being gullible and naive to what is in front of the naked eye" he says and I am left confused

"What do you mean" I ask

"I am saying a leopard never changes it's spots" he says and whistles along the music. We get to the hospital and she's already waiting for me with her bag next to her, she is on her phone

"Hey ready to go?" I ask standing by the door

"You have no idea hey" she says and the nurse walks in and hands her the medication

"Let's go then" I say and she gets off the bed, I take her bag

"Bolt here already" she asks

"Nope I asked Senzo to come with me" I say

"Your boyfriend doesn't really like me much Afrika" she murmurs

"He is not my boyfriend Larona and can you blame him really" I ask and she snorts

"No not really" she says

• AMANDA

I get to school and the excitement and determination is burning deep inside me, I really can't wait to start getting my life in order I have my Son now and I want him to be proud of his mother, he is going to the most blessed little boy I know with an aunt like Afrika I jealous really. I think I am lost So I take out my timetable again and look at the venue I am supposed to be going to, a voice startles me from behind

"Are you lost" the male voice says and I look back and the shock on my face
"What Mandy, what are you doing here?" he asks
"Uhm I, uhm I am enrolled here for my grade 12, I didn't know you were a teacher," I say trying to lose the shock, this guy was one of my sweetest clients he was going through the at that time
"I guess that is one thing I didn't share about myself, sorry," he says
"Oh, please don't be hey," I say
"God it's nice to see you," he says
"Same here hey," I say not entirely meaning it
"We should catch up sometime," he says
"I am no longer on the job," I say
"Good for you Mandy, and we can catch up outside the job, I wasn't referring to that," he says and I nod
"No sweat then. Can you please show me? Where I can find C6?" I say
"I am going there now; I have Physical Science in that class," he says
"Oh, okay," I say, God isn't this awkward though
"Let's go then," he says
"Let me help you carry those then" I offer
"Don't worry Mandy I have it covered," he says
"Cool then," I say and we walk to class and find about 15 students in the class.

•NOMALANGA

Ever since I went to get Sbahle from Mzwa's house I haven't had a talk with her, I need to sit her down and instill some manners and respect in her, even though I am 19years late, I won't die I leave behind this rotten child who will give her brothers a tough time. I am having coffee in the dining room and Khaya is reading Something on his tablet, the ice princess walks in.

"Baba, I have never been so embarrassed in my life," she says and I already know what she is talking about.

"What are you talking about baby girl?" her father entertains her

"I was trying to swipe my card at the restaurant and it declined dad, I was So embarrassed but luckily the manager knows me and he knows I am your daughter So he said he will put the bill on a tab till I fix the problem," she says

"Let me call the bank and find out what is going on okay calm down," he says and I roll my eyes.

"Don't waste the bank managers time with nonsense," I say

"Haibo Noma, how is this nonsense?" he asks

"I am the one who closed froze the funds on that card," I say and sip my hot beverage

"Kodwa why Noma?" he asks

"Because imali iyasebenzelwa (you work for money), Mzwa and Mpilo work for their money, they always have ever since they were young," I say

"Ma you want me to be involved in the drug business?" she says

"Don't be stupid. Your brothers used to do the garden, wash the cars and keep their rooms very tidy and neat and God they were So respectful and they knew how to treat people Something I can't say about you. So you are required to clean your room, no helper will make your bed or tidy your room, no helper will make your meals unless they cook for the whole house, you will do basic chores Sbahle, like washing the dishes, feeding YOUR dogs and taking over every responsibility that comes with them after all you are the one who wanted pets, and then you will be given money for it and it will not be hefty as before sweetheart just So you can be able to buy petrol and have pay for your Wi-Fi, you want clothes you tell me and I review if it's necessary or not, no money for fancy restaurants, you

are hungry there is plenty food in the house and no popping bottles like you say until you learn respect and manners you will be treated like a child" I say standing up
"Kodwa Noma," he says comforting the crying Bahle on his nap
"And should you try to go against me Mdlalose and give her money or banned privileges I will know and I will make it much harder for her," I say and walk I hear them before disappearing
"Baba," she says crying
"I will talk to her princess," he says and I laugh mxm I am not changing my mind nope, one way or another Sbahle will act like an adult

•DINEO

I get to the flat and Ama is not yet back, so I tidy up and bit and start with the pots, I even put the wine in the fridge So it gets cold in the meantime, once I am done I go take a quick shower and put on my little black dress and red heels to match my lips. I just hope she likes that look. I hear the door open and quickly get out of my room, she is looking So simple and yet So breathtaking God, her eyes land on me and she whistles
"Wow Dee you look amazing hey," she says and I blush
"Oh, thank you So much babe," I say really happy that she noticed me
"Hot date," she asks
"With you yes, I just felt like dressing up and cook for you So you can tell me how your day went," I say and she smiles
"Well I had a long day and, on my way, back from school I ran into an old friend and went to someplace to chill and catch up," she says
"Oh, okay," I say pouring wine and went back to the lounge and offer her a glass
"Oh, no I am fine thanks; juice will be fine," she says and I frown
"This is your favorite Chardonnay Mandy," I say
"I know but I want to keep Sober and focus on school for now," she says
"I understand babe let me get your juice," I say and walk back to the kitchen
"You are just the best," she says and my heart just skipped
"Anything for you love," I say and look at her since it's an open plan kitchen and lounge, she has her legs on the table and leaned back with her eyes closed, perfect perfection in sight I tell you

CHAPTER 32

•MPIILO

I get home after spending the whole at the lab, that place will be the death of me, we received large orders for this coming week and production had to triple to cover the orders and to leave us with safety inventory. I need a kick of caffeine So I can go through the number then I will consider sleeping, I walk in the dining room and they must have already finished with breakfast so I go to the kitchen to make myself a cup of coffee, I find Bahle washing the dishes
"Aww you feeling domesticated I see" I tease and she gives me a deadly look
"It's not by choice trust me, your mother is making me do it," she says
"Okay," I say boiling the water
"Mpilo please talk to her, she has become this monster o don't recognize, she froze the money in my account and I have to work for patrol and data money can you believe that," she says and I nod

"Actually, I can believe it, Mzwa and I used to work for our money, ma never gave us money for nothing," he says

"You were boys," she says and I laugh

"What is that supposed to mean?" I ask amused

"I mean my nails are going to suffer because of these stupid dishes," she says frustrated

"It's not like you will have money to re-do them since your account is frozen," I say

"You can be an asset sometimes," she says

"Make that all the time sis," I say pouring the contents into my cup

"Please Life talk to her, you know she listens to you," she says

"I would talk to her if I didn't see the importance of what she is trying to teach and frankly I do think you need the lesson, Bahle you are a spoiled brat, you don't care about anyone but yourself, sis you are selfish and entitled, you don't have manners that even Mzwa's girls have, trust me you will thank Ndlovukazi someday trust me," I say

"Mxm thanks for nothing," she says and I chuckle taking my coffee and walking to my bedroom

•EMILY

My father summoned me and I know what he wants to talk to me about and to tell you the truth I have started having second thoughts about all of this, my mother is right my brother wouldn't have wanted us to do, his life choices led him to his demise and he was a person who takes responsibility for his actions So I know for a fact he would want us to let go and continue living our lives and letting go of this revenge plot on the Mdlalose family. I get home and my mother's car is not on sight, I sigh because my shield is not here, I have to face pa alone. I find him watching Some Afrikaans channel on DStv.

"Hey dad," I say

"Sit down Emily" he responds I sigh and take my sit

"Is everything okay?" I ask

"Where does your loyalty lie with me your father or with Khaya Mdlalose?" He asks

"Of course, with you Pa," I say

"Then why are you stalling?" he says in a firm deep voice

"I swear I am not; I am working on a lead my husband hinted," I say to my defense

"Care to share?" he says

"Well they are using a university student to move the dates and locations of drop-off," I say

"They have a transporter?" he says and I nod

"Yes, but the poor child is unaware of what she is doing," I say

"Oh, now you working towards Something that kid would testify in court and name his associates and we would have taken down the biggest drug cartel in South Africa," he says with a smile

"Yes pa," I say in a low voice

"Find out who this kid is, and be close to her so you can find out more," he says and I nod

"Okay," I say

"I knew you would make me proud," he says and I fake a smile

•AMANDA

I was sitting in the class alone practicing physics; I am taking this whole school thing very seriously this time. I have another class at 1 pm and it's only 11 am So I will use this time productively and not just idle scrolling through Social media. The door opens and Sphamandla walks in, things still awkward, from satisfying his sexual needs to being his student

"Hey what are you busy with?" he says

"Hey Sphe just looking at the work you gave us," I say and he sits on the desk

"Oh, yeah, are you winning?" he asks
"So, far so good," I say and he peeps through
"Oh, yeah you getting it?" he says
"So, why an adult centre?" I ask and he sighs
"So, you know my wife and I had problems all along then we finally got our divorce. So, I just needed Something new and what better than helping people make use of their second chance and make Something in their life just like I did when my divorce went through" he says
"So, the last time we were together, you were still conflicted," I say and he laughs
"Honestly Mandy I think that's why my marriage didn't work out, and I met you trying to find out where I stand and woman, you reminded me of how amazing it was to be with a woman but like I told you back then Mandy physically being with a woman satisfied me but emotionally I was poor, Something was missing within and it was never filled by any woman, my ex-wife didn't make the situation easy but then again maybe it's because I was not there for her the way a husband was supposed to," he says and I nod because I know this, we weren't sexual but I would let him vent out to me
"So, where are you now?" I say and he smiles
"I am in a relationship with Nate," he says and blushes
"You chose the white boy?" I say and he laughs
"Yeah he is good for my soul, he is done playing and so am I," I say
"I happy to hear this, you deserve to be happy hey," I say and I truly mean it, questioning your sexuality is not an easy thing to go through
"I am really happy Mandy Yoh," he says and it's evident in his voice
"One last question though," I say and he smiles
"You've always been a 21 questions queen," he says and I laugh
"Are we Bisexual or are we gay?" I ask
"Definitely gay, I am done with women," he says and I high five him, if I were to walk around with him, you'd swear we are dating and he is straight nothing say gay from this man
"I am proud of you," I say
"So, what's being been going on with you" he asks
"We are going to need the whole day for my life" I confess
"Then I will make time on Saturday," he says and I smile

•AFRIKA

I get back to res after a long day, I just want to bath, eat and sleep, I am not even studying tonight, I open the door and walk in, Larona is not in the room, where could she have gone to? I sigh and change into my nightdress and when I open the covers, she walks in holding flowers, a gift bag, and takeaways
"Hey tsala," she says
"Hey, where are you coming from?" I ask
"The mall, this is for you," she says and gives me the flowers and gift bag
Thank you, but it's not my birthday" I say and she laughs
"This is me thanking you for what you did for me Afrika, you were in my corner even after everything I did to you. I know it's not much but it's from the bottom of my heart" she says
"Ncoo thank you so much," I say and we share a hug
"I even brought you Some food and non-alcoholic wine," she says
"Oh, thank God I am famished" I confess
"Okay let me dish up so long," she says and I sit on my bed and scroll through my WhatsApp

•MR MDLALOSE

I don't know what to do this situation between Noma and Sbahle is just frustrating, I hate seeing my daughter suffer but on the other hand, I don't want to step on Noma's toes, we might have failed as husband and wife but I respect her parenting skills So I am just going to let her deal with the situation how she sees fit. The study door opens and Mpilo walks in
"Dikane," he says
"Mfana want (my boy)" I say
"I just got a call from Marianna," he says
"Is everything okay down there?" I ask
"Yeah everything is cool, she says the is a cartel leader that wants a meeting with the big boss," he says
"Couldn't she let them know that she is the Queen there?" I ask
"She did but those bastards wanted me specifically," he says and I sigh
"So, when are you going?" I ask
"I told her to tell them I will see them on Friday and I will land in the morning but I will fly to Brazil tomorrow and Connect to Colombia So I confuse anyone who might be following me then when I get there I will try to find out what they want before the meeting," he says and I nod
"Yeah that's good," I say
"Let me go inform Ndlovukazi and then pack," he says
"Don't stay longer after your meeting flyback," I say and he laughs
"Don't worry dad Colombia is my second home I run those streets I got soldiers there," he says
"Okay then," I say and he stands up

CHAPTER 33

MPILO

My mom was the one driving me to the airport, she cried like I said I wasn't returning home, Ndlovukazi can be a drama queen at times yaz. I was sitting in the back because I was avoiding her unnecessary slaps. She is looking at me through the review mirror
"If that Mariana girl is failing to handle this little thing, I don't know why she is in charge," she says
"Come on ma, it was out of her hands. She tried getting that guy to talk to her but because they are not a part of her cartel, she can't rule them" I defend her
"Bullshit she must just shoot one in the nuts to command respect," she says and I laugh
"Language Ndlovukazi," I say
"Mxm ai suka, when did you say you are coming back again Mpilo I hate this traveling of yours man," she says
"I will be back Saturday morning ma," I say and she sighs
"Mpilo you are turning 28 this year, when will this playboy status come to an end, you need to find Someone to be with and start a family of your own I mean look at Mzwa he is 31 and he has been married for 5 years and he has beautiful kids," she says
"Ma, we won't be the same you know this," I say
"I know and I am not asking you to be Mzwa I am just referencing him. Please consider settling down, just give love a chance this one time please Son" she begs
"Yoh, fine Ndlovukazi. When I come back, I will start dating, will that make you happy" I say

"If only you do it to be happy and to find Someone you genuinely care about, don't just use the poor girls Mpilo," she says

"I hear you," I say and she smiles

"Good, we are here," she says and I look out the window and see we are already at OR Tambo

"You are a smooth driver you should be my chauffeur," I say and she laughs

"Ka nyoko" she says and I burst out with laughter

"Hectic," I say getting out of the car

•LETHABO

I have been parked outside the house behind Dineo's car, the poor girl is so loyal to my mother she has been coming here as she promised her, I even feel like she has her life on hold and that's not fair man. I go on my Facebook and scroll, I see that Ama checked in to Elite adult center, could she possibly be enrolled for her matric? If that is the case, I am very proud of her. I am tempted to call her but, in all honesty, I am not ready and I did promise myself to take my time. I finally get out of the car and walk inside, Dineo is wiping the table. She is in a black dress and red heels that match her lipsticks

"Hey" I greet her

"Oh, hey you are home," she says

"Yep, you look good," I say and she smiles

"Thank you, I had a date," she says

"Had?" I enquire and she sighs

"Yeah I came here and cooked your meal then got ready as I was about to leave, he sends me a message telling me he can't go out with me anymore and I should delete his number," she says sounding sad

"Jerk! I am sorry hey, it's his loss" I say

"It surely doesn't feel like it hey. I am just going to go home and have a quiet night, host a pity party for myself" she says and I feel for her

"Stay awhile and let's have dinner," I say and she smiles

"Are you sure I don't want to be in your space you know after having a long day at work and all?" she says

"Nah it's cool, I have a lot on my mind too I could use the company," I say and she nods vigorously

"Okay then go relax and I will bring you a beer," she says

"Cool stuff," I say and walk out of the house to my room

•AFRIKA

I was walking back to res from the study group, we are writing on Friday So we were practicing and it all went well it's safe to say we are ready for the paper, my study mates even asked to take me out for lunch and a movie on Saturday as a way to show their appreciation for helping them out, but I really don't want them to feel like they have to pay me for helping them. It was just after 8 pm and I am glad I had something to eat I am just hitting the sack, I am walking to our room and I see that our door is slightly open and deep voices are talking with West African accent, I stop by the door ensuring that I don't disturb them

"Where is Afrika, I am going to ask you for the last time"

"I don't know where she is, I swear, she left early to attend her classes I swear," Larona says

"That's a fucken lie, you are her roommate" he roars and I can hear Larona cry

"I swear, she could still be on campus" she says

"Fuck this, if we take Afrika this one will be able to point the cops to us" I instantly recognize this voice, it's Preacher one of the guys I normally deliver sequences to

"We should just kill her boss; she is a loose end," one of his skivvies says and I start panicking.

"No no please no, I would never tell anyone anything I promise you sir, please don't hurt me" Larona begs

"We are going to wait till she comes back, take her phone before she could try to warn her and close that door," he says and I quickly move from the door to the stairs taking my phone out and dial Mzwakhe because he is the one who got me into all of this I am definitely not telling this problem to my sister

•MZWAKHE

Mpilo has only been gone for a couple of hours but his job is making me work overtime, I am just glad my father is helping with balancing the numbers good thing I told Em that I will be home really late tonight. My phone rings and it's Afrika

"Hey Afrika, what can I do for you?" I say

"You have to get me Mr. Mdlalose, Preacher is in my room at res and he was there to kidnap me," she says crying and I immediately get on my feet

"What, are you safe?" I ask

"Yes, but they are with my roommate in there I overheard them speaking before I could walk in, they are even threatening to kill her you have to help her please," she says and the fear and panic in her voice I cannot miss

"Listen to me carefully, I want you to go to campus now and run, I will call you once I am there and don't worry about your roommate, I will have people go to the room now okay," I say

"Please hurry, I am scared please," she says and hangs up

"Mzwa what's going on" baba asks

"That mother fucker preacher wanted to kidnap our transporter but luckily she wasn't in her room she overheard them and managed to go hide but they have her roommate," I say

"Fuck I knew that piece of shit was never to be trusted Fuck," he says

"I am going to go get her now please call our guys to go to res and get those fools, this is the name of the res and her room number," I say writing down in a hurry

"Sure, just hurry and get that girl she is important Mzwa nothing must happen to her," he says

"Yeah baba I know, I will book her into a hotel so long," I say

"Definitely not bring her here so we can protect her ourselves, this is the only safest place I know and we don't even know who Preacher is working with," he says

"And Ndlovukazi?" I ask

"Just go get that girl I will deal with your mother," he says

"Don't forget to send someone to res," I say already out the door

CHAPTER 34

•MR MDLALOSE

Soon as Mzwa left I called our boys and asked them to go to res and help that girl out, I instructed them to apprehend Preacher and his people and take them straight to the warehouse. I even asked one of them to stay behind and look after the roommate and I still need to get her sisters' address so I can send someone to her too. After the call, I went to knock on Noma's room

"Ngena (come in)" she says and I am happy that she wasn't sleeping

"I am sorry to disturb," I say and she closes her book
"Is everything okay?" she asks
"Our transporter was almost kidnapped, it was Preacher one of our clients and now I am even beginning to think that he is the one who has been hitting us, I shouldn't have trusted that piece of shit again," I say
"God is he okay?" She asks
"Yeah she is fine, Mzwa went to get her," I say and she narrows her eyes
"It's a woman, God is her family safe, her kids?" She says
"We will fix that don't worry, can she stay here for a while, our house is the safest place I know," I say
"Definitely, we put her in this situation after all," she says
"Thank you," I say relieved that she didn't give me a tough time with this
"I will go get Mzwa's old room ready for her," she says getting out of bed

•MZWAKHE

I am driving like a fucken F1 driver not even giving a damn that the cameras are catching me, I will pay the tickets tomorrow right now I need to save Afrika, that girl is very important I can't lose her, for the first time I managed to add some value in the family business and I have a better relationship with my father for it. I get to campus and show my access card and the guards allow me in, I park in my space and call her
"Mr. Mdlalose," she says and I feel the fear in her voice
"Afrika are you safe? are you okay?" I ask
"Yes, I am hiding in one of the bathrooms, where are you?" she says and I sigh
"Listen run to the lecturers parking lot I am here," I say and the line goes dead even before she gives me a response, a minute or so later she gets in the car breathing heavily after she closes the door she just cries and I feel so guilty I rub her back to calm her down
"We need to go get Larona," she says
"Don't worry about that she is safe," I say
"And what about my sister what if he goes after my sister," she says crying
"I am going to send someone to guard her from afar, so don't worry please". I say
"What have you gotten me in Mr. Mdlalose, why would Preacher want to kidnap me" she asks
"I really don't know Afrika but I promise I will find out and, in the meantime, I will keep you safe" I say starting the engine
"Where are you taking me to" she asks roughly wiping her tears
"To some place safe" I say and drive off while she is looking outside the window, the drive back is not long we get there in no time
"Come we are here" I say and she takes her bag and gets out of the car
"What is this place" she queries
"It's my parents place, I have already asked them to look after you" I say and she nods. We get in and find my parents in the lounge having a conversation
"I found her" I say
"Oh, thank God" my mom says turning and her eyes land on Afrika and the shock on her face, and I know why so I quickly say something before she says something to make Afrika aware
"Ma, Baba this is my student Afrika and she is also helping me with the sequences for the software development and Afrika these are my parents" I say and she gives me a deadly look then looks at Afrika again
"You must be tired and scared come let show you the bedroom" she says taking her hand and they walk away
"She is going to have us for dinner" baba says

"I know and I am not ready for her wrath" I say taking a sit rubbing my head

•NOMALANGA

Saying I am mad would be an understatement, I am fuming, how dare they use a child for this, a student for that matter. I am boiling with anger but I am trying to keep calm for this girl. I open the door and she walks in first.

"You will be sleeping in here" I say

"Thank you" she says hugging herself

"You will wear those pyjamas after you shower, I hope they fit you" I say and she gives me a faint smile

"Come let me show you the bathroom" I say and we walk out and open the door across hers and I already put a towel and Some cosmetics I haven't used

"Thank you Mrs Mdlalose" she says and I place my hand on her shoulder

"I will make you Something light to eat So long" I say and she closes the bathroom door. I walk back to those two idiots

"You bloody fools, I should have known that those big heads were full on nothing but water, are you crazy Mzwakhe a student" I say

"Ma please I was desperate" he says

"Your stupid decision says a lot obviously" I say slapping his shoulder repeatedly

"We were losing money ma" he justifies

"But we were nowhere near being broke" I say

"Ndlovukazi" they both say

"You couldn't even get her protection knowing very well the monsters we deal with in this business and what is worse she doesn't even the truth of what she is doing" I say

"Noma please it's already done" Khaya says

"Wena I don't even want to hear you breathe because you went through with this whole thing, I mean you both have daughters would it be okay if Someone was using them like this" I say

"What's done is done we can't do anything now" this fool that fathered the other fool next to him says

"You are going to stop using that girl" I say

"No Ndlovukazi we need her" Mzwa says

"I don't care, find Someone who is older and knows exactly what he is doing" I say

"We will do no such thing, that girl is perfect Noma, this is my business don't interfere because I don't interfere in your job too" Khaya says and I laugh

"Right" I say leaving them standing there to go make her Something to eat

•AMANDA

I wake up feeling Somehow and out of nowhere I feel the need to vomit, I quickly get off bed and run to the bathroom and vomit once I am done rinsing my mouth I go back to my room and get in bed, I take my pregnancy book and read through where I stopped last night. This book is a blessing for pregnant women like me who don't have anyone with experience in our corner to navigate through this whole thing. My phone rings and I answer without looking

"Hello" I say eyes glued to my book

"Ama" his Soft voice says and a tear just escape without warning

"Lethabo" I say in disbelief

"Yes, it's me. How are you?" He says

"I am taking it a day at a time, what about you" I murmur

"Yeah I am trying" he says and there is silence I can only hear his breath, I hold my stomach wishing I could just tell him that our baby is growing inside of me and how beautiful this whole experience is

"I just wanted to check up on you" he says

"I really appreciate it" I say

"Okay let me get up and get ready for work, take care" he says

"You too" I say and he hangs up. I close the book and just take in the echo of his voice in my head, I miss him, I miss him So much.

•AFRIKA

I don't know when and how I managed to sleep but I did and I think it's because I knew my sister and Larona were safe, I texted Mandy and she responded saying she is busy reading the baby book, I didn't want to call her because I was afraid she would pick up that something isn't okay, I called Larona who was asking questions I didn't have answers to myself. There is a knock on the door and I sit up and cover properly

"Come in" I say and Mrs Mdlalose walks in looking like a boss

"Good morning, how did you sleep" she says

"I slept well thanks Mrs Mdlalose" I say

"You can call me Ndlovukazi" she says

"Okay and thank you for welcoming me into your home" I say

"Don't mention it, wear this after you shower. Breakfast is served at 8am in the dining room" she says

"Okay Ndlovukazi" I say

"And Mzwakhe asked that you don't go to campus today he will bring you everything they did in your classes So you can catch up. He will come pick you up later So you can go get a few things at res" she says

"How long will I be here" I ask

"I don't know baby but for as long as you are no longer in danger" she says and walks out I quickly get up and make bed then go to the bathroom. I do my business and go back to get dressed, this dress is So beautiful and comfortable, I walk out and get lost a few times until I find them, it's only 3 people at the table but that food could feed more, I take my seat

"Good morning" I say

"Is that my dress, and what the hell are you doing here" she says and I look up its Sbahle Senzo's girlfriend, I sigh

"Bahle behave Afrika is our guest" Ndlovukazi says

"I asked what she is doing here and why is she wearing my clothes" she insists

"She will be here a while that is all you need to know for now" her father says

"Oh, wow now we are a homeless shelter" she says and her father bangs the table

"Enough Sbahle, stop this nonsense and be accommodating for once be nice" he says and his wife is looking at him shocked that he just reprimanded Sbahle

"Afrika I am Sorry please relax and dish up for yourself ignore Bahle she acts like a brat at times" he says and I smile at him

"Thank you sir" I say and take a plate while she mumbles to herself kodwa did it really have to be her family God

•AFRIKA

I didn't know what to do with myself in this big ass house, they went to work and Sbahle went to school, earlier on the maids were going up and down cleaning and all and now they went to their rooms at the back of the house, I think I have gone through all the rooms except the bedrooms just to keep myself busy, and the backyard and pool are to die for, I wish I knew how to swim. I look at the time and it's just after noon God it's going to be a long day. I flip through the channels and find something interesting.

"Hey, Afrika you okay?" Mr. Mdlalose Jnr says

"Oh, hello, yes I am okay," I say

"That's good," he says and I sigh

"Did you find out why Preacher was after me?" I ask and he shakes his head

"Honestly no, but my father has him and his boys Somewhere trying to get him to tell the truth," he says

"Honestly I don't think I want to continue doing the drop-offs," I say

"No Afrika please we will protect you I swear," he says

"I wouldn't need protecting if I was not a part of this whole thing," I say

"Think about your sister Afrika, the money we give you helps her outright, with her not having an income again I mean we don't want her to consider being a prostitute again," he says and I sigh. He is right with Ama in school and the baby on the way we need all the money we can get

"This is all just becoming too much," I say

"I know Afrika and I promise you will always be protected I promise you we will even protect your sister," he says

"We will see," I say

"I came to take you to res so you can go get some of your stuff," he says

"Oh, yeah let me get my phone," I say walking to my room

•AMANDA

I went to the clinic for my antenatal and the nurses are happy with the growth of the baby, my high blood is stable and I got the supplements, I didn't want to go to an OB/GYN and waste money for something they can do for free at the clinic. I headed to school and I was a little late for my first class but at least it's Sphamandla's class. I get in and sit while he is teaching and the students are looking at me

"Ms. Mbatha, you are late," he says

"I am really sorry sir," I say

"See now you disrupted my class. Everyone listen you are only allowed to be less than 15 minutes later more than that please don't bother coming to class" he says and I am left wondering what's eating him

"It won't happen again I am sorry," I say and he continues with the lesson, he finishes and we all pack our books

"Amanda please stay behind," he says and I remain on my seat and they all walk out until we are left alone, he comes and sits on my desk

"Forgive me for being an ass I just didn't want them to think I was favoring you," he says

"I totally understand now, I thought I did more than be late for class," I say and he laughs

"No, you didn't hey. I just want to treat you like them all when we are in class, I hope you understand" he says

"Totally understand don't worry," I say

"So, why were you late?" he asks

"I went to the clinic," I say

"You are sick," he asks and I almost tell him but I remember Afrika said we shouldn't share with anyone

"Nope it was my date to go get my prevention injection," I say and it sounded like the best excuse

"Oh, yeah, look at the time hurry to your next class before you are late" he says

"Okay later," I say taking my bag and rush to my Life Sciences class.

•AFRIKA

We got to res and he waited in the car, I got in and Larona was around watching Something from the laptop, soon as she saw me, she came and attacked me with a hug

"Oh, Afrika you are safe," she says

"I am and I am happy to see you safe too," I say

"Who were those men who were looking for you and who were those that came here and took them," she says

"I will explain Some other time I promise you but right now I need to pack," I say and she narrows her eyes

"Pack? Where are you going?" she asks

"Somewhere safer for me at the moment," I say

"Afrika you need to give me something here please," she says

"I wish I could but it's better you don't know anything," I say

"And school?" she asks

"I will continue attending my classes," I say

"Okay," she says Sounding defeated

"And I am going to need you to keep everything that happened to yourself please," I say

"Yoh, okay," she says and I go pack my stuff

•LETHABO

Paul invited me to go out for a couple of drinks he says his brother will be joining us later on since being in the house gets a little boring, I decided why not, we got there and ordered beers and started drinking

"You seem to be much better," he says

"Maybe because I spoke to her this morning," I say and he laughs

"You love her don't you," he asks

"More than life itself," I say confidently

"So, have you made a choice yet," he asks

"I think I have always made my choice I just wanted to be sure," I say and he offers his hand for a handshake

"Way to go, man, get your lady and fight tooth and nail to defend her," he says and I nod

"Yeah I will go see her tomorrow and spend the weekend with her," I say

"I am proud of you man," he says

"Thanks for your advice bro," I say and a guy joins us

"Oh, sorry I am late," the guy says

"Finally, hey man this is my brother Sphamandla and bro this is my friend Lethabo," he says and we shake hands

"Nice to meet, I brought a friend I hope you don't mind," he says

"Nah don't sweat it," I say and when I look up, I see Ama by the door and Spha clicks her fingers to call her, her eyes find mine and she freezes

"Mandy come," Sphamandla says and I feel like I have been thrown daggers at

"Paul I am sorry man I remembered that I needed to do something," I say taking my phone and car keys from the table and walking out through the other door. So, she has moved on already why didn't she tell me though

•EMILY

Something is eating through my husband and I want to know what it is, ever since he came back last night, he was cold and this morning his mind was all over the place and now he is home early and he has been in his study since. I fix him a drink and go to him I open and he is looking outside while on his chair, I walk to him and hand him the drink then start massaging his shoulders

"Thanks babe," he says

"Something is bothering you," I say

"Yeah but I would rather not talk about it," he says

"Mzwa please talk to me," I say and he sighs sipping on his cognac

"Everything just went south," he says and I roll my eyes

"What do you mean," I say

"One of our clients tried to kidnap our transporter last night at her room at res," he says

"Oh, my God is she okay?" I ask genuinely for the first time since this conversation started

"Yeah she wasn't in her room but she managed to overhear them asking her roommate," he says and I cringe

"Is she safe now" I enquire.

"Yes, she will be living kwa Mdlalose for a while," he says

"Mhhhhhhh" I say and remember that my father told me to be close to her So I can get more information from her and now that she is living with my in-laws, I will have easy access to her

•AMANDA

When Spha invited me out to go have a drink with his brother and his friend I didn't think the friend would be my baby's father, he walked out and he probably thinks I moved on, and considering my past I wouldn't blame him for it. I quickly asked Spha to drive me to Lethabo's place I didn't care if his mom was there, I just needed to assure him that I haven't moved on, call me desperate I don't care, I love Lethabo and our relationship got ruined because I wasn't truthful to him. We get there and his car is in the driveway.

"Go get your man Mandy," he says and for a minute there a person who doesn't know him could easily tell that he is gay

"Thanks for the ride"

"I will wait for a while if you don't get out in 15 minutes I will know you two are having makeup sex," he says and I laugh getting out, I walk in scared as hell, scared that he might reject me and scared that his mother is home and might embarrass me, I walk straight to his room walk in without knocking since the door is open, he has his hands buried in his thighs

"He is not my boyfriend I swear," I say and he looks up

"You don't-" I cut him off

"We are just friends and he is gay," I say and he closes his eyes

"Ama," he says and stands up

"Lethabo I miss you so much," I say and let a tear escape

"Ama," he says again in a low voice

"I am sorry I didn't tell you the truth I am Sorry, I miss you, I love you," I say and he comes to me with tears streaming down his face and pulls me to him and buries his nose in my hair

"I miss you so much baby," he says and he moves a hand to my waist

"I am sorry," I say taking in his scent

"You have apologized enough baby and I want you to know that I want you Ama I want you and I don't care what you used to do to get by, I love you enough to overlook everything, I love you So much Amanda Mbatha and she will never be another woman for me but you, I am sorry I took this long," he says and I just let it out and hold on to him for dear life, he

does the same and after a moment he makes me look at him and we kiss slowly and passionately

"I love you and thank you for choosing me," I say

"You are my one true love Ama," he says

"I have to tell you something," I say

"Okay," he says and I let go of him and reach for my purse and take the Sonogram photo out and hand it to him, he takes it and stares at it for a while and his face is expressionless I start to panic, he looks at me in the eyes and tears are shining in his black beautiful pair

"Are we pregnant?" he says and I sigh in relief

"We are having a baby," I say and he smiles and blinks the tears

"Baby why didn't you tell me," he says taking my hands

"I wanted you to make your choice without having to consider any factor, I didn't want to seem as if I am using the baby so you could choose me," I say and he drops to his knees and places his head on my belly while his hands snake my waist

"Thank you Ama," he says and I lean to kiss his head, I have my man back and he is happy about our baby thank you, God

CHAPTER 36

•AMANDA

I open my eyes and Lethabo is kissing my stomach and smiling to himself, I can't believe I am back with this man whom I love this much, a man that gave me a beautiful gift. I smile when he starts mumbling something to the baby and he looks up and our eyes lock

"Oh, look who is awake, slaap tiger my son and I early birds," he says and I laugh

"Oh, already ganging up on me?" I say

"Never babe, I am always team you," he says and I smile

"How did you sleep?" I ask

"Better than I have in a long time, you were next to me, what about you?" he says

"All good my love, I am happy we are okay now," I say

"Thank you for following me here, because I would have only come to see you today," he says

"I couldn't let you believe that I moved on babe," I say

"I love you mommy," he says moving up and pecking my lips

"I love you too Lethabo laka," I say and he blushes

"Let's go shower in the house, I don't want you to be late for classes," he says and I frown

"I was hoping we could be cooped up in here all day," I say

"I wish I could love, but my students are writing a test today and skipping classes is not good for you either plus it's Friday and I will pick you up later after they finish writing," he says

"Okay love," I say

"And say sorry to Spha for me I was rude yesterday," he says and I laugh

"Don't worry he will understand plus he is the one who drove me here," I say

"Okay rato laka, ema babe arelo hlapa tu (okay my love, come let's go take a bath please)," he says and I stand up making a face

•AFRIKA

I woke up early and took a shower and went to prepare breakfast, I found the maids and they showed me how they prefer their food and after I prepared it I set the table and I wasn't even aware that it 8 already, Ndlovukazi walks in first in the highest heels, this woman is beautiful

"Hao Afrika, did you make breakfast?" she asks

"Yes ma, I wanted to show my appreciation for welcoming me in your home," I say

"Oh, baby you didn't have to but thank you so much you are so sweet," she says and her husband and Sbahle walk-in

"Good morning," Sbahle says and we greet back

"Sanibonani," Bab Mdlalose says

"Morning baba," I say

"Morning Khaya Afrika made breakfast," Ndlovukazi says

"Hao that's very thoughtful of you Siyabonga," he says

"Yim o bongayo baba (I am the one who is thankful)," I say

"Sbahle you should learn a thing or two from Afrika," Mr. Mdlalose says looking at his daughter and I wish he didn't do that Sbahle already hates me, we don't want to give her more reason to

"Oh, trust me it's the other way around" She says

"What could she possibly learn from Bahle, calm down, please. Everyone let's sit,"

Ndlovukazi says and I go get the jug of juice and I come back

"When last did I have mabele porridge I didn't even know they still make it" he says

"And it's very good hey, where did you learn to cook like this" ma asks

"Well I had to teach myself how to cook when my sister moved to town" I say remembering the painful memories

"Is it just the two of you" she asks

"No, we have our mom back in the township" I say and I am not comfortable talking about Sibo

"Your hair is beautiful" she says trying to change the topic after she saw that I am uncomfortable and I appreciate that

"Thank you so much ma" I say

"What other compliment are you going to give her now Ndlovukazi geez" Bahle says

•you still remember that your throat fits perfectly in my hand right and I still have a good trip" she says and Sbahle just looks at her food. Wow this girl has no respect whatsoever she is rude even to her family

•DINEO

I got home last night and Amanda wasn't here I even went to bed around midnight but nothing, the first thing I did in the morning was go check her room but she wasn't there. I am really worried about her since she didn't even answer her phone, she is frustrating really because I came here to spend time with her before I could go to Lethabo mxm. My phone beeps and it's a WhatsApp text from Lethabo I smile and open it

Take this weekend to yourself and relax, I will manage it says and I am fuming with rage, why this l of a sudden I thought we had a connection and he loved spending time with m. I go to view statuses and I see he posted Something he wrote

'what is meant to be will always be' what does he mean by this. I close my phone put it on the couch trying to calm down I don't want to be mad please come see calm down. The door opens and she walks

"Where the hell were you Amanda," I say already on my feet

"Whoa calm down Dee, I was out and what's with the shouting," she says

"I am sorry just that I was worried it's not like you to not sleep at home" I say trying to justify my outburst

"I am an adult Dee and I was safe," she says
"I am sorry, you know with women disappearing every day I thought maybe," I say
"I understand babe" she says and I smile
"So, where were you" I ask and she blushes
"Well my boo and I worked things out yesterday, he doesn't care about what I used to do
Dineo he loves me enough to overlook that and I couldn't be any happy" she says and I feel
rage brewing from deep inside me It is taking everything in me to be this calm right now
"But why would you go back to him after what he did" I say and she narrows her eyes
"I was the in the wrong and love forgives and our love has proven to be stronger than
anything" she says and I told my fist and take a deep breath
"Amanda," I say in a warning tone
"Babe I can't talk now; I need to go pack he will be here any minute to pick me up" she says
leaving me there and opening her bedroom door. This is why Lethabo told me to not come
this weekend he will be with her. These two are betraying me in the worst possible way. I
go to my room and start trashing it

EMILY

I went to my in-law's house hoping that I run into that girl, the transporter. When I arrived,
the house was silent and I guess people are not back yet. I open the fridge and find a bottle
of wine, yes, it is one of my favs, I pour a glass and turn to the fridge.

"Hello" a voice says making me jump
"Oh, my God I thought no one was home" I say
"Oh, Sorry I was in my room" she says and God her hair is So beautiful and So is she
I am Emily, Mzwakhe's wife" I say and I see her sigh in relief
"Oh, I am Afrika" she says
"Do you want a glass" I ask sipping on my wine
"No thanks I don't drink" she politely declines
"Living with Sbahle in the same house baby girl trust me you are going to need a drink
100% of the time" I say and she giggles
"I will survive" she says and I decide to test the waters
"My husband told me you are working with him" I say
"Yes, I move. Sequences for his Software development" she says and I realize that she has no
clue that she is working for a drug empire
"Mzwa sings your praises, he says you are the started student he has ever come across" I
say
"I get the brains from my dad" she says and I smile
"Okay babe, so how are you loving being here" I ask
"It will take time for me to adjust but a day at a time will get me there" she says
"Don't worry I will pop in once in a while to check in okay" I say and she smiles and nods.
She is such an innocent child God I hate using her like this

CHAPTER 37

•AFRIKA

That shower is exactly what I needed trust me and I am very relaxed now that lavender
shower gel works wonders, I got to my room and removed the towel and start to lotion my
naked body. I need to call Mandy I am sure she is wondering why I didn't come today since

it's Friday, I need to tell her that I am staying here now but how do I explain it without making her worry. I put on my short pajamas and comb my hair when the door opens and Mr. Mdlalose walks in

"Baba" I say feeling uncomfortable, why would he just get in here without knocking

"Afrika" he says after moving his eyes from my thighs

"Can I help you with. Something" I ask and he clears his throat

"Nomalanga said I should tell you that the food is here" he says

"I already had a sandwich about 2 hours ago" I say placing my hands on my exposed thighs hoping that they cover me because his eyes keep moving there and it's making me nervous

"2 hours ago, no you need to eat, come" he says

"Okay I will be right there" I say and he walks out, I finally breathe and go lock the door and change into leggings and a sweater and put on my slippers and exit. I get to the dining room

"I hope you like seafood" Ndlovukazi says

"I have never had it before but I will try it" I say and Sbahle laughs

"Just have a taste and if it doesn't work for you, I will go make Something for you in the kitchen" she says and I look up and Mr. Mdlalose is looking at me intensely. What is wrong with him tonight God. I sit down and dish up and to my surprise it tastes really good.

"It's really good ma, especially these" I say

"Oh, calamari I love it two, but I am obsessed with prawns" she says and shows me how to eat it and I must admit it tastes really good

"I think I am going to learn a lot from you" I say and she laughs

"I will try to be the best teacher baby girl" she says and I smile. I really like Ndlovukazi she has this motherly aura you can't help but feel the warmth

AMANDA

Just like we used to before our brief separation, we are watching one of our favorite shows and I have my legs on his lap and he keeps on rubbing them. Lethabo's love language is physical touch and quality time So I know this moment is everything to him. I kiss his hand from time to time. He is having a beer and poor me is having blueberry cheesecake flavored ice cream. Something has been weighing heavily on me

"Baby" I say

"Mommy" he says

"Where is your mother" I ask

"She went to Thaba-Nchu, they had a funeral So she is staying there a while to make sure that the kids are well" he says

"And what is going to happen when comes back" I ask

"I explain to her that I love you and not even your past could change that, I explain to her that she is going to be a grandmother" he says Sounding casual

"You know she won't just accept me back like you did" I say

"That's her problem babe, I want you and I love only you, she doesn't have to support this she just has to respect it, I don't want you to worry about anything, I will protect and defend you Ama" he says and I smile

"I believe you baby" I confess

"I am glad to hear that, So Mommy" he says

"Mmhh" I say and he sips on his Corona

"Can we please go to the OB/GYN please just want to see my boy in there" he says and places his hand on my stomach

"I don't see why not love" I murmur

"I will ask around for the best one and then you will go there for the entire pregnancy" he says

"We don't have to waste money you know, the clinic offers the services for free" I say

"Definitely not! Ama this is my first child and I want you to have the smoothest pregnancy ever" he says

"You are just the best babe thank you" I say and he brings his face closer for a kiss

•NOMALANGA

I have a lot to do today, Mpilo is coming home So I need to prepare his favorite meal, yes he wasn't gone for that long but he has been eating foreign food each day since he left So I just want to bring his taste buds back to South Africa too. The perfect day starts with me working out So I change into my gym gear and head to our indoor gym when I get in Bahle is working out too

"Oh, at least I have a workout buddy, morning baby" I say

"Morning Ndlovukazi" she says without looking at me

"Why didn't you tell me you will be hitting the gym this morning, I would have been early So we could start at the same time" I say

"I thought you would be doing Something with your new daughter Afrika" she says and I am shocked

"What? What are you talking about" I ask?

"You seem to be singing her praises ever since you came here, complimenting her and all" she says

"Sbahle" that's all I manage to say

"No Ndlovukazi you never compliment me like that" she says

"What am I supposed to compliment from you Sbahle, the rudeness, the disrespect, the arrogance, the ungratefulness" I ask and she cries

"Man, I am your daughter" she says

"Yes you are but I never taught you all of these things, the only thing I am trying to do is show you the way, no one will want to be in your circle Sbahle you will go through life alone if you don't change this attitude of yours, this has nothing to do with Afrika, it's all about you, you don't like her because she is everything you are the opposite of, instead of seeing her as competition or your replacement rather look at her as Someone you could befriend and have a relationship with" I say

"Will anything I do ever be good enough for you" she says and I smile

"Emotional blackmail on me, really Sbahle?" I ask

"Ndlovukazi I am not blackmailing you" she says

"Your father and I will not live forever and your brothers will have a life of their own to be babying you, I suggest you grow up and fast" I say walking out.

•MZWAKHE

I went to see my father because I need to talk to him about this whole Afrika situation, she said Something that has been taking sleep from me and she holds all the power to this whole thing, this is not about just memorizing sequences and delivering them to people weak in week out, it's about trust, it's about having Someone you can easily control, Someone who has Something to lose, having a transporter keeps us safe from having to deal with a lot of people information moves from us to the client with no paperwork and trail meaning the will never be evidence when we are investigated and we also don't have to meet with our clients and have our pictures out there So it goes deeper. My father seems to be on another planet of thoughts.

"Baba is everything okay" I ask

"Yeah I am just wondering how Mpilo's meeting went with that other cartel" he says

"We will hear about it when he gets home tonight baba" I say and he nods but it can tell that this is not what is making him get on his train of thoughts.

"I want us to talk about Afrika" I say and his eyes shoot straight to me

"What about her" he says
"She said she wants out" I say and he laughs
"She must just forget about it" he says
"We need to reason with her" I say
"Find out what she holds dear to her heart and threaten it then she will be grounded" he says
"But in that she will know that the whole Software story is bull" I say
"Maybe it's time she knew what she is really in, how dangerous we are and that she must never try to cross us" he says
"I will use that as a last resort baba" I say
"She is your project, keep her in check" he says and sips his cognac

•MPILO

What a total waste of my time, those Spanish mother fuckers had nothing important to talk to me about, they want to move our product and that is Something they could have spoken to Mariana about, I told them that she is in charge and if they don't want to be working with a woman they can take their money and distribution channels and walk and we all know that money is way too important So they will go with our terms. I landed at OR Tambo and got a cab, I know they are expecting me later on but I managed to get an earlier flight. The taxi drops me off and I get in. When I approach the kitchen, my nostrils are filled with an aroma that makes me hungry at the same time. I get to the kitchen and Ma is standing over the stove cooking

"Making my favorite" I say and she looks up
"Oh, Fana you are home, but your flight was for later on" she says
"I got one for earlier ma, that meeting was just useless" I say
"I am just happy you home, I hate this traveling" she says and I smile
"I know Ndlovukazi" I say and kiss her forehead
"Ma you did say the pink box right" a voice I don't recognize says
"Yes dear" she responds
"New helper" I ask
"No baby your brother will explain, her name is Afrika and she is such a good girl very helpful too I like her" she says
"I got it" a voice behind me says and the hair on my back stand up
"Oh, thanks baby" ma says and I look back to see this good girl and I swear all the air left my whole body, I couldn't believe my eyes, it's her it's the stranger from the mall, our eyes are locked and I feel this connection move between us, at this moment even my mother doesn't exist. I never thought I would see her again but now here she is standing in my mother's kitchen. Ndlovukazi clears her throat and we both break the deep eye contact and look at her
"Mpilo this is Afrika and baby this is my Son Mpilo he just got back from a short trip" she says and I am the first one to hold out my hand for a shake and she takes it and the electricity from that day is still there
"Hi, it's nice to meet you and you have a beautiful name" I say and she smiles leaving me with weak knees
"Thank you and it's nice to meet you too" she says her Soft voice serenading me.

MPILO

I couldn't believe my eyes, really, I never thought I would come back home and find the only woman that has made me feel all those foreign standing in my mother's kitchen helping her cook my food, these things only happen in the movies man, I didn't want to leave the kitchen but I could see that my presence was making her a little uncomfortable, So I went to take a shower and go sit in my room and maybe nap a bit, a knock comes through and I shout come in, she walks in with a plate and glass of juice
"Oh, I am sorry I wasn't aware that you weren't dressed" she says looking back and I smile, I mean I am not naked I am in my boxers only but not naked
"I am dressed Afrika you can look" I say and she turns and places the food on the chest of drawers making sure she doesn't look at me
"Your mom asked me to make you something to eat" she says
"Thank you, I would have done it myself but I felt like I was making you uncomfortable in there" I say
"Oh, no it's not like that, I usually keep to myself when in the presence of someone for the first time" she says still not looking at me, So I stand from my bed and go stand right in front of her
"But this is not our first meeting, tell me you remember me" I say hoping that she remembers me
"Yes, I do from the mall" she says and I smile like a retard
"So, don't be uncomfortable around me then" I say touching her chin to make her look at me, I am taller than her needs to look up a bit to look at me and her beautiful face is exposed, those lips tempting me to kiss them slowly and passionately.
"I need to go help your mom finish with cooking, welcome back home Mpilo" she says walking to the door and she is out. Fuck did you hear how she says my name, I smile and take a bite of the sandwich she made me.

•AMANDA

Lethabo and I found the perfect OB/GYN, his female colleague told him about her and in the morning we got ready and went to see her, she is indeed the best but she doesn't come cheap but my man couldn't care less about the money, he is all for me getting the best doctor. We did the ultrasound and he got so emotional it was really beautiful too see. A week again all hope was lost but now here he is with me loving me and this baby past everything. We went to the mall afterward, he said he doesn't want me wearing jeans anymore and suffocating his son. Imagine so we got me dresses, leggings and jumpsuits, just a few because I will come back again when my bump is bigger. We are now at the restaurant
"Thank you babe" I say and he smiles
"Anything for you Ama, I want you to have the best pregnancy babe" he says
"I really appreciate this and you so much. Our child is blessed to have a father like you" I say
"You want to make me cry now right" he says and I laugh, I see Mike walk towards us and I take a deep breath he gets to our table before I could say anything to my boyfriend
"Mandy, I thought that was you" he says and I sigh
"Hey Mike" I say sounding bored
"You are so scary, where have you been" he asks
"I have been around" I respond not even looking at him
"Babe" my boyfriend says questioning this
"I am sorry love; this is Mike and Mike this is my boyfriend Lethabo" I say
"Boyfriend huh wow I am shocked, but aren't you going to tell him how you know me" he says and I stop breathing

"There is no need" I say
"I will do it for you, my guy I used to be a client of hers she was a mad escort and damn" he says and I wish the ground could open and swallow me
"I am not your guy first of all and I am not going to let you disrespect my girlfriend like this, please leave us in peace we are having a private moment here" Lethabo defends me and I am looking at him shocked
"I didn't mean to offend you my guy, I will leave you, Mandy see you around beast" he says and walks away laughing
"Baby I am so sorry" I say
"It's okay Ama" he says but I can tell that it annoyed him like it would any human
"We can tell them to make it a take away then go back home" I say and he shakes his head
"No Ama you said you wanted to eat here and you will eat here, our day won't be ruined by Some jackass," he says
"You don't have to pretend like what just happened didn't make you mad" I say
"Yes Amanda I am mad, more than mad just not at you, I am mad at that guy, I know about your past now and it's up to me to decide how I react to it coming up when it does, and for us to completely get it behind of us we need to move on with our lives" he says and I cry
"I love you so much" I say
"I love you too, don't cry" he says and comes to sit near me and thank God we chose the booth

•AFRIKA

He still has that effect on me, seeing him and touching him made my panties Soak wet, he intimidates me but a part of me wants to be in his presence, he makes these butterflies go tad crazy when I am in his presence. God I never thought I would see him again and here I am in his parents' home. I get back to the kitchen and Ndlovukazi is humming Some Song
"Was he still up" she asks
"Yes, ma'am he was" I say
"I hope a full house won't be too much for you" she says
"Absolutely not, it's nice living with people, it has always just been my sister and my mom" I say
"That other time we had a conversation about your family you didn't seem comfortable" she says and I swallow
"Yeah I didn't have the best growing up but Amanda my sister made everything possible for me she is my entire life I owe everything to her" I say and she smiles
"She sounds like a good person" she says
"She is one in a million" I say
"What about your mom" she asks
"Uhm my mom she" I Mumble
"We don't have to talk about it baby, relax" she assures me
"It's okay, Sibho, my mother is an alcoholic and she never raised me because she was always intoxicated Somewhere with her boyfriend, I think it's because of Something that happened with my father but she won't talk to me about it" I say and shrug my shoulders
"But here you are fighting on studying Actuarial Science, that shows that tough times don't last but tough people do, I am proud of you Afrika. You remind me So much of myself growing up" she says
"Thank you ma" I say and she tastes what we cooking
"Mpilo is going to finish this whole pot" she says and the mention of his name makes me feel Somehow
"Between him and Mzwakhe who is the oldest" I ask
"Oh, Mzwa is my first then Mpilo then Bahle" she says and I nod

"I met Emily the other day she is lovely, does Mpilo have a wife" I fish and she laughs
"That one can't even get a girlfriend, so wife is far-fetched" she says and I sigh in relief. I don't know why but I am happy to hear this

•DINEO

I have been in this flat all on my own, I am trying to come up with how I am going to make those two pay for what they did to me. Betrayal has the biggest price to pay, all I wanted to do was love them but what did they both do they shoved my love back in my face. They went behind my back and crossed me. I never wanted it to get this far, Lethabo I can understand but Amanda hers is unforgivable I have been here for her from day one but she insists on not seeing me and she has no idea how much that helps. I sniff her t-shirt to take in her scent but in no longer calms me like it used to do, I get out of my room and go to hers and get under the covers

•MZWAKHE

I went straight to my parents from work, Mpilo is back and I want to know how everything went in Colombia and explain why Afrika is there maybe he will help me find a way to ensure that she never leaves us. I get home and Afrika is with my mom in the kitchen

"Hello ladies" I say

"Hey Fano" ma says and Afrika just waves at me

"Where is Life" I ask

"Check his bedroom" Ndlovukazi says

"I am staying for dinner, Em and the kids went to her parents" I say and she laughs

"Okay boy no problem" she says and I go find my brother, he is laying on his bed with headsets on, I pull him by a leg

"Mzwa man" he says because that's how me and him play

"Jet-lagged," I ask as he sits up taking off those things from his ears

"Nah not really" he says

"So, how did the meeting go" he asks

"Those mother fuckers just wasted my time for absolutely nothing" he says

"Sorry man" he says

"And Afrika" he asks with a wide smile on his face, I narrow my eyes

"Why the smile" I ask

"Because she is the perfect stranger I told you about, the one from the mall" he says

"The Afro goddess" I ask

"The one and only, man when I saw her this afternoon, I just went crazy all over again" he says and I exhale deeply

"No Mpilo No you can't" I say and he frowns

"This is our transporter man you can't" I say

"What, fuck no Mzwakhe" he says getting off his bed

"You know we don't mix business and pleasure. Business always comes first" I say and he places his hands on his head

"This isn't happening God No" he says

"I am sorry man" I say

"Why is she here though" he asks

"Preacher wanted to kidnap her from her room at res" I say

"She didn't have security detail" he asks

"No, I didn't think one of us would come after her" I say

"You risked her life" he says

"Calm down man" I say and he laughs

"Calm down how Mzwa, the first time I fall for a woman and she happens to be our transporter so tell me how do I calm down" he says half shouting
"Just stay away from her she is business" I say and he laughs then walks out. Fuck why is this happening

CHAPTER 39

•MPILO

it feels like my heart has been ripped out of my chest, how do I just switch off my feeling for Afrika, I hate feeling So helpless, I saw her first Mzwa knows it. He is my brother for crying out loud and he should be on my side, after all, he was one of the people behind told me to give love a chance now I found a girl I am willing to give this thing a shot with but business is standing in my way. I went back to my room after smoking a cigarette and I wore something decent, on my way to the dining room I bump into Afrika coming out from her room that is next door to mine

"Oh, I am sorry, seems like we always bump into each other," she says and for the first time she gives me a smile that warms my heart

"Don't sweat" I say putting my hand on her shoulder and it's there the chemistry, it's strong

"Heading to the dining room" she asks

"Yes, let's join everyone" I say and she walks in front while I look at her booty and it's something I can work with, we get to the dining room and everyone is already seated, I look at my brother and he is giving me a disapproving look I roll my eyes and ignore him

"Aow Dikane welcome home" my dad says

"Sure taima" I say and take a seat and she takes the vacant one near me

"I smell cigarettes, Mpilo you started again" Ndlovukazi says

"I needed one ma please" I say and she cliques her tongue

"And what did you bring me from Colombia" my sister asks

"I didn't find the time to go shopping Sbahle, business took priority like always" I say looking at Mzwa

"Okay dish up" ma says

"So, Afrika how are you settling in with the family" Mzwa says and shoot him a look

"Very well thanks, I was just hoping to go see my sister tomorrow" she says

"Oh, that's wonderful baby, send my regards" my mom says

"Will do ma" the beauty besides me says

"I will tell the driver to take you then" my father says and I frown, they continue with their casual banter but my heart is aching to be alone with Afrika and get to know her better. I move my hand under the table and find hers then place them on my lap, she looks my way and doesn't retract her hand and that's a relief

•MR MDLALOSE

We had our dinner and a few drinks while having a conversation, I could see that Mzwakhe wanted to talk to me and I am wondering if this Afrika girl started talking about leaving the job again. This day is not like the other because Noma and I are even laughing at each other's jokes

"May I be excused please. I want to retire for the night". Afrika says
"Oh, okay baby goodnight and thanks for helping me cook" Nomalanga says
"It was a pleasure ma and I got to learn your recipe" she says and we all laugh
"Smart girl" Ndlovukazi says and Afrika leaves I watch her until she disappeared into the corridor, we sit for a while and everyone starts yawning, Mpilo is the second to leave, then Noma followed until it was just Mzwa and me
"You have been looking like Something is burning you all night, what's wrong" I ask
"Your Son is what is wrong with ma baba" he says and gulps down his drink
"What did Mpilo do" I ask
"A while back he got to my house and told me he met the love of his life blah blah" he says
"And what is wrong with that it's good news he will give me more grandkids," I say
"That girl is Afrika Bab" he says and I lean in balance my hands on my knees
"You say what?" I ask
"Exactly baba this is bad, more than bad. He needs to let go of whatever he thinks he feels for her" he says
"Mpilo knows the rules, it's family first and business and in this instance his family and business are the same thing" I say
"Baba you didn't see him I swear he isn't the Mpilo we all know" he says
"I will talk to him then" I say and he nods
"Thanks baba, I have worked hard to have Mpilo ruin everything" he says
"I said I will talk to him tomorrow Mzwa" I say
"My wife is probably home I should get going" he says and we shake hands then he leaves
"Fuck it Mpilo" I say and sip my drink

•AFRIKA

I couldn't sleep I kept thinking about the warmth of his hand, it felt So Soft and how he kept on rubbing my knuckles made me feel Some type of way, I can't stop smiling Yoh, I like Mpilo, a few hours in the same circle and I am losing my mind. I blush and cover my face my bedroom door opens and I freeze could it be Mr. Mdlalose again, my heart starts racing. My eyes are shut, I feel the person sit on my bed and stare at me and a second later they move the strand of hair from my face and caress my cheek, I remember this touch So I open my eyes and it's him, the light from the garden is producing a little light So it's not entirely dark
"I am sorry I didn't mean to wake you" he says
"No, it's okay, what are you doing in here" I ask rubbing my eyes making it seem like I was asleep
"I honestly don't know; I just couldn't sleep So I thought I should come to check up on you" he says
"Are you uhm, what do they call it? Jet-lagged?" I say
"I think So hey" he says
"I normally scroll through my Social media when I can't sleep" I say and he laughs
"I would rather just look at you" he says and I blush
"You are So beautiful Afrika" he says and we thank the man above for my chocolateness
"You don't look bad yourself" I say and he smiles
"Well thank you beautiful lady" he says and rubs his arm to be warm he is not wearing anything and his tattoos are exposed
"Cold?" I ask

"I will be okay" he says and I don't know why but I open the covers
"Hop in" I say and he narrows his eyes
"You sure" he says
"I will change my mind Mpilo" I say and he quickly climbed on and got in
"It's warm in here" he says and I yawn
"Oh, look at that" I say
"Let's try sleeping maybe I will doze because I am next to you" he says and smile
"Okay" I say
"Let me set the alarm So I can get out of your room before anyone's sees me then Ndlovukazi will have me on a platter" he says
"Good idea" I say and he presses his phone then places it on the pedestal. He lays down properly and pull me to him, I have my back to him. God this feels So right, why am I So comfortable around this guy, where did I get the courage to even invite him into my bed but it doesn't matter because I am happy at this moment.
"Goodnight Afrika" He says and kisses my neck
"Sleep well Mpilo" I say
"No doubt" he says

•AMANDA

I woke up and Lethabo was not next to me, this is a first, I get up and put on my gown, and go find him in the house and he is making breakfast, he looks So cute in that apron
"This is not how it happens in the movies" he says and I laugh
"What is that supposed to mean" I ask
"The lady only wakes up when her man brings the breakfast," he says and I laugh louder
"Wow love" I say
"Ai jwale re jola le mapantsula rona" he says and I take the dry dishcloth and hit him with it
"Excuse you" I say and he laughs
"Ka dlala man" he says
"You better mister" my phone vibrates and I take it out of my gown pocket, it's a text from a number I don't recognize
Stay away from my boyfriend you prostitute, do you think he will look past your past, never, he will always see you for what you are. You better pray I don't meet with you because I will give you a beating of your life my smile fades and tears threaten
"Are you cheating on me Lethabo" I say and he laughs
"Why would I do that" he says not even looking at me
"Tell me the truth" I say and I am more emotional than I would have been, damn these hormones, he looks at me and he notices that I am serious
"Baby what's wrong jwale?" he says quickly coming my side
"Who would send me this Lethabo" I say handing him my phone and he reads it
"Baby I swear I am not cheating on you, Ama I would never hurt you like that I swear, you are enough for me Amanda and if what this text is saying I wouldn't even be back with you love please" he says already wiping my tears
"Manje who is this" I ask again
"I don't know babe but I promise to find out Amanda I am Sorry babe don't cry please"
"Whoever she is tell her she better be ready for me" I say and he smiles
"But Ama there is no one and I promise you this, I might be smiling but I understand how serious this is So please baby don't hurt yourself because of Something that doesn't exist" he says and pecks my lips

"Now can daddy continue making breakfast for you babe?" He asks and I nod

CHAPTER 40

•MPILO

I woke up even before the alarm could go off, she was still in my arms and she fits in perfectly, we were now face to face and I couldn't help but stare at her beautiful face, I took in all of her features, she is perfect God. I quickly took my phone and took a few snaps of her. I got off bed carefully to not wake her. I get out of her room to mine undetected and make my bed quickly and hit the shower. I am done in no time So I make way to the kitchen for a glass of milk, I can't stop smiling and whistling Some nice melodies, my mother is in the kitchen already giving orders for Sunday lunch and supper to the helpers.

"Morning Ndlovukazi" I say and go kiss her on the cheek

"Someone woke up happy" she says

"Why wouldn't I be, I woke up to live another day, the birds are singing and the sun is shining" I say and she laughs

"What did you dream of?" She asks

"It was more than just a dream" I say

"I love seeing you this happy Mpilo" she says

"Well prepare to always be in the presence of happy and cheery Mpilo because from this morning nothing can steal his happiness" I say opening the fridge

"I just hope this happy Mpilo will consider finding a girl to love" she says and I roll my eyes

"All in good time mother patience" I say

"Help me with breakfast please, the ladies have Something to do before starting with lunch" she says

"I would love to help ma" I say

"What time is it" ma asks

"Just after 7" I say

"Then let's make Something quickly everyone will be in the dining table Soon" she says already going to the pantry to get Some ingredients. My father walks in wearing his guy gear

"Mpilo" he says

"Morning baba" I say

"Tell the helpers to stock up water in the gym" he says

"Okay I will" I say and he walks away but stops at the door

"We have Something to discuss after breakfast okay" he says and I nod, what does he want to talk to me about now eish

•LETHABO

I was packing her bag while she gets dressed, I won't lie I am sad that she is leaving but she wanted to talk to Afrika and tell her that we are back together, I don't know what I am going to do with myself after I drop her off

"Marry me So you don't ever leave" I say and she laughs

"That is the most unromantic proposal ever" she says and I smile

"I just want to have you here with me always" I say and she smiles

"Oh, baby. I am Sorry I have to leave this early" she says

"I hate that you have to leave at all babe" I say and she comes to me and snakes her hands on my neck
"It's all going to be okay, you can come get me on Thursday" she says
"That's not good enough but I will take it, for now, Ama I am serious I want to marry you" I say
"And I want to be your wife too but babe let's get through your mom first" she says
"I told you that my mother's opinion won't change anything in our relationship, I know she is going to be difficult and if I have to wait for her to approve, I won't marry you" I say and she lets out a sigh
"That's true" she says and I kiss her
"Okay finish up before Afrika gets there and not find you" I say
"She is going to be So happy to hear that we are back together" she says and I smile
"Not as happy as me but it's good to know that she loves me for you" I say
"You are perfect for me Lethabo, you even gave me your seed to grow the first time I gave you my body" she says and my ego is fed
"Yeah it shows I don't shoot blanks" I say and she laughs
"Now you are calling yourself" she says and I laugh

•KHAYA

After breakfast, I came straight to the study and I have been waiting on Mpilo for almost 45minutes, I am impatient now. We need to address this issue So he can block whatever he thinks he feels for that girl, he must remember what is important and stick to it. He walks in
"Sorry I took my time I was washing the dishes" he says
"Don't we pay people for that" I say and he narrows his eyes
"There is nothing wrong helping them out with the little things once in a while" he says
"You are becoming weak Mpilo" I say
"Haibo being considerate doesn't make me weak" he says and I can see he is getting annoyed
"Listen here Son, Mzwakhe told me about you falling for Afrika" I say and he laughs
"I should have known he would be coming to you, and no baba I met Afrika first I just didn't have a way of tracking her down" he says
"Well that is unfortunate because your brother got to her first, she is business now" I say and he chuckles and shakes his head
"She is a person Dikane not business" I say
"Focus Mpilo Focus, that girl is a business asset, and you must stay away from her" I say
"So, I must just switch off my feelings" he asks
"Exactly what I am saying Son. Family then business comes first and in this instance family is business boy" I say
"I love her" he says and I laugh
"There are a lot of girls who would kill to be with you, chose one and learn to love her" I say
"No baba it's Afrika that I want, they are a lot of intelligent people out there chose one and teach them what Afrika is doing" he says
"Mpilo don't try me, you think your balls are a match to mine now huh, you think you can challenge me now huh. Remember boy everything you know I taught it to you and there is a lot more from where that came from, I will make both your lives a living hell, I will make her life a living hell you have already placed your weakness on the table, HER. I will cripple you Mpilo. I worked very hard to get this business where it is today just to have a skirt ruin it all. BUSINESS FIRST remember that" I roar and he walks out, I sigh and brush my forehead

•AMANDA

I got to the flat and Dineo wasn't around and her bedroom was a whole new mess, it's like she was trashing it on purpose out of anger. I tidy around the house and thank God my boyfriend got us Some treats before heading here. I decide to change into a comfortable lose dress, after a while in front of the TV, my sister walks in only to close the security door and she leaves the door open a bit

"You are glowing yeses" she says and I blush

"Oh, well thank you sweetheart" I say and she takes sit next to me

"I am sorry I didn't come through on Friday," she says

"You would've slept alone if you did because I wasn't here" I confess

"Amanda you know you are not supposed to be going out in your condition, alcohol and clubs are canceled for time being" she says and I laugh

"Relax mamcane, I was not out drinking" I say

"Then where were you" she queries

"Well you will be pleased to know that junior and I were safe inside being spoilt by daddy" I say with the widest smile on my face

"No ways Lethabo" she asks her eyes already shining with joy

"Yes, sis we made up Afrika he chose me" I say and she screams like we just won the lottery

"Oh, Mandy this is great news sis'wam, how did it happen" she asks and I tell her the whole story

"You two are just distant to be together shame, and he must be So happy about the pregnancy" she says

"I have never seen his So excited, he is losing his mind" I say

"Ncooooo sis this is just amazing really" she says emotionally

"This morning he hinted marriage" I say still not believing it myself

"What, Oh, my God this has to be the best news ever Mandy" she says

"Like Afrika, everything of mine is just coming along just fine, you are in University, I am in school trying to make it, I am expecting the biggest blessing God entrusted with a woman, Lethabo loves me and he wants to make me his wife, I don't know but it feels like God is finally showing up for me" I say

"He truly is Mandy, you deserve everything and more, you have sacrificed a lot it's time you got blessed for everything" she says and we hug

"We love you So much Nana" I say and she sniffs

"I love you both So much sis" she responds and we let go

"Bring the plastic on top of the counter it has goodies" I say and she gets up and I chose a movie So long

•DINEO

I stepped back from the door feeling like I am about to explode I couldn't even walk properly, the rage was completely taking over me and paralyzing me, the last time I was this mad and off my pills I almost killed Someone. I heard everything she and Afrika said I heard it all. I get to my car after relaying on the walls for balance, I take out my anger on the starrng wheel and just scream it all out, I roughly remove the wig on my head and throw it to the back, I calm down and start laughing while starting the engine

•LETHABO

On my way back from dropping Ama I got a call from Paul and he said he is outside my place and he has a bottle of Hennessy and I couldn't be more grateful at least I won't be bored. When I got home, he was standing at my gate having a glass, we got in and took out camp chairs and we chilled in front of the house while listening to music from his car

"We should get braai meat" I say

"Don't you have a braai stand we could just buy raw meat and braai it ourselves" he says and I nod and get the braai stand and charcoal, I go marinate the meat while he starts the fire and in no time we are standing by the braai stand guarding the meat So it doesn't burn

"So, how are things with your madam" he asks and I smile

"We are good man, I am happy I gave us a chance man, we are even expecting" I say

"She is pregnant?" He asks

"Product of the first time we got intimate; I am overjoyed" I say

"Congratulations man, this is great news" he says and we shake hands.

"Now I want to marry her, Soon as I tell my mom that we fixed things I am having a conversation with my uncle's and I am paying her lobola" I share my plans with him

"Way to go man, make an honest woman out of her" he says and we toast with our glasses, Dineo's car park behind mine and I roll my eyes

"Eish I told her to take some time off what is she doing here" I mumble and she gets to us, she is looking like a complete mess, her mascara is running from crying and the tears have dried, her plaited hair is messy I think she has been scratching it like a crazy person

"Lethabo" she says

"Dineo are you okay" I ask and she nods

"Yeah I came to cook Something for you" she says and I sigh

"There is no need hey I told you to take time to yourself this weekend" I say

"No, I don't mind" she half shouts and I narrow my eyes

"I mind you don't look too well go home and rest" I say and she goes silent for a while like she is gathering her thoughts. She rubs her forehead

"I am So Sorry you are right I shouldn't be here I Sorry" she says running out of the yard to her car and she just drives away

"That was weird" Paul says.

"What just happened" I ask because I have never seen her like that

"Who is she anyway" he asks

•AFRIKA

I had a great day with my sister and I am So happy that life is coming together really good for her, she deserves all the happiness in the world, she is a great person and it's about time the universe gave her a break. The driver gets to the Mdlalose family home and I get out, much as I had a great day I just wanted to get here and see Mpilo. I walk in and Ndlovukazi is in the kitchen with Sbahle

"Sanibonani" I greet them

"Hey baby, how is your sister" ma asks

"She is very well thanks ma" I say and she smiles

"That's good baby, I hope you enjoyed yourself" she says

"I had an amazing time thanks" I say

"Great, you should go prepare yourself for dinner, we are trying a new dishwasher today" she says and I am glad I left space for dinner

"Okay ma I will see you at the dinner table" I say and she nods. I make my way to my room and take my toiletries, as I was about to walk out Mr. Mdlalose walks in and I freeze on the very same spot

"You are back" he says

"Yebo baba, thanks for organizing the transport" I say
"It's a pleasure Afrika" he says giving me an intense look into can't help but move my eyes from him
"Uhm I was about to go shower" I say hoping he would leave but he just steps aside a bit and I move and the space is So small that my body rubs against his, I get to the bathroom and lock the door and exhale. Once I am done, I go back to my room and luckily, he isn't there So I change and go to the garden, that's. My favorite place, I was standing by the fountain when I noticed Mpilo by the pool, I smile and go to him
"Hey, I was wondering where you were" I say and he takes a puff of his cigarette
"Hey Afrika" he says Sounding So cold
"Are you okay" I ask because this is not the Mpilo of yesterday or this morning at breakfast
"Can I help you with Something" he asks and I gasp for air
"Uhm I, Uhm I was just" he cuts me off
"Stop mumbling and speak I don't have the whole day geez" he says and I already have tears in my eyes, why is he treating me like this
"I am Sorry" I say and walk around blinking my tears

•DINEO

Why the hell did I drive to his place now he must think I am Some. Kind of weird, I can't let my anger get the better of me, I need to plan properly, I couldn't risk going to the flat and losing it, So I decided to go home to my parents. I need to think of Something to tell Lethabo about my behavior today. When I got home, I found my mom, one look at me she was already near
"Dinny baby are you okay" she asks concerned
"I am okay mom" I say casually
"Then why do you look like a mess" she asks and I sigh deeply
"I was in a road range than turned physical ma" I say
"Dineo you can't be going around fighting" she says
"I know ma, I am Sorry" I say
"Are you sure you don't need to get back to your pills" she says and I my eyes
"My treatment in Cuba worked ma, I don't have Bipolar anymore" I say
"I know baby but it wouldn't hurt seeing a doctor here to be sure I mean aggression is one of the symptoms" she says
"Mom please I am only human I am bound to be aggressive at time" I say and she sighs
"I was just trying to help" she tells
"You don't have to because I am fine really" I say
"Go take a shower I will prepare Something for you to eat So long" she suggests and I walk out. Thinking about Amanda and Afrika's conversation

•MPILO

I am such a fool now she might think I am Some jerk who doesn't know if he is coming or going, I just had a lot on my mind and I just snapped at her. What my father said to me this morning really messed me up, I gave my life to run this business side by side with him and I want this one thing and he doesn't want me to have it because of business, what about my happiness, I love Afrika why can't he just cut ties with her and find another person. I don't even know what she might be thinking of me right now, I don't even have experience at this love thing I don't know how to approach her and ask for forgiveness. The helpers come to tell me that dinner is served, I go join them and Afrika is not there
"I hope you enjoy this guys" ma says
"It looks delish ma" Bahle says. We start dishing and Afrika hasn't shown up yet
"Where is Afrika" Ndlovukazi asks

"Oh, she said she has a headache" I make an excuse for her because I know she didn't come to dinner because I acted like a complete jerk

"Oh, poor child, take Some Advil's to her please Mpilo, I will dish up for her and put them in the fridge" she says And I stand up, I can feel the intense gaze my father is giving me but I just ignore him flat out. I take a glass of water from the table and walk to her room, I don't even knock I just go in she is inside the covers, I exhale and ho sit next to her, she has her headsets on and eyes closed, I remove one from her ear and her eyes shoot open and they are bloodshot red she has been crying

"I am sorry for talking to you like that, I just had a lot on my plate Afrika I am sorry" I say

"You don't have to be" she says

"Babe please don't be like this" I say caressing her beautiful face.

"It served me right for being too big for my boots" she says

"Don't say that please, last night was amazing and I want to sleep in here again tonight please don't lock I will be back after dinner, I told them you have a headache" I say

"Just go Mpilo" She says

"Don't sleep yet I will be back" I say and kiss her on the lips, the more they tell me to leave her alone the more I want her. I walk out and before I could even close her door my father appears looking like he is ready to murder he comes and stands in front of me

"Yekela ukhlokoloza inyoka emgodini Mpilo (stop poking a snake in its hole)" he says and walks away

•EMILY

I hate what my husband is becoming So I decided to fully commit to taking my father in law down, with him gone my husband will not need to impress him and risk all he has worked for just for a drug empire. The key to getting everything I need is this Afrika girl, I hired Someone to find out everything on her I wanted to know every detail to the color of her eyes and he said he got me everything, he delivered the finding today's and I couldn't find time to look at it because Mzwa has been home the whole time. He went to shower So I decided to go to his study and have a look at this quickly, drunkard mom, prostitute sister, God dysfunctional I tell you, Something catches my eye and it's shocking, father was a Genius who invented a never seen before drug but he got killed for it, by an unknown person who wanted a partnership and Mr. Mdlalose my father in law is the only man that started producing a never seen before drug a few months after this man's death, could this be a coincidence or did Khaya kill this girl's dad for the drug but I chose to go with the second possibility. I know my father in law and this screams him in all aspects.

"Em baby" my husband shouts and I quickly put back the documents in the envelope and hide then go out

"Yes babe" I say finding him in the kitchen

"Where did you disappear to" he asks

"Was trying to choose a movie" I like

"Found anything" he asks

"Not yet I was still scrolling, fix the snacks and I will find one"

"Beer or wine" he asks

"Beer babe" I say

"That's my girl" he says spanking me and I giggle then walk to our lounge to find Something on Netflix. I will go back to playing detective tomorrow

CHAPTER 42
ONE WEEK LATER

•MPILO

I haven't spoken to Afrika since that Sunday because my father has been keeping an eye on me So I needed to tread carefully, Khaya Mdlalose is a dangerous man and he could harm Afrika just to make me get the message and I would hate myself if anything happened to her because of me. They designated a driver/security guard for her but that's one of my boys the nicest thing about treating people good is that they will help you out in times of great need. He doesn't spend much time with his wife So I booked them an afternoon at the hotel So he doesn't tell my father or Mzwa that I took Afrika. I am sitting in the car waiting for her, mine is with her driver, at around 2pmm she gets in and I look at her she has her eyes closed like she is trying to relax after a long day she opens he eyes and they land on me "Mpilo" she says after gasping for air

"I know you must be mad at me but I have a good reason why I didn't come back that night or any other night but. I am here because I couldn't stay away" I say

"What could be your reason" she asks and I sigh

"My father wants me nowhere near you" I say careful not to go into detail and her face changes making me wonder

"Okay" she says and doesn't probe any further

"Are you done for the day" I ask

"I have a 5 pm class butt the lecturer isn't around" she says

"Okay then" I say and start the engine.

"Where is my driver" She asks

"You will see him when we get back" I say and I see her blush through the review mirror

"Where are we going" she asks and I keep quiet, I drive to Some residential park

"I just wanted to have a quiet moment with you" I say and getting out of the car and opening her door, she gets out and I take out the food and blankie

"Picnic" she says with the widest smile and I can't help but return it. We set up and sit down, I love comfortable she is with me

"So, now that you are with me what next" she says and I just attack her with a kiss

"I've wanted to do this since the day I saw you in my mother's kitchen" I say and she looks down

"That was my first real kiss" she says and I laugh

"Yeah right" I say and she is keeping a straight face

"Are you for real" I ask shocked

"Yes" she says

"I take it you have never had a boyfriend before" I ask and she looks down embarrassed

"Yeah" she confesses and I smile

"Where have you been" I say kissing her again. I can't believe this

"Who is Afrika" I ask holding her hands

"Well Afrika is her name. Calm, honest, loyal, warm, give without expecting anything in return, humble as they come. I am just a girl who had it bad growing up but God was generous enough to give me my sister and her love made it bearable, my mom is an alcoholic who never cared for us and my father I don't know him, died when I was a baby. I am a 1st-year Actuarial Science student and I am obsessed with reading and Solving problems. I just want to make it in life and give my sister the best life" she says and I can't help but admire her.

"How old are you" I ask and she looks down

"I am turning 19 next week" she says

"You would be the youngest I have ever been with, but then again you are my first real girlfriend" I say

"I am your girlfriend" she asks and I giggle

"Whether you like it not babe" she giggles

"What about your dad you said he told you to stay away from me" she queries

"Don't worry about that babe I will figure something out, I wanted you from the very first day I saw you at that mall and Afrika nothing is going to stop us from being together. I just need you to be strong a lot is going to happen" I say and I see fear cross her eyes

"Don't be scared, I got you" I say

•DINEO

I had an entire week to calm down and think of a better plan and I came up with one, I will return everything to how it's supposed to be and I will get everything that I want. I made a few calls and I got everything I need. I am parked downtown at some dodgy ally. The door opens and the guy walks in

"Do you have my money" he asks

"Do you have what I asked for?" I say

"Obviously wena, what would I be doing here if I didn't" he says

"Don't be cocky with me please" I say and lock the doors and take out the brown envelope from my bag and hand it to me

"R5000" he says

"That's what we agreed on, just give me my stuff and tell me how it works" I say and he gives me a bottle containing two pills and a bottle with some brown liquid

"Crash those pills and put them in anything edible then it will flush anything but make sure you are near the hospital because in 20 minutes you will experience excruciating pains and then with this just pour a few drops in a drink and it will cause some drowsiness but the person will still be conscious" he says

"Okay cool" I say putting them in my bag

"It's nice doing business with you ngwana" he says and I open for him and he gets out and I start the engine and drive off.

•MZWAKHE

I was meeting my father at the lab, he came to see how things are going, I was hoping to bump into Mpilo too but he isn't here, things between us are rocky and I hate that, I don't want to be fighting him, me and him have always been close and to be torn apart like this because of a girl is not on. I found him in the humidifying room and he was addressing the workers in there, I must admit the operation has grown. He finishes and we walk to the office

"Everything seems to be going very well here" I say

"Yeah Mpilo knows how to run this whole thing" baba says

"How is he doing though" I ask

"He will get over it" he says

"Is he staying away from Afrika" I ask

"Yeah, he has been behaving. I am watching them like a hawk and I asked the driver to tell me about Afrika's movements and they haven't met behind my back" he says

"That's good. He will come around baba" I say

"He better because this tension is too much and your mother will notice and start asking questions and then try and force me to let go of that girl so she can be with Mpilo, you know how Ndlovukazi is" he says

"I am less worried about ma, we need Mpilo for this business baba he has an irreplaceable skill Dikane" I say and he sighs

"I know Mzwakhe and I am having sleepless nights because of it honestly" he confesses.
"I should try to reach out to him" I suggest
"You do that because he has been avoiding me" he says
"This is just messed up" I murmur
"You can say that again Son" he says

•AFRIKA

This has to be the happiest day of my life, I can't believe Mpilo did that for me, it was the perfect day indeed we even lost track of time, I can still smell him on me, we did a lot of kissing it feels like my lips are swollen. I can't believe I have a boyfriend. Mpilo left first So that his father doesn't suspect that we were together, I wonder what his problem is with Mpilo and I being together. I get home and they are already seated on the dinner table
"Finally, you are home, I was so worried" Ndlovukazi says
"I am Sorry ma; I had a group meeting" I say
"It's okay Nana I need your number so I can call you next time" she says
"I will give them to you" I assure her and I steal a glance at Mpilo who has his eyes fixed on his plate and a smirk on his face
"Sit down and dish, you must be hungry" she says and I nod taking a seat next to Mpilo like every other day while I am busy dishing up, I feel his hand squeezing my thigh I give him a side look
"So, how was school Afrika" Mr. Mdlalose asks
"It was very good but hectic baba thanks" I say
"So, are you as smart as they claim you are" Sbahle asks
"I hold my own Sbahle" I say and she nods
"Mpilo I was at the lab today and you weren't there" his father says
"Yeah I wasn't" he says not even looking at him
"So, where were you" he asks further
"I had a private matter to attend to" he says
"I hope you were out finding me a daughter in law" ma says and he laughs
"Ai Ndlovukazi let it slide" he says
"Just bring Someone I will be able to click with and she better have a good fashion sense" Sbahle says and I mentally roll my eyes
"Kahle we Bahle" Mpilo says drinking his juice my phone vibrates and I check it and it's Mpilo, okay when did he type this again
I am sleeping in your room tonight baby I smile
"Care to share the good news Afrika" Mr Mdlalose asks and I look at him shocked wondering what I should say
"Haibo Khaya" ma says
"She doesn't mind. So, Afrika" he insists
"Oh, next week Friday is my birthday So my sister says she wants me for the whole weekend" I say because already Mpilo asked to take me away
"Oh, I have to plan Something for Thursday then. Were you even going to let me know though" she says and I smile at her.
"I am not big on birthdays me" I say
"Not this year, we are celebrating" she says
"Thank you Ndlovukazi" I say
"Okay then you and Sbahle are excused to go do Some school work" she says already on her feet clearing the table
"Okay Goodnight everyone" I say and walk to my room to do Some work before Mpilo comes

CHAPTER 43

•EMILY

This is exactly what I hate about all this bullshit Mzwa is doing, ever since he went on a quest to be his father's favorite Son he hasn't been the man I fell in love with and it's frustrating, he neglects his girls most times because he always has Something to worry on, even now we having breakfast but he's on his phone

"Mzwa, the girls have been trying to talk to you for a few minutes now" I say taking his phone

"Em babe I need that" he says

"Your daughters need you" I say and he sighs

"Can we not do this in front of the girls" he says

"We wouldn't even be needing to do this if you could remember that you a husband and father" I say and we are disturbed by the lady that takes care of the girls

"Come on girls we should get to school" she says already holding their backpacks

"Have a great day babies, mommy loves you okay" I say giving each a kiss and they are out

"Emily please my phone" he says

"That's all you care about these days why am I even wasting my time" I say

"Why are you saying all of this" he asks and I chuckle

"You can't even see that you are losing yourself trying to be Khaya's puppet" I say

"Emily a lot is going on, Mpilo is in love with Afrika and he isn't supposed to, we are stressed that he might disclose everything about our operation to her and that would just ruin everything, Emily. He might choose her and without the two of them everything would just be a mess" he says and I raise my eyebrow. This is good, they have to get together and it would make my job a lot easy, Mpilo tells Afrika and then I extract it from Afrika and give it to my father and my father sends Mpilo and Khaya to jail and I have my husband back.

"Whatever Mzwa just get your shit together" I say and walk away, God is this your manna from heaven

•LETHABO

I went to the mall to buy this shoe I saw online, just that they didn't display much colours online So I was hoping they might have it in store and yes, I did the right thing by going the myself. I saw a few dresses I liked So I decided to get Amanda Some for when her bump gets bigger. I get home at around 6 and Dineo's car Is parked in the driveway So I leave mine out. I walk in and she is busy cooking

"Oh, hey" she says and I must admit she looks better than Sunday

"Hi" I manage to say in between the awkwardness

"You are home late" she says

"Yeah I passed by the mall" I say

"Adding to your closet" she continues the small talk

"Not really I just bought a pair of shoes and dresses for my girlfriend" I say

"Got a new girl" she asks

"No, my woman and I are good now" I say

"I am happy for you" she says

"Thanks, I am going to go and take a shower" I say

"Lethabo wait please" she says

"What's up" I say looking back at her

"About Sunday Sorry I came here looking like that, I just wanted to get my mind off things after what had happened, the guy that o was supposed to go out with that time and he canceled and told me to delete his, it was actually not him but his ex. He reached out and asked to meet So I drove to his place and while there the girl showed up started getting violent with me, that's why I was such a mess, it turns out that the girl isn't his ex they still together and they have 2 kids he just wanted to make me his side thing" she says with tears
"Oh, no Dineo. I am sorry to hear that" I say
"Messed up thing is I was falling for him but he betrayed me" she says and I go hug her
"Everything will be alright don't cry" I say trying to calm her down. Why do some men hurt women like this though?

•MPILO

I hate playing this hide and seek shit, I am a grown man and I should be able to love Afrika openly I have to be able to walk around with her holding hands and not afraid of who might see us and tell my father, loving her with reservations is just too much and I hate it. This new and different for both of us and we should be allowed to explore it and explore is, but until I have come up with a plan to get her out of this shit, I won't risk my father coming after either of us. I am in the office trying to balance these numbers, I hear Mzwa's voice approaching and I just roll my eyes, he opens the door and gets in

"Hey bro" he says

"Sure" I say not even looking at him

"I was hoping we could go get Some drinks" he says

"I am busy Mzwakhe" I respond

"Come on Life how long are you going to be like this" he asks

"Until you and your father let me be with Afrika" I say and he sighs

"We can't let that happen Life, you know business comes first and she is business" I bang the table and stand up

"Say she is business one more time I dare you to say it one more time" I roar

"Mpilo" he says then sighs

"I was supporting you when baba hated you for marrying a white girl, I had your back when you didn't want to be a part of this business because you were expecting your first child, I fought with baba So he cannot disown you, I spoke to him to give you an allowance So you can have an easy life with your family even when you didn't contribute shit, I had to work my job and yours So you don't have to leave Emily at home alone. I have been in situations that threaten my life and freedom So you don't have to because you were a family man, and you know why I did that I did because you are my brother and I love you, I understood that you wanted Something different and that was okay. I had you back Mzwakhe even when it meant fighting with baba, I had your back. Now you failing to have mine and that's cool" I say and he is looking at me expressionless

"Mpilo please" he says and shake my head

"No man I know where I stand with you now and it's cool. Thank you for showing me your true colors. Close the door on your way out" I say and sit down again, he walks out and I let a year out. I wipe it using the back of my hand. I am more hurt than angry. I could take this from my father but not him.

•AFRIKA

Tomorrow I am delivering the sequences and I am in my room trying to practice and see if I got them all in, I don't know why but I still get nervous about not remembering them even though I know very well that my brain wouldn't fail me. The nicest thing about this room is the big window looking out the garden my favorite place here and there is a couch in here

So I made it face the outside by the window, it has Somehow become my sanctuary. I am residing the sequences and I do the 10th and final one for tomorrow and Someone claps their hands

"You're a genius, it's like you are singing" Bab Mdlalose says behind me and I sigh

"I wasn't aware that I left the door open" I say hoping he would get the hint

"Oh, no it wasn't open" he says and I roll my eyes

"I am sorry I didn't hear you knock baba" I say and this time he won't miss my sarcasm

"So, are you ready for tomorrow" he asks

"Always am baba, it's my job" I say and he chuckles

"Have you seen or spoken to Mpilo today" he asks and thank God I am facing away from him

"I only see him at the table when we eat, and he hardly ever talks to me, it's like I disgust him at times, I am always shocked when he speaks to me" I say

"Oh, is that So, I will have to talk to him about this, we don't want you feeling unwanted here at home. You are a guest here and you must be comfortable you know" he says and I feel his hand on my shoulder I close my eyes and stand quickly

"Okay sir" I say and smirks at me

"Okay then Afrika I will see you at dinner" he says and turns back and walk to the door.

Afrika learn to lock your door. I give myself a mental note. A call comes through and I go get my phone from the pedestal, it's Mpilo I blush

"Hey" I say

"Sthandwa sam (my love)" he says and I don't know what to do with myself

"Ukuphi Mpilo (where are you)" I ask

"I am still at work babe, there is a lot I need to process before tomorrow morning, I won't be home for another two to three hours" he says and I sigh

"It's already 7 we having dinner in a few" I say

"I know Ndlovukazi will save me a plate" he says

"I guess I will see you tomorrow then" I say

"No way, I want to find you in my bed tonight when I get home" he says and I smile

"Oh, we changing rooms now" I ask

"I also want your scent on my pillow cases and sheets" he says and I giggle

"Okay sir" I say

"Ngizok bona ke muhles wami (I will see you then my beauty)" he says

"Okay" I say and he hangs up.

CHAPTER 44

•MPILO

I got home and it was silent Some of the rooms were already dark, it's just before 11pm. I go to the kitchen and warm up my food then eat, I rinse my plate after I am done and make way to my room, I am not even going to shower. I open my door and smile instantly, she listened to me, she is in bed. I close the door and lock then quickly remove my clothes and I am left in my boxers, I get in bed and hold her

"Mmmh" she groans

"I am home love" I say kissing her neck

"You are so cold" she complains

"Good thing I found you here to warm me up" I say smiling and she turns to look at me

"Not fair Mpilo" she says and I kiss her
"Askies muntu wam (Sorry my person)" I say
"Were you able to finish at work" she asks
"Yes, I did even though I couldn't wait to make it home to you" I say and she blushes
"I want to take you to the park again tomorrow" I say and she smiles but it Soon disappears
"I wish I could babe but I have to deliver your brothers sequences for his Software development" she says and I freeze instantly. I quickly snap out of it
"Let me drive you then" I offer at least I will make sure that she is safe
"I would love that" she says with the widest smile
"What time?" I ask
"After my last class that is 4pm" she says
"Okay then you will find me waiting in the car at 4pm madam" I say and take her juicy lips into mine and kiss her, my hands move to her ass and I squeeze gently, I feel my erection starting to get stronger and steadier, it pokes her and she whimpers and pulls out from the kiss
"Mpilo, I uhm I am not ready for that" she says and I smile
"I know baby and I don't want to make love to you before I fix this whole thing with my dad and it will definitely not be in my bed, I want your first experience with sex to be magical" I say and her eyes are still fixed down
"Thank you for understanding" she says and I kiss her forehead
"No pressure okay" I say and she nods. We continue talking about what we would like to have and experience out of this relationship, I must admit Afrika is more matured for her age and at the same time she is So innocent and inexperienced like she should be and honestly I think this is Something that makes me So drawn to her this much. She is a breath of fresh air

•KHAYA

I am in the cinema watching Some news on Al Jazeera, it's good to keep in touch with what is going on in and around the world especially for a man like me who has operations in foreign countries. I need to guard my investments at all times. I look at the time and it's just after 1 am damn I should go to bed I have a long day tomorrow, I switch off everything then walkout, I pass by the corridor of Afrika's room and I stop for a minute battling if I should go upstairs to my room or go see her. I find myself turning her doorknob and walking in but to my surprise her bed is made and she isn't even in the room. I clench my jaws and sit on her bed. The is only one explanation she is in Mpilo's room. Damn it, she better not have given herself to my son in my bloody house. If these two think they are just going to play with me and get away with it then they have another thing coming their way, they don't know Khaya Mdlalose at all.

•AFRIKA

I couldn't join everyone for breakfast because I had an 8 am class, but Ndlovukazi wouldn't let me leave without anything So she insisted I take a fruit salad in the fridge. My day goes on by very smoothly and I have a two-hour break before my last class, I am in the cafeteria having a drink and busy typing my maths assignment. Someone takes a seat near me and I look up and it's Mzwakhe's wife
"Hey Afrika with the good hair" she says and I smile
"Hi, Emily. How are you?" I ask
"I am very well thanks, yourself" she asks back
"I am fine thanks, what brings you here?" I query
"I came to see Mzwa but he has class right now so I am to wait an hour, I couldn't lock myself in the office so I decided to come and buy a snack" she says

"Stupid question, of course your husband works here" she laughs
"So, how is everything at the house" she asks
"I don't have any complaints hey, it's really going well" I say I don't want to find myself saying anything wrong and having her tell her husband
"Is Mpilo treating you well too I know he can be an ass" she says and I smile
"He is a good person I don't have any problem with him" I say not being able to get rid of my smile
"Oh, that's a first, he must like you then" she says and I shrug my shoulders
"Maybe I don't know" I say
"Can I have your number So we can chill Sometimes" she says and I narrow my eyes
"Oh, I am Sorry for being weird just that I like you and I don't have any friends So I thought we could hang but I am just crazy I am Sorry" she says standing up and I feel bad
"Emily it's okay, I would use a friend myself" I say and she smiles and sits down again
"Oh, thank God, I was So embarrassed" she says giggling and putting a strand of hair behind her ear
"No need to, give me your phone" I say and she fishes for it in her bag and hands it to me, I punch in my number and save it then call myself So I can have hers as well
"And there I have yours too" I say handing her phone back to her
"Thank you friend" she says and I smile
"Let's order Something to drink and maybe that snack while you wait" I suggest
"You don't have a class" she asks
"No, I have a long break before my next class" I say
"Oh, well, in that case, let's order" she says

•AMANDA

After my last class, Sphamandla gave me a lift and we decided to grab Something to eat and go chill by my place. He even got a few beers for himself. He is a nice person to chill with and he has a lot to say, I learn a lot from him and I like that we have even forgotten about our sexual encounters and we have a beautiful friendship brewing. He opens his next beer
"Nate would be telling me how irresponsible I am for drinking during the week" he says and I laugh
"He sounds like he is the disciplinarian in the relationship" I say
"He sure is Mandy" he says smiling
"When am I meeting him" I ask and he laughs
"Funny he asked me the same thing last night" he says and I smile
"So?" I say
"You could come to our place this weekend" he says
"I will be there and get my baby some Timeroof ice cream, we are obsessed" I say
"How could I forget Mandy" he says and the door opens and Dineo walk-in
"Oh, hey stranger" I say and she smiles at me
"I am sorry I have been home" she says
"Oh, Dee this is my friend and teacher Spha and this is my friend and roommate Dineo" I say
"Nice to meet you Dineo" Spha says and they shake hands
"Likewise," she says and goes to her room
"She is the weirdest person I have ever come across; I sense this dark aura around her it's creepy" he says and I laugh
"And who died and made you a sangoma" I say
"I am not kidding Amanda, I always feel like this when a person is not harboring good intentions, be careful around her" he says
"Okay now you are the creepy one" I say
"Just get your fat ass up and go take my beers out of the freezer" he says and I roll my eyes

"I think I hate you when you are gay, your confused self was So sweet" I say and he bursts out laughing
"That is a low blow Amanda" he says still laughing

CHAPTER 45

•AFRIKA

I had an amazing day with Mpilo like always, he drove me to all ten houses and it was really fun, he kept on making jokes I thought I wasn't going to remember the sequences. We went and got ice cream when I was done then we went to get my driver and drove Mpilo back to his car, today I am the one who has to go back home first because he wanted to go, something at work before coming home. I got in well after 8 pm and to my surprise they were done with dinner, two plates wherein the fridge but I decided that I will eat with Mpilo when he gets home. I go to my room and before I could even get in Someone pushed me inside quickly and closed the door, turn me and pinned me to the wall, it's bab'Mdlalose
"Where were you last night" he says

"Baba you are hurting me" I say scared out of my mind

"I said where were you last night Afrika, I hate repeating myself" he says in a low intimidating voice

"I was in my room sleeping" I say

"You are lying I came in here around 1am and you weren't in bed So I am going to ask again and think long and hard before you answer me" he says tightening his grip around my arms I am scared at this moment my heart feels like it's about to jump out of my chest

"What were you doing in my room at 1am" I ask tears streaming down

"This is my house and I do in and out of every room as I please, now where were you" he says

"I was in the garden baba I normally go to the garden when I can't sleep" I say crying

"Tell me the truth Afrika" he roars and I can't help but cry more

"I was in the garden I swear" I stick to my story

"Then why was your bed made huh why" he says and squeezes Some more

"I went there around 10pm, the nights before I deliver the sequences, I get very nervous and I love the garden it calms me down" I say hoping he will Somewhat but

"You better not be lying to me" he says letting me go and I he walks out. I sink to the floor and just cry my eyes out. Why would the man handle me like this, and why was he even in my bedroom at that time, I get up and lock my door and just get under the covers.

•MZWAKHE

I was in my office preparing for the lesson, my head is all over the place and not just today but of late, the fact my relationship with Mpilo is rocky is really not helping one bit. We have always been So close but right now this is important to me him and dad have always been So close and I swear Mpilo will be over it Soon as he lays his eyes on the next sexy skirt. My door bursts out open and Afrika walks in wearing a long-sleeved T-shirt in this heat

"I am Sorry I am Sorry but I can't help you anymore with delivering of yours, I am going back to my room at res" she says

"What Afrika think about Amanda your sister she needs your help" I say

"Stop trying to manipulate me Mzwakhe, my sister will understand" she says and I know nothing is going to change her mind right now

"What happened" I ask

"Your father is weird, he comes to my room at ungodly hours and he waltzes in anytime without knocking, last night he got physical with me and I am not having it anymore, I might be poor and in need of money but I will not be treated like that at all I refuse Mzwakhe" she says crying

"What, Baba wouldn't do that unless you gave him a reason to" I say and the shock on her face

"Are you for real right now, you know I don't care! I just don't! After classes I am going back there I am packing my shit and getting out of there, you can keep your job and your money and keep that bursary too I don't want anything from you" she says and I fold my arms

"Listen Afrika" I say

"No, I am done listening I am done, find Someone else" she says and attempts to walkout

"You don't know who you are messing with young girl, if you think you can just walk out of the operation just like that then you are not as smart as you would like to believe. We are Mdlalose cartel and we are the biggest drug cartel in the country and you haven't been delivering sequences for any Software, you deliver dates and locations of drugs to our clients, you are the Mdlalose transporter, we own you now" I say and she is looking at me like she isn't hearing anything that I am saying but I know she did because she has tears streaming uncontrollably on her face

"How could you do this to me" she says in a low voice I can almost feel her pain

"This is a dog eat dog world Afrika, it's nothing personal just business" I say and she places her hand on her chest

"You can't force me to do this, it's illegal" she says and I laugh

"It's like you have a choice Afrika, you see, we have people watching your sisters every move and we know that she is pregnant if you try to leave this operation or try to go to the police, we are just going to take her until she gives birth then sell her child to a tribe that eats infants in Asia then we sell your beloved sister into slavery and prostitution in Italy to the rich men that have sick fantasies, but if you continue to work with us that will be unnecessary honestly.

"You bastard," she says sinking to her knees and cry

"So, I have a 3rd-year class to teach, I will leave you in here to calm down and afterward you will go to your driver and go home to rest then tomorrow we go back to how things were before 20 minutes ago" I say and take my teaching material and walk out. She isn't going to run; she loves her sister way too much and she won't put her at risk. This is exactly why she was perfect for the job not only is she intelligent but she is had Something she holds dear to her heart and that makes it easy to control her.

•MPILO

I didn't go to work today because they are busy packing for deliveries tomorrow, then receiving stock to start cooking for next week. I used this opportunity to catch up on my favorite series. I last saw its season 1 until Afrika told me that she has it on her laptop and this woman has it to its 10th season So you can imagine my happiness. I am eating all the junk in the world in my girl's room watching her laptop and waiting for her to arrive she did say her classes on Thursday end at 1pm this will give us a chance to bond before everyone gets back later and we go back to being just people living in the same house. Her bedroom door opens and she walks in looking like she has been crying, her eyes are swollen and red and she looks really defeated. I quickly get off her bed and go to her but she steps back from me and just let her tears fall

"Did you know Mpilo" she says and my heart starts racing

"What are you talking about sthandwa Sam" I say in a calm voice
"None of this is real right? You are just pretending to love me So I can continue being blinded" she says and right now I am scared out of my mind
"Baby what happened please talk to me" I say
"Did you know that your brother was using me to move information about drugs" she says and my whole world comes crashing down
"Afrika," I say trying to hold her but she steps back and puts a hand over her mouth and cries
"Mpilo how could you do this to me, you knew all along and as if that wasn't bad enough you make fall in love with you like the fool that I am falling for you" she says and I can feel and hear the hurt in her voice.
"No no Afrika I love you and that's no lie baby I swear to you, this is why I have been fighting with my father and Mzwa, I didn't want them doing this to you, I hate what they are doing Afrika I am Sorry baby I swear I was working towards getting you out" I say rubbing my hands together begging her
"I just wanted to make Something out of myself to change my life and that of my sister, you people came in my life pretending to help me but you were using me, why Mpilo" she says breaking my heart she poured out her hopes and dreams and that's why this statement is hitting home
"Ngiyaxolisa baby please" I say going down on my knees trying to hold her but she won't allow me and that is frustrating
Your brother threatened my sister and her unborn child Mpilo if I don't cooperate with you" she says and I quickly stand up
"Mzwakhe is the one who told you this" I ask wiping my tears she nods and I sniff
"Afrika lalela I love you and I am really sorry that I kept this from you I will explain to you baby but please don't hate me" I say
"Phuma Mpilo, just get out" she screams hitting me with her tiny fists, this moment will haunt me forever. I don't want to anger her So I comply and get out tears on my face. Right now, I have mixed emotions but the most dominant being anger. I go to the lounge and open the key drawer and pull out my keys, I get in and start the engine, I drive like a maniac till I get to Mzwakhe's house. I am fuming, to say the least, I walk on without knocking and meet Em in the lounge with the kids
"Mpilo" she says Sounding annoyed
"Take the girls upstairs if you don't want them to be traumatized," I say and walk in further. I get to his office and he is on the phone laughing
"You bastard" I say charging to him and throwing in punch after punch he obviously returns them but I overpower him and drop him to the floor and get on top of him and punch the living shit out of him, I get off him and hold him by his shirt and throw him to the bookshelf, he hits it So hard and falls down the shelf and books fall on him, I drag him out and start kicking him on the ribs, I couldn't contain my rage, he was even bleeding now
"You piece of shit, you weak man, how dare you, to tell Afrika that bull shit, after everything I ever did for you, you do me like this, you throw me under the bus to the woman I love" I say still kicking him
"Mpilo please stop you will kill him stop" his wife screams and I stop and wipe my tears and sweat
"You are dead to me Mzwakhe do you hear me dead" I say before walking out leaving him there looking like a corpse

•NOMALANGA

Case after case after case. I am tired these heels are showing me flames today, I just can't wait to get to my office and take them off. I just got out of court and I am happy I got a

conviction for this case. My phone rings and I quickly hand my things to my colleague So I can be able to take it out of my bag. I find it and it's Emily calling
"Hey makoti want" I say
"Ma please come to Siphephelo memorial hospital right now" she says crying and it's a miracle I could hear the name after how she pronounced it
"Why what's wrong who is admitted" I ask
"Mzwa mama he is not looking good ma please" she says crying and I panic
"What happened to him Emily" I ask
"Mpilo came to the house and started beating him mercilessly" she says and I gasp for air
"Are you sure it's Mpilo" I ask not believing, my Sons are close why would they fight to a point of one going to the hospital
"I saw him myself ma" she says hysterically
"Okay I will be right there; I am leaving the courthouse now" I say and hang up
"Help me to my car please" I say hurrying and trying Khaya on the line, his number takes me to voicemail. I try Mpilo to find out what happened but it rings unanswered.

CHAPTER 46

•AFRIKA

To say I was hurt would be an understatement, I am broken, I can't believe my mother's words came to pass, she warned me that my intelligence will get me into trouble, and it hasn't even been a year and I am Tangled with a drug cartel. All I wanted was to have a better life for myself and Amanda. How heartless can these people be? I feel So much pain I don't even know how to stop crying it's just too much to handle right now. They even threatened my sister and the baby now I don't have a choice, losing Amanda would be the death of me but working for a family that produces drugs and kills the youth comes with a hefty price on my conscious and peace of mind. I am curled up in my bed crying. My mind drifts to Mpilo and I feel my heart breaking further, how could I have been So stupid, I mean a man like him would never have fallen for Someone like me, he was just trying to make it harder for me to want to leave this thing because I would have been deeply in love with him, but who says I am not already. The door rattles but won't open because I locked
"Sthandwa sami vula ngiyakqela (my love please open)" he says and I remain quiet
"I am begging you Afrika please love please" he says Some more
"I know it's hard for you to believe anything that comes out of my mouth right now but out of everything that is going on, my love for you is real God is my witness babe, I met you at that mall and I fell in love you without knowing you and I went straight to Mzwakhe and told him I just met my wife and that's true. Yes I knew about the transporter but I never knew it was you. Baby when I got back from Colombia you were here and I was the happiest man and the next day my father tell me to leave you alone, that's why I snapped at you that time, I asked them to find Someone else and, Afrika please open" he says again
"It was never my intention to hurt you love baby please I beg you Afrika please" his please got to my heart, I love him So much but how do I know that he is telling me the truth
"I will break down this do now if you don't open, I swear, let me in please" he says and I get off the bed and open, he has blood on his t-shirt and he is a bit swollen and his hands are bloody
"Oh, my God Mpilo what Happened," I ask and I hate that I even care

"You should see the other guy, I am okay" he says
"You went to fight Mzwakhe" I ask
"I had to do Something" he says
"For what exactly, would you have done this if it was Someone else" I ask
"Baby please" he says
"No Mpilo, you are just as cruel as them" I say and start crying and hitting him again, this time he lets me go on for a while and I just break down, I was about to sick to my knees but he caught me and held me tight in his arm, going down with me
"Ngियाqolisa sthandwa Sam please, don't give up on me I beg you. I love you I really do" he says and I am too emotional to say anything and I can't believe anything that comes out of his mouth right now

•NOMALANGA

I got to the hospital and tracked Emily to the waiting room, I have been trying to crack my skull asking myself why those two would fight until one of them is admitted. Something has been happening in my house and I don't know about it. I spot her in the corner crying
"Emily" I say and she hurries to me
"Oh, ma" she says and I take her in for a hug
"What happened how is he" I ask
"The doctors took him to the operating room" she says
"Oh, my God my baby. What happened" I ask trying not to cry
"Mpilo just came to the house fuming with anger, he told me to take the girls upstairs if I didn't want the girls to be traumatized forever, So I did and rushed back to the study that's where I found him beating my husband to a pulp, he was like a wild animal out for blood" she says and I have my hands on my mouth
"Oh, Mpilo" I say. This doesn't sound like him he is not a hot head yes; he does crazy things but when it comes to violence he would rather step back, what could have made pushed him over the edge to even hospitalize his brother
"He deserves to rot in jail for assault or even better, attempted murder" she says and I don't want to defend and seem like I am favoring Mpilo over Mzwa. I need to find out what happened. We sit for an hour till Khaya walks in
"I got your voicemail, Emily, what do you say happened" he says and she explains to him
"Mpilo is not a violent person what could have happened, where is he even" he says and I remain silent hoping that my Son makes him because the way Emily described it it's scary. Siza walks in and comes straight to us I stand and we hug
"Ndlovukazi, sanibonani" she says greeting
"How is he? how is my husband?" Emily asks
"Well he is out of surgery and the was no serve internal bleeding and luckily no bleeding to the brain and his brain is not even swollen" she says
"Oh, thank God" we all say
"However, he has a few broken ribs and a broken leg, I am going to keep him here a while for observations especially for his brain" she says and I nod vigorously
"Can we see him" Khaya asks
"Of course, the nurse will take you" she says and calls the nurse to take them to Mzwa and I am left with her
"Thank you so much Sizakele, I need to dash out a little and I will come back please cover for me if they ask" I say and she narrows her eyes
"No problem" she says and I leave her standing there, if it were another day I would be asking about Razor and the kids

•MPILO

We are in the same room but for the first-time things between us are awkward, she is on the couch and I am sitting on the floor looking at her beautiful face looking sad, she is hurt one can't miss it. I never wanted her to find out like this but there is nothing I can do now, I need to get us back to where we used to and fast, right now she doesn't even believe that I love her and I don't blame her one bit. I hear Someone shouting my name So I stand and go to meet her, it's my mom

"Mpilo kodwa, what happened you almost killed your brother" she says crying

"I was hoping he is dead would have saved me from going back to finishing what I started" I say and she hits me

"You don't talk like that Mpilo no, why did you hurt him like that" she asks

"It's not as bad as how he hurt me mama" I say

"What did you do tell me please maybe I will understand why you did it" she says

"I want that bastard to be the one to tell you ma, I want him to see the disappointment in your eyes and he tells you what a filthy human being he is" I say and she shakes her head

"You can't be here Mpilo please" she says

"What do you mean" I ask

"Emily wants you in jail" ma tells

"I will do time I don't mind" I say and she hits me Some more

"Don't you ever say that, Mpilo I can't have you in jail I need you to disappear a while till things cool over, till I get a chance to make Mzwa to not listen to Emily" she says

"There is Something important that I can't live behind" I say

"Tell me what it is and I will take care of it please Mpilo" she begs. Give me a moment ma, I will find you

"Just be quick Mpilo I need to get back to the hospital" she says and I nod going back to Afrika, she is still on the couch.

"Baby listen my brother might press charges So my mom suggests that I go lay low a while till she manages to talk him out of it, I would stay and face the consequences but it would kill Ndlovukazi and with what we do we don't want our information on the database. I am going to come but I need you to not trust anyone, only my mother love, I know you hate me but please know I love you and I beg you please when everything has died down I will be back and I will get you out of this" I say and she is looking me with teary eyes, I kiss her not caring if she is returning it. I take out a charm bracelet from my pocket and put it on her wrist

"I was going to give this to you today, I love you muhle want, I will be back before you know it, don't forget only trust Ndlovukazi" I say and she blinks her tears I walk to the door and stop

"I love you and that's not a lie" I say and get into my room pack quickly then change clothes and go meet my mom in the lounge, she is pacing up and down

"Finally," she says

"I need you to keep an eye on Afrika ma, guard her with your life or else I am not going anywhere" I say and she looks at me confused

"I don't know what is going on but I will Mpilo I promise" she says

"I will call you when I get to where I will be off the radar" I say and leave but my heart is bleeding leaving my woman here is not on but I trust my mom she will make sure that she is okay.

A FEW HOURS LATER

•KHAYA

we have been waiting on him to wake up, they said 3 hours but it has been more than that, I am desperate to find out what transpired between my boys.

"I am going to call the lady that's with the girls then go buy Some coffee" Emily says

"I will go with you Em" Noma says
"Do you want anything baba" she asks her father in law
"Coffee will be okay thank you" I say and they walk out. A few minutes pass and he opens his eyes slowly until he gets them wide open
"Dikane" he says with a low voice
Thank God you are awake" I say
"Where is Mpilo" he asks
"I don't know we have been here the entire time, Mzwakhe what happened" I ask
"Well Afrika came to my office this morning and said she wanted out So I..." He tells me everything that happened and I slap myself mentally
"Fuck I shouldn't have been physical with her like that" I admit
"Why were you in her room nawe baba" he says and I sigh, the ladies walk back in
"Oh, baby you are awake" his wife says hugging him but careful enough not to hurt him
"I am fine baby, don't cry" he says
"He deserves to go to jail for this Mzwa" she says and I want to say no to that but I will discuss this with my Son alone, he can't send Mpilo to jail, we are partly responsible for his outburst
"I will think about it" he says
"There is nothing to think about Mzwa he almost made me a widow and my children fatherless" she insists
"Okay Em fine" he says and Nomalanga and I look at each other
"Good I will get the cops tomorrow morning it's already night now" she says and kisses him
"I will get the doctor" Noma says walking out. I need to find Mpilo he needs to lay low a bit, we can't have his details and prints on the database, not with our kind of job.
"I need to make a call" I say and step out dialing him and it says the number I dialed does not exist
"Damn it Mpilo where are you" I say to myself. He needs to disappear until I can change Mzwakhe's mind, things haven't been good between us but I can't have the body and fuel of my operation in jail, Mzwa will just have to take this as a man and get over it

CHAPTER 47

•MZWAKHE

'You are dead to me Mzwakhe do you hear me dead' his voice kept on playing in my head and guilt just ate through me, there is no coming back from this, he will never forgive me for this, but I just wish he could understand where I am coming from. He really did a number on me, I never thought Mpilo would lose it like this, he has never been a violent person. I am looking at myself in the mirror, looking at the damages he left me with
"You are right to look at yourself So you can understand why I am pushing for you to press charges" my wife says standing by the door
"Em" I say
"How did you sleep" she asks
"The pain medication knocked me right out" I say
"I am glad to hear that; the girls send their love" she says and I smile
"I will call them later" I tell
"So, tell me, why did your brother do this to you" she asks and I sigh deeply

"Can we not talk about this right now" I say
"No Mzwa we are talking about it now So talk" she says and I know she won't let this slide
"Well I told you my brother is in love with Afrika right" she nods and I tell me everything that happened. When I was done, she had her hand to her mouth
"What has gotten into you Mzwa, who are you?" She asks and I can't miss the disappointment in her voice
"I was desperate Emily okay, I had to find a way to keep her" I say
"But to threaten her sister and an innocent baby for that matter, what kind of monster are you" she asks
"Em please I don't need you judging right now, I need my wife" I say
"You deserve all the judgment in the world" she says and I close my eyes
"I will not have you talk to me like that" I say firm and she laughs
"Are you hearing yourself, you are becoming exactly like your father Mzwakhe and have you stopped for a minute and asked yourself what your father was doing in Afrika's room at that ungodly hour" she says
"Baba has been trying to make use that they are apart, So he says he had a feeling that Something was up and he went to check if she was sleeping and she wasn't there, that's why he went to her and demanded that she tells him where she was" I say and she chuckles
"I just hope you will be able to live with yourself for what you are doing Mzwakhe" she says
"Emily please" I say
"The police will be here any moment be ready to cook up Something to tell them" she says walking out

•AFRIKA

He has been gone for a day but it feels like years, I am mad at him and hurt but a part of me misses him So much. If he was here I would a little safer, I don't trust anyone in this house even though he said I could trust his mom, I just can't she can't stand up for me and go against her family, I wish I could talk to my sister and tell her this but I am not risking her life and safety, I will get myself out of this if it's the last thing I do. There is a knock on my door but I keep quiet until the person identifies themselves, I am opening
"Afrika baby, are you in there" Ndlovukazi's voice says and I go open
"Hi ma" I say and let her in
"How are you" she asks
"I will be okay" I say taking a sit on the couch
"Afrika, Mpilo asked me to take care of you while he is away and I said I will, I just need to know what is going on" she says
"Did you know that Mzwakhe was using me to deliver dates and locations of drug drop offs" I ask and she remains silent a while
"Uhm I, no until the day he brought you here" she says
"So, everyone has been looking at me pretending to be helping me whereas I was just being used" I say and laugh, this Sounds like Something done in the movies it hard to believe that I am living this nightmare
"I am So Sorry Afrika, I tried telling them to cut all ties with you, but Khaya is stubborn Afrika I am Sorry," she says
"How would you feel if Sbahle was used the same way I am being used, is it because I am poor and no one has the power to fight for me" I say
"It's not like that please Afrika" she says and I laugh
"It's okay I am stuck with you; I will do my job and money will keep flowing in and you will continue living this lavish life. You know why because I don't have a choice, I need to do this So they do not harm my sister, the only person I have and love in this world" I say
"They threatened your sisters' life" she asks shocked

"Isn't how they keep people in check to get them to do anything they want" I say and I hear her exhale deeply

"I am Sorry Afrika, I know that you might not believe me but I have taken you as a daughter and I care about you and it's clear that Mpilo cares about you too, I will talk to my Son and get a full detailed picture of what is going on here" she says and I laugh

"Don't bother yourself, I have learned that no one helps you without gaining Something So I will help myself out of this, from here onwards I am just your employee Ndlovukazi" I say
"Please don't talk like this I am pleading with you" she says but I just shake my head. She stands behind me in total silence and after a while, she walks out, and I just cry

•MPILO

I am staring at the pictures I took of her sleeping that other time, she looks So peaceful here and we were So happy, but it's all messed up now, For the first time in my life I regret ever been born into the Mdlalose family because if that was the case I would have a normal life with my woman away from this whole mess. Yesterday I had no idea of where I was going to hide but I drove around and found myself in Mpumalanga, my mom's sister lives here and I know this is the last place they will think of finding me since there is like Some bad blood between them

"Now are you ready to tell me what you are doing here because I only know the money you send me every month, does your mother even know you send me money or that you are here," she says

"Kahle man Sma," I say

"Shisa inkauza ke sibeme (light Some cigarettes So we can smoke" she says and I roll my eyes

"Yaz wena" I say and we step out for a smoke

"So, what are you doing here Mpilo" she asks

"I came to ensure that you built this house and completed it" I say and she laughs

"Don't bullshit me wena" she says

"Well I had a fallout with Mzwakhe and Baba" I say and she laughs

"Now that's my boy, see why you've always been my favorite nephew" she says and I laugh

"I almost beat him to death ncane" I say and she chuckles

"But tell me why would you almost kill your brother" she asks and I take out my phone and show her Afrika

"Aow maglazane, she is beautiful but who is she" she says

"Her name is Afrika, my girlfriend" I say

"Manje you want me to ask me question after question like I am an exam question paper Hai man aow qhaze (explain)" she says and I tell her the whole thing

"Khaya is a bastard and Mzwakhe yena I can't believe him, he never wanted this life to begin with, he was happy with his vasplak white girl, manje why is he suddenly evil" she says

"Yaz Smangele he hurt me So bad I didn't expect him to do me like this" I say

"Do you really love this girl" she asks

"More than I can even describe, you know me I have always just been about the sex but I love this one seriously, she is everything and more" I say

"Then we need to find a strategy to get her out of this and fast" she says

"Please ncane fast because I am not happy with her being in that house alone without me even though she hates me at the moment" I say

"You are her first love trust me she is just hurt she could never hate you" she says and I shake my head

"I hope so" I say

"Thenga ibeer ke Mpilo sihlanganise iplan (buy Some beer So we can start coming up with a plan)" she says

"Ai wena Sma umuntu uzohamba la umquthe namashishi (you demand So much I am going to leave this place without my pubic hair)" I say handing her my card

"I am going to pour myself I full tank, thank you boy I will be back ngama Black label" she says

"Corona Sma man no" I say and she clicks her tongue. I decide to text her

ngiyak'thanda Afrika and I will be back for you. You will get me on this number anytime you need me babe. I had to destroy my simcard and please don't give this number to anyone, I miss you muhle wam and remember only trust Ndlovukazi I press send and put it in my pocket but a minute later It beeps and it's her

I hate that I love you it says and it just makes me So happy, I have a fighting chance here and I am not going to disappoint her

I know and I am going to make things right I promise I send and wait and wait but no response. It hurts but I am glad that she told me she loves me even if it's in some type of way

•DINEO

I am executing my plan tonight; I am ovulating So chances of me catching his seed is high. I made sure to bring my sexiest lace number, our first lovemaking experience is going to be out of this world, I swear he will forget about Amanda after what I am going to do to him. I take out my diary and write down Something and kiss his picture in there. It's just after 7 pm So I dish up for him and make Some juice and pour the brown substance I got from that guy. I put them on a tray and head to his room outside, I knock and he opens talking on the phone with the widest smile

"Yes love... okay shower then and text me when you are done...I love you both So much... okay sharp" he says and hangs up

"I am sorry for taking this long to finish," I say

"You didn't have to Dineo, and from tomorrow don't worry yourself about coming, I will have takeaways after all my mom will be back Soon" he says and I smile at him

"Okay" I say and he sits and starts eating, I just want to see him drink the juice

"Thank you" he says and I nod, the joy I had in my heart when he drank the juice

"I will go tidy up in the house before I leave" I say and walk out. I take my bag and go to one of the bedrooms and change into that sexy number I mentioned and wait for about 20 minutes to go to his room, I know the drug has started to work. I shove my diary back in there and take my bag and walk to his room, I find the plate and glass both empty and he is on his beg mumbling to himself I drop the bag on the couch and go to him

"Hey love" I whisper in his ear

"Ama" he says

"It's me love" I say

"When did you get here" he asks

"I just got here; I knew you missed me" I say

"You have no idea how much I miss you Mommy" he says and I smile

"I want to make you feel good" I say and he smiles

"Oh, Ama do you know how much I love you and our Son" he says and moves his hand to my stomach, he looks So drowsy like the guy said he would be

"And we love you too So much" I say and get off him and take off his shoes, I then pull off his trousers and boxers and his erection springs free, he has a beautiful size I can't wait to feel him deep inside of me, I help him out of his t-shirt and now he is completely naked

"I want to make love you Ama" he says

"I am all yours baby" I say and he pulls me on top of him and I take his lips into mine and God this is heavenly. His hands are moving through my whole body squeezing and rubbing

me sensually, Amanda has been having a gentleman all to herself but good thing I am Amanda tonight, I will receive Lethabo's seed and grow it inside of me.

CHAPTER 48

•LETHABO

I open my eyes and shut them immediately, they are burning up and my whole body feels Somehow, I have a pounding headache, I sigh and open them slowly this time, I realise that Someone is next to me, but when did Amanda get here. I turn slowly minding my aching body, I was about to kiss the person when I realize that the person's skin tone is definitely not my girlfriends. Like speed of light, I get out of bed and Dineo turns back to me

"Oh, morning love, are we late" she says

"What the hell are you doing in my bed" I ask and quickly place my hand on my head

"Haibo what do you mean babe" she says

"Don't babe me and answer my question" I say and she smiles

"Well if I have to remind you of the slow sensual lovemaking night, we had I would take the whole day" she says with a smile but I remember no such thing

"I would never do that" I say and she rolls her eyes

"Oh, come on look at yourself" she says signaling with her eyes, I look at myself and I am completely naked, I quickly grab my boxers and wear them

"What the hell did you do to me Dineo" I say and she puts her hand on her chest and acts shocked

"What did I do to you, haibo" she says and I felt myself get mad

"Get the hell out of my bed and leave, never come back here again do you hear me" I shout

"Oh, I will babe but expect my parents Soon" she says leaving me confused

"Get out" I scream and she gets out of bed and starts getting dressed with a smirk on her face. I am trying to search my memory to find what happened last night but I come back empty, she is being slow for my liking So I quickly take her and throw her out then close my door, I sit on my couch and her bag is next to me, I get too mad I just take it and go throw it outside. Fuck this girl is crazy, I could never do this to my woman I could never sleep with another woman who is not Amanda it's not me and it wouldn't change, and why can't I remember anything from last night the only memory I have is her giving me food and that's it. I rub my head and sigh. Fuck what if she took a video or pictures, I am dead, I am dead for real, Amanda is going to go crazy especially after that SMS she received, but do I come clean or take this secret with me to the grave and hope this crazy girl didn't take any pictures or video

•AFRIKA

I open my eyes and the first thing I think about is Mpilo, Last night I was missing him So bad I decided to come sleep and his bed and his scent made me feel at ease I managed to fall asleep imagining that I am in his arms. I turn and the charm bracelet he gave me rattles and I look at it and smile, without noticing a tear escapes and in that moment, I realize that I love him more than I hate him. I take in his scent from the pillow one last time then get off bed. I slowly take my time making it and when I am done. I walk out and I am met by Ndlovukazi knocking on my door

"You slept in there" she asks and I look down embarrassed

"Yes ma" I say

"Oh, okay, I brought you breakfast, I thought you might not be ready to sit with anyone" she says

"That is very thoughtful of you but I am fine thank you" I say because my appetite went out the window the day Mzwakhe threatened my sister and her baby

"Afrika please, you haven't been eating anything these past few days but you need your strength for studying and your health, in general, please, I promised Mpilo that I will take care of you and I intend on keeping my promise" she says and I sigh

"I will try eat" I say and she smiles

"I made Something simple, tropical breakfast and orange juice, but if you want Something I can go and quickly make it" she says

"No this is fine thanks" I say and she opens my door and I walk in, she follows in

"So, do you sleep better in his bed" she asks and I shrug my shoulders

"I think I know but I would like to hear it from you, are you and Mpilo seeing each other" she asks and I sigh

"I think you should ask him that" I say

"Afrika I am Sorry. I mean it baby I am Sorry" she says and then walks out.

•Mpilo

I wake up with a hangover from hell, Sma and I really went in hard, my aunt is So stubborn I told her to bring us Some Coronas but she came with her Black label and that thing is too strong but one quart down I just kept drinking and smoking. I get out of the room and go brush my teeth, as soon as I am done, I go to the lounge and she is already holding a beer

"Ai man Sma it's too early" I say

"Then why is my throat open" she says and takes a gulp, I just laugh

"You are Something else" I say and throw myself on the couch

"I brought chips and Russians, plus iatchaar ethingiswayo e next door the way imnandi ngakhona ngathi bebei nyathela ngama nyawo (the way it's So nice you'd swear they put their foot in it)" she says

"And you expect me to eat that" I say making a disgusted face she laughs

"Ai cheese boy this is not Sandton with your mango salads" she says and I burst out laughing

"Yazi I shouldn't be laughing but coming up with a plan to save my girlfriend" I say

"I tried thinking and you know I come up with ideas when I am drunk but nix the only way to get rid of Khaya and free your girl is to kill him and you would be the first suspect" she says

"Exactly ncane" I say

"But Mpilo, I suggest you and your girl keep doing this thing under the carpet, take her to these drop offs and make sure she is safe when you are not with her, but do this while they think that you are over the girl and nothing is going on between you two. Be the Mpilo they have always known while working on a way to take your father down, find Something he is doing that you are not a part of so when he goes down, he doesn't take you or my sister with" she says

"Eish Ncane I don't know" I say

"Or just take this girl and run away" she says and shake my head

"She has her sister here and she would never agree to running away" I say

"Ai let me go back to the drawing board" she says and I go get the food she spoke about

•DINEO

To say I am happy would be an understatement, last night was perfect, it was magical, we made love and he is the first man to ever give it to me like that. Now I need to wait for a few days and then I can do a pregnancy test, and move on to step two of the plan, I already know

that Lethabo's mom will be over joyed and support me, he will have no choice but to be with me and help raise our Son. I get home and go take a shower

•NOMALANGA

Afrika and Mpilo are definitely a thing, I wonder why it took me this long to connect the dots, I mean from the very day they first met in my kitchen they had a moment but I just thought he was taken by her beauty like he does with every other woman, but it's clear he loves her because he asked me to take care of her, but Something is still not making sense why would he beat his brother to a pulp, no one wants to tell me what happened and it's frustrating. Out of all of this I am just glad to know that there is a possibility My Son might have found love.

"We need to find a way to make Mzwa forget about pressing charges against his brother" Khaya says behind me

"If you could just tell me why the other almost killed the other" I say

"Noma this is not the time" he says

"It will never be the time with you So out with it So we can get over it" I say

"Fine your Son is in love with the business and he didn't want to hear that So he took out his frustrations on Mzwa" he says and I laugh

"Do you see fool written across my forehead" I ask and he sighs

"Hai Nomalanga man" he screams at me and I give him a look

"Kahle bo wena" I say

"Mpilo is more rational than that So try again" I say

Okay then you want the truth I will tell you the truth, my Son grew Some balls and told that Afrika girl who and what we really are, she tried to leave and Mzwa set her straight, if she dare tries to ditch us or go to the police we will go after her sister and her child and make her feel pain like never before, Mpilo is becoming weak and I am glad that Mzwa is stepping up. Lalela la Nomalanga not even you can do anything to change that, Afrika will be our transporter until we say no more and Mpilo must just forget about her and go find himself Some other virgin to fall for because the one he wants right now is strictly business. Don't cross me because I will kill you all and marry another woman who will bear me kids" he says and I scared because this is the ruthless Khaya Mdlalose no one can stop, but I don't show him my fear So I slap him hard across his face

"You are a bastard Khaya and hell has a special place for you" I say

"Whatever, just work with me to make sure that Mpilo doesn't go to jail and comes back home and make sure that he stays away from that girl or I swear I will skin him alive my blood or not, my penis might be small like you once said but it can plant a seed in another woman like it did you and I will have another family and forget about you and Mpilo while Mzwakhe and I become Kings. If you think you know me Noma, I suggest you try again because I will have no one come in between me and my money, power and status. I gave life to that boy and I will not think twice to take it from him, or you after all you are nothing to me" he says in my face and walks away with his hands buried deep inside his pockets, Soon as he disappears I exhale, I wasn't even aware that I was holding my breath.

CHAPTER 49

•LETHABO

I am not doing any good, this thing is eating through me, I feel So guilty, I don't even know how I am going to look at Amanda for the first time since we became a couple, I wish it wasn't Friday. I wish I didn't have to go get her knowing what had happened between me and another woman. I feel So filthy.

"You have been awfully quiet today, is everything okay" Paul asks me and I sigh

"No, I am fine man" I say and fake a smile

"Having problems with Amanda?" He says

"No, we are okay" I respond

"Then what's wrong, talk to me. You know what they say man a problem shared is a problem half Solved" he says and I sigh and just tell him what had happened

"What, No man. She might have drugged you" he says

"I believe so too man" I say

"And I am sure she didn't even wrap you" he says and I bury my head in my chest

"What do I do Paul man" I ask defeated

"Safety first man, you need to get to the doctor and get a Pep drug before 72hours pass we don't know what this girl has, So test for all these on the sexually transmitted infections"

"Yeah you have a point" I say

"I suggest you also ask the doctor to send your blood to the lab and ask them to do a toxicology report" he says

"What could I have been without you Paul" he says

"This is what friendship is about, so have you decided on what you going to do" he asks

"I don't know if I should come clean or take this secret to the grave with me" I say

"You don't know what this girl is planning Lethabo, and what she did to you should scare

you, we don't know what lengths she is willing to go to for whatever sick game she is playing, I suggest that you come clean to your woman after all you didn't do this on purpose or willingly. Remember how her secret almost broke you guys don't give another one a chance to try" he says and I sigh

"I think I should go to the doctor now" I say

"Definitely man, and Amanda loves you, she will understand" he says

"I really hope So because losing her would be the death of me" I say taking my stuff and

leaving our office, the is already chaos outside the learners are happy that is Friday, and if it was another day I would be happy too but this Dineo is weighing heavy on me

•EMILY

I am happy my husband pressed charges against Mpilo but that piece of shit is nowhere to be found either way he will return and his arrest warrant will be waiting, I will focus all my energy and time ensuring that my father in law follows him Soon and then they will both be charged with Something heavy. I needed to see Afrika, I need her on my side, time is ticking and the period my father gave me will be over Soon. I get to the Mdlalose home and walk-in. I find my mother in law looking lost in her thoughts

"Hey ma" I say and she snaps out of it

"Oh, hey Emily, is everything okay is Mzwa okay?" She asks panicking

"Calm done ma, he is doing okay, his doctor is the best" I say

"Oh, thank God, what brings you by" she asks

"I was hoping to see Afrika, is she in?" I say and she narrows her eyes

"Emily that girl has been through enough, if your husband sent you here to threaten her Some more please just leave" she says and I clear my throat

"I am mad at what Mzwa did to that girl ma, I am not even talking to him because of it, I just wanted to apologize to her" I say and she sighs

"I am Sorry for-" she says and I cut her off

"It's okay ma, you don't have to apologize really" I say and she gives me a faint smile

"She is in Mpilo's room" she says and I stand up and go find her, I knock and she doesn't respond
"Afrika are you in there? It's me Emily" I say and a second later I hear the door unlock and I get in, she is sitting at Mpilo's desk with her laptop and books open
"Working on a Friday" I say
"How can I help you Emily" she says not even looking at me
"I just came to check up on you to find out if you need anything" I say
"And what do you want in return" she says looking at me arms folded
"What do you mean" I say
"I learned that people in this family don't just help out from the goodness of their heart, they always have something to gain, so what is it that you are to gain Emily" she says and I sigh
"I am really sorry about what my husband did, threatening your sister like that put me off, I am not even talking to him. Afrika, I don't even know my husband anymore" I say
"So, you tell me that you never knew what they were doing with me" she asks and I swallow if I admit that I knew she will never trust me
"Yes, I knew that they are dealing drugs but I had no idea that you were a part of it" I lie
"I see" she says and I sigh
"I am really Sorry Afrika; I have daughters and I can't imagine anyone using them like this" I say and she looks away So I don't see her tears
"Well your husband doesn't feel that way" she says
"My brother was killed by a drug lord, he was a mule and we didn't know, we don't even know who the drug lord was and when I found out what Mzwa's family was doing I was already head over heels in love with him and he wanted nothing to do with the business So I was a little relieved, but his obsession with his father's approval started and he was never the same again" I twist the truth to better suit my purpose
"I am sorry to hear that" she says Sounding sincere
"It's okay, we learned to live with it, but I guess not me because I am investigating it, I need to know who killed my brother So I can get closure" I say
"Any luck" she asks
"I will get there someday" I say
"All the best" she says
"I am sorry again" I say and walkout

•AMANDA

Lethabo came to get me and I couldn't be any excited I missed him So much, but he hasn't been in the best moods ever since he got me from the flat, we are watching our favorite series he is not even paying attention to it, he is lost in his thoughts I have never seen him like this

"Baby" I say
"Yes love" he says not looking at me
"Could you please take me to Spha's place tomorrow, he invited me over to meet his boyfriend" I say
"That won't be a problem" he says
"Are you okay Lethabo" I ask
"Yes, baby I'm good" he says looking at me and gives me a faint smile that is even forced
"You know you can talk to me about anything right" I say
"I know Lerato laka" he says and I sip my juice
"So, how was work" I ask
"Just fine" he says dismissively and I want to cry. I let him be and we sit in total silence for about 30 minutes, but my pregnant self gets horny. It is really aching down there, I tried

pressing my thighs together but it's not going away, I move my hand to his penis and start rubbing it, I am glad he is in his boxers, easy access, the beast starts getting stronger
"Baby" he says I a low voice
"I need you" I say unbuttoning my dress
"Not now love please" he says
"Lethabo please even if it's a quickie please" I say
"Ama I am really tired baby please" he continues and I just get So emotional
"You are rejecting me" I say and he sighs
"I am tired of real" he sticks to his story
"Wow" I say and cry, I hate these hormones
"Please don't cry" he says
"Then sleep with me" I say
"I am dead tired baby; I wouldn't even give you two strokes" he says and I cry more
"Mxm" I say and stand up taking off all my clothes and get under the covers hoping that he will change his mind when he comes to bed

•MPILO

Afrika is not answering my calls or texting me back and it's frustrating me So much, I am worried out of my mind, and honestly, I am even losing my mind. Today only I smoked two packets of cigarettes trying to keep my head together
"Cancer is real and it kills you know" Sma says
"I know that" I say and sighs
"What's cooking oil wena" she says
"I miss my girlfriend and she won't even pick up my calls or return my texts, I am worried about her" I say
"You said you asked your mom to keep an eye on her and I am sure she would have called if Something happened to her" she says
"That's the thing she doesn't have my new number, no one does except my girl" I say
"Eish ya neh" she says and sips her beer
"Fuck it, I am going back" I say and she pulls me back by my belt
"Are you mad, do you want to go to prison Mpilo just pick up that phone and call your mother then get rid of that sim card" she says and I sigh. I dial Ndlovukazi and she picks up after a few rings
"Noma here" she says
"Hey ma" I say
"Oh, Mpilo, why did you take So long to call" she says
"I needed to settle in" I say
"Where are you?" She asks
"It's better that you don't know" I say and my aunt nods
"Okay fair enough" she says
"How is Afrika" I say and she sighs
"Honestly Mpilo she isn't doing too good. She is always locked in your bedroom, the only time she comes out is when she goes to school" ma says and I close my eyes
"Ma, I need to come back, she needs me" I say
"There is a warrant of your arrest Mpilo and your father is out for blood to whoever is trying to get in between him and his business, So I beg you Son don't come back yet I will protect your girlfriend and I will get Mzwa to drop the charges" she says
"A week ma, I am giving you a week and then I am coming home to Afrika" I say
"That's all I need" she says and I sigh
"Look after my girl ma, I love her" I confess
"I figured" she says and I hang up

•LETHABO

I did go to the doctor and he drew my blood for Some tests and the toxicology, he gave me injections and asked me not to sleep with anyone until we can get the results back, at least he gave me the PEP drug so I don't contract HIV, in case Dineo has it and possibly infected me. Last night my woman wanted sex and I just had to say no, I couldn't risk giving her Some infection and risking our baby, and I couldn't suggest that we use a condom because that would have raised Some suspicions. I am planning on telling her Soon as I get all the results back and explain to her with Some proof that the girl drugged me. I am driving her to Spa's place and she is mad at me like really mad. We get to the place

"What time should I pick you up" I ask

"I will call you" she says pouting

"Okay then have fun" I say

"I will" she says getting out of the car

"I love you babe" I say and I see a side smirk

"Yeah whatever" she says and walk to the gate, she is gaining weight, but her ass is still sexy as hell.

"I am Sorry" I shout and she looks back at me and comes back to my side and pecks my lips then leaves without saying anything, I start the engine and drive off

•AFRIKA

I am sitting in the garden with a cup of coffee and I am wearing Mpilo's hoody, it's big but comfortable and it smells of him, I am enjoying my novel, just like before when I was still living with my mom, reading gives me a chance to exist in another world and forget my problems a bit. It's dark outside but the lights are blessing me. I hear footsteps approach. I look up and it's Mr. Mdlalose I sigh

"I knew I would find you here" he says

"Can I help you" I ask not even looking at him

"Afrika, for Someone So innocent you caused havoc in my house and between my boys, one is in hospital one and the other has vanished into thin air and the police are looking for him" he says and sighs

"Can I help you with Something sir" I ask again

"Don't be cheeky with me Young girl" he says and Ndlovukazi's voice disturbs us

"What is going on here" she says and Mr. Mdlalose rolls her eyes

"I was just giving Afrika the sequences for next week" he says and hands me a paper

"Afrika come inside Nana, it's getting late and this garden is chilly you will catch a cold" she says giving this ruthless man a stare, I take the cup and my phone and follow her inside, we get in the house and he is not following us

"Did he threaten you" she asks

"No, he was just telling me that I ruined his family basically" I say and she sighs

"Don't listen to anything that man says" she says and I shrug my shoulders

"Come eat while we discuss your pre-birthday dinner on Thursday because you will be with your sister on Friday" she says and my heart sinks, Mpilo and I were supposed to be going away for my birthday but with how things are now I should just forget that and go to Mandy

"I don't want any dinner" I say

"Afrika please, you are a year older and you need to celebrate" she says

"Celebrate what exactly, the fact that I am being forced to help drug Lord's to move their product, celebrate that they are threatening my sister and her unborn baby, celebrate that the first boy I love knew I was being used and now he disappeared to God knows where. I am Sorry Ndlovukazi but I have nothing to celebrate" I say and walk away from her

CHAPTER 50

•NOMALANGA

I was here to talk to Mzwa about dropping these damn charges against his brother, this must just come to an end, he has to understand that he forced Mpilo's hand and all, but when Mpilo returns he needs to know that he almost killed his brother and then let it slide, I know their relationship will never be same. As a mother this just puts me in an awkward position but then again, right is right and wrong is wrong, and in this instance, Mzwakhe was wrong in all aspects of the word. I bump into Siza and Razor

"Love birds" I say and they look at me

"Ndlovukazi" he says

"Hey gorgeous" she says and we hug

"Now that I ran into you can I have a quick word" I say

"I was here to pick up my wife" he says

"I have one more patient baby and we can go; you guys can talk" Siza says and I couldn't be any grateful

"Okay Soft, can we use your office" he asks and she nods already on her way. We make way to her office and we are met by a huge photo of her, Razor and the boys. They are just a beautiful family

"So how can I do for you" he says after we both sit

"I need legal advice" I say and he laughs

"You are the law Ndlovukazi" he says

"I know but like a doctor can't heal themselves I can't advice myself" I say and he shrugs

"Fair enough" he says

"So here is what's been happening" I explain everything to him and when I am done, he has his head in his hands

"I would help this girl Noma but I promised my wife that I focus on nothing but the law now" he says and I smile

"I know and I would never ask you anything that would make you go back on the promises you made your wife" I say

"Much appreciated" he says

"Say I release every dirt I have on him how do I protect my children and I from it" I ask

"Whoa Ndlovukazi that's impossible, Khaya is not stupid and he is irrational, he acts on impulse and he is controlled by emotions soon as you dish out his dirt he will retaliate and you will all go to jail, I am his lawyer and I know a lot and you know if you two go to war I wouldn't be a part of it but he will go find another beast that will play dirty and he won't spare anyone, I am not even supposed to tell you this but he keeps track of the profits of the Colombia lab he gives you and he knows how you launder it, he can prove that you are the owner of those offshore accounts and he will use that information to break you down so with what you just told me clear your paths, change accounts move through shell companies that will not trace back to you, move it from country to country before it gets to you so it's trail can be lost. Khaya has been in this game for longer than me even and he is a ruthless mother fucker, I am sorry to say this but none of you are safe from him, what I will advise you do is lay low and make him believe that he has all of you under control and while he loses sight start doing your thing discreetly even. You know he will never allow anything come between him and power" he says and I sigh

"Mpilo loves this girl Razor and I want my son to have a chance" I say

"I understand, but play this game with him, make him believe he has all the power and beat him at his own game. I am all for love ever since I had my wife but their lives are important, tell them to make sure that he doesn't find out that they are still seeing other" he says

"Thank you so much" I say

"Don't release anything on him Ndlovukazi because that would be the end of you and your children, because if he goes down he is taking everyone with him, and we know you will have it harder than him because of your position with the state" he says and I bite my lip in total frustration. The door opens and Siza walks

"I am sorry to disturb but babe ma is impatient now she says she wants the boys out of her house" she says and Razor laughs

"It's okay we can go; we were already done talking" he says taking his wife's things and then takes her hand into his then we walk out

•DINEO

I have looked everywhere in my room, in my car, all over this house but nothing it's not here and it's just frustrating me, where could it be, if anyone lays their eyes on that thing I am done, I am so done. I storm out of my room and find the maid in the kitchen; I go to her and turn her around really quick

"Where is it" I say

"Where is what Dineo" she says

"Don't play dumb with me where is it" I say again shouting

"Where is what, I don't know what you are talking about" she says

"My blue sparkling diary, where is it" I say squeezing her arms

"Dineo you are hurting me" she cries

"I wouldn't be hurting you if you just told me the truth so speak" she says

"The last time I saw you with it was when you were with it last week I swear" she says and I let her go

"You better not be lying to me" I say and walk away, I might have left it at the flat then and Amanda respects boundaries she wouldn't get into my room without me there. I don't want to show up there until I strike her but I need to find it so I will go there tomorrow when she isn't around, she normally goes to school at 8am and comes back around 4 so I will go then

•AMANDA

I am the Bakery with Spha, he is helping me run around to organize a little surprise birthday get together for my baby sister, she is turning 19 and I can't believe she has grown to be a beautiful humble resilient woman ever. I couldn't have asked a better sister, a friend, supporter and confidant. I am looking but these cakes but nothing is appealing to me they are just cakes. An idea suddenl hits me

"Exactly" I say smiling and rubbing my little growing bump

"Tell me you have made a choice" he says and I laugh

"Even better I came with a design" I say

"Idrama Amanda yoh" he says

"Hai kahle nawe" I say and walk to the lady that works here

"Sisi do you guys make cakes with customers design" I ask and

"Yes, we do, you just have to show us a picture or have the baker draw it so she can see if that's the one you want" she says

"Oh, thank God I want my own design" I say

"Cool then. Which design" she asks

"The African continent shape" I say

Genius, pure genius" Spa says and I laugh.

"Can it be large please and make it so colorful, she has been through so much in her 19 years of life each color will represent every Pain, happiness, sadness, joy, achievement everything she has ever felt" I say
"This is a great concept Mandy" my friend says
"Thanks buddy" I say
"Okay so when do you want it" the lady asks
"This Friday, in the afternoon around 2/3" I say
"Okay that's fine. It will cost R600" she says and I take out the money and give it to her and she gives me the receipt.
"Thank you very much" I say and go back to the car
"So where to from here" he asks
"We said China mall akere for those decorations nyana" I say
"Oh yes. So, you need to tell me what your sister likes so I can get her a gift" he says
"I will SMS them to you" I say
"Perfect" I say

•KHAYA

Nomalanga is guarding that girl with her life, I can't even have a minute to myself with her, she is everywhere and it's annoying on the other side things at the going south at the lab, production is running slow and we have deliveries this Thursday and it's a Tuesday already. Now I wish I knew Mpilo is, he is the only one who knows how to run this shit and he needs to come back now. I get to the hospital and find Mzwa reading a book. I close the door
"Mgabashe" he says
"You need to drop these damn charges Mzwakhe" I say
"Did you see what Mpilo did to me?" he asks
"Who hasn't man just get over it, we pushed him" I admit
"Wow baba" he says
"Mzwakhe" I warn
"My wife will not allow me to do that" I say
"Who has the balls in your house Mzwa" I ask
"Of course, it's me baba" he says sounding annoyed
"Then make this disappear so Mpilo can come home, the lab is chaotic he needs to come back and fix all of this man Mzwa, I am not losing money over nothing" I scream
"We going to have to wait for me to be discharged then" he says
"And when the hell is that" I ask
"This Friday, the doctor hinted" he says
"Good because by next week I want everything running smoothly, we have the biggest orders" I say
"I hear you Dikane" he says
"I will see you tomorrow, I have a meeting I need to rush to right now" I say and walkout

•LETHABO

After work I drove to the doctor, he said I should come today to hear the results, and my heart has been racing since then. I am the next person after the patient inside. I have a headache from all the thinking and panicking. It's finally my turn, so I get in and he is looking at a line
"Hey doc" I say
"Lethabo, you are back, take a sit" he says
"Thank you" I say feeling so nervous
"So, your results are all back" he says
"I hope it's good news" I say

"I haven't had a look; I prefer to find out with my patient" he says
"Ready when you are" I say and he tears the envelope and reads through a while
"Oh, look at that, well you are clean of any sexually transmitted infections" he says and I sigh in relief
"Oh, thank God" I say and he nods and opens the other envelope
"But unfortunately, the toxicology report came back positive. So, you were definitely drugged" he says and a part of me is happy and relieved that I didn't do this on purpose I didn't sleep with Dineo willingly
"Thank you so much doctor" I say
"Lethabo you know you can open a case of rape" he says
"I know and I will think about it" I say
"Fair enough, I am sorry for what happened to you, society is not used to men getting raped that they find it to be a joke which is wrong because men choose to keep the violation to themselves and no one deserves to live like that" he says

CHAPTER 51

•LETHABO

I found myself outside my girlfriend's apartment building after work on Thursday, that day after I went to get my tests, I couldn't go see her, my head was all over the place, but I realized that I needed to come clean. My heart was beating So fast, I was afraid of what she might do after I tell her, I think I am more afraid of her wanting to do nothing with me after she learns what happened, but I can't keep this from her because I know I wouldn't want her keeping it from me. I was about to call her to open the gate for me but Someone was at the gate So I quickly got out the car locked it and got inside. I was trying So hard to normalize my breathing but I am shit scared it's not funny. There is loud music playing in her flat, she won't even hear me knock since the safety door is open I attempt to open the door and luckily it opens, I walk in and she is in her underwear and bra only dancing to the music, I stand by the door watching her in admiration till she turned and saw me
"Lethabo man" she says her hands going to her potable bump
"I am sorry for scaring you" I say and she sighs
"What are you doing here" she asks with a smile coming to me, she pecks my lips and I touch her belly
"Someone is growing I see" I say and she laughs
"Indeed, he is, daddy's big boy" she murmurs
"I love you Ama" I say and she blushes
"I love you too baby" she confesses
"Can we talk please" I say and her face falls
"Is everything okay" she asks leading us to the couch
"No babe unfortunately not" I say in a low voice
"Talk to me love" she says running my cheek affectionately
"So, remember when I refused making love to you this weekend" I say and she rolls her eyes
"Mxm claiming to be tired" she says and under different circumstances, I would have found this funny and cute
"I wasn't tired love; I just didn't want to possibly infect you with Some nasty infection I might have contracted" I say and the shock on her face

"Infection, baby you cheated" she says tears already glowing in her eyes and I shake my head vigorously

"I would never cheat on you I would never no matter what" I say

"Then when did you get an infection and how" she asks and I sigh deeply

"Well a while ago when we were separated, my mom got close with the daughter of her pastor and it seemed harmless when she left, she asked her to drop by to cook and clean around the house, and she did as told. Thursday, she came around 5:30pm and started cooking and she served me as I was talking to you on the phone, after eating Ama I felt So drowsy I didn't know what happened after that. In the morning I found her in my bed I thought it was you but it didn't make sense when I turned I saw her and I couldn't believe it, I don't remember sleeping with her but she said we did, I know myself Amanda I would never cheat on you So I suspected that she might have drugged me So I went to the doctor and did Some tests and a toxicology report which came back positive, I suspected correctly she did drug me babe" I say and tears are falling uncontrollably on her beautiful face I hate myself right now

"This is the report and the results on the tests came back negative I didn't contract any infection from her," I say and she comes and sits on top of me

"Lethabo" that all she managed to say, my baby is so emotional I suspect the hormones are exaggerating her reaction

"I am So Sorry I didn't mean to" I say

"You don't have to apologize for being violated love, what that stupid girl did was rape you, you didn't give you consent," she says and honestly, I thought she was going to be livid right now

"You are not mad at me; you don't think I am lying?" I ask

"Mad at you for being drugged baby no, and I believe you Lethabo because I know you, I know the father of my baby would never hurt me like that" she says and I just hold me So tight

"You don't know how relieved I am to hear this baby" I say

"You telling me shows how much this relationship means to you and how much you value me and our baby, if you were Some other guy you would have slept with me not minding that you might put my health at risk, instead you protected me even when I was mad you didn't give in, I respect you for this and if I didn't know how much you love me now I know and I am sure" she says and my heart is calm

"Thank you baby, I thought you were going to freak" I say and she shakes her head, after a second, she looks at me and freezes

"What's wrong?" I ask

"What if your mom told her to do that, so you could get over me, she doesn't know we are back together" she says and I stop to think

"I never thought of it like that hey" I say and think of the possibility

•MPILO

My mother better make this go away by today because tomorrow is my girl's birthday and I am not spending it away from her, she has to come through for me, I miss Afrika and I can't function properly because she isn't taking my calls or responding my calls, my absence is not making her heart grow fonder, but it's making her get over me and the thought of that alone gives me anxiety. I don't want to imagine me without her, I did that for all my adult life and it wasn't fulfilling, when she agreed to be my girl she brought Some sense of direction into my life, I don't want to be the old Mpilo who changes women like he does sneakers. I don't know what I would do if I lost her. I wipe my tear

"You are really in love with her" Sma says and I sigh

"I am losing my mind ncane" I say

"I am Sorry Mpilo, and I am sure she is missing you too" she says
"I am here hiding like a coward, I should be with her, protecting her, giving her hope" I say
"You are not a coward, you are doing the right thing by being here, if you go back there, they arrested you and you go to jail then who will protect her then. Trust in your mom she said she will protect her and get Mzwa to let this go and she will, I know her she keeps her promises" she says
"I just wish she would just pick up her phone Sma" I say and she laughs
"She is still young, you are her first love and she doesn't know how these things work, you need to teach her when you get back" she says
"I always thought I was Mr. All girls want me and I was too hot for any girl but honestly I sometimes wonder why a perfect woman like her chose to be with me" I say
"It can only be love" she says
"I wish I could play you the scene of the day we first met at that mall Sma Yoh, if I didn't urinate my pants that day I will never do it again" I say and she laughs
"I am going back with you once all of this has settled; I want to see you around her" she says
"I would love it if you met her, and please come it would piss Khaya off" I say and we both laugh
"My sister would kick me out even before I get in" she says and I shake
"They are divorced Ncane" I say and the shock on her face
"Say what" she says and I laugh. Oh, boy here comes a million questions
"They didn't want anyone to know" I say
"This needs beer and some smokes; I need you to tell me everything from scratch" she says and I roll my eyes and fish for my wallet to take out my card

AMANDA

What that girl did to my man is sick and twisted and Something tells me that his mom had a hand in this, maybe she knew Somehow that
Her Son loves me enough to let my past be and forgive me and she could stand that. This just made us even stronger, this just proved that Lethabo and I are meant to be. He decided to sleepover, and I couldn't be any happy because he took care of that itch all night long. He woke up as I was applying lotion
"Morning beautiful" he says
"Hey baby" I say smiling
"What time is it" he asks
"6:30, you need to go shower and head back home to change So you don't be late" I say
"Do we have to work" he says and I laugh
"Yep especially if you are expecting a baby, I heard they are very costly those tiny human beings" I say and he smiles and gets out of bed
"Well, in that case, let me go shower" he says and walks out the door living me blushing. I put on my clothes and go to the kitchen to dish up Some food from last night So he could eat at school for lunch. I am So excited about today and I hope Afrika has Some fun. Lethabo appears from the bedroom
"Babe let's go before I am late" he says and I take my things and he drives me to school
"So, how will you pick up the cake" he asks
"Oh, Spha will drive me baby" I say
"You need to get your driver's license babe" he says
"You will give me Some lessons?" I ask
"In fact, we will start next week" he says and I get excited instantly
"I can imagine myself driving your car, with our Son in his car seat" I say and he smiles
"I can see that" he says
"So, you coming right?" I ask

"Yep but I am bringing Paul with me" he says
"I like him So yeah" he chuckles and we get to my school and we kiss
"I love you" he says
"I love you too baby" I say and get out of the car.

•AFRIKA

The first SMS was from Mpilo, it came through at exactly 00:00, his message was heart-warming but I wish he was around to tell me this, I miss him and sleeping in his room is no longer helping because my scent is replacing his and that alone gets me more depressed, my sister was next and her message gave me hope, she Sounded So excited about spending the day with me. Larona and Senzo followed. I go through my Facebook and they are already happy birthday messages from my friends. I react with love and respond with a thank you. I decided not to go to campus today, I will be locked up in here till Amanda says she is home. I am disturbed by a knock on my door, and I know it's Ndlovukazi because she is the only one who knows I sleep in here. I get out of bed in Mpilo's pajamas and go unlock the door, she walks in with the most beautiful flowers in an amazing vase and two gift bags, she starts singing Happy birthday to me and It's awkward because I don't know what to do, she stops and looks at me

"I know you said there is nothing to celebrate but my motherly self wouldn't let you be broody and I am happy Mpilo didn't too. I am really sorry for what you are going through because of my family, I have taken you as a daughter and I hope one day you will find it in your heart to forgive me Afrika" she says

"Is Mpilo back" I ask and her face falls

"No, but he sent you this" she says giving me the flowers and one gift bag, I smile and open the gift bag, it has a box from a jewelry store, I open it and it has a little note "I got a matching bracelet since I am not into necklaces, I decided to go old school" I open the box and it's a silver chain matching my bracelet. It's a heart and it's engraved MPILO, I blush

"I could help you put it on" she offers and I hand it to her and she puts it on me, I can imagine him with bracelet with my name on it

"Does this mean you are not giving up on him" his mom asks

"The heart wants what it wants ma" I say and she smiles

"I am happy to hear that" she says and hands me the other gift bag

"I didn't know what to get you, I hope you like it" she says and I open. It's a 1st edition book by one of my favorite authors, this must have cost a fortune. I look in there again and find a gift card, it's worth R6000 I could spend it at any book store. I don't know how but I find myself attacking her with a hug

"I love this gift thank you So much Ndlovukazi" I say

"I am aware baby, you haven't been here long but you've finished reading my collection, So I thought what better gift" she says

"Thank you So much I love it" my mood for the day improved

"Please pick up his calls he is losing his mind" she says

"I will" I say

"Go take a shower, I want to take you out for brunch if you don't mind" she says

"Okay I will find you when I am done" I say and she smiles and walks out.

•DINEO

Amanda invited me to a braai, her sister is turning 19 today So she organized Something for her. This is the perfect time to pour those pills in her foot So that thing she carries inside of her dies, Lethabo will only have a child with me and no other woman. It has been a week since we did the deed and that enough time for the test to come back with a definite answer. I bought two tests from different brands, my breasts have been tender and that can only

mean one thing right. I quickly go to the bathroom and pee on those sticks and wait for a few minutes, I am still sitting on the toilet anxious as hell. My head drifts to my diary and I wonder where I could have misplaced it, it hardly ever leaves my sight, I just have to look again and patiently this time around. O snap out of my thoughts and check the sticks, they both say negative, my breathing changes and tears threaten, I was ovulating and my breasts are tender this could only mean that the tests are wrong. I take the tissue to wipe myself and when I look at it, it has blood. I shut my eyes and dump it inside the toilet and flush, anger, and hate start to consume me more. How could I get my period now, my period has never changed dates before why is this happening to me, Lethabo will be So disappointed. I take those damn tests and through them across the room screaming. I make my way to my bedroom and check on the pills "if I can't give him a child then no one will, not even you Mandy" I say and throw the container back in my bag and go pick up the tests in the bathroom.

CHAPTER 52

•AMANDA

After my last class, I waited for Spha to finish his with his other class, luckily he gave me his car keys and I was chilling in the listening to his music, he has Some nice Amapiano, I think we going to use this stick to play Some music back at the flat. I check my watch and good thing we still on time to get the cake, everyone is going to be bringing their alcohol So I don't have to worry about that. The driver door opens and he gets in

"Sorry I took my sweet time" he says

"No man it's okay" I say

"I just need to get to your please So I can send Nate the location" he says

"Okay we only need to fetch the cake and maybe buy your alcohol" I say

"Don't worry about me, bae will bring my alcohol and a change of clothes with" he says

"Thanks again for helping with the braai" I appreciate

"That's what friends are for Mandy and your bae will help me Soon as he gets there" he says and I nod

"I just hope Afrika will be happy" I murmur

"Of course, she will stop worrying man it's going to be a nice chilla you'll see" he says and I nod. He looks at me and frowns

"You bump is bigger today" he says

"I know right, I thought I was the only one who noticed you" I say and he laughs

"What if you carrying twins" he jokes

"Kill me now" I reply and he smiles, why I look outside we are already at the bakery

"You are such a smooth driver" I say

"I know" he replies and I roll my eyes

•MZWAKHE

I am in my room at the hospital waiting for my wife to come pick me up, I got discharged about an hour ago and luckily, they had already called her but she couldn't leave work immediately. I am not ready to face her because I know we are going to have a huge fight over Mpilo. My doctor walks in first she follows

"I am so sorry babe; I couldn't leave immediately I was in the meeting when the nurse called" she says

"Its okay babe don't worry" I say and she pecks my lips
"So, this is your medication and your card with the next appointment, the instructions to the meds are on the container, please take it easy, a lot of bed rest and if you feel drowsy and serve headaches come to the ER fast" the doctor says
"Thank you doc" I say and she smiles and walkout
"Ready?" Em asks
"Definitely babe, I hate hospitals" I say and she laughs and take my bag and we leave to the parking lot, she helps me in and puts my bag in the back and gets in
"I asked the helper to make you chicken Soup and fresh buns" she says
"That was thoughtful babe thanks" I say
"The girls will be so excited to find you at home; they have been throwing a lot of tantrums demanding to see you" she says and I laugh
"My princesses" I say and we approach the intersection where we turn left to our place but I need to go to the police station first
"Make a right at the intersection please" I say and she gives me a questioning look
"Why, where do you want to go" she asks
"The police station" I reply
"Oh, no need babe I went yesterday and they said they will call once they have Mpilo in custody" she says
"I want to drop the charges Em" I say and she hits the breaks in the middle of the road and I am grateful for the seatbelt
"What?" She says in a chilling voice
"I understand why my brother did what he did, I would have probably done the same thing if he threatened you love" I say and she laughs

•LETHABO

Paul is going to make me late, it's a surprise party we have to get there before the person we are honoring not the other way around, Amanda has even been calling me to ask where I was. I am So impatient now. I even took off my sneakers and watched Some Soccer, but my heart is not here at all, I should be helping Spha to braai the meat eish. The remote falls and I sigh and try to fish for it with my hand but it seems like it went under the couch I kneel and put my hand under, I feel Something like a page and frown, I need to clean yeses, I peep down there and there is a sparkling blue book. I take it out and the remote and sit down, the first picture on the book is Amanda and Dineo, I am left shocked, she knows my woman. I continue to browse through the book and I find horrific things, I see that she wants to give Amanda abortion pills and I just switched off the TV and my sneakers and lock. I get in the car and drive out trying Ama on the phone, this psycho seems to be close to her and she could be at the braai, she could try and feed her that poison then. I drive like a complete madman afraid for my girlfriend and child. I keep peeping on that book on the passenger seat and shake my head. She loves and hates Amanda and at the same time; she is not stable at all. She needs help, professional help it's a miracle why she hasn't hurt Amanda, I knew mental health was real but I never thought I could experience it first hand and be a part of a delusional person's fantasy. _____

•AFRIKA

I had the best day with Ndlovukazi, she wouldn't stop apologizing and I thought it was time to let this grudge against her go, I mean she has been there for me since Mpilo left and I am grateful for that. We went out for brunch and then she insisted that I do Some mini retail therapy and I got treatment for my fro at Some upscale salon, she insisted on taking pictures of us saying they are for her Instagram, I just laughed. Soon as we got home, she made me change into one of the dresses she bought me and took more snaps then I was out the door to the flat. The driver drops me off and my mood is good from what it was this morning, I

just wish Mpilo was here. I use my key to open and my way to the apartment, the is
Amapiano playing and I sigh and greet the guy outside our house who looks too suspicious
for my liking. I open and walk-in and people shout surprise. I laugh and look around and
everyone is here even the ones I don't know
"Happy birthday mntase'khaya you look So beautiful" Ama says and we hug
"Thank you and It looks So pretty in here Mandy, look at the cake" I say and my blink my
tears
"Don't cry baby it's your birthday" she says then pecks my lips
"Thank you for this" I say and I spot Senzo
"How did you find him" I say to Mandy but pointing at Senzo who is laughing at me
"Your Facebook friend list" she says and we both laugh. Dineo appears with a plate
"Hey Afrika, happy birthday honey" she says and we hug
"Thank you So much" I say
"Madam you said you are hungry out of your mind, here take this and eat, I need to go
change" she says handing Amanda a plate and walks to her room
"Oh, I am the one who needs Some food, I last had a light meal hours ago" I say and she
frowns
"Okay boy boy and I were not hungry, siya kgala nje, you can have the plate co the food is far
from being ready" she says
"You sure" I ask
"It's your birthday love" she says and I devour the food while she introduces me to her
teacher and after that, I go greet Senzo
"You snake we spoke this after, no hint nyana" I say and he shakes his head
"I know the meaning of surprise friend" he says and I chuckle
"That hungry huh" he asks as I pop the last of my sandwich in my mouth
"It's my birthday" I say shrugging my shoulders
"Well Ms Party I didn't know what to get you So I got you a gift card" he says and hands it to
me, it's from Zara, it's Zara day today huh Ndlovukazi bought me clothes there too
"Ncaaa buddy thanks" I say and hug him
"You look amazing by the way" he says
"Thanks, and I will be right back" I say and he goes to stand with Amanda's friend/teacher

•AMANDA

Okay what the hell is keeping Lethabo, Afrika even made it here before, where did I leave
my phone even. I try to go locate it but Dineo blocks me
"Did you eat your food" she says with the widest smile
"Yes, I did friend thanks" I lie not wanting to make her feel bad
"Good" she says with a happy expression and walks away. I go check on Afrika
"You don't look too good" I say to her
"I am feeling nauseous, I think it's from all this perfumes and colognes mixed" she says
"I guess you took that for me, I hope you did" I say brushing my belly
"Poor me" she says
"Are you still okay Senzo" I ask
"Yes, and thanks for inviting me" he says and I smile at him
"You are my baby's friend I wanted her to have at least one friend at her party because you
can see it's me and my people" I say
"I should get more friends" Afrika says
"Don't bring meaningless bullshit into your life" Senzo says and I high five him. The door
bursts open and Lethabo walks in with no shoes holding a blue diary, I make my way to him
"You are late and you are not wearing any shoes" I say
"Where is Dineo" he asks and he looks mad really mad but I also notice fear in his eyes

"She is in her bedroom I think, how do you know her" I ask
"Please tell me you didn't eat anything she gave you" he says and I frown
"She made me a sandwich but I didn't eat it, why what's going on" I ask and he sighs in relief
"Oh, thank you God" he says and looks behind me
"You sick bitch" he says and goes to stop the music
"Lethabo" I reprimand him and look at Dineo who is looking like she has been caught with her pants down
"Baby no, she doesn't deserve you trying to stick up for her, she is the pastor's daughter I told you about" he says and my heart almost stops
"What?" I say in a low voice
"Why Dineo, why would you want to kill our baby" I ask making my way to her and she is stepping back
"She what" I ask shouting and everyone is now watching us
"She wrote everything in this book Amanda, she planned to drug me and forcing herself on me, she planned on feeding you abortion pills" he says and my hands move to my mouth, she isn't saying anything she is just crying looking down like she lost in her world
"Dineo why" I ask with a broken heart
"Because I love you damn it, I wanted you but you never saw me not even once. You saw them all but me, then you went by get a boyfriend and left me in this godforsaken life that I got in for you. I had to make you see me I had to. If I couldn't have you Lethabo wouldn't too, but I loved you enough to be with him So I can protect him and love him on your behalf. Then you went and got pregnant Mandy, this baby doesn't deserve to live, you two weren't supposed to have this baby, your bond was supposed to be through me alone, I would have been what kept you connected, I would have loved you both like you never thought possible but" she says and I cut her off
"Can you hear how crazy you Sound right now" I say and her facial expression changes
"Who are you calling crazy you bitch" she says charging to me really quick but Lethabo hold her back and Spha takes her while my boyfriend comes to me, she is screaming like a madwoman
"It's too late that bastard child will die, and none of us will give him a child" she says
"You said you didn't eat the food right" my boyfriend asks and I nod vigorously
"Yes, but Afrika was too hungry she ate it instead" I say and fear creeps in, I look at my sister and she is on the couch sweating profusely, I make my way to her and feel her temperature she is burning up
"Afrika are you okay" I ask
"Take her to the hospital Mandy" Nate says and Lethabo scoops her and rushes out
"You better pray nothing happens to my sister or I will rain down on you and you will spend the rest of your miserable life in prison" I say and she laughs
"She needs help Mandy, this one has a mental issue, I can just tell" Nate says again and I remember he is a psychologist
"Go with your sister, Nate will call the psychiatrist facility to pick her up" Spha says
"I am not going there" she says trying to break free and I rush out to my sister. Lethabo drives like Schumacher to the hospital and we finally get there. The Porter's help us move her inside and we explain to the doctor what had happened. I am So scared right now I just cry
"She is going to be okay baby" he says taking me in his arms
"It's her birthday baby, we should be Happy not at the hospital wondering big she will be fine God no" I say and she calms me down
"I am Sorry love very Sorry" he says
"I can't believe I have been living with a snake" I confess
"She is sick, I wonder if her parents know" he says

"We should inform them, Nate said he is going to call the psychiatrist facility to admit her and I am pretty sure they will need her parents' consent" I say and he nods.

"I will ask my mom to SMS it to me" he says and we sit in the waiting room, and I am calculating how much the bill will be this hospital is state of the art and they must be expensive but for Afrika, I would rather be in debt.

"She is going to be okay" Lethabo says and we sit for about 2 hours and the doctor appears "Afrika Mbatha" she says and we go to her

"I am her sister" I say and she smiles

"She ingested abortion pills from the black market, it consists of the ingredients the approved abortion pills has but it has a deadly catalyst to it, luckily Afrika wasn't pregnant and nothing got damaged, she just experiences side effects of the catalyst one of it being to sweat like that and be drowsy but she will be okay. We will keep her for a day or two for observation because like I said the catalyst is deadly, we just want to ensure that we got all of it" she says and I sigh in relief

"Oh, thank goodness" I say

"The nurses will come to get you when they are done with her, and here is her phone, it has been ringing" she says and hands me the phone and walks away. Even before we could sit the phone rang and it's a Mpilo I frown I didn't know she has a new friend. I answer it

"Oh, baby finally. I was going out of my mind here Afrika, how is your birthday going, I hope you liked your gift" the person says and I look at the screen again and move it to my ear

"Sthandwa Sam please say something I miss you mhles please" he begs

"Who is this?" I ask

"Whoa who are you on my girlfriend's phone asking me who I am, where is Afrika" he says

"Hei wena this is Amanda her sister" I say

"Oh, shit, Amanda I am sorry I didn't mean to uhm can I talk to Afrika" he says calmly

"Unfortunately, she can't come to the phone right now, she is been checked on, we are at the hospital" I say

"What happened is she okay? Which hospital" he asks and I sigh

"She will be fine, we are Siphophelo Memorial" I say and I hope he comes Afrika has a boyfriend and she didn't bother telling me

"I will be there soon as I can" he says and hangs up.

"Who was that" Lethabo queries

"He says he is Afrika's boyfriend" I say and she frowns

"Iyoh," he says and I clap once and sit down burning to get some answers from Ms Party.

CHAPTER 53

•MPILO

After hanging up the call I didn't even waste time trying to pack my clothes, I just wanted myself in Johannesburg, my girlfriend is in hospital and I don't care if I have a warrant for my arrest, I am going to see her. I took my things and hurried to the Sma's room.

"Ncane lalala, I need to leave" I say

"Mpilo we have been over this come on" she says

"And I listened but now my girlfriend is hospitalized, I can't just stay here" I say and she gets off the bed

"What Happened to her, what did your father do" she asks

"I don't think this has to do with baba, she was with her sister and I believe ma would have tried getting in touch with me if she knew" I say

"Just keep discreet when you get there Mpilo please" she says
"I will Sma" I say
"Call me when you get there and drive safely you want to get to her alive" she says and I nod quickly running to my car.

•AFRIKA

I opened my eyes and I felt a bit drowsy but lucky enough my temperature was normal. I can't believe Dineo would want to do that to Amanda, I don't want to think of what could have happened if my sister lost that baby, I look towards the window and my sister is looking outside, her back to me
"Mandy" I say and she turns quickly
"Oh, hey Nana, how are you feeling?" She asks already next to me
"I am better mntaka'ma. What did the doctor say" I ask?
"Well the abortion pills didn't affect you or your ability to be pregnant, you just reacted to the side effects of the black-market abortion pills" she says and I sigh
"Thank God" I say thankfully
"Don't worry you will be able to bare little Mpilo's" she says and I freeze
"What are you talking about manje" I say trying to pretend like she didn't catch me offside
"Don't do that Afrika, your boyfriend Mpilo called and Soon as he heard that you were hospitalized, he said he is coming" she says and my heart melts
"He is on his way" I ask and you can't miss the excitement in my voice
"Just look at you Afrika, why didn't you tell me you have a boyfriend" she asks and I look down embarrassed, how do I tell my sister all this without making her worry
"Sis it's a long story" I say and she shakes her head
"We don't keep things from each other Afrika" she says and tears threaten
"I know" I say and blink them
"Don't cry I am not mad at you I just hoped you would be comfortable to tell me about your first love" she says taking my hand
"It's just So complicated Mandy" I say and she frowns
"What is he not treating you well" she asks
"He loves me So much but other things are standing in our way" I say
"What is he married" she says and I shake my head vigorously and Lethabo walks in with food
"Oh, she is awake" he says
"Yes, she just woke up a few minutes away" she answers and I am happy to be saved by the Bell. I know I need to tell her the truth but how do I go on about it.

•NOMALANGA

I drove straight to Mzwakhe's house after Afrika left. I had a week to convince me to drop the charges and I failed to do so. Now Mpilo isn't able to celebrate his girlfriend's birthday with her. I am going to use emotional blackmail if I have to because my son can't be living God knows where like a fugitive. I get to the house park behind Emily's car in the driveway. I go knock and she is the one to open
"Oh, hey ma" she says
"I am sorry for showing up unannounced" I say
"No, it's okay, you don't have to apologize. Please come in" she says and I walk in
"How is he" I ask
"He is trying but I was told to make sure that he gets enough bed rest" she says
"You know he can be stubborn So be firm" I say
"Definitely" she agrees
"Is he sleeping" I ask

"Oh, he is in the shower, can I get you anything to drink before I go tell him you are here" she says
"Sparkling water please baby" I say
"Coming right up" she says and goes to the kitchen to get me Some. She comes back after a few minutes and hands me the water
"Thank you Em" I say
"He will be right down, and Ma can I cash out to the store quick" she asks
"Of course, love takes your time" I say and she leaves. After about 30 minutes Mzwakhe makes his way down to me.
"Ndlovukazi" he says and I stand to help him settle down
"How are you feeling" I ask
"Ngi right ma" he says
"Please don't give Em a tough time, she will simply be following the doctors' orders" I say
"She will be the one giving me a tough time" he says and sighs
"Why what's wrong" I ask
"Because I went to drop the charges against Mpilo" he says and I immediately feel like Something heavy was taken off my shoulders
"Oh, don't worry she will come around soon" I say
"I hope so" he says and I take out my phone and text Mpilo
Come home, he dropped the charges I press send

•DINEO

The psychiatrist kept on asking me questions after questions and I just didn't answer her. I wanted to leave this place; I am not mad I don't understand why they always see it fit to love me up here all the time. She sighs because she can see that I won't be giving her any answers. The door opens and my parents walk in. I quickly stand up and go to them
"Mom please tell them I am not crazy" I say and she looks at me with teary eyes
"Oh, my baby, I failed once again" she says
"Tell them mama tell them I went to Cuba and I got cured" I say
"You are just delusional Dineo, you never went to Cube, we can't cure bipolar but we can manage it, and you haven't been taking your pills for years you were bound to have an episode" the Dr says and I give her a deadly look.
"You are the delusional one" I scream at her
"You have a good facility here Dr and we give our consent to have her committed" my father says
"You have always hated me, you are evil dad, an evil man pretending to his congregation that he is Holly, taking care of everyone except me, I hate you both" I say losing my mind and two male nurses walk in and one hold message while one gives me an injection. I feel drowsiness immediately
"I hate you" that is the last word I utter before drifting.

•MPILO

I just got to the hospital and its night already I am scared, I pray nothing serious is going on with her. I get to the front desk and ask where Afrika Mbatha is and thank God for my looks the nurse didn't give me a tough time because she was busy flirting with me. I get to the room and she is in bed looking out the window
"Muhles wami" I say closing the door and she looks at me
"Mpilo" she says with a trembling voice
"It's me baby, I am here" I say and close the blinds on the window and go to her, she is crying already, I just hold her face and kiss her passionately
"You are here" she says touching me

"I am Sorry muntu wami" I say and she holds me tight
"Don't you ever leave me again" she says
"I promise I won't I promise" I say
"I love you So much Mpilo Mdlalose" she says and I am weak at the knees, I pull out from the hug and look at her
"Ngiyak'thanda baby yezwa" I say and she nods. I kiss her again and she pours her emotions out
"Why are you here" I ask and she explains what happened at the surprise party
"People are crazy outchea, Kodwa uright wena? (But you are okay)" I ask
"Yes, my womb wasn't affected" she says and I put my hand on her flat stomach
"Basazo khula ngapha oMpilo abacane (little Mpilo's are still to grow in here)" I say and she giggles, her eye moves to my wrist and she smiles
"Nice bracelet" she says and I smirk.
"Matches your necklace" I say and she kisses me this time and I am left weak
"Lie down with me So you can tell me where you have been" she says making space for me, I blush and take off my shoes.

CHAPTER 54

•AFRIKA

I am happy, I am So happy my heart is at ease, Mpilo is here with me and it feels So right, I even managed to sleep throughout the night and when I opened my eyes and saw him next to me, I just couldn't contain my smile. We are So close together since this bed is not big enough for both of us. We talked for almost the whole night. The door opens and the nurse walks in and frowns
"He shouldn't be here" she says
"I know and I am Sorry but please let him sleep he is too tired please" I say
"I don't know ousi" she says
"I will pay if I have to please, he is so tired" I say
"Eish you will get me in trouble, but I will guard the door when your doctor comes, I will come to warn you" she says and I smile
"Thank you I will make it worth your while" I say and she smiles
"Now take your pills please" she says and I take them and drink careful not to wake sleeping beauty up. She walks out, closes the door, I kiss his lips and he smiles
"That's bribery sthandwa'sam" he says and I laugh
"God, you aren't sleeping" I say and he opens his eyes
"Nope I am just comfortable this way, I missed sleeping next to you like this, honestly I was starting to forget how you smell" he says
"I have been sleeping in your bed and wearing your clothes" I confess and he smiles
"You love me don't you" he says narrowing his eyes and I blush
"In a way, I never thought possible" I say and he closes his eyes
"That's all I need to be the man you deserve and nami ngiyak'thanda muhles wami (I love you too my beauty)" he says to me and we kiss slowly and passionately, we stop and I laugh
"We forgot about morning breathe" I say
"I couldn't care less about that baby" he says
"Drunk in love I understand" I murmur and he bursts out laughing

"I am glad you do" he says
"I missed you So much" I say
"Qhubeka ukhulume kanje ngizok'shada nahlanje (continue talking like this and see me marry you today)" he says and I smile
"It wouldn't mind being Mrs. You" I say and he blushes
"Mrs. Me, I like that I should save your number like that on my phone" he says
"Kante how is it saved" he smiles and reaches out for his phone and shows me, I am saved as Muhles Wami
"I wonder how my number is saved" he says and I hide my face
"Just Mpilo" I say and he frowns
"You not romantic Afrika Yoh,"
"Ufuna ngibaleni kante? Mpilo Yami?" I ask and he laughs
"That's more like it babe" he says and I peck his lips

KHAYA

Mzwa dropped the charges and I couldn't be any happier, now it means Mpilo can home and go get us back on schedule because we are behind it's not even funny, I was hoping that he would have gotten here last night and it's clear he isn't here, the only person who would know of his whereabouts is Noma, I go knock on her door and she shouts come in, I walk in and she is putting the last pillow on the bed, she turns and I must admit she looks sexy in that black short nightdress, he thighs are exposed and I must give it to her, working out is doing wonders to her
"My face is up here" she says and I shake my head and look at her
"Yeah uhm, I was uhm" I say and she disturbs me
"You are mumbling Khaya" she says rolling her eyes
"Where is Mpilo" he says
"I don't know" she replies
"Nomalanga, did you at least tell him that his brother dropped the charges" I ask
"I informed him yes" she says casually
"And where is he, why isn't he back home" I ask
"Maybe he doesn't want to come back to a home where his father puts money before his happiness" she says
"Don't tell me that, Mpilo needs to come back he has a job waiting for him" I say and she chuckles
"Things are bad at the lab aren't they" she asks with a smirk
"This is no joke Ndlovukazi, contact him and tell him to come home" I say
"I will but I won't force my Son to come back if he doesn't want to" she says
"Don't test me please because I will not be held accountable for my reaction" I say
"I said I will call him didn't I" she says
"You better" I say and walkout

•MZWA

She is applying lotion on her naked body and it has been a minute since I had Some and the way she is doing it I swear it's to turn me on period. My boner is steady and strong if it's Something I know my woman to be good at is riding me, she has skills I ain't ever seen before
"Baby" I say in a low voice
"What" she says Sounding annoyed
"I need you Em" I say
"Need me?" She says making a face
"Yes look" I say pointing at my erection and she rolls her eyes

"Go tell Mpilo to take care of you" she says
"Is Mpilo my wife" I ask
"Or wait batter go ask the person you consulted with and decided to drop the charges because you saw them better than me" she says and I laugh
"So, you are using sex as a weapon Emily" I say
"It's my body Mzwakhe" she says
"Oh, wow" I say
"Yeah wow" she says
"If this is how you want to play it then cool" I say
"What is that supposed to mean" she asked with her hands on her waist
"In my culture, if the first one can't carry out her duties completely, we help her by getting a sister wife" I say taking my phone
"What did you just say to me" she asks
"I know you heard me Em, so don't play stupid" I say and she throws the lotion at me
"Asshole" she says and walks to the closet

•AMANDA

My boyfriend and I slept at the flat, and I am glad to have friends like Spha and Nate, they ate the food and cleaned up the place. I am just happy that the food didn't go to waste and they saved me from slaving away this morning trying to clean, I woke up and fought the urge of looking bat Afrika's gifts, I wonder what they got her but we will look at them when she gets discharged. Lethabo finally walks out of the bedroom holding his phone
"Baby I am afraid that I won't be able to go with you to the hospital" he says
"Why what's wrong" I ask
"My uncle called and said he will be coming by the house this afternoon" he says
"Okay babe I understand" I say and he smiles
"I will drop you off mara no hustle" he says and I nod. He takes my things and we walk out. After dropping me off he drives off. I go to her bedroom and there are no nurses by the station on their floor So I just open the door and she is laying on her bed with Some guy laughing, soon as they heard the sound of the door, they looked my way
"Amanda" Afrika says and the guy quickly gets off the bed
"Hey, I see I disturbed Something in here" I say walking towards the bed. He is now sitting on the edge of the bed.
"Oh, uhm, Mandy this is Mpilo, and Mpilo this is my sister Amanda" she says and the guy extends his hand
"Nice to finally meet you, Muhles has told me a lot you" he says
"Nice to meet you too but I am Afraid Afrika hasn't told me anything about you" I say and she gives me a look
"I hope she will now that we have met" he says and by the look of things he is way older than Afrika
"Mmhhh maybe, how old are you again"" I ask
"Uhm Mpilo can you please go get me Some juice" she says quickly and he looks at her and smiles
"Okay coming right up. Don't miss me too much" he says and she blushes and he walks out after putting on his sneakers
"How old is he" I ask again and she look down
"29" she says in a low
"What Afrika, he is even older than me Nana" I say
"I know Mandy, but I love him and he loves me please" she says
"How did you even meet a 29-year-old man" I query

"We met at the mall Mandy please, if you knew how much Mpilo loves you would be happy" she says
 "Afrika he is older So much older and experienced guys like him are players he will just use you and leave you heartbroken" I say
 "He is not like that I swear" she says
 "I know this is your first time with a boy but baby please the only thing he wants is probably sex" I say
 "He hasn't even brought up the subject, he knows I am not ready and he isn't pressuring me into anything" she says and I sigh
 "I just don't want to see you get hurt" I say
 "I know and I appreciate that. Do you trust me" she asks and I narrow my eyes?
 "Yes, I do with my life" I say
 "Then please trust that I know what I have gotten myself into" she says
 "It's him that I don't trust baby" I say
 "I understand" she says nodding
 "I will be watching him like a hawk, one wrong move and I will castrate him balls" I say and she laughs
 "You won't have to because he treats me right and he loves me, he will hurt me at times yes but only because he is only human and he is bound to make mistakes" she says and I roll my eyes
 "Don't Sound smart with me, oksalaya I will be keeping an eye on him" I say and she laughs
 "Okay okay"
 "God you have a boyfriend, just take everything at your own pace Nana and make the right decisions and just be safe" I say because honestly I for one know that the heart wants what it wants and if it wasn't because of that Lethabo wouldn't have been able to give us another shot
 "You raised me well Amanda give yourself some credit" she says and I smile
 "I didn't a pretty good job" I say and she opens her arms and I go give her a hug
 "Tell him to cut the hair and beard kacane Yoh, he has too many tattoos futhi" I say and she laughs
 "Those are the things I find attractive most" she says
 "You don't have taste then" I joke and she knows that

•MPILO

I went to get myself Some breakfast at the cafeteria, I know Afrika was just trying to get me out of the room when she asked me to get her juice, I take it she wants to tell her sister more about bus and to tell you the truth I hope she gives us her support, she means a lot to my girl and having her in our corner would mean So much to her and me. My phone rings and it's Ndlovukazi

"Ma" I say
 "Hey boy, how are you" she asks
 "I am great how are you" I say
 "Ngi'right, did you get my SMS" she queries
 "Yebo I did" I say
 "So, when are you coming back" she asks
 "Actually, I am around" I say
 "Then when are you coming home" she asks
 "When my girlfriend is discharge ma" I say
 "What Afrika is admitted, what happened, which hospital" she asks panicking I just roll my eyes
 "Siphephe Memo-" I don't even finish

"I will be right there" she says and hangs up. You idrama engaka

CHAPTER 55

•NOMALANGA

I was really worried about Afrika being hospitalized when I last saw her, she was fine. I pray it's nothing serious, I am fond of that girl I am not going to lie. I get to the hospital and quickly call Mpilo who says I will find him at the reception. I get there and he's on his phone

"Which room is she in?" I ask

"Calm down ma," he says

"Where is Afrika, Mpilo?" I ask and he smiles

"You are fond of my girl ne" he says

"Yes, I am and I wonder what she saw in you?" I say and he laughs

"Oh, wow Ndlovukazi" he says and leads the way. We walk into her room and she is with another beautiful girl like herself

"Oh, my poor baby" I say hugging her

"Ndlovukazi" she says

"How are you feeling baby" I ask touching her forehead to feel her temperature and Mpilo laughs

"She is fine ma, don't fuss" he says

"I am fine really" Afrika assures me and I sigh and look at the other girl

"You must be Amanda" I say giving her a warm smile and she returns it

"Yes, I am" she says

"Oh, Mandy this is Mpilo's mother" Afrika informs her sister and she is shocked, to say the least

"You girls are So beautiful" I compliment

"Thank you ma" Amanda appreciates

"So, baby what happened, you were fine yesterday when you left" I ask and Mpilo pokes me and narrows his eyes, I take it he is signaling me not to mention that Afrika lives with us

"Well ma, a friend of mine or let me just say an enemy of mine..." Amanda explains and I am shocked

"You are with child?" I ask and she smiles and her hands go to her belly

"Yes ma" she says

"Oh, congratulations sis" I say

"Thank you So much" she responds

"Tell me Afrika who is your doctor, I need them to tell me that you are perfectly fine" I say and Mpilo chuckles

"Kodwa Ndlovukazi are you not being dramatic"

"What do you know wena" I say and the girls laugh

"I am okay Mama" Afrika assures me and I shake my head

"The owner of this hospital and her husband are my friends, I will ask Siza to run the tests herself with me present" I say

"It won't be necessary ma" my Son says and I hit him with my handbag

"Come let's go find Sizakele, girls I will be back just now" I say and Mpilo and I walkout

•AMANDA

To say I am shocked would be an understatement, my sister has a boyfriend and his mother loves her, how long have they been together that she has already met his mom. She is such a bubbly lady God, and she seems to genuinely care about my baby girl. Kodwa how does she know the owner of this prestigious hospital. I am So curious

"And when did you meet the mom" I ask and she smiles

"A while back sis, she is a nice lady next" she says

"She has such a bubbly personality, very beautiful" I say

"Yeah she is" she says

"She seems to genuinely care for you, this Mpilo must love you" I say and she blushes

"I love him too Mandy" she confesses and I laugh

"How does she know the owner of this hospital? Are they loaded?" I ask

"Mpilo's family has money mtakama" she says and I nod

"I can tell, even your boyfriend has that private school accent" I say and we both laugh

"Oh, kodwa Amanda" she says

"Just don't let his money make you feel like you don't need school and making a name for yourself" I say

"I will never be dependent on a man sis; I will be my own woman. My dreams are still very much alive. I promise" she says

"I am glad to hear this" I say

"Where is Lethabo" she asks

"He had to go home; his uncle will be coming through" I say

"Oh, okay" she says nodding

"I just hope he is not going to talk about me, probably his mom has told the whole family that her Son was dating a prostitute" I say

"Your man will defend you Amanda, he chose you because he loves you, trust me he is ready for all they will throw at him" she says

"I pray So yaz Afrika" I say and sigh

•KHAYA

I received a call from a number I didn't recognize and it was Buli asking to see me, I wanted to tell her off but what she said shocked me hence I gave and came to see here at her home in the township. This house is small and has no decent furniture, I wonder how she lives here

"Couldn't you choose a better place to meet" I ask

"I didn't have transport fare to go anywhere hence I asked you to come here" she says

"So, were you serious about what you said?" I ask and she places a pregnancy test in front of me and I sigh

"Why are you only telling me this now" I ask

"I just found out Khaya" she says

"Where is your mother, does she know" I ask

"We buried my mother a few weeks ago she got worse and eventually died" she says

"Oh, well sorry to hear that" I say

"So?" She says

"So, what?" I ask her

"Will you give me the money to abort" she asks and I laugh

"You want to abort my child Bull are you sick" I say

"What do you want me to do, you told me you are a married man" she says

"Well things change" I say, this will be the perfect thing to get Nomalanga and Mpilo in order. It will show them that I can easily replace them if I wanted to. it will valid the threat I made to Noma that I will kill them all start a new life with another woman

"What are you saying" she asks

"I am saying take care of that child and I will be back very soon; I just need to take care of a few things" I say and she smiles
"Okay, I will be here" she says and I take out my wallet and hand her the notes I had in there
"I will send you money later okay" I say
"Okay then" she says and I stand up and leave

•AFRIKA

Indeed, Ndlovukazi came back with a young female doctor, wow I couldn't believe that she owns this hospital, some people are just blessed. She ran the tests on me and did a lot of scans of my abdomen and everything is cleared

"She is in perfect condition Ndlovukazi" the doctor says

"Thank you Siza now I can calm down" ma says

"Yes, you can rest assured that Afrika will be able to give you grandkids" the doctor says

"Hopefully not anytime soon" my sister says

"Don't worry Amanda Mpilo will wait for Afrika to complete her studies first" ma says and my sister smiles at her.

"With that all said I don't see why we have to keep her any longer " the doctor says and I sigh in relief

"That's great news" I say and they all laugh

"Let me tell you a secret, I might own this place but I hate hospitals too when I am the patient" Siza says

"Where can I get the bill" my sister asks

"Can I please pay it Amanda" my boyfriend asks

"We can split it; you don't have to carry the burden alone" she insists and I know my sister when it comes to me, she wants to chip in always

"It's nothing I promise, allow me please" Mpilo insists

"Okay and thank you Mpilo" she says

"Thanks for allowing me" he says

"Okay Afrika, you can change So long I will go get your discharge papers ready" the doctor says

"Thank you doc" I say

"Muhles I am coming let me go settle the bill quick" he says

"Okay" I say and he walks out followed by his mom who is talking with the doctor

"You going back to the flat with me?" She asks and I look down

"Was hoping to go with Mpilo" I say and she laughs

"Its okay Nana don't feel bad about it" she says and I sigh in relief.

"Thanks sis" I say

"I will just go finish my assignment and wait for Lethabo to come pick me up" she says and kisses my forehead

•MPILO

I was the first to leave the hospital and go home, we didn't want to arrive at the same time and give my father a reason to suspect us. I was happy that Muhles wanted to come home with me, sleeping without her for days was hard So in my arms is where she will be sleeping most nights. I got in and the house was quiet, I went straight to my room and he scent filled up my nostril Soon as I walked in, I place my phone and wallet on the pedestal and notice dried tears on the pillowcase, she was crying herself to sleep every night. I spend days thinking that she didn't want me anymore but she did and she slept in here because she loves me and I couldn't be any happier. I strip off my clothes and I am left in my boxers, the door opens

"And the prodigal Son returns" my father says walking in, I just look at him and go take my toiletries
"It's good to have you back home" he says and I laugh
"You don't have to kiss my ass baba" I say
"Watch your mouth boy" he says
"Or what baba, you going to hit me?" I ask and he laughs
"I don't have the energy to be bickering with you Mpilo," he says
"That's good to know" I say
"You need to go to work things are a mess, your people seem to only listen to you" he says and I shrug my shoulders
"That's a shame" I say
"What is that supposed to mean" he asks and roll my eyes
"I won't be going back to work Dikane, find Someone else" I say
"Mpilo" he roars
"Go ask your Son to help you out and leave me out of it" I say and walk out. I want him to sweat a bit, plus with no product, there won't be a reason for my girl to transport the sequences, she deserves a break So I am doing this for her. We will continue with work next week if I feel ready though.

CHAPTER 56

•LETHABO

I got home and waited for my uncle, the same one who said he will be here at midday, So I used that time to wash my car and clean my room, it was really dirty, Ama would have given me a hard time if she found it like that. I am in my room watching Some Soccer and he walks in
"I finally arrive" he says
"Malome I even thought you were not coming anymore" I say and we shake hands
"Hai your cousin took my car and left with it she only brought it back an hour ago" he says
"She is still troublesome that one" I say and he laughs
"You would swear she is a boy" he says and I join him in laughter
"Thank you for coming through" I say
"So, what can I do for you" he says
"So, malome remember the girl I told you about" I ask and he nods
"Yes, the one that got you to stop suckling on your mother's breast" he says and I laugh
"Yes Amanda" I say and he smiles
"What's wrong Son" he asks
"Nothing actually, I have Some great news malome, she is pregnant" I say and he starts whistling
"Hai you don't waste time So, I am proud of you man, yei I love this girl man, she is making you a man in all aspects" he says and I smile
"She is amazing malome"
"So, I take it you want to send me to her family" he says
"Yes, that is the plan malome, but she is not from a stable home, So I don't know how it's going to work" I say

"Her background shouldn't worry us; we want the girl, not her background Son. Just talk to your girlfriend and inform her of her plans So she can talk to her family and find out how they are willing to do things and who they would have us talk to and send the letter to" he says and I sigh

"Thank you malome, I wanted to inform you first" I say

"Much appreciated, and I am proud of the man you are becoming" he says

"Thank you sir" I say

"Pour me Something from your stash" he says and I laugh standing up

•NOMALANGA

Afrika and I got home and found Mpilo and Mzwakhe arguing and like professionals my Son and Afrika looked at each other like this was the first time they saw each other since Mpilo left.

"Uhm when did you get back" Afrika says in a shaking voice

"Today" he says Sounding annoyed and I have my eyes fixed on Khaya

"Oh, okay" Afrika says again and I look at her and she has tears in her eyes, I must admit these two know how to act

"I will be in my room" my Son says and leaves

"Please excuse me" Afrika says and wipes the fake tear

"I am sorry baby" I say and she quickly disappears

"Seems like the love has died down" Khaya says with a smirk

"And that just makes you So happy right?" I say Sounding disappointed

"Definitely Noma, it means my Son will get back to his senses Soon" he says

"You are the most selfish person I know Mdlalose" I say and he smiles

"Please tell me Something different" he says

"I am just done hoping that you will be a father first" I say and deep down I know I am over that, just being an actress

"Listen here, I got Mzwa to drop the charges now get your Son to go back to work Noma" he says

"I am not forcing Mpilo to do anything" I say and he bangs the table

"I am not playing around with you, you and your Son better stop pushing me because I will retaliate and none of you will like that" he says and I remember Razors words to play this game with him just to make him think he has all of us under control

"I will talk to him" I say

"Good" he says and leaves me standing there

•MZWAKHE

Things are just going South in my house, I even miss the hospital, the nurses there were pleasant. I just get out of the shower limping and it takes me a while to put on my clothes and after that I go down to the kitchen to make Something to eat. I am combining

ingredients to make a decent sandwich when the door opens and Emily walks in

"You are not supposed to be doing that, there the doctor did say bed rest" she says

"I was hungry, or yini you want me to die of hunger?" I ask and she gasps for air

"Take that back Mzwa" she says

"I don't want to Em" I say

"What is going on with you?" She asks tears already shining in her eyes

"Nothing much I am just horny" I say

"You are becoming a monster and impossible to live with" she says

"I could say the same thing about you" I say casually and she blinks her tears

"What do you want from me Mzwakhe" she says

"I was told to relax and take it easy you are not making it easy for me" I say and bite my sandwich

"You are slowly becoming your father and keep it up Mzwa you will end up alone and let me remind you that you've already lost Mpilo and my children and I will be next" she says and I shoot her an intense look she swallows her saliva

"Don't you dare threaten to take my children away from me don't you dare" I was her and she shakes her head before walking away. Nxa the nerve

•MPILO

I just hope that performance was enough to make my father believe that I am drawing back from Afrika. It has been a long day and the most of it I had to share my girlfriend with everyone else, I need some sugar. I am like a little child always wanting his mother's attention. Muhles walks in and comes straight to me and throws her hands around my neck

"That was a good performance" she says and I fix her glasses

"You deserve a performance babe" I say and peck her lips

"Oh, well thank you" she appreciates

"You are beautiful Afrika; I don't think I will ever get used to it" I confess and she quickly hides her face on my chest

"Don't make me blush please" she says

"I love seeing you blush for me" I say and she looks up and her dimples are out to play

"Okay okay I get the picture" she says trying to keep a straight face

"Ngiyak'thanda yezwa (I love you okay)" I say

"Uthandwa'yim muntu wam (I love you too)" she says and we kiss

"You two need to be careful now, He might walk in on you" she says and my girl quickly moves from me

"I am sorry ma, I forgot to close the door" Muhles says

"It's okay baby, just be careful please" Ndlovukazi says

"We will ma, I just need to come up with a way of spending time with Afrika without giving it away to baba" I say

"That will be simple, I will help with that don't worry. I am on your side and I am happy to see you happy Mpilo and it's a bonus that it is with Afrika but I am going to need you too to meet me halfway. Try by all means to act like you are done in front of everyone but me" ma advises and I sigh

"That is going to be difficult but I understand and we will try ma" I say and she smiles

"Afrika are you feeling strong enough to help me prepare supper" ma asks

"Aow kodwa Ndlovukazi, you have had my girl's attention more than me this entire day I was hoping to have some time with her, I am her boyfriend you know that right?" I ask and she rolls her eyes

"We both know that you two will be sleeping in the same room tonight even if I advise against it So don't put a show for me, you will have her for the entire night" she says and Afrika is looking down in embarrassment

"Let's go baby" she says taking her hand and I am left trying to figure out what to do with myself.

•AFRIKA

I am learning to cook different things each time I help Ndlovukazi in the kitchen, I know I was mad at her but in all honesty, I love this woman, she treats me good and she is more of a mother to me and it kind of feels great to have a mother figure, don't get me wrong Ama will always be the best parent, I am just saying having an elder care for me is nice. I am taking the asparagus out of the boiling water into ice water.

"Afrika" she says almost whispering

"Yebo ma" I say

"I am happy that you are with my Son and I also care and love you like a daughter" she says

"I appreciate that Ndlovukazi" I say

"So, like a mother to a daughter, Mpilo is a boy and even if he loves you, he is still a man and he will get to a point where he wants sex" she says and I choke on my saliva she laughs

"Don't be shy. I want you to understand that if you are not ready you shouldn't do it, if he loves you he will wait okay, and if you are ready and decide that you want to be intimate please use a condom with him, you are too young to be a mother and there is a lot we have to get through before you two can bring a baby into this world, and hear me he will tell you stories like it's not nice with a condom or a condom gives him rash Don't listen to all that crap just tell him no glove no love" she says and I am So uncomfortable right now

"Thank you for the advice mama" I say

"It's a pleasure baby. Oh, Mpilo is So lucky" she says with a smile making me blush

"He is a good guy" I say and she laughs

"To you baby because he loves you, a lot of girls would argue with you on that one" she says and I feel a little jealous

"He had a lot of girlfriends" I ask

"You are his first real girlfriend Afrika, Mpilo has always been a weird child when coming by relationships" she says and I want to give myself a gold medal.

"Oh, okay" I say

"Oh, my chicken" she says hurrying to the oven

CHAPTER 57

•KHAYA

It's been a few days since my Son came back from the hospital and I haven't been to see him, I have been spending my days and nights at the lab but still we are way behind schedule, we didn't even have deliveries this week, my clients are not happy with me, I need to remind Mpilo who is boss, he might seem like he is staying away from that girl but he was ready to give up everything for her and he did almost kill his brother too, that kind of love doesn't just fade away all at once, I will use her to get him back to order. I got to Mzwakhe's house and Emily is the one who opened. She wasn't looking like her usual self. She hands me my drink and takes a seat next to me

"You don't seem too happy, everything okay" I ask and she sighs

"No baba everything is just a mess" she says and I narrow my eyes

"Talk to your father my baby" I say and she starts to cry

"Mzwakhe has changed" she says and I sigh

"Changed in what way" I ask

"I wasn't happy that he dropped the charges against Mpilo baba and ever since then he has been Somehow, he snaps at me, he threatens me with taking a second wife and all, he is just been Someone I don't know at all, and it's taking its toll on me I can't be the mother my daughter's need me to be" she says

"I am really Sorry Em, I will have a word with him" I say

"He is in our bedroom" she says and I nod and make my way there, he is in bed watching TV. I go to him and pull him by his leg and squeeze he screams like a little bitch

"Baba" he cries

"Why are you treating your wife like a piece of trash" I say
"What did she say to you Dikane" he asks
"She told me what has been happening here" I say
"Did she tell you what she has been doing to me" he asks and I squeeze again
"I don't care what she did. Treat her right Mzwakhe or I will squeeze your balls next time" I say and let his leg go
"Ai baba" he says
"Lalela, I have an announcement to make, something that will make your mother keep her Son in check. Bring your wife by" I say
"What's good?" He asks
"Just be there Friday night" I say
"How are things at the lab?" He asks and I sigh
"I don't even want to talk about that, it's crazy nje ai" I confess
"Eish Mpilo is being a brat about all of this" he says
"I know, I need to leave now, I will see you Friday" I say
"Sure baba" he says
"Apologize to Emily" I say and leave

•AMANDA

I get off the taxi tired as hell, Lethabo called and asked me to come to his place and bring a change of clothes, I was surprised because it's a Wednesday but spending time with my man is amazing, I guess it's because we are also best friends. I am So sleepy my baby is starting to make his presence felt and God he is getting heavier by the day. I finally get to his house and he is on the couch playing FIFA.

"This is why you couldn't come get me, babe, really?" I say and he laughs

"I am sorry baby; I was winning and I even bought two players" he says

"Oh, boy" I say rolling my eyes

"I am sorry, we should get you a KIA Picanto" he says and I smile

"I would gladly accept it" I say

"How is my son" he asks as I sit down next to him.

"He is becoming heavy babe, and I am forever tired" I say

"I am sorry love" he says

"So, why was I asked to come on a weekday" I ask and he smiles

"Well, on Saturday I mentioned my uncle coming through" he says

"I remember babe" I say

"Actually, I was the one who asked him to come through and we had a chat" he confesses and I narrow my eyes

"Chat about what?" I ask

"About sending him to your people" he says and I swear my heart almost stops

"Are you serious?" I ask already crying, arg these hormones can exaggerate shame

"Like a heart attack baby, I want to make you my wife Ama, I want my Son to call my surname when he is born, I want to wake up and go to bed next to you every night for the rest of my life" he says and I am looking at him and feeling nothing but love

"I would love nothing more than to be your wife baby" I say and he smiles

"I am happy to hear that, my uncle asked that you talk to your family and ask who they should send the letter to" he says and wipes my tear

"I will go talk to my mom I guess" I say

"Thanks baby, I know it's not easy for you to go to your mom and ask for help but I want us to do everything the right way" he says

"It's okay babe. I don't believe you want to marry me" I say and he smiles

"I can't believe you agreed baby, I mean how did I become so lucky" he says and I see it in his eyes that this man loves me and I can't help but feel So much joy in my heart
"Afrika is going to be So happy" I say
"Skeem Sam seo" he says and I hold out my hand and wiggle my ring finger
"So, where is my rock" I say and he laughs
"You ain't getting any till I pay your lobola" he says and I make a sad face he laughs. To think man were paying to use me and pleasure themselves with like I was nothing but a piece of meat, I find a man who loves me So much he wants to go all the way. God your mercy is sufficient

•NOMALANGA

Mpilo has been refusing to go work and that is pissing his father off and as pleasant as it is to watch Khaya lose his mind, he isn't stable when he is provoked, he is irrational and he might do anything to prove to us that he is in charge. I didn't want to have this conversation at home So I asked him to bring me lunch. He got here and we have been talking about random things and him making me laugh

"I can't believe it's my first time in your office" he says

"Imagine my son doesn't know where his mother hustles" I say and he rolls his eyes

"You don't have to make it sound like you some kind of thug" he says and I throw my pen at him

"Watch it" I say

"Quite throwing stuff at me and hitting me mama I have a girlfriend now" he says and I clap once

"Yoh, we know Mpilo, we know. You honestly don't need to remind us every two minutes" I say and he chuckles

"I need to leave ma" he says

"Before you do that baby, I want us to talk" I say

"Sure" he says and sips on his juice

"You need to stop challenging Khaya now because he will do Something drastic to make his point. I spoke to Razor and he asked that we tread carefully when dealing with your father. He shared Some information with me and if we take him down by exposing him, he has as much dirt on us to take us down with him. He advised that we play his game, let him think that he is in power and he has us all under control and when he least expects it, we strike" I say and he sighs

"So, I must do as he says" he asks and I nod

"Make him believe that you are back to being his Son and make him believe that you are over your feelings for Afrika" I say

"Okay ma, I will go back to work tomorrow, at least my girl had Some time off" he says and I smile shaking my head

"Thank you Son and I promise that you and Afrika will get your chance to love each other freely without your father trying to get in between the both of you" I say and he smiles

"I know mama, I will fight till that day" he says and sits a while before he leaves.

•AFRIKA

I finally put my bookstore voucher to good use

I got So many books I think I am going to need my shelf now. I got all my favorites and the best sellers. Since bi got them I do my school work very quickly when I get home and start reading, Mpilo even complained saying I am neglecting him. He can be a baby at times but I love him regardless. I am in the garden enjoying this romantic novel. A voice startles me from behind

"I hope you giggling like that because you've found your own man" she says

"Excuse me" I say and she comes to stand in front of me
"I said I hope you found your boyfriend now So you can leave mine alone" she says
"Honestly Sbahle, nothing is going on between Senzo and me, we have explained this to you a million times" I say and she rolls her eyes
"I know girls like you Afrika, Senzo has recent pictures of you on his phone" she says
"We only took pictures on my birthday my sister invited him to my birthday braai" I defend
"You are So after my life it's sad. You try by all means to have my boyfriend and now you are desperately trying to have my mom too, running around her like a headless chicken. You will never be me no matter how much you try" she says and I sigh
"If you could just stop for a minute and observe, you would realize that we are two different people me and you. I want nothing that is yours. Senzo is your boyfriend and he is my friend, Ndlovukazi is your mother and just because we have a relationship doesn't mean I wish she birthed me, I appreciate how she cares for me. You have nothing to worry about, trust me, I am not after your life. I am simple I wear Mr. Price and you go to Gucci and all these expensive stores, you are a weave girl I am a natural hair type, So in all honesty what makes you think we have the same taste in man" I ask and she blinks
"Just stay in your lane" she says
"If you could take a minute you would realize that I never left my lane" I say shaking my head
"Watch yourself Afrika" she says
"I am always minding my business even five minutes ago, you are the one who came to me yet I am supposedly the one after you, ai angazi" I say and take my things and walk inside the house

CHAPTER 58

•MPILO

I woke up early in the morning and went to the lab, I got there and Some of these guys were sleeping, some were outside smoking cigarettes and having a conversation, I went to the cooking area and there were just 3 guys working in the trying to push production. I laugh and go to my office and the still didn't notice me. I ring the bell that alerts them to go to the meeting point. I got them already gathered and the shock on their faces when they see me. "So, this is what's been happening, you have been slacking hence you couldn't push production, we pay you to sleep and take unnecessary breaks to smoke" I ask and they Mumble amongst themselves.

"We lost a lot of money this week because we didn't do any deliveries and yet you are going to expect to be paid in full. I don't even know why you are still working here you are not assets, only three guys were hard at work when I walked in the cooking area" I say

"Hade taMpilo (Sorry)" one says

"I don't need you sorry, I need you to work and prove that you want to be here guys, I pay you a lot of money I should be getting value money but with the rate at which you going it's like I am taking money and burning it" I say

"We will do batter" another at the back says

"You are all replaceable gents just because I like doesn't mean I won't kill you and replace you with people who want to work and get this money" I say

"No taMpilo please we will make it up to you" he says

"In that case then I want 50% of production done by knockoff don't bother coming back tomorrow if you don't reach this target. Except for the three of you I will be transferring a token of my appreciation into your accounts, you didn't need me to be physically there to get the job done, and that shows respect, I salute you and you can take the day off and go spoil your families" I say they start thanking me, and the regrets on the others are visible "Go back to work" I say and they scatter like roaches. I turn back to Someone clapping hands

"You are a pro, I tried everything to get these bastards to work but nothing" my father says "They are my people after all" I say and make my way to the office and he follows

"Good thing you came back to your senses before I did Something to that girl to show you that I meant business" he says and I cringe but quickly compose myself

"It would have been a waste of time, you told me she is business So and I am treating her as such, you want me to be a stone-cold bastard, right? I just hope you are ready for this monster" I say and he narrows his eyes.

"You can be anything I don't care just not the pussy Mpilo" he says and I laugh

"I have to work; you know your way out" I say

"If you are over the girl why are you still So cold towards me" he asks

"Because you made it clear that I only matter to you to make you money and other than that I am just your Son because you donated the sperm" I say and he swallows

"That's absurd Mpilo" he defends

"Don't worry I swallowed the bitter pill and I am over it" I say and he remains silent.

•AFRIKA

After my last class, I just wanted to go home and take a long shower then continue with my novel. I want to finish this book before next week, that's when we will be getting the exam timetable, I need to focus on that now, I need to channel my brain to remove everything else and prepare for the exams. I receive a call from Amanda asking to see me. She said she is on her way to res and I told her to meet me at campus instead, I didn't want Larona spilling that I am not living there anymore, please don't judge me for keeping this, she is pregnant and she worries about me I don't want her losing the baby because of the stress. I went to get her at the gate and we walked to the student park

"I can't get over how beautiful this place looks" she says and I smile

"Don't worry you will be attending here soon" I say and she smiles

"I hope I will be able to juggle being a mother, a wife and a student" she says

"You have a supportive man Mandy he will be there for you, and did you say, wife?" I ask and she blushes

"He has spoken to his uncle about sending the letter" she says and my hands move to my mouth

"Oh, Mandy, this is great news sis'wam" I say and she nods

"I couldn't believe it Afrika; I am still shocked" she says

"God is truly amazing" I say

"Problem is I need to go see mama and ask her to at least be Sober enough to help me through this, but knowing Siboi" she says

"I will go talk to her, in fact I will emotionally blackmail her, there has to be something inside of her that cares about us Amanda, deep down there has to be something" I say

"Maybe Nana, I don't know" she says

"9 months of carrying a child and pushing it out of you has to count for something, she has to come through for you this once" I say

"I just pray that God touches her heart Afrika, look at us we have everything going for us but our mother can't even be a part of it and celebrate with us because she Somehow blames us for going through this hell" she says

"Exactly Mandy it's just heart-breaking, I will go see her tomorrow" I say

"I appreciate that Nana" she says

"Want to grab a burger?" I ask

"My Son says yes, I am watching my figure" she says and I laugh

•EMILY

I just got out of the shower after a serious workout, I am planning on taking my girls on a trip soon and I want to be bikini ready and I must admit I am getting there slowly but surely. I put on something comfortable and appropriate to go play tea party with my children. I go downstairs and Mzwakhe is there by the lounge standing by the pictures, I walk past him and he grabs my arm

"We have become physical now" I ask and he sighs

"Em please, just a minute" he says pulling me next to him

"What do you want Mzwakhe" I ask

"Look at us here, our wedding day. I was the happiest man to ever live, I got to marry my best friend and the love of my life" he says and I sigh

"Mzwa" I say in a low voice and he disturbs me

"And this day we had just found out that we pregnant, remember we were in Cape Town" he says and I smile

"You were pretty excited about that" I say smiling and he chuckles

"Yeah I had just proved that I don't shoot blanks" he says and we both laugh

"Oh, wow" I murmur rolling my eyes

"I want us to go back to how we were babe, I am sorry for acting like a jerk these past few days, I love you Emily and I appreciate you and our kids very much" he says

"The things you said you hurt Mzwakhe" I say and he nods

"I know baby and I sincerely apologize for that" he tells

"Can we forget about all of this, leave this drug business" I say and he sighs

"Emily please understand how much my relationship with my father means to me" he says

"You are losing yourself trying to be his son" I say and she shakes his head

"I will work on it I promise, but I don't want to lie and say I will leave the drug business because I won't really" he says and I sigh

"Then don't bring it to our home, don't let it cause friction in our home" I say

"Never again I swear" he promises

"In that case you are forgiven" I tell and he smiles and kiss me

"Thank you love" he says and I must admit having my husband back feels good, but it's time I brought Afrika on board and took Khaya Mdlalose down along with his Son.

•LETHABO

Lazing around after work and playing FIFA while drinking a cold beer is everything. After a day I heard with those children I deserve some break man. I love teaching but I think I should just try a collage or a university, deal with a little matured people. My door opens and my mom walks in

"No wonder you can't hear me calling you, you are busy playing that thing" she says

"I didn't hear you ma Sorry" I say and she walks in and takes a sit on the ottoman.

"How are you?" She asks

"I am very well, I am not complaining, what about you" I ask back

"I am good, just happy that I left those kids with everything they will need, my cousin will rest in peace" she says

"That's good" I say

"When last did Dineo come around" she asks and the mention of her name makes me mad

"Your friend is admitted at a psychiatric facility, she has bipolar" I say

"Haibo Lethabo oreng" she asks shocked
"Yep it is what it is. She drugged and raped me and then she tried feeding my girlfriend abortion pills" I say and she gasps for air
"No Lethabo, Oh, bathong ngwanaka" she says
"Dineo" I say and she claps
"Wait did you say girlfriend" she asks and I nod
"Yes, Amanda is pregnant and Dineo tried killing our baby, Amanda's sister landed in the hospital because of that" I say
"What are you still doing with that prostitute Lethabo, and how sure are you that that thing she is carrying is yours" she says
"Ai mama Amanda is not a prostitute anymore, she wasn't one when we started dating and that baby she is carrying is mine, I believe it and I feel it" I say
"Ai shame the muti that girl is using on you is strong" she says
"I am not doing this with you mama" I say
"I will never accept that girl" she screams
"I never expected you to but you will know it and respect that she is my woman and she is carrying my child inside of her and I am going to marry her" I say So calm
"Over my dead body, she will never be my daughter in law forget it shame" she continues and I sigh
"You are my mother and I love and respect you very much but you won't be dictating my love life forget it" I say
"I leave for a while and already the devil is having a field day in my house" she says screaming at me and I just stay silent and look at her, we just fought off one battle and we already have another one Yoh, can't my mother be more understanding

CHAPTER 59

•AFRIKA

I came back to the house after my last class to come change, when I left this morning the weather was all sunny and nice but things took a turn around 11 am So I have been cold since then, and I couldn't go down to see my mom dressed like that, I hate being sick So I needed to change into Something warm. It's just after 2 pm I want to quickly go talk to Sibob about my sister's lobola and make it back in time to prepare for dinner, bab'Mdlalose told us to all be available as he has an important announcement to make. I just wonder what it could be real. I grab my bag and as I open the bedroom door Emily is standing there tears streaming down her face.

"Em is everything okay," I ask and she shakes her head

"I am sorry for just showing up Afrika, I just didn't know who to run to and you are the only person I told you," she says and she is making zero sense

"It's okay please come in" I say and she gets in and I quickly close the door and go sit on the bed with her

"I can't believe that it's him, I wonder if my husband knew about this, but they are all So close he must have known" she says and I wish I had an idea of what she is talking about

"You aren't making any sense Em what's wrong" I say

"I finally found out who killed my brother" she says

"That is great news right, it means you will finally find closure and that person will rot in prison" I say

"I wish it was that simple Afrika, I don't have proof but the person who told my PI knows for sure because he was present the day they killed my brother, but he is too scared to testify he said he was just telling the truth to me because he wants me to find closure and that he is tired of living with the guilt" she says

"I am sorry to hear this" I say comforting her and she shakes her head

"Does he even know that I am related to the man he killed" she asks

"Who is this person Emily" I ask because I want to make sense of these statements, she keeps on saying

"My father in law Afrika, he killed my brother because he was caught smuggling drugs for him and he was too scared that my brother would give him and his entire operation to the police So he killed him to protect himself" she says and I am left shocked, jaw-dropping shocked

"Oh, my God this man is evil" I say, he is used to getting people to do his dirty work while he enjoys the benefits, now I am really scared for my life

"He even stole this drug business from another innocent man and then killed him, he is not the brain behind this drug he is producing, he stole it. He is the devil he lies, steals, cheats and kills just like Satan himself" she says and my heart starts to beat So fast as I remember the story Amanda told me about my father. Sibon has always lied to me about who my father is and she would change his name now and again. Mandy just know him as abuti Knox

"What was this man's name" I ask

"Siseko Mdoda" she says and sniffs, I hold on to that name with all my heart. If what I am thinking is true then I now understand why Sibon always hated the fact that I was smart like my father, if this is true, I am suffering the same fate as my father in the hands of the same man. This information was too much all at once. I didn't want to ask Emily too many questions and have her suspect that I might know something about this Siseko man. I need to think of a way to make my mother tell me the truth.

"So, what are you going to do" I ask and she shrugs her shoulders

"I want him to pay for what he put me and my family through, I can't do much now till my PI gets more information then we can go to the police with" she says

"I totally understand and I am really sorry" I say trying to calm her and comfort her but my head is all over the place thinking of the possibility that Mdlalose killed my father for his drug formula.

"I just pray my husband doesn't know or have a hand in this" she says and I feel her pain

"So, are you going to come to the dinner" I ask

"I don't have a choice until I have evidence, I need to act normal So I don't have him suspicious" she tells and I nod in agreement. I decided that I will go see my mom tomorrow because I just can't leave someone as emotional as she is right now. I have never met a man as evil as Khaya Mdlalose, Emily is right he is the devil himself

•LETHABO

I left early in the morning without going into the main house, I just didn't want to bump into my mom, I still couldn't believe that she decided to overlook that the crazy girl she brought to our home drugged me and raped me, all she seemed to be interested in is reminding me that my girlfriend used to be a prostitute, for a devoted Christian like her she is way too judgemental and unforgiving. I get home from work and she is sitting outside under the shade provided by the gazebo.

"Dumela mama" I say walking to my door

"Lethabo we have to talk" she says

"If it's you wanting to judge and insult Amanda, I don't want to hear it" I say and she sighs

"This here is my house and I don't want to see that girl here" she says

"It's okay I will respect that, but also understand that I love her and I am not going to stop being with her, I am not disrespecting you mama but I am sticking up for Amanda because I am going to marry her and the Bible did say a man will leave his mom and dad to be with his wife" I say and she stands up

"You are going to choose that girl over me your mother Lethabo" she says with tears

"I am choosing peace, you don't want Ama here so I am choosing to respect you as I have always done, I will not bring her here I will go to her" I say

"Lethabo" she says

"What I don't understand is how you claim to love me but failed to ask me how I feel after your friend violated me like that, or is it because I am a man and according to Society we can't be raped, well I was because of Someone you brought to our home, you care So much about my choice of a wife rather than the damage Dineo has caused, you claim to be a Christian praying to God to forgive your sins yet you are holding Amanda's past and mistakes against her, why not forgive her like the prayer says" I say and she is looking at me shocked

"Just listen to how you talk to your mother because of a girl" she says and I sigh

"Unbelievable" I say and open my door and get in. I go straight to get a few of my things and toiletries and throw them in my sports bag and walkout

"Where are you going" she asks as I lock my door

"It's Friday, Ama was meant to come but you did say you don't want her here So I am going to her" I say and go to the car

•MZWAKHE

Emily had left and said she would be back after a few hours So I took this opportunity to go to the lab to see Mpilo, my father did say that he went back to work yesterday, I called one of the boys that work for us to come and drive me when I got there it was business as usual everyone was going up and down working and you can tell that Mpilo is back. I limp there with my hand in the sling. One of the workers open the office door for me and I walk in, Mpilo is sitting down looking at Some papers, his eyes land on me and he frowns like he is bored to see me

"You want me to send you back to the hospital" he says without looking at me

"I am not here to fight" I say

"Then what are you here for?" He asks

"I just wanted to have a word with my brother" I say and he laughs

"Oh, okay go find your brother then" he says and I sigh

"Mpilo please" I beg and he leans back and look at me

"I did say you are dead to me Mzwakhe or did you think I was joking?" He asks

"I am sorry for what I did I really am, I should have found another way to get you to back off from Afrika and I admit threatening her sister was cruel but I had no choice, I just want to have a close relationship with baba" I say and he claps

"Well congratulations you are your father's Son" he says and it hits home

"I am really Sorry for hurting you" I say

"Get the fuck out of here man" he says and looks at the papers again

•KHAYA

I can't wait to drop this bomb on Nomalanga, I want her to regret divorcing me and allowing Mpilo to disrespect me. Today she will know I mean business and when I say she must get her dogs under a leash that's exactly what she should do or I will destroy them all and build another family, she must believe that threat and live by it that's the only way I can have real power over them. I get to the dining room and everyone is already there having a conversation. Sbahle was sitting next to where I sit and I have plans for that chair

"Ah everyone honored my request well I appreciate this" I say
"What is the big announcement baba, is everyone getting their allowance increased" my daughter says and I laugh
"Your allowance Is handled by me and, sadly, I haven't seen any real change in you baby girl" her mother says bursting her bubble
"We will all find out in about 5 minutes" I say
"Give us a hint at least" Mzwa says and I shake my head while laughing
"No Son, absolutely not" I notice the tension between Mpilo and Afrika and I couldn't be any happier, they are even sitting far from each other. I must admit she looks good these days. My phone beeps and it's my driver telling me that they Are here
"Ahhh I will be right back" I say with a wide smile. I find Buli already waiting by the door wearing the dress and shoes I sent her.
"You look nice" I say and she smiles
"Thank you" she replies and I take her hand and we walk in, everyone at the table is shocked to see her on my arm, Ndlovukazi has a glass of champagne in her hand
"Baba what is this" Bahle is the first one to ask
"Everyone you know Buli, she used to work la ekhaya but I realized that there was more to this woman and I was hooked I knew that life was giving me a second chance to right my wrongs. Buli here is pregnant with your sibling and I want you guys to accept her and give her the support she needs during this period" I say and my children are shocked, their mother stands up and I am pleased with myself her evening is ruined and her wings cut off
"This is great news, congratulations to the both of you" she says and we are all looking at her like a crazy woman
"Also, Buli will be staying with us permanently" I say
"I can't believe this baba" Bahle says
"Show some respect to your father and stepmom Sbahle" Ndlovukazi says and I narrow my eyes why is she not mad
"Thank you Noma, as I was saying, we are still trying to work out things So in the meantime she will move into the room Afrika is using and Afrika will move into the helpers' quarters in the back" I say
"Sorry to disturb you sir but I will move back to res, after all no one is after me" she suggests and I give her a look
"Nobody is leaving this house; you will stay in the quarters the is a room vacant" I say because if she is in there I can finally have her without being disturbed or seen
"Oh, that won't be necessary, Afrika will share a room with me" my damn ex-wife says and I wish I could go and choke her to death, I swallow and fake a smile
"If you insist" I say calmly to pretend like I don't care, I open a chair for Buli and Noma stops me
"Buli baby, you are now the lady of this house, come take your chair and face your king, I will take a chair next to my son" she says and I am boiling mad, she must be going crazy not taking this so calmly
"You are far too kind Noma thank you, baby come take your seat" I say to Buli helping her to the chair facing mine at the other end
"I am not going to sit for this nonsense" My second Son says already on his feet
"Mpilo Mdlalose sit down and respect your father, he called us here to help him celebrate and we are going to do that and welcome Buli, she is a part of this family now" she says and our Son sits down and I follow, this is just not going accordingly, Nomalanga has turned this to her show and I hate it, why is she So calm about this whole thing.
"I will inform the chef to serve us our starter" I say and stand up to go to the kitchen
"Cheer up guys a new life is Something worthy of a celebration" Noma says chuckling and honestly, she is the only cheery person around the table.

CHAPTER 60

•MPILO

I couldn't believe my father could stoop So low to impregnate the help and he even has the nerve to bring her here to sit down and eat with us, I bet you he did this to hurt my mom. He keeps on hurting those I love and with each passing day I hate him more. I don't even understand how Ndlovukazi was So calm through that bullshit because everyone would have understood if she had lost her mind and went crazy. I am still amazed at how she composed herself. The bedroom door opens and Afrika walks

"Baby" she says and I look at her

"Is she already taking over your room" I ask

"No apparently she will be moving in tomorrow" she says

"Okay love, you comfortable sharing with my mom" I ask

"I don't have a problem but why is he refusing to let me go back to res" she asks and I sigh

"Because he wants to keep a close eye on you, on us and honestly it's better living here baby it's easier for us because if you were to move back to res or I move out and get my place he would have people watching us 24/7 making it impossible for us to meet without him

knowing" I say

"I understand" she says taking off her dress. She has become So comfortable around me it's amazing

"Want to borrow my shirt" I ask and she smiles

"Yes please" she says and I laugh looking at her perfect skin and body. I lock the door and we get inside the covers; she moves close to me and I take her in my arms and sighs

"Your dad" she says

"I don't think I have ever hated a person this much" I say

"Like that that Buli girl is young enough to be his daughter," she says

"I wouldn't have a problem if he truly loved and cared for that girl, but I know he doesn't, he is just doing this to hurt my mother" I say

"Do you think she is okay with all of this babe" she asks

"To tell you the truth Muhles I don't know" I admit and she sighs

"My heart goes out to her; she doesn't deserve any of this" she says and I take a deep breath

"She doesn't deserve any of this" I agree and she nods

"Tough times don't last babe tough people do. Your mom is a strong woman she bends but she doesn't break" Afrika says and I smile and kiss her forehead

"That is true and that applies to my girlfriend as well" I say and I know she is blushing

•AMANDA

My boyfriend is not okay, his eyes are fixed on the TV but I know he isn't concentrating on the program, he is lost in his thoughts and it breaks my heart to see him like, I just wish I could make it all go away

"I am Sorry love" I say holding this hand and he quickly looks at me

"What why baby" he asks

"If it wasn't for me, you wouldn't be fighting with your mother like this" I say and he sighs

"Don't ever apologize Ama, mama will come around" he says

"Maybe we should put a hold to this whole lobola thing until she gets used to the fact that we are back together" I suggest

"No Amanda I am not putting a hold on my plans because of my mom baby, I want to make an honest woman out of you and I want our Son to come into this world and call my surname" he says and I understand him kodwa it's not as simple

"The same baby she doesn't believe that is yours" I say

"But I do, I believe that this is my Son. You would never lie to me like that baby" he says and I appreciate his faith in me

"Just for peace sake let's postpone this lobola thing until our Son is born and we can do a DNA test just to prove that our baby is her grandson" I say

"I know my mom and nothing will change her mind about you, delaying our plans won't change her mind" he says and I want to cry

"Did my life have to be So shitty that I turned to prostitution, look at me now I have stopped yet it's still following me around, I did this for my baby girl, I had to or we were all bound to be nothing" I say

"You have apologized enough and you have felt bad it's enough now, those without sin should cast the stones" he says

"I can't seem to catch a break, I messed up my life and now I am doing the same to yours, I knew it I just knew that I didn't deserve you, everything was okay before I came along" I say unable to contain my tears

"Everything before you was mediocre Ama, I don't want a life without you, you have brought So many positive changes in my life and I don't want a life without you" he says

"She is your mother Lethabo" I say

"And no one said she will not be my mom if I marry you" he insists

"You don't understand" I say and he holds my hands

"Stop this, I don't want you stressing, you are pregnant and you don't need this. Leave me to deal with my mother please just focus on you and our baby please, and don't think of leaving me or delaying our plans okay" he says and I nod.

"Now come let's go to bed it's late" he says getting up and switching off the TV. I stand up and we walk to the bedroom.

•NOMALANGA

it doesn't hurt as much as I expected it to but it still does, in the back of my mind I knew Khaya had a young lady who he is seeing but I never thought it would be Buli again. The same girl I caught him within my own house has resurfaced again and this type she is with a child. Last night I couldn't allow myself to lose it in front of my children or show Khaya any kind of weakness. I know he is out to destroy my soul and leave me crippled, he will get close once in a while because I am only human but I will never give him the satisfaction. I woke up early and worked out. Now I am in the kitchen enjoying my camomile tea before going to shower and then I will make Some space for Afrika in my room.

"Morning ma" Bahle says and I don't remember the last time my daughter was this calm

"Oh, hey baby" I say

"Are you okay" she asks and I know what she means

"Yes, I am fine, I had a great morning workout" I say avoiding her real question

"I am not referring to that mommy, I mean are you okay with everything that happened last night" she says and I sigh

"Your dad and I are divorced Bahle he can do whatever he likes with his life" I say

"Not in your house" she says and I smile and take her hands in mine

"It's his house too, trust me I would leave and go start my life Somewhere but there is a lot that is going on, if I leave a lot of people will suffer, I am a mother first and my happiness comes second to that of my children" I say

"That's not fair Ndlovukazi" she says
"It comes with motherhood baby you will understand Someday when you have children of your own" I say
"You are truly a Queen mawami" she says and I realize this is the first heart to heart I have had with Sbahle, she has always been a daddy's girl.
"Thank you Nana, so why are you up So early" I ask and she shrugs her shoulders
"I was worried about you So I needed to see if you were okay, sleep was scarce this last night" she says and I smile at her
"Don't worry baby mom is a big girl" I say and she smiles
"I am sorry I am always a brat" she says making a face
"You have time to change all of that baby, but you still not getting your privileges back" I say and she laughs out loud
"I wasn't even thinking about that" she says and I stand up
" Good, let me go shower" I say and kiss her forehead. Why can't she be like this all the time though

•AFRIKA

I managed to move my things to Ndlovukazi's room, the room is big enough for both of us, she even set up a desk for me to be able to study. She is such a sweet person. The tension was just too high in the house I needed to give them a moment as a family So I told the driver to take me to the township to see Sibó. When he parked outside it was So quiet and that is shocking considering that it's a Saturday and month-end. I walk in the yard and open the door, it's So stuffy and the curtains are closed. I leave the door open for fresh air and also open all the windows and curtains, I open her room and she is in bed and it's dark. I go open the curtain for Some light
"Who is here" she says and coughs
"It's me, mama, it's Afrika" I say and she takes her time sitting upright and she looks like a shadow of her old self, she has lost a lot of weight and it's breaking my heart to see her like this
"Sibó, are you okay" I ask sitting on her old mattress
"I am okay Afrika" she says but her appearance says otherwise
"No mama you are not, what's going on you have lost So much weight" I say and she lets out a tear
"I have been So sick Afrika, I am weak I can't even do much anymore" she says and even though she never cared about us I have always loved her, she is my mother drunkard or not, I wipe her tear
"Have you been to the clinic" I ask and she shakes her head
"No, I haven't been there" I say
"It's clear you are sick mama, and this place is not clean either when you are week you need a clean place and proper food, let me clean up and see what I can get in the kitchen and mix up Something for you" I say and she looks down
"There is nothing to eat here I don't even have electricity" she says and my heart breaks reminding me of when Amanda and I would face such while she was drunk out of her mind
"I will be back mama just give me an hour tops" I say and luckily the car is still outside, I tell him to take me straight to the local shopping center, they have pick n pay, pep stores, and other essential shops. I use my R5000 bursary allowance to buy her enough groceries and electricity then I go to pep and get her new bedding, pajamas, gown and a few dresses and morning shoes. I decide to go to the pharmacy to get her Immune boosters and Something for her cough, and in no time, I was back home, I made here noodles because she said she doesn't have an appetite. The bed that I was using in my room was still new because it

wasn't long Amanda bought it before I left, So I fixed that room and moved her because it's north-facing which makes it warm, it will soon be winter. I help her move in there
"It looks beautiful Afrika thanks" she says settling on the chair I had for reading my novels
"I will prepare you bathwater So long" I say and she cries
"I don't deserve your kindness especially after how I treated you and Amanda, I am even ashamed to call myself a mother" she says and I let my tear fall
"It's okay Sibó" I say walking out and getting the water for her to bath.
"Wear these pajamas after your bath and get in bed, I will be in the kitchen cooking your meals and I will leave them in the fridge during the week you will just warm up and eat" I say
"After you are done please come So we can talk" she says and I nod and go out and the first room I went to was hers, I took out all her old clothes, they were all old, dirty and smelling of pee and vomit, I went to the back and started a fire and burned everything including her blankets and sheets. I asked the boys around to come to help me remove the mattress and base out, they said they could take it to the dumping side for me and burn it if I could just give them R50 I did and they took it away. I cleaned the whole house with Domestos and pine gen. The smell was not completely gone but it was much better. I suddenly felt the urge to cry, I don't know what triggered it but I sink to my knees and cried silently
"I am very sorry for all I put you through Afrika, forgive me please" she says standing by the bedroom door, I wipe my tears quickly and attempt to stand up
"No you can cry my girl, I need to see the kind of damage I caused my children" she says and she awakens all these emotions inside of me I cry feeling like Someone is squashing my heart with no care in the world, I am burying my face in my thighs, a second later I feel her sitting down next to me breathing heavily, she takes me into her arms for the first time
"Forgive me please, forgive me, my girl, I was So consumed in my pain that I didn't notice that I was causing harm to my children. I was selfish and took away your childhood, I let Amanda take all the responsibility, my responsibility. Lord knows how Sorry I am. I love you and your sister So much and Afrika I am very sorry from the bottom of my heart I am Sorry" she say brushing my afro.
"I have waited all my life to hear you say this mama" I say with hiccups
"Thula sana lwami (hush my baby)" she says and I can't help but let it all out

CHAPTER 61

•AFRIKA

I couldn't leave yesterday emotions were just too high, for the first in my life my mom and I had a moment and it was different but it felt So right, Sibó has hurt me and dragged me down but I just couldn't bring myself to hold it against her, could this be God's way of giving us a second chance. I woke up and went to make her porridge when I walk back in the room, she is sitting upright
"Oh, you are already awake" I say and she smiles
"Yes, I had a good night sleep" she confesses
"I am happy to hear that" I murmur
"Where did you find that dress" she asks chuckling
"I am surprised it still fits, used to be my favorite" I reply with a smile, I had to find Something to wear and wash what I came wearing.

"Sit down, and tell me how university is" she says and I smile

"It's very good, I enjoy the course that I am doing, I love numbers So it's the perfect field for me" I say and she smiles nodding

"What are you studying and what will you be when you done studying" she asks sounding interested

"Well I am studying Actuarial Science, it's a 3 years BSc degree but to be a certified Actuary I will need to write a series of 10-12 exams after completing my degree" I say and she nods

"Sounds fancy but what do they do" she asks and I smile

"Well an actuary is a professional who applies analytical, statistical, and mathematical skills to financial and business problems. This is especially valuable when facing problems involving uncertain future events or financial risks in insurance, retirement, investments, and risk management environments" I say and she claps like I just said the smartest thing ever

"You will be the biggest thing in the world my girl, I wish your father could have used his intelligence in the right ways" she says and I am happy that she is the one who brought up the subject

"Please tell me about him Sibó" I ask politely and she takes my hand in hers and smiles with tears shining in her eyes

"After Amanda's father left me, she was still a toddler, it was very hard being a single mother with no help, my family was never there for me, it was just me and her. We then moved around here from another township, there was a collage here back then, I found a job there as a cleaner and I was able to take care of myself and Amanda, and that's where I met your father, he was studying chemical engineering there, he wasn't from around here he moved here for school he was originally from the Eastern Cape So I would show him around and we became close and he loved Amanda like his own, he was the perfect gentlemen. He wanted to take care of us So bad we ended up moving in where he was renting, we were making ends meet, we combined the money I made and the one his family would send him every month plus he would hustle and make extra money, but he thought it wasn't enough. He was So smart Afrika So smart, he worked on a formula and I always wondered what it was but he would say it's going to make us millions Sibó just wait and see, but that got me scared and I was angry when he even quit school for that thing, a while later I found out that he was trying to create a drug better than cocaine, and we started fighting because of it but when we found out I was pregnant with you he was more determined to make it work and I just wanted him to stop and leave what he was doing and go back to school and become an engineer like he had planned to leave his home town. He started selling his drug and people demanded it like fat cakes, he managed to buy this house when I was 6 months pregnant, life was great I guess but I just didn't want him to continue with this, I advised him to use the money he had already made and start a legit business but not Siseko he wanted quick cash that won't have him work like a slave. One day he said a man in town who deals cocaine wanted a meeting with him and he went and that's when he started having all this money for everything, he said the millions he was talking about will Soon come but whoever that partner of his was he had plans of his own Afrika because he stole he used him to get his formula and one night, you were still a little baby and Mandy was around 5 years, man came to our house and gunned him down, he died in front of me with you in my arms Afrika, I have never been So terrified, they left and I tried to call the ambulance and ask for help but it was too late he was gone just like that and I didn't even get the name of the man that took your father from us, and from that day I lost it, I lost myself losing the only person I had in this world was hard on me I felt like I was cursed, first Amanda's father leaves me and then I find this amazing man who loved me and my daughter and gave me a child too them death takes him away, I didn't know how to deal with all that pain, and you girls were the, available for me to take out my anger and frustration on. Your father was an amazing man

but his intelligence was his doom Afrika" she says and I am left with So many emotions running through me, So Emily was right Mdlalose killed my father for his drug formula, I am indeed suffering in the hands of his murderer. I am walking the same road my father did just like Sibho had feared

"I am sorry Sibho" I manage to say

"I am sorry I lied to you about who he was, I just needed to tell you something different in my heart I needed to remember him as the see student he was not the man that got killed for the formula of drugs that is killing people" she says

"I appreciate you telling me the truth ma" I say and she smiles wiping her tears

"I just need to talk to Amanda" she says

"You should mama she needs you now more than ever" I say and she narrows her eyes

"Why is she okay, is she sick?" She asks with panic and I shake my head

"No nothing like that, she is pregnant and her boyfriend wants to pay lobola for her" I say and he hands move to her mouth

"This is great news Afrika, Oh, I hope she forgives me, maybe God is giving me another chance to be a better mother to you girls" she says and I nod

"I will ask her to come to see you" I say

"I appreciate that Afrika and thank you for coming to see me" she smiles and I hold her head. If I thought I hate Khaya Mdlalose before then I was joking because now I can even feel the hate inside of me, I loth that man and if I could I would kill him with my bare hands, he took away everything from us everything, my childhood, my happiness my father he took everything for me and I will be his doom and he won't even see me coming

•MPILO

Sleeping alone has become strange I must admit, it was even hard for me to fall asleep, but I eventually did after listening to our favorite songs, yes, I have become that person. I have been horny out of my mind and I must admit it's taking everything in me to hold myself every night and not try anything with her, but as soon as her soft skin touches mine, I burn up, my boner doesn't scare her anymore. I have to rely on beating meat till she is completely comfortable with giving herself to me and man I hate masturbating. I take cold showers and burn up Some steam in the gym. I skipped breakfast just to avoid that Bull girl and my father. I finally get out of my room and go to the kitchen. Ndlovukazi is in there humming Some church Song

"Morning Mama" I say and she turns and smiles

"Oh, hey baby" she replies

"You are in a good mood" I say opening the fridge

"The is no point being Moody and sad it's not going to change anything, after all the Bible says let tomorrow worry about itself, I will only focus on the positives" she says

"You sound like a motivational speaker" I say and she giggles

"You are a clown" she says and I make a stupid face.

"Do you want to do anything today; I don't have plans" I ask

"I wanted to go have lunch at the hotel and then go pick up Afrika from her mother's place since I told the driver to go home and rest" she says and I look at her in total admiration

"That is very thoughtful of you ma, and I will join you for lunch" I say and she smiles

"We are going to have So much fun" she murmurs and I eat the slice of cheese and I feel like throwing up immediately as baba walks in

"Ehh Mpilo I would like to have a brief of the past week" he says and I roll my eyes

"I already emailed it to you" I say not even looking at him

"We used to do that face to face why change" he says sounding confused

"Keywords USED TO," I say and take my plate and walk to the door

"Mpilo" he shouts after me and I roll my eyes and look at him

"What's wrong with you" he asks and I laugh

"You really can't expect to have your bread buttered on both sides, it doesn't work like that Dikane" I say and walk the lounge

•AMANDA

It was already late in the afternoon and Lethabo went home to go get a few of his things he said he will be with me here for a week, I asked him not to because his mom will just hate me more but he said he needed a break from his mother So I understood. I take my phone to call Afrika and find out how it went with Sibó. She answers after a few rings

"Mandy" she whispers

"Haibo why uhleba (why are you whispering)" I ask frowning

"Oh, Sorry I didn't want to disturb Sibó she just dozed off second ago" she tells and I roll my eyes

"Is she drunk out of her mind" I ask

"No, she is as Sober as they come, she has been Sober for days now" she says and I remove my feet from the coffee table and sit straight

"Are you sure you are at the right house with the right Sibó" I ask shocked. my mom Sober never those two words don't even rhyme

"I am sure sis, Sibó is So sick Mandy she has lost So much weight it's sad, I have been here since yesterday I couldn't leave her alone" she says and Something in me moves

"Are you sure it's not her playing you So you can give her money" I ask

"I am sure Mandy she didn't even know I was coming to play me " she replies and yes, she makes sense

"Did she go to the clinic?" I ask

"She will go tomorrow" she says and I sigh

"Okay, so what did she say about my lobola, did you manage to talk about it" I ask

"I did and she is happy happy even excited about being a grandma, she asked to meet you, she wants to apologize to you as she did me, Mandy, she even told me the truth about my father and how he died" she says and I am sure

"Are you sure you are not dreaming about all of this Mara" I say and she laughs

"Come see her tomorrow and you will dream with me" she says

"Sure, I will come because I don't believe that Sibó has changed just like that" I say and I hear her sigh on the other side of the line

"I was also surprised, but come through Mandy she really needs to talk to you" she says and in my heard I am trying to imagine my mother Sober and I can only go back to the memories I have from when I was young and abuti Knox was alive

"Yeah sure, listen we will talk later" I say trying to make everything Afrika said to make sense because I don't understand, why after So long, is it because she is sick, what happens when she recovers and she can drink again, what then, we will have invested a lot thinking that she has changed and then she hurts us again and I am Sorry but this time I have my baby to think about, I can't allow Sibó to take me on an emotional rollercoaster again that will leave me emotionally drained.

•NOMALANGA

I am done getting ready to go dine at the hotel for lunch and guess what I am waiting on Mpilo who went to get ready before me but he is still not done. I think he was supposed to be a girl this one, he fails to make a decision on an outfit, which man is dramatic as Mpilo show me and I will gladly wait. I pour myself a glass of champagne and wait for him in the lounge. Buli walks in and sits on the vacant couch

"Ndlovukazi" she says and I give her a faint smile

"Oh, hello there" I say and sip on my drink

"I am sorry for what I did" she says and I chuckle
"Don't worry about it, how is your mom" I ask because I don't want to think about her and Khaya
"Well mama finally gave in, she died a few weeks ago" she says and I can tell she is hurt from the sound of her voice
"That's sad, I am sorry to hear that, but she is finally free from all the pain" I say and she nods
"I hate myself for what I did to you Ndlovukazi, I am sorry I was-" I quickly stop her with my hand
"Don't do that Buli, don't sit across me and pretend like you didn't know what you were doing, don't pretend like Khaya coerced you. You are going to use your mother as an excuse don't bother because you could have come to me after all you were here. After all, I wanted to help you and your mother out. You slept with Khaya because you wanted to and that's that. But continue telling yourself otherwise to sleep better baby" I say and she is looking down in shame
"I just hope you know the kind of evil you brought in your life, all that glitters is not gold. I hope you have your big girl panties on because baby girl you are going to need them" I say and gulp down my champagne, Mpilo appears
"Finally," I say taking my bag
"Sorry ma, getting this fresh requires time" he says and I roll my eyes
"You telling me, let go Mpilo you are driving" I say already on my way out

CHAPTER 62

•AFRIKA

Ndlovukazi came to pick me up from my mother's place and I was feeling guilty that I am leaving Sibho alone, but I was a bit happy that she is looking a lot better than she was when I got her yesterday. I pray she keeps to her promise and goes to clinic tomorrow at least if we can know what she is suffering from.

"Mpilo and I went out for lunch, we had a great time" she says

"Oh, that's nice" I say and get lost in my thoughts again

"Nana what's going on, you don't look too good" she says and I sigh

"My mother is not looking too good ma" I say

"Oh, that's a shame baby, has she been to see the doctor" she asks

"She will go to the clinic tomorrow" I say

"No, I will have the driver come pick her up early and take her to Siza she will help her out" she says

"I don't want to bother you" I say

"It's no bother Afrika, you are stressed and you need to focus on school and you are starting with exams soon you need to focus I don't want anything distracting you, we already have this damn drug business in your way" she says and I sigh

"Thank you ma" I say and she smiles and takes my hand into hers. We get to the Mdlalose home and she parks

The minute we get inside Ndlovukazi goes to the bedroom we share and I stop by the kitchen to get some water, I feel a heavy presence in the room, I would say it's Mpilo but the aura of this person is dark it can only mean the devil incarnate, my father's killer. I don't turn because I want him to speak first.

"I am aware that you didn't sleep at home" he says

"Yes, I slept at my mother's, I am allowed to have a relationship with my family right" I ask rhetorically and he chuckles

"Don't Sound smart with me Afrika" he says

"It wasn't my intention Mr. Mdlalose sir" I say sarcastically

"In this house when you sleep out you let us know" he says

"Good thing I told the lady of the house" I said calmly

"You work for me Afrika; you tell me not Nomalanga" he roars

"Noted" I say and I feel him roughly turning me to look at him

"I will not have you think that you can disrespect me do you understand, this is my house and my rules go" he says and the pain on my arm from his grip stings but I will not show him weakness I remain silent towards his threat, he realizes that I will not give him the satisfaction So he lets my arm go and I look at him one last time and walk away, to tell you the truth it took everything in me to not blurt out that I know he killed my father but to defeat this man I must not give away anything.

•MPILO

I was with my boys at some club, ma suggested that I go away from the house a while just to get up to my old habits So Khaya can think we are back to normal, but to be honest I am not feeling this vibe I would rather be locked up with my girl in my bedroom and listen to her telling me all Sorts of stories but to get Khaya off my back I will do what I must. The boys are going hard, as usual, they bought all the alcohol in the world and girls are the order of the day, if it was back then I would be in pussy heaven right now but there's this chocolate person with Some good hair I don't want to hurt.

"Eh boi, are you good" my friend J says

"I'm easy boi" I reply

"As man Life you are not, look at all these ausis and that one with an ass wants you" he says

"Nah man I'll pass" I say and he frowns

"Defuq wrong with you man, you acting like Some cuffed nigga" he says

"Maybe I am cuffed J man" I say and he laughs

"That would be the day" he says thinking that I am joking but I let him be, he moves from me and goes to the girl he said wants me and whispers Something in her ear and a second later she comes to sit next to me.

"Hi Life, my name is Khanyi" she says and I will admit she is a beautiful woman

"Hi Khanyi, you good" I ask and she smiles and looks down

"I am good, just happy to be in the presence of Lord Life, I thought you were a myth" she says and I laugh. Lord Life is my alter ego, I make wrong decisions when that one is activated

"Hahaha Lord Life is no longer coming into play, it's just Mpilo now" I say and she blushes

"I bet Mpilo is more fun anyway" I want to laugh but I keep it in these girls would say anything just to get the alcohol flowing but I would suggest she lets it go because we will buy her and her friends' alcohol regardless, she doesn't need to kiss my ass.

"Yeah I think So too hey" I agree with and she changes her sitting position and faces to me So I can see the cleavage, horny me is admiring it straight up but Afrika obsessed me is disgusted. My phone vibrates from the pocket and I take it out, it shows that it's Mrs. Me I smile and open the text

Ma tells me you are out clubbing she says

Just to get baba to believe that I am the old Mpilo I say and she types as I wait in anticipation

I understand sthandwa Sam she says and I blush

I will be home Soon though I respond

Behave Mpilo she says with a rolling eyes emoji I laugh

Always sthandwa Sam. I better find the bed warm I say
As you wish. I love you she texts back
*Ngithanda wena muntu want (I love you my person) * I reply and put my phone in my pocket
"Lucky girl" Khanyi says and I sigh I forgot about her Soon as the text from my girl popped up
"Nah I am the lucky one" I argue
"Wow hey, I envy her really" she says and I narrow my eyes
"You'll find your nigger don't rush" I say
"Looks like he's taken already" she says and I laugh
"Let me refill you" I say running away from this conversation

•AMANDA

I woke up early and prepared Lethabo's things for work, I will not be going to school today because I promised my baby sister that I will go see Sibó today, I just want to make sure that she is not manipulating Afrika. I made his lunch box and we were out the door, he dropped me off home and went to work. I got in and the house was clean for a change, I get to her room and it's empty I frown and go to the other room we used with Afrika and she is in the room, the is new bedding and it looks really clean. She is even in a new dress and Afrika was right Sibó lost a lot of weight it's sad to see.

"Mandy" she says already tears shining in her eyes

"Hi Mama" I say and she smiles

"It's true" she says and her eyes are on my belly

"Yes, he is in here" I say and she smiles

"I am So happy for you my baby" she says

"What is wrong Sibó" I ask concerned and she sighs

"I will find out today" she says and I sigh

"Okay I will go with you then" I say

"Thank you, I appreciate it, I was scared" she says and I nod

"It's okay Sibó" I am So emotional right now. The is a knock on our door and I go open, it's Some guy in a suit and a Mercedes is parked at the gate

"Hello" I say and he nods

"Morning, I was sent by Ndlovukazi Mdlalose to pick up Sibó Mbatha and take her to the doctor" he says

"Mpilo's mother?" I ask and he nods, I am shocked, wow I don't know what to say

"Oh, okay we will be out soon thank" I say and go back to my mother

"Sibó we will be going to the doctor's Afrika's boyfriend's mother send us a driver" I say

"She has a boyfriend, wow she has grown now, I have missed a lot, you are pregnant and getting married too" she says

"Don't worry Sibó it will pass" I say not knowing what better to say. We go out and get in the car. We get to Sphephelo memorial and we walk out. The driver walks in with us and he is the one to talk to the nurse at the reception. After a while a doctor Ndlovukazi called to see my sister for the last time came, she is as beautiful as the last time

"Oh, hi Amanda, right?" She asks

"Yes, nice to see you, this is my mom, Sibó this is Dr. Motaung" I say and they exchange pleasantries

"We can walk go this way" she says and leads us to the room and mama gets comfortable on the bed, she starts examining her and doing all these medical things to her, it took time and she sighs

"Oh, Ms. Mbatha" she says

"Is everything okay" she asks

"From mere observation, I can say your mom has alcoholic hepatitis" she says
"What is that" I ask panicking
"Well your mother's liver is inflamed because of all the alcohol she has consumed. Do you see that parts of her skin is yellow and her eyes too, she doesn't have an appetite, loss of weight and bloated stomach could only mean liver inflammation" she says and I failed to keep my tears in.
"Does it have a cure" I ask
"No but it is treatable, your mother will have to make Some drastic changes in life, she will have to eat healthily and stop drinking alcohol indefinitely" she says and I look at my mom who is crying
"I am sorry Amanda so sorry" Siboniso says and I hold my breath
"So, what now Dr?" I ask and she is looking at us with So much empathy
"I will have to admit her. So, we can even drain the fluids in her abdomen" she says and I nod with tears
"Okay thank you so much" I show appreciation
"I will go get her admitted so long" she says and I nod, soon as she walks out my mom just breaks down
"I did this to myself Amanda I brought this to myself I have no one to blame but myself, I drank myself to death" she says
"Don't talk like this mama it's okay, we will get through this I promise. This hospital is the best and they will help you I promise" I say trying to calm her down but I am breaking down inside myself.

• KHAYA

I need to talk to Buli, she needs to understand the rules to this whole arrangement, so we can have order here. I don't want to find myself amid chaos that I will fail to contain. I open the bedroom door and Afrika's scent fills my nostrils but I quickly push it to the back of my head

"Khaya" she says quickly putting on her gown and I roll my eyes

"Why hide it's not like I haven't seen that before" I say and she frowns

"Can I help you with something?" she asks

"When is your next doctors' appointment" I ask and her eyes wander around

"Uhm I uhm, I was hoping to go see the doctor Sometime next week" she says

"Good fell me in, I want to be there" I say and she looks at me shocked

"Oh, okay I will tell you" she says

"A few ground rules, when we are in the room with everyone else we act all lovey dovey, we are what you call couple goals, you can act all spoilt as you like, but behind closed doors me and you are nothing but two people expecting a child. Do not disrespect Ndlovukazi at all costs or my children. I will take care of you and all your needs, you are to not have a boyfriend at all costs, your sexual needs will be handled by me and mine by you but I am allowed to step out should I want. You are to tell me about your movements no matter how close I want to know where you are at all times. What I am saying Buli is, I am your God and you worship me, do you understand?" I say and she is looking at me shocked

"Bulelwa do you understand me" I roar

"Yes, yes I understand Khaya" she says

"Good girl" I say

"Who is this Afrika girl" she asks and I sigh

"Not your business, get ready and join me in the garden in 10 minutes, I asked them to prepare us a snack" I say and she nods. I walkout

CHAPTER 63

•AFRIKA

I was at Some expensive restaurant in Sandton waiting on Emily, it's time I knew what she wants to do with the information she gathered about Bab'Mdlalose, I feel like she is the only person I can get into an alliance with to take down this evil man. We have the same story, this man took away our loved ones from us while he continues to benefit and go unpunished. Well it has to stop now. A petite woman walks towards me, I peep and it's Em, Oh, finally

"Oh, I am So Sorry friend" she says

"It's okay, you are here now" I say

"I had to go drop off the girls at my parents' house" she says and I nod

"That's okay really" I say

"How are things at the Mdlalose home, I am sure it's chaotic, I still cannot believe that even mall" she says and I exhale

"Honestly things haven't changed that much, Ndlovukazi is being a Queen about all of this, she isn't losing her cool not even for a minute" I say and she nods

"She has always handled things differently" she says and we sigh simultaneously

"What is your plan on getting Khaya down" I ask

"Well I want to gather all the information I could against him, information that wouldn't be doubted in the court of law, he has expensive lawyers and they will crush anything that isn't concrete, I need to gather everything against him So the charges can pile up, at least if they don't find him guilty for killing my brother and that Siseko man they will find him guilty for something" she says

"He is my father" I blurt out

"Excuse me" she says eyes narrowed

"Siseko Mdoda he is my father" I say and the shock on her face

"What, Afrika are you sure" she asks

"Yes, I didn't know before yesterday but I went to see my mom and she explained that..." I tell her what went down with Sibho

"I can't believe it" she says

"So, I guess I want to work with you to take this evil man down Emily, I want to see him suffer for what he has done to both our families" I say and she nods vigorously

"Definitely, together we can be stronger" she says

"I am worried because his relations tires Mpilo and Ndlovukazi and I don't want him taking them down with him" I say

"I understand Afrika we just had to make sure we find things that he does alone, I know my husband wronged you but I don't want him to go to jail either for my children's sake Afrika, I hope you understand where I am coming from" she says and I sigh

"I won't lie I hate your husband, I am tied up with bab'Mdlalose and this messed up drug business because of him but I understand, so long we take down the big fish

"Thank you and I am Sorry about everything about your father. Thank you for teaming up with me. We will destroy Khaya Mdlalose" she says and we toast.

•BULI

Things were not supposed to get to this point, this is not what I wanted. I need to meet up with my cousin right away, she is the one who came up with this whole thing she must find a way to get out of this mess. It's hasn't been that long here but Khaya is already showing

me that it's going to hell. I wear the expensive clothes he got me and I go to his office and knock before walking in.

"I didn't say come in Buli" he says and I roll my eyes

"I am sorry" I say

"What do you want" he asks

"I want to go out, I need to Sort out Something at my mother's house" I say and frowns

"Okay the driver is available" he says

"Thank you" I say and walk out. The drive to the township is smooth, I direct him to my house and we get there. I get in and find Snazo drinking her savanna

"Ao Mzala" she says excited to see me

"Hey" I say sitting down

"You look like those rich housewives" she says

"Snazo sisenjeni (we are in shit)" I say and she narrows her eyes

"Why yini what happened" she asks

"Khaya wants to accompany me to the doctor" I say

"Manje (and So)" she says casually and I roll my eyes

"There is no fucking baby have you forgotten" I bark at her

"That can be arranged wena just get me Some cash and I will pay Some doctor I used to work with to hook you up for the entire pregnancy" she says and I sigh

"I didn't want all of this Snazo, I just wanted him to offer me money for abortion and to keep my mouth open he did say he was married now he wants to use me as pawn in his fight with his wife, that lady is sweet I can't do this to her" I say and she rolls her eyes

"Stop being marry mother of Jesus, you are poor, you need money and a lot of it. Khaya has it. Just gather it and when you done disappear and go start a new life Somewhere" she says

"It's going to take time to get enough money mzala and by then my belly will have to grow" I say and she sighs in frustration

"You worry about the most stupid things, haven't you had of pregnancy sponge, before you ask me Some stupid question on how you will hide it, find a way, don't share a room with him, have sex on your terms, always initiate sex in the office So you just bend over and don't have to take care of your clothes" she says

"Plus, he likes it from the back" I say

"Now you playing along Buli, he used you and tossed you aside now it's time to pay" she says

"Buli hope all of this works because if he finds out we are dead" I say

"Then make sure he doesn't find out Bulelwa" she says

"I will transfer you the money for the doctor" I say

"Just withdraw it and give me the cash then I will take you to China mall and we get you Something big for the baby So you can say it's what you bought in case he is tracking your finances" she says

"How the hell do you think of these things" I ask and she laughs

"Honey this is my job" she says and I clap once

•AMANDA

I am in my mother's hospital room, she has a drip on her arm and connected to a few machines, after everything she has ever done to us, I still care and I wonder why. I won't lie there were times where I wished God could take Sibó so we could have a peaceful life with my baby sister but now that it could happen, I am praying silently to God to just give her another chance.

"You look lost in your thoughts" my mother says

"I thought you were sleeping" I say

"I was and I woke up to the sight of you lost in thoughts" she says

"No, it's nothing, how are you feeling" I ask
"Better than being at home, all these medications are helping me" she says and nod
"That's great Sibona, you will be fine with time" I reply
"Ngiyabonga Amanda (thank you)" I frown
"It's all Afrika and her boyfriend's mother" I say
"No thank you for stepping up for me when I lost my way, thank you for taking care of Afrika the way you did, you gave up your life to be a mother to her, and I must admit you did an amazing job at it. I am sorry for giving you all that responsibility Mandy, I stole your childhood, no amount of sorries will give you back your life but I want you to know that I am sorry and I want to make right by you girls and my grandbaby" she says crying and I just can't hold myself
"It was tough Sibona, it was tough, I still wonder where I got the strength from day and day out, I hear you apologizing and I appreciate it but I don't know if I can trust you" I say
"And I don't blame you baby, I disappointed you and Afrika enough times but this time I mean it and my actions will prove it to you I promise" she says
"We will see mama" I say and she nods
"I am done with alcohol; I am done with men. I just want to focus on trying to send a relationship with my children, I don't know where I will start but I will pray to God for guidance" she says and a part of her believes her
"Just don't make us all these promises now because you are sick then the next thing you are better you go back to alcohol and start hurting us, don't give us false hope" I say
"I will prove it with each passing day that I want to be an even though mother even though I am years late" she says and I shrug my shoulders
"Let me call Afrika and inform her" I say taking out my phone

•MZWAKHE

I haven't seen my parents ever since my father introduced Buli to us as his girlfriend and mother of the baby. I don't understand why he would do this to my mother but I am going to stay out of it. The driver drops me at the Mdlalose home and I find my mom in the garden cutting her roses
"Mama" I say and she looks back at me
"Mzwa" she says cool. My mom and I haven't been close since I threatened Afrika, I know she is disappointed in me and that hurts because she has always in my corner
"How are you holding up" I ask
"I am great hey, what about you" she asks without looking at me
"I am okay, I am seeing the doctor tomorrow hopefully in be as good as new" I say
"That's good news" she says
"Ndlovukazi I miss you" I say in a low voice
"Then come home more often" she replies and I sigh
"Ma you know what I mean" I say and she finally looks at me
"I always thanked God that at least one of my boys didn't want this drug business, I was happy that at least one of you will have a normal life that isn't tainted by drugs, but you weren't ahead and got yourself in that and I let you be but Mzwakhe you became a monster the day you let that innocent girl move information without telling her the truth or giving her the chance to make her own choice, the day you threaten her sister So she can continue doing this was when I know I had lost my sweet son" she says and my heart sinks
"I am still that son; I am still your son ma" I argue and she shakes her head
"No Mzwa you are your father's son" she says and went back to her roses. I walk inside the house and I meet with Afrika descending the stairs. Her eyes land on mine and she shakes her head before attempting to leave
"Afrika" I say and she stops

"What?" She snarls

"How is everything at school is the lecturer standing in for me doing a great job?" I ask and she chuckles

"I don't have time for this" she says

"I am sorry" I say it out loud and that gets her attention

"If that is the case tell your father to let me go, I don't want to do this, cut all ties with me" she says and I sigh

"That's not going to happen Afrika you know too much already" I say and she shakes her head

"For what you are doing to me Mzwakhe God will deal with you on my behalf" she says walking away. I start regretting why I came here in the first place

CHAPTER 64

•AFRIKA

After my last class, I asked the driver to take me straight to the hospital, Mandy had called me yesterday to let me know that Sibonani is admitted. I am scared I won't lie but thanks to Ndlovukazi I know she is getting the best medical assistance. I get there and look at the text Amanda send containing the ward and room number. I get there and it's So silent only the Sound of beeping machines, I walk in and Amanda is sitting on the edge on her bed and they are talking about Something

"Sanibonani (greetings)" I say and they both turn to look at me

"Hey Nana" Mandy says smiling

"Unjani Afrika" my mom asks

"I am well thanks how are you" I ask standing by her

"I am feeling much better actually. They drain the fluids from my stomach bit by bit and while they do it, I feel lighter and better" she says and I nod

"What are they saying is wrong with you" I ask and she sighs

"I drank myself to this point Afrika, I almost drank myself to death. I have liver inflammation, uthi uDoctor your alcohol nton" she says and I look at Amanda

"She has alcoholic hepatitis" my sister tells me and I think my heart almost stops, this is serious more serious than I thought

"Is there a cure" I ask panicking and Sino takes my hand

"No there isn't but they can treat it all I can do you help myself is to live a healthy life and quit alcohol" she says and I sigh

"Well, are you?" I ask not entirely sure if I want to know the answer

"I am willing to and I am going to stop drinking and taking my health seriously. I want a second chance to be a mother to you both I am Sorry girls" she says and I smile at her

"I'm glad to hear that" I say

"Yeah but not you Sound negative or anything but she has to prove herself Nana" Mandy says

"Your sister is right Afrika, and I will Amanda you will see, I promise to try I promise to make it work" she says and Amanda smiles at her and I sigh. The doctor walks in

"Hello, Sorry to disturb I just wanted to come to look at her vitals, and talk to you about something" she says

"Is everything okay" I ask

"Yes, it is don't worry, who lives with your mother" she asks

"I live alone doctor Motaung is everything okay" Sibona asks
"Once we are done with all of this you are going to be discharged and Some days will be better than the others and we normally advise a person who is in the process of stopping with the consumption of alcohol to stay with Someone who will be a daily reminder of why they must stay away from alcohol, to help you stay clean and live healthy because if you don't I am sorry to sound harsh but you will die" she says and I close my eyes
"We hear you doctor" my sister says in a low voice
"I will leave you to discuss this as a family" the doctor replies and makes her way out of the room closing the door, the awkwardness in the room just goes from 0 to a 100-really quick

•EMILY

I went to see my father at the station and as always, he was busy working a case. The time for justice is finally here and I am glad that in a few months I will have my husband back and all this drug business will be done and he will go back to earning a clean salary and we don't have to feel guilty of feeding drugs to innocent people out there and causing pain to their families.

"Emily I am busy this better be good" he says as we walk in his office and he closes the door
"It is good Pa; I have Afrika on our side" I blurt out and he looks at me

"Seriously" he asks and I smile

"Turns out the owner of the drug formula that Khaya killed is her father" I say and he punches the air in victory

"Good, this is great damn" he says

"And the bonus is she lives in the Mdlalose home and she is dating Mpilo" I say and he laughs

"Oh, this is amazing Emily I am so proud to call you my girl" he says

"By she doesn't want Mpilo or my mother in law to go to jail" I say and he shakes his head

"I already let go of your husband and I am not backing off Mpilo, that Son of a bitch practically runs that business with him out of the streets he can continue with production and kill more children" he says

"So, what are we going to do" I ask

"Make her believe that Mpilo will be safe from all of this but when we make an arrest, we take them both" he says and I sigh

"Okay that will work, she will hate me but she will get over it. She deserves better than that boy after all" I say and he nods

"This is the best news I have heard in a long time; I will inform my superiors on this progress baby girl" he says

"Okay" I reply

"Listen we must celebrate, bring your children and your black husband home for dinner this Sunday, I will make pootjie koss" he says and I smile

"I haven't had that in a while I would love that papa" I say

"If you had married a good Afrikaner boy you would be having every other day" he says and I roll my eyes

"Dad no please don't start and when I come with Mzwa please keep the nasty comments to yourself" I say

"You made me proud so I will even share a glass of Scotch with him and call him seuntjie" he says and I laugh

"Better, I will be on my way see you Sunday, greet ma for me" I say

•AMANDA

I couldn't stop thinking about what the doctor suggested, but the thought of having to go live with my mom is just too much. What if she decides to go back to her old life, It will be

like going back in time to be abused and neglected by her, but a part of me sincerely wants to be there for her and help her regain her strength So that she can be a mother to us, to my baby girl. I will soon get married and have my child and as much as I don't want things to change, they will and I will not be able to be there for Afrika as I was before and that's where Sibona will need to step up. So is me going back to help her a way of making her be a better mother so she can be there for Afrika when I can't. Lethabo rushes towards me and removes the pot on the stove

"Oh, my God" I say realizing that the meat is burnt and there is smoke in the kitchen

"Baby, what are you thinking about So deeply that you didn't notice the pot burning" he asks opening the window

"I am sorry love, I got lost there for a minute" I say and he takes my hand and moves me to the lounge

"What's wrong" he asks again

"My mother" I say and he sighs

"Still thinking about what the doctor says" he queries

"Yes, I don't know what to do" I confess

"What does this tell you" he asks pointing to my heart

"It says I should give her another chance, help her out you know" I say

"I know baby and I understand" he says

"But I am scared baby, I don't know if she means it if she wants to change. If she will not go back to her old ways Soon as she gets better" I say and he nods

"It's only normal for you to feel like that, and honestly we can't be too sure if she will keep her promise but help her out and if she does change it will be an amazing time and opportunity for you and Afrika and our Son to have a grandma, but if she goes back you would have tried and you would have learned and it will haunt her. Don't take this opportunity away from yourself and then come to regret it at a later stage" he says and I smile at him

"And you wonder why I find it So easy to submit to you" I say and he blushes

"You don't say" he says

"You lead me well Lethabo, you will make a great father, husband and head of our home" I say and he looks at me and shakes his head

"I love you baby; I have become the man I am because of the woman you are" he says and I blush opening my arms and he comes in for a hug

"I love you too babe and thank you for the advice" I say and he kisses my shoulder

•NOMALANGA

I had a lot on my mind, with the way things are between my Sons and Khaya parading up and down with Buli in my house, Afrika having to do a job she doesn't want but has no choice because her sister's life is being threatened and I don't even have a plan on how to get her out of this shitty situation, I have a spoilt brat for a daughter and nothing seems to work to get her to be a better person. I like to think I am superwoman but, in all honesty, I am tired, emotionally, mentally and physically, but I am a mother and we don't get to be tired. Afrika has been tossing and turning next to me.

"You don't have sleep or you miss sleeping with Mpilo" I say and she keeps still like she froze

"I am sorry for disturbing you ma" she says

"Don't worry baby I wasn't sleeping" I say

"Are you okay" she asks

"Not Afrika but I will be in the morning o don't have a choice" I say

"I am sorry for everything you are going through; you don't deserve what Bab'Mdlalose is doing in your house" she says and I let a tear-out

"It's okay baby. I have grown a thick skin" I say
"You don't have to be okay Ndlovukazi, you are only human and we can't expect you to be immune to things all the time, sometimes you need to break down to be okay" she says and I just cry. She turns sits up straight rubbing my back because I am facing away from her
"It's going to be okay; you have a good heart and God sees it mama just pray to him and I promise he will deal with him and those who hurt you" she says and this child's words are just going straight to my heart
"Kunzima Afrika ukuba umfazi (it's tough being a woman)" I say
"I know mama but you are a Queen. you breakdown where your enemies can't see you and when you go out to their presence you put on the armor of God and they will always wonder how you do it. Bekezela kuzolunga maduze (hold on its going to be okay Soon)" she says and I turn to face her
"You are a blessing to me Afrika. Your mother's womb was blessed to have carried and delivered you" I say and she smiles in the dark
"And I would say your children are blessed to have a superwoman and call her mom" she says and I smile
"You don't know what you have just done for me thank you" I say and hug her"

•MPILO

Soon as I opened my eyes, I couldn't even take a second to gather my thoughts or go to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I went straight upstairs to check on Afrika. My mom insisted that she starts sleeping with her before Khaya could realize that she has been in my room all the night. I open the door and my mom is up putting on her gown
"We haven't even brushed our teeth geez" she says and I laugh
"I just wanted to check if she slept okay" I say and she laughs
"She is fine Mpilo I am not Some random guy" she says
"I know that. We are just used to sharing a bed, I know I couldn't sleep without her" I say and she rolls her eyes
"If it's any consolation she couldn't sleep either but she did eventually. You two will get used to it. I am not having Afrika falling pregnant under my watch" she says and I frown
"We Are not even, arg why am I telling you this. Can you please go make me coffee?"
"Mxm" she says and walks out. I get in her space and pull Muhles to me and smell her. Her scent always intoxicates me
"Mmmhhhh" she says complaining
"I know you are not a morning person but wake up please I miss you" I say and she turns quickly at the Sound of my voice
"I didn't know I would be waking up to you" she says with a smile
"You missed me too huh" I ask and she kisses me
"I did but I enjoy sleeping with your mom, I feel like a baby, the is Something about this bed" she says
"Ouch" I say and she giggles
"I am sorry but it doesn't match being in your arms" she says
"If that is the case I will be at your school after your class and we will go to the park or hotel whichever you want and just be together no disturbances" I say
"I would love that" she tells and I kiss her one last time
"I love you and I will see you later" I say
"I love you sthandwa sam" she says and I kiss her forehead before getting out of bed

•KHAYA

I just finished making my smoothie after having a good workout, Buli was in the kitchen too eating Something. I finished and went to the bathroom I spot Noma by the mirror facing the

stairs making her way down, I went back to the kitchen quickly and held Buli from the back kissing her earlobe
"And then you want sex?" she says and I laugh
"No, my love, I just wanted to show the mother of my baby some love" I say and we hear Someone walk in but I already know who it is
"Oh, that's nice" she says
"I see the baby woke you up early for a snack" I say and laughs
"Good morning" Noma says and I couldn't be any happier that she found us like this
"Morning ma" Buli says
"Noma, how did you sleep" I ask
"Slept late hey, Afrika and I were up late, having a roommate is fun" she says making coffee
"Oh, that's great" I say and she nods
"Buli how is the baby Buli" Noma asks
"Very well thanks ma" she says
"I think it's going to be a boy. Indlalifa yam (my heir)" I say bragging
"Oh, Khaya you already have son's," Buli says and Noma laughs
"He is right yours is the last so he is ought to inherit it all my children already have enough plus they have my wealth too," she says and I frown
"Unless you are planning on giving me more," I say and Buli smiles
"Let's get through this one first," she says
"Okay, then my love I will see the two of you later at the doctor, right?" I ask Buli
"Yes," she says
"I could refer you to a good doctor Buli," Noma says and it's pissing me off really because nothing seems to annoy her about this whole setup
"No thanks I am comfortable with my doctor" she answers Ndlovukazi
"Okay sisi," Noma says taking the cups of coffee and walks out
"So, will you be picking me up to go to the doctor," Buli asks and I frown
"Why would I don't hat when the driver is here," I say and leave her in there. This thing is not working on this woman, she isn't mad or sad or jealous, Buli must just give birth to my child, and after that disappear.

CHAPTER 65 A WEEK LATER

•AMANDA

After school Lethabo was already parked at the gate to pick me up So we can go get Sibon from the hospital, she was discharged in the morning but I explained to the doctor that we can only come to get her later on in the day which wasn't a problem for them. We get there and walk to her room hand in hand. He has been So supportive throughout this whole thing and I realize that I could have never asked for a better life partner. We find Sibon on the couch reading the magazines they provide
"Sibon," I say and she looks up
"Amanda you are here," she says
"Yes, Sorry for keeping you waited I had school earlier," I say and she smiles
"Don't worry about it. Thank you for coming to get me" she appreciates

"Oh, and this is my boyfriend Lethabo, baby this is mom Sibó" I say and my man extends his hand for a handshake

"Dumela ma, it's nice to meet you" he says and my mom is smiling

"Sawubona ndodana (hello Son), it's nice to meet you too, and thank you for the lift" she says

"You ready?" I ask

"Yes, I already have the pills and the discharge form is at the nurses' station" she says and the doctor walks

"Oh, Amanda you are here already, I just came to check up on her" she says

"Thank you for everything Dr. Motaung" I say and she smiles

"Let me explain the meds to you" she says and tells me everything then I sign the discharge papers

"All the best on your journey Sibó. This is my friend's number she is from a support group for alcoholics she will be expecting a call from you when you are ready" she says and ma takes the card

"Thank you for everything you have done for me Dr. Motaung it means a lot to me. I am grateful" she says and they hug before she walks out. Lethabo takes her bag and we walk out to the car. She settles comfortably in the back. The drive to the house is silent with the radio playing at a low volume. We eventually get home and I must admit this house is clean the people I hired did a great job. The garden is very clean. We all get out of the car and get inside she freezes at the door and looks at me

"What's going on Mandy, who's furniture is this" she asks

"It's ours Sibó, I moved all my things from the flat" I say and she looks at me with tears

"Uzohlala nami? (You are going to stay with me)" She asks in a low vibrating voice

"Yes Sibó, you need Someone to help you" I say and she just comes and gives me a hug

"I will see you later" Lethabo mouths at me before walking out

"I don't remember ever living in a beautiful house, it's So clean and warm. You have beautiful furniture" she says breaking the hug

"I hope you don't mind; I threw away all the old furniture" I say and she shakes her head vigorously

"It's no better everything is beautiful ngiyabonga (thank you)" she says and we walk to the dining room and gasp for air

"What what's wrong?" I ask

"I will start watching TV" she says chuckling and I can't help but join her. She settles comfortably into the single couch and I go pour us Some juice. It wasn't easy deciding to come back home and I just hope I don't regret it. The house looks nice I don't think I have ever seen it this way. I even got new curtains and carpet for the dining and our bedrooms. I took everything that belonged to Dineo and asked her parents to get them, well Lethabo asked them to.

•BULI

I love staying in this house, it's a mansion I only dreamt of in my life but to actually be living here is a dream come true, Snazo was right the "Abortion money" wouldn't have gotten me anywhere, I have already saved up R15000 and bought stupid things from China mall for when he asks me what I spend his money on. I have 7 months to gather more money and disappear because that's when I will be expected to give birth. The only person I hate hurting in this whole game is Ndlovukazi, she was nothing but good to me and my mom but I hope one day she will forgive me. I am riding a pregnancy book

just to put up the act since the isn't a baby to prepare for. I poured Some alcohol in my jug pretending to be drinking Some juice.
"What's you game plan" a voice startles me and I look back
"Oh, Sbahle" I say bored. I never liked this girl when I was a maid, she is rude and disrespectful, makes me sick
"What are you playing at Buli" she asks again and I sigh
"What do you mean" I ask back and she laughs
"With that baby, you are carrying what are you hoping to achieve" she says and my hand moves to my stomach
"I just want my child to have a loving family and be close to his siblings that's all" I say and she rolls her eyes
"How do we even know that the baby you are carrying is my father's" she asks
"Khaya is a smart man, if he didn't believe that this baby is his he wouldn't have brought me here and introduced me now would he" I ask
"Don't give me attitude" she says and I sigh
"I am just answering you, sweetheart, my baby and I are here to stay So I suggest that you get on with the program" I say
"Oh, we will see about that" she says with a raised eyebrow
"Or are you mad and jealous that you will not be the last one after all" I say and her facial expression changes instantly
"Oh, please that illegitimate child doesn't scare me one bit, I will always be the princess of this family" she says and I smile
"If that is the case you shouldn't worry about me and my child, princess" I say and sip on the 'juice'
"Watch yourself Buli because I am watching you" she says and walks away. I exhale deeply. I just hope this girl won't be a problem for me.
I will go see Snazo she will know what to do

•AFRIKA

I am in my favorite place in the whole world, Mpilo's arms, we are at some hotel but I swear I like it better when we are in his bedroom or the park where we have our picnics. His scent just leaves me paralyzed all the time. He took off his T-shirt and I am drawing circles on his chest with my fingers
"Baby" I say breaking the comfortable silence
"Muhles" he says leaving me blushing
"If it was a different lifetime and your family didn't own a drug empire what would you have loved to be" I ask
"Honestly love I would have loved owned a chain of hotels, restaurants and clubs" he says and I smile
"I didn't expect that" I say and he laughs
"I know, no one ever is babe. I just have a certain need when I am at these places and my taste is hardly ever carted for and I found out that many people can relate to me" he says
"Then capitalize on that babe, start with Something small, maybe a restaurant, but an established one and introduce that taste of yours and see how many people can appreciate that" I say.
"I could do that love; I will look into great restaurants and see which one is currently struggling and buy them out" he says

"Well, follow your dreams you don't have to invest your whole life and time to running your father's drug empire while he just benefits while doing nothing" I say
"That's true my love" he agrees
"I am glad you agree because I am not marrying no drug lord" I say and he laughs
"Oh, so you want to marry me" he asks Sounding surprised and I laugh
"Obviously" I say and hide my face on his chest
"I am doing Something right for you to be thinking about me being your hubby. I am pleased because I thought I was going to have to work harder for you to see yourself as my wife" he says
"Nope I am down for it" I say and he sits up and looks at me in the eyes with a smirk
"Do you want to know how I am sure that you are my girl and mine only" he asks and narrow my eyes
"How do you know" I ask
"Because you starting to talk like me" he says and I giggle
"Your habits, likes and interests are rubbing off on me" I say and he kisses me
"Means you mine mami" he says and honestly, I can't help but blush
"I am yours baby," I say and he hugs me and we fall back in bed and he kisses me all over the face and I giggle
"I will get to finding that restaurant and you going to help me outright?" He asks
"I got you boo" I say trying to sound like him and he laughs
"Girl give your man a kiss and quit playing" he says and I gladly kiss him

•LETHABO

I get home and I see my uncle's car parked outside. He is probably here to find out of Amanda has spoken to her family about who we send the letter to, but things are looking up with her and her mom and I am happy for them and it will also make our journey simple. I walk in and I can already sense a weird vibe. My mom looks down immediately as I take a sit
"Dumelang" I say
"Lethabo" my uncle says and my mother just remains silent
"Is everything okay" I ask and he sighs
"My mother called me and she had a lot to say" he tells and I look at her and her eyes are still looking down
"I am sure she did malome" I say and lay back on the couch
"So, is it true that the girl you have been telling me about is a prostitute" he says and I laugh
"Wow mama wow. Well no Malome my girlfriend isn't a prostitute, she used to be before we were a couple" I say looking straight at my uncle ready to defend Amanda
"Hai Lethabo this is a difficult matter" he says
"I don't agree with you, I love Amanda and she loves me too, she has all the qualities I want in a wife and mother of my children" I say
"You are just going to overlook that she has slept with a lot of men before you" he asks
"I won't lie Malome it bothered me but we broke up and I dealt with it, we were apart and I knew the truth but I just couldn't stay away, I love her So much not even her past can taint my love for her" I say and he sighs
"Problem is your mother doesn't want her" he says
"Since my mom was in the spirit of telling my girlfriends past, did she tell you who told her about Amanda" I ask
"That's not important Lethabo" my mom defends

"Not important because she was also a prostitute and your pastors' daughter, not important because you invited her to our home and gave her the ropes and she eventually drugged and raped me" I say and my uncle looks at her shocked
"Ousi why didn't you mention this" my uncle says and she doesn't say anything
"I love Amanda Malome and it's not because I can't find what I want because she is what I want. If mama could see Amanda for the person she is not for her past she would see how blessed I am to have that woman, she would love her and she would respect her because Amanda stood at those streets and let those men do as they please with her because she wanted to give her sister a better life and I, for one, salute her because she did a great job because her little sister is in university and she is stable because of the sacrifices my girl made. Amanda didn't wake up one morning and said God I want to be a prostitute, situations forced her and to prove that she never wanted it she left it and she is back at school trying to chase her dreams and the world should be applauding her not crucifying her. I love her Malome and that's just God's truth" I say and wipe my tears
"Oh, Lethabo, son" my uncle says
"I love her and I won't apologize for that" I say
"Ousi do you see this" he says looking at his sister, and I just walk out

CHAPTER 66

•MPILO

The question is 'what do you bring to the table' is not associated with money or material things, it's associated with the value you will bring, the positive changes that will come with you being a part of the next person's life. I am blessed to have Afrika, she showed me what she is bringing to the table, she made it known that she doesn't want a drug Lord in the future and she gave me a sense of direction as to what I could do to get myself out of that business. At 19 years she has a powerful mind I am always left in shock with her level of thinking. She is building me up to the man she deserves and the man I know I can be, and her suggestion gave me a push in the right direction. I am meeting with an owner of this restaurant that I love so much; their food is amazing and often I wish it could be a restaurant and club at once. You know have the restaurant upstairs and club downstairs with. Once you are done eating, go down and party without having to drive around.

"Mr. Mdlalose, he is ready for you," the PA says and I walk in the office. He is sitting on his chair like the King

"Good afternoon," I say holding out my hand to him and we shake

"Hey man, how are you?" He asks

"Very well thanks, how about you" I reply

"I am great thanks, do what can I do for you" he says and I smile

"I want your restaurant" I blurt out and he laughs

"I am not selling" he says

"You can reconsider most" I say and he narrowed his eyes

"My business is profitable and, in a few years, I would be able to expand to other cities" he says and I nod

"That's good So you won't have a problem giving me this one then and go open another one is a new city" I say
"I am not selling, why are you after my place" he asks
"I love this building" I say and he shakes his head
"I am sorry but you wasted your time coming here" he says and I sigh
"I beg to differ" I say
"Okay, if you don't mind, I have another meeting" he says
"How much is your restaurant worth" I ask
"That's none of your business" he says and I nod standing up. I write a figure on a Post-It note and my number as well
"Think about it and give me call" I say sliding it to him and he looks at it and raises an eyebrow, I smile and walk out.

•LETHABO

It's a Friday, and my girl was supposed to come visit but with this drama that has been happening I just don't know what to do maybe I should move out but then again who will she stay with here but I can't put my life on hold and not be able to spend time with my pregnant girlfriend. We can't even go to her flat because she had to move out to help her mom, it's like we are taking two steps forward and 5 steps back and not because of our problems but they did say true love conquers all. I walk to my room and take out the keys from my pocket
"Lethabo" her voice startles me
"Ma" I say in a low voice
"Can we please have a word" she says
"I don't want to fight with you mama" I say and sigh deeply
"Me too papa" she replies and I walk in the main house, we sit in the kitchen
"I am Sorry ngwanaka (my child)" she says
"Sorry about what exactly" I ask
"For being difficult and judgemental, not supporting that you love this girl, and when your uncle was here, I realized that if I continue to be against your relationship, I will push you away eventually and Lethabo I don't want to lose you" she says
"You accepted her the first time and Soon as you heard Something about her you came gun blazing, now you want to let us be again and what if you hear Something about her again, we are going to be back here again?" I ask and she shakes her head vigorously
"I am praying about this spirit of judgment within me and I will not" she tells and I sigh
"Mama I don't know; I have a feeling that you will always hold this against Amanda" I tell
"I will tell you the truth it bothers me, I just had hopes and dreams about the kind of girl you would marry" she confesses
"But my choice of a wife is not up to you ma, and you should know this because you were rejected by my father's people and in turn, he turned against you and me" I say and she swallows
"I know ngwanaka" she apologizes
"And my girlfriend?" I ask
"I will accept that you want her and you want to marry her" she says
"Okay" I say
"If it's her you want and I will respect that" she says and I stand up
"Thank you" I say and walk out, a part of me doesn't believe she is being sincere about this whole thing but I don't need her to be best friends with Ama I just want her to respect the fact that I am choosing her and that she is carrying my child that's all.

•AFRIKA

I have been watching bab'Mdlalose closely and I notice that he keeps his laptop closely at all times and doesn't live it laying around open, he also has a key that is always paired with the car keys and it got me thinking, what could be on that laptop and what could that key possibly open. I know a few things about technology since one of my modules is Information technology but we haven't gotten in-depth and I need to learn on how to have it So I can be able to access the information on it and maybe I will find Something on it, that would help Emily and me, but for now, I have to keep Some information to myself until Mpilo is halfway out of this drug business I can't afford him going down with his father. I need information on Mdlalose alone information and crimes that will not Mpilo. There is my classmate who is very good at IT and he is forever on his gadgets. I see him in the student garden and go to him

"Hey" I say and he looks up and blushes

"Oh, hey Afrika" he says shyly

"You know my name" I ask shocked

"Who doesn't know the smartest girl in our class" he says and I laugh

"You are also smart" I say and he smiles

"What are you doing around campus on a Friday" he asks

"I was actually on my way then I saw you and I wanted to ask Something" I say and he stops typing and looks at me

"Okay I am listening" he says fixing his glasses

"You are good with IT, are you like a computer geek? No offense" I say and he smiles

"I am the best with tech Afrika, I can have I can clone, I can encrypt" he says and I nod

"Can you teach me the basics" I ask and he smiles again

"I would love to teach you, yes" he says Sounding So excited you'd swear he has been waiting for me to ask him

"Oh, that was easy" I say and he chuckles

"We can meet up when you are free" he says

"Let's exchange numbers then So we will communicate" I say handing him my phone and he gives me his

"Thank you So much uhm" I say and he sighs

"Brandon" he says and I look down embarrassed

"I am Sorry" I say feeling bad

"It's okay I understand" he says

"I will give you a call then" I say and he smiles

"I will be waiting" he says and I bid farewell and leave to the waiting car.

•AMANDA

I get home from school tired as hell, my baby is heavy guys and I have started wanting nothing but food, sleep, and sex. I swear I live for those three things. Everyone in the neighborhood is surprised to see me back home and I am not even giving them a minute to ask me stupid questions, I am just letting them go on with their speculations. Soon as I open the door food aroma hits my nostrils, Sibó is standing by the stove cooking

"It smells heavenly in here God" I say and she laughs

"I made steamed bread and mogodu" she tells and I wiggle my tongue

"I don't remember the last time I had this meal; I was so focused on alcohol my tongue was shocked by the taste of Ultra-Mel" she says and I burst out laughing

"Aow Sibó unehaba (you are exaggerating)" I say and she laughs

"How was school" she asks

"Yhuuuuuuu I was sleepy the whole day my feet I don't want to mention" I say going to the living room with her following behind

"Remove those shoes, I will get prepare water for you and give you a foot rub" she says

"I would love that thank you for mama" I say
"Is Afrika coming today" she asks
"She said she will come tomorrow, uyajola (she is dating) manje she wants to see her boyfriend first" I say
"You said her boyfriend's mother is the one who organized me the treatment, that hospital looks expensive, bane Mali (do they have money)" she asks whispering like we are gossiping
"They do have money, very well off" I tell and she claps once
"That boy must not take advantage of Afrika's because he is Rich" she says and I shake my head
"His mother will keep him in check she promised" I tell and she nods
"Okay let me fix that water, go change that trouser and put on a dress you will suffocate the baby man Amanda" she says
"You starting to Sound like Lethabo" I say rolling my eyes
"You should listen to him because he is right" she says going to the bedroom to get the bathing dish

•NOMALANGA

I was meeting with the real estate agent and she showed me a few houses around the capital, Tshwane. I needed to move around the cleaned drug money and what better way to turn it into property. I was loving the one we were in right now; I just couldn't help but fall in love with it.

"How much is this one again" I ask

"This one is R8 million" she says

"I want this one" I say and she smiles

"Oh, well I will process the paperwork and you will sign tomorrow and it will be all yours" she says

"Good then, but I want you to make the title deed in this name" I hand her a copy of the ID

"SMANGELE HLONGWANE" she says the name out loud

"It won't be a problem, right?" I ask

"Not at all ma'am" she says and I nod

"Well then if you have apartment buildings in your listing let me know or transfer me to someone in your circle, and please ensure that they are in expensive suburbs and different cities and towns" I say and the smile on her face

"Certainly" she says and I sigh. I am receiving my next payment of the profits made from the Colombian lab and I am happy Razor and Gadhafi helped me create shell companies to move it around before it gets to me.

"I will be on my way then, I will see you tomorrow and the money will reflect in the account latest tomorrow, I just need to meet up with my bank manager now" I say

"Tomorrow it is Mrs. Mdlalose" she says and I leave.

CHAPTER 67

•AFRIKA

I am going to visit my family today; it will be my first time visiting them since Mandy moved back home. We had just got out of the neighborhood where the Mdlalose home is, and the

driver just stops by the side of the road, but he doesn't get out or anything and now I am wondering what is going on, why did we stop. I sigh and the door opens and it's Mpilo. I blush

"Thank you bra man" he says and hands the guy a brown envelope

"Sure taMpilo" he says with a smile

"Muhles come baby" he says and I smile getting out of the car

"And then" I say

"I wanted to drive my girlfriend is that a crime" he says and I shake my head no

"not at all, I am glad to see you" I say and we kiss

"Now come let's get you home" he says taking my hand and leads me to the passenger side and I get in and he goes to his side and gets in starting the engine

"You look great babe" I compliment him and he laughs

"Thank you sthandwa Sam" he says taking my hand into his, the joys of driving an automatic car, his phone rings and it's connected to the car, he looks at it and frowns

"Who is this manje" he says answering it

"Mpilo here" he says

"Mr. Mdlalose, it's Craig Miller here" the caller says and Mpilo smiles

"Oh, Mr. Miller it's nice to hear from you" he says

"I will cut straight to the chase; I spoke to my wife and business partner about your offer" the caller replies and I frown wondering what this conversation is all about

"And" baby says crossing fingers

"And we both agreed that it's an offer we can't refuse" the person replies and Mpilo nods

"I am listening" my boyfriend replies

"Well the place is yours but on Condition that you pay the transfer fees and lawyers' fees" the guy says

"Done" this one next to me says quickly

"And we will meet on Monday then" the person

"Monday it is" Mpilo says and hangs up

"And then what was that all about" I asks and he kisses my knuckles

"I would rather show you" he says making a U-turn and I can't help but get excited with him, he drives a while and his good mood is infectious, he parks

"Look at that" he points to this restaurant at the corner and it's packed, it looks amazing. The building is just So nice

"This place looks really nice" I say and he nods

"Imagine the roof top being where people can chill and have drinks while a live band performs, then the first floor being the restaurant and a club on the ground floor. We could Carter for 3 different types of people in the same place" he says and I smile

"I love it baby I love the idea" I say excited

"Then you will be pleased to know that by Monday this place will be mine" he says and I clap excited

"Oh, baby I am So proud of you" I say pulling him to me and kissing him

"It could have only been you sthandwa Sam. If you didn't show me a sense of direction, I wouldn't have changed the dream and I am So grateful Afrika for reminding me that I am more than just a drug Lord" he says and I kiss him again

"You did it Mpilo, I am So proud of you" I say

"Come with me on Monday" he suggests

"I would love to babe" I say and look outside and I see his vision, this building is just allowing his plan God.

•NOMALANGA

I just got home from the estate agent's office, they open on Saturday until 1 pm and we managed to finalize everything and the money was already reflecting in their account. She told me she found a few apartment buildings across Sandton and in Cape Town and I told her to set up a day for me to view them. I am investing in property now and everything will be in my sister's name, we are not in contact and Khaya will not think of her if he tries to rat me out. I get home and go straight to the lounge and sit down and close my eyes a little to relax.

"Ndlovukazi" a voice says and I open my eyes it's Buli and Khaya

"Hi" I say

"Had a long day?" my ex asks

"Something like that" I reply and he nods

"Uhm Ndlovukazi I was wondering if you would have a problem with my cousin coming to visit me for a sleepover" Buli says and I sigh

"Like I said Buli, you are now the madam of this house you can do as you please So long as your uhm boyfriend baby daddy approves, go on sweetheart" I say signaling with my hand

"Exactly Buli do everything you want baby, just be comfortable this is your home, our babies' home. I just want you to be happy and enjoy yourself here" Khaya says pulling her to his side and she blushes

"Thank you Ndlovukazi" she says

"No problem, please excuse me. I need to relax before I need to hit the road again" I say

"Where are you going" Khaya asks

"I will be meeting with the other prosecutors, one of them is hosting a braai at her place" I say and he frowns

"I see" he says

"Oh, and Buli could you do me a favor and tell the helpers that when a person by the name Alex comes, they should bring them to my bedroom if I am still asleep" I ask and she nods

"And who is Alex" Khaya asks looking like he has been fed chilli's

"You Khaya I am not your child, you ask too many questions, save them for Buli not me" I say and He gives me a deadly look before I leave them standing there, cabanga, anyway Alexandra is a make-up artist but Khaya doesn't need to know that, let him breathe fire for nix

•MZWAKHE

I am healing slowly but surely; I just can't wait to heal completely now I am tired of being rendered useless. I miss my students and I miss making the sequences. And to tell the truth, I miss my brother So much, I wish we could find a way to move past this whole thing, we have always been So close and the fact that he hates me and wants nothing to do with me is killing me, on the other hand, my mother is disappointed in me. I wish and hope every day that they could understand where I am coming from.

"Penny for your thoughts babe" she says walking in with snacks

"I am just missing work" I say and she smiles

"I am sure they miss you too baby, you are a good lecturer" she says

"Do you think Mpilo misses you" I ask and she

"Who cares" she says uninterested

"Em he is my brother and I miss him" I confess

"He owes you an apology" she says and I shake my head

"He was just angry and he-" she disturbs me

"Don't make excuses for him Mzwa he almost killed you" she says

"Let's drop it babe before we can into an unnecessary fight" I say and she nods

"Yes, I agree, on the bright side, you ready for tomorrow" she asks

"Nope I am not ready to be criticized by your father, and have him constantly remind me that I am black" I say
"Mzwa don't be like that please, my father will behave tomorrow I promise you" she assures me and shrugs my shoulders
"We will see Em" I say
"Choose a movie while I go get the girls," she says and I nod

•AMANDA

Sibo and I walked to the local shopping complex, she said she wanted to stretch, I, on the other hand, I am enjoying this at all, this child is heavy first of all and walking is not my thing, you'd swear I have a car, Lethabo spoilt me. We walk to our street and people are looking at us Some type of way, they are used to seeing my mother drunk and cussing us out, but I pray that they never get to witness the free show again.
"Is that car at our house" mama asks
"I don't recognize it, maybe it's parking next door" I say
"Maybe" we move closer and it's definitely parked at our house, I have never seen it before So I am wondering who it might be. Soon as we get to the gate we can't see inside since it's tainted the doors open and Afrika and Mpilo walkout.
"Sanibonani" my baby girl says
"Oh, Afrika it's you" Sibho says
"Yes, mama it's me" she says
"I hope you haven't been outside for long" I ask
"Not just 15 minutes" she says and we nod
"Sanibonani" Mpilo greets us
"Hi Mpilo" I say
"Yebo ndodana" my mom says and I poke Afrika to tell her to introduce Mpilo to our mother
"Uhm Sibho this is Mpilo, taMpilo this is my mom Sibho" she says and they smile at each other guess they are amused by her Calling him taMpilo
"Are you the son of the generous woman who helped me get treatment" Sibho asks
"Yes ma, Ndlovukazi is my mother" he replies
"Thank her for me, tell her I am grateful that she offered me a chance to live So I can make things right with my girls. I am grateful" ma says
"Thank you Mama" he says
"Please come in for coffee" she offers
"I would love that mama" he says and Sibho and I walk in while he takes out Afrika's overnight bag and they follow us. I still feel Somehow with Mpilo, I know he has shown that he loves Afrika and all, I guess I am just been mother hen where Afrika is concerned. My phone vibrates and it's Lethabo
"Hey love" I say and Sibho chuckles
"Rato laka, how are you" he says
"I miss you" I confess
"Then come sleepover because I miss you too" he says and I sigh
"Lethabo your mom" I say in a low voice
"She won't be a problem babe, she said she will respect us and our relationship" he says
"Are you drinking?" I ask and he laughs
"I am babe but I am not drunk or imagining that" he tells me and I chuckle
"Okay love come pick me up late Afrika just got here" I say
"I will get you around 7 or 8" he says
"Cool then" I say and we hang up
"Uyolala e malunde (you are sleeping out)" she asks jokingly

"Yes, I am going to sleepover at Lethabo's place I hope you don't mind ma" I say looking at her and she smiles

"Not at all Ama and thank you for regarding me as a mother in this issue" she says

"Thank you Sibó let me ask Mpilo what he prefers" I say hoping he doesn't say sparkling water you know rich people; I find them sitting on the couch with him whispering something in Afrika's ear and she laughs, I clear my throat

"Mandy" my sister says

"I will be going to ask Mpilo what he prefers to drink" I say

"Any Soft drink, thank you Amanda" he says politely and I still can't believe Afrika has a boyfriend

•KHAYA

I am sitting in the lounge where I will be able to see who walks in and out of my house. I want to see who this Alex is, Noma has the nerve to bring a man into my house. I want to see that fool So I can take care of him real Soon. What she is doing is disrespectful and if she wants a man why didn't she go to his house, it goes to show that the man I broke and after her money. She is too desperate to make me jealous she probably went for Someone below my standards. The doorbell rings and I sit on the edge of the couch, a second later the helpers appear with a girl pushing something like a suitcase.

"Hilda" I say

"Yes Mr. Mdlalose" she replies coming to me

"Who is that" I ask

"Oh, that Alex she came to see Ndlovukazi" she says and I frown

"What is she here to do with Nomalanga" I say

"I don't know sir" she says and I go to Alex myself

"What are you doing in my house" I say

"It's none of your concern Khaya, why are you in my business" Ndlovukazi says appearing from the garden

"Uhm I just" I Mumble

"Alex baby this way please" she says

"Yes ma'am" the girl says and they go to the garden

"Get back to work" I snap at Hilda

"Yes sir, I am Sorry" she says leaving

"Damn it Nomalanga" I say taking my phone on the coffee table and go up to my bedroom

CHAPTER 68

•NOMALANGA

I don't remember the last time I got drunk as I was last night, If people knew the kind of bull happening in my home they would have sworn that I was drinking to drown my Sorrows but I will assure you that I was just having fun, I felt like I was 20 again, young, wild and free. I forgot about my problems for a while and I even met someone, he is a Judge, and yes, I know its conflict of interest but how about I do something out of character for once. My head is pounding, and I can't seem to have pills in my vanity mirror. I walk downstairs and find them all around the table having breakfast

"Morning"

"Aow Ndlovukazi" my forward Son says chuckling
"Ubuye udakiwe Nomalanga (you came back drunk) in the early hours of the morning, what were you thinking" Khaya says distastefully
"What were you doing up in the early hours of the morning like a witch Khaya" the words come out of my mouth casually and Mpilo chuckles
"Don't disrespect me Noma" he warns
"Mpilo make me a hangover concoction"
"Relax o'lady I got you" he says
"Seems like you had an amazing time Ndlovukazi" Buli comments
"You have no idea, I don't remember the last time I had So much fun, I felt young"
"Did you at least find a boyfriend" Bahle says I laugh loud
"We will have to wait and see now won't we" I say
"He better be a fine one ma" she says
"And he better play far away from my house" the bitter ex adds a comment
"Ave umuncu (you are So Sour)" I say narrowing my eyes
"I don't understand why Ndlovukazi's boyfriend can't come here while we living with our ex maid who is now your baby momma" my daughter continues
"Sbahlle watch your mouth, I am not your friend, watch it" he roars
"Oh, there goes the Lion King" I say standing up and walking away to find Mpilo who seems to be taking his precious time mixing weird ingredients.
"Are you still mining the ingredients"
"Patience ma, what did you drink even"
"Hai Mpilo, I had champagne and later on I moved to Hennessy"
"You wilding Yoh,"
"I am young, beautiful, successful and single"
"I agree but can we scrap out young" I take the dishcloth and throw it to him
"Jealousy doesn't look any good on you"
"Ngiyadlala ma (I am just kidding ma) you don't look your age one bit; you age like fine wine" he compliments and I smile
"That's more like it I know I raised a gentleman" I say and he bows

•AMANDA

I open my eyes and my good girl down there is still pounding. Lethabo went in too hard on me last night, it was good and I just couldn't get enough but yeses he showed me who is boss. I am happy that I didn't bump into Lethabo's mother. I just don't know how things will go. I look back and realize that baby is not next to me, I look up and he is on the couch
"I am going to break that thing" I say because ever since he bought that damn play station, he is always on it
"Aow Mara baby, you were sleeping"
"I am awake now" I say and he laughs
"5 more minutes" he says
"Lethabo I will break those DVD's" I threaten and he bursts out laughing
"As for DVD's Ama, these costs a fortune to be called such" he defends and I quickly get out of bed and go sit next to him and force a snuggle, he laughs
"You are So jealous baby Yoh," he says allowing me in, and continue playing with me on his lap
"I hate this damn thing"
"I should teach you So we can play together" he says
"Maybe I will feel less neglected"
"Dramatic much Ama" he says and I laugh
"I want Some wings" I say and he sighs

"Onale maqheka Amanda (you have tricks)" he places the controller down and kisses me on the forehead

"It's your baby"

"My poor baby will be blamed for everything" I roll my eyes

"Wings, chicken nuggets and then big Mac meal" I say and he nods

"Yes ma'am, let me put on a top and go get these things for my baby" he says And I get off him and sit while brushing my belly

"You are the best when you not playing this thing" I tell and he smiles

"You are just abusive"

"You love me though"

"How can I not Ama, when you are even giving me this beautiful gift, I would even go out in the storm to get you everything you want" I blush

"We Are blessed to have you Daddy"

"I am the blessed one love" he says trying to locate his keys I roll my eyes

"In your drawer babe" he winks at me

•AFRIKA

I don't remember this house ever being this beautiful and warm, every room has furniture now and it's just the home I always dreamt of having when I was growing up. I am thankful to Amanda for coming back home to take care of Sibó and to bring back Some dignity here. Even though this place harbors a lot of painful memories, the possibility of having new and happy ones is overwhelming in a good way. I walk out of my room when I hear Sibó laughing, out of curiosity I want to see who it is. I get to the lounge and its out neighbors, the same one who used to laugh at us when Sibó was a drunkard who didn't care about us.

"Sis'Nandi" I say

"Oh, Afrika, how are you" she says then sips her drink

"Very well thanks, unjani wena" I reply

"I am fine, your mom tells me that you are now in university studying Something fancy" she says

"Yes, I am studying Actuarial Science" I tell

"Hai that's nice, you know everyone didn't believe that you and Amanda would make it out, but look at your house now, you even have a washing machine" she says

"It will teach people that God has a plan for every one of us" I say

"That's very true" my mom says

"So, vele Sibó, you are no longer drinking, yoni are you sick " she asks

"Yebo Nandi, I did that all my life now it's time I be a mother to my children and be healthy enough to see my grandchild grow" ma says and I smile at her

"Okay, and I've seen Amanda's boyfriend loya thisha was high school (that high school teacher)" this woman is fishing for information So she can go gossip

"Mmmh" Sibó replies

"Mama we need to do that thing now" I say

"Oh, yebo, Nandi you will come back Some other time to visit" she helps down the drink

"It will Soon, your TV is So big I can see these people very well, I must tell my husband to upgrade me" she says and Sibó walks her to the door and comes back after a second

"Abantu baya thakatha Afrika (people perform witchcraft)" she claps once

"Why was she here even" I ask

"Jealousy baby, they never thought good things would happen to our family" she says

"Don't share much with her Sibó" I advise

"I wouldn't dare people go to extreme lengths when they feel intimidated by you and your progress forgetting that God loves us all" she says and I smile

"Facts" I say and she narrows her eyes

"Huh?" She asks and I chuckle
"Don't worry about it"
"Let me start cooking Sunday lunch So you can eat before you leave"
"That sounds nice but I will leave tomorrow because I am not writing"
"Oh, at least, we have you for one more day" she flashes me a smile
"What do you plan on cooking So I can help"
"Just watch Some cartoon and relax" I laugh
"Haibo Sibho cartoons really" she laughs along with me
"Kanje you even have a boyfriend now" I blush at the mention of Mpilo"
"I will go buy Coke at the spaza shop" I say dodging the boyfriend topic with my mom, yes, they met but it's still awkward

•BULI

I was So excited to have Snazo come here and see how beautiful this house is, she will be sleeping over and leaving on Tuesday. At least I won't be bored for a few days, it can get lonely here because no one likes me including the staff, and that hurts because I have always been Someone people love and like being around but now everything just changed, I am hated and my presence annoys most people. I was in the classiest outfit; I want my cousin to see that her teachings are not going to waste. I go to the kitchen and the helpers are busy making Sunday lunch

"Uhm Hilda can you please make me a platter of finger foods; it will be the two of us" they all look at each other and burst out laughing

"Don't you have hands now" Hilda says

"Cabanga isbindi (imagine the nerve)" they laugh again

"When Buli tells you to do Something you will do it, understand" Khaya says appearing behind me and I smile

"And if anyone has a problem with that there is the door a lot of people would kill to work in the Mdlalose mansion" he says

"Sorry Bab'Mdlalose, Buli what would you like on the platter" Hilda says and I look at her with a smile

"Thanks baby" I say and he kisses my cheek and walks out

"The platter Ndlovukazi normally has when she has guests but make it for two people"

"It will be ready Soon"

"BULELWA" Snazo's voice scream and I rush to receive her

"Mzala" I say and we hug excited

"Yoh, this house is amazing, it's like I am at the hotel" she says looking around

"I was just like you when I first got here"

"Ai you have hit gold" she says

"Shhhh" I give her a look

"Give me a tour phela" I roll my eyes at this melodramatic person

"Hilda" I shout and she quickly appears

"Take Snazo's bag to my room and bring her a cold bottle of champagne with that platter to the garden"

"Okay"

"Mzala come let's go relax first and I will give you a tour later" Mpilo appears and just give us a distasteful look before walking out the door

"Who is that yummy rude man" Snazo says drooling

"That's Mpilo mzala, he is Khaya's Son"

"He will Soon be Snazo's boo, watch the space"

"Good luck because he is just rude"

"You know I appreciate the challenge" she says smiling

"Hai Snazo don't cause chaos here" I warn and take her hand and walk to the garden

CHAPTER 69

•AFRIKA

I woke up and helped Sibó clean around the house and when I was done, she had already finished making mabele porridge, it's one of my favorites. After eating I went to pack my things and took a bath, Mpilo said he will be picking me up Soon because we need to go to the meeting at the restaurant. I am So excited for him and relieved that he will exit the drug business bit by bit without even realizing it. My phone beeps as I brush my hair

I am outside Muhles it's Mpilo. I peep through the bedroom window and see his car. I quickly apply face cream and dispose of the water outside then go back to take my bags, Sibó is in the lounge watching some Nigerian movie on Africa Magic, she has become obsessed, she even slept today in the AMs and even before I could wake up she was already up watching the channel volume up even.

"Mama I am leaving"

"Oh, already, when will you come again"

"This weekend hopefully"

"Okay let me walk you to the stop sign"

"No, it's okay Mpilo is here to pick me up"

"Oh, okay"

"Don't be sad Sibó I will be back"

"Don't mind me I just having you and your sister around that's all"

"I understand"

"Greet Mpilo for me, and call when you get to res" I smile

"I will and stay focused, drink your meds and pray to God to give you the strength to Tay away from temptation"

"I will baby thank you" we hug and I go out to the car, he has his chair reclined back, I open the door and he opens his eyes

"And then" he smiles

"I thought you will take forever" he says and I roll my eyes then lean in for a kiss

"You know I am more punctual than you babe So chill out" he chuckles and starts the engine and Soon as we meet the road, he takes my hand into his, this is the part I love about driving around with him. We get to town and within a blink of an eye we are outside the restaurant and it's like I am seeing it for the first time, we walk in the building hand in hand and I am scared that his father might see us but Mpilo isn't bothered. He talks to a white girl and she leads us upstairs and I am just falling in love with this place more. We get in the office and a guy and woman are sitting behind the table and there are two extra guys in suits reading documents.

"Sorry I am late" Mpilo says

"Mr Mdlalose no need to worry, your lawyer has already started going through everything" the white guy I assume is the current owner says

"Vusi is everything in check" Mpilo asks his lawyer I assume

"Everything is standard I don't see a problem with anything" the guy responds

"In that case let's sign" baby says sounding excited. The couple signs first and then hand the documents to Mpilo with a pen.

"Baby do the honors" he says handing the papers to me
"I don't understand" I say with confusion
"Just sign and I will explain to you on our way home" Mpilo whispers and I sign while shaking my head. They exchange pleasantries and talk business a while drinking champagne. I am trying to wrap my head around my name being on the contracts.

•NOMALANGA

My day is just another long day with cases piling up on my desk and I just feel like screaming Sometimes but I always remember why I decided to be a prosecutor and I just go back to being a gladiator in a suit. I check my watch and God it's already knockoff time, where did this day go, I didn't even have lunch, mxm I pack my bags and a file So I can work at home with a glass of wine, but no let me just leave work at work, I will indulge in a bottle of wine and watch Scandal, Olivia Pope might be younger than me but her character gives me drive. A knock comes through my door

"Yes, come in" I just hope it's not Something that will require me to give another minute of my time

"I hope I am not disturbing you" a voice says and I quickly lookup

"Oh, Judge Moroka" I am surprised to see him here, he flashes me smile while shaking his head

"My friends get to call me Thuso" I smile

"Oh, we are friends" he chuckles

"Oh, come on you know we are" he says and his deep voice just gets me giddy

"Well friend, what can I do for you"

"Well I was hoping we could have late lunch, I heard from a little birdy that you didn't leave your office the whole of today, So I know you are hungry" I smile

"I wasn't going to say otherwise anyway, I am famished and I could appreciate a good plate of food with a glass of Merlot"

"I know a great restaurant and they sell top-quality wine" he whispers

"In that case why are we still here" he chuckles

"My car or yours" he asks

"I will follow you behind Thuso" I say and he chuckles

"I hope you not trying to get away" he says and I smile

"Not at all" I say standing and taking my things and we leave. I drive behind him and we get there after a few minutes. The time I park and fix my hair he was already opening my door

"Don't worry you look perfect" he assures me and I am left weak, he is such a gentleman, I just give him a warm smile and we walk inside, the joy I feel when they give us a table by the corner

"Can we please have you bottle or Merlot" he asks the waitress, she smiles and goes to the back

"I promise you are going to love it"

"I hope So because I am a lover of wine" I say and nods

"Don't worry I won't lead you astray"

"I feel like having a juicy romp stake with their Greek salad" I say

"I think I will join you" he says and we both close our menus

"So, who is Nomalanga Mdlalose, besides being the badass prosecutor and wife to tycoon Khaya Mdlalose" I sigh

"Between us, we are divorced" his eyes pop out of his sockets

"You don't say" he says

"I kid you not" I reply and he leans in

"Well in that case welcome to the club" he says and we both chuckle and the waitress comes with the bottle of wine

"Just in time to toast for my return to singledom," I say and he just smiles. When was the last time I felt so alive?

•MPILO

I explained to Afrika why I bought the restaurant in her name because I don't want my legal things to be taken if we are ever busted. After all, we bought them with drug money, So everything I buy now will be in her name just, it was overwhelming for her but she understood why I did that. To tell you the truth besides my mom Afrika is the only one I trust with my life, I know we haven't been together for long but I know I am not making a mistake practically handing her my life. My bedroom door opens and the Buli's cousin walks in wearing the most revealing outfit ever, she is disgusting

"Excuse me" I say getting off the bed

"You are excused boo" she replies and I sign

"Listen you are in my room and I don't appreciate it, you came here to visit Buli not me So can you please do me a favor and stick to her room till you leave, your face is not pleasant to look at" she chuckles

"You don't have to be rude, I just want to have a good time, my cousin told me that she hasn't seen a woman around here or around you"

"Oh, whoring runs in the family I see" she gasp for air

"That is not a nice thing to say" she says smiling and holding on to my t-shirt, I sigh. The door opens as I was about to move away from her, soon as her eyes land on the situation her smile falls and I close my eyes

"Sorry to disturb, just came to tell you that dinner is served" she says and walks out closing the door

"Listen here don't you ever try this nonsense again or this will be the last time you set foot here and I am not joking with you" I warned her and go out to find my girl. I get to my mom's room and she is under the covers, I remove my slippers and get in next to her.

"Baby it's not what you think"

"And what was it"

"Muhles that girl is an opportunist I've seen her type, she tried to get on with me but I didn't give her the time of day, I would never do you like that I promise" I say hoping that I am reassuring enough, remember I haven't had to deal with such situations before.

"Why didn't you put her out of your room"

"I was about to when you walked in Muhles look at me" I plead

"Am I overreacting" she asks turning to face me

"I think you reacted as expected, I am not sure. Are you really mad" she smiles?

"Yes, I am" she says

"I am sorry baby but I promise it wasn't what you saw" I reassure her

"It's okay love. We still have a lot to learn about relationships, we are both inexperienced in being in a serious romantic relationship, but we will find our feet, right?" She murmurs and I smile sweetly at her

"It's kind of cute seeing you jealous I must admit" I say and we both giggle

"Don't flatter yourself, I was just worried about my image, from me to that wow" she says and I burst out laughing

"Savage babe" I say and she pecks my lips

"I don't want girls near you" she confesses

"Baby don't worry I see these girls as my homeboys" I assure her and she laughs

"Look at me laughing, one would swear that I wasn't mad a minute ago, what are you doing to me" she blushes

"What can I say babe, nawe uyabona" I joke and realize that we are the perfect combination, we are inexperienced in this department and we don't even know if we are reacting like we

should to situations and to tell you the truth I wouldn't have any other person to walk this journey with she is just perfect.

•AMANDA

I think my mother spoils me more than Lethabo could, today she called me and asked what I would love to have for dinner and I told her and she made it and I must say it smells heavenly. She even took the money Afrika left her and went to buy me a preggy pillow and I couldn't have been more thankful I don't know why it took me So long to get one. She is just So sweet and considerate, it feels great having a supportive mom and I pray to God every day that it stays like this forever.

"Here you go" ma hands me a plate

"You are Good sent; I have been thinking about this meal all day" she laughs

"You are going to work harder to lose weight after birth" she says and frowns

"Oh, Sibó don't remind me, my ass is already huge" I say and she smiles

"Don't worry you will get through it, just enjoy this pregnancy" I smile and takes a spoonful of my food

"Honestly I was scared when I first found out but now, I am just So in love with my baby and his father"

"How is his mother taking it" she asks and yes, I explained everything to her I mean everything

"Yaz ma I didn't see her one bit; I don't want to see her and have her look at me with those judgemental eyes"

"Just Respect her as an elder and engage with her when required, keep your distance baby but don't make it awkward for uLethabo. You don't want him feeling like he has to fight more battles this is already taking its toll on him, be his peace, not another battle he has to win" I look at her in awe Wondering where all this knowledge was hidden

"I hear you and thanks" she smiles and eats

"Hei you won't believe who came by, just to see what we have in the house and to compare to hers" I roll my eyes

"Sis'Nandi" I say and she laughs

"Uyazi yena (you know her)"

"People forget that God loves us all" I say slightly shaking my head

"Exactly Mandy, I know they are just waiting for me to mess up So I can be the talk of the Town"

"Don't give them the satisfaction" I say

"I am planning on calling that lady from the support group"

"The one Dr. Motaung said will be waiting for your call" she nods

"Yes, I think it's time, I shouldn't wait till I am tempted to take a stand. I place my food on the coffee table and go sit near her and hug her so tightly

"Thank you Sibó" I say

CHAPTER 70

•MPILO

I wonder why my mother is still insisting that we sit down around this damn table to have a meal, this is awkward, and it becomes harder to pretend with each passing day. We must just accept that things will never go back to how they used to be that's all. This Snazo girl

keeps on giving me looks and it's pretty uncomfortable considering that my woman is at this very table. Let me just make her uncomfortable too.

"Dikane" I say looking at my father and I see my mother shooting me a look

"Mgabashe" he replies

"Buli is your woman right"

"Correct" he says and holds her hand I want to roll my eyes

"And I believe that everything that has to do with her you will keep it under control right"

"Yes Mpilo"

"Can you do me a favor and keep your woman's dog on a leash, she is here for her cousin not me I don't understand why she has to walk in my room without knocking practically naked, do you think you can do that for me" I ask looking at the now embarrassed Snazo, who is looking nowhere but her plate. Khaya clears his throat

"I will fix it" he says

"I am sorry for her actions Mpilo" Buli chips in a comment

"Just keep her away from me please"

"Can someone keep her away from baba, whoring seems to be in their DNA" Bahle says and Ndlovukazi chokes on her juice

"Sbahlle Mdlalose don't you dare talk about Buli like that, grow up ntombazane because if I force you it won't be pretty. It's like all of you are forgetting that I am the man in this house, I provide. Everyone is doing as they please" he says and leans back on my chair waiting for Eminem to stop. Hilda walks in with about two dozen white roses

"We are having a family breakfast what do you want" baba roars at Hilda who stops walking instantly and I sigh

"I, uh, these were delivered for Ndlovukazi" the helper says and mama frowns

"For me, bring them please" Hilda hands her the banquet and she smells them and reads the card, a smile creeps on her face immediately.

"Excuse me everyone, and I won't be joining you for dinner" she informs us and walks away humming something. Could it be that my mom found someone? As weird as it sounds, I am going to enjoy watching my father explode. Looking at him right now it's clear that it's already killing him. He is looking at Ndlovukazi till the sound of her clicking heels fade.

"Bulelwa a word please" he says and walks away.

"Thatha Ndlovukazi" Bahle says laughing

"What just happened" I ask

"Your mother has a boyfriend and your father is breathing through the wound. We deserve our reality show, Keeping up with the Mdlaloses" we laugh and I high five her.

"Hai let me go to work" I say and wink at Afrika who just blushes and I leave.

•AFRIKA

I must admit what happened today at the breakfast table was amusing, Ndlovukazi is really frying Bab'Mdlalose, we all didn't know that she has started dating but thought roses were proof enough. I was not writing today I just came through to meet up with Brandon, he will be teaching me basic encryption, hacking, and cloning. Hopefully, I will learn fast enough to get to know what exactly Khaya Mdlalose is hiding on that laptop.

"Then you input the second code" he says and I type it

"That's easy" I say and he laughs

"Not easy at all Afrika you are just smart" I roll my eyes

"Will I ever hear the end of it"

"Nah not really, your intelligence is shocking" he says and I sigh

"Okay then let me leave you be"

"Decrypt this firewall and you will be able to get through any personal computer" he says and I start typing codes and I get through

"Yaaaaaaaaaaaaasssssss" I scream and we high five
"You are now a black hat hacker" he says and I laugh
"Too Soon fam" he laughs
"Thank you Brandon"
"It's okay we will do cloning next time; I didn't think you would be able to grasp this in a day"
"You know what they say" I say bragging and my phone rings it's Emily.
"Hey Em"
"Friend, where are you? I am around campus"
"I am at the student garden"
"Okay I am a minute away"
"Sharp"
"Afrika, I have to go to the library, Financial Mathematics is calling me" he says
"You will still join us on Friday for Economics"
"Definitely" he says and bid farewell. A minute later Emily gets to me.
"Were you studying" she asks and we hug
"Yes, I was, exams have started"
"How is that going"
"I wrote two already, Information Technology and Statistics and they went pretty well
"That's great, So about our mission"
"Where do you start"
"Maybe you could give me all the names of the people you deliver the sequences to So I can start investigate them" that won't implicate Mpilo in any way, he is not a part of the connections and clients, Mzwa is. Mpilo is just on the production side of things.
"Okay I can do that" I say writing 5 names of those I hate, I want to see what kind of investigation she is going to make first before I give her all the names
"Okay I will get to it, I am trying to work on Mzwa to give a little information on his father but it's going to take a while. You could also try fishing Something out of Mpilo or look we could try getting his black book, he has been using that thing for years now, it has to have Something incriminating" I frown
"I have never seen him with a black book"
"He only uses it in his study and locks it up, I've seen him with it a couple of times" she says, now that is what the key is for, a part of me feels like Emily knows more than she is letting on, which makes me feel like I must keep Some information to myself too
"I will look into it"
"Thanks babe, let me get going" she says and leaves. Black book huh.

•NOMALANGA

"Beautiful roses for a beautiful lady, I had So much fun yesterday, if it's no bother can I cook for you tonight" the card that came with the roses said and I haven't been able to put it down all day blushing like a school girl. I feel alive I don't even know how to contain it. I haven't been happy in years; my marriage was suffocating me and I tried to work on it but it kept on taking and taking from me. I like the judge and I want to be happy again So I will just go with the flow and live in the moment. My cell phone rings and I smile
"Hello friend" he chuckles
"Hello mkgotsi (friend)" he says and I smile
"I got the roses and I love them"
"That's a relief because I thought maybe the delivery never made it to you"
"Why would you think that though"
"Because I don't receive a call or SMS telling if you accept my invitation to cook you Some food" he says and I start spinning with my chair blushing

"I was going to let you know just now, my apologies you know how the job can be, I've been very busy" I say
"Totally understand, So?"
"I would love to come for dinner"
"Great then I will send a driver to pick you up at 7"
"Don't worry I will drive myself"
"If you insist, I will send my address" he says in a low voice
"Tell me how did you know my home address"
"I am a resourceful man Nomalanga"
"I see" I say biting my lower lip
"I hope it didn't cause any friction with Khaya"
"I am a single woman remember"
"Not for long" I raise an eyebrow after his statement
"I will see you later Thuso" I say and he chuckles
"Later beautiful" I hang up and catch my reflection on the window, if you could see the smile on my face, the butterflies in my stomach are a tad crazy, God what am I going to wear, I need to call Alex to come do my face. I laugh aloud at how excited I am

•KHAYA

I couldn't concentrate, my day has been going South. I thought fucking Buli this morning would make me feel better but I am still mad, my wife seems to have moved on and that isn't sitting well with me, I didn't anticipate this whole thing, not at all, Mike did say she was sticking to her usual schedule So when did it all change, fuck it Noma why do you have such a hold on me. I get to Mike's house and find him swimming
"You said my wife wasn't seeing anyone" I roar Soon as we are face to face
"Your ex-wife you mean"
"Don't joke around, how did you miss that Nomalanga has a boyfriend"
"I stopped tailing her the day you guys divorced"
"Are you stupid, who the fuck told you to stop" he frowns.
"Khaya I know I work for you and I don't ask questions but why the hell would you give a fuck if she is moving on or not"
"Because she is my wife"
"You seem to forget that you are divorced"
"I don't care, a piece of paper won't tell me otherwise" he laughs
"Then why the hell did you sign, why did you cheat and hurt her"
"Every man steps out of his marriage once in a while" he shakes his head
"Not when you are married to a woman like Ndlovukazi" he says and I sigh
"Mike find out who my wife is sleeping with" he laughs
"For someone who brought a pregnant woman to his house you are confused, what did you expect Ndlovukazi to do huh?"
"Don't ask me stupid questions" I say giving him a deadly look
"Hai I will get my boys to it"
"Good and let me know Soon as you know"
"This is just crazy really; you want to have your cake and eat it"
"I don't care about your opinion, Nomalanga is my wife, mother to my children, I am the first and only man who will know her in that way"
"I will do my job but know this, you are one confused man Khaya Mdlalose"
"So, I've been told"
"Ndlovukazi will not allow you to turn her into your puppet"
"We will have to wait and see won't we" I say and leave. I get to my car and bang the damn steering wheel in frustration. Yes, we are divorced but did you see how she smiled when she

got those flowers, she should be regretting ever divorcing me, wishing that we could get back together not gallivanting around giving herself to other men

•BULI

I wake up and my vagina is still burning up, Khaya fucked me for the whole morning and afternoon, I swear this has to do with his ex-wife receiving flowers and he punished me for it. I am still in his bed because I was too tired after the last round and I am happy that he is not here, he has never been this rough before. I go to his bathroom and take a quick shower and put on my dress, the bedside watch says it's 18:00 wow where did the day go. I make my way downstairs and Snazo is sitting on the couch near the mini bookshelf reading a book with champagne next to her, I sign

"Mzala" she looks up

"And she Grace's us with her presences"

"Eish it has been a long day"

"I am sure he fucked you all shades of rough, because the guy left here fuming, seems your sex game didn't calm him down" I roll my eyes

"Snazo, Khaya asked me to talk to you" she sighs

"Because of what his Son said at breakfast"

"Yes mzala, behave yourself or you are going to have to leave" she raised her eyebrow

"Wow and you are going to let him" I told my arms

"Snazo Mpilo didn't feel comfortable and you need to respect that"

"Fine Buli, but what's his deal with that Afro girl"

"What do you mean"

"Something is definitely going on between those two" I frown

"You are just imagining things, she is not his type at all, guys like Mpilo like plastic girls"

"Then why did he reject me"

"I don't know maybe because you threw yourself at him" she gives me a nasty look

"Fotsek Bulelwa" I laugh

"What do you feel like doing"

"Redecorating this house, I thought I liked the decor but now that I have been here for a while, I don't like it it's too outdated like that Ndlovukazi woman"

"Snazo don't start"

"Why that old cow is no longer his wife, why must the decor stay"

"Because this house belongs to this old cow, this old cow pays the bills around this house, the food you eat is bought by this old cow as well as the champagne you have been drinking day and night" Ndlovukazi says appearing from the corridor and I close my eyes

"Uhm I uhm, I was" Snazo mumbles, I am So embarrassed right now

"Buli" she says eyes fixed on my cousin

"Ma" I say in a low voice

"Take care of the trash" she says and ascends the stairs leaving us standing there like wet chickens. Snazo and her big mouth Jesus

"I am Sorry Mzala"

"You have a big mouth nawe" I say and shake my head slightly

CHAPTER 71

•NOMALANGA

I look at myself for the last time in the mirror and take a deep breath, I look really good no lies, but I am nervous, for what I don't know because I've already sat and had a conversation with this man, a conversation that had nothing to do with work. I take my purse and walk downstairs, I bump into my son

"You look gorgeous"

"Thank you Mpilo"

"Who is this guy"

"You will soon find out" I Pat him on his shoulder and walk away, his house is not far from our house. I get there and press the intercom bell at the gate and his voice comes through

"Thuso" his baritone voice comes through

"Uhm it's Nomalanga"

"Just on time" the gate opens and I drive-in, I walk out and when I get to the door he opens and his smile just wins me over

"Wow you look amazing" he says handing me a glass of white wine

"Thank you"

"This way please" I follow him and his place is so intimate, it's a gated community, 2 bedrooms, kitchen, open plan lounge, and dining room then a bathroom.

"I love your place"

"Thank you, I wanted something small you know, enough for only me" he says and we go to the balcony, where he set up so nicely, candles and all, I blush Lord the effort

"It looks lovely Thuso"

"I am glad you like it, come" we go to the garden couch also in the balcony and sit down

"I am just waiting for my starter to finish cooking"

"3 course meal?" I ask amused

"Yes, and I hope you love seafood because I made lobster for our main" he says and I look at him impressed

"I love sea and Mediterranean food so no worries, where did you learn how to cook" I ask and he laughs

"My mother was a boss around the kitchen and I loved helping her I eventually fell in love with food and cooking but my father wouldn't allow me to go to culinary school, he was a lawyer and he wanted me to follow in his footsteps, so I did go to law school obviously but I secretly went to culinary school with my mother paying the fees, he didn't find out until I graduated from law school, time I graduated as a chef first" he says and I laugh

"Impressive"

"Tell me more about yourself" I sip my wine and sigh

"Well I was born and bred in Mpumalanga, but my parents were originally from KZN, baba just found work in the province and he decided to start his life there. I have an older sister; she is just two years older than me and she hates my guts"

"Why would she hate you Noma, you are the sweetest thing ever"

"Let's just say there was a time I worshipped Khaya and Small, my sister, saw him for who he was straight from the beginning. She tried warning me and Khaya hated it, so started he telling me that she was trying to make passes at him but he rejected her, he had SMS's on his phone from her it's was convincing, she tried telling me that he was framing her but I chose him over my sister and to date I don't have the courage to apologize to her" I confess

"Oh Noma, you still have a chance to make things right, you are older now and you know better, reach out to her and make her forgive you, I bet she is waiting for her sister to reach out to her"

"I don't know Thuso"

"You have nothing to lose" he says and kisses my knuckles, let me go get the starter, please move to the table so long, I do as asked and he comes back with two side plates, he places it next to me, it's garlic bread smeared with guacamole and topped with shrimps

"Oh my God it looks amazing"
"I wanted to impress; I don't cook much anymore"
"Why is that" I ask while he refills my glass
"I used to cook for my ex-wife and children but now I live alone I don't see the reason to slave in the kitchen if I could just order take-out" he says
"When did you divorce"
"It's been 2 years now"
"I am sorry" I say brushing his hand
"I am not, I deserve better" he says and I nod
"I know what you mean"
"You are a beautiful woman Nomalanga" I blush looking down
"Thank you" I say chewing this delicious food
"And I believe we are old enough to know what we want, I know you just got divorced and all, but I like you Nomalanga and I want to start something with you, something serious something exclusive. I am sorry if this is sudden for you but I just don't like wasting time" he says and I am left breathless
"Uhm I huuu Thuso" I say and drink from my glass
"It's okay if you don't feel the same" he says
"No, it's not that, I didn't think you would just put it on the table so quickly"
"I like getting straight to the point, I like you, I want to have something with you and I don't see why I should waste time" I swallow
"Oh well uhm I think we can exclusively get to know each other better and work on us" I say and he stands up and comes to my side, he holds out his hand and I take it, he holds me by my waist and we are eye to eye
"You will be treated like the Queen that you are Nomalanga" his lips touch mine and they start dancing together, his touch makes me feel so good, like a woman, like an appreciated woman

•MPILO

I decided to go stay with my girlfriend in their room and soon as my mom gets home, I will go back to my room. I am watching a series on her laptop while she is studying at her desk, she is writing Financial Mathematics so she is just doing the final touch up's. I can't wait for her to finish with her exams I want to take her away, she will say she is going home for the holidays, I will stall production so that they don't need her to transport the sequences, then I will create an 'emergency' in Colombia that needs my attention, then me and my girl will get an opportunity to be alone.

"Baby what time is it" I check my phone

"It's half past 10 love"

"I am tired now"

"Did you manage to do everything"

"Yeah" she yawns

"You need to relax and not overwork yourself"

"I need a full body massage"

"I have magical hands baby" I say and she smiles

"Let's see then," she says taking off her pajamas and she is left with her underwear" I gasp for air and get a boner immediately fuck, she walks to their bathroom and comes back with some oil and lotion

"Lie down" I say and I have a feeling that I am going to regret this. She is lying on her stomach, it's taking everything in me to hold myself, to not think with my penis, but she is tired and I can do this for her. I pour the oil on her bare back and smear it all over her back with my hands, she lets out soft moans when I massage areas with tension and fuck she

turns me on, I can't help but imagine how she would moan when I lay it down on her, making love to her, fucking her out of her mind. My hands work their magic but I am affected, my breathing has spiked, I involuntarily move my hands to her ass and squeeze a couple of times, fuck I want her, I turn her around she looks at me straight in the eyes and I take her lips into mine and kiss her slowly and passionately, my hand goes to rub her tit and it fits perfectly in my hand, I am between her legs dry humping her, thank God I am in my shorts, her breathing escalates and she holds on tight to me, fuck Afrika, I bite her lower lip and she locks her legs around my waist, I continue grinding on her
"Oh Mpilo" she says after letting out a sexy moan, I press her down to the mattress wanting to feel her body on me, I hump her harder and groan in her mouth
"Ahhhhh fuck ahhhhh mmmhh" I cum in my shorts and she is still holding on to me for dear life. My breathe normalizes and I just realize what just happened
"Baby I am so sorry" I say getting off her, she sits straight then her eyes move to my penis looking at where I messed myself
"Mpilo" she says in a low voice.
"Afrika I am really sorry I wasn't supposed to allow myself get that far baby I am sorry" I say feeling so ashamed, she said she wasn't ready I shouldn't have done that.
"Mpilo" she calls out and I am already out the door. I have never been so ashamed I don't know how I am going to look at her

•KHAYA

I have been tossing and turning the whole night, so soon as the clock hit 4am I made my way down to the gym to blow some steam, and I feel much better after boxing. At around 4:45 I walk out from the gym to make some smoothie so I can go back and lift some weights. I am taking out ingredients from the fridge and I hear a car park and a second later the door opens, I go stand by the corridor where the person must pass. It's Nomalanga, she is wearing a man's tracksuit and she has her outfit from last night in her armpits and her shoes in one hand. She is tiptoeing
"You don't sleep at home now" she jumps a bit and turns then frown
"That is none of your concern"
"You are now gallivanting and sleeping around with any man, who is he Noma"
"Haibo wenja ukuthi ngi nyobisa bani aksi'yi ndaba yakho (who I sleep with is none of your business)" she says and then Burt's out laughing I am left feeling like a fool
"So, you are sleeping with someone"
"Honestly Khaya in that tiny little brain of yours which part makes you think that you can ask me about my private life"
"You stay in my house"
"This is my house Khaya, I am the legal owner of this house, I am the one the municipality sends the bill to, it's my house Khaya lethu, I can go in and out as I please I don't owe anyone an explanation I am a single woman okay I am not single anymore, but I am not your wife anymore and I don't owe you shit, get that"
"Watch your tongue"
"No Khaya you watch your tongue, I am not your child, I am not your wife, we are divorced, you have Buli, what I do shouldn't be your concern really. Focus on your girlfriend and the child she is carrying. You should stop thinking that you are my God that time has passed" she says and walks away
"Nomalanga" I say and she raises hand her and disappears, I take out my phone and call Mike who answers after forever
"Khaya" he snaps at me
"Who the fuck is Noma sleeping with"
"You it's 5am in the morning I asleep I will know if my boys have anything later on"

"I don't pay you to sleep man Mike, find out now and call me" I say and hang up. Noma is going to send me to an early grave.

•AFRIKA

I didn't know what to do with myself when Mpilo left the bedroom, my body was hot and in need of him, what he made me feel was out of this world, I have never felt such pleasure, I even peed myself and thank God he didn't realize it, I don't know why he kept on apologizing for because I never for once asked him to stop, I wanted him to continue as much as he did. Sleeping became a problem a struggle, I wanted to follow him to his room but I felt he wanted space, he seemed so embarrassed. This morning he didn't even come down for breakfast and I suspect he went to work early just to avoid me.

"2nd hour has passed you are left with only an hour" the invigilator brings me back to my thoughts and I realize I've been done for the past 3 minutes; I love math and I practiced last night so It was just like practicing. I put my things in the pencil case and go submit and sign out. Soon as I am out, I check my phone and there is nothing from Mpilo and it breaks my heart. There are WhatsApp texts from Sibho

10:00 |hi baby|

10:01 |you are writing today angisho|

10:04 |good luck|

10:07 |I love you baby|

10:30 |call me when you are done|

I chuckle and dial her number; she answers after 2nd ring.

"Baby girl"

"Hey mama, unjani (how are you)"

"I am okay, how did you write"

"Very well I just got out of the auditorium, I wrote very well"

"That's good Afrika, I am proud of you" I smile

"What are you up to" I ask

"I am doing the laundry with the washing machine" she says and giggles

"Levels" I humor her

"You will be coming home this weekend"

"Yes, I am coming ma"

"Okay I will go buy ingredients I want you to help me bake, your sister spends so much money buying biscuits everyday" I laugh

"Mandy and her cravings"

"Uyahlopha, lalela let me finish washing we will chat on WhatsApp" she says and I roll my eyes

"Okay later"

"I love you"

"I love you too Sibho"

CHAPTER 72

•AMANDA

I know my sister to be punctual So I don't know why she hasn't arrived yet; I mean I have been here for 30 minutes and I am halfway through my food already. I swear I can eat for the entire Africa, the continent not my baby sister. My mom says I am going to work extra hard to get my figure back after I give birth. I take a bite of this burger and she finally arrives

"I am sorry I am late" she says taking a seat opposite me

"Where were you"

"Campus, helping my friends with Economics"

"At least that is a good reason, I was going to have your head on the platter" I say and she laughs

"Askies sis, so how are you"

"I am okay, your nephew is making me eat all the damn time"

"And you love it don't you"

"God, I enjoy it but I will soon come to regret it"

"I guess I will get you a treadmill as a baby shower gift" I laugh

"Oh, wow Afrika"

"It's a thoughtful gift Mandy, you won't have to go to the gym and leave a baby behind, yabo" I roll my eyes

"I see you have it all figured out" she chuckles

"Hai let me just order"

"I will also have Some light" I say and she raises an eyebrow

"I give up" she shakes her head. My phone beeps from the bag and I take it out it's my mom, I sigh

"You thixo what did I do"

"What? What's wrong" Afrika says

"Yoh, Sibon and texting" she laughs

"Mandy don't even mention that, she is blowing up my phone every minute of every day"

"She just sent me a chain message to forward to 10 people, if I don't, I will have bad luck for 10 years" she laughs out loud

"When did she even get a phone with WhatsApp"

"I got here one but I regret it now as she is too much manje"

"But it's cute, I never thought she would be this person"

"That's true Nana, she is really trying and I appreciate her efforts So much, I just hope she doesn't relapse"

"Do you think she is staying away from her friends because if she mixes with them it's going to tempt her" she asks leaning in and placing her elbows on the table

"Yeah I haven't seen any of them at the house and she even locks the gate now, she doesn't want them coming around" I reply

"At least"

"Yeah she even said she wanted to start attending the support group meetings"

"That would be great, having people who know exactly what she is doing through"

"Yeah, I will encourage her"

"Thank you again for once again putting your life on hold to take care of Sibon" I smile and shake my head

"Honestly Afrika I am glad I did, having a mother who cares feels good, she is taking care of me more than I am taking care of her"

"You deserve it, to be cared for, you've done it for so long it's time you just relax and focus on yourself and your baby"

"Thank you sis wam"

Things are spiraling out of control now, people seem to think they can just play on top of my head and not suffer the consequences, I think I have been barking a lot lately it's time a bite So they can see that I am still ruthless. Mike hasn't gotten back to me about who Nomalanga is dating and I know he is doing this on purpose, trying to get his point across, I don't understand why he thinks his opinion matters in my life, he just has to do his job and ask no questions. I am busy signing documents at the office, I hate this job but I need a legal business to clean money and that my wealth to not be questioned. My office door opens and my PA walks in

"Sir" see why I say people don't respect me anymore, why would she just burg in my office without knocking

"I didn't say come in, where are your manners" I say and she swallows

"I am Sorry Mr. Mdlalose"

"Show Some respect" she walks out and I shake my head. She knocks

"Yes, come in" I shout enough So she can hear me

"Mr. Mdlalose" she says

"How can I help you"

"I have a Mike here to see you but he doesn't have an appointment, I tried getting rid of him but he insists that you will want to see him"

"Show him in"

"Yes sir" she says and walks out. I go stand next to the door, soon as he walks in, I take his hand hold it behind him

"Fuck Khaya what are you doing" he screams like a little bitch

"You have started to grow wings Mike and it's time I cut them off"

"What did I do" I stretch it So he can feel excruciating pains, he groans

"I gave you an assignment but you took your precious time getting back to me, you think we are friends because we walk in the same circles now boy"

"I didn't have anything then Khaya I couldn't just show up"

"Bull shit" I say twist his arm breaking it, he screams and I let go of his arm he bends over taking in the pain. I take the file he had with him and go sit in my chair, and go through the pictures. She is with a man, not the kind I had expected though, this one looks like a man with power and respect.

"Who is he, I think I've seen him before"

"That's Judge Thuso Moroka" he says and I clench my jaws

"She is fucking a stuck-up Judge, Nomalanga!" I say and throw the pictures across the room

"I want everything on that man, get me all the dirt you can find on him, everything Mike and make it snappy" I say but he has him eyes trying to take in the pain calmly

"Did you hear me Mike or do I have to break another arm" I bang the table

"I heard you Yoh," he says standing up and Soon as he's out I Google this judge, imagine from a rich man like myself to a state employee mxm

•LETHABO

I decided to bring a few scripts home with me to mark, this is one part of my job I hate but it has to be done I don't have a choice. Things between my mom and I haven't been okay, she still hasn't taken her time to sit down with me to at least ask how I am since Dineo violated me, I don't know if she doesn't care or she is ashamed to talk about it knowing that she had that kind of access to me because she let her in. I am going to be a father So and I want all this negative energy to just be gone by then. I am not bringing my Son to this toxicity. The door opens and Mandy walks in

"Oh, what a lovely surprise" she smiles

"Sorry I didn't call" she says

"No need to call babe, you can just drop by anytime you want, you know this" she smiles and comes to sit on top of me. Her baby bump is big now and her face is full but she looks So cute, my sexy teddy bear

"I missed you" she says kissing me and I laugh

"You came by because you wanted sex Ama" I say and she laughs and hides her face on my neck

"Yes, but I also missed seeing you and being with you" I smile

"That's cute baby, I missed you too sthandwa Sami" I say

"Now can you do me, I am going out of my mind" I smirk and help her off me while kissing her. We stand up and her arms are snaking around my neck, I have my hands on her ass. I am leading her to bed, turned on already

"Lethabo" my mom shouts my name and I continue kissing my woman, she will go away. I lay Ama on the bed and I was about to get next to her when the door opens.

"Mama I have a visitor" I say

"Oh, I am Sorry, I just wanted to greet Amanda" she justifies and Ama sits upright at least we were not in a compromising position, I wasn't on top of her or beside her, she was on the bed and I was still standing

"Oh, dumela mme wa Lethabo" my girlfriend greets her

"Hello Amanda how is everything going"

"Everything is going very well. Boy is growing up" she brushes her belly

"That's good to know, I am sure you can't wait to give birth" I look at Ama

"I actually enjoy being pregnant but yes I can't wait to see him"

"Okay ausi I just wanted to find out if you are doing well"

"Thank you"

"I will be in the house, Lethabo I baked Some biscuits come get Some for Amanda"

"Now you speaking her language, she is obsessed with cookies" I say and she smacks me playfully

"I was obsessed with pumpkin So I understand Amanda"

"Thank you ma" she says and sticks out her tongue to me

"I will come get them mama" I say and she nods walking out. I go lock the door

"Now where were we" I say and she giggles

"You were about to give it to me daddy" she says and I close my eyes instantly

•NOMALANGA

I want to tell you a secret and promise you won't judge me, God this just feels So good. I am doing things that I wouldn't have normally done but they Are fulfilling to me and I am happy. Well I slept over at Thuso's place, you obviously know this and I let that man have me like a Sunday lunch and it felt So good, Khaya was the only man I knew sexually and I couldn't compare him to anyone, yes I would comment on his size and performance once in a while just to bruise his ego, but wow Thuso exceeded my expectations, it was nothing mediocre, I swear I have never been that wild, the 25 years old me was out to play and I loved every minute of it. Thuso makes me feel young, sexy and mostly alive. I have missed this thrill in my life. I take Some documents to go print. The door closes behind me

"Motho waka (my person)" the baritone voice says and I smile before I turn back

"Hey" I say and he comes and kisses me and I kiss him back until I remember where we are

"Stop" I say and look down

"You don't like my kisses this late afternoon"

"I like your kisses more than you can ever know" he smiles

"And I guess you will be coming over tonight" he asks

"I would love to but not tonight please"

"Make it up to me"

"By doing what"

"Spending the weekend with me" he says and I laugh

"You promise to cook the whole weekend"

"I will even let you tell me which meals to cook, we will have a one-man cooking marathon"

"Temping"

"And I promise to make you feel good like I did the other night" he says and I hide my face

"Down boy, this is our workplace, we can't be seen around flirting and all you know the rules" I say and he nods

"I know Noma, I want to talk about the conflict of interest" I sigh

"Yes, we should" he pecks my lips

"I will call you later" he walks out and I go back to making copies.

•MPILO

I have been leaving early in the morning and coming back late at night, I don't know how to face Afrika, I honestly feel like I violated her, she made it clear that she wasn't ready for sex and I pleased myself with her without her concern, I have been a jerk and man whore for most of my life, I sexualized women so much I even believed that that's all they were good for back then and being who I am now I hate myself for being that kind of man, I know better now I have the utmost respect for them. I just couldn't be the old Mpilo, I might not show it but I am fighting demons so I don't go back to my old ways. I love this girl and I respect her so much the last thing I want to do is hurt her. The house is dark everyone is asleep. I take my plate of food in the oven and walk to my bedroom. I open and she is on the bed I freeze instantly, she removes her headsets

"Mpilo" she says and I sigh

"Baby"

"What is going on with you, why are you avoiding me like this, did I do something wrong maybe" I place my food on the chest of drawers and sit on the edge of the bed

"You didn't do anything wrong baby, I did, I am Sorry"

"What is it that you are Sorry for I am confused" she says and I look at her confused

"Wait Afrika, you are not mad at me?"

"Mpilo why would I be mad; I am just hurt by the way you have been ignoring me"

"Babe what happened the other night, I shouldn't have done that to you, you did say you are not ready to be intimate but I just pleased myself with you"

"I would have stopped you if I felt uncomfortable Mpilo did you think about that" I swallow

"I, uhm I guess" I Mumble

"I enjoyed what happened that night, I have never felt that way before, the pleasure I felt was out of this world, I didn't want you to stop" she says and I look at her

"Are you serious?"

"Yes, I enjoyed it Mpilo, I think I am ready for sex" she says looking down and I remove my shoes and go kneel in front of her and kiss her

"I would kill to bury myself inside you right now, to feel every part of your body, to make you exist in other world but I don't want you to THINK that you are ready I want you to be SURE because once I take your pride you won't get it back. Be sure first and then give yourself to me because I am ready and willing to give myself to you babe"

"Okay"

"I love you Afrika and I am Sorry for avoiding you" she smiles

"I understand why you did babe and I love you too" she gives me a hug and I feel like much better

"I promise to communicate better"

"I would appreciate it"

CHAPTER 73

•KHAYA

It seems like I had to break his arm So he could do his job, he called me to say he is coming to see me about the task I gave him, I can wait to show Ndlovukazi the dirt her So called man has, if she thought she was going to date a judge hoping he had a clean past, a better past than mine then she has another thing coming. I will block each and every relationship she has until she gets over the idea of thinking she can live without me. My office door was open. He walks in and closes the door; his arm is in a sling.

"How is your arm"

"Don't act like you care" I laugh

"You going to hold a grudge against me"

"I am not a pussy Mdlalose, you said we are not friends, So I don't see why we should make small talk"

"Okay fair enough, what do you have for me"

"Well he has a past like anyone else but it's nothing you can use against him, he is super clean not even a parking ticket, he doesn't accept bribes he is clean" I feel myself boil

"That's impossible"

"I dug deeper than I needed to but he is a principled man, ethical Khaya the is nothing on that man, nothing"

"Let me see that" he hands me the file and I go through it. Reading every sentence just makes my blood boil, he has nothing on him at all, how could this be possible not even a hearing, all the lawyers that have been in his court room sing his praises. Fuck this is going to make everything hard. It's a Friday and my mood is already going down south.

"Are you sure Mike"

"You know very well that I can do my job very well, you wouldn't have hired me for every job you had if I didn't know what I was doing"

"No person is this perfect"

"I didn't say he was perfect I just said he doesn't have a dirty past, he made mistake any human could possibly make"

"Mistakes not enough to make Nomalanga leave him" I sigh, his phone vibrates and he looks at it

"Oh, well seems like your ancestors are with you, one of my boys just sent me that picture, It was taken a few minutes ago, but we can't be too sure, I forwarded the picture to you" I quickly take my phone and look at the picture and thank God it's clear enough.

"I knew it no man is that perfect" I chuckle and forward the picture to Noma with her caption

Who is the side piece between you and that young yummy lady and include laughing emojis

"We done right"

"Yes, thanks Mike"

"Here is my invoice" he places it on the table

"I will deposit it before I knock off"

"And I am done tailing Ndlovukazi" he says and walks out. Mxm this one is taking this way too personal.

•NOMALANGA

This morning I packed my weekender and took it with me to work. I will be spending the entire weekend with Thuso, I will drive to work on Monday from his house. I am really excited to spending time with him and getting to know him better and of course for the other reason. I have never met a man who knows what he wants and isn't afraid to make it known. I press the intercom at the gate and he opens without asking who I was. I park at his spot since his car is in the garage. I open the door to get out but my phone beeps, I take it out and it's Khaya, I can't help but roll my eyes heavenwards.

*Who is the side piece between you and that young yummy lady [laughing emoji] *

I look at the picture and my heart almost stops, it's Thuso with some girl, she was here at his house I recognize because this is the same exact spot I am parked at. They are holding hands and huge smiles plastered across their faces I should have known that he was too good to be true, how could I have been this stupid. I get out of my car and go to the house fuming; I walk in and he is standing in the kitchen

"I was wondering if I opened for the wrong person" he says with a smile

"How dare you Thuso" I say and he frowns

"What's wrong babe"

"Don't babe me, how long were you going to keep this up"

"Just calm down and tell me what you are talking about because I am shocked" I chuckle

"You know exactly what you have been doing This don't act stupid with me"

"Okay I am losing my patience now, it's either you tell me what you think I did or you go sleep and calm down then we will talk"

"I am not a child and I am not your fool" I throw the phone on the counter and he takes it and looks at the picture

"Oh, this is why you are shouting" he says and I go crazy when he takes his wine glass and go sit comfortable on the couch

"That's all you have to say to me, after making me fall in love with you, you play me for a fool with a girl young enough to be my daughter, how dare you do this to me, you sold me dreams and I fell for I can't believe that I let you play me like" I am screaming at him but he is So calm it's making me more angry, I stop talking and fold my arms

"Are you done being crazy, can I talk now" he says and sips his wine then stands up and comes to me, he gently pushes me to the wall while looking at me intensely, I swallow but keep straight face

"First of all, I don't play games and I am not the one making you a fool, your ex-husband is, you decided to take the photo he sent you and fight with me. I am glad to hear that you are in love with me because I am too, and I don't appreciate you screaming at me and I am going to punish you for that in bed since I don't believe in hitting a woman.

Nomalanga you will never do this again, you have a problem with me or what I did you come to me and we sit down and talk about it like adults and let this be the last time you believe people first without talking to me, I am a man who knows what he wants and that means I won't play games with you and any other woman, I chose you for a reason" he says and I am feeling Some type of way, this man is breath-taking

"What about that girl"

"I am still talking, aren't I?" He says in a low voice, I want to kiss him

"You are"

"That girl in the picture is my daughter Didintle, she normally comes by to check on me when she is around the neighborhood" he says and I feel like a fool, damn you Khaya, I am So embarrassed right now God

"Thuso, I am Sorry" I am looking down

"Look at me" I shoot my eyes up to his

"Don't help your ex to play these silly games, I am not playing you and I don't plan to"

"I am Sorry" he kisses me

"It's okay, give me your keys So I can get your bags in the car. Go take a shower and when you done go to our bed I am coming; I think I should just punish you and get it over with" he says in a stern voice sending shivers down my spine

"I am Sorry" I say handing him my keys and he walks out while I make my way to the bathroom

•AFRIKA

The driver just dropped me off at the house and I asked him to be available to take me home, I was planning to go tomorrow but Sibho texted me earlier to remind me that I should come and help her bake for Amanda, I didn't want to disappoint her. She is So excited she even sent me pictures of the ingredients. I love how lively she has become; she is a better mother than I thought she would be and glory to God for that. I open our room and live the door open. I walk to the closet and come back with my bag and Some clothes, I am busy folding the clothes and parking

"I always wished to see how this room looks" a voice says and I quickly look at the door it's that Snazo girl

"Can I help you with Something"

"Not really, I just wanted to see this room and I saw the door open and I saw an opportunity"

"It's just like another room"

"Nope I don't agree, this one is bigger and more elegant than the one I share with my cousin"

"That's because it used to be a boy's room hence the decor and stuff"

"Okay, so your name is Afrika right" I sigh

"Yep that is me"

"Weird name but okay. So how are you related to the Mdlaloses"

"I am not related to them" she frowns

"Then why are you staying here, don't you have a family" she asks

"I have a family; I am parking to go home now"
"If you do why are you staying here" she insists
"That's not your concern Snazo"
"Mmm, so you and Mpilo huh" I mentally roll my eyes
"What about us"
"You two like a thing"
"What do you mean a thing?"
"Are you two like fucking" I laugh
"No, we are not" I answer and it's not like I am lying
"I kind of sensed a vibe between you too"
"There is no vibe" I say going to the bathroom to get my toiletry bag
"I kind of like him" she confesses looking at me intensely to probably look if I would react anyway, I shrug my shoulders like I don't give a shit but deep down I know I want to explode.
"He has a girlfriend So his mom says"
"Have you seen her" she asks
"Nah I haven't hey"
"Who cares if he does, I am going to shoot my shot" I laugh
"He has already told you to leave him alone"
"He will be glad I didn't when we celebrate our 1st anniversary in Paris" she says and I laugh
"Ambitious much"
"Just wait and see"
"Good luck" I say and zip bag, then change my hand bag, while she is eyeing me, for what exactly I don't know.

•MPILO

I am bursting Some Travis Scott in my office; I even went out to get Some beer and my cooler box is full. Since my girlfriend is going home, I will just spend my weekend here and get Some work done. Maybe tomorrow night I can hit the club with my boys, it's been a minute since I turned up really good. My phone rings and it's FaceTime from Marianna, we haven't really spoke in a while, she tried calling me a few times and I ignored her then send her a text, but let me just answer her today maybe it's business. I answer it and she appears on my screen

"And he finally answers my calls" I laugh

"I am Sorry I have been busy"

"Oh, wow Life"

"How have you been"

"I have been great hey, what about you"

"All good can't complain"

"When will you Grace us with your presence, Colombia is calling you" I smile

"I will arrange a trip Soon, every okay at the lab"

"Everything is running smoothly, under control"

"I am happy to hear that" I say and my gather and his Son walk in and I sigh

"Marianna I will call you later okay"

"You dismissing me now"

"I would never, some people just walked in my office" she smiles and nods then I end the call and stare at the

"Mpilo" baba says

"Can I help you with anything"

"Life come on" Mzwa adds

"Do you need anything gentleman"

"Okay you have taken the this far enough Mpilo when are you planning on letting go" baba asks

"Dikane I chose to stop regarding you and your Son as my family. You proved that you care more about money than my happiness"

"There are a lot of women in this world, you will fall in love again"

"I wanted Afrika Dikane not another girl. You got me to back off her and you managed to ensure that she works for you until you say so. I am putting the job first as you wished So what is it that you want from me again"

"I just want my brother back"

"I don't have a brother he died; I suggest you get over yours too"

"Mpilo please stop this, I don't want the tension anymore, we were So close I miss that"

"I don't baba, I am done with the both of you, I am your employee not your Son, after all it is the money you want more than anything right"

"Don't talk like that"

"I might just move to Colombia permanently, the girl I loved is business to the both of you So why am I staying" he sighs

"You have a family here" I laugh

"I don't think So, stop trying to make things work between us, we are all done, until you allow me to have the only woman I ever wanted and cut her off from this business I want nothing to do with you both"

"Mpilo you can't have Afrika, she is business" my father says

"I will keep away from her Mgabashe like I have been doing and I will also keep away from the both of you"

"Mpilo"

"Leave him be Mzwakhe, let's go he will come around"

"Don't bet your money on it" I say and increase the volume and Travis Scott continues to play.

CHAPTER 74

18 SN

•NOMALANGA

I got out of the shower and lotion quickly. I hate how I handled this whole situation. I should have known how Khaya operates but I guess my ex fucked me up in the head that I believed for a minute that every man will cheat, I am used to hostility and I admit I should have acted better, Thuso is nothing like Khaya and I need to know this. I walk in the bedroom and my bag is in there but he isn't, I have never had a man calmly put me in my place like this, he didn't have to use violence or insults to make me hear him. I feel his hands on me and I close my eyes

"What I am about to do to you is not cruelty, I want to remind you that I am your man and when you have Something bothering you, you sit me down and talk to me like an adult" he says and kissing my neck, I am already damp down there.

"I love you Nomalanga and stop thinking that all men are like the boy you were married to"

"I love you too" I say and he turns me around and I realize he is completely naked; my clitoris starts to pulsate. He kisses me Softly and passionately while his hand Softly massages my breast, I let a moan escape in his mouth and pulls me closer to him, this kiss is sensual I don't think I even want him to foreplay me, I just want to feel him deep inside me. He lays me down on the bed and gets on top of me, I have my legs wrapped around his waist and his erection is already pocking me, I move my hand to it to direct it inside of me but pulls away signalling me to stop what I wanted to do. My body wants him and he is taking his sweet time kissing my earlobe, sending shivers all over my body, I think at this point I qualify to be a part of the wetlands because I feel my arousal dripping down my thighs, his mouth moves from my ear to my nipple and he sucks on it for dear life, his hands move up and down my body sensually massaging every part, his scent was just intoxicating me it's safe to say I am existing in my own world right now. His hand moves to my wet shaft and he inserts a finger before he starts to hiss as he realizes how wet I am. My breathing starts to escalate as he starts to move the finger, he inserts a second one and I can't help but arch my back. I am lost in this pleasure when he stops and puts his hands under my thighs like he is jerking me, he moves me to the corner of the bed, I am trapped between him, the headboard and the pedestal, he makes sure that I am laying comfortable on my back, my intimate area is So exposed he is seeing all of it between my legs as he has my legs spread out and balancing on his strong built arms, he comes to kiss me on the lips and I join him and rub my hands all over his back, without any warning, he enters me roughly and I stop breathing in order to get used to his size filling up my shaft. I open my eyes and he has his eyes closed biting his lower lip and to say that sight of him didn't turn me on would be a complete lie. He starts to move slowly and carefully, preparing me for pleasure I never knew existed, he thrusts in and out of me while I moan to his skill, out of nowhere he starts pumping into me So fast I don't know how to feel, I am conflicted between how nice it feels and the pain, it's bitter sweet. He goes on without slacking and I can't help but hold on to the sheets, he shows no mercy to me, a part of me wants him to stop and another part wants him to continue, I don't know if I am moaning or crying at this point. I try to move but I am trapped.

"Oh, Thuso please" I cry

"Who is your man Nomalanga" he says breathing heavily while I moan from this pleasurable pain

"You are Thuso, you are my man"

"You will not scream at me like that again, do you understand me" he says and I think his thrusts are going to be the death of me
"Never again I promise please" I cry
"Good, the only third force allowed in this relationship is God, do you understand me" he says and I nod trying to open my eyes, he increases the pace and I cry out loud more
"Oh, ahhhhh please"
"Please what, do you want me to stop" he says as I feel his penis hitting deeper and deeper
"No, no, yes, Oh, yes baby Ohhhhhh" I shake my head and nod
"Should I stop, yes or No" he asks again as he starts to go slower, I feel something build up from my abdomen and I let out a moan louder
"Oh, baby" I say and he moves in slower and slower
"Thuso don't stop please" I beg but he tightens his hold and stiffens his body
"Mmhhhhhh" he groans and collapses on top of me breathing heavy
"You can't be done; I was about to get my orgasm" I complain and he laughs
"This was your punishment Nomalanga you don't get to have an orgasm" he says and I instantly want to cry
"You can't do that to me" I say in his ear
"I can love. This is how I am going to punish you; I am going to give it to you this way and then deny you an orgasm" he says moving next to me and adjusting me to place my head on his chest and kiss my forehead
"That's cruelty"
"It will make you act right"
"So, you just going to leave me hot and bothered"
"I would leave you like this till tomorrow but love you too much I will give you your orgasm later, you just need to take this like a big girl for a few hours" he says
"Wow" he chuckles
"Why would I reward you when you are being punished, there is no pleasure in being punished"
"I am not getting on your bad side again"
"We will see, but you don't strike me as a woman who can stay out of trouble" we both laugh
"You are the best in bed, I didn't think I would enjoy sex this much at my age" I confess
"We are young at heart, age doesn't mean we should have mediocre sex, I mean look at your body, sexy as hell and woman you are as tight as they come, I fit perfectly in there" he says and I giggle hiding my face
"Come let's get you cleaned up; I will make love to you when we done eating" I smile
"I love you Thuso"
"I love you too Sunny" we kiss

•AFRIKA

I made sure to lock our bedroom before leaving, Ndlovukazi has expensive clothes and jewellery in that room and Snazo is not someone to be trusted it's clear she likes snooping around and who knows if she has a long hand too. Ndlovukazi did say she isn't coming back for the weekend so I took the key with me. The driver drops me off at the house and like my sister told me, the gate is locked. I text Sibho to open for me and like always she is online. A minute later she appears from the back, I am glad to announce that she has started gaining weight. She has on one Amanda's weave and it suits her, the girl is even wearing jeans
"Hi babes" she says opening the gate
"Sibho, you look beautiful"
"Amanda gave me this hair and a lot of her clothes, angisho they no longer fit her" she says as I walk in and wait for her to lock again

"The jeans look good on you"
"Thank you babes, but ishwapha sam sona (but my flat ass)" I laugh
"Awunaso i'shwapha Sibho (you don't have a flat ass)" I say
"Hai Afrika you are blind" she says taking my bad and we walk in the house. Amanda is on the couch
"Aow sis want (my sister) you are So big manje"
"Oh, yes please remind me Afrika" she says and I laugh
"I am Sorry man, just kidding"
"No, you are right I am a what now"
"You will Soon give birth babes stop worrying" ma says from the kitchen and I roll my eyes
"Who taught Sibho to say babes" Mandy laughs
"She learns something new and I trust me she strangles you with it" she says and I laugh
"It's nice to be her"
"She is a whole mood awazi wena (you don't know)" Mandy adds and comes back with juice on a tray and Some snacks
"Hai Afrika we will bake tomorrow, this movie is nice I want to see how it ends"
"It's okay mama" I say and sip on my drink
"I would join you guys but my boyfie is going to fetch me first thing in the morning, we have to go buy more things for the baby"
"This is your last trip Amanda, no more gallivanting you will give birth in the street"
"Aow ma, I am 3 weeks away from giving birth"
"Take it from me babes that child can come at any moment, stop being a tourist and stay home, no going to sleep after this weekend" Mandy frowns
"I will tell Lethabo then" she says in a low voice"
"Good, he can come by as much as he wants to see you"
"In fact, you will explain to him need".
"No problem, and Afrika remind me to go to the hardware store to get the house and gate keys cut for you"
"I would appreciate that"
"Ai today I am not cooking, Mandy I am taking R100 from that money to go buy Some bread and chips, I will fry Some Russians"
"Mama that is your money, buy yourself anything you need and anything we might need in the house"
"Thank you sisi" I smile at the warmth that exists in this house
"And please come with Atchaar" Mandy quickly adds
"Okay, babes let's go to the shops" she says asking me. I gulp down my juice and go to the kitchen to take a container and plastic. We walk out and go to the shops, we pass by the place she used to drink at and she doesn't even look its direction, I am So proud of my mom really.

•MZWAKHE

I was hoping that things with us and Mpilo could be fixed but he is really serious and I know my brother he will not change his mind until we give him what he wants, I am tired of the fights and tensions, I miss my friend and brother, there is a lot I need to vent out and he is the only one who can advise me without judgements. We finally arrive at the Mdlalose home and we both get out of the car. We get in the house and baba pours two glasses of scotch and hands one to me.

"I haven't seen mama in a while, do you think she is around"
"She is definitely around, probably in her bedroom sulking and crying"
"Ndlovukazi isn't the crying type" he laughs

"Oh, trust me tonight she is, finding out that her boyfriend has been cheating on her will get her crying" I frown
"Ndlovukazi has a boyfriend" I am shocked
"She thought she did but I took care of that quick" he says and sips on his drink
"You know the guy?"
"Yeah Some judge she works with"
"Hai okay, how is your baby mama"
"She lives in a mansion; she eats what she wants and goes shopping when she feels like it So she should be fine" he says and I laugh
"Ai baba wena" I say shaking my head
"I don't have time to be babying Bulelwa, I Mpilo on my case" I sigh
"Maybe we should just give him what he wants, I could pick another student"
"Never, it's Afrika and no one else, until I say So Mzwakhe. Your brother should stop acting like a spoilt brat"
"You know Mpilo he is stubborn, he won't forgive us" he shakes his head
"I don't need or want his forgiveness I want his submission" he says
"Baba please we can replace Afrika but not Mpilo, let's give him this, he has never asked for much, Grant him this one thing" I beg
"No, he is not getting that girl" he shouts and I raise my hands in defeat
"Okay, okay Dikane"
"I don't want to talk about this again"
"It's closed, let me go check on ma" I say

•LETHABO

My uncle brought the letter he wrote for me to send it to Amanda's mother, I explained that I want my child to come in this world and call my surname and Ama is due really Soon, we have to get this negotiation under way before our boy arrives. I am super excited about all the positive things happening in my life. Mandy doesn't know I will be sending the letter; we haven't had the marriage conversation in a while she probably thinks I am not interested anymore. I change into Something comfortable and prepare to play Some FIFA. a knock comes through and I go open, it's my mom with a plate of food
"Hey papa"
"O'lady"
"I brought your food" she hands me the plate
"Thank you ma"
"Can I come in a bit" I move aside to make space for her
"Yeah sure" she walks in and goes to sit on the couch, I sit on the ottoman and look at her
"Lethabo it has always been the two of us and as a mother I just wanted the very best for you. I had a certain type of life planned out for you"
"But ma you can't do that, plan a life for me"
"I know that Son and I am sorry"
"You have become Someone I can't recognize mama and I hate the tension between us"
"I hate it too; I miss my son"
"I miss you too O'lady but you need to let me make my own choices and respect them even if you don't always agree with them"
"I will try papa"
"Don't try ma, just do it, respect that I am with Amanda and that she is carrying my Son"
"I will I swear" she says
"I am sending a letter to her mom tomorrow; I am marrying her mama" she swallows and nods
"Congratulations Son" she says in a low voice

"I want you to be a part of my wedding, a part of my Son's life, but in order to do that you will have to come into terms with the fact that Amanda will be a part of my life forever and know past that her past isn't going to change"

"I understand Lethabo"

"Thanks"

"And I want to sincerely apologise for bringing Dineo into our lives, I am Sorry for what she did to you in your own home"

"I appreciate that ma" I say and she smiles

"So, when is my grandson due" I smile

"Less than a month"

"I should start preparing for his arrival" I laugh

"I can't wait to meet him" I confess, talking about my boy brings me So much joy.

"You will be a great father"

"All thanks to you, you raised me well" she smiles with tears shining in her eyes

CHAPTER 75

•AMANDA

Lethabo never lets me do anything, he doesn't understand that I am pregnant not handicapped, he won't let me even pour juice for myself. The only thing I am allowed to do myself is shower and put on my clothes, I enjoy the spoils most times though, my Son and I are really blessed to have this in our lives, they don't make them like Lethabo anymore. Yesterday we went to the mall to buy more things for the baby, we didn't really get him enough warm things and obviously he is a winter baby. We also got him a car seat and other baby accessories. I couldn't really look at the clothes yesterday because I was dog tired. He has been in the house for a while so I will just lose myself in all that cuteness. I get the plastic from his closet and go sit on the bed and the first item I find in the plastic is a fluffy powder blue baby grow, it looks So cute and tiny I can't believe my little man will be wearing this Soon and here with us. I get so emotional I can't hold on to my tears. Lethabo walks in with a tray of food and Soon as he sees my tears, he places it on the coffee table and rush to me

"Baby, is everything okay, is the baby okay"

"We are okay" I say and he wipes my tears

"Then why are you crying love"

"I am just So emotional, I can't believe that I have been carrying this life inside of me and that he will be with us Soon" he smiles

"It's magical, feels surreal most time"

"Like how did God chose and entrust me with such a great job"

"Because he saw your heart Ama, he saw how fierce you are when it comes to those you love, God saw that you are his Soldier"

"I am So thankful for this, I mean not every woman gets to experience the joys of carrying a life inside of you, it's not all rosy but I wouldn't trade for anything"

"I am So blessed to have met you Amanda Mbatha, thank you for choosing me, for giving me this beautiful gift of fatherhood"

"We are blessed to have you babe; you have made this pregnancy easy and fun and I really appreciate you and all the efforts and sacrifices you make for me to be happy"

"I love you" he pecks my lips
"I love you So much"
"Can I feed you now" I smile
"Please we are hungry" I say brushing my belly
"Good thing because ma cooked you Some seven colours" I smile
"Bring it here let's murder it" he chuckles
"You want to eat on the bed"
"No babe, my bedding is white, imagine if you spill beetroot on top of it" he laughs
"Let me help you up then"
"Are you trying to say I am big"
"I am just trying to be a gentlemen" I smile
"You always are my gentlemen baby" he bows
dramatically I can't help but face in love with him more and more

•NOMALANGA

Sunday's are the laziest days, and I believe it should be legally deemed necessary to spend them with your partner locked in doors, in limited clothing while stuffing your faces with good meals in front of the television. To say I had a good weekend would be an understatement really, this man here has proven that not all men are the same, he is simply amazing and he definitely knows how to make me feel a Queen. I don't remember the last time a man appreciated me this much. We haven't been together for long but I know he is going to lead me So well that I will submit naturally without him making me now down to me. I am happy to have this second chance at love with a man like this one next to me.

"Oh, I hate Sundays" he says taking a deep sigh
"You and I both" I say biting on my tacos
"Sunny" I love my new name
"Mmhhh" I say chewing
"Enjoying that huh"
"You have no idea; I think being with you is going to get me fat" he laughs
"Don't worry I will make you fat and help lose it"
"You want to work out together"
"We already are baby, in the bedroom" he says with a smirk I can't help but laugh out loud
"Oh, my God, you are naughty, I would have never thought about this side of you when you are sitting in court looking all serious and scary"
"When I am in court, I am Judge Moroka, but when I am with you at home, naked. I am just Thuso an ordinary guy chilling with his woman"
"I see"
"Speaking of work"
"Yes" I say sitting to face him
"I suggest we become transparent about our relationship with the office, So that we don't get anyone accusing us of things like me favoring your cases because of our relationship, So we make it know to them So they don't assign your cases to me to avoid being labelled biased against the other side" I nod vigorously
"I totally agree with you"
"I am glad to hear that, so we will get on with it tomorrow"
"The Sooner there better" I say and he leans in for a peck

•AFRIKA

My mother is a whole entire vibe, Sibho is hilarious I kid you not. The thought of having to go back hurts a bit, but I don't have a choice I can't have Bab'Mdlalose coming after my family especially now that my nephew is almost born. I miss Mpilo anyway.

Yesterday we baked the whole day and she even filled a Tupperware for me to give to Mpilo to give it to his mom, well Sibho I practically live with them. We are chilling watching Some TV and thank God it's not Africa Magic. There is an annoying Sound outside the house.

"What is that Sound" ma ask

"It's annoying need"

"I can't even focus" she says

"Let me lower the volume" I do So and it's near us, my mother clicks her tongue and goes to peep through the window

"Haibo it's Someone at the gate Afrika" she says and comes to put on her morning slippers, then head out the door to see who the person. I remain under the flee blanket drinking my coffee with Some cookies, it's winter now So it's a bit chilly than usual today. She comes back after a minute or two with a brown envelope

"Who delivers letters on a Sunday"

"And that man couldn't even tell me where this letter is coming from, he just asks me to have a look at it and respond to the address inside"

"That's weird" I say and she already opening the envelope. She reads through and I am curious as to what it's written there.

"Who is it hle" I ask and I see tears shining in her hears and her lips curve to form a smile

"Mama what's going on"

"Oh, Afrika, I am So emotional. This is good news"

"Tell me" I am impatient now

"It's a letter from Lethabo's family, they are asking to come here in 2 weeks to pay for Lobola for Amanda" my hands move to my mouth

"Oh, my God mama"

"This is great news, that boy wants to make an honest woman out of my first baby, I couldn't be any grateful to God for giving me an opportunity to Sober up to be a part of this beautiful life with my children. Afrika it's hard trying to stay away from alcohol but the thought of losing you and Amanda again after I have felt how good it is to have a relationship with the both of you gives me all the strength to fight of the urge off and keep away from alcohol. I am happy Afrika I have you and your sister I am happy. Yoh, Nkosi yam (Oh, my God)" she lets out a piercing cry, I quickly walk to her and hug her

"Askies Sibho" that's all I manage to say

"I am happy Afrika, So Happy" I hug her and let her take in the moment. Oh, Mandy you are blessed, does she even know the letter is here

•KHAYA

I couldn't be any happy with how Nomalanga is taking this, she hasn't come down from her room the whole weekend, but I think she secretly comes down at night to stock up on food, I understand that she wouldn't want to bump into me So I can rub it in her face but I promise I won't, but she has to know that she will never get another like me. Yes, I cheated here and there but those girls meant nothing to me, even Bulelwa, if I wasn't for my baby she wouldn't even be here. She is just a means to an end, an end that will see

me and my wife remarrying and my children getting along again, but first I need to get my fantasies out of my system before I pledge myself to Ndlovukazi once again.

"Khaya" she says walking in my bedroom

"Bulelwa" I say

"I need to talk to you about Something before we go down for supper"

"I am listening"

"I am sure you can see that your child is growing now" I sigh and look at her bump, year true it's there now

"Your point"

"I need new clothes, maternity clothes"

"How much will you need for that"

"I don't want to buy them at these stores, I wanted to tailor make everything so I can be able to alter them after giving birth and continue to wear them, it would save money"

"Buli how much" I ask annoyed

"Let me go to the designer to design a whole new wardrobe for me then we will add everything up. I will bring you the invoice"

"Sorted then" I say getting of my bed and closing my computer.

"Let's go eat Bulelwa" I say leading her out. We walk out and Sbahle is approaching, she rolls her eyes, obviously because Bulelwa is coming out of my bedroom.

"Bahle"

"Baba" she says Sounding annoyed

"You are supposed to be at the dinner table"

"I won't be joining; I ate where I come from"

"Sbahle you know we eat dinner as a family"

"What family are you talking about"

"Watch your mouth young lady"

"May I be excused" I laugh

"5 minutes to be at the dinner table or I will come to your room to drag you by the hair" I say and she walks away.

CHAPTER 76

•KHAYA

We are all gathered around the dinner table except for Nomalanga, she has been closed up in her room for 3 days now, I am actually starting to feel bad, maybe I should go and knock on her door and have a civil conversation with her. You know slowly pave a way for her to ease up to me again. Show her that I will forever be the only man for her and that is a truth she has to be reminded of.

"Can you please pass me the pepper" Buli's cousin asks looking at the Bahle since the pepper is near her. "When are you leaving again?" my daughter decides to take this South.

"I am not here for you, until the owner of this house tells me otherwise, I am not leaving," the girl answers and a chuckle comes from Mpilo.

"Don't you just get tired huh? Snazo is here for Buli, I don't understand why you have to be So mean all the time," I say feeling defeated.

"Thank you Khaya," the girl says looking at my daughter trying to provoke her.

"Can you also try getting out of everyone's face, you are here for Bulelwa not any other person."

"I will keep her in check baby and I am Sorry," I nod an acknowledgement to Buli. We all turn our heads to the Sound of clicking high heels, who could it be at this time? Noma appears with a weekend bag, her handbag and laptop bag. She has this huge smile plastered on her face and she is radiating a glow. I feel my pulse weakening, like the air is leaving my body. I am holding on to this fork for dear life, if it was a living thing with bones, I would have broken it in every way possible.

"Mpilo don't just sit there come help me" she says and our Son is already by her side assisting.

"Where are you coming from with a weekend bag?"

"Haibo wena, were you not aware that I wasn't home the entire weekend?"

"Maybe because I wasn't here myself, I have been at the lab, only came back today."

"Don't kill yourself because of a job my baby," they place the bags by the corridor and they take their seats.

"You are glowing ma," Sbahle compliments and I am watching everything unfold suppressing the urge to jump at Nomalanga and just beat her senses back, how could she let that man convince her otherwise?

"Thank you baby," she says blowing a kiss to our daughter. She isn't regarding me at all, not even a glance or nod, nothing.

"So, where were you?" Mpilo asks again

"Well since everyone is around the table I might as well just let you know; I will inform Mzwa and Em separately."

"Tell me you planned a holiday; God knows I need one," princess Sbahle adds Sounding as dramatic as she has always been.

"It's not that baby, but I am So happy I will fund your vacation with 2 friends."

"Ma, don't joke like that!"

"I don't joke around Bahle. So everyone a while ago I had the privilege of meeting one of the greatest men alive, a man that has proven to be a gentleman in all aspects, this man has reminded me that good men exist and just because you've had it rough, it doesn't mean you can never find love again. What I am trying to say to you is I have found a second chance at this love thing, your mother is in a relationship and I would really appreciate if you would support me and my new partner," she announces and I am sitting on this chair clenching my jaws, tapping my feet under the table.

"Uyajola ma (you are dating)?" Mpilo asks

"Yes, Mpilo that is what I am saying."

"Woah, I don't know how to feel or what to say but I guess you too deserve to be happy I hope he treats you good and all the best Ndlovukazi"

"Thank you So much Mpilo" she says clasping his hand

"I just want to know who this man is mama! You definitely have you groove back girl!" they both laugh.

"His name is Thuso Moroka, he is a Judge, so yes we did meet through work," she gives the details and I sigh. I feel stuck to this chair while fire is burning through my whole body, the thought of that man touching her and pleasing himself with her all weekend is just sickening.

"So, you weren't locked up in your bedroom the whole weekend?" I ask and she looks at me.

"Why would I be locked in my bedroom when I have a life to live Khaya? Haibo!" she says and stands up.

"You are not eating?" Mpilo asks.

"No baby I am full thanks. Everyone please excuse me I just want a hot shower and my bed, and by the way Afrika will be back tomorrow she had to stay home a bit longer" she says and takes her bags while humming a melody. She disappears, I look up and everyone is staring at me.

"Baby are you okay? You are sweating profusely," Buli says trying to touch my forehead and I smack her hand away.

"I am fine damnit, why wouldn't I be?" I snap and click my tongue.

•AMANDA

Lethabo just dropped me off with all the baby stuff we bought. I was So excited to show everything to my mom, I was supposed to have come earlier but since Sibó said this is the last time I visit my boyfriend until I give birth, I had to wait for him to get home and we have been at it since then. I wanted to give him sex because he won't getting any for a while but mostly it was for me, this pregnancy makes me horny all the time So I just needed the pleasure one more time. I was So excited to find Afrika still at home. We are looking at the baby clothes and they are making us melt.

"So, many things though Amanda!"

"Blame it all on Lethabo mama, the car was So small to fit in everything he wanted to buy. We still need to get a stroller and a feeding chair"

"He is still young for feeding chair kodwa Mandy," my mom says

"Try telling the father that, he says he wants to buy everything his child is going to need, whether it's for now or in a few months' time, plus my boyfriend believes in budgeting So I know he had put this money aside for everything the baby needs," I say and she nods.

"He is a responsible man; you are blessed to have him sis."

"Like Sibó, I never thought I would have such an amazing boyfriend in my life."

"Soon to be husband," Afrika says and I frown.

"He hasn't spoken of the lobola thing in a while now I guess this drama with his mom and I is just getting to him," I say and they both looking at me with the widest smiles.

"Why are you too smiling like this" I ask looking at the tiny vest Lethabo chose.

"Look at this," she hands me a brown envelope and I take out the hand written letter and go through it, immediately tears stream down my face.

"When did he send this?" I ask.

"Yesterday," my mother answers.

"Yoh, Sibó, I didn't know he was sending this, mama he was serious! He is marrying me." I ask because this feel surreal.

"He is making you a wife my baby, believe it." I cry and she comes and sits on the arm rest of the couch and hugs me.

"I am So happy for you Amanda, you and that boy will have a beautiful family and you will be So successful, you deserve all this happiness my baby," my mother says with a trembling voice.

"Yoh, Indeed, God works in mysterious ways, I never thought I would be pregnant with a whole child and this excited, let alone being Someone's wife. Lethabo knows how dirty my past is yet he still chose me."

"That's because he knows you are not your past sis; he knows you are a super woman and he knows his children will have the best mom," Afrika adds and I chuckle.

"Thanks Nana, God, I am So happy," Sibó laughs and wipes my tears.

"We are also happy for you babes," she says and Afrika and I look at each other before bursting out with laughter

"Hao nihlekani? (What are you laughing at)?" she asks making us lose it all together.

•MPILO

I am going to enjoy watching my father lose it. He thought he was bringing Buli here to hurt my mom, using that innocent baby to torture Ndlovukazi; I am glad my mom is not responding to this whole thing the way baba is hoping. Bit by bit we will all move away from Khaya Mdlalose's shadow. One day he will not have any hold on any of us, hopefully my stupid brother will see that baba cares about no one but himself and his money. On the reals though, I am happy to see my mom that happy, she has been miserable for a while and she was trying to hide it from the rest of us, being the Ndlovukazi we all needed while she needed a break from it all. I am in the garden enjoying my whisky, this is Afrika's favorite spot, she is always here with a fleece blanket, coffee and book in her hand. I miss her but she needs to spend time with her family too.

"Are you not freezing?" my sister asks and I point to the outdoor heater.

"Oh, I wasn't aware," she says sitting next to me.

"What's up?" I ask and she sighs.

"It will never be the same again right?"

"I am Sorry Bahle, but it's never going back to how it used to be."

"I don't know how to feel about all of this Mpilo."

"I understand Nana but Ndlovukazi also deserves to be happy."

"I agree maybe in the back of my mind and deep down in my heart I kind of believed they will be able to fix everything."

"They are beyond repair Bahle, we should be grateful that we are all grown," she sighs.

"What's going to happen if mama decides to marry this guy?"

"Then we support her, I mean Ndlovukazi had lived her life for everyone else but herself, it's time we let her know that it's okay to choose herself and be happy."

"I am happy that she didn't break down after baba brought Buli here, you know I feel bad that I once blamed mama for breaking our family and not once did she try to correct me, she protected him Mpilo, she didn't want to be the one to make me stop seeing baba as my hero until the day I saw it for myself."

"That is Ndlovukazi for you, see why she needs us to be happy for her because if we don't Sbahle she wouldn't hesitate leaving that Judge guy."

"This just showed me that I need to grow up Mpilo, we might be wealthy and all but we don't live in fantasy, the same way our family broke apart is the same way we could lose it all," she says and I am looking at her not believing that those words are coming out of my sister.

"Who are you and what have you done with my bratty sister?" she laughs.

"I am still the same person Life, I just need to grow up."

"I am happy to hear you talk like this, really happy, I hope you mean it."

"It's going to take me a while to transition but I will change you'll see."

"Ndlovukazi will be pleased to see the changes in you Nana."

"I want to make her proud."

"I like this new Sbahle" she laughs.

"You and I both."

•NOMALANGA

I tried sleeping after my long shower but sleep just wouldn't come. This bed suddenly feels So big and cold, 3 days away and everything has changed completely for me. I wish I could just pack my bag and take Thuso up on his offer to stay for as long as I want, but I need to ensure that everything settles in fine without being hasty or anything. I turn to find my phone and my door opens, Khaya walks in and I just sigh, I know exactly why he is in here. I sit up straight and fold my arms watching him pace up and down

"I know for a fact that you got my text on Friday," he says

"Yes, I did Khaya."

"Then why the hell would you spend the whole weekend with him?"
"What did you think the picture would do?"
"You divorced me because I cheated on you, a new man does the same thing and you stay Nomalanga are you kidding me?" he shouts.
"Who said Thuso is cheating on me?" he chuckles.
"Even a blind person would see what was happening there."
"Not every man is like you Khayaalethu."
"Nomalanga you are testing me."
"I am too tired; I am really not in the mood for this tonight or any night."
"Are you doing this because I brought Bulelwa here?"
"What?"
"Nomalanga, she is pregnant and I couldn't let my child grow up in that environment," I laugh and get out of bed.
"I couldn't care less Mdlalose, I am with Thuso because I love him, I am in no competition with you."
"You love him?" he says in a low voice, if I didn't know him any better, I would say he is hurt.
"Yes, Khaya I love him," he shakes his head.
"You are just trying to get over me Ndlovukazi, you are not in love!" I raise my hands and groan in total frustration
"You are an arrogant, self-centred narcissist. Not everything is about you Khaya, my relationship isn't about you, my life doesn't revolve around you anymore. Understand this live by it and leave me the hell alone, do you understand the words that I am saying to you?" I ask while poking his chest furious as hell. He looks at me intensely and I shoot him the same look back until he decides it's enough and walks out.

CHAPTER 77

•MPILO

I have been having a really hectic day, the boys are really overworked at the lab, I need to find more men I can trust to relieve them. At least I have enough man power to have 3 shifts a day, that will increase production and ensure that my men don't suffer from fatigue. This might be an illegal business and all but it doesn't mean we have to work people like slaves. I work the numbers and see how much it would cost us to get new employees, it's not much if we are going to be able to produce more. After all, there has to be a trade-off, give up something to gain the other. I press the buzzer signalling the workers to go to the meeting point and I give them 10 minutes before I make my way there. They are all standing chatting, probably asking each other what I might be calling them for.
"Guys, apologies for disturbing you while working."
"Sure taMpilo."
"First of all, gents, I want to thank you for the loyalty you have shown me and this business."

"You treat us well grootman, we are just reciprocating," one says and I smile.

"I appreciate each and every one of you gents. I am aware that I have been over working you for a while now, you spend more time here than you do at home and I am sure your families have started to complain, So I have decided to get you extra men So that you all can be able to work 8 hour straight shifts," I say and the cheer, shaking hands and fist bump.

"We really appreciate that taMpilo."

" You guys know that we need discretion and loyalty in this business, right?"

"Sure grootman," they say whole others just nod I agreement.

"I am going to need your help; I am going to ask each of you to bring me 2 men that you believe will be loyal and will keep their mouths shut about the kind of job we do here. I need people who want to work, people who won't drag us back but help us keep moving forward. The guys will not be at the same salary scale as you yet because we are going to put them on probation."

"Yoh, grootman Siyabonga, eish, we will be able to bring our brothers to work ya it's tough for them to get jobs, at least we will help each other at home," I nod.

"I will give you until Friday to identify your two people and then I will tell you how to bring them here," I say and my phone rings disturbing me, it's Mrs Me, the caller ID is never wrong.

"Guys you may go back to work, I need to take this," they scatter to their work stations and I answer.

"Muhles wani."

"Mpilo kante where are you, the architect is here at the restaurant and we've been waiting for you but nothing," I put my hand on my forehead.

"Eish, babe damn um please look at her designs and stall her a bit I will be there in 20."

"Hurry up babe!" she says and I quickly go the office to get my car keys and rush out to the car, I drive faster than necessary and in no time I am outside the restaurant, I walk in and go straight to the office and find them standing by the table looking at the plans.

"I am really Sorry for being late, work was just hectic," I say pecking Muhles lips and then offer my hand to the architect.

"It's okay Mr Mdlalose, Afrika here kept me company and gave really good input" I smile.

"Let's hear the input then."

"Well initially you wanted the club to be on the ground floor, the restaurant to remain in the first floor and the roof top to be a section for live bands and stuff. Well Afrika suggests that we move the restaurant to the ground floor, the club to the first floor and then the roof top will keep it's intended position, her reason being Some people will come to the restaurant to just eat and we don't want them mixing up with the club people, since they would have to descend to the ground floor to exit the building, So it's simpler if they we already there, and have those that want to party to go up for less chaos, but again she came up with another idea, to have separate entrances, here for the club. Then put the staircase to access the rooftop at the back and the restaurant will have the doors facing the street over here" she explains and I nod

"Great thinking love" I say clasping her hand.

"Thank you."

"I am glad you like it because it was just making So much sense. This building is big and beautiful I am going to enjoy revamping it."

"I have seen your work I don't doubt it one bit, we want to keep our old customers and attract new ones, So for the restaurant please don't change it much try keeping it's originality and incorporate the changes I told you about, and the Sound proofing."

"Sound proofing is a priority; I know a company that masters it."

"So, how long will all these changes take?" Afrika asks.

"Good thing we don't have a limited budget and we are not really going to break down many walls. I have enough man power So I say give me 2 months max to get the club and roof top running then the restaurant will be moved down and revamped in two weeks" she says.

"That's good!"

"Okay then let me get going and prepare for the job" she says rolling up her plans and then we bid her goodbye.

"I am So excited!" I say pulling my girl to me my arms on her waist.

"I am So proud of you."

"You made me realize that there is more to me than drugs babe," she gives me a kiss

"I love you."

"I love you more babe and please help with naming the club, my contact at the liquor board wants a name for the club and then your ID after all this place is yours," she makes a face.

"Okay."

•NOMALANGA

Working in a place where you are always out on the street meeting clients, police officers and witnesses come in handy when you want to skip work. I have been So mad, like really mad with how my ex thinks he can just dictate how my life should go. He is absurd if he believes that I will let him control me like I am Some 5-year-old child. I decided to work from home until I calm down, I don't want to be taking my frustrations out on innocent people who just need my help. I have been showing the helpers where to clean and fix up, they really have been slacking these days. I am just in a short and oversized T-shirt and bare foot.

"Hilda please make sure that you vacuum the entire cinema, I can smell the dust when I walk in there."

"I will Mrs. Mdlalose," I roll my eyes.

"Just Ndlovukazi Hilda," I say and walk Somewhere else to find what they haven't been doing right and I bump into Buli and her sister.

"Oh, Ndlovukazi I wasn't aware you didn't go to work today and Yoh, your legs are to die for I swear," Snazo says, I sigh and look at Buli.

"Bulelwa," I say in a low voice.

"Ndlovukazi," she says.

"Didn't I ask you to take the trash out?"

"Not today ma, but I will go check I am sure the helpers did it though" she says and I want to laugh, I move my eyes and look at the cousin again with a distasteful look.

"I mean the trash Buli," Snazo gasps for air.

"You want my cousin to leave?"

"Yes please, the house is crowded now". I say and walk away. I should just go relax in the garden and gather my thoughts and come back to my senses. I was happy when I got back here but I just had to allow Khaya to taint it. Nomalanga Hlongwane keep it together. I start swinging on the sling chair looking at how beautiful my garden really is, the water fountain is making these amazing Sounds and I must admit, it is a little man-made heaven.

"Mama can I please have a word?" Bahle's voice says behind me, So I pat the empty space next me and she occupies it, I put one hand over her shoulder, "Mama is listening baby," she clears her throat.

"First of all I want to apologise for ever blaming you for destroying our family, mama I know I haven't been the best daughter in the world, I was just existing in my own world and I realize now that I need to come back down to earth and be a person. I am really Sorry for being a pain, I want to start afresh ma" I couldn't believe my ears, I didn't even know what to say So I just took her in my arms and kiss her forehead repeatedly.

"Oh, Bahle" the words escape my mouth.

"I love you Nono," I laugh because it reminds me of when she was growing up, she used to call me that.

"Were you watching your home videos?" I ask and she chuckles.

"Yeah I was, and I was the cutest thing ever." I laugh.

"You were my baby and I love you too."

•LETHABO

After work I went straight to the mall, I wanted to go to the Jewellery store to look at their engagement rings, I want to see the ones she would like and check their price ranges then look at my finances. We have spoken of rings a couple of times luckily, So I know the kind she likes.

"This one is beautiful" I say.

"Yes, I love that one too!" the sales assistant says.

"But my eye is on this one too..." she laughs.

"Is she a petite or thick woman?"

"She is thick but her hands are very slender"

"Oh, in that case I would advise this one."

"Her hands are swollen a bit now because she is pregnant so I am not sure."

"You can buy a size that would fit her now and when she gives birth and goes back to her normal size you can bring it back and we will resize it."

"Okay that's better. Let me come back this weekend or next week during the week, because I am paying her lobola next weekend and I want to give her the ring later after the negotiations."

"Congratulations sir, you are so romantic!"

"Thanks, and I will be back soon, bye" I say and leave. I decide to buy her Some food at Nando's and drive to her place. I get there and find her mom putting Some laundry on the washing line.

"Dumela ma."

"Lethabo, how are you?"

"I am very well ma thanks, how are you?"

"I am well I can't complain," I nod.

"Is Ama in?"

"Yes, she is inside," she says and I walk in to find her on the couch busy on her phone.

"Love," I say and she smiles.

"I have been texting you, I was about to cry!" I laugh.

"I am Sorry I was driving here, my cry baby" I say taking a sit next to her

"I can't control my emotions."

"I understand, I brought you this" I hand her the food and she flashes me her beautiful smile.

"You are just the best! how was work?"

"Not bad I am done marking grade 12 scripts thank God, So I am left with the grade 10's"

"Bring them through with the memo, I will keep busy with them" I take her hand and kiss her knuckles.

"You are a star; I will bring them tomorrow after work"

"Okay, let me go get you Something to drink" she says standing up and struggling a bit, she is big now and her breathing proves it but she looks So cute.

•BULI

Ndlovukazi wants Snazo out of the house and I can't really blame her my cousin can be too much at times and she doesn't have a filter, now I understand why her blessers don't keep her long. She wants to jump the gun even when the rules are set, on the other hand I truly

need her here with me, I don't have anyone in my corner, everyone in this house hates my guts and I just don't know how I am going to handle all of this now. I walk to our room and find her on her phone obviously on Instagram, the free Wi-Fi is her heaven she is definitely on a vacation here because girl is never seen without a bottle of champagne.

"Can you believe that old cow?"

"Snazo come on."

"Why are you defending her?"

"I am not but this is her house you really have to respect her."

"Bulelwa stop giving her all the power stand your ground too, after all this is your man's house unless you want me gone..."

"How can you say that you know very well that I need you here!"

"Then talk to Khaya and ask him to get that old hag under control, use that pregnancy it seems to work on him" I sigh.

"I need Some air Snazo, I will see you later," I walk out and find my driver in the car, So I just get in

"To the shopping centre please"

"Yes ma'am" he says and starts the engine. Oh, what did I get myself into? We get to the shopping centre and I go inside Woolworth food and take the trolley. I am buying ingredients I am going to need to cook tomorrow, I want to prepare Some Soul food, we always eat these fancy foods I want Something normal, and it will sell my pregnancy story as I will say I was craving the meal. I get to the spices aisle and there is an elderly woman, with "beards" on her limbs. She is definitely a sangoma, she is looking at me intensely I swear she is being creepy" I avoid her gaze and continue with my shopping. I feel Someone turn me around and hold me So tight on my upper arms

"Ouch let go of me!" I say to the old sangoma.

"Young girl leave that house, leave that house and go back home" she says in deep voice I feel deep chills

"Leave me alone"

"You are dealing with the devil himself, leave whatever you are doing" she continues and I am now crying, the is Something about her voice that scares me

"Please help!!" I scream

"Stop chasing after treasures and riches that are not yours, they are not worth your life, he is the devil" I can't even speak now I am just crying praying that this woman leaves me alone, a younger lady appears.

"Please help me" I say and she removes the lady from me.

"I am So Sorry sis, mama what did you do? God, I am really Sorry" she is saying and people are now gathered in the aisle watching

"You will die if you continue with this, money is the root of all evil, save yourself and leave that house, he is the devil" she continues while her daughter tries to pull her away from me, I run out of the shop I am no longer doing this shopping, I get to the car crying my heart is beating So fast. She looked and Sounded really scary, her words just Sounded horrific, we need to leave all of this and disappear!

•AFRIKA

I got to the house and one can just feel the tension by walking in, I wonder what happened while I was away. I wish I could just go back home and have a normal life, not tied to drugs and a ruthless man who cares about money and power. I pass by the study and the door is open, I stop and look to see who is coming and the corridor is empty, my curiosity gets the better of me, I quickly walk in and go to the desk and the laptop is on its obvious he is around the house he is busy in here. The keys are on the table with the same one that never leave his side, I try open the drawer and it opens, God it exists the black book it's in here, I

was about to take it and have a look when I hear his voice approach, I quickly move away and go sit on the chair far from his desk. I feel him behind me and I try by all means to act normally.

"What are you doing in here?" I look back, "I am Sorry Mr. Mdlalose I was looking for you and the helper told me you are in here So I was waiting on you" I say and he takes his seat "What can I do for you?"

"I wanted to apologise for staying longer at home without letting you know" he raises his eyebrow.

"Oh, so you heard me that other time?"

"Baba, I don't want to be on your bad side, I don't want to put my family in the firing line" he smiles.

"I am glad to hear that you know this"

"Apologies once again baba" I say standing up.

"You will receive the sequences on Friday be ready."

"I'm always ready sir" I say and walk out the door, as Soon as I am far from the study I stand and exhale deeply, that was So close, you have to be careful Afrika. I need to find a way to get my hands on that book, something tells me that this man's downfall is in one of those pages if not all of them.

CHAPTER 78

•BULI

I don't think I have ever been this scared in my life, first of all I don't like traditional healers because I find them creepy, so imagine having one in my face saying all those scary things. It felt like she could see right through me. I couldn't stop crying in the car on our way back to the house, I didn't care giving the driver a little show because I am too freaked out to even care. Soon as we got home, I wiped my tears and made my way inside the house making sure to go straight to the room I am using. When I open the door, I find Snazo at the same position I left her this time she has an extension cord with her phone charger plugged in.

"That was quick, I take it you have calmed down" she says and I just ignore her and go straight to the closet, soon as she sees what I am doing she gets off the bed

"What are you doing?"

"I am packing Snazo!"

"Duh I can see that but where are you going?"

"I am going back home," she laughs

"What are you talking about Bulelwa? what happened?" I shake my head.

"I have been warned to stay away from Khaya Mdlalose."

"Who warned you? can you just tell me what the hell is going on?" she says taking the suitcase.

"All I know is you will join me and pack if you care about your life."

"I will slap it out of you if you don't spill it out now!" she threatens and I know she is serious. I sigh and look at her straight in the eyes and tell her. After narrating the whole thing, she just burst out laughing.

"Are you kidding me Buli?"

"This is not funny, that sangoma was pretty clear," she rolls her eyes

"You just said yourself that the lady is old, she could simply be having a metal health issue you know."

"I definitely know it wasn't that."

"Oh, come on we are So close to getting what we want sis."

"How will we get it if we are dead?"

"Buli if we run now Khaya will freak and hunt us down, he will look for us because he will want the baby and where will we hide broke, let's stick to the plan and maybe rush it a bit then after we secure the bag we get out of here and out of the country where he will never find us" I hate it when she makes sense.

"I don't know Snazo."

"Trust me, I will never lead you astray. It's tough for girls like us Buli, we need to do anything possible to survive. Hold on a while till we can get enough out of him then we will disappear forever" I exhale.

"I hope we don't live to regret this," I hold her hands and look at her straight in the eyes.

"We won't, trust in us babe," I nod.

"Okay."

"That's my girl, now forget about that demented old woman," I nod vigorously but honestly my heart is still not at ease.

•AFRIKA

I couldn't stop thinking about that black book, I needed to find out what is in it and maybe from there I will know how deep Mpilo and Ndlovukazi are in. I care deeply about them, I just can't do this recklessly and risk taking them down with my father's killer, I know they are not innocent but they are good people. I will access his office when he is out of the house and see if I can access the book and possibly find Something else in there. I won't lie I am scared but I won't be a coward and back down now, I need to get justice for my father, Emily's brother and all other Souls he might have taken, free myself and others from his ties.

"Baby are you even listening to me?"

"Mmmm," I say being dragged out of my thoughts, he closes the laptop and looks at me.

"Okay, what's bothering you?"

"It's nothing love."

"It's Something Afrika, you never just wonder off with your thoughts like that, talk to me."

"It's really nothing really."

"I can tell you are hiding Something from me and I wish you could just talk to me because it's obvious that it's weighing heavy on you."

"You are reading too much into this."

"I won't force you to talk, but just know that I am here for you anytime."

"I know babe."

"I love you Muhles."

"I love you too sthandwa Sam (my love)."

"So, I have been thinking," he says with a jolly voice, So I go snuggle closer to him.

"About what?" I ask.

"About taking you away once you are done with exams," I smile and look at him.

"Are you serious? Where are we going?" he laughs.

"Okay I am glad it's getting you excited."

"I just want to go Somewhere with you where we don't have to hide our love."

"I understand and I am Sorry, I know this is not how you pictured your first relationship to be like."

"It's okay Mpilo, at least we are together and not letting the circumstances keep us apart."

"It's not okay Muhles, we shouldn't be hiding like this, we love each other and we want a future together, my father shouldn't be a stumbling block that hinders our progress."

"One day we will be free of Khaya Mdlalose," I assure him and he sighs.

"How Afrika? When I am failing to find a way to get you out of this mess?"

"Don't beat yourself up, you will think of Something eventually," I want to tell Mpilo my plan and all but I am afraid of how he will react, I can't risk giving that evil man a hint that Someone knows about his evil deeds, he wouldn't think twice about killing me like he did my father.

"Thank you for not putting any kind of pressure on me babe, I promise you everything is going to be okay."

"I believe So, now tell me about this get away trip," I say excited.

•KHAYA

I couldn't just stand by and watch another man have what is mine, Nomalanga was made for me, she is the only woman that could ever handle me at my best and worst. To have a man come out of nowhere and snatch her from me is not Something I am willing to accept. Since Mike has refused to work with me on this Ndlovukazi thing I decided to do things myself, I don't want to involve a lot of people in this. I hired a car So she doesn't recognize that I have been following her, I am parked outside NPA office where she works. It's almost her knockoff time. Just on time, she walks out of the government building in the highest heels I have seen her in, she is wearing a black tight dress with a red blazer. I felt myself losing my mind looking at her and knowing that the damn Judge has her as he pleases. She is putting her things in the back and then gets into her car. As Soon as she moves, I tail her, I follow her until we get to Some street, her car parks at Some gated community and drives in. I have seen this place; she is here to see her boyfriend. 40 minutes later they drive out in a red Mercedes Benz and they are laughing, thank God this rental has tinted windows and they can't see me but I can definitely see them. Just looking at them, thinking they can be happy when I am not, I take out my phone and make a call.

"Jason, how are you?"

"Mr Mdlalose I am well thanks yourself?"

"I am great thank you. How is business?"

"It's really slow sir, you want to bring in your fleet?" he asks.

"Not yet, they are still in good condition."

"Oh, okay," he says Sounding disappointed.

"But I need you to teach me a thing or two about the anatomy of Mercedes Benz C63."

"No problem you can come through to my workshop anytime."

"No stress then, I will pop in very Soon."

"I will be waiting."

"Keep well Jason," I hang up and drive away. Nomalanga is stubborn about all of this, I am left with no choice.

•EMILY

This girl is wasting time, she has all the access in the house to get to that black book, if we get that book all our Khaya Mdlalose problems will be Solved. I just hope she is not getting any cold feet and not backing out of this. The only thing she gave me were the names of the clients used, if we nail him for drug charges, we will have associates to tie to him but I hope we also get him on my brother's murder and bonus Afrika's fathers as well. I needed to see her to remind her of what that man did to us So she can go back into formation. We were chatting earlier and she mentioned she will be home the whole day; I get to the Mdlalose home and find her in the kitchen eating.

"Hey friend."

"Em what a nice surprise," we hug.

"I was in the neighborhood and I thought I should stop by."

"How are the kids?"

"They are still cute and very naughty," she laughs.
"Oh, man they are just adorable."
"Excited to be finishing your mid-year exams."
"Super excited, I hate having to leave the house in the cold," I smile.
"I know what you mean, so you visiting home for the holidays?"
"My captor hasn't given me the permission," she says and sighs.
"Oh, Afrika, you see why we need to find Something concrete on him, you can't be living like this, you are young, you should be exploring things not tied up to drugs!"
"I know Em and I promise to focus on our mission Soon as I am done, remember that is one exam paper away, soon we will find justice for my father and your brother," I smile.
"So, you haven't found anything or heard anything?" she exhales and shakes her head no.
"Not yet but Soon Emily I promise."
"You are not having cold feet right," she smiles and clasps my hand.
"No, I am fully in, I can't live my life like this, I can't have him threaten my family any longer and I also want to get Mpilo out of his claws," I am glad to hear that.
"I have emailed you all the information I got on the clients you deliver to."
"I will have a look at that," she says.
"Let me pour Something to drink," I move to the fridge, at least she is not backing out.

•NOMALANGA

Thuso and I decided to go watch a play in Newtown, he has been So excited about seeing it, he got me hyped up too, the only thing that is off with these things is that they play on weekdays, but who knows it might come to be my favorite thing to do after a long day of work. These people know how to get into character, this whole thing is just So beautiful, the passion they have for what they do is out of this world. They bow after the end of the play and we all give them a standing ovation.
"That was beautiful," I say to this gorgeous man besides me.
"I am glad to hear that."
"Why love?"
He smiles, "I thought you wouldn't like it one bit," he says and I hold his hand.
"I enjoyed it love, thank you."
"I am happy that you enjoy my favorite things Sunny, I want us to go do your favorite thing this weekend." I laugh.
"Are you sure about that?"
"Oh, boy what did I get myself into?" I chuckle
"Well this weekend I was planning on visiting the spa, for Some full body massage, get a Mani and pedi then go to a book signing of one of my favorite authors, I was going to take Afrika with but I will make it up to her."
"I would love to be your plus one Ms Hlongwane."
"It's confirmed then. Now can I take you out for dinner."
"Please sleep over tonight," I blush.
"I would love that very much Mr. Moroka."
"Now that I know I get to sleep next to you tonight we can go eat."
"But you do know I am going to have to leave early to go change."
"That's why you need to leave Some of your things at the house," I stop on my tracks and look at him.
"Are you serious?"
"Yes Sunny, you can't be leaving at the early hours of the morning to go back to change like we are Some kind of teenagers."
"In that case I will bring a suitcase full of my clothes Soon," he laughs.
"I will make space for you in the closet."

"I love you," the words just come out of my mouth leaving him blushing.
"I love you too beautiful," we kiss right near his car for a while and when we are done, he opens my door and I get in.

CHAPTER 79

•MZWAKHE

Today I had to go see the doctor for my check ups and she is really happy with my healing process, she even removed the cast on my leg, it feels weird without it but I am happy that I get to drive myself again, having to be driven around like a kid is just annoying really. I go to the dispensary to get my meds again then leave, I think I am walking really funny, it's going to take me a while getting used to not having the cast on me. Soon as I get in the car the driver starts the engine

"Take me to the lab please"

"Okay" he drives in silence until we get to the lab, it's around 4pm, as I walk in, I realize that these are new people and I have never seen them before, what happened to our old and loyal people. I go straight to the office and Mpilo is in there working through the bursting music. I have always hated the kind of music he enjoys. His eyes shoot up at me and he rolls them then decreases the volume

"Can I help you"

"Oh, come on Life"

"Yoh, Yoh, Mzwakhe don't you get tired"

"No, I don't, I want to make things right"

"Are you ready to let go of Afrika and letting us be?" He asks and I sigh

"Mpilo that's Something you can't have"

"And like I said before if you don't give me a chance to be with Afrika then forget about ever calling me your brother again"

"I know that you lo-" he cuts me off

"No, you didn't because if you did you would talk to your father to back off"

"I tried okay"

"Obviously not hard enough, listen here if it isn't about work don't show up here don't talk to me about it" I sigh

"Just know that I am Sorry" he laughs

"Just get out man" he says going back to work

"Who are the guys in there"

"Came up with a new system that ensures that my people are not overworked"

"So, the orders workers are still around"

"Yeah, they do the morning shift, these are the afternoon shift guys and at 10pm the night riders will take over"

"Oh, that's good, great system"

"Sure"

"I am healed So I am ready to get back to work full time"

"Good for you" he says and increases the volume. I sigh and go unplug the Sound system and he gives me a warning look

"I understand you are mad and I will take it Mpilo just don't neglect my children because of me, they ask of you every day, hate me it's good but give my girls their uncle" I say and his expression Softens, I know Mpilo loves my children So much and what I just said must have made him feel So guilty. I am Sorry to use my children to get my brother but it was the only card I could play. I walk out of the office hoping he will show up at the house to see them.

•AMANDA

I went to the mall with my mom to find me a beautiful dress and matching doek for my lobola day, the same Sibona that told me that I should be at home and stop gallivanting because I will end up giving birth in the street is the same one who dragged me to the mall. Her excitement is making her forget her own rules but ke why would I complain I hate being house bound after all. We manage to find a beautiful Ankara print dress at small street and it looks really good on me and it didn't cost me an arm and leg. I even told my mom to find Something for herself too and we almost are matching. We paid and went to find shoes at Rage. We get to Carlton centre to go eat at McDonald's and we bump into Lethabo's mom, to my surprise she didn't pretend to not see me, she is the one who actually waved and stopped

"Hello ma, unjani (how are you)" I say when we reach her

"Amanda, I am very well how are you"

"I am fine thank you"

"That's good usi, you tired"

"I am really tired I can't wait to pop him out now" she laughs and I smile

"We all can't wait to see him"

"Oh, ma, this is my mother Sibona, and mama this is Lethabo's mother" I introduce them and Lethabo's mom is eyeing my mom probably surprised to see her Sober and looking well

"It's really nice to see you sesi, you raised a gentleman, your Son is amazing" Sibona says as she shakes hands

"Thank you and you have a beautiful daughter too" she says and I know very well that she just said that because of the compliment Sibona gave her about raising my man

"Thank you, hai at least we are Soon going to meet our grandson" my mother adds

"It's very exciting really" my soon to be mother in law says with a smile even though it doesn't reach her eyes but it's a smile none the less

"Very exciting ma" she nods and places her hand on my shoulder

"It was nice seeing you and let me hurry quickly to the store before they close" she says

"Okay bye" I say and she walks away.

"She is a proud woman" my mom says

"That is very true mama"

"I wonder how such a nice person gave birth to sweetheart like Lethabo"

"I honestly wonder everyday" I confess

"Hai but she did a great job raising that boy Amanda respect her for that" I nod

"So, mama I have been meaning to ask"

"Okay my babes" she says as we walk through the restaurant

"Now that Lethabo is paying lobola will I be required to stay there after giving birth because honestly Sibona wanted you to help me out with the baby until I get the hang of things"

"Oh, Mandy I would be honoured, I have feared bringing up the topic secretly hoping that you would want me to be the one helping you"

"Oh, Sibona" I say clasping her hand

"Thank you and yes it's normal for a first-time mom to want to be helped by their birth mom not the mother in law" she says and I sigh in relief

"Thank God" I say and she laughs

"Go order I am hungry phela" she says and I stand up as big as I am to go order

•AFRIKA

I get home and I am glad that I am done with my exams, now I can look forward to the get away trip Mpilo is planning for us, he says he planned to supply the clients with stuff that will last them for at least 3 weeks So we can get a week away from it all and I can have two weeks to relax and not have to deliver sequences to those clients, I couldn't be more appreciative of his efforts to give me a break from it all. After changing into comfortable leggings and oversized hoodie and slippers I walk to the garden with a book. I am looking at my texts responding, I realize that there are two people at the sling chair I normally read, it's Sbahle and Senzo, I haven't seen him in a while

"Afrika" he says more confused than surprised

"Hey buddy" I say

"What are you doing here"

"Oh, I kind of live here now" he frowns

"Why? when did you move from res"

"It has been a while really, and it's quite a long story" I say

"You know I always have time to listen"

"I know" I exhale

"I will give you a call later So we can agree on a catch-up day" he says and Sbahle clears her throat, I am sure she hates me even more now but Senzo is nothing more than a friend to me.

"I am Sorry for disturbing I just came out here to read this is normally the sport"

"It's okay Afrika" Sbahle says leaving me shocked, she is never this polite to me

"Okay later then" I say and walk away, trying to come up with a reason I will give Senzo as to why I am living at his girlfriend's house. I walk back in and when pass by the study the door is open, I walked past but he called out my name

"Afrika" Bab'Mdlalose calls out I roll my eyes and walk in

"Yes sir"

"Sit" he says not looking at me busy on his laptop. I spot the black book on his desk with a pen inside, this means that he has recorded something new in it, what other crime has he committed, I move my eyes from the book before he realizes my gaze upon the book

"Yes Afrika, So I am aware that you finished writing exams today"

"Yes, I am done"

"That's good. So, I called you in here because I just received an email from Mpilo, our clients have ordered enough product for a few weeks

So, your service won't be needed until then, since I am in a good mood, I am going to allow you to go to your family until we need you back" he says and I raise an eyebrow, I have to sell him my shock

"Oh,"

"Yes, you will leave the next week after doing your last delivery, meaning you will spend this weekend here" he says and I nod because I was planning on leaving tomorrow since it's Saturday.

"Okay and thank you"

"And don't try anything funny, your driver/security will be watching you from afar"

"I wouldn't expect anything less from you sir" he chuckles

"Don't try to sound smart with me Missy or I will keep you here" he says and I look down

"Apologies" I murmur

"You are excused" he says and I walk out with a smirk, my boyfriend is such a sly fox

•BULI

I thought about everything my cousin and I spoke about and she made a lot of sense, girls like us need to do extra ordinary things to be able to make it in life, we both had it rough in and we don't seem to be able to catch a break. I need to make this work for us, I get enough money from Khaya So we could start afresh Somewhere far from it all. She managed to organize a fake invoice imitating a well know fashion house. I adjust the fake baby bump and walk to his bedroom. He is on the bed watching his tablet.

"What can I do for you mother of my youngest" he says and I frown

"You are in a good mood"

"I am Bulelwa" he had a smile

"Did you get a multi billion dollars contract" he chuckles

"Something more valuable actually" I nod

"Okay"

"My Son seems to be growing up daily" he says and I use one hand to rub the bump

"He is hey, Soon I will struggle to lotion my legs" he laughs

"I will get you a maid to do it for you" I laugh, he is really in a good mood

"Listen I have that invoice from the designer"

"Okay how much is it" he asks and I hand it to him"

"I can cut down if it's too much money" he laughs

"Oh, dearest Bulelwa, this is change to me, doesn't affect my bank account at all" I raise my eyebrow, R150 000 is nothing, how much money does he have

"Oh,"

"Yes, I want my Son to be comfortable in there and that means you have to wear comfortable pregnancy clothes So I will double it" he says and I gasp for air

"Khaya" I say and he points to his chest of drawers

"Please pass me the cheque book over there" the joy in my heart right now, Snazo is going to lose her mind I swear

•NOMALANGA

I just finished packing the suitcase with a few of my clothes that I will leave at Thuso's place for both our convenience. He is going to be So excited to know that I actually took him up on his offer. I take a sip of my wine and my phone rings, I quickly walk out of the closet to get the phone, I see the caller ID and the butterflies go crazy

"Hey love"

"Sunny" his baritone voice says sending vibrations down my spine

"You okay"

"Yes, I am well, I just got home from the gym So I thought I should just check on you"

"Oh, thanks love, I am well, I can't wait for tomorrow" he chuckles

"I am excited too Sunny, so tell me what does one wear to those things of yours since we are meeting there, I don't want to rock up looking like a joke" I smile

"You could wear anything casual, be comfortable" I say

"Great stuff"

"But then again since I am the one taking you out let me be the one picking you up"

"That's a great idea I might get a quick something before we leave" I giggle and he joins in. The door opens and Mpilo walks in, I roll my eyes

"Love let me call you back, my son lacks manners he just walked in my bedroom without knocking"

"No problem, later" I hang up

"Before you scream, I am sorry" he says

"What's going on" he gets on my bed

"Can you please do me a favor"

"No, you can't sleep with Afrika tonight" I say and he laughs

"It's not about asking permission to sleep with MY girlfriend tonight"

"Glad to hear that So what's up?"

"I need you to call Emily and ask for the girls" I narrow my eyes

"Why don't you get them yourself"

"Emily hates me ma, she might refuse, so please get them for me I have been So consumed in my issues with Mzwa I forgot that they also need their uncle" he says and I smile

"I will surely get them for you"

"Thanks Ndlovukazi, on Sunday though"

"No stress, they will be happy to see you my boy" he nods

CHAPTER 80

•MZWAKHE

I had just finished reading the emails Mpilo had been sending us, he has totally refused to even brief us face to face that is how much he doesn't want to be in the same space as us. I just hope he will show up Soon to come and see my children, those little humans will be the ones to bring us close again. I walk to the kitchen and find my wife making Some smoothies, I sit on top of the kitchen counter.

"Can you make me one too"

"Which fruits would you like"

"Just work you magic babe"

"I will do that mister"

"Just don't add oat meal" I say and she laughs

"I really don't understand your hate for that good healthy thing" I roll my eyes

"For you babe yeah"

"How is your leg today" she asks

"I will be used to having a cast free leg" she giggles

"I am just glad I don't have to be riding you all the time" she says and I burst out laughing

"That was one thing I enjoyed about being a semi-cripple" she smiles

"Oh, wow" she says and her phone rings, she quickly wipes her hands with a dry cloth and answers the call then place it on speaker

"Hi Ma"

"Hey Em, how are you"

"I am very well thanks yourself"

"I am fine too baby, how are the girls" she asks my wife and I know where did is going

"They are just So naughty I can't deal"

"Oh, man, I miss them So much"

"I am sure they miss their grandma too"

"I was hoping to have them for the day tomorrow" she says

"That would be lovely, I will let them know"

"That's great then, I will come get them at around 11am"

"You will find them ready and waiting"

"Okay see you tomorrow and greet your husband for me"

"Okay Ndlovukazi"

"Okay love you, bye"

"Love you too bye' she hangs up

"Isn't your mom the best" I fake a laugh

"She is babe, you will have the entire day to yourself"

"Exactly I will just go to the hotel and get pampered and drink wine and get drunk, when they get back you will take care of them right"

"Yeah sure babe you deserve Some time to yourself" I say and she shakes her shoulders with excitement and then pour my smoothie in my glass and hands it to me

"Thanks love"

"I need to find a friend that will go have Some fun with me tomorrow" she says already taking her phone and leaving the kitchen. Fuck this is not going to work, Mpilo got my mom to ask for the girls because he didn't want to come here himself, I won't lie it hurts knowing that he means what he said about wanting nothing to do with me. This just proved that things will never be the same again

•MPILO

My mom came through for me, Emily allowed her to take the girls and I got excited, I want us to do everything fun tomorrow, I will even be playing tea party and dress up just to remind them that I love them. They are my girls and even though things are rocky between me and their parents they must always know they can count on me regardless. Well today I closed shop and let the guys go rest for the 3 weeks of course they got paid for free since they only worked a week for this month, even the new guys got paid. They will open when I come back from "Colombia". I am with Sbahle in the living room and I must admit she is trying her level best to be a better version of herself. Afrika appears from the corridor dressed warmly and I notice she is wearing my sweat pants and they are a little big she looks so cute; she has a flee blanket and book and I know she is going to the garden.

"What do you think of Afrika" Sbahle catches me off guard

"What do you mean"

"I mean what kind of person do you think she is"

"Well she is a humble, innocent soul, she looks like the kind of person to have in your corner, she looks like a woman a man could build with you know, she is the kind that would make you want to get your shit together because she simply just deserves all the great things a man could possibly offer, she looks like a strong resilient woman who had been through a lot but doesn't let her problem keep her down-" she cuts me off

"I get the picture" she says and I realise that I might have went too deep

"Well you asked me didn't you"

"I did I just didn't think you will be Shakespeare about it" I laugh

"Why do you ask"

"I think my boyfriend cheated on me with her" she says and my heart stops for like a minute

"You think?"

"Okay I know Senzo always insist that they are nothing more than just friends but I have this feeling that it's more to what he is telling me"

"Have you found them in a compromising situation or Something"

"Well I once found them having lunch, but he mentioned that he is having lunch with a friend named Afrika but he didn't mention that Afrika is a woman" I don't think I have ever felt So jealous in my life, I know she hasn't dated anyone before but why hasn't she mentioned being friends with Sbahles boyfriend

"Do you have any reason not to trust your boyfriend"

"No, he hasn't cheated on me or I haven't caught him except for this friendship with her. Just another day he was here and they kind of had a moment you know, he wanted to know why she didn't tell him that she now lives here, he was like you know you can talk to me and she went like I know and it's just So hard to believe they could only just be friends" I sigh trying to suppress this feeling of jealousy deep within me, the thought not my woman being with another man is sickening, I don't want to even think about it, she is the only perfect and innocent thing I have in my life that no one has ever had and I feel really blessed hence I don't like knowing that another guy might have had the opportunity to share even a moment with her in a form of a relationship that isn't innocent.

"Talk to your boyfriend Bahle maybe you are just imagining things" she sighs

"I guess" he says but I am not okay my mood has gone down South with this whole talk. I need answers before I explode.

Short meeting in 30 minutes I text Afrika because wow I am going to lose my mind if she doesn't tell me what is going on.

•NOMALANGA

I did as my Son asked me and I packed my bags and drove to Thuso's place, I didn't really mention my plans with anyone in the house because I don't want Khaya getting to know my business especially after what he did. The drive to the house is short and I don't get to wait for him to open for me since he gave me the remote to the gate and keys to his house. Our relationship is really progressing well. I park at the space and get my bag out, Soon as I walk in, I hear laughter erupting from the kitchen. I walk there and he is with a younger woman who is pregnant.

"Hello" I say standing at the entrance and the both look back

"Sunny" he says smiling at me

"Hello" the young lady says

"Come here babe" he says and I drop the heavy bag and go to his side

"You look amazing" I compliment him

"Thanks babe, and you look breath-taking as always" I blush

"Thank you" I say and look up, the girl is looking at us with a smirk.

"Sunny, this is my second child, she comes after Didintle, her name is Naledi, and baby this is the beautiful lady I have been telling you and your siblings about, her name is Nomalanga" I hold out my hand for a handshake but she comes in for a hug making me melt

"It's So good to finally meet you Papa has told us a lot about you, I have never seen him this happy thank you"

"It's great to meet you too, and he makes me happy as well, he is a great man" we break the hug

"Okay then let's get going, Naledi you will lock up" he says

"I am going to be here a while; my husband will get me later"

"Okay baby girl see you then"

"Bye guys enjoy"

"Thank you sweetheart" I say and Thuso takes my hand and we go to my car.

•AFRIKA

Soon as I got Mpilo's text I left the garden and made my way to his bedroom; I used the other entrance. I wonder what he wants to talk about, he had never called me to his room this early. I get inside the covers and continue reading my novel, the door opens and he walks in. When he realizes that I am in the room he turns back and locks the door, when he faces me again, he has this look on his face, that makes my smile disappear

"Baby are you okay" I ask really worried

"Afrika Mbatha" he says and my eyes pop out

"Mpilo Mdlalose" he exhales deeply

"Who is Senzo" he says and I sigh

"You asking me this So I guess you already know"

"Muhles" he says in a warning tone

"Baby Senzo is a friend of mine and he also happens to be your sister's boyfriend"

"You have never mentioned this to me before"

"A lot has been happening love and honestly when I am with you, I don't think about any other guy" I say and he smirks for a second and goes back to being serious

"So, you have never dated him" I sigh

"No Mpilo, Senzo and I are friends but I have been distant lately because I didn't know how I was going to explain my current situation to him" he comes to sit next to me

"Kodwa Muhles that boy stays in the burbs, he doesn't even attend university because he graduated a while back So how did you meet up with him and end up being friends" he asks and I look down. God how do I explain this to him without throwing my friend under the bus

"Babe we are friends can we leave it there"

"How did you meet" he insists and I should just tell him the truth. I explain everything to him and he is chuckling in a psychotic way scaring me

"That Son of a bitch, how dare he? I am going to fuck him up, he must even just forget about dating my sister"

"Mpilo calm down Senzo is a good person who made a wrong decision, Larona fed him all this information and he acted on it but he isn't that person, he made a mistake, yes he

was wrong for what he did but he realized it and apologized sincerely, we are good friends he is a good person"

"Why are you defending him Afrika"

"Baby I am not defending his action that night and he knows it, I am defending the person I know he is, ask your sister and besides thinking he is cheating with me she will vouch for his character, he made a bad decision that night and it doesn't make him a bad person entirely Mpilo"

"I can't just pretend like he didn't violate you"

"I am not asking you to babe, but I am asking you to understand that he made a mistake, get to know him then and be the judge of that"

"You don't understand" he says and I quickly go to him and snake my hands around his neck

"Look at me" I say and he does

"I love you baby and you alone, I have never been with any other man before you, be it in a relationship or sexually. I want you and only you Mpilo. I know you can understand that he is a good person but right now you are being jealous and your thoughts are just running wild with you. There will never be any other man for me besides you believe this please" he sighs

"Your love is the only purest thing I know Afrika, it's not tainted by anything and I am scared to lose you I am jealous that Someone could have shared a moment with you, I am just a selfish man who wants you all to myself" he says and I am left weak at the knees

"It can only ever be you I promise"

"I love you and I am Sorry" he says and peck my lips repeatedly

"I love you too and it's kind of cute seeing you jealous" he smiles

"I felt like I was losing my mind"

"I am glad that you still have your senses intact" he chuckles

•BULI

To say Snazo was excited would be a total understatement, the girl is over the moon, she is So excited one would swear that we just won the lottery. This morning she dragged me out of bed to go claim to check. R300 000 I still can't believe that I have that kind of money in my account really. After going to the bank, we went to get our nails done and we got a few outfits too but with the money that is in the card Khaya gave to me, we are not going to touch the 300k anytime Soon. We are having lunch at Some ridiculously expensive restaurant because Snazo wanted a proper check in and food snap for her Insta. She is dramatic I tell you.

"So, soon as my passport is ready, we are leaving right" I ask and she frowns

"Buli we need to at least have half a million before leaving the country"

"Snazo we didn't even think we would get R300 000"

"Exactly but now that we have seen how easy it is to get money out of him, we stick around a while and get the 200K then I promise we are getting out of here and starting a new life in Nigeria"

"Don't be greedy mntase"

"Bulelwa we are going to a foreign country; we are not sure how hard it's going to be to get jobs"

"What jobs because we agreed to buy clothes and handbags this side and start an online boutique there"

"Exactly we not sure if we will get customers"

"You were sure that it was going to work out when we started this whole plan"

"Yoh, Buli you sure know how to ruin moments, I have gotten us this far So relax"

"I just don't want us to drag this more than we have to"

"Live a little" she says and pops the sushi in her mouth

•NOMALANGA

I am glad to see Thuso enjoying himself like this. We are done with our massage now they are going our pedicure; we are in white gowns and having champagne with Some treats aside. My body is So relaxed I swear I feel brand new

"Sunny please bring me here at least once a month" he says and I smile

"Noted, I am happy you are not finding this as something that is emasculating you"

"Only boys will think like that"

"You are just the best" I say, his phone rings and he frowns

"Moroka...yes I am... what is she okay...which hospital again...I will be right there" he hangs up and places the glass down and retracts his feet from the lady doing his pedicure

"Is everything okay" I ask quickly

"No, please drive me to Siphephelo Memorial"

"Okay but what's wrong, I ask already on my feet" he is adjusting his gown

"Naledi got into an accident with my car" he says and my hands move to my mouth

"Oh, my God, Thuso is she okay"

"I don't know the nurse said she is surgery" he says and I can see the fear in his eyes

"Come let's go change So we can leave" I say taking his hand.

•KHAYA

I am pacing up and down waiting on a very important call. I just hope everything goes smoothly, I am done joking around with Ndlovukazi and that man. I am just glad that her car tracker says she is at the spa far from it all. My phone finally rings and I answer quickly

"Yes"

"It's done boss"

"Good boy now get rid of the truck"

"Already on my way to chop shop"

"Good job I will wire your money now"

"Sure" he hangs up and I do the payment.

"Rest in Peace Judge Thuso Moroka" I laugh

CHAPTER 81

•NOMALANGA

Thuso is So quiet, I am So scared I just hope both Naledi and the baby are okay, I can't imagine what he is going through right now, I know I would be dying inside if anything had to happen to my children and my two I he beautiful granddaughters. I take his hand and like he has been waiting for me to do that he squeezes it. He won't show it but he is really scared and who can blame him, we finally arrive at the hospital and we both get out of the car and walk inside the hospital hand in hand, I feel his trembling in mine and I give him a reassuring look. We haven't exchanged words but our body language is doing all the talking. We get to the reception and there are two nurses.

"Hello" I decide to talk because I can see that my partner is not going to be able to do this.

"Good afternoon ma'am, how can I be of assistance"

"We got a call to come here, a pregnant woman was admitted she got into a car accident"

"Naledi Sibeko" the nurse says

"Yes, that's her" Thuso says quick

"Okay, she is still in theatre, please take a sit in our waiting room over there and I will go inform the surgeon that her family is here and he will send Someone with an update or he will come once they are done with her" she says politely and I nod

"Thank you and is Dr. Motaung"

"Unfortunately, she doesn't work on weekends"

"Oh, okay thanks" I say and lead Thuso to the family waiting room.

"This is the best medical centre I know in this country, Naledi is in good hands"

"I am So scared Sunny I can't lose my daughter" he finally confesses and I hug him

"I know baby but let us keep a positive mindset" he nods vigorously fighting his tears

"I need to call her mom and husband"

"I can do it for you if you can't" he gives me a faint smile

"It's okay babe I will handle thank you for being here with me"

"I wouldn't be anywhere else but your side" he nods and starts calling her husband and his ex-wife. He talks for a while and then hugs up

"Her mom says she is in North West but she will drive here Soon and she says my Son in law is only landing around 6, I will try him around that time"

"She is going to be okay, believe this please"

"I am trying Sunny" he says and we hold hands and wait for the doctors. The doctors keep walking in and talking to other families and that is frustrating because we haven't heard anything. We are now the only ones waiting and after like 2 hours two doctors walk in.

"Naledi Sibeko" they say and we quickly stand up

"Yes, I am her father and this is my partner, how is my daughter" Thuso asks in a low voice

"Well sir it was touch and go for a while but we managed to control the internal bleeding and she is stable now, we decided to get her to ICU

overnight and then we will move her to the ward tomorrow" we both sigh in relief

"Oh, thank God" he says

"And the baby" I ask

"Well ma'am when she came through the baby was already in distress and we had to do an emergency C-section, he is 6 weeks early So we had to put him in an incubator, he didn't

suffer as much as the mom, he is a strong little baby" the second doctor say and Thuso just sits down and bury his head in his hands

"Thank you both So much"

"Thank you ma'am, we believe they will both be fine" I nod

"Can we see them"

"The mom is heavily sedated but we will allow you just 5 minutes with her but you can see the little Soldier right doctor" the first doctor asks her colleague

"Yes, they can see the baby" the paediatrician says.

"Can I have a minute"

"That's fine, you will just go to the nurses' station and they will take you to her"

"Thank you So much" they nod and walk away and I go kneel in front of him and hug him

"They are both fine love, it's okay now they are fine" I assure him

"I don't think I have ever been So scared Nomalanga"

"I understand baby" he holds on to me tight

"They are both fine" he says asking for confirmation

"Yes, they are both fine, we can go see them" I say and he stands up.

"Thank you for being here Sunny I really appreciate it" he says and I kiss him

"That's what a loving partner does love"

"I love you"

"I love you too" he says and we walk to the nurses' station

•AMANDA

I was hoping that Afrika would come home this weekend but she said she needed to finish up Something. I bet you she is Somewhere with Mpilo playing house but I don't blame her shame being with your partner is satisfies the Soul. I envy her right now because I miss sleeping next to my man but what can I say I am close to popping his son out and then we get to live together forever. My phone rings and it's the Afro princess who's been running in my thoughts.

"Hey sis" I answer

"Hey you guys, how are you"

"We are fabulous darling how are you"

"I am great thanks"

"So, you really not coming home" I ask

"That's why I called besides checking up on you and my Son" she says and I smile

"What's going on Nana"

"Please don't be mad at me"

"I can never be mad at you, what's wrong"

"Well thing is Mpilo is taking me away for a week to Some resort and spa in Mpumalanga"

"That's romantic, I didn't know he could be that sweet" she laughs

"Yeah it's So considerate, I feel So special"

"You are special my love" I assure her

"Thank you Mandy but there is a problem"

"Tell me"

"We are leaving Tuesday late and only coming back on Sunday, that means I won't be there for your lobola" she says and I won't lie I am a bit disappointed

"Oh, that's sad but at least it's not my wedding day So I understand nana, you need the change of scenery my love" I say and I really mean it, she has never had the chance to be her age and do what other kids did and it's sad that it had to be on my lobola weekend but I understand

"I am so sorry"

"Its okay nana go out there and have some fun"

"I will make it up to you I promise"

"Make it up to me buy going to get a contraceptive injection on Monday" she laughs

"Mandy"

"What? the man is whisking you away on a romantic getaway obviously you going to give it up and I am not encouraging it I just want you to be safe in case the condom bursts remember to use one"

"You are making me feel some type of way right now" I chuckle

"It's reality, I wish you could keep your virginity forever but Mpilo would run away even if he loves you" she burst out laughing

"Right, I am finally terminating this conversation" she says

"Oh, boy, so have fun in Mpumalanga and take a lot of pictures"

"Will do"

"I love you"

"Okay I love you too. bye" we hang up and Sibho walks in

"Was that your sister"

"Yes"

"When is she coming home, she is done writing most"

"Well she is going to Mpumalanga with Mpilo, he wants her to relax after the long six month of University"

"Will she be back in time for your lobola"

"They plan on coming back on Sunday"

"You Amanda it's sad"

"It is mama but she deserves this, you know Afrika has been an amazing child, never asked for much or expected more than I could provide. She respected me and held back on being her age so she doesn't seem like she is ungrateful, it's time now she explores and have some fun"

"I understand but I was excited to for us to be able to spend this time with you and support you"

"It's okay mama she will come on Sunday and we will still celebrate" she smiles

"Okay, let me go cook" I nod and think of how different my day is going to be without my sister, it would be more perfect with her here

•MPILO

I just got off a call with the lady from the Mpumalanga place I am taking my girl to for a few days, she just needed me to confirm our stay and it's from Tuesday afternoon to Friday late. We are signed up for a game drive, quart biking, spa treatments and then I will have her all to myself, I am really excited about this whole thing. Getting to have her all to myself uninterrupted. I take a deep sigh before knocking on my father's study door

"Come in" he shouts from inside and I walk in

"Mgabashe" he says as I walk in

"Bab'Mdlalose" I respond and he sighs

"Really Mpilo"

"I am going to go away for a while"

"Where to" he asks narrowing his eyes

"Colombia"

"Is everything okay there"

"No there are a few glitches here and there, some cartels are trying to give us some problems do I want to show face so they can know that Marianna still has our support and protection"

"Yes, remind them that the Mdlaloses own the turf in that size of town"

"Yeah sure" I say without looking at him

"So, when are you leaving"

"Monday, I still need to buy my ticket to see what time my flight is"

"Okay you will feel me in"

"I will"

"Sit down let's have a drink"

"I was just talking to you because it's business it doesn't mean we are cool or we are friends" I say and walk out shaking my head. My father and Mzwa really think I was joking when I say things will never be the same between us again. I need to book my ticket online So when he tries to fish, he can see that I really brought my plane ticket and I am scheduled to go to Colombia no lies, I just need some time away from all of this.

•AFRIKA

I am sitting in the closet I share with Ndlovukazi, trying to find cute warm outfits for my trip with Mpilo, they have so many things to do around their resort, I need to pack my bathing suit for their indoor jacuzzi I hope Mpilo won't mind us getting in there, I will be my first time being out of Gauteng or Johannesburg for that matter. My phone beeps and I pick it up from the floor and it's WhatsApp text from my mom.

*Hey my babes, she is so sad [laughing emoji] *

I am just glad she bought it I text back

is everything going well

Yes, everything is ready just waiting for the day

Thank you for doing this for her

She has done so much for me as well ma this is the least I could do really

Let me finish cooking, I love you

I love you too ma" I get off WhatsApp and go back to finding outfits. The bedroom door opens, and Sbahle's voice shouts for her mom, I decide to walk out of the closet

"Hi" I say

"Hello, have you seen my mom"

"No, she is not back yet"

"Any idea where she is or when she is coming back"

"No, she didn't mention it to me"

"Shucks okay thanks" she attempts to walk out but stops on her tracks

"Afrika" she says looking back

"Yes"

"Are you or have you ever dated Senzo" she asks and I sigh

"No Sbahle I am not and I have never dated Senzo, we are nothing more than just friends really good friends"

"Are you sure because I don't want to be making a fool out of myself while the both of you are fooling around behind my back"

"I assure you Sbahle, nothing is going on between us I swear, Senzo loves you and you alone"

"I am just trying to get my life in order and I want to know that I am not wasting my time believing that we can work out while he is just playing me"

"Take it from me he isn't playing you Bahle, he loves you alone even when he believes he can't handle you he can't let go, he loves you the sooner you believe that the better your relationship will be"

"I love him so much"

"He loves you Bahle believe that and you guys will be okay"

"I am sorry for being a bitch to you"

"It's okay"

"I just want to be a better person"

"It's never too late, thanks for apologizing"

"Uhm let me go try and call my mom and go see Senzo I need to apologise to him too for being a difficult person, if he was another man, he would have long given up on me"

"That's very try"

"Okay let me leave you then"

"Sure" I say and she walks out. I never thought she could be so calm and civil. I walk back to the closet.

CHAPTER 82

•NOMALANGA

Thuso didn't want to live until Naledi woke up and I just couldn't let him sleep on the chair So I had to call Siza and ask her to rent us the private suit and I will pay, after all this is a business. The bed is big enough for the both of us. His mood has slightly improved and we got some food delivered here

"Ahhhhh thank you for organizing the food and this room"

"It's only a pleasure"

"It's good knowing people in the right places huh" I laugh

"I guess so, you feeling better?"

"Much better, I would have lost my mind if you weren't here with me"

"I wouldn't have it any other way" the is a knock on the door

"Come in" I say and a nurse walks in with a woman my age.

"Kido, you made it" Thuso says

"How is my daughter" she asks with tears shinning in her eyes

"She is fine, they are both fine, it's a boy" he says and walks to her, they share a hug. I give the nurse a nod of acknowledgement and she walks out. They break the hug

"Sunny, this is Mamokete my children's mother and this is the lady I am seeing Nomalanga" I extend my hand out to her and takes it

"Hello, it's really nice to meet you, even under these circumstances" I say

"Like wise" she says

"I can't get a hold of her husband" he says

"His PA says his connecting flight got delayed" she responds

"Okay, but I sent him message to come straight here when he lands, he will see it soon as he opens his phone" Naledi's mom nods. The nurse walks back in

"I could give you the keys to my house so you will go sleep there, Noma and I will sleep here"

"I don't want to leave her Thuso, I will sleep on the chair if needs be"

"It's okay, I will ask if they could add another bed in here" I say

"Thanks Sunny"

"Thanks, but it's no bother, the couch is big enough and it looks comfortable"

"Are you sure"

"Yes, dear thanks though"

"Let me go see how she is doing"

"Okay then nurses will show you" Thuso says and she nods before placing her handbag on the couch and walks out the door

"Love, tomorrow morning I am going to need to go get my grandkids and drop them off at the house, their uncle wants to spend some time with them o I promised to fetch them for him because there is some bad blood between my boys at the moment"

"It's okay Sunny I understand"

"I will be back Soon as I drop them off"

"You don't have to rush back you can also spend an hour with them" I smile

"I love you"

"I love you too" he pecks my lips

•MPILO

I have been tossing and turning, I just can't seem to get some sleep, a lot is on mind I just want this whole trip to be perfect. I want Afrika to have a great time and relax and fall in love with me. I want us to explore each other in ways we have never thought of before, but I will still respect her decisions on something's, I want her to want me the way I want her. My phone beeps and I reach for it on the pedestal, it's a text from Mrs. Me

Get out of my head I want to sleep I blush

I have been tossing and turning myself

*Want me to come to your room? * She asks

*Where is Ndlovukazi? *

*She didn't come back, forgot that she is dating? * I sigh

Oh, yeah it tends to skip my mind at times, I am coming up there unlock the door

Hurry up she texts back and I get out of bed all excited. As I approach the corridor that leads to the stairs and kitchen someone clears their throat and I look back it's my dad

"Why are you up so late" he asks

"I could ask you the same thing" I say

"Mpilo I know you are not happy with me but you don't get to think that you can disrespect me" I say

"Have you stopped to think that if you could just try to leave me alone, I wouldn't need to sound disrespectful"

"Are you really going to throw away our bond because of a woman"

"You threw away our bond when you chose money over my happiness" I purr back

"Mpilo you can find any woman that you want and they will worship the ground that you walk on, women like a man with money and power" I laugh

"I don't know why I always allow myself to do this with you, because you don't listen or hear me, it's no point talking to you because it's like I am running around in circles"

"So, you want me to treat you like an enemy"

"That is so much better because I will know what to expect from you as an enemy, rather than believing you are my father and you love me but have you chosen everything else that benefits you other than my happiness"

"Mgabashe" he says in a low voice

"No baba I am not listening to you anymore" I walk to the kitchen to get some snacks and juice then walk back to my room passing him at the same spot. Fuck this old man nxa. I get to my room to text my girl and there is already a text from her

*Where are you? * I sigh

I am sorry babe; I ran into my dad and I could risk coming up to you in case he followed me

Oh, that's a bam, was looking forward to sleeping on your arms

That's what you will be doing for a few days love, hang in there for me

Okay

I love you I say and she doesn't text back and 5 minutes pass

Muhles, don't be mad please

Lol I went to the bathroom sorry; I love you too I smile

*Video call? *

I would love that she texts back

•EMILY

My mom In law really came through and got the kids, I am really grateful for it, I needed a day out to just have some fun and chill with a friend and just let loose, being a wife, mom and having a full time job can be draining sometimes and if you don't take time to yourself once in a while you will find yourself drowning. I got Afrika to come out with me for a chill day. We decided to drive down to the Vaal and have a boat cruise, I made all the necessary arrangements yesterday after speaking with Ndlovukazi. I am so excited to be away from it all. The cruise is beautiful and so is this river. I am having wine and Afrika is having a non-alcoholic cocktail.

"Mzwakhe and I should really get a house here, just look at how beautiful these houses are"

"Yeah imagine waking up to this view and I can imagine the morning breeze" she says

"Exactly hey babe"

"So, me of us will have to work really hard to afford all of this"

"Mpilo can afford to buy this for you" she narrows her eyes

"Why would he want to buy me a house"

"You two are dating right?"

"No, we are not, I like him yes but no" I roll my eyes

"You don't have to lie to me really. I mean it's obvious to me that you two have something I mean you asked that we keep him out of everything when we take their father down"

"I just realized that they are good people that's all" I laugh

"Friend I won't tell my husband about you and his brother; I know you afraid that he might slip it to his dad but I wouldn't do you like that. He told me that you two are forbidden from being together"

"Emily, Mpilo and I are really not together, I would love to be with him yes but your husband and their father threatened my family"

"Mzwa wouldn't hurt them babe"

"The Mzwakhe you know and the one I know are two different people. He is your king and the nicest man but to me he is the monster that got me into this life in the first place" she says and it really hits home

"I am sorry I didn't mean to imply" she smiles

"Don't worry about it, God knows why all this is happening and can we stop talking about this depressing topic. We came here to have some fun right" I nod vigorously

"You are right" I sip my wine

"And thank you for inviting me hey, I have never been on a boat before, I am enjoying myself"

"I am glad I brought you along with, you are nothing like my other friends" she laughs

"You are blessed to have me" she jokes and I laugh

"You honestly are, like literally" I smile. I honestly like Afrika; she is sincere and real I just wish we could have met under different circumstances

"It's good to have friends hey, I have only had like 1 friend and she betrayed and the day of betrayal I met a good friend and now I have you" she says and I nod

"You not missing out on anything, the more friends you have the more bullshit and drama" she says

"You sounding like my sister"

"She is a smart girl then" I say and we both move our eyes to the beautiful view.

•KHAYA

What Mpilo said to me last night really didn't sit well with me, I tried to shift it to the back of my head but it just kept coming back. It hurts that he would rather have me as an enemy than a father, we have always been so close and most days I miss that, but there are rules and rules that are mentioned to be followed even by my favorite son or else there won't be order and in my world order is everything. I haven't seen Nomalanga and I wonder if she has heard about her boyfriend. I hear giggling coming from the room my granddaughters use to play when they are around, I turn the door knob and the door opens, I walk in and find Mpilo and the kids playing house, soon as they see me, they come rushing to me and I hug them

"I missed you girls so much"

"We miss you too grandpa" the eldest says, she is normally the spokesperson

"When did you get here"

"It hasn't been long Mkhulu, grandma fetched us"

"Oh, thank Grandma for that because I have missed you girls"

"Uncle Mpilo is playing with us, do you want to join us" the youngest says

"I will join you later baby girl, I need to sign a few documents"

"Mommy says no working on Sunday" I laugh

"Don't tell mommy okay, I am working so I can buy you a big doll house and cars, would you like that"

"Yes mkhulu, please go and work" I chuckle and Noma walks in and just looks at me then her son

"Mpilo I am going to head out" she says and I don't pick up an ounce of pain or hurt in her voice, hasn't she head in mean it's been hours and hours since the accident

"To the hospital" Mpilo asks and my heart starts racing, hospital? He didn't die?

"Yes, call if you and the girls need anything"

"Will be fine Ndlovukazi" he says and she walks out.

"Is your mom sick"

"No, she isn't, her boyfriend's daughter got into an accident with his car so she is the one admitted"

"Oh, that is sad" I say standing up and walking out to my bedroom, I am going to kill those incompetent fools. They messed up this whole thing. This damn man is still alive and Nomalanga will insist on being by his side all the time, what was supposed to be a mission to get them apart has turned around to be something that brings them closer together and more distant from me. I move to my closet and take my anger out on my clothes, I rip some apart, I just need something to get my frustrations out on and this is not helping one bit. I need a body a body that will feel pain I will inflict on it, I want to hear someone scream because of the pain. I take out my phone and dial, she answers after the 3rd ring

"Mdlalose" she says

"My bedroom now" I command and then hang up. I start stripping off my clothes until I am completely naked

•NOMALANGA

I get to the hospital and the nurse informs me that they are in Naledi's room because she is awake. I walk there and find them standing around her bed, there is a young man sitting next to her with her hand in his. Naledi is taking so I don't talk I just wave and they all smile at me, Thuso takes my hand and pulls me to his side.

"So, I am driving to the mall to get some food, I get to that road that leads us faster to the mall next thing I know this huge truck moves from its lane to mine, I flickered my lights but nothing so I decide to move to the other lane but the driver moves to the other lane too, at that point I knew I had to get off the road, we were so close to colliding, so I stepped on the accelerator so I could avoid being under that truck and squashed. I managed to do that but I was driving so fast I had to hit the brakes but nothing they were not working, and was so close to colliding with the tress, I tried and tried but nothing, I said a little prayer for God to protect my baby and I and that was the last thing I remember, it happened so fast I swear I thought I was going to die. I was scared mama, the thought of dying young with my baby inside of me" she says crying to painfully

"It's okay my love you are safe now, you both are" her husband comforts her

"My car just came back from the service, how could the brakes fail" my whole body went cold oh, God NO

"I just wondered papa because your car is always in good condition"

"I am so sorry my baby, I will go to Mercedes Benz and inquire. Do you think you can remember that truck?" Thuso asks

"No but it was huge I don't remember much everything just happened so fast"

"It's okay I will get to the bottom of this"

"This has Khaya written all over it I know it, this poor child is laying on this bed because of that evil man who thinks he can play God with everyone. How do I even tell Thuso this?"

CHAPTER 83

•BULI

I don't think I have ever felt so filthy in my whole entire life, to say I was violated would be an understatement. Khaya Mdlalose is an animal and he doesn't deserve to live amongst people, for someone who believes I am carrying his child he is ruthless towards me. He has no respect for me as a woman and as a human being in general. The whole thing was inhumane, He had his way with me till I bled, I screamed so painfully for him to stop but he just couldn't care, he pressed me harder to the bed as I bend over and gagged me with his boxers and took me roughly from the back, once he was done he couldn't care, he went to the shower and got out of the room. I had to drag myself downstairs to the room I use, it feels like my whole soul was ripped out of me. I took the longest shower ever trying to clean away the dirt I felt was clinging on to me for dear life and no amount of shower gel could make me feel clean. I have been sitting on the floor by the bed for a while now, I have my legs to chest, hugging myself while rocking myself back and forth. The door opens and I freeze instantly. What if it's him and he wants to hurt me like that again.

"Babe" Snazo says and I breath out

"Bulelwa I am talking to you, yini you and bae got into a fight" the mention of that man's name made me lose it, I just cry and she quickly comes to me and hugs me

"Mntase what's wrong, why are you crying so painfully"

"He, he, he hurt me Snazo"

"He hit you?" I shake my head vigorously

"No, he, violated me in the worst possible way mntase, I screamed for him to stop but he just continued, it hurts so much Snazo I feel so filthy"

"What?! BULI NO" she exclaims

"What did I get myself into. This man is a monster" I say and she hugs me placing my head on her chest

"I am really sorry mntasekhaya"

"I can't do this anymore Snazo I can't"

"It's going to be okay, shhhh I am sorry"

•MPILO

I parked my bags and made sure that I included everything I will need for our trip. Afrika isn't around she went to deliver the sequences and it's quite a lot but her driver/security guard will be there to make sure she is safe. I need to leave the house today because I did say I was flying to Colombia today; I will be staying at the hotel tonight and then the driver will bring Afrika to me but leaving the house as if she is going to her family. I decided to act like I always do when I leave get my mom to drive me to the airport. She has been so distracted ever since yesterday; I am kind of worried about her. We are in her car driving to OR Tambo.

"Ndlovukazi are you okay"

"Yes, why do you ask" I sigh

"Come on ma, this me?"

"Oh, Mpilo I don't want to ruin your trip with my issues"

"Talk to me I swear I won't let it get to me" she laughs

"Then you wouldn't be the son I know now would you" I laugh

"Did you fight with you boyfriend" she looks at me eye rolling

"No Thuso and I are fine"

"So, him daughter is healing good"

"Very good son, they are out of the woods now, she is going to have long recovery, the accident left them with pretty bad injuries but with God's grace she didn't have any brain injuries or swelling"

"That's great ma, she will be fine"

"So, I drop you off at the airport and then what?"

"I give my ticket at the airport to make it look like I got on that plane and then I go to the bathroom disguise and take a cab to the hotel"

"That is some 007 James Bond type of thing" I laugh

"You are exposing your age Ndlovukazi" she giggles

"All of this hustle because your damn father can't accept and support that you love this Afrika"

"He isn't putting out our fire ma, the more he denies us the more I fall in love with her"

"I am proud of you for not giving up on this"

"I could never even if I tried, I am just in too deep with her ma"

"I can see that, and I am glad she loves you too. Be gentle with her and don't force her into anything she isn't ready for and if she is, use a condom"

"We've heard this talk before Ndlovukazi and I am a gentleman"

"I can accuse you of many things my dear but a gentleman I don't know, you could say you are trying to find your feet in that department, Afrika is too in love with you to see that you are a rough neck"

"Oh, wow my own mother for that matter" she laughs

"We are here, drive safely tomorrow and have lots of fun"

"Thanks Queen, look after my girl tonight"

"You know she isn't some damsel in distress"

"I know ma, it's for my peace of mind"

"I got your back Mpilo" she says and we hug. I get out of the car and take my bag before she drives off. I need to call the car rental people tomorrow, make sure that the car is ready for me.

•LETHABO

My uncle was around to talk about what will happen this Saturday, 4 more days before she becomes my wife traditionally and I can't wait. I have waited all my life to have a woman I love as much as Ama, to have kids with her and just have a beautiful life together. I walk in the house and find him and his sister talking about something that is obviously amusing because they are laughing so hard, I can't help but smile.

"Share the joke"

"Hai man, you won't find it funny. It's something that used to happen when we were growing up" my mother says

"Okay then"

"Mochana (nephew) are you still sure about all of this because it's still early for us to cancel" my uncle says jokingly

"I am very sure uncle; I am not changing my mind. I am marrying that girl" I say

"I am so proud of the man you've become; I am proud. I hope your cousins can see what real man do, you have set the perfect example" he adds

"Let's not pressurize them mara akere uncle"

"Absolutely mchana. So how much will you be sending me with" he asks

"I thought I should give you R30 000" I say

"Haaa! Lethabo do you think they would charge you that much for her I mean with-" I quickly interject

"Mama stop please. Whatever amount Amanda's family want I will pay it to the last cent. I am not doing Amanda any favors by marrying her and none of us are going to treat this lobola as such"

"I wasn't implying-" my uncle cuts her too

"Ausi please give us some space" she looks at him shocked before standing up

"Okay" she gets out of the room

"Don't mind your mother Lethabo. The woman is yours; you are the one who is going to live with her if she really makes you happy then all our options of her shouldn't matter to you"

"Thank you Uncle this means a lot"

"So, I am going to need you to buy me at least 3 bottles, whiskey, cognac and Brandy"

"I will go buy them ka Friday"

"But us something to drink Friday night, me and my team will be sleeping here"

"Don't worry I will make sure that you get enough Amstel" he laughs

"See why you are my favorite nephew" I nod and we shake hands

"We will discuss everything else after Saturday akere uncle"

"Yes, let's firstly get this lobola out of the way then we can know where to go next"

"No stress Malone and thanks once again."

•AFRIKA

I have been delivering sequences this whole day and I couldn't be happier that I finished in time. Mpilo had already texted that he already left the house and he is at the hotel. That one is more excited than me I swear. I listened to Amanda and before starting with the deliveries I started at the doctor and got myself the birth control injection. My next appointment is in three months. I am ready to give myself to Mpilo, he has been patient enough with me and I appreciate him so much. I am not going to give him my virginity as a reward for his patience but I am giving it to him because I want him to be the one to make me a woman, I am ready for sex and I want it to be with him because I love him and he loves me the way I need to be loved. The driver finally drops me off at the mall and find Senzo already waiting at the restaurant

"I am sorry I am late" I say

It's okay what can I say I am just happy you squeezed me in your busy life"

"Don't be like that please" he laughs.

"I am kidding man, how are you"

"I am great thanks, wena unjani (how are you)"

"I am absolutely great" I narrow my eyes

"What happened"

"My girlfriend has miraculously transformed into this woman I have always wished she could be"

"You don't say"

"Like Afrika, she came through on Saturday and apologized sincerely for all she has ever done, Sbahle cried and I was shocked. She slept over and yesterday she woke up and went to do Some groceries and guess what? She cooked. She didn't ask me to take her to Some fancy restaurant in Sandton she actually cooked. It wasn't the best meal I've had but I was So happy at the effort she put in"

"Oh, friend that is great news"

"For the first time after so long in a relationship with Sbahle I felt loved and appreciated."

"It's good that you didn't give up on her"

"I was this close to calling it quits I swear but I happy I didn't give up that quickly"

"I am happy for you guys"

"I hope this won't be shot lived"

"Don't attract negativity, encourage her to do better and give her compliments on her change and she will want to be better than how she is currently doing"

"For someone who is single you sure give the best advices" he says and I laugh

"I am an old sold, I think I was in a very successful, loving marriage in my past life"

"Oh, boy" he chuckles

"Mxm you don't know wena. Can we order please" I say and he politely signals the waiter

•NOMALANGA

I haven't seen or spoken to Thuso today. I honestly don't know how to tell him that I suspect that my ex-husband tempered with his car and that he almost lost his daughter and grandson because of it. What if he decides that I carry too much a burden to carry on, would I blame him though? I know I would quickly walk away from situations that threaten my children, but I love Thuso and losing him would kill me, it would be the end of me. I never thought I would love another man in my life and it's a bonus because he loves me more and he legit wants me to be happy all the time. Khaya walks in and it's taking everything in me to not lash out at him right now.

"How is your boyfriend's child" he asks and I won't bother asking how he knows

"She is recovering well; we thank God for his Mercy is sufficient" I says and he nods

"Amen that's very true"

"You know the devil will test good people in all directions but he never wins at the end. Yes, here and there he wins the battles but never the ultimate war"

"Mmhhh powerful words Ndlovukazi"

"It's like Satan could actually hear these words and understand them and really back off you know, like save themselves because at the end light overcomes darkness"

"Why are you talking like this Nomalanga"

"I am just trying to be positive" he nods

"Oh, well I will keep the good judge and his family in my prayers" I smile

"I would really appreciate it Thank you" I say and walk away and I know for a fact now that he had a hand in the malfunctioning of that car. I am not going to confront but he will know that I know and he will wonder what I have planned and he will lose sleep over it and that is perfect because there is no sleep for the wicked. I will focus my energies on my relationship with a loving man who is all the good Khaya isn't.

CHAPTER 84

•NOMALANGA

Thuso called and asked me to come over his place, I was hesitant at first but I realized that I can't really hide from this man because we are in a relationship after all. In as much as I am scared, I can't really hide my suspicions from him, I want this relationship to work out and that starts with not keeping any secrets from my partner. I got to his place and opened for myself. He is sitting down on the carpet watching current affairs.

"Hey," I say and he stands up, we share a long hug.

"I missed you so much."

"Oh, love, I missed you too."

"Why didn't you come over yesterday?"

"I just wanted to give you space with your family."

"Sunny, you are a big part of my life and I want you everywhere I am unless you truly can't make it, but as for giving me space; no, I don't want space from you," I smile.

"I am glad to hear that."

"Good," he pecks my lips.

"How is Naledi?"

"She will heal love, she is still shaken up a bit, I think she is going to need therapy."

"That would help her greatly."

"Definitely. And I went to Mercedes and they showed me all they worked on when the car was at service, they have the whole thing stored on the computer, and they got the car and checked it out it appears that someone tampered with the brakes," I close my eyes.

"Uhm that's, uhm it's" he narrows his eyes.

"What's wrong Sunny?" I sigh and take a seat.

"I had already suspected that your car was tampered with after hearing Naledi tell what happened."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I was planning on telling you today, as scared as I am, I can't keep it a secret."

"Scared of what love?"

"You hating me and possibly wanting nothing to do with me."

"Why would I hate you Nomalanga? You have brought back happiness and peace in my life I love you."

"Would you love me still if you learnt that I am the reason your car was tampered with? And your daughter and her child almost died because of it?" he gives me a confused look.

"I am not understanding."

"Thuso I suspect that my ex-husband tampered with your car to get you out of the way," he gasps for air.

"Are you one hundred percent sure about this?"

"I don't have concrete evidence but I know him and how he operates."

"Sunny," he says in a low voice eyes closed.

"I am so sorry Thuso for bringing such drama in your life I am really sorry," he exhales and takes a seat next to me then clasps my hand. I won't lie I am scared; he isn't saying anything to me, his eyes are cast down and he is brushing my knuckles. Can he please say something?

•AMANDA

I wish I wasn't this big; I could help my mom with the "spring" cleaning, she says she wants the house to be spotless for Saturday, the girl even took the money I gave her and bought new curtains and bedding. I must admit she has taste. She managed to do the windows and wash the carpets.

"I wish I could help you out ma."

"I know baby but you going to get tired."

"Thank you for going out of your way to make this work out for me Sibó."

"I am just happy to have this opportunity to see my girl get married and be a mother"

"So, who's going to help with the negotiations?"

"I have already spoke to bab'Mahlaba and he agreed to help me out. He said he will ask his brother to come with him," I feel tears threaten.

"You went all out Sibó."

"I wanted to do everything right Amanda, and those are older respected men and I know they will work good for you."

"So, how much did you tell them to ask for?" she laughs

"Not too much," she says

"Sibó don't ask for a lot you know with my past."

"Stop that Amanda, stop seeing yourself as a prostitute, that is in the past and you are definitely not going to continue defining yourself with your past. You are Amanda Mbatha and that is it. If Lethabo saw a prostitute in you he wouldn't be marrying you so stop seeing

yourself as that, do you understand me?" she says and I can't help but cry and she comes to hug me.

"Just that I thought if I held on to the past and knew it that I won't hurt as much when those who know about it use it to hurt me."

"Those who measure you by your past are not people you should associate yourself with, you are more than that Mandy."

"Thank you Mama."

"I want to repeat these words to yourself every morning before you get out of bed. I AM NOT MY PAST!" I nod vigorously

"I will try it. Thank you so much."

"Good now let me finish."

"Okay, I'll go make myself something to eat."

•KHAYA

I have been feeling bad about how rough I gave it to Buli the other day, I mean yes, I wanted to hurt someone and all but I will admit that I took it too far. I don't care about her but she is carrying my child and the least I can do is treat her right until she delivers safely. I got gifts for her and I hope they will help soften her up. I walk in their room and she is curled up in bed, I go sit next to her and soon as I touch her, she freezes and I sigh.

"Bulelwa," I say

"Please don't hurt me."

"I won't, I swear."

"What do you want Khaya?" she asks crying.

"I want to make things right with you. I shouldn't have treated you like that."

"But you did, I know you are using me but you didn't have a right to hurt me like that."

"I know this now; I was mad and I just lost myself in the moment."

"I begged you to stop."

"You did and I should have listened."

"Yet you didn't. Don't come in here and pretend to be sorry, you are a monster Khaya Mdlalose and I wish I never met you in my life."

"Okay I know I came in here to apologise but I won't have you talk to me like you are coming down from the tree, I am not your mate. The only reason I am trying to make things right is the child you are carrying, my blood. I believe I should treat you better for his sake other than that I wouldn't even bother," I say and she is looking at me shocked.

"Now I got you all these nice things every woman would appreciate, and here is a cheque use it to go to the spa and feel better, this is all the apology you are going to get from me."

"What did I expect from you?"

"Exactly, do me a favor and go get something to eat, don't starve my child Buli because I would kill you if anything happens to him," I say standing up and walking to the door, I stop in my tracks.

"And Oh, remember we have an appointment with your OB/GYN tomorrow," I walk out and go find the driver that normally takes Buli where she wants to go, he is smoking under the shed at the back of the house.

"What's your name again?" I ask him.

"Skroof grootman" he says

"What a ridiculous name but listen I want you to keep a close eye on Buli, let me know of her every move, listen in on her conversations on the phone when she's in the car and let me know," I say.

"Okay sir" he says and I walk away, I don't trust this one she might try running away with my child and I won't let that happen, she can Fuck off after giving birth to my child and I won't give a fuck but my child stays where I am.

•AFRIKA

I look really beautiful today, I am in a short black bodycon dress with red thigh high block heeled boots and a leather jacket, I got the outfit inspiration from some magazine and I am glad I didn't let me talk myself out of it. I haven't spoken to Mpilo at all today, but I am in the car going to meet up with him. My driver is taking his time today sweet Lord. He is making my excitement subside really. We finally arrive at some hotel and there are a lot of cars parked. My eyes wonder around to find Mpilo but he is nowhere in sight. The driver like always isn't saying anything to me, and I know I should just wait for Mpilo to open the door and hand him the brown envelope. After a few minutes we are disturbed by a sports car parking next to ours, hai people are living the life out here man.

"Miss Afrika, please go to the sports car," he says and I smile.

"Is that Mpilo?" I ask my excitement sky high.

"Yes," he says and I get out of the car quickly and go to this beautiful car. I get in and he has this huge smile plastered on his face

"You look amazing sthandwa Sam," he says and I blush.

"Thank you love," I say and he leans in for a kiss, our lips touch making me feel all sorts of warmth and love. Mpilo still gives me crazy butterflies.

"Ready to hit the road?"

"Can we leave already" I ask and he laughs.

"Just a minute, your driver is putting your bag in the boot" he says and I look back it closes and he walks to Mpilo's open window and he hands him the envelope

"Thank you." my boyfriend says and my driver walks back to the car.

"Now we can leave Muhles Wami," he says and starts the engine.

"What is this car?"

"This is an Aston Martin baby," he says and I smile.

"I like it."

"I am glad you do," he presses the radio and a song starts playing, he takes my hand into his and the is comfortable silence. Soon as we hit the free-way, he fast forwards the music to a specific song that leaves me smiling.

...Riding to the music, this is how we do it (all night), all night

Breezing down the freeway just me and my baby, in our ride

Just me and my boss, no worries at all

Listening to the, Aston Martin Music, Music...

"I see what you did there," he laughs.

"I have always dreamt of playing this song while riding an Aston Martin with my lady going somewhere to relax."

"You can be romantic if you want huh?"

"You make me this way"

"I am so excited"

"Ngiyak'thanda yezwa" he says making me melt.

"I know and I love you too."

"We going to have a great time I promise."

"I am already having the time of my life," he smiles.

•BULI

I can't believe this man. He thinks throwing gifts and money at me will make it all go away, on top of it he threatens to kill me. How did I get to this point? How did I allow myself to get bent over for a married man, my mother must be turning in the grave, I am a disappointment. Maybe this is karma dealing with me, after all I betrayed one person that was willing to help me and my mom out, Ndlovukazi's tears didn't just fall in vain. I deserve

what Khaya did to me I am paying for my evil doings. Snazo walks in looking like some rich woman.

"Mzala how are you feeling?" I shrug my shoulders.

"It is what it is."

"At least you are not crying today."

"It doesn't mean I am okay Snazo."

"I didn't say you are okay though Bulelwa."

"Where have you been?"

"I was out there trying to find a man with money for myself so we can at least both contribute to our mission."

"I think I am going to say I had a miscarriage, please inform the doctor."

"Buli" she says and I shake my head.

"I can't do this anymore" she sighs and looks at the diamond necklace and earrings along with the R50 000 cheque.

"And then?" she asks.

"That is Khaya's way of apologizing," she smiles.

"See he regrets what he did Mzala."

"Are you kidding me right now?"

"I am just saying he had the decency to apologise some man wouldn't even bother Buli. In fact, I would always wish to have him misbehave so he can apologise with all the money and gifts."

"Not everything is about money."

"Where are you from honey? Because where I'm from money makes the world go round."

"You are unbelievable"

"I would rather cry with money in my bank account, looking like class and living in a mansion."

"You are unbelievable, you are insensitive so please just get out."

"I am just being honest"

"Get out Snazo," I shout and she sighs.

"Calm down," she places her bag down before walking out.

CHAPTER 85

•MPILO

Soon as we drove through the lodge my heart started racing, my throat got dry and my palms were sweating. My nerves were getting the best of me. I take a glance at Afrika who has the widest smile on her face, her excitement is visible, I just hope this lives up to her expectations. The lodge is up a cliff and I can't wait to look at the view with her in my arms. Thank God they have tar roads because it was going to be a challenge getting this car up there if it was gravel and rocks. We get to their parking lot and I stop the engine.

"This place is breath-taking" she says exhaling

"Nature is babe"

"Thank you for bringing me here Mpilo"

"It's only my pleasure muntu wam, come let's go check in" I say and she gets out of the car, she looks really amazing today. I take out our bags from the boot then lock the four-wheeler. We walk in to the reception and a lady is minding the post. She has a smile on ready to assist us

"Hello, how are you" she says

"We are very well thanks yourself"

"I am fine thank you"

"Can we please check in" I say and she nods, my woman has long left my side and is standing by the sliding door admiring the view

"Yes, sir can I have an ID please" she says and I produce my driver's license

"Mr. Mdlalose, the presidential room. You will be with us till Friday 6pm"

"That's correct" I say and she smiles handing me back my license

"This way please" she says and I signal Afrika to come. She takes my hand and we follow the receptionist. We walk a while away from the rooms till we are in view of a few more beautiful bigger rooms, she stops in front of the door

"This is your room Sir, the number to the reception and kitchen are by your phone available for you 24 hours, if you have a problem just call the reception. I hope you do enjoy your stay with us"

"Thank you so much and we will" I say and she nods and walks away. Afrika is long inside the suite; I love seeing her this carefree and bubbly and full of life. I place our bags near the couch and walk out to the balcony, she is standing there silent, I stand behind her and snake my arms around her

"This is just out of this world, it's beautiful"

"Not as beautiful as you though"

"Oh Mpilo, I feel so special and loved right now"

"As you should sthandwa Sam, I love you and you are special in every aspect of the word"

"I love you too" she says and leans her head back to me resting on my shoulder I manage to peck her lips

"Come let's see the room" I say and we walk inside. The bed is big and covered in white bedding, there is a fluffy carpet on the floor but doesn't cover the whole floor just the bed area. There is a fire place and we check it out and thank God it's electrical, because I don't know shit about starting a fire. A big couch is facing the fireplace and across it is a big screen, we make our way to the bathroom and the tub is big enough for the both of us, there is also a shower, she looks at me with a smirk.

"We've never had a shower or bath together"

"I know Muhles, you know we live like criminals" she laughs and kisses me. A knock disturbs our moment and I groan

"I will be back" I say and go open the door. It's a different lady and she is pushing a tray

"I am sorry to disturb sir but this is your welcoming drink and platter and also your gift set. It's gowns and slippers" oh I was wondering why they asked for our sizes

"Oh thank you. Please just put it over there" I say and she gets in and leaves it by the fire place, and walks out. I look at the tray and its champagne in an ice bucket, oh fuck my Afrika doesn't drink alcohol will just have to order something else for her, the finger food platter looks really appetizing. I hear water running in the bathroom and my nostril is hit by a very nice smell of bath foam. I walk back to the bathroom and my girl is butt naked, chocolate skin exposed. I hold my breath and close my eyes, getting an erection instantly.

"You joining me right" she asks and I open my eyes and clear my throat

"Definitely I say and she smirks and gets in the tub, I take off my clothes and she is looking at me intensely I swallow. Soon as I am naked, I get behind her and she has her back to my chest, her head nicely placed on my shoulder. I can't help but circle my arm around her flat stomach and my other hand to pour water on her exposed pecky breast.

"I will treasure this moment forever" I say

"This is just perfect babe" I kiss her neck and she moans when I move to her earlobe

•NOMALANGA

I failed to sleep last night, I don't know where Thuso and I stand. I came clean and told him about Khaya but he never said anything after that. He just continued cooking and we ate and watched TV, he didn't even make love to me. I wish I knew what was going through his mind. A part of me just wish I didn't tell him but if something had to happen to him, I would have hated myself for not being straight with him. I can't even focus on my work; I have been trying to analyse a case ever since I arrived at work and it's almost midday and I haven't done a thing. I just hope this is not the end of us. My door opens and Mzwakhe gets in. I am shocked to see him here.

"Hey ma" he says

"Mzwa"

"How are you doing"

"I am very well son, unjani wena"

"I am fine thanks, may I sit?" He asks

"You may. What brings you by"

"I was hoping to take you out for lunch mama"

"I wish I could but I am busy" he sighs

"Ma please I am sorry"

"What are you talking about now"

"Ever since the Afrika thing, things between us haven't been the same and I miss you ma"

"What you did Mzwa"

"I know I disappointed you Ndlovukazi but I just wanted my father to see me"

"Your father's attention should have never been anything you long for. Mzwakhe your dad is a toxic man and if you want to be like him then I am afraid for you but mostly for your children"

"Ndlovukazi, you were not so concerned about Mpilo being close to dad"

"Because he never was close to him for vicious reasons, he has never gotten innocent people in this business without their consent, Mpilo did what he did with Khaya because he wanted to that's why it is easy for him to cut his ties to your father but you are looking for his love and acceptance, you are trying so hard to be the perfect son you are losing yourself in the process" I say and he is looking down

"I just want my mother back"

"I have always been here I was just waiting for you to show remorse to what you did to Afrika" I say

"I swear I am sorry"

"No, my baby you are not because it got you your father's conditional love and attention and I hope you see your father for what and who he really is before it's too late"

"Ndlovukazi"

"I am your mom and I love you even though I am not for the decisions you make at times"

"I love you Mama"

"I love you too sweetheart"

"I need your help with Mpilo" I shake my head

"No, you messed it up, fix it yourself" he sighs

•BULI

I couldn't stay in this house any longer and Khaya must pay for what he did to me. Yes, I hurt Ndlovukazi and broke a family but no I didn't deserve what he did to me and I am not going to blame myself any longer for what he did. I asked the driver to take me to the shopping centre around the neighborhood and when I got there, I requested an Uber and used the other entrance/exit to go to the waiting taxi. The driver took me to the police station and I paid him and walked in. I stop by the charge office door to really ask myself if this is what I wanted to do. I wipe my tears and walk in, I find a woman at the front desk

"Hello" I say in a low voice
"What can I do for you" she says without returning my greeting
"I want to open a case"
"Everyone wants to open a case sisi, you will have to be more specific" I swallow
"Uhm I was raped" I say dropping a tear and she looks at me, finally
"That's sad" she says and I calm down feeling like she gets my pain, she starts asking me questions and I respond openly and she writes down
"Who is the perpetrator, do you know him?"
"Yes, I do" I say and wipe my tear
"Can I please have his name and address so we can be able to go arrest him soon as we get an arrest warrant" I nod
"It's Khaya Mdlalose" I say and her eyes shoot up
"Oh" she says nodding but doesn't write down anymore
"Can you please come with me to the office" she says and I narrow my eyes but I just follow her no questions asked. We get to the office and she shows me where I can sit down.
"I will be right back" she says walking out. A part of me feels great about reporting this to the authorities. Men like Khaya must know that they can't rape women and believe that they can get away with it all. The cop has been gone a while now, what's going on. I don't want my driver back at the shopping centre to start looking for me. The door opens and my heart literally stops when he walks in, wearing his suit. He shakes his head and goes to sit down on the chair far from me
"Oh Bulelwa" he says and I just can't help but cry, how could she call him here, this is supposed to be a safe place for victims like me
"What did you think was going to happen, I own this town sweetheart, everyone is on my payroll"
"I am sorry I wasn't thinking straight" I say looking at him with pleading eyes
"Clearly because you thought you could get me arrested" he says then laughs.
"I am sorry it will never happen again" I say
"Get up let's go" he says and extends his hand to me, I take it scared out of my mind. He wipes my tears and we walk out. I am literally shaking in my boots, I regret coming here I should have just packed my bags and left now he will have me watched 24/7, I've dug myself into a deeper hole.

•AMANDA

My baby sister send me pictures of the place Mpilo took her and God it's so beautiful, she also send me photos of them and as much as I tease her with Mpilo they actually look good together, she looks happy with him and that's all that matters to me, seeing her happy always. My mom went to the mall to do some groceries since it's month end, the money Afrika sends us from her job really comes in handy I swear it give us a comfortable life, I really appreciate her for sacrificing her hard-earned money for us. A knock comes through the door and I groan, visitors in this cold weather, why didn't Sibonani lock the gate. I get up to go open and it's a job on its own. I open and an elderly couple is standing there looking at me
"Sanibonani" I say
"Hello sisi, how are you"
"I am very fine thanks how are you"
"I am fine thank you" the woman looks like someone I know
"Can we please come in and talk" I frown but move aside to let them in. I close the door and show them to the dining room, they settle down and I do the same
"How can I be of help"
"I take it you are Amanda" I nod

"Yes, ma I am Amanda"
"Thank God we found you" she says
"Indeed, and congratulations on the beautiful gift you are carrying" the man says and I smile
"Thank you baba" I say
"I am sure you are wondering who we are"
"I am"
"Well we are Dineo's parents" he says and I freeze
"We are not here to remind you of the bad our daughter did to you and we are truly sorry for it all" the woman says
"How can I help you" I ask irritated now
"Dineo is doing really well at the psychiatrist facility, the doctors are happy with her progress but she will remain there for a while"
"Good for her" I say and they sigh
"Our daughter is not well Amanda she is sick and everything she did was because she wasn't receiving the help that she needed but now she is and she is getting better" the mom says
"I hear you but what can I do for you" I ask once again
"Dineo asked us to reach out to you and humbly ask you to please go and see her" he says and I laugh
"Why would I want to do that baba after what she did to me" I say and he nods
"I understand my dear but"
"No, you don't understand, because if you did you would have told her to leave me alone"

CHAPTER 86

18SN

•KHAYA

Soon as I got the call from my contact at the police station, I left everything and went straight to the station. Bulelwa thinks she can destroy me, and she almost could have if she had went to another police station but I wouldn't be worried about doing jail time, not with lawyers like mine, the only worry was the press getting a hold of this story and my name being dragged in the mud for a loose woman such as Bulelwa. She had been crying ever since we left the station and I haven't said anything to her. I want her to think of the worst thing I would possibly do to her as punishment. We get home and neither of us gets out of the car.

"Who took you to the station"

"I requested an Uber" she confesses

"From the house?"

"No, I asked the driver to take me to the mall and I requested from there" I laugh

"You conniving bitch" I say and she cries

"What did you think was going to happen Bulelwa"

"I wasn't thinking Khaya I am really sorry please forgive me"

"I am Khaya Mdlalose baby no one and I mean no one can touch me, I run these streets"

"I know this please"

"Did you even think that people were going to believe you a nobody hoe who fell pregnant for a married man after seducing him in his home and caused his divorce, I would have cried temptation and the world would have believed me " I say making her cry more

"You know that is not what happened Khaya"

"What is it that I don't do for you Buli?"
"You do everything and I appreciate it"
"You clearly don't because you almost got me arrested"
"I am sorry I swear it won't happen again"
"You right it won't happen again because I am not going to allow it to happen"
"What to do you mean"
"I mean you are not to leave this house unless you have a doctor's appointment of which I will accompany you to. You crave anything you want to buy anything send your driver or buy it online"
"You are keeping me your prisoner that is not fair" I roll my eyes
"Life is not fair sweetheart. Until you give birth to my baby you are not going anywhere"
"Khaya please" she begs and I must admit I like the sound of it, I get off it.
"When you get in the house pack your shit and move to my bedroom and also tell you cousin to pack her shit and get the hell out of my house" she gasps for air
"But-" I shake my head disturbing
"This is not a discussion neither am I am asking you. Do as I say Buli because if you don't you won't like the monster I will become" she cries harder when I open the door
"You better be silent; I don't want people asking questions and oh give me your phone" I say
"Please"
"Don't make me punish you for the shit you did today, hand that phone over" I say with a Stern voice, and she open her bag and hands it to me.

•MPILO

I woke up before her and she is sleeping so peacefully on her side of the bed, she's lying flat on her stomach and her back is exposed, she slept in her underwear only and I was hot the whole night wishing to make love to her, but I promised to wait until she feels ready. A strand of hair is falling in her face covering her eye a bit, her thick juicy lips are slightly patted. Till this day I can't get used to how her beautiful chocolate skin glows, she is so flawless I swear I have never seen such effortless beauty in my life. I love this girl and I wish I could show her just how much. I was about to peck her lips when she wiggles her nose making me smile, her eyes slowly flicker open and soon as she meets my eyes, she closes hers again and her lips curve forming a smile
"Starring is rude" I chuckle
"I couldn't help myself babe"
"Good morning" she says opening her eyes
"Morning Muhles wami, how did you sleep"
"I don't think I have ever slept so peacefully in my life, how about you"
"I slept great because I knew I didn't have to wake up early to sneak out of your room or vice versa" she giggles
"I know right, God not having to sneak around like thieves for a change"
"We have a few things planned today"
"Please tell me we are going to explore this whole place"
"Definitely my love, we have a game drive, get to experience the real wild and then they will show us the best views, even got a camera to take proper pictures of you" she laughs
"Your expensive phone would have done the job but thanks babe"
"Don't try to sound smart with me here, I am trying to be romantic"
"You are definitely not trying baby you are romantic" she says and I kiss her
"Let me call the kitchen to have them deliver breakfast for us while we shower"
"Great idea" she says sitting up straight as I make the call. When I am done, she gets out of bed and comes to my side

"Come" she holds out her hand and I take it. She leads us to the shower and gets in first opening the taps, I stay out while looking at how lively she is, how I wish the world would let us be. The water Cascades down her naked body and I see her nipples harden I can help but bite my lower lip. I take off my boxers and join her. I step back soon as I am in the shower

"Kodwa muhles this water is boiling" she laughs

"Haibo babe, this temperature is just fine"

"For you maybe but I am a man babe, and Johnny and the twins down there don't do well with boiling water" I say and she laughs

"Oh boy I am sorry" she says and adjusts the water

"That's better" I say and step close to her. She takes the sponge and pours the shower gel and starts washing my upper body

"I love your tattoos"

"This is the first time I am hearing this" she smiles

"I thought I've mentioned it before"

"What else do you love" she smiles

"Well your beard and that scruffy hair" I smirk

"I was planning on cutting my hair"

"No please don't" she says and I smile and take the sponge from her and turn her around, one hand snaking her stomach and the other washing her breasts, they are so sexy, I can't resist

"What do you love about my physical self" she fishes

"Your chocolate skin is my weakness babe fuck you don't understand muhles, then the crown on your head like babe your fro don't ever lose it. Then indaba ila" I say and squeeze her but she jumps a bit I laugh

"It's not big mos"

"It's the perfect size for me" I say and kiss her neck and I get the same moan she forever dishes out when I move to her earlobe, I erection pokes her butt instantly

•BULI

Regrets replaced the blood in my body and I couldn't even sleep, I wish I had listened to the sangoma lady when she told me to run as fast as I could, see where my ignorance has gotten me, see where greed and short cuts has landed me. How I wished I had accepted my simple life, yes, I would sleep hungry sometimes but I was happy and free. My life was mine and I had the power to decide how I live it, but now I have become Khaya's prisoner till I birth his child, what child at that because this damn thing is all fake, I don't know what I am going to do, I don't even want to think of what he would do to me if he finds out that I lied about carrying his seed. Oh, Bulelwa what have you done to yourself. Snazo walks in from the bathroom wrapped in a towel.

"Morning mzala"

"Hi" I say and she frowns

"You are still in a sour mood from yesterday"

"I am fine"

"What happened at the mall, didn't get what you wanted"

"No man, not everything is about material things" I shout at her

"Haibo"

"I went to the police station to open a case against Khaya and guess what that damn cop called him, can you believe how corrupt our system is Snazo, the same people that were meant to keep me safe took me back to the bastard" I say with tears

"You did what? Come on Buli you can't be this naive, of course Khaya has cops in his pocket"

"What Snazo what kind of monster are you"

"No Buli what kind of fool are you" I laugh
"You know what just pack your shit and get out" I say and she laughs
'this is not your house"
"Well good thing the owner is one who told me to tell you to fuck off" I say and she blinks a couple of times
"Khaya kicked me out?"
"Yes, Snazo he wants you gone" I say and she sits down on the edge of the bed
"Oh my God" she says in a low voice looking at me straight in the eyes and I just let out a sigh

•AMANDA

This whole Dineo thing is weighing down on me, how does she think? How does her brain work honestly what in her right mind makes her believe that I would want to come and see her after all the evil she did and planned against me? I haven't spoken to anyone about it, I am still shocked at how her parents would think it's okay to come and make that request on her behalf. A text from my boyfriend comes through from my phone telling me that he is outside. I get off the couch and go to my room and put on the warm flee blanket around my waist and bump to keep the baby warm -it's all Sibos teachings- she would flip if I went outside without doing this. I walk out and he is parked by the gate. Soon as I get in the car, he frowns

"You are not happy" he says and I smile
"Why do you know me so well again"
"Because you are my rib" I blush
"Right" I say and he laughs
"Talk to your man baby what's wrong, you hungry?" I roll my eyes
"Yes, I am hungry but it's not that"
"Will drive to get you food after you tell me what is bothering you, deal?"
"Okay deal. So yesterday Dineo's parents showed up" he clenches his jaws
"What, what did they want"
"They came to apologise on behalf of Dineo" he laughs
"After so long really"
"They came because their daughter sent them"
"What and they listened to her, what could she want from us after all she did"
"I wonder how they all reason in that family"
"What was the message the came to deliver"
"Well she asked them to please beg me to come and see her at the facility"
"You are not going there"
"I wasn't planning on it babe at all"
"The nerve" I shake my head
"I want you to forget about all of this and focus on Saturday and keeping our baby safe okay"
"Always babe" he smiles
"Now what do you want to eat"
"I want chicken dust from the junction by the mall"
"You've always complained about the hygiene what changed"
"I am craving that questionable hygiene you know" I say and he laugh
"Bathong Amanda"
"It's your baby love. Blame him" he rolls his eyes
"My poor baby" he says and starts the engine.

•AFRIKA

Mpilo and I had the most amazing day ever, for the first time we were holding hands in public and some PDA and it felt good to just be us and not worried about Khaya or Mzwakhe seeing us. I am getting to know Mpilo more and for me it's not a process at all it's a form of art and it's absolutely beautiful. How would I have known that he is afraid of creepy crawlies if we were back in Johannesburg, or learn that he prefers his bread microwaved first before eating. Each and every moment is a reminder of how perfect and fitting he is for me. We had just finished bathing when the reception called and asked him to come through apparently there is some problem with our room bookings or something like that. I am going through my bag trying to find something to wear. The red matching lace thong and bra and the see-through red cover up appear and I bite my lip. I wanted to wear this for Mpilo on Friday when I give myself to him, but why the delay, I am ready and the sexual tension is just high. I quickly lotion again with oil and slip on this sexy number, I am excited and scared at the same time. I do something with my hair quickly and just gloss my lips like I always do. I remove the bag on the bed and quickly tidy up and go look at myself in the mirror

"You are becoming a woman today" I say to myself and smile ignoring my racing heart. I had planned to play this song for him and I hope he doesn't find it old school or anything. I quickly connect my phone to the smart TV and play the song Tonight is the night by Betty Wright

...You're knocking' on my door and you're ringing' my bell

Hope you're not impatient after waiting so very long

A whole year I put you off with my silly hang-ups

And we're both old enough to know right from wrong

Tonight, is the night

That you make me a woman, mmm...

You said you'll be gentle with me

And I-I hope you will, hmm...mmm...

I'm nervous and I'm tremblin'

Waitin' for you to walk in

Tryin' hard to relax

But I just can't keep still....

The door opens as this woman sings, and his eyes land on me and he swallows the words he wanted to say and just looked at me from head to toe

"Mmh you look amazing love" he says and I look down and start walking to him slowly, I stop when I am right in front of him and he gasps for air.

"Mpilo I am ready" I say looking at him straight in the eyes and I swear I don't know where I am taking this courage

"Baby, you don't have to if" I cut him

"I want to, I am ready" I say and he brings his face closer to mine and inhales deeply, one hand slides from my thigh till it lands on my butt, his touch warm and seductive, sending shivers down my spine both our breathing have escalated at this moment. Out of nowhere he takes my lips into his and while trying to get through the kiss he picks me up and I wrap my legs around him, he walks forward while we are kissing and stops, his kisses move from my lips to my to my neck and I tilt it back giving him easy access, he bites a little and I moan and that's when he places me down gently on the bed and I open my eyes, his are red and small it's like he is high on something. He gets on top of me and comes for my lips again gently and passionately, I am rubbing his back but the T-shirt is in my way so I help him out of it quickly and he moves down and licks me from my thigh till his nose land on my good girl I gasp when he inhales and after that he groans and holds on to my hips, he moves the cover up and kisses my belly and makes his way up to my left breast and starts sucking on it while he gently massages right breast, it feels really good I am rubbing his head eyes closed.

Next thing I know he removed my cover up and I am left in the bra and panties, his one hand moves to my back and like a pro he unhooks my bra and helps me out of it, he moves back to sucking my breast and I let out a moan, I am dripping with wetness between my legs I feel so hot, my Vagina is literally pulsating. I feel both his hands slide down to my waist and holds on to the thong and slide it down he jerks his body to be able to pull it out of my legs I am left completely naked and exposed he gets off me and I open my eyes to see him as he takes off his sweatpants and his erection springs free, he comes back on top of me between my legs and I feel it poke my entrance

"Oh Mpilo"

"I am going to make love to you now baby"

"Please Mpilo" I beg for it and he holds one leg adjusting it and before I could even think I feel him slide in his enormous size inside of me and I hold my breath, it stings a bit so I bite my lower lip, he pushes through the second time and I feel like something just shifted, he doesn't move giving me a chance to get used to having him inside of me, I kiss his neck and he starts to move slowly and slowly and I am getting used to the movement, involuntary moans keeps escaping my lips his pace increases a bit and I start to feel the pleasure this whole thing is meant to make me feel, his breathing and groans make me hot more hot and my hands move to his sexy butt and he just goes crazy, his pace increases, he thrusts in and out of me making me lose my mind and feel this pleasure I never knew existed, his strokes are equal and deep and I can't hold on to my moans and screams, the movements he does with his waist make me lose control, how can I not enjoy this, he quickly moves his arms under my thighs and jerks me up and I feel him deeper inside, I go crazier and bite his shoulder when he parts my butt cheeks and feels like he just added an extra spice.

"Oh baby, ahhh Mpilo"

"Are you enjoying me as much as I am" he asks in a barely audible voice that sends me straight to cloud 9. He kisses me and I suddenly feel something building up around my waist and I can't send it away, it's too nice for me to even want it stop happening I keep on building up until I feel like I am going to pee myself, oh God not again, I try to press my thighs together but he is in between them thrusting in me, the urge to pee becomes stronger I don't think I can hold it in any longer

"Let it go baby, cum for me love, allow your body to let it go" he says and like a command I relax myself and what I felt next I never expected it, I exploded with so much pleasure I couldn't suppress my loud moan

"Aaaahhhhhh Mpilo ahhhhh have baby please"

"Yes my love, give it to me" he says pumping into me through my shaking legs, his pace is faster now and he is making deep sounds and he is holding on to me for dear life. I am kissing his exposed neck as his face is buried at the side of my head

"Aaaaaahhhhhh ahhhhhaha" he moans into my ears and stops moving completely. My legs are shaking like crazy and his scent is driving me insane. We are both trying to normalize our breathing, he picks up his head and I open my eyes and he is already looking at me, I suddenly feel shy, he kisses my forehead with a wide smile

"That exceeded my expectations babe" he says and I look away

"Don't be shy baby, look at me" I look at him straight in the eyes and blush

"Ngikak'thanda muhles Wami (I love you my beauty) and I feel honoured to have been the one to deflower you"

"I love you Mpilo yam and I wouldn't have had it any other way, I feel like a woman" I say, he smiles and kisses me

"My woman"

CHAPTER 87

•NOMALANGA

I haven't seen Thuso ever since I told him that Khaya is actually behind this whole ordeal. Our phone conversations have become short and cold, the same one's that used to brighten my days and make me happy have become the cause of my fowl moods and sleepless nights. I miss him so much, sometimes I wish I could just drive to his house and tell him to stop all of this and go back to being the man I chose me and who lifts all my burdens, but his child's life was in the firing line because of all of this, because of Khaya and he wouldn't have done this if I wasn't a part of his life. The thought of not being together leaves a bitter taste in my mouth I fight off the tears. I have been playing with my food at the breakfast table.

"Mama are you okay?" Bahle asks and I look at her

"I am fine baby" I say giving her a faint smile

"Obviously not sthandwa Sam, you look besides yourself, playing with your food like that; I mean you hate that"

"I will be okay, just a lot happening at work"

"Are you sure it's not your boyfriend?" I chuckle

"No nana Thuso and I are fine"

"Can we have lunch sometime this week?"

"I would love that baby girl"

"Friday afternoon"

"You got yourself a date" she smiles and bites her sausage. Buli walks in and takes a seat, she looks besides herself

"Good morning" she says voice so low it's worrying

"Hi Buli, how was your night"

"Just another night Ndlovukazi, yours?"

"It was okay thanks. I see the baby is starting to grow" I say and she gives me a faint smile, even a fool could see it's completely fake

"Yes, it is" did she really refer to her child as it, I don't know if I was the only one who had a pet name for their child soon as I found out I was pregnant.

"Are you okay?" She lets out a deep sigh

"Yes, just woke up on the wrong side of bed" I nod

"Pregnant mood swings, do what you enjoy after breakfast and your mood will greatly improve" I advise

"I will try that thank you"

"Oh, have you tried pregnancy yoga?"

"No, I haven't"

"Listen a friend of mom did it with her second baby and she sings it's praises, I will give Siza a call and ask her about the place and maybe you and Khaya can go because it's like a couple's thing" she nods and stands up

"Please excuse me" she says and leaves the table

"And then; what's her problem?" Bahle ask and I shrug my shoulders, something is wrong with this girl, I just hope Khaya didn't do anything to her I mean she is pregnant with his child

"You will never know with pregnant women; you will experience it someday" I say

•DINEO

I am really doing well, and receiving all the help that I need, I am super grateful that Lethabo and Amanda took me to a facility rather than prison. My parents have been super

supportive and for the first time in my life I feel like they really love and care for me. It hasn't been easy being in here, some days I am at my lowest because of doing the same thing over and over again. A knock comes through my door before the person walks in, it's one of the nurses.

"It's time to take your meds"

"Okay" she hands them to me and I drink and open wide she looks and gives me a thumbs up.

"You have visitors, let's go"

"Anyone I know" I ask feeling optimistic

"I think so, you know I work late shifts so I don't know who normally visits you" she says and I pray its Amanda. We walk out of my room and she leads me to the visitors' lounge, soon as I see my parents I frown, their smiles disappear too

"Not happy to see us?" my father says

"No, it's not like that. I was hoping it's Amanda you know" I say and my mom sighs

"Oh, sorry my baby"

"Did you get a chance to go and see her"

"We did Dineo, and she is....." he sighs

"She refused, didn't she?"

"Yes, she didn't want anything to do with you my baby. I am sorry" ma chips in. I won't lie I am so hurt, I thought she would really come out here and hear me out. I want to apologise sincerely for everything I did to her

"She isn't ready to face you Dineo"

"She never will be ready dad. All I wanted to do was apologise"

"We understand that but you will need to give her a break" my father says

"But I too don't understand why she is being difficult; I mean our daughter was unstable at the time and she is better now" my father gives her a look

"Don't speak like that, that girl is still deeply hurt by all that has happened, we shouldn't pressure her into forgiving you. all we must be doing is pray to God and ask him to bless Amanda with the spirit of forgiveness and our family with the spirit of patience" he says and I sigh

"I guess you are right dad thanks" I say

"Come let's all pray" he says and we hold hands

•KHAYA

I have people watching Buli and her every move in my house, I want to be aware of everything she gets up to even the number of times she goes to the bathroom, I don't want any surprises from her anymore. I think I should even get cameras in the house once and for all just to see what she gets up to. I check my emails for the millionth time and still nothing from Mpilo, I just hope everything is going well in Colombia. My office door opens and I smile when I see who it. I lean back as he walks in further, my assistant runs in after him

"I am so sorry Mr. Mdlalose I tried to tell him that he can't come in here without an appointment" poor girl says panicking

"It's okay, he is an old friend of mine" I say and she exhales and walks out closing the door behind her.

"What a lovely surprise Judge"

"So, you think you are the only one who can really play dirty" he says and I frown

"What are you talking about" he chuckles

"You overstepped the imaginary line we had and I thought you understood this after all thugs like yourself do live by the rules" I laugh

"Are you going to say what you came here for or you are just going to stand there and sound like a philanthropist" I say and he sighs

"You know very well why I am here, I am not going to waste both our time by getting into detail because already I am so damn mad at myself for coming here and allowing you to drag me with you in the mud but like a man I am not going to sit by and watch you come for my life or anyone I hold close to my heart" he says

"If that is the case you know what to do" I say and he shakes his head

"I am not going to leave Nomalanga because you feel like she is your property or whatever you think she is in that tiny little brain of yours"

"Oh well" I say

"Listen I might be principled and ethical but I will go the extra mile like you just to protect my territory"

"I am scared, literally shaking in my boots" he laughs

"Remember I am a judge and I am influential person amongst my peers so don't push me to a point where you find something illegal miraculously pop up somewhere in your personal space which will lead you to finding yourself in my courtroom or a friend of mine and not even a bulldog like Razor will get you anything less than 15 years inside, so I beg you please continue to think that you can play God in my life or Nomalanga's" he says and walks to the door leaving me clenching my jaws. Damn, damn, damn! I take my phone and dial Razor who answers after forever.

"What"

"That's not how you answer someone who pays you" I say

"I have so much money and you know this, probably your pay check pays for my children's entertainment" he says and I laugh

"You asshole, quick question"

"Make it snappy I am on vacation with Sizakele she would kill me if she saw me on the phone, I was given 5 minutes to check my email"

"What would happen if you were to piss off a judge" he laughs

"Then I might as well quit law because I would never win any case in that judge's courtroom or their associates and trust me pissing off one judge is as good as pissing them all, they protect each other"

"I see" I say pissed off because I am going to have to back off for a while from this damn judge. I will find a way to get him out of my way I should just let him believe that he won "Sharp" he hangs up.

•MPILO

It still feels surreal, it still feels like I am dreaming. This was not my first ever virginity breaking experience, but it was definitely my last and it exceeded my expectations. I had imagined how love making would be with Afrika but doing it for real, I must say I have a mediocre imagination because the reality was much better, warmer, more sensual, it was intimate and I felt myself connect to her soul. I still cannot believe she initiated the whole thing. We didn't even sleep last night we stayed up and spoke of our hopes, dreams and the life we wish to have together, I got to know her better and deeper and God blessed me with not just a beautiful and smart woman he blessed me with a pure heart, he blessed me with a soldier. I am just staring at her and she looks amazing I guess the glow is extra you know with what happened last night and early hours of this morning. I didn't want to over work her hence we had only 3 rounds and I wish I could have gone for more, now that I know her secret place just want to bury myself in her every chance I get. The delicious thought of last night creep in and my cock twitches in acknowledgement. I can't resist, I get closer to her and kiss her lips and run my hand up her thigh to her ass and she open her eye and I smile when she opens the other one. I get closer until our bodies are touching and I feel hot instantly; I want to feel her arousal all over my hard cock, I want to hear her moans as she

takes in the pleasure I am giving her, I want the privilege of hearing my name come off the tip of her tongue while she is high on nothing but me

"Baby" she says in a sleepy voice

"Good morning" I say and kiss her neck

"I am tired" she says and I smile

"I know babe but I will do everything myself, I just need you to look the other way" I say and she doesn't wait for me to ask twice, she looks back and her butt touches my hard cock, I kiss her exposed back and touch her breast playing with her hardened nipple and she moans, I get closer to her and move down a bit. My hand moves from her breast to her honeypot and she is dripping wet already from me merely touching her, feeling her arousal drip down her thighs just made me hungrier for her. I lift her leg up a bit and directed myself inside of her and she lets out a satisfactory moan as I slide in, I can't explain how I am feeling right now so I just let out a groan and close my eyes

"Mmmhhhhh" I start moving slowly

"Oh Mpilo" she says and like ecstasy I get high off my name coming out of her mouth while she feels me deep inside of her, I keep my thrusts equal and slow and I don't plan on changing my strokes

"You are mine do you hear me" I say lost in pleasure

"All yours, ahhh baby yes"

"Aaahhhh mmmhhhh Afrika baby what are you doing to me; fuck I am going to cum" I say

"Please don't stop yet baby please" she says and I am going to try to last longer but her slick pussy isn't making it easy for me

"You are so wet Muhles fuck" I hold on to her hip and give her all of me

"I love you oh sthandwa sam I love you so much" the words are out of her mouth like a prayer, I direct her face to look back at me and kiss her but she can't concentrate on my kisses because of the pleasure, I totally understand. I hiss as I cum losing my mind, I don't wait to calm down I just flip her and get on top of her and give her more faster strokes and the look on her face satisfies me as a man, her moans in my ears are more than motivation, I pull out and drag her down adjusting her, just when she thought I was going to penetrate her I start rubbing her clitoris with my cock and she cries and starts holding on to the sheets for dear life, I do it more vigorously and her moans gets louder and I know she is near, I go on and on rubbing her clitoris and her pussy lips with her arousal, she arch's her back and curls her toes grabbing some more of the sheets and like rain she squirts all over me and the bed, her legs starts shaking uncontrollably

"Mpilooooo ahhhhh baby" she says and nothing beats seeing your woman come all over the place, I look down at her while she tries to calm down from the pleasure she just felt.

"I never thought I would feel so much pleasure from sex"

"I am glad you are enjoying sex with me babe"

"You are the best I love you"

"Ngiyak'thanda nam munt'wam" I say and she blushes. There is a knock on the balcony sliding door taking me away from this intimate moment.

"Yes" I shout

"Mr. Mdlalose your brunch is served" the female voice says

"Thank you so much we will be right out" I say with a smile

"Brunch, what time is it?" Muhles ask

"Almost twelve babes, you slept through the entire morning babe, come let's take a quick shower and go eat" I say and she pulls me down to her for a kiss.

"Thank you" she says with her ever so beautiful smile

"Anything for my Queen" I say and we get off the bed to shower quickly.

CHAPTER 88

•LETHABO

After work I drove to the mall and got Amanda's ring, it's so beautiful and I don't doubt that she will love it, after the negotiations I am taking her to some beautiful park and she will have her pregnancy shoot there while it gives Afrika a chance to prepare her things. I am so excited I don't even know how to contain it; I have looked at this ring a million times now. I put it in my drawer and walk out to find my mother who I find in her room looking at pictures of me when I was still a baby

"Reminiscing about the past" I say and she smiles

"You were the cutest baby alive"

"Aow magriza"

"I can still remember the joy and peace I felt in my heart when I first held you at the hospital, you were so tiny and perfect" I smile

"And right there and then you decided that no siblings for this one" she laughs

"I would have loved to have more children but circumstances didn't allow me"

"I understand mama, but at least you will have 2 more additions to your family"

"I guess so"

"I can't wait to meet my son ma you" I say and she holds my hand

"You are going to be the best father to your children Lethabo"

"That's all I've dreamt of mama to be a loving, supportive and present father, I didn't have that so I don't want to put my child through it" she sighs

"Do you wish he was around"

"When I was younger yes, there were a lot of things I needed from him but as I grew up I accepted that I will never get to know him and I was okay with it, after all you did the best for me mama I didn't want for anything"

"And you turned out great, you are the best child my love" she says and I kiss her knuckles

"That's because I have the best mom" I say

"So, Amanda will be staying here after the lobola" she asks

"I would have loved that but she said she will move after our baby is about 3months"

"Haibo what is her reason"

"She wants her mom to help her out you know till she gets the hang of things as she is a first-time mom" I say

"I can help her with that Lethabo after all that child is a Mafa" I sigh

"Ma please, this is Amanda's decision to make and you will be able to go to her house and visit the baby and they will both visit on weekends until the move here with us"

"After you happy with the decision she made"

"I would love to have them here with me immediately after Saturday but I understand her reasons" I say and she nods

"If you are happy with it then who am I to dispute it" I can't do this so I just stand up and walk out of her bedroom.

•AFRIKA

This whole experience has been magical, I always thought I wasn't missing out on anything when it came to sex but now, I know that I have, the pleasure is just too much I don't know how to explain it. Turns out when I feel like I am peeing I am actually cumming and it's called squirting, Mpilo explained it after he deflowered me and I was embarrassed thinking I messed up the bed but it was pure pleasure. I am a woman now and I couldn't have chosen any other man worthy of my pureness as Mpilo, he is my first love and first everything, I don't want to do anything if it's not with him. We are sitting in the balcony watching the sun set, the view is amazing and this hot chocolate with marshmallows just tastes heavenly.

"I wish we could stay here forever" I say and he looks at me

"I know my love, I hate the fact that we have to leave too, I loved our little bubble"

"From being so free and happy and having to go back to hiding just makes me so sad"

"I am sorry mules but trust me we going to be spending a lot of time together"

"I trust you and thank you again, I had the best time" he smiles

"No thank you mami for giving me your innocence, it truly means a lot to me and it showed me how much you love me, and I want you to know that I will forever cherish you and love you the way you deserve" he says and I smile

"You are just amazing" I kiss him

"As you are to me Afrika, I am God's favorite son" he says

"Why do you say that"

"Because he saw me good enough to have you" I blush

"Did you have to make me melt like this though" I say and he chuckles

"I am just being honest babe"

"I appreciate it trust me"

"So tomorrow I have one final surprise for you" I narrow my eyes

"Can you please tell me please"

"I am taking you to meet my aunt"

"She stays around here?"

"Yes, she is here in Mpumalanga, I was with her that time I was away"

"That to you almost beat your brother to death" he laughs

"Yeah that time sthandwa Sam"

"You are a hot head yaz" we both laugh

"Wait till you meet Smangele"

"Your aunt?"

"Yes, she is the total opposite of Ndlovukazi"

"Now I can't wait to see her"

"You going to love her and don't take anything to heart baby"

"Oh boy"

•BULI

I walk into the bathroom and ensure that my fake tummy is sitting properly and we'll adjusted, I have to sleep with it now that I am sharing a room with Khaya and this thing is uncomfortable. I put on tights underneath, then my pyjamas and my gown on top. When I walk back in the bedroom, he is in bed busy on his tablet. I don't acknowledge him I just go to the side of the bed and remove the extra pillows and get in, I switch off the side lamp and put my head on the pillow.

"Why would you sleep dressed like that" he asks and my heart stop for like a nano second

"Because this is how I want to sleep will it also be a problem Khaya"

"Bulelwa you are being crazy; this bed has an electrical blanket if you are cold"

"Can you please leave me be please" I say in a low voice.

"How the hell will I have access to you" I chuckle and get out of bed

"This is for exactly that, you are not sleeping with me anymore Khaya. I might be your incubator but I am not your sex slave. You made it clear that I am only here because of your child and let it remain the only reason why" I shout and he is looking at me shocked

"I will let this outburst slide and blame it on the hormones" I laugh

"Don't you dare touch me Khaya because if you do, I will cry rape to everyone who dares to listen" he laughs

"You haven't learnt, have you? I own this baby"

"You obviously haven't dealt with a desperate woman" I say and his lips form a thin line and his jaws clench and I know he is mad

"You trying to act like a boss"

"I am trying to get you to leave me alone, do you think you can be able to do that? I mean I am here I am your prisoner and I do whatever it is that you want but my body is off limits"

"And what makes you think you a say in any of this"

"Because it's my body and you will leave me alone or I won't be held responsible for what I do next" he laughs

"Right madam Buli" a smirk on his face.

"You think this is a joke right, continue" I get in bed and shut my eyes feeling his heavy gaze on me.

•AMANDA

I was in my room fitting the dress I will be wearing on Saturday and it fits perfectly now, I am grateful for Sibos wisdom she is the one who advised me to buy a dress size bigger than because now it fits properly if I had bought my size I wouldn't have a dress to wear. I go out of my room to go find my mom who's been locked up in her room, when I walk in, I find her sitting on the edge of her bed shaking like crazy. I quickly make my way to her

"Ma what's wrong" I ask hugging her

"It's hard Amanda it's hard I am afraid I will fail"

"What's going on Sibon, you are scaring me, why are you shaking?" I ask tears already forming in my eyes, hearing her so like this hurts me

"Today has been the worst day. I am craving alcohol and I am just afraid that I will give in to it and the last thing I want to do is hurt you and Afrika" she confesses and I hold her tighter

"Oh mama"

"It's hard Amanda, it's taking everything in me to stay away from the bottle but some days are harder than others"

"I am sorry mama; I know it's tough and I am sorry I have been so consumed in my own things that I haven't stopped to ask you how you are handling all this"

"You don't have to apologize I am just grateful to have you in my life"

"Please know that I am here for you as you are for me and when you find it hard please talk to me" she lets go and I wipe her tears

"Oh, Mandy thank you my babes"

"Don't you think you should go to rehab"

"No, I don't want to go, I want to be here with you and your sister. I want to be here when my grandbaby is born, I will fight this every day until the urge finally stops"

"I will be here every step of the way"

"Thank you"

"Can we please go to the doctor and see if we can get you some medication to take away the cravings"

"I would really appreciate it"

"I am sleeping with you tonight" I say and she laughs

"Huuu my poor bed"

"Come on we are not that big"

•NOMALANGA

I step out of the shower and dry myself; a week is almost over and I still haven't seen or heard from Thuso, I don't want to be the one to reach out to him. I want him to take time and think then get back to me, I won't lie this silence is killing me and making me uneasy, what if he wants nothing to do with me anymore hence, he hasn't said anything to me. I just wonder if he is alright at all or if he is able to sleep sound at night with how everything is going at the moment. I finish applying lotion and slip on my pyjamas. I remove the pillows from my side and put them on Afrika's side. I get in bed and adjust my pillows. My rings and I sigh. I take it and my heart jumps with glee as I see the caller ID, I answer immediately

"Hello"

"Sunny" his baritone voice just soothes me

"How are you"

"If I say I am okay I would be lying"

"Me too" I murmur

"I miss you Nomalanga and-"

"You don't understand how much I've been waiting to hear you say that"

"I am sorry for being silent for so long, it has just been so crazy and I am sorry for shutting you out" he says in a low voice, I feel his sincerity

"Just don't do it again please"

"Please come home tomorrow"

"Okay"

"I love you"

"I love you too Mr Moroka"

"Okay let me leave you to sleep I will call you in the morning. Goodnight" I smile

"Goodnight" I hang up and just 1 phone call to improve my mood.

CHAPTER 89

•AMANDA

My mom didn't have a good night at all, she was shaking all night and I was so scared, soon as we woke up, I poured her some water to bath in the basin and for myself as well. I wanted us to be the first in line to get the doctor to see her. She is such a good doctor people come from near and far to consult and I believe she will know what to do with my mom. She arrived around 10am and the receptionist said it's because she had to start at the hospital before coming to her practice.

"You may go in" the assistant says

"Thank you" we stand up and make it to the consultation room. She is already sitting behind her desk and she smiles when we she lands her eyes on eyes

"Hello" she greets us

"Hi doctor" we say in unison

"So, who is my patient today"

"My mom is"

"What seems to be the problem"

"So, a while back my mom was diagnosed with alcoholic hepatitis and she had to quit alcohol"

"Oh, so sorry to hear that. So, you haven't touched alcohol since, right?"

"Not at all doctor but I have been craving it so bad I am shaking and it's just so hard"

"I totally understand, are you a part of any support group"

"Yes, I attend support group at our local clinic twice a week" Sibò tells

"That's really good, having to talk to people who know exactly what you are going through helps and seeing them fully over alcohol will prove that it's possible. So, would you be willing to do an inpatient detoxification programme?"

"What is that doctor"

"In simpler terms it's rehab"

"I want to be better for my children I have lost a lot of time with them as I was focusing on my pain and alcohol, I don't want to go away from them not for even for a week I can't it feels like I will be neglecting them all over again" she says crying and I can feel the pain laced in her voice. The doctor is just nodding

"I understand and we can look at a different treatment plan"

"Thank you so much"

"So, I will start you on medication called acamprosate, which may help combat alcohol cravings by restoring the balance of certain chemicals in your brain"

"Oh, thank God"

"Be back here in a week so you can tell me how they are working if not we will look for another type of medication okay"

"Okay thank you so much"

"You are going to beat this, and please be there for her too she needs to know that she has people she can count on" I nod vigorously

•NOMALANGA

I am still so full, my daughter and I had a heavy meal at lunch, I don't think I will want anything to eat until tomorrow morning. It was really nice bonding with Sbahle, you know a girl is her mother's best friend and things between us have never been rosy, with the attitude she had and my no nonsense self we clashed most times and she decided to preference her dad over me and it's nice having to be close with her. It's never too late. I drive in and park my car behind one I don't recognize. I walk in the house and Kenny G is playing his sax I swear I just went back to the good old times. I find Thuso in the kitchen pouring some wine.

"Hi" I say and he looks up at me

"Sunny"

"I see you are relaxed nicely" he smiles

"I had a long day really I needed to relax"

"I understand what you mean"

"Would you like glass?"

"Yes please" he takes out another glass and pours me the dry red and walks towards me and hands me a glass and we walk to the lounge and he lowers the volume, I sit and he places his glass on the mini table and takes my legs removing my shoes and then places them on his lap and gives me a foot rub, it feels so good

"So Sunny"

"Mmmm" I say lost in his touch

"I really want to apologise for being so cold and distant"

"I understand where you were coming from and I feel responsible for what happened to your daughter I mean if I wasn't a part of your life Khaya wouldn't have done that"

"You don't ever have to worry about Khaya trying to cause problem for us" he says and I frown

"We can't be too sure of that" he smiles

"Trust in your man"

"What did you do?" He chuckles

"Nothing we had a one on one and we are now on the same page, he knows that there are lines he must not cross"

"I don't understand"

"There is really not much to say but trust in me"

"Okay I trust in you"

"You sleeping over?"

"Yes, I am unless-"

"Unless nothing Sunny. What do you feel like eating?"

"I am so full had a heavy lunch"

"Okay I will make light snacks then"

"Okay love thank you"

•MPILO

I was kind of sad to be leaving this place and going back home, my girl and I had the most amazing time getting to know her and know what makes her tick. It has been such an intimate time in our relationship and I am grateful for every moment I got to spend with her, with no interruptions. I am packing our bags in the boot and she is still in the room making the last touch ups. I decide to check out immediately before going back to the room. The process is fast and I am back in the room and find her by the balcony, I go and stand behind her and snake my hands around her waist

"You are back" she says and I kiss her neck

"Yes, baby we packed and ready to go"

"I am so sad God"

"I know Muhles, I am not okay myself, I don't want to leave this bubble we have created"

"The thought of hiding like what we doing is wrong is really not fair" I turn her to face me and tears and streaming down her

"Hey please don't cry baby please" I say and place her head on my chest and hush her

"It's just so painful Mpilo"

"It will all be okay muntu wam, I promise we will spend more time together even when we get back to Johannesburg"

"I love you so much and I wish they could just let us be, we are not doing anything wrong being together"

"Kuzo lunga baby (it's going to be okay)" I assure. I won't lie hearing her break down like this hurts me

"Baby please don't cry" I say and she breaks free from my hold

"I am sorry I am just-" I interject

"No need to apologise babe. I understand the frustrations because I feel them too. Ngiyak'thanda Afrika kakhulu futhi (I love you so much" and if it were up to me, I would spend all our time together locked away from the world"

"We going to make it right?"

"We are going to make it babe" I say and wipe her tears

"We can go and thank you once again for a wonderful time"

"Thank you for taking time out to come with me, you could have been with your family but you are here with me and I truly appreciate it and you" we kiss and walk back to the room. I take her handbag and we walk out hand in hand

•KHAYA

I step out of the shower and lotion really quick; I check the time and it's after five minutes after 7, I am already late for dinner I am pretty sure that my family is already down and waiting for me. I put on my sweatpants and t-shirt and get jump into my morning sleepers, I don't remember the last time I wore such a lazy outfit, it feels so comfortable I won't lie. I walk out of my bedroom and descend the stairs. When I get to the dining room, I find no one and the table is only set for one and that's for me clearly. What the fuck is going on here.

"Sbahle" I shout and no response

"Bulelwa" still nothing. I sigh and I hear footsteps approaching, it's the damn maid

"Mr. Mdlalose" she says bowing down a little

"What the hell is this, where is everyone"

"I set up for your dinner sir, I was waiting for you to come down so I can serve you"

"Where is everyone why am I being served alone"

"Ndlovukazi called and said she will be out for the entire weekend, Miss Sbahle said she is going out with her friends" I sigh

"And where is Buli"

"Oh, she had her dinner earlier and said she will be outside by the pool"

"Okay" I say dismissing her with my hands

"I will go get your food" she says leaving for the kitchen, I go take my sit and she comes back and places my food in front of me, as I am eating it hits me. I look around the dinner table that was used to being full of people and food, laughter and banter. I realize that I am left alone in this big house all alone and the only person available is someone I don't care about at all. Fuck how did I get here. I take a sip of my wine and look at the family portrait on the wall and sigh. It's nice being at the top but it's fucken lonely I won't lie

•AFRIKA

I am sad I won't lie but I am consoling myself with the fact that I get to sleep with him again tonight before heading home tomorrow. The drive to his aunt's place seems long but Mpilo says it isn't such a stretch from where we were. I can't really wait to see his aunt the way he speaks of her I can tell she is a total mood. We drive in some

neighborhood and I can tell we are almost there. I sit up straight and he smiles at me. He parks at some big house by the corner and there are people sitting outside with music playing so loudly

"Oh Smart" Mpilo says and leans back after killing the engine

"She is a party person"

"She is the party" he says and I laugh

"I can't wait to meet her now"

"Okay babe, let's go and see her so we can hit the road" he says and we both get out of the car and he is already holding his hand out for me. We walk inside the yard and it's just guys and a girl who is way younger to be his aunt

"Eita" Mpilo greets and they return it

"Sure sure"

"Where is Sma" he asks

"She will be back she drove out to go get more beer" he nods and we walk towards the door and we walk in, the house is nice and clean. Mpilo sits on the couch and pulls me to sit on his lap, we kiss.

"Babe, stop you aunt will walk in" I say and he moves his kisses to my neck

"Sma won't be back so quick"

"You can't be so sure"

"I know her. I have a room here"

"And so?" He chuckles

"We can have a really quick one"

"Mpilo" I reprimand him and he chuckles

"I know you want me too" I blush

"I do but not in your aunt's house" he doesn't answer but takes my lips into his and I hold his head caressing him

"Aow the bold and the beautiful" a voice says and I get off Mpilo quickly and sit down embarrassed out of my mind, Mpilo stands up laughing

"Ncane"

"Yes, Rich Foster" she says and I suppress my laugh

"Let it go man Sma" she takes a sip of her beer straight from the bottle

"Manje seyiphelile I honeymoon yenu (so you back from your honeymoon)"

"Ncane, this is Afrika my girl I told you about and Muhles this is my aunt Small" I stand up and hold put my hand she looks at me and smile

"Aow 4 eyes I've heard so much about you. You driving my nephew crazy last time I saw him the police were looking for him but he didn't care he just wanted to go back to you. Limnandi ikhekhe lakho girl ngiyak'vuma" she says and I look down not knowing how to respond to that

"Aow kodwa ncane" she laughs

"Unganginaki Afrika icondo yam inoku baleka (don't mind me, I tend to lose my mind at times)" she says

"It's okay"

"Umuhle man nomnyamazane (you are a beautiful dark skinned) you give these Yellow bones a run for their money and if he gives you any problems just squash his balls and he will never do it again" I laugh, she has absolutely no filter God.

"Aunty don't tell my girl to be violent with me hao" she clicks her tongue

"Ai suka you do know I am team Afrika, now right?" She asks and I smile

"Oh wow" Mpilo says raising his hands

"Nomnyamazane Mina ngishaya ibeer ngik'zamele iWine nyana? (Dark lady I drink beer so should I find you some wine)"

"No thanks juice will be fine"

"She doesn't drink alcohol" she looks at me

"You don't drink? Then how do you deal with this big-headed thing" she asks and I just laugh

"You are such a sell-out Sma yoh"

"Hade ntwana yam" she says chuckling. She is definitely the total opposite of her sister Ndlovukazi is so reserved Sma is just unique and I love her

CHAPTER 90

•AMANDA

My big day finally arrived and I honestly can't believe that by the end of this I will be someone's fiancé and not just any man but the most selfless, loving and supportive man. Lethabo has been one of the reasons why I believe God has shown me mercy and favor. Girls with a past like mine are never seen as good enough for being a mother or wife and I am glad I managed to live past that stereotype. We also deserve to be loved and appreciated. It's just after 10am and I am already in my dress and my mom is done cooking for both delegates and as much as she is going through a difficult time, today she woke up and made this day about me, her joy and excitement was just rubbing off on me. My phone beeps and I go take it from my chest of drawers. It's a text from Afrika, it makes me smile.

Today is the day the Lord has made for us to be glad and rejoice in it. Congratulations sister I don't know anyone who deserves happiness as much as you and I hope Lethabo just knows how blessed and lucky to have you. I love you Mandy her text leaves me with peace in my heart and tears in my eyes

Thank you so much Nana and I love you too I text back and the door opens, mama walks in.

"Babes, his uncles are here" she says and my heart's starts to beat faster

"I hope everything goes well"

"We started this day with prayer the is no way anything can go wrong" I smile

"Thank you, Mama you are just, the best"

"It's a pleasure love, let me go get everything ready. I will be back to check up on you" I nod and she smiles and walks out, I go peep through the window and it's 3 gentlemen. One starts yelling our clan names

[Shandu kaNdaba, Mthiya, Ndabezitha, Sontshikazi, Khumbula Mgwala, UShandu ubengakanani ngoba nasentendeni yesandla uyahlala. Kanti nala umkhonto ucije ngakhona uyahlala athi cababa. UShandu owalima insimu eyilimela izinyoni zase zimbonga zithi tjiyo.

UBhabha Magwaza, unkentenkente olwakhwela izintaba zaseNhlazatshe kwaze kwaphuma abafazi bengabhincile bethi ingabe lolunkentenkente lunkenteza lwenzani. Ndaba Komkhulu.]

The Sesotho accent trying isiZulu kills me but the fact that they took the time to learn my clan names give me hope that they fully support my marriage to their son. After like 30 minutes the gentleman representing me and my family walk out and open the gate for them and they all walk inside. The house goes dead silent and I am trying to keep come and wait for my mom to tell it's all over. My phone rings and it's Lethabo

"Husbae"

"Say that again please" I giggle

"My husbae"

"Hey wifey, how are you?"

"I am so anxious babe; I just hope everything goes well"

"Don't worry Ama nothing is going to ruin this moment for us. Everything is going to go perfectly you'll see" he says and now that he's said I believe it more

"Thank you for making an honest woman out of me Lethabo"

"Thank you for making me a man amongst man Amanda" he appreciates me back and I am left blushing

"We are going to have such a beautiful family love" I say and I swear he is nodding

"Definitely babe. Listen I am going to pick you up soon as they are done with the negotiations"

"Where are you taking me though"

"You'll see just be ready when I get there" he says and I smile

"Okay bae later" I say and hang up. I hope through my social media and after like forever I hear my mom ululating and I stand up impatiently for her to walk in through that door. I was about to walk out when the door opens

"It's done my baby" she says with a smile on her face and her eyes are shining with tears

"Oh Sibó" I say exhaling

"I am so proud Amanda; I am so happy to have been a part of all of this. I love you my babes" she hugs me

"I love you too Sibó" I tell her and she let's go

"I was listening in on everything and that boy paid every we asked for"

"That are not going to come again"

"Not at all they came prepared I am telling you"

"How much did you want ma" she laughs

"I am not telling you that today" she says and I make a face.

"Aow Sibó"

"Ai suka, come they want to see you" she fixes my dress and we walk out

•MPILO

I get home after dropping off Muhles at the events office. It was really hard having to be separated from her, we have been practically joint at the hip. So, I kind of feel somehow not having her with me. The house is dead silent, to his place is not as warm and lively as it used to be, and we all know who to blame for that don't we. I approach the corridor and my father appears, seeing this man just drains blood from my body. I sigh

"I make you that sick huh" he says

"You have no idea" I say straight to his face

"I get that a lot from my enemies you did say I should regard you as one right"

"What do you want"

"How did everything go in Colombia"

"Everything is sorted"

"That is not you briefing me"
"I just sat in a plane for hours think you can give me a minute to breath"
"My employees don't get time to relax why would I treat you any different" I roll my eyes
"Well in that case I will compile a brief and send it to you"
"You could just tell it to me Mpilo emailing me will just waste time"
"I would rather waste my time than sit down and talk to you"
"Your level of disrespect just goes up with each passing day"
"You are a tiring human being Khaya just let it go please"
"Get out of my face Mpilo"
"Gladly" I say and walk past him. Why didn't I just stay at the hotel a while longer?

•AFRIKA

We get to my house and my mom made sure that the garden is well trimmed and without wasting anytime, the decor people start getting on with the job of setting up, well a while ago I started saving my allowance from the bursary to plan my sister's baby shower, she probably thought she wasn't getting any but I wouldn't let that happen. My mom is super excited I don't think I've seen her like this before
"So how did everything go?"
"Everything went really well babes. They paid everything cash so I wouldn't be surprised if they went to home affairs to sign tomorrow"
"That's great ma, I am so happy for her"
"She will be so happy to get home and find this surprise thanks again for organizing this" she says
"It's the least I could do mama after all she has done for me"
"She is a really special person"
"That's very true"
"So, when will the food arrive"
"I texted the caterer and she said she is leaving her place in 30 minutes" I answer her taking out my phone to check if she hasn't texted back
"She knows this place?"
"I sent her our location ma"
"So how was your trip" I smile from ear to ear
"It was amazing mama, like the I have never seen anything that beautiful, the view was breath-taking, and the sun rises are just out of this world"
"I saw the pictures you sent I was so jealous" I laugh
"I will save up and definitely take you there"
"Yoh I want to go to Durban first, wear that swimming costume"
"I will talk to Mandy and we can go soon as the baby is bigger you know"
"Okay nana, I will start with a diet to look great who knows I will find you and your sister a step father"
"Huuuu Sibó" we both laugh
"So, did you get her outfit"
"I found the perfect dress and a coat"
"That's great but at least the weather is behaving"
"I prayed about this weather hle"
"Let's go check the decor" we walk out and these people are professionals they are so quick and the little they have done already shows how perfect this set-up will be.

•LETHABO

The madam is so grumpy that I won't tell her where we are going or what is in the suit covers in the back of the car. She is so cute when she is angry, even the music I am playing

seems to be annoying her, we just got married traditionally we should be over the moon but it is what it is. She will be smiling and laughing in a minute, we drive into the park in town where the photographer is waiting.

"What are we doing at a park Lethabo, you could have taken me to your place and made love to me do you know how sexually frustrated I am and you don't seem to care" she says and I sigh

"Babe relax please, we will ask your mom to allow you sleep over just for tonight"

"Fine" she says and I shake my head. I park and walk out taking the suit covers filled with clothes she will change with for this pregnancy shoot. I open the door and help her out, and we walk to where the shoot will be and God the setup is so beautiful, soon as she realizes her hands move to her mouth and she looks at me

"Baby" she says

"Surprise" I say and she starts crying

"You are so considerate babe thank you so much sthandwa Sam"

"You deserve it all babe" I say and we greet the photographer and we don't waste time she starts snapping pictures of Ama in the dress she is wearing and she looks breath-taking. I decide that this is the perfect time to do this, I go to her and take out the ring and kneel down in front of her and my cry baby just starts with the water works

"Lethabo" she says

"Lerato laka, I know it's already done and you are mine traditionally but I wanted to give you this ring to prove that I want this and I am ready for the life we are going to build together. Amanda please wear this ring as sign that you are proud and happy to become my wife and life partner" I say and she is smiling at me warmly

"Of course, love of course I will" I take her hand and slide the ring down her finger

"You are just a dream come true Lethabo. I love you so much" I stand up and we kiss. The photographer is still taking snaps of us and I couldn't be any happier capturing this moment.

"Okay let's not waste time, go change into any something in one of these covers and let's get this over and done with" I say and she takes the covers excitedly and moves to the changing booth the photographer came with. Her colleague is already at the house to capture the baby shower moments.

•NOMALANGA

We just got home from the hospital to see Naledi, she is healing really well and the baby is getting stronger with each passing day, I am just glad that Khaya's evil doings didn't claim their lives

"My grandson just looks so much better"

"I am thinking about that"

"Thank you for coming with Sunny"

"Always love"

"Should we just go eat out or we will order and have them deliver to the house"

"I will cook for a change baby" he smiles and looks at me

"I would really love that"

"I am so glad we are okay"

"Me too Nomalanga"

"And oh, I am going to drive up to MP to reach out to my sister" he smiles

"That is great baby it has been a long time and it's time let it go, family is very important and she is the only sibling you have"

"That's very true, I just hope she gives me the time of day"

"Trust me she is probably waiting for you to reach out to her"

"Hopefully"

"So, when do you plan on going"

"During the week" he nods as he parks in our street

•AMANDA

I will remember this day for the rest of my life, my pregnancy shoot was just the icing on the cake, it got me more hyped up I swear. I can't wait to share to his with my mom and sister and for them to see the pictures, they are just so amazing. The other highlight of this all is the ring on my finger, it's exactly my taste I love it so bad. The car stops and people scream SURPRISE and I shoot my eyes up and I see Afrika, Spha and Nate with another white girl I think it's Nate's friend, 2 of the girls I chill with at school, Lethabo's cousins and my mom, I look at Lethabo and he is smiling

"You sly fox"

"SURPRISE selallane saka (my cry baby)" I smile and wipe my tears

"So many in one day though, babe" go your friends are waiting. I kiss him and walk out of the car

"You guys" I say and guy them all

"Congratulations sis" Afrika says

"You don't understand how happy I am to see you" I say holding on her for dear life. I didn't think she was going to come

"I wouldn't have missed this day for the world"

"When did you get back"

"Last night and stop today is all about you sis, come" she drags me inside and I still can't get over how cute and intimate my baby shower is. I change into the dress and coat and some cute block heels; I am being pampered for real today. She fixes my hair and we walk out. Everyone is already seated and I get so emotional looking at the support I am getting from my friends and family. I sit down and Nate is on his feet coming to get the tiara on my head and the belt written 'mommy to be'. The colours are so beautiful and so me and the cake looks amazing the gifts are more than the number of people here.

"Oh, guys this is just so beautiful"

"You have your sister to thank, she really pulled it off" Spha says and I blow my baby a kiss

CHAPTER 91

•AMANDA

Yesterday is officially the best day of my life to date. I have never felt so much love and support and the fact that my sister is the one who organized this whole thing for me just makes it extra special. My baby has the best aunt ever and the fact that my mom is also here and trying keeps me at ease and it gives me strength. Well everyone had the best time and the baby shower went on until later, even though I was already tired I held on and stayed with them and after they left I went to beg Sibho to allow me spend the night with my husband and you don't want to know what she said, it was hilarious but hey I am waking up next to him and that's all that matters to me. He went out to go get us our cravings at our local shopping centre and I decided to use this as an opportunity to clean his room because he wouldn't allow me do it. As big as I am, I managed to work quickly I was mopping the floor towards the door. I am all done in no time and I go rinse the mop.

"Oh Amanda, I wasn't aware you are here" my mother in law's voice says

"Oh, morning Mama, I got in with Lethabo last night after my baby shower" she frowns

"Oh, I wasn't aware that you had a baby shower"

"You and I both ma, it was a surprise and your son was in on it too" she smiles but it doesn't reach her eyes like always but it doesn't bother me anymore. I am completely fine with the fact that this woman will never fully accept me or see me worthy of her so

"He didn't even mention it to me, hai Lethabo"

"I am sorry" I manage to say because I honestly don't know what to say

"He also tells me you will be staying with your mom after the baby is born" I can tell that she is not for that so I mentally roll my eyes

"Since this is my first child, I want to be close to my mother so she can help me out, but I will move here soon as I get the hang of things"

"I see" she says in a tone I don't appreciate but I am not going to take it to heart, I won't let her ruin my good mood.

"Okay ma, I was busy cleaning in the room, I will be in there if you need me"

"Okay ousi" she says and I walk back to the room.

•BULI

I have started avoiding being in the same space as Khaya most of the time and it is helping me keep my sanity, I am just glad that my little threat worked because he hasn't tried to touch me at all. I stick to my side of the bed and he sticks to his and I couldn't be any happy with the arrangement. I spend my days out here trying to figure out how I am going to make it out of this house and run away with the money I have. I think I am still going to stick to the plan of running off to Nigeria and starting a new life all together. I look up and I see the devil approaching from the house making his way to me. I sigh

"Bulelwa" he says sitting next to me

"Khaya"

"How is the baby"

"The baby is fine Khaya, the baby is growing, the baby is fed" he exhales

"I am not looking to have a fight with you Buli"

"Then what do you want"

"I don't want to give you any stress as that would just give you health conditions and in turn harm the baby" he says and I look at him shocked

"Who are you and what did you do to Khaya"

"O spoke to a friend of mine who knows about these things and she advised me to just give you a break" he says

"I thank God for your friend"

"So please anytime from now a pregnancy masseuse will come to see you and give you some pampering" he says and I swear my heart stops

"I don't want anyone touching me so no thank you" he chuckles

"I wasn't asking you Buli, I was told to help you relax so I am doing exactly that" he says and leaves me scared to death. If this masseuse comes Khaya will definitely know that I am not pregnant and that will be the death of me, oh dear lord what am I going to do. I need to get out of this house as in like yesterday, my life literally depends on it. I wipe my tears with shaking hands.

FEW DAYS LATER

•NOMALANGA

With each kilometre I cover I get more nervous; I don't know how Smangele is going to react to seeing me but knowing my sister the possibility of her kicking me out is higher than any of us could think. My sister is the total opposite of me, she isn't afraid to say her mind whether or not it hurts the next person or not long as she said her peace you will deal with your emotions on your own. I finally drive in the neighborhood and all the memories of my childhood come back, we had a great upbringing and we were so close and it all changed so

fast and things were never the same again with me and my younger sister. As I get to the house, I see that it is extended, wow she really changed this place. There is a VW Golf 7 parked in the yard. What if she sold this place and moved God? I gather all my courage and strength out of my car and walk in the yard. I take a deep breath before I hit my knuckles on the wooden door. I wait for a few minutes and the door opens. She looks at me for a while and I am glad she still lives here and she didn't sell our parents' house. I was about to say something when she closed the door in my face, I am shocked. I was about to knock again when she opens

"So, I am not dreaming" she says and I sigh

"No, you are not"

"Yini ulahlekile? (Are you lost)"

"No Smangele I am not lost" I assure her

"Then ufunani lana Miss World (then what are you doing here)" she asks sounding annoyed with me

"I came to see you"

"See me do what? I am not singing I am not dancing so see me for what exactly" she says and sips on her beer.

"I just want to talk"

"Yoh" she says and walks back in the house and I follow her

"How have you been" I say following

"I have been living my life just how you left me all those years ago" I look down embarrassed

"Sma" it comes out as a whisper

"Nomalanga you said you wanted to see me and you did so why are you still here?"

"I am actually going to stay a while"

"I hope you booked your hotel" I give her a look

"Why would I do that when there are rooms here" she takes out a cigarette

"Ngisayo bema mina uyangi phathisa intloko (I am going to smoke because you really giving me a headache right now)"

"Sma I really want you to know that I am sorry and I miss you so much mntase'khaya"

"This would have made a really bomb Khumbul'ekhaya episode" she says and laughs making her way outside. She is going to give me a tough time God I should just be ready to work on getting her to give me the time of day. I notice a picture on the TV stand and I go pick it up, it's a picture of her and Mpilo and it's not an old picture, why didn't he tell me that he was in contact with her.

•AFRIKA

Being at home is really nice and peaceful and I wouldn't trade these moments for anything in the world. I am alone in the house since Amanda went to see her OB/GYN, she wanted to find out if there wasn't a way for her to induce labour, she is so huge and always tired, she is ready to pop the little man out. I understand her frustrations but she needs to hold on a little while because she is due this month so I don't see why she should induce it honestly. A knock comes through the kitchen door and my mom gets it and a second later Larona walks in

"Tsala" she says and I narrow my eyes, God I haven't seen her in like forever

"Hey you" I say standing up to hug her.

"Afrika, since you moved out of-" I quickly cut her because my mom will hear her

"Ssshhhh" I say and she gives me a weird look

"What" she asks

"Nothing, how have you been" I change the subject

"I am great hey, enjoying the holidays, what about you" she asks looking around the house

"I am fine thanks hey"

"So, I couldn't believe when your neighbour told me that your mom is sober now and your house has transformed" I frown

"I wasn't aware we are the talk of the time"

"You have no idea; everyone is wondering how you guys managed to live this life all of a sudden" I laugh

"God loves us all Larona" my mom walks in and places two glasses of juice and snacks on the coffee table

"Afrika I am going to the shopping centre; I will be back soon" Sibona informs me

"Please don't forget to buy me my hair serum"

"You good thing you reminded me I had forgotten" she says walking out

"This is unbelievable, I remember how this place used to be like now look at it, Funny how things change" she says taking the glass of juice.

"Like I said God loves us all" she shrugs her shoulders

"So, tell me where have you been Afrika" I sigh

CHAPTER 92

•AMANDA

The doctor refused to induce labour and said that the baby will come when he is ready and apparently it could happen any day now. I really can't wait to pop him out honestly, I miss having my body to myself and I doubt that makes me a bad mother, I am just tired of having to go to the toilet every minute. I am also over the fact that I can't go out of this house and Lord knows I don't do well staying in one space all the time. My baby sister walks in with some food, there is something different with Afrika, how she carries herself how she speaks and acts.

"I thought I was going to die with boredom in this whole house alone"

"Where is Sibongile?" she asks

"Support group"

"Oh yes how could I forget, so I brought you food" she says handing me a take away and it smells heavenly

"Where did you buy this" she smiles

"My boyfriend's restaurant" I give her a look

"Mpilo has a restaurant? Shut up!" I say and giggles

"Yes babes, and soon his club will also be up and running"

"Wow that is really impressive babe"

"I want to convince him to buy a McDonald's Franchise and bring it to this neighborhood"

"That is genius babe it would really make him a lot you know a well-established brand that is affordable around the people" I say

"Exactly" I smile and high five her

"You sure know how to date a loaded guy huh, advising him so good"

"I try hey" she says and I smile even her confidence has improved

"Afrika"

"Mandy"

"Are you sealed or has Mpilo had his way with you" I ask and she looks away failing to contain her smile.

"WHAAAAAAAAAATTTTTT?" I say and she frowns

•NOMALANGA

I knew Sma was going to give me a difficult time but yoh she is making me sweat like crazy. She isn't giving me the time of day, she even leaves early in the morning and late at night, she is ignoring me bluntly and its kind of hurts my feelings but I honestly don't blame her. I cooked a hearty meal -lamb shanks and samp- and I bought her enough beer and some wine for myself. I just want us to have a one on one and the opportunity to sincerely apologise to her. I hear the gate open and I go peep and she is the one opening it, she drives in and leaves the gate open clear sign that she plans on driving out again. She walks in.

"Mntase" I say

"Yaz une'scefe Nomalanga yoh (you are so annoying)" she says and it stings a little

"I cooked, please have a meal with me" I ask politely and she sighs

"Will that stop you from annoying me every minute of every day?"

"I will try, have a meal with your big sister please" I plead

"Fine" she takes a seat on the couch and I smile, the first thing I do is get her beer and open it, I walk back and hand it to her and she takes it without saying anything. I go back and dish up for the both of us really quick. I hand her a plate and I sit down next to her.

"So how have you been?"

"How do you think Nomalanga?"

"Sma I know I messed up and I hurt you but please I am trying to make things right here"

"Well you are years late for that, I have learnt to live my life without my only sister" her statements hurt so bad I am left feeling so guilty.

"I am really sorry for everything mntakama"

"Do you have any idea what I went through in my life and I had no one absolutely no one to help me get through it. Mpilo was there but he never knew what to do because he was a child and he is a man. I needed my sister I needed you and you were not available for me. Losing my twins and almost dying myself was the hardest thing I had to go through and it still hurts" she says trying so hard not to cry and my hands have moved to my mouth, I never knew she was even pregnant. Oh God

"Sma. Oh, I am so sorry I am really sorry forgive me please" I place my plate on the table and kneel in front of her

"I am really sorry I wasn't there but I am here now and I am asking for your forgiveness and another chance" she is trying so hard to keep her tears from flowing and I just wish she would allow herself to be vulnerable.

"How do we pretend like it never happened" she asks

"We don't pretend Sma we work through it"

"I have spent all my life fighting my demons alone and now you are here trying to act like you care" her words just keep on hitting home

"You don't have to fight them alone now, I am asking to be there for you like I should have all those years ago, and God knows I wanted to reach out but I was ashamed of myself my pride wouldn't let me show up here and admit that you were always right about Khaya" she sighs

"Nomalanga"

"Please Smangele please" she brushes her forehead.

•MPILO

I had a great day with my girlfriend, even though we have to be careful with meeting up but we are making it work. We are at a great time in our relationship and I feel like I could share my happiness with someone else because keeping it to myself is just not satisfactory. My mom is the only person from my side that knows about us and there are some things I can't share with her about my relationship.

"Are you blushing" Sbahle's voice draws me back from my thoughts

"Oh, hey sis, what's up"
"Nothing much, I asked if you are blushing"
"You misinterpreted my facial expressions" I say laughing
"You are doing it again Mpilo" she says folding her arms
"You are being crazy"
"Am so not and you know it. So, who is she" I smile?
"There is no she Bahle" I wish I could just share it with her but I don't know if I should confide in my little sister, yes she has shown tremendous amount of change but I am not sure if she would be able to keep such big news to herself
"Have you ever even had like a proper relationship?" I chuckle
"I am not answering you buddy nope no ways"
"You are such a bore really"
"Ikuphi imbuzi yakho (where is your goat)" I ask and she gives me a warning look
"Don't disrespect your Sbale (brother in-law) like that" I roll my eyes
"I don't remember receiving any lobola sis so stop with the titles"
"Mxm calm down. Would you like anything to drink" she asks
"I would do with a cold beer" she nods and goes to the bar. She is really trying hey, we can hold a conversation without her being a brat about something.

•AFRIKA

It seems like everyone in this neighborhood is not happy that my mom is being a better person and that things are finally looking up for us, the rumours that go around about us and how we make our money to survive and how we got all this nice furniture. It's just tiring and having Larona come here too to fish for information was just too much. I told her that I am happy that she has healed from the painful experience she went through and I made it clear that I couldn't continue being her friend because I still don't trust her. She was shocked and her shock made her say some really nasty things and that proved that I made the right decision cutting her out of my life once again, she never tried reaching out to me for months but as soon as she hears negative stuff she comes running here to fish for information so she can go and fuel the fire out there. My phone rings and it's Emily, I sigh and answer

"Hey Em"

"Babe, how are you?"

"I am great thanks, really good to be home with my family"

"Oh yes I forgot that you on holidays" she says quickly

"Yes babe"

"Do you think you are still going to be able to go mission black book"

"That's the first thing I will get to immediately when I get back to the Mdlalose house don't worry"

"I just want us to get this whole thing done with so I can get justice for my brother and your dad"

"Definitely" I agree

"Okay let's talk later and enjoy your time at home"

"Thanks babe" she hangs up and I sigh, I really need to get this ball rolling, the sooner I get the black book and check what is in it the better, for justice and for me and Mpilo I need Khaya Mdlalose out of the way. He is a monster terrorising innocent people and he has gotten away with it; it's enough now, it has to stop and I will stop at nothing till he is locked up and the keys are thrown away. I am scared, yes, but I will work smartly and carefully so I don't get caught and put my family in more danger.

•NOMALANGA

We were done with the crying and I am happy she opened up to me and let me in on her pain and I hate myself for not being there when that monster almost beat her to death and killed her twins in her womb, I will live my life trying to make right by her. The alcohol has started kicking in and my wine is finished.

"So vele you divorced that pig" she asks

"It was long overdue Sma, I just wish I saw him for who and what he was earlier"

"But then again you wouldn't have your children, you wouldn't have had injayam uMpilo" she says and I smile

"I can't believe he never mentioned that he was in contact with you ever since"

"I live on Mpilo Nono, he sends me money every month and he built this house for me and got me my vrrr-phaaa" she says and I smile

"He has always been a great child" I say

"Are you sure that he is Khaya's son" I laugh

"Haibo Sma, I have never been with another man until recently" I confess

"Nomalanga nifeba seni gugile" I burst out laughing

"That's my cue to go to bed plus I ran out of alcohol" I say

"Ai sit down and have beer with me"

"Absolutely not" I say cringing

"Hai alcohol is alcohol. Just drink I won't tell the world that you went left. After all, under that snob there is a serious kasi girl" she says shoving the bottle in my hand and directs it to my mouth, I don't want to be a party pooper so I take a sip and it's bitter

"Nono take a gulp man so your tastes buds can get used to it quickly"

"I am not a beer person kodwa so allow me take my time"

"It's better if we do one man one quart (bottle of beer)"

"Siza lala nje (will we get some sleep)" I ask and she is already on her feet getting the beer. Sma is a bad influence but it's nice bonding with my sister so let me just let loose. I take a gulp of beer and close my eyes taking in the bitter taste.

CHAPTER 93

•NOMALANGA

I only took a few days to come see my sister and now that everything is okay between us, I have to go back, my cases are waiting and I am due in court real soon. Much as I loved these few days with Smangele duty calls and I must respond. I have a responsibility towards those people so I must go back home plus I miss Thuso. We are in the bedroom I am using packing my things and Sma is sitting in bed watching me

"So, you really don't want to pack your things and leave with me" I ask

"No not yet I will follow soon"

"Sma"

"I still need to take care of a few things before packing up my shit and leaving"

"What other things kodwa"

"I am seeing this other fool so I still need to give him some goodbye sex" I laugh

"So, this is not you trying to bail out on me because if this is overwhelming for you, I could understand" she sighs

"Nono I already agreed to uproot my life and move to Johannesburg to be with my you and your children"

"I just don't want to seem like I am forcing you" I say

"Trust me if I didn't want to leave, I would have told you straight up no lies"

"I am glad that you want to be close to me as much as I want you to be too" I confess

"You now sounding like siya nyobana Nono ai man (we are in a sexual relationship)"
"Smangele how does that poor guy cope with you because you have no filter at all you just say the first thing that pops up in your head" I ask
"It actually turns him on" she answers
"I don't want to hear anything about your sex life, you will traumatize me" I say
"Mxm. So, what are we going to do with this house" she raises the concern.
"I don't know mntase for now let's leave it closed and we will see what to do with it" I say
"Okay then" I exhale
"I am all done let me hit the road" I exclaim and she nods
"I will see you soon, drive safely and don't tell Khaya I am coming I want to give him the shock of his life" she says
"I am all for that sister" I say excited to I know Khaya will be pissed off to learn that Sma and I are in a better place.

•AFRIKA

Another day with my boyfriend and it brings me real joy. We are really making this work even under the hostile environment his father has subjected us under but we are not letting him, we are putting us and our love first, and every minute we spend together seems to brings us closer together as a couple. We are at the club/restaurant office which we have turned into our own bedroom and everything else, we have a bed in here and we keep it locked always. We are both naked with our legs tangled and watching something on his laptop, our sex life is so great, each time we are in the same room I just want to rip off his clothes and have him give me so much pleasure. The thought of him makes me feel hot and bothered. I move my hand to his private part and he gasps for air
"You have become so insatiable" he says chuckling
"And who is to blame for that" I ask with a wide smile and he shakes his head
"What monster have I created; my dick is going to fall off"
"I am that bad huh" he smirks and pecks my lips
"Babe I will give it to you just now but now I need advice on something" he says and I balance my head with my hand looking at him
"I am all ears babe" he nods
"I have so much money in my offshore accounts and I need to move it around and turn it into assets but I honestly don't know which business to venture into" he says
"So, I was talking to my sister about this the other day, so how about you buy Franchise rights of well establish and known restaurants like your McDonald's and Spur and build them all around the country. McDonald's you could build around township shopping centres since it's affordable for everyone you know plus you did say you want to own a chain of restaurants" he smiles
"Okay that's a good idea I will find more information about it and get it running ASAP, but babe I was looking into something that could make me a lot of money and something that deals with luxury" he says and I frown
"Luxury huh"
"Yes" I keep quiet for a minute and an idea finally hits me
"You know rich people right and a lot of them, and since you are rich yourself you know the kind of things they like and their singular tastes so how about you start a company that helps them meet their taste in luxurious lifestyle" I say and he narrows his eyes
"Tell me more" he sits up straight and I laugh
"So like you will be a service offering company for the rich and famous, they just call you up to organize them private jets, yacht, book them into expensive and exclusive hotels and shop for them around the world and plan their events, find them hotel destinations you know the works" I say and he smiles

"Like a concierge service company" I nod vigorously
"Exactly" I exclaim
"Ndabezitha, sthandwa sam"
"Dikane, bambo lwam"
"Ngiyabonga Afrika, you have proven to be exactly the kind of woman I need in my life"
"I love you Mpilo" I kiss him and he wastes no time and gets on top of me.

•AMANDA

I have been feeling some type of way the entire day, but I don't know right now it seems to be getting worse. My waist is on fire I go out to the toilet to pee and I notice that my panty liner has bloody mucus discharge, I take out my phone and text Lethabo to come immediately. I go back to the house and the pain starts to sting, it's not so bad so I take it like a big girl. I go to my room and take out my baby's bag and my personal bag with toiletries and my night shirts and gown. I am taking deep breaths when my mom walks in "Mandy" she says and gets closer
"Haibo what's going on are you in labour"
"I think so" I say calm and my mom starts to panic
"Bathong Amanda call Lethabo. Do you want to give birth in this house" she says and I laugh.
"Sibo calm down"
"Why are you so calm? are you not in pain?"
"I am but panicking won't make it go away" a strong knock comes through the door and I know it's Lethabo. I take the bags and my mom holds me like I am about to break. She is being so extra I swear. She opens the door and her fellow panic mechanic walks in with horror written all over his face.
"Baby are you okay, is the baby okay" he says
"Please take me to the hospital" I say and he takes the bags and holds my hand. We walk to the car and he opens my door and I get in.
"Please call hle Lethabo when she has delivered, my baby I will pray for you okay" she says and I nod. Lethabo gets in the car and drives off. I close my eyes and thank God he is scared so he won't be asking me a million questions. I open my eyes when I realize that we've been driving a while I mean the hospital in our neighborhood is not so far from the house.
"We were supposed to be at the hospital now baby" I say
"I am taking you to the best love, I can't risk anything" he says and I roll my eyes
"idrama yakho" I say and he shakes his head
"Only the best for you and the baby" I close my eyes again and within a few minutes we are at Siphophelo memorial. He parks and takes out the bags from the back and I open the door and get out. He frowns and takes my hand. We walk in and go straight to the front desk and soon as the nurses see me, she presses something and a porter appears with a wheelchair.
"He will take you to the delivery room" the nurse says with a smile and I nod
"Can I please be in the room with her?" My husband asks
"Definitely sir you can, but I am going to need you to give us her details so we can open a file for her"
"Okay, baby I will be with you soon" he says and the porter pushes me away. We get to a delivery room and the nurses are already waiting for me. They show me where to change, I wear the hospital gown and they help me to the bed. A doctor walks in and she smiles
"Hello Amanda, my name is Dr. Mkhize and I will be helping you deliver your baby safe; I am going to need to check how far apart your contractions are okay" she says and I nod because now the pains are showing me flames. My husband walks in as the doctor check me out. He holds my hand and kisses my forehead. An hour passes and the pain is a Ted crazy now I

can't deal. The epidural they gave me doesn't seem to be helping at all. She comes back and sits down between my legs

"Okay you are at 10cm dilation. We can start pushing" the doctor says and I get to it. I push and push with Lethabo's encouragement after a few minutes a loud piercing cry fills the entire room

"It's a boy" a voice says and I smile with tears, a second later they place him on my chest and I swear I never knew I could feel so much love in my heart, he is just so perfect and I am in love with the only human being who knows my heart beat from the inside.

"Oh Mandy, look at him. Baby thank you so much" Lethabo says and I look at him and I can see the love and joy in his eyes. He pecks my lips

"Name your son baby" I say and he lets out a tear.

"Kopano Kagiso Mafa, my boy" he says with pride in his voice

"And what does it mean"

"Kopano means unity and Kagiso means peace. Our child will unite us all and bring about peace Ama". He explains and I couldn't think of better names. They are just perfect.

"Perfect just like him babe"

"Ke ya lerata haholo fela (I love you two so much)"

•MPILO

I dropped off my lady at home and of course with our disguise car that is heavily tainted. We had another great day together and it proved to be fruitful also. She gave me other ways to turn my money into assets that will generate me more money. I think my girlfriend should just be in charge of my finances and be my advisor in all things because she is just the perfect person for the job, I am sure you can agree with me on that. I get home and I see my mom's car. The girl disappeared a few days and she has only been communicating with texts saying she is okay and safe. I need to have a word with her, this thing of not sleeping at home is becoming too much, she is doing as she pleases and she must just calm down. I walk straight to her bedroom

"Nomalanga" I say and she looks at me

"Mpilo" she says frowning

"I honestly don't like this gallivanting of yours without informing us. Tell your boyfriend to act right no man" I say

"Haibo wena my father is lying next to his wife in the cemetery in Mpumalanga, and last time I checked I was the parent here" she says

"Either way, I worry" she laughs

"Help me nayi ingulube iyangi nonela" she murmurs and I roll my eyes

"I have said my peace" I insist

"Mxm for your information I wasn't with Thuso, I drove to see my sister" she says and I make a face

"Sma?" I ask

"Do I have another sister dummy?" I laugh

"And how did it go" I query

"We are great, we sat down and spoke and fixed things. She will be moving to Johannesburg" I smile

"That's great ma, I am happy for you guys"

"And I want to thank you for taking care of her all this while, thank you for not allowing yourself to be caught up between the feud and being there for her when I failed to. You are a good person Mpilo, my womb was blessed to have birthed you" I smile

"I love Sma mama and she has been through so much she needs us" I say and she opens her arms for a hug and I gladly go in for it. You can never be too old for your mom's hugs

"Don't mention this to anyone"

"My lips are sealed" I say

CHAPTER 94

•AFRIKA

Yesterday my sister gave birth and I got so excited and I can't wait to see my nephew, she sent us a picture and baby Kopano is the cutest thing ever. My mom and I prepared the room for them and it looks so nice and ready for them. Lethabo passed by here to get the car seat and that was a while back they will arrive any moment from now. I can't contain my excitement. Just on cue the door opens and Mandy walks in her gown and her husband follows holding the baby. These 3 are just perfect SBWL. I clap in Glee and they laugh

"Can I please hold him please" I say

"Here you go aunty" daddy says handing the son to me

"Oh my God he is so perfect"

"I know right, I still can't believe he is all mine" Mandy adds and I can see it from her eyes that she loves this baby more than anything in the world and I know that my nephew has the best mom in the whole world. I look back and my mom is standing by the door hands covering the mouth and she is crying

"Oh, ma don't cry. See you making your granny cry baby boy" I say and walk to her

"Hold him mama" she takes him and the little champ doesn't even wake up, he is not bothered and he isn't going to lose sleep because of us.

"He is so adorable. Oh Amanda" our mom says and her proud smile is not missed. I look back and Mandy pecks Lethabo and he walks out.

"Hai daddy dearest not staying" I ask and she laughs

"He wants to give you and me a chance to see him, after all he slept at the hospital with us. Couldn't put his son down"

"And the nasty nurses at the hospital allowed you" my mom comments

"I wasn't at our local clinic. He took me to the hospital Mpilo's mom organized for you"

"Hai this boy is madly in love with you Mandy he doesn't want nothing but the best for you. Appreciate him always" Sibho adds

"I know ma and I will"

"Let's go sit" I say already leading the way

"So how was it bringing this little man to the world, is it as painful as they make it out to be" I ask

"Haibo Afrika why are you asking such, do you want to experience this" my mom says and I roll my eyes while Mandy laughs

•KHAYA

I haven't seen Nomalanga in a while funny enough her car was here yesterday but she never came down to join us for dinner, either she is closing herself in her room or her damn boyfriend fetched her. I don't want to ask my son about it and seem like I am still stuck up on his mom. The last thing Mpilo should know is that I regret losing Ndlovukazi, none of them should because they will see this a weakness. I pour myself a glass of hard liquor and gulp it all down. Nomalanga walks in the bar area of our house but attempts to walk back as she notices me

"Why don't you just move out of my house if you don't want to run into me" I tease

"Your house Khaya?" She says looking back

"Yes, my house" I repeat

"That's not what the tittle deeds say my friend" I roll my eyes
"It's in your name because I wanted it to be so calm down" she sighs
"Why I am even engaging in this conversation with you God you are tiring. You are the definition of kill joy but Not today Satan go try someone else" she says tilting her head to one side
"We need to talk about Colombia"
"What about it" she walks further in
"You won't be getting this month's profits Nomalanga, a lot is going on and I need capital to start a new venture" I say and she laughs
"How is your financial situations my problem buddy?" She asks
"Colombia is mine and I gave you what you wanted because I thought we would mend our marriage but hey here we are divorced so I don't have to keep making you rich, you have Thuso for that. Let him man up and do like I did"
"Oh my God, you taking my money because I don't want anything to do with you anymore?" She asks in a low voice
"Why must you continue benefiting from my business when you are not my wife or working to earn it. So Nomalanga you will only be getting twenty five percent of the profits" I say and she laughs
"And you think you are working for it. Do you even know which part of Colombia that lab is, do you know the workers there?" She asks and I swallow
"Exactly, so if you think you are going to use my son and make money out of his hard work and think you can keep it from me then you have another thing coming. Mpilo will get 50% and you and I will take 25% each or I will tell him to burn that shit down to the ground" she says and pecks my cheek before walking out swaying her hips and clench my jaws because she would really influence Mpilo to drop Colombia and ensure that it doesn't get back on its feet. Why did I even start a conversation with this woman, she always leaves me bad

•LETHABO

Saying I am happy would not do justice to how I really feel and trust me it's a lot. I don't think I ever knew that I would love this much and this pure. My wife and son just make me a complete man. I never knew favor the way I do now. It could only be Gods favor I swear. I am praying to God to be the best father to my son; to be there for him and his mother the way I wished mine was. I get home after dropping them off and I am still in high spirits. My uncle's car is parked in the yard so I leave mine outside and walk in. They are sitting outside basking in the sun

"Dumelang" I greet and my uncle stands up

"Ntate was moshanyane (a boy's father)" he says holding out his hand for a shake and I take it with pride

"That is me" I reply

"Lethabo I am so proud and happy for you son. Getting married and welcoming your first child who is a boy and who will carry on our family name" he adds

"Thank you uncle. I am so happy"

"You are a man now son, take care of that girl and your son. They come first and remember that okay" he continues and I am nodding vigorously

"Absolutely uncle. I am a family man now" I say and both chuckle

"So, what did you name our grandson"

"Kopana Kagiso Mafa" I tell

"Haaaa perfect, indeed you are a man now. Ousi you raised a good man here and his son will live up to his names and I pray he starts within the family let there be unity and peace between you and you daughter in law, let go of the past and hold hands to grow this family" my uncle says a mouthful and my mom nods.

"I hear you brother, so when will we go see the baby" my mom chips in
"Anytime you want mama"
"Okay I will let you know" I nod
"Lethabo monna bring the plastic on top of the kitchen table and bring two glasses. I am here to celebrate you" I nod and walk inside. My uncle's support means a lot to me and I am glad to have had him as a father figure in my life.

•NOMALANGA

I have been eating everything and anything the few days I spend with Smangele was the worst on my weight so I have to shed it off. I work out for an hour and when I am done, I check the time and it's an hour before dinner. I go switch the music and throw the towel I was using into the dirty basket. As I make my way to my bedroom I see Buli in the upstairs lounge balcony, she looks so lost in her thoughts and she is not her usual self, not that she has been bubbly ever since she came here pregnant but she is worrying me, as much as she is not my favorite person I can't just ignore her, being pregnant and alone is not nice. I walk outside and sit next to her and she doesn't even notice my presence until I shake her
"Buli" I say and she snaps out of it
"Ndlovukazi" she says barely audible
"What's wrong sisi you don't look okay" she gives me a fake smile
"I am okay" she answers and I shake my head no
"I can see it in your eyes that something is really bothering you, we are not the best of friends but you can talk to me. I know how overwhelming pregnancy can be so" I say
"I am just missing my mom I wish she was here to help me out" she confesses and I sigh
"You should visit her grave; it would work wonders on your soul" she nods and I stand up. I reach the door and she stops me
"Ndlovukazi" I look at her
"Yes"
"I know I am not a good person and I broke your family and for that I am really sorry but please help me" she says and tears stream down her face and I see fear and uncertainty in her eyes. I quickly go back to sit next to her
"What's going on, talk to me"
"Can I trust you please?"
"One thing I can definitely call myself is trustworthy" she nods and she attempts to speak when Khaya walks in with a smile
"Bulelwa baby come it's time for your massage" he says and Buli returns a smile but it's fake as the one she gave me I narrow my eyes
"Khaya give us a moment please. We are talking" I say
"She will come find you later Nomalanga. We need to do this. Come baby"
"Buli" I say
"It's okay Ndlovukazi, we will talk later" she stands up and takes Khaya's hand and the disappear, I frown and lean back on the outdoor couch wondering what could possibly be eating through this child

MPILO

I am video calling with Afrika and she is so excited with the arrival of her nephew it's making me wonder how good she will be with our child. I can see our daughter running around with an afro like her mom's and her beautiful chocolate skin.
"Do you want kids" I ask
"I want you to give me many babies" she says and I laugh
"Finish varsity and I will give you all the children you want my love"
"You better not go back on your word"

"Never and the first one must be a girl and her name will be Mpiloentle" she rolls her eyes
"Sharing a name with daddy huh"
"Yes, because she is going to be a daddy's girl" I add
"Okay then Mpilo your daughter will be names Mpiloentle" she confirms and I smile
"I love you babe"
"I love you too Muhles want"
"Okay let me go eat my mom has been calling me" I nod
"Okay I will call you later and kiss the new champ for me tell him uncle Mpilo is going to bring his welcoming gift soon" he smiles
"Okay I will" she blows a kiss and I catch it she giggles and hangs up.

•BULI

He walks in first in the bedroom and I follow after him, I am scared out of my mind. I don't know how much of the conversation he heard. He stops and I do the same waiting for him. to say something to scare me more, he turns back and gives me a hot slap across my face and I fall instantly holding my cheek, it stung me bad and I couldn't contain my tears. He kneels in front not me and holds me by my chin
"You dare try to tell Nomalanga about"
"Khaya I swear it's not that I wasn't trying to tell her anything" I say
"Do you see a fool when looking at me Buli, I heard the entire conversation" he says breathing fire
"I wouldn't do that I swear"
"Bulelwa when will you learn. Learn that you will never win against me" I know this now I know, I scream in my head
"I wasn't gonna talk about us with her I swear"
"You want me to lock you up in this bedroom now huh, the way I took you freedom of going anywhere you want I will lock you up in here and tie you up until you birth my child and then I will throw you out on the streets like the trash that you are" he let's go of my chin and walks to the bathroom, I just decided to lie there on the floor and just cry.

CHAPTER 95

•AMANDA

My mom helped prepare one of her best dishes and cleaned the house. My husband and his mom are coming over so she could see Kopano for the first time. I made sure to make sure that my baby looks cute like out of this world cute. I just hope that woman tries to behave and just see her grandson and leave, I don't need her negative energies anywhere near my child. I finish getting dressed and I put on my ring. My son makes some noises of discomfort so I pick him up and he makes these funny faces I just can't help but giggle. The door opens and my mom walks in
"You are going to make him want to always be carried Amanda man" she complains
"He was crying" I defend and she rolls her eyes
"Anyway, your mother in law is here and looking as sour as the last time"
"I am so over that woman" I say and she laughs
"Just come with the baby Mandy" I hold Kopano properly and we walk out to my room to the lounge, my husband is sitting next to his mom and I take the individual couch and Sibho goes back to the kitchen.
"Good afternoon" I say

"Hello ouisi"

"Hey babe" my husband says with a cheerful voice I can't help but flash him a smile

"You are here to see him but he decides to sleep" I joke

"Can I hold him" I nod and hand her, her grandson, she doesn't smile entirely but she looks at him like really looks at him, I frown. My mom walks in and tries to hand them plates of food

"I will take him while you eat ma" I offer

"Oh, thanks but we ate before coming here I will just have the glass of juice" she says without even looking at Sibho or me.

"I would love to eat thank you ma" my husband says and my mom hands him the plate and juice and places the glass of her juice on the coffee table and walks back to the kitchen to return the plate of food. Sibho comes back and sits.

"Hai he eats a lot and he can cry this one. Was Lethabo like that as a baby" my mom makes conversation

"My Lethabo was such a sweet baby never been troubling, maybe he takes after his mom" Ms Mafa purrs and I sigh.

"But he does look like me" Lethabo tries to bring in humor, my mom and I laugh

"He is still very young to tell who he looks like" Sibho tells him and he chuckles, out of nowhere my mother-in-law starts removing Kopano's baby blankets and his clothes next, I am shocked

"Mama what's going on" Lethabo asks shocked himself

"I am just trying to see if he has the birthmark all of the babies with the Mafa blood have" she says and It stung like hell I have never felt so indirectly insulted. I stand up and they all look at me.

"If you are referring to the one under his arm then it's there and you will find it guaranteed" I say and walk out

"Mara mama why are you like this" I hear Lethabo say before I am further out.

•NOMALANGA

I just couldn't get the Buli thing out of my head, something is really going on with that girl and I just wish she could tell me what it is so I can help her. I am a prosecutor and I work with people and I had to learn to read them, and I read fear and uncertainty in Bulelwa. Whatever she is going through is having its way with her every day and if she doesn't talk about it or seek help, she will lose her baby and that will just add to her mental and emotional health.

"Sunny are you listening to me" he says waving his hands in my face bringing me back from my train of thoughts

"Yes, babe I like that" he laughs

"You are definitely not listening to me" he says and I sigh

"I am sorry just have a lot on my mind" I confess

"Out with it, tell me about it maybe you will feel lighter" he says and stands right in front of me.

"I am worried about Buli" I say and he narrows his eyes

"Who is Buli?" He queries

"Khaya's girlfriend/baby mama"

"Why are you worried about her" he asks

"I have been sensing that she isn't okay so 2 days ago I saw her and asked her about it and she confirmed that she is going through something and before she could tell me Khaya walked in and called her" I say and he sighs

"Sunny" he says with a Stern voice and straight face

"Mmmh"

"Whatever it is that she is going through, don't be a part of it" he says
"But love that's just not who I am" I say
"I know that but this is your exes' partner and it would be inappropriate to be in their business I know your motherly instincts will kick in but try to remember that she is your exes' partner and she is carrying his child. If you meddle in their issues it will only be fair if Khaya tries to be in our business too because you would have also crossed that line" he says and I sigh
"Just that she has no one and" I say and he cuts me
"She has Khaya" he insists
"I guess so"
"So please love don't get into their business because your ex will see it as a way to be a part of our business as well, let's just hope and pray that she will be okay and whatever she is going through will be over and peace and happiness will be with her" he says
"Okay I will back off"
"Thank you" he pecks my lips

•AFRIKA

We have been going from meeting to meeting with Mpilo and I am dead tired now. I am going to die where I sleep. I am just happy that he takes my advices seriously and he really works on them. We have all the information on Franchises and he has even applied for it and you know money, he paid for his applications to be processed quickly and apparently, we will have a response in a few days.
"What a day it has been" he says and yawns
"Tell me about it" I add
"But it was really fruitful babe like I am so excited" he says
"I can see you can't wait" I reply and he laughs
"Bit but bit I am close to living my dream and being a billionaire in the hospitality industry" he says
"You are going to shock most people when it all comes out and they learn it's all you" I say
"Exactly my love. I just want to be done with this drug business and be legit. By the time you are done with varsity I want us to run our legitimate empire together be like the youngest power couple to ever grace these streets" he says and I blush
"I would love that baby" he looks at me and smiles
"I am glad we are on the same page"
"Now can we be on the same page and get some food because I am hungry" I say
"Yes ma'am. Do you want something at the restaurant or you want something different?"
"We support our own babe come on" I say and he high fives me
"I found my wife y'all" he yells outside his window and I laugh
"You crazy" I say giggling
"About you boo, now put it here" he says pouting for a kiss
"Mpilo eyes on the road" I reprimand
"Come on Muhles you know you want to" I roll my eyes and quickly peck his lips.
"I love you" he says and I just give him a look of admiration. Can we just stay like this forever?

•LETHABO

I am so mad, mad out of my mind. I can't believe my mom would go so far and insult my wife like that, what she did was not innocent at all, she removed my son's clothes implying that he might not be mine and that was the most disgusting thing she could have ever done. If I was ever hoping that she will give Amanda a chance I was naive and stupid. It's time I protect my wife and now my child from my mom's hate and judgement. Amanda locked

herself in her room and refused opening for me so I could talk to her. She is obviously hurt and who can blame her though. We are in the car and I just want to be out of this woman's presence.

"I don't understand what I did wrong" she says and I laugh

"The fact that you can't see what you did wrong makes me realize how evil you can be" I say

"Lethabo what did you just say to me? Take that back now" she shouts

"Will you take back the humiliation and insult you dished my wife today ma, questioning our son paternity in my presence will you be able to take it back?"

"I was just looking if he had our birthmark" she justifies and it makes me extra mad

"And you just had to do it in front of them, couldn't you ask me if MY son has the mark. No what am I even saying why couldn't you believe my wife just like I did when she looked at me in the eyes and assured me that Kopano is mine" I roar

"Lethabo you don't understand" she says

"I do understand mama, understand that you are a hypocrite you pretend to be this righteous woman but deep down inside you have a dark heart and soul. To do that to your own grandson is just pure evil and there is no coming back from this. My son is innocent and you used him to fight your battles with my wife, a battle that you are clearly the only participant. Amanda wants and is willing to work on a relationship with you, but you keep on seeing her as not good enough for me"

"I am your mom" she says

"And today I feel ashamed that you are my mother" I say and she starts crying

"You see what this girl has turned you into" she says sobbing

"Don't you dare mama don't blame Amanda for your appalling actions don't." I scream at her. I am so angry I am literally shaking.

CHAPTER 96

•AMANDA

Lethabo's mother proved me right, she proved that she will never see me worthy of her son and she showed me that she still believes that my son is not her grandson and I am glad that she has shown me that we will never have a good relationship and I have made peace with it. I am done trying to get her to like me and for real this time, when it comes to her, I am building walls. I know I wasn't right in avoiding Lethabo when he wanted to talk to me but I just couldn't face him it was all just too much for me at that moment. I haven't touched the gifts she brought for Kopano and my son is not going to use any of those things because she didn't bring them with a pure heart, it was just for show. I place Kopano down and kiss his forehead before walking out. My mom and sister are in the lounge watching something.

"Is he finally asleep?" Afrika asks

"Yep he is after milking me dry" they both laugh

"He is such a foodie, but who will blame him because you ate everything sis" she says and I give her a look

"Get off me please" I defend myself

"So, have you spoken to your husband" ma asks

"I did briefly but it's awkward" I say

"I still can't believe his mom did that" Afrika voices and I sigh

"You know what she did wasn't foreign but how she went on about it showed that she looks down on us and she doesn't have respect. She had no right removing Kopano's clothes like that, as an adult and the grandmother she should have informed me the elder and head of this house of her families traditions and what they do to their children and I would have

understood and gave her the platform after all the baby is theirs and you are their bride, but she disrespected herself and embarrassed her son in her quest of humiliating you and reminding you indirectly of your past" Sibó says and I couldn't agree with her more "Exactly ma, she just had to communicate with you on how they do things not just handle my son like that" I add "Don't let her take away your happiness Mandy, Lethabo loves you and he believes that Kopano is his son and that's all that matters sis, pray about this and ask God to bless her with a pure heart" my sister adds "I am just done with that woman I don't want to lie" I say crossing my legs "Just respect her and stay away from her negativity my babes" my mom advises

•LETHABO

My next move is clear as day light and I am not going to avoid it or hold on to hope that my mom will get along with my wife and try to look beyond her past life and realize how blessed I am. I need to man up and put my son first, I don't love my mother any less but my respect and tolerance for her is so low it's going to be difficult to stay with her.

"Okay so Mr. Mafa by the look of things you qualify for a home loan worth R1 million" the lady helping me at the bank says

"Whoa that much huh" I ask

"Yes sir, your finances are up to speed and very impressive" she adds

"Well thank you and how will my bond repayment look like" I ask

"So monthly you would pay R8209 if you don't have any deposit paid. Then your mortgage bond registration including VAT is R29 950 and your transfer fees will also be VAT included at R25762" She explains fully and I nod

"Understood thanks"

"So, do you already have a house in mind that you want us to buy for you" she asks

"No not yet, I just wanted to check how much I would actually qualify for, so my wife and I can start looking at something within the price range"

"Okay so soon as you have it you will come back here and we will start with the process okay?"

"Definitely and thank you so much for your assistance" I say standing up

"It's a pleasure I hope to see you soon" we shake hands and I leave the bank

A week later

•KHAYA

I have been locking Bulelwa in our bedroom just to teach her a lesson, that day I overheard her speaking to Nomalanga and I had to walk in before she could mention that I have her under house arrest, and I am surprised Nomalanga hasn't been bothering me about where Buli is not that I am complaining. I walk in our bedroom and she is in the same position as always, curled up in bed.

"Bulelwa" I say in a Stern tone and she quickly looks back at me

"Yes" she says in a low voice

"Get ready we are going down to eat with everyone" I order

"Thank you but I will have my meal in here" she says

"You have been cupped up in here, you need to breath so please get out of bed" I say and walk to the closet and come back with a dress

"Here wear this" I hand it to her and she walks to the bathroom and I don't stop her, but in this moment I realize that I have never seen her baby bump or touched it but arg I am trying to be human tonight so I will let her be. She comes back and she looks presentable to be in the presence of everyone. As we descend the stairs holding hands, we hear laughter erupting in the lounge, like they are happy seriously happy. As we walk in my eyes land on a

person, I never thought I would see again in my life or in my house, she annoys me and I doubt it will ever change. I clench my jaws and she notices me and starts laughing making her way to me.

"Old man Khaya Mdlalose you look old and crusty and shit" she says patting my stomach
"What the hell are you doing in my house Sma"

"I am moving into my sister's house, so get used to seeing me around" she says

"Over my dead bother" I say

"We can have that arranged dear. Mpilo give me a gun and let me show him how easy it is to arrange his dead body" she has always had the balls to stand up to me and that's why I never liked her. She was bad influence to my wife and I don't doubt that will change even after all these years. She is going to be a thorn on my side and I hate it already

"Nomalanga I am not having this thing in my house" I say

"But my sister and her children must tolerate having your trash baby mama in her house, what kind of joke are you?" She insults me

"Don't come to my house and disrespect me please" I warn, she looks at Buli

"Manana if I were you baby I would run, run so far from this man before he breaks your soul, that's what he is good at breaking people for his own selfish reasons, and take your child with you before he turns this little innocent soul into him and trust me the world doesn't need any more Khaya Mdlaloses trust me" she advises Buli who is looking down.

"Nomalanga hold your sister please" I say

"Somebody call SPCA please and tell them a dog with rabbis is out of control" she says laughing and I hold her by her arm tight. Mpilo comes to try and save his aunt.

"Mpilo calm down I will handle this myself" she says and my son walks back. I tighten my grip

"Please look at my shoe" she says and I drop my eyes and she is in an all-star sneaker

"You are showing me your cheap shoes because"

"Ngizo'khaba amasende unye nyi (I will kick you in the balls so you will shit your pants)" she says and I am boiling with anger, no woman has disrespected me in front of my children like this.

"I don't have time for this hood rat come Buli I will tell the maid to make us something" I say and we walk back up

"Smangele is here uza lala ungafuni (you will sleep even when you don't want to" she shouts loud enough for me to hear her and I feel like running back down and bursting her head open

•AFRIKA

I am laying on Mandy's bed looking at my nephew's cuteness, I just can't get over him. The house is so warm and it has that baby smell all over it's so intoxicating I swear. He keeps on suckling on his tiny hand and it's adorable. My ovaries are jealous I swear, but hey calm down not anytime soon. My phone vibrates and I quickly get off the bed so he doesn't wake up. Amanda would kill me. I walk to the bedroom I share with Sibó and answer the video call.

"taMpilo" I say as his face appears on my screen

"Eita" he humors me and I smile

"Zikhiphani" I ask

"Nothing much I am just missing you babe. My bed is not smelling of you anymore" I blush

"Ncoooo Mpilo I miss you too love" I say

"Meet me tomorrow at our restaurant" he says

"I would love to babe. What time"

"Uhm I can only make it there around 1" he informs.

"I will get there earlier and use the chance to see how far they are with everything" I say

"You are a star Muhles, guess what"
"What" I ask impatient and he laughs
"We have a new house mate and it's Sma" he says and I laugh
"What when did all this happen. I am sure everyone is dead with laughter right now" I say
"You have no idea, I had to call you before I got lost in her jokes and have you mad at me for not calling you goodnight" I smile
"I am glad you did remember that you must say goodnight" he chuckles
"I am learning sthandwa Sam"
"You really are love. So yeah let me let you go be with everyone"
"Thanks babe, I will see you tomorrow I love you" he says smiling with his eyes
"I love you too" I say and he blows me a kiss this time and I catch it before hanging up

•AMANDA

My mom and Afrika went out to get a few things that we need around the house and some meds for Kopano, Sibho tells me that he has to have those little bottles of medicine that smells horribly those "Harmansis" or whatever they are. So my son and I are left alone, I swear his life's mission is to suck me dry, Lethabo has been around to see us and things are awkward between us and I think I am the one making them like that because my husband has nothing to do with his mom's behaviour and I should know how he stands up for me. I should just stop being a bitch towards him. A knock comes through and I can't really stand up and go open since my baby is breastfeeding so I just shout come in. Lethabo appears and gives me a faint smile
"Hey baby" I say trying to show him that I am sorry
"Hi love, how are you two" he asks and sits down with a smile
"We are okay just that your son what's to see me skinny to the bone" he laughs
"I will just have to feed you more" he says and I blush
"Baby, I am really sorry for how I've been acting these past few days" I say
"You don't have to apologise babe we are past that and I just want us to be okay and just move forward and grow our family"
"I want that too" I say
"Good because I want us to go house shopping while you are here and work on it so that after 3 months, we can get to move into it you know" I am shocked I swear I don't even know what to say
"Baby" It comes out as a whisper
"Unless you want a wedding first and then" I shake my head vigorously
"No, I don't even want a wedding at least not now. It's wasting money and we could use that money for more important things" I say and he smiles
"So, a house it is?" He asks
"Yes, baby definitely. Oh, Lethabo thank you" I say eyes shining with tears and he takes my hand
"We are building our family Ama and we will have a beautiful life together love" I lean in and kiss him until Kopano makes a sound and we both laugh
"Come to daddy baby boy" he says and I hand him to his father
"Baby help him burp first, hold him like this" I say helping him.
"Like this?" He asks
"Yes, you got it" I say and take my phone snapping some pictures of them. Oh, my boys.
I am glad we are okay now

CHAPTER 97

•NOMALANGA

Having Smangele here is somehow calming for me, I didn't realize how much I needed and wanted my sister in my life. Family is important and now that my kids and my only sibling are in one place, I am going to do better for all of them. She has started giving Khaya a tough time and it's a bliss to see, she has never been afraid to stand up to him and even go as far as threatening him. I get in after a long day of work and find my sister sitting on the kitchen counter talking and the helpers are just dead with laughter.

"Hello" I say and place my things on the island

"Nono" she greets back and the helpers just nod and bow a bit.

"How was your day?" I ask

"It was great I am getting to know everyone here" she says and I nod

"Do you want me to organize something for you to keep you busy or something?" I ask

"Yeah, I want a car wash and tavern" she says and I roll my eyes

"Why am I surprised" she clicks her tongue

"Manje uzongiyezela iplan? (Are you going to hook me up)" she asks

"Sma getting a liquor license is going to take time man and where will you even find a place to open this tavern of yours" I ask and she smiles

"Ngiphe into yok'thenga wena uzobona ngiyenza izinto ziyenzeke (just give me the money and you will see me make things happen" she says

"Just don't go around trying to bribe people at the liquor board because that is a criminal offense and you could do sometime" I warn

"I could do with some time inside you know for my street cred" she says and I gasp for air

"Smangele" it comes out as a whisper because of my shock, she laughs

"Relax ngiyadlala sis'wam (I am just kidding my sister) I sigh in relief

"I will make the funds you want available then"

"Sure, skhokho Sami" she fist bumps me and I just go with it.

•MPILO

Your boy Is flourishing and he has his girl to thank. Having a woman who makes you realize that you can reach your full potential and be more than what you believe you are is a dream every man has. The McDonald's Franchise was approved and I paid the money and I have licensing to go on. I spoke to the owners of the shopping centre around Afrika's neighborhood and asked to rent some space and the isn't any available, so I got people to find me a vacant land and luckily the was one just across the centre and the owner is selling, I made an offer higher than the asking price and I am pleased to inform you that I just met with the person and I signed the papers and made sure that the land is in the name of a shell company. I don't want to register everything under Afrika's name and get the authorities to start snooping around. All I need is a construction company to start building and we will be up and running. I don't know what to do for Afrika to show her how much I appreciate her and all the light she has shed in my life. I am the restaurant, I popped by just to see how far they are with the renovations, I can't wait to just open up this place, my friends have been going crazy I swear the night of the opening is going to be mad. The lady in charge arrives

"Like what you see" she asks and I smile

"Your work is amazing" I compliment

"It's going to look better once we are done with everything"

"I see you are even ahead of schedule" I say

"My team is amazing really, and I wanted to talk about that so we might open 3 weeks earlier so prepare with advertising and bookings make this place go crazy" she says

"Okay we will sit down and chose a date to open and I will make sure that the best event planners and club hosts come through to plan everything" she nods

"Okay you will tell me when"

"time is no longer on our side so let's make it tomorrow mid-day" I inform

"Okay no problem" she says and attempts to walk away and I stop her

"Can I poke your brain" I ask

"Yeah sure"

"What is the best gift to give a woman to show appreciation" I ask and she smiles

"I don't know about other women but I would want money, you can never go wrong with money. Getting gifts is tricky because sometimes we might not like it so money is the way" I nod but I know my girl would want something of sentimental value, something she would cherish and remember why I gave it to her but I guess I could get her something and give her plenty cash, she will see what to do with it, spoil herself and everything.

"Noted thanks" she nods and walks away. I go tidy up the office.

•BULI

I seem to be Khaya's punching bag each time he goes through something he takes it out on me. I don't know if I can take this any longer. He has managed to break all the walls I thought I had to protect myself, but he has reached my soul now and I am hanging by a thread and it will soon snap. He has managed to make me feel like I am living for nothing and I think death isn't something I am afraid of anymore, at least I will be free from him and his torture, I will be with my mother on the other side. I look at the pills I gathered from the medicine cabinet in the house and the bottle of Hennessy. My heart is beating very fast, looking at the pills and seeing how many they are brings me fear and I don't know why but I suddenly don't have the guts to go through with it, something deep inside of me tells me that suicide is not an option, that I haven't played all my cards to succumb to this, I cry and take these pills and throw them in the toilet and flush. I sink down and hug my shoulders crying.

•KHAYA

I need something that will help ground Smangele, her behaviour and confidence to stick up to me isn't something I am willing to live with. She and her sister are a bad combination that I really need to tame and fast because they could be my doom. Something needs to give and soon.

"So, she has moved here permanently?" Mzwa asks

"Imagine and you mother had no decency to talk to me about it" I respond

"That's crazy baba"

"That woman is a loose cannon"

"I never liked her one bit she is too forward and ghetto for my liking" my son says

"And loud and annoying, I need something to get her to behave"

"Just take Buli and move out pops" I laugh

"And who will keep an eye on your brother and Afrika, without me there they will get into a relationship and it will get messy, so I am staying there and making sure that they keep away from each other" he sighs

"I hear you Dikane" he says

"Enough about that crazy woman, how is my daughter in law" I ask

"Eish baba we are going through something at the moment, she wants another child and I don't think I do; I mean we have our hands full with the girls" I laugh

"Just give her the child and make her stop working. If you have to compromise, she will also have to" I advise

"Em will never agree" I laugh

"Don't give her a choice, if she wants a baby, she will listen to you" I say and he nods
"I will try talking to her tonight" I nod
"Remind her of who has the balls between you"
"Definitely baba" he agrees and I sip my drink

•AMANDA

My baby had an appointment at the baby clinic today and my little man was just so cute and the nurses couldn't stop admiring him. He is the cutest baby ever and soon as he is a bit grown, he is going to be in those baby adverts I swear. My husband drove us there now we are in the car driving back home. Kopano and I are sitting in the back and Lethabo keeps on looking back at us through the review mirror. We pass by the big houses in our neighborhood where the nurses, the teachers, municipal workers live. I notice a for sale sign.

"Baby please stop" I say and doesn't ask me questions by pulls over

"There is a house for sale over there" I say pointing back and he reverses until he stops

"This house is not in the best condition babe and I thought you would want a house in town"

"This is a good neighborhood babe you know this and it's safe too. And it needs a little TLC" I justify

"A lot of TLC babe" he says and I laugh. A woman walks out of the yard and she is wearing a suit and holding papers. I can't help but open the window and call her to us.

"Hello" she says frowning

"Hi, I am sorry for calling you like that I am just feeding my child" I say and her face relaxes

"It's okay I understand, how may I help?"

"Do you know who is selling this house?"

"I am actually the agent" she says

"Oh great. How much is the house" I ask?

"Well it has been in the market for 3 years and no one wants it. We are desperate to sell it now so the owners have agreed to take R180 000" I frown

"A 6 rooms house in a good neighborhood for that much what's wrong with it"

"It's a mess inside hey. It needs serious renovations trust me" she says and I nod

"Can I please have your card and we will call you" she smiles and hands it to me before leaving

"Mandy babe"

"Love this is amazing. You take your savings and buy this house cash, take a personal loan we renovate it and it's perfect in no time, and it will be ours fully, we won't have to pay a bond of 8 thousand or more a month for 20 years" I say and he sighs

"I just want to give you your dream home" he says

"I know babe and we could turn this into it and we don't have to spend so much money for that love. Let's find a construction company and ask them how much they would charge to fix everything and take it from there" I say and he smiles

"Okay let's talk more when we get home" he says and starts the engine. I can already see how amazing this house would be for us. With Kopano running around. I honestly need to find a job and help my husband. He can't be the only one bringing in the money.

•AFRIKA

I got to the restaurant and Mpilo was already waiting on me. He shared with me some great news and I am so proud of him, with every passing day her proves just how much he wants to find himself free from his father and this drug business and I give it to him for being willing to work hard to make it rather than finding it comfortable with making money quickly and easy selling drugs. He is the office bathroom and his phone rings as I am taking

selfies with it. It says Marianna and I raise my eyebrow but compose myself, Mpilo works with a lot of people this could just be someone's who working for him.

"Babe your phone, someone is face timing you" I shout loud enough

"Uhm answer it please I will be out now" he says and I do as instructed, imagine my shock when a white woman appears on the screen naked. I swear my heart almost stops

"Oh hi" she says not even trying to cover up

"Uhm hi" I say with a shaking voice.

"Where is Life" she says and I swallow and blink my tears away a couple of times. I don't know but I am tongue tide. The bathroom door opens as my tears fall, how could Mpilo do this to me.

"Babe who is it" he says fixing himself

"Marianna" I say and his eyes quickly shoot up and he rushes to me as he sees my tears and takes the phone, he shuts his eyes after looking at the screen and ends the call

"Baby it's really not what you think" he says and I laugh

"Really Mpilo you are going to use that line" I say trying to stand up from the bed

"Muhles it's the truth baby, I am not cheating on you I swear to God" he says panicking. The hurt in my heart

"After everything Mpilo this is how you do me"

"Afrika it's nothing I promise you" he says and I attempt to walk away but he pulls me by my waist and holds me tight to him

"You can't leave before I explain babe please"

"There is nothing to explain, what I saw was clear enough" I say failing to stop my tears.

"Marianna is nothing to me sthandwa Sam, absolutely nothing. Afrika you are my life baby and you are not going to cry like this over someone who is even in Colombia I swear nothing is happening. Yes we used to have a thing when I was still that side and it was strictly sexual, nothing more" I felt a sting of jealousy hit me, I don't want to think of him giving other women the same pleasure he gives me, I don't want him thinking about all those women before me.

"Why is she calling you naked then why" I scream at him and he shakes his head

"I don't know my love maybe because I have never made her aware of the fact that I am in a stable relationship now, I am sorry" he says and I cry more

"You are ashamed of me Mpilo" his eyes pop

"Never baby I could never be ashamed of you" he says and I try to get out of his hold but he holds me tight, he kisses me and I try refusing him access to my lips but he moves to my neck

"Mpilo" I say

"Don't fight me sthandwa sam, she means nothing to me I swear" he says breathing on my neck and his touch is just intoxicating me.

"I love you Muhles and only you and I don't have eyes for anyone but you" he continues while touching me all over, I am mad at him but my body is somehow not carrying the emotion with me. I finally stop trying to push him away, giving into my sexual desire burning me.

"Don't fight me, I love you and you alone" he adds moving me and I sit on the edge of the desk and we kiss hungrily

"I want you to call her and tell her about me tell her to stop calling you" I order between the wet kisses as I quickly unbutton his jeans

"Consider it done babe" he says breathing heavily parting my legs wide and removing my underwear alongside my stockings thank God I removed my boots soon as I got here. He drops his pants and pulls me closer to him and my aching throbbing vagina wants to feel him deep inside of me already.

"Baby please" I cry and he slides his hard dick inside me

"Fuck Afrika you are so wet baby" he says and starts moving
"Mpilo" I cry louder
"She means nothing to me baby It can only ever be you" he assures me while thrusting in and out of me, the pleasure is just too much I lean my head back and bite my lower lip
"I love you Mpilo, I wish you knew how much"
"Trust me baby I have an idea because I love you as much" he says and holds on to one leg at an angle and I can't help but moan out loud

CHAPTER 98

•MPILO

I tried laying it down good on her but my woman is stubborn and strong willed, after given her multiple orgasms and killing myself to calm her down so we could talk, she got dressed and told me to take her home and we haven't met since that day. We only talk on the phone and I think we are good now she just wanted me to tell Marianna to stop calling me period and after explaining that Marianna works for me, she told me to get her in line and teach her the word professionalism. She is feisty that one and I just fall in love with her more especially seeing how mad she gets over the thought of another woman having what's hers and yes, I belong to Afrika, mind body and soul. I have been trying to get a hold of Marianna for a few days and she isn't taking my calls. I just need to make things clear to her and make her understand her place. I take my phone and try her again and this time she answers and thank God she is dressed
"Life" she says with a Spanish accent
"And you finally decide to answer my calls" I say
"I have been busy; I am running a very big drug operation"
"I know that remember I own that operation" I say and she rolls her eyes
"Right" she responds and I sigh
"Marianna" I say
"So, she is the reason you haven't been coming to Colombia" she gets straight to it
"Yes, she is" I say honestly
"I thought we had something going on Life" I sigh
"You know it was just physical" I tell
"Ouch" she replies
"I am really sorry if I made you believe that there could ever be anything more between us, I am sorry for leading you on but there can never be anything between us. I am with the lady you saw and we are exclusive, I am not planning on cheating on her" I inform her
"More like a child Life" I clench my jaws
"Listen I am apologizing here but do me a favor, don't look down or disrespect my girl like that because we will have a serious problem here" I say with a Stern voice and she blinks a couple of times
"I am sorry"
"Good now please don't call me unless it has something to do with work and if my girlfriend is the one to answer my phone be polite and respectful" I lay down the rules
"I hear you" she sneers
"Good to know we are on the same page" she hangs up without saying anything

•NOMALANGA

I have been trying to think of what we could do with our parents' house because we both don't want to sell it as it is the only thing left that belonged to our parents and the memories we made in that house make it really hard to think about not having it in our family. I wonder if Smangele and Khaya haven't killed each other in the 24 hours I haven't been home.

"You tend to get lost in your thoughts these days Sunny" Thuso says

"I am sorry love"

"It's okay, just try talking to me about things to get them out of your mind, I am here for that" he says and I smile

"I have already spoken to you about it, my parents' house"

"Yes, you did and I promise we will come up with something together and then you will take it to your sister so you could both agree" he says

"Thank you love" I Peck his lips

"Now I have been thinking" he says and I narrow my eyes

"Yes"

"We have been together for some time and I am sure about you and I believe that you are too"

"I am sure about you Thuso" I assure him

"I am glad love. I believe it's time that I met your children and you meet the rest of mine as well" he puts his idea on the table

"I think it's time too, so what do you suggest we do? Have one big dinner together" I ask

"Definitely love, so that they could also meet each other" he agrees

"I am all for that" I say excitedly

"Tell your kids and I will tell mine" he says

"Month end?" I propose

"That's enough time my baby" I nod with a smile

•AMANDA

Lethabo finally got my point after seeing the amount of money we could save. We took a contractor to the house and he said they could need two months to finish the renovations and the addition of our ensuite bathroom because we don't want to share it, extend the lounge to fit in couches and dining table. It's 3 bedrooms and it has double garages; it couldn't be more perfect. He will be signing the documents and receiving the title deed on Monday and the renovations will start Wednesday. I am so excited I didn't think everything will happen so quickly.

"So, you too really bought a house" my sister says while packing, schools are reopening on Monday so tomorrow she will be heading back to res, the house won't be the same again

"We did and I am so excited" I says

"I just can't wait to see it when they are done"

"Me too Nana from the dump it is now, Lethabo is patiently waiting to see it transformed"

"And how did his mom take all of this" she asks

"Lethabo doesn't want to tell her yet" I say and sigh

"This tension between them is not sitting well with you ne" she asks

"At all Afrika, like they have been close all their lives and it somehow feels like I am separating them" I confess and she shakes her head

"Don't do that to yourself Mandy. You were willing to live with her in one yard but she proved that she isn't willing to accept you. For your own peace of mind and to enjoy your marriage you need to move away from it all" she says and I nod

"I guess you are right"

"Of course, I am sister. I hate packing God" she says shoving the Jean in the bag and I laugh

"I could do it for you and pay me, I really need a job"

"You are going back to school; you don't need a job" she says and I shake my head
"That was before I become a mother and wife sis what I need to do now is adjust my plans and be able to bring money in too because I can't depend on my husband for everything"
"I understand but don't give up on your dreams"
I smile
"I am not I am just adjusting them to suit my life now, I am thinking of doing a short event planning course" I say and she smiles
"Events planning huh"
"Yes Afrika"
"Yes, do it sis, I think I could find you a job" she says
"A job where babe"
"Mpilo and I are working on something so we might have something for you let me talk to him" she says and I smile
"I would really appreciate it Afrika yoh thank you" I say
"Anything for you sis" we hug and Kopano cries
"Mandy come feed him" my mom shouts from the lounge
"Duty calls" I say and walk out

•MZWAKHE

I thought peace would finally reign in my household but Emily seems to want chaos all the time and I am not about that life, I am just glad to be going back to work and not have to deal with her drama all day. She walks in my study with a paper in her hands
"This is our timetable" she says
"For what Em"
"When we should have sex, you know when I am most likely to conceive" I frown
"You want us to plan our sex life"
"Don't look at it like that babe look at it as planning our baby" I sigh
"Emily" she shakes her head
"Babe please"
"If I give you this child you are going to have to stop working and be a full time stay and home mom" I say and she gives me a deadly look
"Why would I do that"
"Because you can't want to have many children and expect them to be raised by nannies" I say and she chuckles
"You turned out fine" she says and I stand up
"Excuse me?" I say and she keeps quiet and looks down
"Don't you dare compare my mom to this" I warn
"I really don't understand why you would want me to stop working. There are a million working moms who raise their children well"
"Emily if you want another child you will have to stay at home and raise it"
"It? Mzwa really"
"you want me to compromise you will also have to give in too" she chuckles
"You are becoming impossible with each passing day" she says heading to the door and I shake my head

•BULI

All I do is sleep, eat, bath and repeat the process. I am stressing out now because I can't go out to buy a bigger baby bump to show that the baby is growing, soon enough Khaya will expect to see the baby growing and I will not have an answer as to why my stomach is not growing. I need to find a way to call Snazo and beg her to get the bigger size to me. I walk to the bathroom and start stripping off my clothes and I get to my underwear and I realize

blood on it, I am starting with my periods. I step into the shower and as the water Cascades down on my bare skin an idea hits me. This is it Bulelwa this is your escape plan. I sink down and sit down hugging myself thankful to have finally thought of something to get me out of this mess. If I make it out of this sticky situation, I am never thinking of taking short cuts in life.

•LETHABO

I can't stay a day without seeing my wife and son and spending all my time with them has been fulfilling. I hate to be going back to work. I am impatiently waiting for them to finish with the house so I can sleep and wake up next to them every day for the rest of my life. I am not going to tell my mother about the house until we are almost done with it. I know she will find a way of making this huge step in my life negative and I can't have her put me down not now. I walk out of the bathroom and find her sitting in the lounge, I have been avoiding her flat out.

"Lethabo" she says and I sigh looking back at her

"Ma" it comes out as a whisper

"How is Koko" she says and I frown

"Who is that?" I ask

"My grandson of course" she says with enthusiasm and I keep a straight face

"He is fine, he is growing"

"When can I see him again"

"I don't know ma; I will see if I can bring him by sometime" I say

"Please son. He must come and grace his home with his presence. Phela this is all his" she says and laugh

"Oh" I say and attempt to walk away

"Lethabo please I am trying"

"How many times have you said that to me ma, and foolishly I would believe that you will change and be sincere but each time you come back and do something to insult, to hurt and to just make me feel like I don't know who you are" I voice out

"I am sorry my son, I don't want to lose"

"You would have never lost me at least not because of my wife but you will and it will only be because of the person you see when you look in the mirror"

"You have to realize that I raised you alone and your fathers people hurt me" I don't allow her finish

"You should stop using that because you are definitely doing the same thing to Amanda" she gasps for air

"Lethabo"

"No ma no" I walk out

CHAPTER 99

•MPILO

My woman is coming back today and I am hoping she sleeps in my room and with that said I need to tidy up. I have been so busy lately and my space is not the tidiest in the world and if she finds it like this, I will not hear the end of it. I remove the bedding and replace with clean fresh ones. My sneakers are everywhere so I quickly pack them away in the closet and go to my chest of drawers to pack my golf t-shirts properly, my bedroom door opens and it's my aunt.

"You have always been a neat freak" she says and I smile
"Ai ncane, not these past few days it was messy in here I wouldn't have been surprised if I found a snake in here" I confess
"Zikhiphani, siphuza kuphi? (What's up? Where are we drinking?)" she asks and I shake my head
"Not today Sma, Afrika is coming back later" she sighs
"Limnandi ikhekhe lakhe ne (she gives you great sex huh)" she says and I laugh
"You have no idea but nah it's not about sex, I love spending time with my girl. We get up to a lot of things" I say
"Like what" she takes a sit on my bed
"Don't tell anyone not even my mom I wanted to surprise her and everyone else but I might just as well share. I own rights to McDonald's brand meaning my restaurant will open soon plus I bought a restaurant that's operating and it's making me money, soon enough my club will be opened. I am also working towards opening my concierge service company" she is shocked
"Heee Mpilo that is great news boy"
"Thanks ncane"
"What's a cons what what company" I laugh
"We will basically be dealing with the rich and famous, people that don't have time to plan things themselves, so they will just give us a call to book them private jets, find them prestigious hotels, go shopping for them all around the world and even plan their events for them" I explain
"Someone will pay you to go buy them clothes, are people too busy to go to the shops to buy things" she asks and I nod
"You would be surprised Ncane, rich people don't have the time to do the smallest of things they are all about making more money"
"That's crazy" she says clicking her tongue.
"I know but their laziness will make me rich" I say
"But why because you are already rich"
"I am trying to go clean and own legit businesses Sma"
"I understand, how did you come up with this idea" I smile
"It's all Afrika, she came up with it all, I am just making the money available" she stands up and offers me a hand and I take it narrowing my eyes
"You have found a gem there. A woman who helps you plan ways of making money instead of spending it is for keeps remember that and don't hurt her she is innocent and smart shame nomnyamazane" I smile
"I still can't believe how lucky I am, I don't know what to buy her to show her how much I appreciate her" I say
"Ungamuthengeli lutho mnike into yok'thenga (don't buy her anything rather give her the money)" she advices and it's the second time now someone tells me this I guess I should just deposit her some cash.
"Okay I will do that"

•BULI

I hope this plan works out, and I make it out of this place and run as far as I can from that evil man. I made sure to take my ID and my bank card; they are safely put in my breast. I am just waiting on Khaya to walk back into the room and I will put on the show deserving of an Oscar. I haven't woken up since he left the bed to go work out, he normally hits the gym early every Sunday morning, and if I want him to buy my story, he really needs to see this with his own eyes. The bedroom door opens and I take a deep breath
"You are still sleeping at this time Buli" he asks and I open my eyes and look at him

"I am not feeling well, I am weak" I say
"Maybe if you wake up and take a shower and get something to eat you will feel better"
"Yeah maybe" I reply and get out of bed slowly and as I stand, he gasps for air
"Bulelwa what is this?" he asks panicking
"What is what?" I ask looking back and thank God the menstrual blood left a stain huge enough to cause panic on the sheets. For the first time in my life I am grateful for my heavy flow. Tears shine in my eyes
"Oh my God Khaya" the words come out as a whisper and he is looking at the blood but his eyes move with mine to my thighs
"What's going on, why are you bleeding like this?" He asks
"It could only mean that something is wrong with my baby, Khaya please take me to see the doctor now please" I say letting my fake tears fall
"Let's go now" he says trying to locate his car keys. And I take my gown and put it on. I walk towards him and like I am wasting his time he scoops me in his arms bridal style and rushes out the door, I pretend to be whipping in his chest as I listen to his heart beating fast.
"What's going on" Ndlovukazi's voice says
"Something is wrong with the baby she is bleeding" he says and I think its fear I sense in his voice.
"Oh my God Khaya hurry up and take her to Siza's hospital I will call her and ask her to avail her best people" she says and I want to scream no, I need to go to the doctor that has been helping us with this lie. God please this can't be happening. He places me in the back of the car and quickly goes to his side and drives off. I am trying to think of a way to improvise my plan. I need to make it out of that hospital before they can find out that it's no miscarriage but menstrual blood. At least I am out of this house

•AFRIKA

I am leaving my home, the warmth, the calmness and the people I hold dear to me and I am going to my home where I want to be always. Mpilo, that man's heart is home. He sent me a message asking me to spend the night in his room and I am going to need to dodge his mom and explain in the morning. The thought of being in the same space as Khaya Mdlalose is just sickening but it doesn't worry me one bit because now that Mpilo is one foot out of the drug business I will definitely make it my mission to find the black book and take down that man once and for all. Sibho walks in as I walk out of the bathing basin.
"Your body is becoming mature baby, look at you curves" she says and I laugh
"Don't joke with me ma" I reply
"I am not, you are now putting weight all in the right places" I smile
"If that's the case then I am happy, a little ass never hurt" she giggles and sit down on the bed and looks at my outfit.
"This needs ironing Afrika; do you want the children at school to say you came out of the cow's mouth with wrinkled clothes"
"Ave unehaba mama yoh (you are exaggerating)" I say and she smiles
"I am going to miss you so much sthandwa Sam" she confesses
"Me too Sibho, I will be home soon don't worry" I promise
"Please don't stay away for too long"
"Ngeke (never)" I say and she reaches for her breast
"I know it's not much but you will buy chomps and biscuits at lunch when you are at school" I smile and take it not wanting to offend her, I know how happy she becomes when she does these little things for us and to me they are a reminder of how much she trying to right her wrongs and for that I appreciate her
"Thank you Sibho" I brush her arm
"Did you finish parking your things"

"Everything ma" I assure her
"And Afrika make sure to wear warm things so you don't catch a cold and end up missing classes because of it"
"I will take care of myself for your peace of mind" I say
"Thank you my babes. Let me go iron this for you" she says walking out

•LETHABO

I am packing my clothes for the entire week to take them to Amanda for her to iron for me, going back to work feels like a death sentence but I have a family to feed and provide for so I will soldier on for them. A knock comes through my door and she comes in before I can permit her.

"Lethabo, I brought you lunch papa" my mom says

"Oh, thanks ma, you can put it on the coffee table" I say folding my trousers

"Hao are you going somewhere?" She asks eyeing the bag

"Oh no"

"Then why are you packing" she queries

"I am taking these to Amanda so she can iron for me"

"But I have always done this for you" she replies

"I know mama but I am married now and my wife is willing to help with it"

"I really didn't mind plus Amanda has her heads full with her son" she says and I laugh

"Our son you mean" I say looking at her and she closes her eyes

"Yes, your son, I am sorry It wasn't supposed to come out that way Lethabo"

"It's okay" I say zipping the bag

"Please don't be mad at me it's not on purpose, it was just a slip of the tongue" she pleases

"I am not mad outlady" she sighs

"Greet makoti for me and don't forget to ask when Koko can come visit home"

"I will" I say and she walks out. I take the food and put it in the fridge. I will have it when I come back. Amanda says she cooked so I don't want to show up with a full stomach and I also didn't want to make my mom feel offended.

•BULI

We get to the hospital and my heart is beating fast. He gets out of the car and runs inside and a part of me tells me to make a run for it while he is still inside but I won't make it very far before he gets me. I mean the gate is far from the emergency entrance. I can't be irrational at least not now. He comes back with a nurse pushing the wheelchair and I roll my eyes. He opens the door and helps me out of the car.

"Ma'am what happened" the nurse asks

"I am, I just woke up and realized that I am bleeding heavily, it's scary, I didn't feel pain it just" I say crying

"It's okay" she says rushing in, Khaya tries to follow us

"Sir please go to the front desk and open a file for her and once you are done, they will bring you to where we are" the nurse instructs him

"Okay I will please save my baby" he says

"We will do everything we can" she says on her way. We get to the room and she helps me to the bed

"Ma'am please give me a minute to get the doctor and the supplies we are going to need" she says and I nod, I notice a dress in the curtain cubicle next to mine, I peep and see that there is no one in there, so I quickly grab it and look out my curtain and the hallway is quite and empty. I go out and make it straight to the exit and I notice a toilet outside so I get in and change the bloody clothes, thank God the dress is black. I tear the fake bump take its sponge to use as a pad. I make my way out of the bathroom and make a run for it. Thank

God no one stops me and there are no guards on site. I see a meter taxi by the gate and I go straight for it and get in.

"Haibo and then" the driver says shocked

"Please take me to the nearest mall" I say because I need to get pads and proper clothes to disguise, a phone so I can call Snazo and get the numbers of the passport guy. I need to get out of this country ASAP

•NOMALANGA

I have been trying Khaya for a while now and he is not picking up my calls. I am really worried about Buli, I hope the baby is fine. If that girl loses her baby, she going to lose her mind no lies. Yes, she hurt me but I wouldn't wish her the pain. My daughter appears as I try her father one more time

"Is everything okay"

"I don't know why your father is not picking up his phone" I answer

"What do you want from that one" she asks

"I want to find out if Buli and the baby are fine" I say and she narrows her eyes

"Why wouldn't they be" she asks confused

"He rushed her to the hospital she was bleeding" I say

"Oh" Sbahle says

"That's all you got to say baby that is your sibling" I say

"What kind of human being are you ma? Normal people would be rejoicing that karma is finally at work but you are sympathizing with them" she says and I sigh

"I am not that way and you shouldn't be too" I say

"Yoh let me go find aunt Sma I know she will agree with me"

"Sbahle" I warn and she leaves me standing there.

•KHAYA

I am scared I won't lie; this baby has to make it. That child is a way for me to redeem myself, to be a better father so Nomalanga can see I can be human and fall in love with me once again. I lost my favorite son and I might actually act like it doesn't affect me but I miss Mpilo, our relationship is beyond repair but I have a chance with the new baby a chance to make them see me differently and be on my side again. They lead me to where Buli is and I find the nurse that took her and the doctor talking

"I left her in here to find you I swear" the nurse says

"Then where is she, you said she is pregnant and bleeding, that woman could be lying somewhere bleeding to death" the doctor says

"You don't know where Bulelwa is" I yell and they both look back at me

"Sir we will find her; we've already called security to check the footage" the doctor says calmly and before I could breathe fire a security guard appears

"We found something in the bathroom outside the 7th entrance" he says and we all follow the doctor. When we get there, we find he bloody pyjama bottoms gown and a sponge, I am confused

"Is that?" The nurse asks

"Yes, it is" the 2nd nurse says

"What is going on here" I shout

"These are the things your wife came wearing" the doctor asks

"Yes, it is"

"Have you seen her baby bump before" she asks

"No never, what's going on?" I roar

"Well it appears that she was wearing a fake baby bump" the doctor says and my heart almost stops

"What" I say in a low voice

"She was never pregnant that's why she ran away" the nurse says and I put my hands on top of my head

"That bitch" I curse out feeling myself boil with anger. She played me and I didn't see it one bit.

CHAPTER 100

•KHAYA

How did I miss this, the red flags were there but I chose not to see them, I decided to see Bulelwa as a vulnerable naive girl and because of that she played me at my own game and now she is on the run, I need to find her, I need to find her and use her as an example, show them all that they can never play me and get away with it. I was willing to come right and be a better person but it's people like Bulelwa that set us off and remind us why we chose to be ruthless. I try to move but I lose my step and quickly balance on the wall. The nurses come to my side quick enough.

"Are you okay sir" the Dr asked trying to touch me

"I am fine damnit" I yell and they get away from me so I fix my t-shirt and walk out to my car. If she thinks she can run away from me then she has no idea who she is dealing with. I get to my car and find the phone I took and placed it in my dash board and today it will come in handy to me. I charge it and switch in on, I am trying to find a clue of where she could run to but there is nothing there. An idea hits me and I quickly call the driver that was designated to Buli.

"Boss"

"Listen I want you to take one other guard and drive to Buli's mother's house and find her cousin Snazo"

"Should we bring her back to the house"

"No I have a feeling that Buli is going to contact her and when she does make sure she leads you to where she is and after that I want you to send me the location and I will send more men to get that bitch" I say

"Okay sir I am on it"

"Be quick about it" I say and hang up. I need to have more than one plan for these girls. I underestimated them once I am definitely not doing it again. I am paying the police a lot of money and most times it's for nothing because they work once in a blue moon. I call the big dog at the station and he answers

"Mdlalose"

"Listen I am going to send you a number and I am going to need you to tap it and listen on the phone calls" he sighs

"What should we listen on specifically"

"I want to know their whereabouts of a girl named Buli, she might call the number and when she does I want you to track her down for me, I want her live location and soon as you find her bring her to my house alive" I order

"Sure, I will get a couple of guys on it now" he replies

"Head this one and make sure they don't mess it up okay" I say

"Sure, send the number and the picture of the girl" he says before hanging up.

•AMANDA

Lethabo got here a few minutes ago and my mom made herself scares, she decided to go and fix my wardrobe because I make a mess in there, she is just trying to give us some space. My husband is on the single couch eating the seven colours I prepared specially for him. Kopano is sleeping peacefully on the couch. And I am ironing Lethabo's clothes to go to work for the entire week.

"This was amazing love thanks" he says licking his fingers

"I am happy you enjoyed the korobela (love potion)" I reply and he laughs

"You can feed it to me all you want babe I will gladly eat it" he says and I smile

"You can place the plate on the table" he gives me a look before standing up and taking the plate to the sink. He comes back and looks at his son

"Mjita yena hasa batla ho tsowa jwale (he doesn't want to wake up now)" he says

"Babe please leave him because if he wakes up my breasts are going to suffer" I plead and he chuckles

"But your boobs still look so small love I am still amazed that they make milk"

"Dynamites comes in small packages I make a whole dairy farm why do you think you son is so addicted" I say and he laugh

"Oh wow" he says and changes the channel to football.

"Husband" I say sweetly at him

"Wifey, what do you want" I laugh

"So, babe, I have been thinking that I should study events planning and start doing gigs around here to also bring in some money to our home" I say and he smiles

"I appreciate that sweetheart but I don't want you to pressure yourself thinking that I am struggling, I can provide for you and our son always but I understand that you want to earn something and that is fine with me all. I am asking you is not to overwhelm yourself I mean you just gave birth to our boy and you still need to finish writing you matric finals in a few months" he says and I nod

"That's true, I don't want to bite more than I can chew" I chew

"So, tell you what soon as you are done with your grade 12 results, we can find you a good school and you can enrol with them" he suggests

"I am all for that thanks babe" I say

"Do this because you want to babe not because you feel like you are a burden to me okay" he murmurs

"Okay love" I say and Kopano starts crying

"Finally, he wakes up" his father says excitedly and I roll my eyes

•AFRIKA

I get to the Mdlalose home and everything is still the same, but what did I think would change here in a few weeks. The driver opens the boot and takes out my bag. I take it and start wheeling it inside. The house is dead silent and I wonder whether to start in the room I share with Ndlovukazi or go to find my boyfriend and show him how much I've missed him. I decide to go put down my bags and then call him to find out if it's clear for me to come down to his room. I ascend the stairs and I hear laughter erupting from balcony and I remember aunt Sma now lives here. I smile and place my bags in the corner and go outside. It's Ndlovukazi and aunt Sma

"Sanibonani" I greet and ma is the first one to stand up

"Oh, hi baby, you are back" she says and we hug

"Back to school and work" I say and she sighs

"I am sorry that you have to go back to doing that, I am sorry we are failing to get you out of this mess" she says and I smile at her

"It's okay Ndlovukazi something will give soon" I assure her and she nods

"Nomnyamazane" I laugh and make my way to her
"Aunt Smangele" I say and we hug
"Uyak'wondla uMpilo beka unona kahle kanjani (Mpilo is feeding you right look at you gaining weight)" I blush and look down.
"Sma shhhhhh do you want Khaya to hear you" Ndlovukazi says already peeping through to see if no one was listening
"Eish hade ngikhohliwe sine enemy of progress in this house (oh sorry I forgot about the enemy of progress)" she says
"How is everyone at home" Ndlovukazi says as we sit down
"Everyone is doing well. My mom is getting better with each passing day. My sister is just amazing, they just bought a house with her husband and my nephew the cutest thing in the world" I say with a smile
"I am happy to hear this baby" she says and I nod. Mpilo walks in and I can't help but smile from ear to ear
"I knew you are here" he says looking at me
"How?" I ask
"The suddenly felt peace in my heart and I knew it only comes with you sthandwa Sam" he says and his mom and aunt start laughing
"Aow thata Shakespeare" Sma says and I giggle
"Woza uzongibulisa sthandwa sami (come and greet me my love)" he says completely ignoring these two ladies
"Ngiyeza (I am coming)" I say and he sticks his tongue aunt
"Voetsek" it can only be Sma. Mpilo chuckles and walks away. The sisters start making fun of what just happened and I am sitting there muffling my laughs. After a few minutes I stand up
"I will be in the bedroom" I say
"Which one" Sma asks and they both burst out laughing. This is so awkward my God. I get out quickly and realize my bags are no longer by the wall so I just make my way to Mpilo's room. I get in and soon as I get in and close the door, he is in my face kissing me hungrily and I can't help but return it. He picks me up and pins me to the door and the next thing I hear is the door locking and he moves me to the bed, he is on top of me between my legs kissing me so slowly and passionately. He helps me out of my Jacket the same time I try to pull his t-shirt off. We both stop and laugh
"I think we should take a minute" I say and he laughs
"I think so too baby" he replies
"Hi" I greet
"Hey babe, how are you?"
"I am okay. I missed you so much" I say and he blushes
"I missed you too Muhles" he says and kisses me on my forehead
"I love you" I confess and he smiles
"I love you too babe and hold that thought" he says reaching for a jewellery store gift bag on the pedestal
"I got us this" he says looking excited and we sit properly. He takes out two boxes and hands one to me. I open mine and it's a necklace of a heart like the organ and it's so cute.
"This is beautiful love thank you so much" I say kissing him
"Got myself one to match" he says smiling
"Sucks that we can't wear them at the same time" I say
"One day we will be able to love" he says and I nod
"Definitely sthandwa sami"
"Now can we go back to what we started the minute you walked in here" he says in a low voice

"Please" the word comes out of my horny self and Mpilo removes the things and helps me out of my shoes.

•BULI

Soon as I got in this hotel room, I swear I exhaled deeply I wasn't even aware that I was holding my breath. I made it out of that house and away from that man. I managed to withdraw money and bought the phone. I called Snazo to send me the passports guy's number and she did not question me and that was a first. I feel so fresh, soon as the passport guys gets here and gives me my shit, I am leaving the country and not looking back. I bought a few things and a small bag and I am ready to make a run for it. I fasten my shoe laces and a knock comes through the door, I go and peep through and it's a guy in a cap, I sigh and open up, he walks in

"My money please" he says after handing me the passport. I look at it and it looks legit. My new name is Zukiswa Ndala, sounds like she is a drama queen. I hand him the envelope

"Thank you" I say

"Good luck" he walks out and I quickly go and get my bag and pop the last of my burger in my mouth and take my phone. I head to the door and open and 3 cops are on my door step and I realize the woman from when I went to open the rape case. Tears just stream down even before they could say anything.

"Please" I beg

"You just never learn" the police woman says

"He is going to kill me are you willing to have that on your conscious" I try to guilt trip them and the all laugh

"Don't waste your time sweetheart, let's go. Khaya hates waiting" they say and pull me by my arm

"I am begging you please" my please fall on deaf ears, they don't seem to even care that they are sending me to my doom. God please have mercy on my soul

CHAPTER 101

•KHAYA

I am pacing up and down by the pool waiting to receive the call, I hope they apprehended that bitch because what I am about your do to her and her cousin is worthy of a show. No one plays me like that and gets away with it. My phone rings and it's them I sigh and answer quickly

"Yes" I snap

"We got here we are on our way sir"

"Good get her here now" I

"We are 20 minutes out"

"Don't forget to wear your balaclavas for my family not to see your faces" I remind them

"Yes Mr. Mdlalose" I hang up and walk towards the direction of the sliding door and I see a car pull up in the drive way it's Mzwa and Emily and thank God they didn't bring my granddaughters. They get put the car and make their way to me.

"Baba is everything okay, you sounded worked up over the phone" my son asks

"I will be fine Mzwakhe"

"I understand but what happened" he insists

"You will find out soon, go inside to the lounge" I say and leave them there going upstairs and thankful that the boys are already setting up. I make my way upstairs and change into black sweatpants and a black T-shirt. Seeing her clothes in my closet just makes me angrier.

•NOMALANGA

I am still so worried about Buli, and the fact that Khaya still isn't answering my calls to let me know how she is doing is just driving me off the cliff. I am even thinking of driving there myself once and for all to save myself from the mental strain. I take my handbag and car keys and make my way downstairs and soon as I walk past the other lounge that we hardly use I frown.

"What the hell are you doing in my house" I ask and they just ignore me. My furniture is not in the room and the whole place is covered in plastic, from the floors to the walls and I promise if the ceiling wasn't high enough it would be suffocating from the plastic as well.

"I asked you what you are doing in my house? Where is my furniture?" I scream but they don't give me the light of day, they simply just continue with their job and I laugh, as I turn one walks in with about 10 plastic chairs.

"Mpilo" I shout anger consuming me, he appears after a few minutes

"Whoa what's going on here?" He asks

"I want to know too, but these clowns won't tell me" I answer and Khaya answers from behind

"You will soon find out; everyone please take a sit" he says walking in with police officers wearing balaclavas. What the hell?

"Care to explain?" I ask waving my hands

"Sit down Nomalanga. You go get the rest of them" the cops get out of the of the room as Mzwakhe and Emily walk in. I shake my head and ho take a sit and they follow me. Khaya is in a black outfit and he is breathing fire I just wonder what made him so mad God, I pray nothing happened to his child. A few minutes later the police come back with my daughter, Sma and Afrika. The one who is holding Afrika roughly pushes her in the room and Mpilo almost got up from the chair but I quickly hold him back. He looks at me with eyes ready to kill but I manage to remind him with my calm eyes what could happen and it works. They take a sit.

"And then what the hell is going on here" Sma asks

"Voetsek Sfebe" Khaya says and Sma laughs

"Don't you dare Khaya Mdlalose don't you dare me" I say defending my sister

"Trust me Noma today you all shouldn't dare me" he says and I narrow my eyes.

"Bring those hood rats in" he orders and we all look at each other wondering who he is talking about. 2 more cops walk in holding a big wooden box, and soon as they open it, we all gasp for air.

•KHAYA

I just couldn't hold myself any longer I wanted blood I wanted to dish out the pain I was feeling, she betrayed me in the worst possible way and for that she is going to pay and from this everyone else will respect me and remember that I made them, that I gave them everything that they have in life and if I wanted to I would take it away just like that. My team takes guns from the box and go stand behind my family, this is to just keep them in order and under control. Especially Nomalanga and Mpilo they like playing hero. I see the fear and uncertainty in their eyes and this is exactly what I want. The cops walk in with Bulelwa and Snazo and they are both kicking and screaming.

"Khaya please I am sorry" Buli pleas with me.

"Silence her" I say and she gets a hot slap across her face and they force them to sit down.

"What are you doing" my ex-wife says standing up ready to save the day like I anticipated and she stops at the sound of the cocking gun.

"Sit down Noma I told you that today you all shouldn't dare me, I will tell them to blow your brains out, she goes back and I nod

"So, you are all wondering what is going on here, well I am going to show each and every one of you what happens to people who think are smarter than me and sharper. People who think can take me for a ride and get away with it. I am Khayaletu Mdlalose and I run these streets, I make things happen and I can stop them just like that too. I gave each and every one of you all you have in life and with a snap it would all go away"

"Leave me out of your mouth, you gave me nothing you piece of shit" Smangele can't seem to shut her trap and she is annoying me but not to worry I have a present for her that will get her in check forever.

"So, Bulelwa band her cousin here thought they could come here and play a fast one on me and for a second they actually did but no one can hustle me no one" I state and saying this out loud is just making me more and more angry

"Khaya please I will disappear and you will never see me again I promise" the she devil cries.

"You should have never even tried to con me Bulelwa and for that you will play" I say and look at her cousin who is crying silently

"Quick question, who came up with an idea to fake the pregnancy to get money out of me?" I ask and they stay silent so I just nod and I go to the box and take out a big butcher knife and make Buli stand up and I rip off her clothes until she is left bare. Her cries get louder and I see my son's looking down avoiding to look at Buli's naked body.

"See how flat her stomach is, she was using a fake baby bump to trick me so I can give her money and this morning she faked a miscarriage to untangle herself from the mess she created because she could see that she couldn't hustle me even if she tried" I inform them and they are looking at each other shocked and the bitch is laughing in my face Smangele is a thorn on my side let me get this party on the road

"This is what I do to people who betrayed me and if you think you can do as you please at my expense then you have another thing coming and it most probably goes something like this" I say and go to Buli and kiss her on the lips

"I told you the only way to leave this house is to give birth to my child and that's exactly what I am going to do. I am going to do a C-section and you better pray I find the baby you said you are carrying in the there"

"No, no please forgive me please" she begs me and I nod to the boys and they quickly hold her down and I kneel and take a smaller knife. She is screaming the house down but I couldn't care less. I make an incision in the abdomen and her father starts showing until blood comes out, she is moving trying to break free so the incision is not straight at all.

"Khaya please stop please" Noma begs

"Baba please Nooooo" Sbahle adds but I don't hear them, if they understood the betrayal and hurt, I am feeling deep in my stone-cold heart. I cut her deeper and her breathing is now faint so I take the injection and give her adrenaline to keep her awake.

"The is no baby in here Buli, where is my child huh?" I ask

"Khaya please" she says in a low voice and the cries in the room are escalating, I look back and Afrika is crying in Sma's arms. My daughter is hiding in her thighs and Emily is looking at the back holding Mzwakhe's hand tight. A part of me happy that they are getting the message. Noma is looking at me like I am the devil.

"Mr Mdlalose please" Snazo finally says something

"Who came up with this plan, I will let you both live if you tell me the truth" I say

"It was me please she had nothing to do with this I set please" she confesses and I chuckle and just take the gun from the cop standing near me and just blow her brain out, she falls

down across the bleeding Buli and tears just stream down her face, failing to say something, she desperately wants to push her body towards her cousin but she is failing.

"No one messes with me absolutely no one" I scream like a mad man and at this point I am feeling like one. I look at my family and my point is made. I turn back and Buli is starting to cough up blood.

"Please just kill me" she begs again chocking. Her voice gets me mad, seeing her makes me want to kill everyone in here just to feel better so I decide to just be done with it and get out of here before I go more insane. So, I shoot her until I am out of bullets, all women except Smangele are closing their ears cringing. I spit on her corps and go wipe the gun off my prints and walk to Sma. She returns my gaze and we are having a starring contest. Everyone is looking at me wondering what I am going to do. I nod to the cop and he comes and forces her to stand up and hold her firm I take her hand and force her to hold the gun

"What are you doing, Khaya leave my sister alone now" Nomalanga says coming to me and the cop tries to hold her but she turns and give her a hot slap on the face.

"Don't you dare" she warns and the police woman looks at me and I nod she backs off.

"This will keep you in check. Don't come for me because this gun will get to the police and every crime and every murder committed with it will be blamed on you. So, remember your place here" I say

"Unyinja Khaya (you are a dog Khaya)" Sma says

"Eyo fela eshogweni (a dog that will die in hell)" Noma adds.

"Mzwakhe please take me home please" Emily says and they hurry out.

"The show is over you can go back to your business now. Guys roll up everything and let's go dispose of this trash" I say and they start packing up everything. And I get the gun in the evidence plastic.

•MPILO

To say I loathe Khaya would be an understatement. He is an animal that has to be put out. That was no way to deal with Snazo and Buli. Yes, what they did was wrong but he had no right to do kill them like that absolutely no right. What killed me was hearing my girlfriend cry and not being able to go and comfort her. This was the first time seeing such a brutal thing and I feel useless for not being able to shield her from everything. I am outside trying to get some fresh air. My father and his team walk out and throw the corpses in the back of the police van and they all drive out. I see Afrika's driver and I make way to him.

"Ola" I say

"TaMpilo" he responds

"Alert me when taima arrives, soon as he drives in okay" he nods vigorously and I fist bump him before heading to inside. I open my mom's bedroom door and she is trying to calm both Afrika and Sbahle down. She shakes her head when I walk in

"He went out with them ma" I say

"It's dangerous Mpilo" she warns

"I know ma and we will keep a distance from each other till things die down but for now let me be there for my girl please" I beg and she sighs

"Okay but you are not leaving the room" she says and I nod. I take her and walk to the closet and soon as we are in the room alone, she attacks me with a hug and I feel her tears soaking my golfer

"I am so sorry sthandwa Sam" I say and she weeps harder

"He is an animal Mpilo" she manages to say

"I am sorry you had to see that. I am really sorry sthandwa sami I am sorry"

"They didn't deserve to die like that" she continues and I decide to get down and hold her properly in my arms

"What if he learns about our relationship, Mpilo"

She says and shakes her head probably at the horrific thought of what just transpired.
"He will have to get through me first before touching even a hair on your head. I promise you baby"

"I am scared baby" she confesses

"I know and I want you to know that it's okay and I am here" I reassure her

"We need to keep a distance from each other" she says and I sigh

"I don't like that Muhles but I agree. You need to know that I love you Afrika and I will protect you for as long as I live" I make a promise

"I love you too" she says still crying and seeing her this way really breaks my heart I won't lie.

•MZWAKHE

The drive back to our place seemed to be long and my head keeps on drawing back to what my father just did. I know baba is ruthless but this was a whole new level, to do it in front of all of us was just plain cruel. My wife has been crying non-stop and I want to get home so I can just hold her. We finally arrive and she is the first one out the car and I follow behind.

"Emily" I say behind her and she is shaking her head

"Let me be there for you please" I beg her as we get in our bedroom

"Your father is a monster Mzwakhe" she says and I sigh

"I am sorry you saw that babe" I murmur

"And that is the man you want approval, acknowledge and love from Mzwa" she asks and I exhale deeply

"He is hurt by what they did to him" I try and justify his actions but I just shocked my wife more

"Are you serious right now, there will never be a good reason as to why he had to kill those poor girls. Your father has done worse and the fact that you want to justify his actions just proves that you are exactly like him" she sneers and I close my eyes

"That's not true love" I say in a low voice

"Get out please" she asks me and I shake my head

"I need to be here for you" I say

"Well I don't want you to be here for me, it feels like I am in the presence of your dad" she says and those words hit home.

CHAPTER 102

•MZWAKHE

I didn't sleep a wink last night and not sleeping in the same room as my wife added to my insomnia, she is mad and disappointed in me and I kind of feel bad for trying to justify his actions. He did a cruel thing and no reason he could give will make his actions acceptable. I just hope Em and I can work passed this. I walk out the shower and go to my study to get my things, it's back to work and after yesterday I am not ready. I walk in the kitchen and spot luggage by the door, my heart starts racing and I am about to walk to find my wife when she walks in

"Emily what is going on?" I ask panicking

"I am taking my kids and we are going to the hotel a while; I don't want to go to my parents' house because I am not sure yet what I want to do"

"What do you mean by that Em please" I say

"I just need time apart Mzwakhe this is all too much for me" she murmurs

"I know love but please we have to be together at this time" I beg but she shakes her head
"I don't think so Mzwakhe. This is just too much for me I don't know how to act around you.
I don't know who you are anymore it's just painful" her words sting
"What are you going to tell our girls Emily please" I say hoping she will rethink this
"I will deal with the girls" she says
"You don't have to leave our home and confuse our children; I will try and stay out of your
space just don't leave" I continue
"I can't exist in the same space as you for a while I need time to think about what's next for
me for us" she says this again and it leaves me with a bitter taste in my mouth
"Em please my father's actions shouldn't reflect on me" I tell
"That's true and it wasn't until you justified his actions" she says in a low voice
"I know and I am sorry for that babe please" I say taking her hands into mine
"No Mzwa I need time" she insists
"Okay okay I will move out babe I will give you some space please don't leave I will leave
after work" I suggest
"Okay" she whispers

•KHAYA

I am glad that I got that bitch and he cousin out of my way and that everyone else is in check
and they know what would happen if they went behind my back and try to outsmart me.
Everyone knows their place now and that will assure us a pretty smooth sailing forward. I
put on my tie and I am dressed for the day. I need to go to the office for a couple of hours
and attend all my meetings. It's a pretty hectic Monday on my side. I get downstairs and the
dining room table is set up and the is food but no people. I sigh and bury my hands deep in
my pockets. I was about to check the time when my daughter appears soon as she sees me,
she freezes and attempts to walk back
"Sbahlle" I say and she stops
"Breakfast is served" I say in a stern voice.
"I am not hungry" she says not looking at me
"You didn't eat last night too so that's not true" I say and she finally look at me with teary
eyes
"After the horrible thing you did in front of us, how did you expect us to eat baba" she half
shouts and I raise my eyebrow
"Watch your tone" I warn
"No, I won't, you expect us to come and sit down and eat like you didn't just kill 2 girls right
in this house last night. You want us to go on like what happened here is normal" she
continues
"I will not have you speak to me like that, I am your father"
"And I wish you weren't. I have never hated having the same blood as you as I do now" she
sneers and her words rub me off the wrong
"You don't mean that" I say in a low voice
"Trust me I do" she assures me and her words break my heart, my daughter always looked
at me like her hero.
"You are a monster, you are not the man that raised me and loved me and protected me, you
showed me horror hoping that it would make me respect you but in actual fact you took the
respect and replaced it with fear and hate" she adds
"Sbahlle Mdlalose" I warn and she shakes her head
"No, no I don't want anything to do with you. You weren't from being the guy that chased
away the monster to being the big bad monster under the bed" she says and walks away. I
am shocked I can't even stop or go after her.

•NOMALANGA

I can't seem to shed a tear, but I am horrified, hurt and scared. Horrified by how inhumane Khaya killed those girls, hurt that my children had to see all that cruelty. Scared that he might send my sister to jail for something she never did. I can't fathom how one person can be so evil and vile. He scared our children for life and none of us will ever look at him the same way again. Even the good he has ever done was thrown out the window, the is no coming back from this. My sister walks in wearing a dress and if it was a different day, I would tease her but emotions are running high.

"Nono" she says closing the door behind her.

"Mntase'khaya" I respond

"Yah ku rough" she says and I sigh

"I am sorry for what Khaya did to you sisi" I say and she sighs

"It's not your fault Nono, that bastard fears me and he knows I have the potential to rain terror on him and he did that to keep me on a tight leash, he did that so he can control all of us" she says

"That's very true" I agree

"It will all work out Nomalanga. No bad deed goes unpunished. He will pay for every evil deed he ever done" she adds

"I can't wait for that day and until then please stay away from him please" I plea with her and she laughs

"I will listen to you this one time" she says and I sigh in relief

"I am going to work on getting us a new place, I can't live here any longer, it feels somehow and I just can't" I voice out

"People died here Nono it will never be the same again" she reminds me and I sigh wishing I could undo yesterday and wipe it off from earth forever.

•AMANDA

Sphamandla came through and dropped of school work for me and I decided to just start with it all while Kopano is sleeping. It's hectic in mommyville I am still trying to get the hang of things and juggle school and being a wife and now being available to see that the house constructions are going on well, I also have to start furniture shopping and all. It's hectic but I will make it work I really have to. I am in the kitchen doing my work because the table and chairs in here are comfortable and spacious enough for my books and other materials. My mom went out to attend her support group meetings. A knock comes through and I sigh why didn't my mother lock the gate. I stand up and open and I honestly fail to hide my surprise.

"Sawbona ma" I greet her

"Amanda, how are you?" My mother in-law asks

"I am very well thanks how are you"

"I am well. Can I please come in" she says and I snap out of it.

"I am sorry please come in" I say moving aside for her to walk in.

"Oh, you were studying I am sorry for disturbing you" she says

"It's okay, I just wanted to push while Kopano is asleep" I say and show her a sit which she takes and I join her.

"Oh, understandably so" she murmurs

"Yeah. Lethabo didn't mention that you would be coming" I put it out there

"He doesn't know that I am here" she says

"Oh, I see"

"Amanda I feel like we started on the wrong foot and whatever I've done is take in the wrong or offensive way and I apologise all I want is to have a relationship with my son the same one I've always had with him" she says and I feel like I should just put it out there.

"Please don't take this the wrong way but ma it's clear even to a blind person that you don't like me and you will never see me worthy of your son and that's okay what rubs me the wrong way is you always coming to me and saying you want us to have a relationship and then turn to say and do things to purposely hurt me and make it seem like it was entirely innocent. We don't have to do this you don't have to pretend to like me, it's draining for me so I can only imagine how draining it is for you be because you are the one who has to live a lie. I respect you as an elder and how you raised Lethabo and I wish to do the same job with Kopano, I would have loved to have a relationship with you but I know it would never be real and that's fine" I say and she is blinking

"Uhm Amanda I don't hate you and I will admit I have a problem with you being with Lethabo I feel like he is more innocent and you aren't and I don't think that makes me a bad mother" I smile

"And that's okay just stop trying to pretend to want to have a relationship with me to gain points with Lethabo. Stick to not liking me whether Lethabo appreciates it or not" I say

"I guess so" she responds

"And I also believe you can hate me but love my child so I don't trust you around my son Mainly because you still believe that he isn't Lethabo's son and how you treat me, so your requests to have Kopano visit will only happen with me there and I don't think that makes me a bad mother" I use her words against her.

"I totally understand where you are coming from, but that little boy is my grandson and I love him, I will prove that to you and everyone else" she says and I remain silent.

"I was hoping to see him" she asks

"he is still sleeping but I will get him" I say and walk to my room honestly feeling good that I told this lady how I feel I am tired of her abusing me and making me feel inferior.

•MPILO

All the good memories ever created in this house are no longer beautiful, Khaya took that away from us and replaced it with horror and terror. I wish we could wake up and someone tell us it was only just a horrible dream. On the other hand, I have to deal with having to be distant from Afrika just so everyone can be safe because it's clear that Khaya is irrational and he acts on emotions. I want to be there for her especially after she witnessed such a terrifying thing. I walk in my bedroom and find Sbahle.

"Oh hey"

"Hey Life" she says with a low voice.

"You good?" I ask feeling bad for her, she has always been closer to that man than Ndlovukazi and it's sad that she had to see her hero do that.

"I will be okay brother" she says and I go sit down next to her

"Yes, you will Nana you have us, if you need to talk, I am here for you" I say

"I appreciate that" she adds

"Kuzo'lunga (it's going to be okay)" I assure

"So, you and Afrika huh" she brings it up and I sigh

"You can't tell Dad or Mzwakhe please Bahle if they find out they will harm her family" I say

"You don't have to worry about that I promise. I finally saw Baba for who he really is and I would never put Afrika and her family in danger. Your secret is safe with me just like it was with ma" she assures me and I am relieved

"Thank you sis"

"So, is it serious?"

"I have never loved a woman or looked at one the way I do Afrika, she is my life. She makes me believe in all sorts of possibilities; you know children marriage the works" I confess

"Wow I never thought I would hear you say that but I am happy for you"

"Thank you Nana, so be kind to her please I am going to have to step back from her obviously so I would really appreciate it if you stepped in for me and be some kind of friend you now"

"I understand Life and I will reach out to her" I smile

"I owe you big time" I say and we share a hug.

CHAPTER 103

•KHAYA

It's dinner time and again none of them is by the table and this time around the table is not set and this behaviour is not what I am willing to have in my house. If they think they will change the traditions of my house then they are truly mistaken. I will allow them a few days to digest this whole thing and after that it's back to normal. I walk to the kitchen and open the fridge and I find a container and the is stew, I take it out and put it in the microwave to warm up while I go get the buns from the pantry. I sit down to eat when I hear the door closing. A second later Mzwakhe passes by the kitchen wheeling his luggage bag.

"And then" I say and he looks my direction

"Oh baba, I didn't see you there" he leaves the bag there and walks in

"What are you doing here with your bags Mzwa?" I ask and he sighs and takes a sit on the high chair

"My wife is traumatized by what you did here last night Dikane and understandably so but I made it worse by justifying your actions and this morning she wanted to move out with the girls and I couldn't have that so I decided to move out and give her space" he says

"Emily is being dramatic and as always you let her be, why are you so weak" I say

"Baba I am on your side here but what you did was wrong exposing everyone to that brutality"

"What I did was justice and you were right to justify my actions to her, because that's what you do when people betray you, you make them suffer and you show it to the rest of those that think they can play on top of your head" I insist

"I don't want to fight you baba, I am tired I just want to relax" he says

"And where will you be sleeping because all 5 bedrooms are occupied" I inform him

"Eish I will sleep in the gym, on that sleeper sofa" he says

"Okay then, you will ask your mother where she keeps extra blankets" I say

"Yeah let me go set up so I can call the girls"

"Okay send my love and tell them grandpa misses them" I add and he walks away.

•AFRIKA

I don't think I have ever been shaken up like this, I am scared but at the same time I see this as more reason why I need to find that book and send Khaya Mdlalose to prison. He is not someone who has to live with others, he is irrational and he wants people to live by his rules and it's clear that will never let me go and I will forever be at his Mercy and the is no one to save me but myself. I need Mpilo so bad, he is the only person who can make me calm and feel a lot better. I don't think I am going to be able to sleep for a while, their cries and pleas will haunt me for the rest of my life like I am the one who sent them to their room. The bedroom door opens and Sbahle walks in

"Afrika" she says

"Hi" I respond and she sits down

"How are you holding up" she asks

"Not good not good at all" I say honestly
"Me too, I can't believe my father can be such a monster" she says
"I can only imagine how you feel, your father was supposed to be the one to make you feel safe not scare you and show you such terrifying things" I add
"He was like my hero Afrika never in a million years did I think he would be the villain in my story, I am so hurt I don't believe he is the man I loved with all my heart all I feel for him is hate and more hate" she confesses
"That's sad I am sorry" I say and she wipes her tears
"Thanks Afrika and I am sorry too" she says and I narrow my eyes
"He has always been a monster in my story Sbahle so this just validated his evilness" I say
"I understand but I was actually apologizing for treating you bad in the past" she says and I give her a side smile
"Its okay man don't sweat it"
"Mpilo told me about you guys and I am happy for you. He loves you and I never thought he would love someone ever and I know this because he even asked me to be your friend and look out for you be there for you because he won't be able to since you two need to lay low a while" she says and I smile appreciative of how thoughtful my boyfriend is
"Thank you Sbahle but you don't have to if it's too much for you" I say
"No, it's okay I would use a friend myself really" she adds
"Okay then, I guess we can get to the peak of the friendship thing" I say and she smiles
"Definitely and I honestly can see how cute your babies will be" she comments and we both laugh.

•MPILO

My mom and I were in the upstairs balcony having a drink, I wish I could take away all this and make it alright for everyone. Like always Ndlovukazi is worried about everyone else but downplays her own feelings and I understand that is who she is but I just wish she could let it all out and be okay because this is difficult even for a big girl like herself. I take out a cigarette and light it up
"Cancer Mpilo you do know it right" I laugh
"Oh, come on mama" I say
"I will never get used to this side of you because I tried beating the habit out of you but shame it failed" she adds
"I smoke when I am stressed or when I am drinking" I say and she clicks her tongue
"Ai suka it's still smoking" she says and sips her drink.
"Maybe someday I will stop but whilst we are leaving with that monster, I don't think it will happen" I say
"I just want us to move out of this hell hole Mpilo I don't think I can stay in this house anymore" she says and my heart almost stops
"Ndlovukazi we can't leave" I say
"Why not Mpilo, this house now harbours painful memories" she says
"I know mama but he will never allow Afrika to leave this house and I will never be able to leave her here Ndlovukazi, Afrika is safe because you are here because we are all here, we don't know how evil he could be with her to leave her here ma please we can't leave" I say
"Calm down Mpilo I could never leave Afrika here, of course she is part of my plans I just didn't think of Khaya refusing to let her go and now I don't think he will ever allow any of us to leave he will use the gun to keep us all here and he knows I will never allow my sister to go to prison. For the first time in my life Mpilo I don't know how I am going to deal with Khaya I don't know how I am going to get us out of this mess" she confesses and finally I see tears

"It's understandable mama none of us have a plan and even if we did, he has us right where he wants us, he knows if we strike, he is taking Sma down" I say
"I wish I never met him" she says and I wipe her tears
"Then you wouldn't have had me your handsome son" I say trying to make her laugh and I hit my target as she giggles
"Thank you for being my strength mntanami" she says and I hug her
"Because you are mine too mama, I love you"
"I love you too Mpilo" she says squeezing

•LETHABO

I wasn't able to go see Ama and my son. I was dead tired I just had come back and sleep and I only just woke up from the nap and the room is dark showing that it's night now even the room is cold now. I can't believe I slept in ties and formal shoes. I stand up and remove my clothes and get into my sweat pants and warm sweater with my morning sleepers. I switch on the lights and clothes the curtains before switching on the heater, I check my phone and see a few missed calls from my wife. I try to dial her but a knock disturbs me, I go open and it's my mom.

"Hao Papa otswa kae (where are you coming from)" she asks

"I have been sleeping ma" I say

"Oh, okay I just thought you dropped off your car and left with friends. I knocked and knocked but you I didn't get an answer" she adds

"I dozed off deep I was just tired" I murmur and go sit on the couch

"Oh askies, I had a great day" she tells

"Did you go to church?" I ask

"No, I went to see Amanda and Kopano and I had a great time. He is really growing up hey. She even agreed to bring her here for the weekend" she says cheerful

"Why didn't you tell me you would be going there" I query

"I just decided in the afternoon"

"I see" that's all I manage to say

"I even have a picture with him" she says showing me her phone

"It's nice ma"

"Okay let me go warm up your food then" she says and walks out. I dial Mandy and she answers after forever

"Mmm" she says and I smile because I know she's mad

"My love I am sorry you didn't find me on the phone I dozed off after work"

"Mmmhfff" she decides to continue with it and I can just imagine how cute she is right now

"Askies mosadi waka hle (I am sorry my wife)"

"You breathe fire when I don't answer your calls Lethabo and you want me to be okay" she finally uses her words

"I know that's why I feel bad baby" I say

"Haaiiii man tjo" she adds and I check my time and it's not 8 pm yet

"I know I can't come in this late so will you come out to see me even if it's just 5 minutes" I ask

"Okay baby I am waiting" she says and I want to laugh, I am baby now, she was mad a second ago, hai woman.

"Okay I will be there soon, call you when I am outside" I inform her

"Sharp" she says and I hung up shaking my head. Our house just needs to be done so we can see each other every minute of every day. I also want to find out about my mother's visit I just hope she didn't cause drama again

•MZWAKHE

I just got off the phone with the girls and I am glad Emily told them that I went away because of work and they are okay with them, I am just happy they are not the ones who left the house because it would have been tough getting to convince Emily to come back home. I am only spending a week here and I am going back to my house. I fix tomorrow's outfit for work and turn the sofa in the bed. I remember the blankets and I just hope my mom is not yet asleep. I quickly get out to go find her. As I get upstairs, I see her and Mpilo outside the balcony and they are holding hands, talking deeply about something, I can't hear them because the French doors are closed. I take a deep breath and walk open the door making them look back immediately. My brother rolls his eyes and my mom smiles

"Evening" I say

"Hey son, what brings you by so late" she asks as I hug her

"I am going to crash here a few days I will explain tomorrow" I say

"It's okay Mzwa you don't have to explain this is your home, you are welcome anytime okay"

"Thanks ma, taMpilo" I say

"Voetsek wena" he says as he lights his cigarette

"Mpilo No" ma says

"No Ndlovukazi I've told him countless times to leave me alone, me and him are nothing he must stop trying to pretend like we are friends. He is dead to me" he says

"I hate this though; you are both my children"

"Its okay ma leave him. I will just pray he comes around someday" I say sincerely

"Don't bet your money on it because you will be broke mfanakithi" he sneers and puffs out the smoke

"Mzwa baby where will you sleep because the beds are all taken" my mom changes the subject

"I will use the sleeper sofa in the gym ma, I just need blankets" I say

"Oh yes come let me go give you some" she says standing up

"Thanks Ndlovukazi"

"Mpilo go get me another bottle of wine so long I will be back just now" she order

"Okay" he says and mama and I walk in the house.

CHAPTER 104

•AFRIKA

it has been a hectic few day and with each passing day it's clear that things will never be the same again. I haven't been able to sleep properly or focus on school and I am scared that if I don't get my act together it will reflect in my marks and Amanda will definitely start asking questions and knowing Mandy, she will press the truth out of me. So, I need to snap out of it and remember all that is at stake here. I am at the student centre waiting for Sbahle to pick me up since we are going out for lunch. I am grateful for her friendship because I can communicate about everything with her including my relationship with Mpilo. My phone vibrates and I smile and answer, the joy in my heart his face appears on my screen

"Mpilo yam" I say and he blushes

"Muntu Wami" he responds

"I miss you so much" I say with tears already shinning in my eyes

"I kiss so much, please don't cry Muhles" he says
"It's just so hard Mpilo. I am trying to be strong but some days are harder than the others" I confess
"I totally understand baby I feel the same and I know things will be better soon we just have to believe and remember that our love is stronger and it will get us through this" he says
"How is work?" I ask
"Just okay sweetheart. What about school?"
"School is okay, I am done with classes now" I say
"You heading home?"
"No waiting on Sbahle to come get me, we going out for lunch" he smiles
"Oh yeah, you guys getting along well" he says cheery
"Yes baby, I appreciate you asking her to talk to me, she is a good person"
"I just needed to know that you'll have someone to talk to because I am not able to be there for you" he says
"I love you Mpilo"
"I love you too Queen and hold on okay?"
"Okay babe I will"
"Listen I am going to plan to have you to myself soon ne"
"I would appreciate that baby please" I say and he nods
"Enjoy lunch and I will see you at home later even if I will be ignoring you" he adds
"I will thanks and you enjoy the rest of your day"

•NOMALANGA

I had to get my act together and go back to work, this year alone I have taken so many days off I am starting to seem like an unprofessional who can't seem to get her affairs in order and I don't want to seem like a brat who disrespects her clients their time and the states resources. I appeared in court today and I gave the case my best and I feel good about myself. It's a Friday so I decided to visit my partner and the atmosphere is just heavy as I just told him what happened. He is holding on to me for dear life and since this whole thing happened this is the first time I am crying so painfully and I am in

"Oh sunny" he says
"It's hard Thuso, he is becoming a ruthless monster it's difficult because now he has included my sister in all of this"
"Why don't you guys just move out baby, this is not a way to live Nomalanga"
"I know Thuso and I could move out and take my children with me but he will never let Afrika go because he is on a quest to keep her and Mpilo apart" I say wiping my tears
"I honestly don't understand how one person could be so sick really and he is smart enough to have cops in his pocket Sunny, the fact that he has a gun with your sisters prints on it makes it hard for me to do anything, you know the law" he says
"I know that it's all about what you can prove, and right now he has a gun that has been used in so many crimes and murders and it has Smangele's prints and for his evil deeds my sister would be the one to pay and it's not fair, we are witnesses but our testimonies wouldn't make any difference against that gun" I say
"That bastard has all of you where he wants you" he says and clench his jaws
"Exactly baby the only way to rid Khaya is to just kill him" I blurt it out
"Absolutely not Sunny, that is not who you are, you will not become a version of him trying to get rid of him" he quickly talks me out of it
"I know I am just frustrated that I have nothing to get this man out of my life and my children's life" I say
"It's all going to work out I promise you" he says and I go back to his embrace

•EMILY

I am scared of my father in law now and how he deals with people who betray him and the fact that my husband and father of my children feels like he didn't do anything wrong just really ticks me the wrong way. I love Mzwakhe with all my heart, he is my everything and we have had a beautiful life together until he decided that he wants his father acknowledgement and it all went South. This is why I need to put a little pressure on Afrika to get that book because without this old man in our lives Mzwa won't be a puppy and he will be done with this drug business and my children and I will get back the man we know and love. The door opens and I sigh, it could only be my husband but why is he here because we agreed that he will give me some time. I get off my chair to go see who it is and I find his dad and my heart starts racing very fast I swear being in the same space as him is traumatic. "Uh, Baba" I say and my voice betrays me. He moves his eyes from the family portrait on the wall to me

"Emily, how are you?" he asks and I don't see him the same anymore in my eyes he is the devil

"I, uhm, I am fine thanks" I Mumble

"You sound terrified" he says coming towards me and I swear I will pee my pants

"Oh no, I am just surprised to see you here" I say trying to show confidence

"But the way you left the house the other day when I dealt with those con artists"

"I just wanted to come back in time for my kids Mzwa and I left in a haste I didn't have anyone to watch them for long, the nanny had to leave" I make a lousy excuse that doesn't make sense even to me.

"I see Emily, so you were not crying and you didn't run off because you felt like what I did wasn't right?" He asks looking at me straight in the eye

"How you choose to deal with your business has nothing to do with me sir" I say holding my breath

"Then why did you kick my son out of the house" he asks

"Mzwa and I are having marital issues and I was the one who wanted to move out a while but he decided he will move out" I make it known

"So, you can't solve anything being in the same house?" He says and now his tone and posture are scary it's taking everything in me not to cry.

"It's not that I just needed a few days to think" I respond

"Please don't start crying if he steps out of your marriage and finds himself a woman who will not put him out of the house he bought and he is paying the bills in, don't cry and come to us to help when he wants a second wife that will be there for him when you start need a few days to think" he says and at this moment I am scared and his words just went straight to my heart.

"What do you mean baba" I say hurt really hurt

"Look in the mirror and reflect then you can answer that yourself. Kiss my granddaughters for me I can't stay longer" he says and walks to the door, I am so mad and angry I just want to jump at this evil man

•AMANDA

My husband came and picked Kopano and I up as we are going to sleep over his place the whole weekend, his mom asked my mom to allow us to come so that Kopano can at least grace his proper home with his presence and Sibho agreed with her. I am just happy to be sleeping next to my husband the whole weekend, I have always missed our moments and how it would be with just us and our son, his first experience waking up in the middle of the night to change his nappy. He is so excited it's a bliss to see.

"I just want to make love to you babe" he puts it out there and I laugh

"I know I have missed that too"

"I am not giving you a breather I am getting on top of you every chance" he says and I laugh
"Poor me, I just hope you bought enough condoms" I murmur
"Condoms for what" he asks really shocked
"I am not trying to fall pregnant again baby I mean I am not even on birth control" I tell him
"Ama babe you are killing me you, condom?" He complains
"I am sorry love but it's just how it is till I am on birth control I mean we are even supposed to be having sex yet so I am kind of taking one for the team" I say and he laughs
"I guess I should be thankful for that and get my ass out of here to get some condoms"
"That's why you are my husband" I say and he comes in for a peck, our moment is disturbed by his mom, calling his name
"Eish o'lady" he says and goes to open for her, she walks inside
"Hello Amanda, you came" she says sounding really surprised because she wasn't here when we arrived.
"Yes, Lethabo picked us up" I say
"Oh, thank you, and he is asleep Jesus" she laughs
"Yeah he is always asleep until he is hungry" I say
"I should just sleep with him tonight to just give you a night off" she says and I want to laugh, I told this woman I wouldn't leave my child with her and then what's this
"Ah that's sweet ma but you know Kopano breastfeeds" Lethabo says and I am grateful
"Oh yes. Please call when he is awake"
"Okay" her son answers and she walks out
"You two seem to be doing well" he comments
"Yeah hey" I answer. I didn't really tell him that I told his mom to stop being fake and pretentious towards me and that we agreed that I will leave her alone and she would extend the same curtesy to me and we will only be civil for Lethabo.
"Thank you baby" he says and I stand up to hug him.

CHAPTER 105

•KHAYA

I was having a really calm day; I didn't want to think about everything that has been happening in my house and with my family. All they need is some time and everything will be back to normal again. Once they are okay, I will propose a family vacation, we haven't been to one in a very long time and I know they would appreciate the effort from my side since they all feel like my actions were not justified. I decided to enjoy my Saturday with a bottle of whiskey from my expensive collection and take a swim and I honestly can't believe that I haven't been inside this pool in 10 years and the water felt good
"You just proved that you are the devil. Swimming in this cold weather" a voice says and I sigh
"Ngidedele Smangele (leave me alone Sma)" I warn her
"Yini baba ka SpongeBob" she says and burst out laughing taking a sit, he mocking is insulting and if I wasn't in the water, I would slap her so hard
"If I put my hand on you" I threaten
"Hao you are still holding on to the anger? I thought the brutality would make you feel better" she adds
"You don't seem to understand that you should stay far from me because I would be your room" I say and clearly, she isn't taking me to head because she pours herself a drink.
"You have always had great taste in alcohol" she says gulping it down and cringing at the burning sensation
"Ye wena Sfebe" I say getting out of the pool

"You might think that you can get away with everything Khaya and for now you are and maybe for a little while long but your day to pay for all the evil doings will come and you will face the music and no one will be there for you and all this money and power you hold so dear to you will not save you" she says so calmly I blink

"Man, like me get away with everything and if it happens that I go down I am taking each and every one of you with me after all you benefited from my doings" I say

"You are delusional, you are sick and you really need help seriously" I laugh

"Smangele you know I am starting to think that you want me, I could bend you right over here and give it to you" I say and she spits at me

"Don't flatter yourself" she murmurs

"Don't ever do that again I will break your neck and go burry you like I did those two" I say in a Stern voice.

•MPILO

Everything is coming along really well, and the fact that I can't celebrate with my girlfriend is sad. The building for the franchise is done and they will be doing the inside this coming week, on the other hand the club is done and it looks amazing I just can't wait to see how it will be when they put in the furniture. I still can't believe they finished so quickly and they didn't leave out a thing. I have one foot out of the drug business and soon enough I will be completely out and that's a relief and I owe everything to my girlfriend, and like I was advised to give her money I am going to deposit a little something for her you know. I haven't seen her today and she is probably out with my sister and I am grateful she is getting distracted from all that has happened. I get to the kitchen to make myself a smoothie and sigh and walk past Mzwakhe.

"So, you really are going to stick to hating me" he says and I keep quiet

"Mpilo I am so sorry okay, I know I did you bad, I know I didn't have you back when all you ever did was have mine and for that I will forever hate myself" I start whistling and he exhales deep

"Ntwana please I miss my brother. I need you please. I don't have anyone to talk to" I laugh

"Don't be funny you have you father of course" I say

"Mpilo out of everyone I thought you would understand why I wanted our father's acknowledgement and favor-" I cut him off fast

"Correct your statement dude, your father. I don't have a father; he is all yours" I say and he closes his eyes

"Mpilo please"

"I am tired of having the same conversation with you Mzwakhe. I am happy that you finally have the relationship you always wanted with that man and I am happy you too are in a better place. As much as I've always had your back I thought you would have mine too, I came to you first thing after I laid my eyes on Afrika and you know how much I tried to find her and the minute I told you that the girl you brought as our transporter is my Afro Goddess you were supposed to show loyalty and back off, after all you still had two more candidates you could have went for" I say and I feel myself getting emotional

"I know taMpilo"

"You know Mzwa I am more hurt than angry. You were supposed to have my back push for my happiness but no you chose a man that treated you like trash like you had some disease" I add and he keeps on nodding

"I understand that and if you still have feelings for Afrika I will talk to baba and convince him to let Afrika go" he says and I chuckle

"Oh, Mzwakhe you really have no idea the kind of man your father is me?" I ask

"I will make him seen reason Mpilo"

"You are oblivious shame it's sad" I say and walk away I am not in the mood for that smoothie anymore

•NOMALANGA

I had a really disturbing dream, I can't remember parts of it but I can clearly remember dreaming of my parents and they were telling me to be strong for my children and to stand up and take the knife by the blade and protect my family, they told me to do a cleansing for the house as two lives were taken here, they said I should get a spiritual/traditional healer to help remove their spirits in the house so that they don't start haunting this house as well as myself and the kids. I am not much of a believer but I understood the message loud and clear. The door opens and Bahle walks in

"Hey mama" she says

"Hi baby"

"Where is Afrika" she asks and I smile

"She woke up a few minutes ago she went to shower" I say and she frowns

"Does she normally sleep till this late or is she sick?" She asks

"No baby she is fine I think this whole is just taking strain on her, she doesn't sleep well at night" I respond

"I totally understand, I am having trouble falling asleep too" she confesses

"I should take you to the doctor so they can give you some sleeping pills" I suggest

"Please ma"

"I love the friendship between you and Afrika" I say and she smiles

"I know I like it too. I am glad Mpilo asked me to reach out to her, she is sweet and she gives the best advices" she says

"I am glad my love. Hold on to her friendship build it and become sisters, it would make both my life and Mpilo's easy" I say and we chuckle

"Yes, ma and I was hoping to talk to you about something" she says and her tone is now serious

"Okay what's going on"

"Mama, this house is not the same, my life is just not what it used to be. Some changes are positive but recent events have just made me feel like everything is going down. Mama I am suffocating I can't. I think I need a change of scenery" she says

"You want to move?" I ask feeling sad

"I was hoping when things die down, I could move to Cape Town and transfer to UCT" she says and I see how much this has affected her, I told my arms around her

"I am sorry you had to see that I am sorry nana. I understand where you are coming from and if you still feel the same when everything has died down" I say

"Thank you for understanding ma" she says and I kiss her forehead

"It's okay Sbahle, everything will be okay I promise"

"I love you Ndlovukazi" I smile

"I love you too princess"

ONE WEEK LATER

•AFRIKA

I am not feeling okay so I decided to just call it a day, I couldn't stay for the rest of my classes that would be abusing myself really, I definitely don't know what I could possibly be coming down with. If I am not feeling well in the morning I will go to the pharmacy and get something, I hate doctors I find them intimidating and they always give bad news. It's not even 12 pm yet when I arrive home, the house is empty and dead silent. I spot one helper through the French doors outside by the pool. As I walk past the study, I realize it's open, my heart starts beating so fast, my heart and mind are in battle of whether I should go

inside or not. My mind wins because I go right in. The laptop is on and his keys are on the table, the small key is there and I know I will never get another chance like this. I don't know what possess me I just grab it quick and loosen it from the bunch and head to the photo copy machine and make a copy of the key I need to go to the key cutter so they can make me one I didn't think it would work but the copy is clear enough, I quickly put it back and I hear footsteps and laughter, I take out my classmates notes I was supposed to copy down and make copies.

"What the hell are you doing in here" Mdlalose's voice roars and I jump a bit

"I uhm I sir" I Mumble

"Afrika what are you doing home so early" Mzwa asks

"I wasn't feeling well at school so I came back, I couldn't concentrate in class so I borrowed my friends notes, I am making copies so I will be able to give her the notes when she comes to get them later, I am sorry if I offended you sir, Ndlovukazi said I could use it should I need to" I say

"Yeah you look like shit, you should go see a doctor" Mzwakhe adds

"I will take the meds in the cabinet and sleep and if I don't feel better, I will go see the doctor" I say

"Next time ask for permission first and go take that medicine you can't be falling sick right now you have a big number to dispatch" he says

"I know sir" I say and take my copies from the machine and walk out. Soon as I am upstairs, I exhale deeply and take out the copy of the key, thank God I have this. I take my phone and Google key cutters around and I see they have one at the complex around the corner

CHAPTER 106

•AFRIKA

I wake up feeling a lot better, like I was never sick in the first place. This is super weird but I think I have been under a lot of stress lately and the fact that I am not having enough sleep might be adding to everything I am already going through. I check my phone and I have missed calls from Mpilo l, he must be worried sick. It's already after 6pm, those meds really knocked me up really good. I yawn and attempt to get up from the bed when the door opens and he walks in and quickly locks it behind him.

"Mpilo, what are you doing in here" I say

"I overheard my father and Mzwa talking, they said you are not feeling too well" he says

"Yes, babe but I am really fine now, you can't be in here they might see you love" I add

"They went out Muhles, I needed to see if you" he says

"I miss you" I say

"I miss you more than you can ever imagine"

"Please hold me" I ask and he smiles and quickly comes to bed and folds me in his arms, I take in his scent and everything is okay

"I have great news" he says

"We are ready to open the club" he informs me

"Oh, that's great stuff. Good news for a change. When is the Grand Opening" I ask?

"2 weeks' time love, there is already a hype around on social media, everyone wants to know who the owner is" he says

"The mystery is nice ne" I ask

"Too nice babe, you don't understand" he confesses

"And the concierge business?" I ask and he sighs

"A friend of mine wants me to plan him the most romantic getaway with his girl because he wants to propose but I honestly need someone who knows the finer things in life to work on it for now because I have my hands full, if I pull this off he will recommend the business to his other successful friends" he says

"Do you need someone with experience or" I ask

"I would be happy to find someone with experience but they are all employed that's the thing and they can't leave their jobs for a start-up you know" he says

"I have someone for you and I know she could have something planned in a week to present to you and your friend, she doesn't have the money to live the lifestyle but she knows these things baby I promise" I say

"Who is the person"

"My sister Amanda" I say and he sighs

"Do you think she would be up for it I mean she just had a baby" he voices

"I know but she wants a job and she wanted to go study events management" I add

"Okay, tell you what. Tell her to plan an expensive getaway and present to me alone first and if I think it's cutting it I will send it to my boy but she will need to get on to it immediately he wants to propose in a month and everything has to be perfect by then" he says

"I will call her" I say and he nods and holds me tight.

"The guard will call me when they arrive so you have me till then okay?" He says and that somehow makes me feel calm

•MZWAKHE

My father And I went out to get something to eat, my family no longer sits around the table and have a meal together. Everything has changed, the helpers cook and everyone will just dish up for themselves and go eat where they want. This has never happened before but I honestly can't blame anyone for how things are happening. I miss my wife and our kids and how our house is warmer than my parent's house. Our food arrives and we start digging in, out of nowhere Mpilo pops in my head and I remember the conversation I had with him.

"Dikane" I say

"Mgabashe" he responds

"Afrika is really losing the plot hey" I say

"Why do you say that" he asks eyebrow raised

"She is no longer the same girl baba, even at school the lectures are complaining, she went from being the genius to the average student, the clients even complained that she is losing it now, she forgets sequences and takes her the forever to remember the correct ones" I lie just to plant doubt in his mind to buy into letting her go.

"I wasn't aware" he says

"I thought it would die down but no. We should just let her go and get someone else she is becoming a liability now" I add

"No Mzwakhe, she will be back to her normal self soon. Just like everyone she is still shaken by what she saw me do to those two hood rats" he says

"I don't think so hey" I say

"Just give her time, after all you are saying she ends up getting the sequences right" he says chewing his stake

"Baba"

"No man Mzwa let it go. If it will make you feel better, I will talk to her" he says

"No that won't be necessary, you are right she is just going through the shock" I add quickly

"Exactly, so when are you going back to your house" he asks

"My wife said I can move back home so I will be leaving tomorrow after work"

"And stop being a softie Mzwakhe. That's why Emily thinks it's okay to play on top of your head. You have a tendency of letting her wear the pants in your marriage" he says
"I hear you" I say and sip on my beer

•AMANDA

My mom and I were at the mall to get me a beautiful dress, Lethabo and I decided to go to court and sign, then soon as our house is done, we will have a big celebration for getting married and moving into our home. We called Afrika to come and join us too, I had to request an Uber to take us to the mall because bi wanted to take the stroller with me and we will use one again when going back home. Sibos is checking the time constantly because she wants us out of her before it gets too late. She isn't comfortable with Kopano roaming the streets but this is the 21st century hle. We decided to eat at Panarottis since there weren't as many people as the other restaurants.

"I don't like this man Mandy. Kopano was supposed to be 3 months before we could be leaving the house with him like this" she voices out

"Askies ma, soon as we done eating, we will leave" I say and she keeps checking on her sleeping grandson. I spot Afrika walking in and I signal her with my hand and she smiles and walks to us

"Hey family" she says taking a sit

"Hey my babes" my mom says

"You look so beautiful Nana, you are glowing" I compliment

"The new mixture I am using must be really working then" she says

"What are you using give us the plug phela" she laughs

"I just mix Mongolia tissue oil, glycerine, spirit and Mongolia body butter" she says

"Okay I am definitely going to start using it shame" I reply

"Yeah it works wonders but you must be patient" she adds

"Thanks I will" our food arrives and we start eating.

"Oh, Mandy I got you a job but you will have to prove yourself in order to secure it" she says and I frown

"Where and what is the job" I ask

"Remember Mpilo is opening a concierge company so he is looking for someone who knows about the flashy lifestyle and stuff too work. For now, he needs you to come up with a presentation of a dreamy romantic getaway trip where the guy plans on proposing" she says

"Honey you know I just need a couple of trillions to live my best life" I say and she laughs

"I told him that. So just put something together and present to him and if he is happy the job is yours permanently" she says

"Don't joke with me please" she says and I laugh

"I am serious, you have a week to come up something and make it flashy and expensive those people are loaded so the trip must be nothing short of glam" she informs

"Give me your boyfriend's number I need to know who the girl is so I can get a sense of what she likes, I hope she is on Instagram" I say

"I knew you are the best person for the job"

She responds

"Kodwa Kopano is still young my babes" ma says and I sigh as she has a point

"Not to worry you get to work in the comfort of your home as we don't have an office yet. We need more clients first to actually find an office space" Afrika says

"In that case I don't see a problem" Sibos says quickly

"Thank you sis I will not disappoint you and your man. God I am so excited" I say and she smiles sweetly at me

FEW DAYS LATER

•NOMALANGA

I listened to my dream even though I took my time but I listened and got a traditional healer. Actually the traditional healer found me while I was out at the shopping centre, she kind of told me the most shocking thing, she says she has been waiting to find me since the day she warned the young lady to run but she knew she wouldn't listen so she was ready to come and cleanse up her spirit from my house, she was referring to Bulelwa and that really got to me and I was more sad thinking that she could still be Al if she has listened to the women's warning. I went to get her from her daughter's house around here, she is originally from KZN but she had to move here with her daughter because of old age but her daughter is a sweetheart because she lets her practice in her house. I had called everyone to be available as per instruction. As I drove in, she started burping and clapping her hands, it was really scary but it's going to help all of us. We walk in with me in the front and she is already sprinkling water around. We get in the lounge

"Thokozani bantwana bam" she says and everyone keeps quiet except Afrika

"Thokoza gogo" she says clapping her hands like she really knows what she is doing

"Nomalanga what the hell is this" Khaya roars

"Thokoza khehla, yehlisa umoya silana uku lungisa owa moshwa nguwe (calm down, we are here to fix all that was broken by you)" the healer says

"I don't have time for this bullshit" he says standing

"Just know that someday you will reap what you sow Khehla. You are not God to take lives you didn't give" she warns him and he shoots her a killer look

"Get this crazy woman out of my house Nomalanga before I blow her brain" he threatens and the woman laughs

"Mina elami idlozi alidlalelwa kehla (you don't mess with my ancestors) just be glad I am working for the good and pure spirit because if that wasn't the case I would tie up your tongue now for the disrespect" she says so casually I see Khaya blink before clicking his tongue and walking out. The sangoma asks us to all sit down and remove the shoes. She starts doing her things and talking really fast, it got intense really quickly. She took out two twigs with leaves and starts chanting certain clan names and asking them to leave with her and go rest and torment the ones that hurt them and leave everyone else. She went on and on. She disappeared a while in the other rooms and came back

"MaHlongwane" she says

"Thokoza gogo" I say

"I want you to go upstairs and bring Bulelwa's clothes" she says and I don't waste time I quickly move upstairs and luckily Khaya put them in the black plastic. I grab it and walk down again; I give it to her and she nods and sprinkles the plastic with the water containing muti.

"Your home will be rid of their torment and so will all of you present in here" she says

"Thokoza gogo" we say in unison she takes a few more minutes washing our faces, hands and feet.

"Idlozi linani (the ancestors are with you)" she adds and we stand up, she goes straight to Afrika.

"As scared as you are it will all work out in the end. Everything will turn upside down and you will feel like everything you did was in vain but remember that every bad deed doesn't go unpunished but what is yours will definitely come back to you. Peace and happiness are yours when everything is said and done. You are blessed my child" she says leaving us so puzzled.

CHAPTER 107

•AMANDA

I just finished presenting the romantic getaway to Mpilo and his friend, who I was told would not be present, he showed up and I got more scared, I have never stood in front of people and presented everything but I had been practicing with my mother and I gained a little confidence to do this, I finished with what I came up with and they have been whispering to each other for a while now and I am shaking in my boots, I need this job, for the money yes and because it excites me too.

"This is beautiful Amanda" the client says

"Really?" I ask shocked

"Yes, it is expensive as hell though" he says

"I am sorry sir I will try to cut down on the extravagant stuff" I reply and they both laugh

"Absolutely not, my lady has an expensive taste and I am glad that you went hard on her Instagram to check the kind of things she likes and I know she is definitely going to like this thanks" he says and I sigh in relief

"I am glad you love it" I say with a smile

"She and I are forever busy, we run our business together and she doesn't like planning so I had already asked Mpilo to put you in charge of planning our engagement party but I will give you the go ahead after our trip" he murmurs and I have a wide grin on my face

"I am game yes" I say excitedly

"Good then, so please go ahead and start with the bookings and all I love this" he says and stands up buttoning his blazer. They shake hands with Mpilo and he leaves

"Good job Mandy" he compliments me

"Thanks Mpilo, so I have the job?" I ask wanting to hear it from the horse's mouth

"Definitely you did well here and I like how you went on about it, you went and researched the client before putting anything together that shows how much you wanted to get this right. I would love for you to work with me on this concierge service company" he tells

"Thanks, and I really want to work, I realize how much I loved and enjoyed putting this together" I say smiling

"It might be your calling. So tomorrow you will receive a laptop and cell phone with a unlimited WIFI connection so you can get on the websites to book and you will also have airtime on the phone to make phone calls international phone calls cost a lot so you will use company resources. I will also make a printer and photocopy available and some files so you can create portfolios we can show our clients from previous jobs like this one. I just hope you will have enough space to work from home" he says and I just get more excited

"I will make the space; I am happy to be working from home I will also be giving my son attention" he smiles

"Good then let's talk remuneration" he says

"Okay"

"I haven't really registered the company but I will get to it soon as things on my plate die down, so for now your salary will not be taxed I will deposit it directly into your account. I was thinking R25 000 a month for now though and it will increase as our client list grows" I am looking at him shocked

"If it's little we can negotiate" he says and I shake my head vigorously

"No ko it's more than enough Mpilo yoh" I say and he smiles

"Oh okay, I will have a contract drafted soon and all. For now, you will have to handle all the positions, you are going to have to be able to create networks with hotels all over, boutiques, some embassies, home affairs, travel agencies you know such things" he says

"I figured that already, someone who does this kind of job has to have contacts to make things happen" I reply

"Don't be afraid to use my name sometimes it would get you everything you want" he says and we laugh

"Got you" I say

"Okay then you may leave, and I will have everything delivered to you"

"Thank you for the opportunity Mpilo I will not disappoint you really" I assure

"You showed your potential Mandy" he says and I take my things

"Bye" I say and leave and hurry home as it's already late, Kopano surely finished the milk I pumped

•MZWAKHE

I have been back in my home now and Emily is not her normal self. I don't know what to do anymore, it's like I am caught between a rock and a hard place and I just don't know who to please anymore, I failed convincing my father to let Afrika go, which means I will never have my brother back, on the other hand my marriage is skating on thin ice, can someone remind me how I got myself into this mess in the first place. I just wish I could wake up from this bad dream. I walk downstairs and find the helper feeding the girls

"Morning sir" she says

"Hey, where is my wife" I ask

"Oh, she left early" she replies and I narrow my eyes

"Early meeting?" I ask

"She didn't say sir, she just told me to get the girls ready and take them to school and after I should fetch them and take them to her parents as she will be back very late" she says and this is news to me, Emily didn't tell me any of this honestly it's so frustrating

"Oh, okay thanks" I say not trying to show her that I am upset with my wife

"If that would be all I would like to take the girls to school, your breakfast is in the oven" she adds

"Okay thanks, Girls come give daddy a hug" I say and they come and we share a group hug, I kiss them both on the forehead

"I love you okay" I say

"Love you Daddy" they say in unison and she helps them put on their coats and they leave. I take out my phone and dial Em who answers after forever

"Mzwa" she says cool

"Baby, you now leave the house early and take the girls to your parents without talking to me?" I say in a warm tone

"You were sleeping so peacefully I didn't want to disturb you" she justifies and I sign

"Emily, I know for a fact that you didn't know about working late this morning so why didn't you tell me yesterday when I arrived" I ask and I hear her sigh

"It was just chaotic it slipped my mind. Sorry" she says and I know it's just to shut me up

"Okay I will see you later then" I say

"Yes later"

"I love you Emily" I say as the line goes dead. I look at the screen and let out a sigh. It's going to take a lot to take my marriage to back where it was before

•NOMALANGA

Bringing the healer here was probably the best thing, there is some kind of calm in my home and I don't know but the feeling of fear and uncertainty seem to have left me hence I woke up and prepared breakfast for my children and my sister. I want us to build a new culture for ourselves and move on from the darkness Khaya wanted to pull us into. The first one to walk in is Mpilo.

"The smell got me out of bed" he says

"Don't lie Mpilo, your bedroom is too far to even smell this aroma" I say and he laughs

"Ai that was for your ego Ndlovukazi" he replies and I laugh

"I am forward askies" I say and he sits, Afrika and Bahle follow

"Morning girls take a sit please, breakfast is served" I say and they don't ask a million questions they just sit.

"You know ma, I never believed in those ancestors thing but I really feel like the old woman helped us" my daughter says

"Why do you say that baby" I ask

"I don't remember the last time I slept that peacefully I even had pleasant dreams, I honestly didn't want to wake up" she says

"I know right, I feel the same way" Afrika adds

"I am happy to hear this. We needed the cleansing and I just want us to start on a clean slate you know and create a new culture for our family" I say and they all nod

"Definitely ma" Mpilo chips in as Smangele walks

"Sesivukile kwa bafileyo (we are back from the dead)" she says grabbing a sausage

"Can't you channel the lady in you kodwa Sma" I say and she frowns

"Askies man, it looked appetizing. We haven't had such a nice breakfast in a while" she comments

"And that will never happen again, having meals as a family is really important" I say

"I agree" Bahle says. We start eating and having a light banter until I remember something important

"Oh, guys I wanted to ask you something" I say and they all nod giving me their attention

"Well you know that I have been seeing Thuso for a while now and we both had a talk and we believe that it is time you guys met" I say

"Finally, I was starting to think that there is no Thuso" Mpilo says

"I thought you hiding him because he isn't appealing to the eye" Sbahle adds and everyone laughs

"Huuuuu shame" I say

"So, when will this happen" my son asks

"We were hoping this Saturday, it will be me and him you guys and his children" I inform them

"Okay I am all in, want to meet my step dad" Bahle says and everyone confirms their availability

"Thanks guys we are going to have so much fun" I say and Khaya walks in

"Fun where? I would love to be included" he says grabbing a plate and dishing up for himself. We all look at our food and eat without answering his question

•LETHABO

To say Amanda was excited would be an understatement, she is over the moon and I am happy for her and more especially because she will be working from home for now and our son won't have to stop breastfeeding. She already has plans for her salary, it's going straight to our furniture budget, and since she has already met me half way I want to give her something that won't only benefit her but our son too. Sometime I am not available to drive her around so I wanted to give my car and get myself the BMW I have always wanted, looking at our fiancé's now, we can afford it. I am glad she insisted that we get the house and renovate it, because look at us we own property and we are debt free. I paid the contractors and I don't have to take the personal loan for the furniture since she will be chipping in her salary to help with that. Having a woman who helps you build is the biggest blessing, like the Bible says "he who finds a wife finds a good thing". Since my mom is the one who bought me the car, I wanted to inform her that I will be giving it to my wife soon and see if she will have a problem with it. I get home and go straight to the house and find her watching TV for a change.

"Magriza (mama)" I say

"Lethabo, you are home early"

"Yeah I didn't start at my mother in law's house as I wanted to talk to you about something important" I say

"Oh okay" she says and lowers the volume

"So, ma I want an upgrade on my car" I say

"Oh, okay that's good, but is this one giving you problems?" She asks

"No not at all, I just want to upgrade. You know I've wanted a BMW" I say

"Yes, it has always been your favorite. So, you want to trade in this one then I give you money that will be needed on top of that" she says and I shake my head

"No mama, I will take a loan and buy myself the car" I say

"No Lethabo 6 whole years paying for a car, I will help you with that, it's not like I don't have the money" she says

"I understand but I want to give my wife the TSI" I say and the shock on her face

"But I got that for you Lethabo" she says

"I understand but my wife and son will use it ma, for when she has to take him to the doctor the mall and stuff, I am not always available" I add

"It's your car Lethabo you do as you see fit with it" she says

"You seem to have a problem with it though" I say

"Lethabo I say do as you please" she says stern

"I can't let my wife drive that car whilst your heart is not happy with it. I will continue using it and buy Mandy the BMW then" I say and stand up with a killer look shot at me. Was I wrong?

•AFRIKA

When my driver arrived, Mr Mdlalose was driving out and that was the perfect moment to get in that damn office and get the book. My courage and strength to see this through was more than the fear of what might happen to me should I get caught but if I deeply on fear Khaya Mdlalose will forever torment everyone and most especially me I will never be able to have my own life, I will always be a business asset to him. I get out the car and look in the garages and no one is home yet. I quickly rush to the office and take out the key from my bag and open the drawer and unlock the safe. I see the book and the plastic containing the gun he forced Sma to hold. We will deal with the gun in a minute, I quickly take the book and rush to the photo copy machine I make copies of each and every page, my heart racing, I swear it could pop out of my chest any minute now, I feel better as I copy the last two pages. I quickly put it back how I found it. I take the copies and put them in my bag and walk out after making sure that nothing is out of place. I make my way upstairs and go straight to the bedroom. I let out a sigh as I try to normalize my breathing. My heart can't seem to let go of Sma's prints on the gun, the thought of having her go to jail for something she never did isn't sitting well with me, I act out of impulse and take Ndlovukazi's plastic gloves she uses to wash her hair. I grab a cloth and take the key again rushing to office one more time. I unlock the safe again and take out the gun, I wipe of the gun thoroughly and I am scared out of my mind tears just fall involuntary. I wipe it till I feel satisfied. I put the weapon back in the plastic and lock the safe. I quickly walk out removing the gloves, I literally run upstairs and go to the closet with the papers I just photocopied. I sit down and start going through the papers and it's a lot of dates back to years ago, I see the information on my father all the meetings they had and the day he murdered him and the people who were there with. To find this confirmation just makes me so emotional, it's heart breaking to finally be sure that the man who robbed me of a parent, a childhood and drove my mother to alcohol is this very man that holds my freedom in his hands. It hurts so much but time for justice is near and he will pay for everything. I literally feel like my heart just dropped into my stomach. It hurts I won't lie and reading about some other inhumane things he has done. He is a monster and he always been a monster and if I don't stop him now, he is going to continue playing God. I continue going through

Everything and I am just shocked to say the least, how is he still roaming around the street, he should be locked up and the key thrown away. My phone vibrates disturbing me, I take it and the shock on my face seeing the bank notification. I don't think I have seen this huge amount of money before; I look at the reference and it's Mpilo. God why

would he give me so much money though. I am about to call him when a text comes in from him

That is just to show my appreciation baby, I couldn't think of anything to get you so please use it and get everything you've ever wanted. I love you Afrika and please don't give up on me. Everything will be okay someday I promise

I don't know what to say babe, thank you and yes it will all be okay, sooner than you think. I love you so much

I reply and go back to the bank notification. God. What am I to do with this kind of money?

CHAPTER 108

•AFRIKA

I couldn't sleep last night my mind was consumed by the information in that black book, I wanted to know more as horrifying as everything is described I just needed to read more and more to be able to convince myself to go on with this to be sure that I wasn't making a wrong decision going after Mdlalose, what I don't understand is why he would write down every little thing he did till the last detail, what kind of a sick human being is he. I have been reading the information in the pages since 11pm it's 3am in the morning and I just can't put it down, the more I read the more I want to continue.

"Afrika" Ndlovukazi says behind me

"Ma" I say acting normal

"Why are you sitting in this cold closet" she asks

"I couldn't sleep ma so I decided to just catch up with my work"

"Are you having bad dreams again?" the concern in her voice cannot be missed

"No, it's not that I promise you" I quickly assure her

"Oh, thank God" she says and sighs

"I will be done and I will come to bed soon" I say

"Okay baby, please because you need to rest" she says

"I will be there, sorry for waking you up ma"

"It's okay baby I was going to the bathroom when I noticed you weren't in bed"

"Okay" I say

"Okay finish up and come rest" she says and walks out, I let out a sigh

•KHAYA

I open my eyes and I am still so tired, I check the time and it's just before 10am, fuck I don't really know why but I couldn't sleep last night, felt like there was some presence in my bedroom and it wasn't allowing me to catch some sleep as if that wasn't enough

there were annoying noises outside my window and when I check there isn't anything out of place but soon as I make it to bed it starts again. I don't know when I finally dozed off. My whole body is aching from the lack of sleep. I have a lot to do today and if I am to get through this entire day, I am going to need a serious pick me up. I hit the shower and I am done in no time but I am still feeling low. As I walk in the kitchen, I find Mpilo busy on his laptop.

"Morning" I say

"Morning" he responds and I am shocked to say the least, he hasn't been greeting me back maybe this is him letting all this go

"How was your night?" I ask and he chuckling

"Don't do that please" he says and I sigh

"I thought you were letting go of this childishness but I guess not" I comment

"Mxm" he says

"Mpilo okay on a serious note, I didn't have a great night-" I say and he cuts in

"Good because the is no sleep for the wicked" he says with a smile

"I will pretend like you didn't say that" I add

"But you will know that I did" he insists on rubbing me off the wrong way

"As I was saying, I am tired and I have a lot to do, I was going to go meet with some guys who want to start buying from us, they are from Swaziland" I says

"How is that my business" he says arrogantly

"I need you to attend that meeting for me plus you are in a better position to and we're them and fill them in" I say and he laughs

"I am swamped sorry" he says not looking at me

"Mpilo" I say and he shakes his head

"Ask your son" he says casually

"You know Mzwa is going to work" I say

"I also have my job, he said he wants to be a part of this business let him start working his schedule to take more drug business responsibilities" he responds

"You are being inconsiderate" I say and he laughs

"You are one to talk hey" he says and takes his things and walk away.

"Stubborn Mpilo, I wonder who he takes after" I say to myself and make a cup of strong coffee

•AMANDA

Mpilo did have the equipment delivered to me and my and I managed to space in my room at the corner of my room and it's a mini office I am so excited. Kopano will be sleeping in my mother's room in the afternoon when I am working so I don't disturb him. I have already managed to call the hotel I presented to the client and booked them a suit and paid the deposit. I have booked them return flights and the only thing I still need to do is book them a car and a driver to drive them around and make reservations for site seeing and other activities. Once this is done, I am going to start an Instagram account for the business so people can know more of us. The door opens and I look back

"Mandy Lethabo is here" my mom says

"Oh, okay thanks ma, I will be right out" I respond and turn off my laptop and walk out, he is sitting on the couch feeding his son and they look so cute

"My boys" I say and he looks up at me

"Hey Mommy" he says and I go kiss him and take a sit near them

"How was work?" I ask

"Just okay babe, how did your first day go" he asks and I smile

"Very well hey I have done a few things and I am already scouting for other clients; I really enjoy this" I admit and he smiles

"I am glad to hear that madam"

"I want us to go check how far they are with the house" I say

"Oh, I passed through there love and there is progress hey" he informs me and I smile

"That's great love, just want to move in our house" I say

"Me too Ama, I am tired of sleeping alone while I have my wife and son" he murmurs

"I understand love" I reply as he holds Kopano up to burp him

"So love, I want you to start with the driving lessons so you can get you license, my plan was to give you the TSI and buy myself a car but after speaking to my mom I realized that it wouldn't be wise since she is the who bought bit for me, so I will continue using the TSI and get you the BMW which I will drive now and again" he says with a smirk

"As exciting as this is love, we just bought a house baby and there is lot we still need to do" I say

"Everything concerning the house is already saved up for babe" he says

"I understand love kodwa you need to recover financially first" I argue

"Mandy remember when you asked me about how I always have money?" He asks and I frown

"Yes why" I ask

"I told you that I am very cautious when it comes to money and I make informed and calculated decisions when it comes to that department. I will never get us in Dept babe" he says

"I believe that babe, I just want you to recover you know, we use almost all your savings, lobola, Kopano, the house, the contactor, the furniture and now you want to buy a whole BMW baby that's a lot. I know financially you are the best but let's hold off the car a bit maybe up until we move in our house and we can see how we spend together, like see figures" I suggest him

"I hear you love but you still need to get the license" he insists

"That I can do I will even start studying for the learner's license" I assure him

"Okay babe, can I have something to eat" he asks and I get up and go to the kitchen.

•MPILO

Afrika and I are at the restaurant/club, I got her from school and we got the food she has been silent since then and she is really worrying me. We ate and after she initiated sex and like always it was mind blowing but soon as we are done, she was lost in her

thoughts again. I thought maybe it was just one of those days but looking at her I know she is going through something. She is always so happy and carefree around me.

"Okay what's wrong babe" I ask

"It's nothing babe, I am just tired you know" she replies

"Are you sure that's all?" I ask and she smiles

"Seriously love, you can ask Ndlovukazi, I didn't sleep well, insomnia was having it's way" she says and I sigh in relief

"Okay you should have an early night" I suggest

"I was planning on it babe"

"Okay" I say and pull her to me and the feel of her naked body close to mine gives me a feeling I can't explain

"Mpilo" his soft voice says

"Muhles"

"I love you so much baby, I would do absolutely anything for you" she says and I smile and close my eyes

"I love you too baby, and I would go to the end of the earth to make you happy" I say meaning every word

"I know you would. Tell me why did you send me so much money" she asks and I smirk, I have been waiting on that question

"People I didn't know what to get you love, I wanted to show you my appreciation" I say

"But Mpilo that money is just a lot I mean" I cut her off

"Get used to it baby, you need to start being comfortable spending money because we will be making it all day everyday even when we are sleeping" I say

"I just wanted you and not this flashy life" she admits

"I know baby, the lifestyle comes with me, and enjoying it won't make me think that you love me less okay?" I say hoping that she believes it

"It will take me a while but I will get used to it love, thank you" she says

"So, for the opening I asked Bahle to invite you out in front of Mdlalose so he doesn't read much into you going out at night, since it will be with Bahle okay" I say

"Okay, that's one thing that gets me excited. I should start shopping for something to wear" she says and I smile

"I will help you with that, I want you to be the best classy dressed woman that night, I just wish I would claim you for everyone to know that you are mine" I say

"You will be able to someday I promise" she says and I kiss her forehead.

•NOMALANGA

I just finished having late lunch with Thuso and he informed me that his children cannot wait to meet me and mine, and that got me super excited, I decided to drive to Mzwakhe and Emily's house to tell them. I forgot to do it sooner and I pray don't have plans for Saturday night. I get to their place and press the intercom and they open the gate. I drive in and park behind Mzwakhe's car. I am not even out the car when the girls come out running to me and I just melt and get out to embrace them

"My princesses" I say kneeling down and hugging
"Gogo, we missed you" the eldest says
"I am sorry for not coming to see you guys frequently. I miss you too and I promise to take you to the theme park soon okay?" I say and they smile
"Pinkie swear" the youngest says and I smile holding my pinkie finger out and we swear.
"Okay girls go and put away your toys I will be there to help you with your homework" Mzwa says and they sprint towards the house.
"Hey ma" my son says
"Hello Mzwakhe, how is everything going" I ask and he sighs
"Not too good, Emily isn't happy with me for what baba did to Buli and her cousin" he says
"Be there for her it was a traumatic experience" I say
"I am trying trust me but she is being difficult" he adds
"It's going to take time Mzwakhe don't put pressure on her please" I plead with him
"I guess you are right ma" he says
"So, I came to ask you guys to please join us for dinner this Saturday" I ask
"Us?" He queries
"Me and my partner Thuso, his kids and your siblings" I inform
"Oh, so you two are really serious, meeting the family and stuff" he says
"We definitely are serious Mzwakhe, he loves me and he reminded me that good men exist" I say
"Are you sure about all of this ma?" He asks
"Yes, I am, I don't think I have ever been so sure in my life. I have never asked you kids for anything now I am asking you for this and your support" I say and he shrugs his shoulders.
"Okay we will be there. I will talk to my wife about it soon as she gets home" he murmurs
"Thank you" I say
"Okay then let's go inside and get a drink" he says and we walk in

CHAPTER 109

•NDLOVUKAZI

To say I was nervous would be an understatement really, the day finally arrived and my children get to meet Thuso and his children, his daughters are already so sweet towards me and I hope and pray mine behave and like him because I love this man. We decided to book out an entire restaurant. Thuso and I arrived first just to see if everything is ready and they have everything under control.

"Sunny calm down please everything will go well" he says and I sigh

"I just want everyone to get along" I admit

"And they will love please just be your bubbly self today, be the Sunny I know and fell in love with" he says and kisses me. We are disturbed by giggles and it's 3 girls, amongst them is Naledi, she looks amazing, I still thank God for sparing her life.

"Girls" Thuso says moving forward to hug them.

"Mam'Noma it's really nice to see you" Naledi says and I smile hugging her

"Likewise, baby, it's good to see that you are well, why didn't you bring boy boy with" I ask

"They went to visit his paternal Grandparents" she says

"Okay I understand" I say and move my eyes to Thuso who is smiling

"Sunny these are my other two girls, Didintle and Keneilwe, girls this is the beautiful lady I have been seeing and doing this life thing with" he introduces us and they look so happy to see me, they don't hold back they just give me warm hugs and a part of me just relaxes. We exchange pleasantries and enjoy some champagne. A few minutes later my children arrive, Sbahle Mpilo and Afrika are walking in front and Mzwa follows with Emily. They get to us and they politely greet.

"Finally, you guys decide to join the party" I say and we all laugh

"Well guys these are my kids. This is my first Mzwakhe and his wife Emily. This is my second Mpilo and the baby of the family Sbahle. This is the daughter God brought to me her name is Afrika, guys meet the gentlemen that has been making your mother happy, this is Judge Thuso Moroka and his daughters Naledi, Didintle and Keneilwe" I introduce everyone and they start sharing hugs and greetings and seeing them gel together like this makes me so happy thank God.

"It's really nice to finally meet you Judge, Ndlovukazi has told us so much about you" Mpilo says shaking his hand

"Same here Mpilo" my man says

"Hao Papa are you not going to break the ice phela they can't be calling you judge, if we get to call Ndlovukazi like that then they can call you something casual too, we are all family now" Didintle says and I smile while Thuso chuckles

"Yes you are right so guys the girls call me Tiki, please don't ask me what it means because I also don't know so if you are comfortable you can also call me that" Thuso says and I giggle and my kids nod, everyone seems calm and care free, except for Mzwa, I don't know if he isn't liking my partner or because of the tension that has been between him and his wife, I give him a look and he returns it with a faint smile. I see Afrika and Sbahle conversing with Thuso's girls while Mpilo is in deep talks with Thuso, they are hitting it off and it's a relief to me.

"Okay guys come let's all take our sits" I say and we all start making our way to the long table set up for our dinner. I am more that relieved

•KHAYA

I get downstairs after taking a long well deserved shower, I am famished I just hope to have a warm nice meal and down it with a few glasses of cold beer then maybe watch a bit of TV then go to bed early I haven't really been getting enough sleep so I honestly need some. I get downstairs and the table is not set and not even one member of my family is waiting on anywhere on sight. What the hell is going on here. I make my way to the kitchen and find Hilda doing Good knows what.

"Did you see the time" I sneer and she jumps a bit

"Bab'Mdlalose" she says

"Don't call my name, I asked if you saw the time" I add and she moves the eyes to the wall clock

"It's 19:15" she repeats what her eyes saw from the clock

"Exactly so why is the table not set?" I ask and she narrows her eyes

"I am sorry sir but Ndlovukazi told us to take a day off as they will all be unavailable" she informs me
"What, I am in this house and I never told her anything about me not being available" I say
"I am sorry sir, I wasn't aware" she murmurs
"Fix me something to eat and serve me some dry white wine I will be in the cinema" I say and walk out. I take out my phone and dial Noma so she can tell me why she told the helpers not to cook but she takes me straight to voice mail and so do the kids, I resort to calling Mzwa maybe he might have an idea where they all went. He answers after a few rings
"Baba" he says and I hear people laughing and talking in the background
"Mzwa how are you?" I ask
"I am fine Dikane, unjani wena (I am fine, how are you?)" He replies
"I am fine, do you have any idea where your mother and siblings are?" I ask and he deeply exhales
"I am with them" he says and I narrow my eyes
"With them where? Why wasn't I told?" I question and he goes silent a while
"Mzwakhe!" I roar
"Because Dikane we are having dinner with her boyfriend and his children I guess that's why you weren't told" he says in a low voice and that alone was enough to jerk me off the couch
"You are what?" I scream in his ear
"She only told me about a few days ago, I thought you knew" he says and I laugh
"This must be a joke, my own children betraying me and going to sit down with another man and have dinner with him while I am left in this big house alone" I say
"Baba" he says
"No Mzwakhe you shouldn't even be there to begin with, your loyalty is with me and if you don't leave that circus, I will know that you are also my enemy" I say and hung up. How dare they leave me and go play happy family with that man. Isn't it enough that he took my wife now he wants my children? Damn you Nomalanga. We should be here as a family trying to find a way to get through this not taking my children and making them friends with her damn boyfriend. I am so mad I could break human bones and enjoy them screaming in agony.

•MZWAKHE

I shouldn't have picked up my father's call now he has messed up my mood and now I have to find a reason to leave so he doesn't see this as betrayal, I am going through so much already I don't need my father as an enemy. I check the time it's only a few minutes after 7, and we only had our starter. My mom is going to be disappointed but I would rather make it up to her than my dad. I take a deep breath and walk back to the table and everyone is having a good time, my wife included the sight of her this happy makes me feel guilty for wanting to take her and leave.

My mom looks at me and he smile disappears

"Is everything okay Mzwa" she asks making everyone stop their banter to look at me

"No mama, I am sorry but my wife and I really have to go" I say and she frowns

"Why what happened" Em asks

"I have an emergency that I really need to attend to immediately, I can't really explain now"

I say

"Oh, can't it wait please, we haven't had a meal"

My mom says and I feel really bad

"I am afraid not Ndlovukazi but I promise to make it up to everyone" I say trying to get them off my back

"So, am I needed to deal with the emergency?" My wife asks distasteful and I know it's because he can see right through me
"No love I was just going to drop you off at home" I say and she shakes her head slightly
"In that case I will stay behind and enjoy with everyone, I will Uber back home" I say
"No Em we will drop you off" my baby sister says
"Okay thanks princess, I am really sorry again everyone" I say
"It's okay son, go handle your business" Ndlovukazi says and I can really feel the sadness in her voice. I go and kiss my wife on the cheeks and she whispers in my ear
"You are unbelievable Mzwakhe" she says and my heart stops, we are not in a good place as it is so this is going to set us back even more. I fake a smile
"I love you too baby" I say and go hug my mom and leave, soon as I get in my car I just cry. What kind of person have I become God, when did I become this selfish person? My mom doesn't deserve this really and what I just did probably hurts her no let me rephrase it definitely hurt her

•AFRIKA

It's taking everything in me to put everything I read in the black book to the back of my head and to just focus on this night as I know how important it is to her, and not even my worries will make it awkward. Everyone is having a great time and getting along and I especially love the vibe between Mpilo and bab'Thuso, it will take away how rudely Mzwakhe left. My phone vibrates and I check it it's Mpilo, I look at him and I swear he is deep in conversation making me wonder when he typed this.
Are you not feeling some type of way being the only one who isn't drinking I smile
It is awkward love but I am a big girl I text back and I look up at him and he reads it he looks at me and finds me waiting, he smiles and winks at me. I notice that Emily has been gone a while to the bathroom and she hasn't been back since. I stand and make my way to the ladies' room and soon as I open the door, I hear someone sniff obviously crying.
"Emily" I call out and the crying ceases
"Afrika?" She says in a questioning tone
"Yes, it's me babe" I confirm
"Are you alone?" She adds
"Yes, are you okay?" I ask really concerned, she unlocks the door and gets out of the cubicle.
"What's wrong?" I say going towards her
"Everything is just a mess Afrika, my husband is slipping through my fingers every day, my children and I re losing him to his father and it hurts so much Afrika I won't lie. I feel like I am losing everything to that man, he destroyed my parents and our family by murdering my brother now he is doing the same Afrika messing up my own family with his son" she says and I can feel the pain in her voice and I understand what that man is doing to her and her family because he is trying to do the same with Mpilo and I.
"it's all going to be okay, I promise" I assure her
"When Afrika, it just feels like he keeps on controlling everyone without anything happening to him. It's just so frustrating" she says crying even more. A part of me wants to tell her about the black book but I can't yet, I want Mpilo to have his club opening with the chaos and stress around his father being arrested. I don't want to take away that moment from him because I know how excited he is about that night.
"Hold on babe everything will work out you'll see" I say comforting her. She cries some more and once she is done, she breaks the hug
"Thanks babe, I feel so much better" she murmurs
"It's okay babe, fix your face and let's go back to everyone" I say and she nods and moves to the mirror

CHAPTER 110

•LETHABO

My mom asked me to drive her to church this morning and she is taking her time; I woke up early and it's hella freezing. Ai I should have offered her the car to drive herself but I realized that she would have found this offensive somehow and made it about my wife and our son, so let me just soldier on and take one for the team. I am planning on going to the house to see when they might be done with everything.

"Lethabo" she calls out for me, so I press the hotter to alert her that I am in the car. She appears and gets in the front.

"Hei this car is small hai, you really need that BMW" she says and I frown

"Decided to hold off that for a while" I say

"Hai why" she asks

"Just a decision we reached with my wife" I respond reversing the car

"So, you take financial decisions together" she asks and I wish I could disappear

"We are married mama so yes" I explain and she clears her throat

"She is lucky, not bring anything but having a saying" she purrs and I chuckle

"Kore you can't help yourself mama yoh" I say

"I wasn't meaning it in a malicious way" she defends herself

"You never do but just so you know my wife now has a job" I say

"Doing what?" She quickly replies

"She works for a concierge service company, she plans trips, organize events and do everything these rich people can't do themselves" I say focusing my eyes on the road.

"Mmmhhh" she says and I smirk finally she has nothing to say

"But Kopano is too young for her to be working and leaving him" I roll my eyes

"Good thing she works from home mama" I murmur and this time I shut her up. As we approach the church, she decides to talk

"Oh, and we will soon be starting baptism classes at church, I would love for my grandson to be baptized just like you" she says

"Oh, okay I will talk to his mom about it" I say

"Okay I will hear from you then" she responds as I U-turn and park at the church entrance.

"We are here" I say

"Thank you son and don't worry about getting me I will catch a lift with maMofokeng" she says and I nod.

•NOMALANGA

I open my eyes and I am in Thuso's warm arms; he is still sleeping so I just lay on his chest thinking about how great last night was, the kids got along well and everything was just happening effortlessly. It's just a shame that Mzwakhe couldn't stay, he would have enjoyed himself like all the other children. Thuso's children booked into a hotel since the was only one bed and it's the three of them, but before they leave, they will come and have lunch with us, and I don't know when this man will wake up and start with the pots.

"Morning Sunny" his baritone says serenading me

"Did you read my mind?" I ask

"I wish I had such powers my love but no" he says

"Just when I was wondering when you'll wake up to start cooking for the girls you wake up" I say and he laughs

"It's nice having a man that can cook huh"

"You don't understand how amazing it is" I say and he kisses my forehead
"Don't worry love we will wake up just now and go start with the pots you will be an assistant chef, right?"
"With pleasure" I say with enthusiasm
"Last night was amazing right?" He asks
"I didn't want it to end. It was just amazing. The kids got along very well and I realize that I was scared and nervous for nothing" I admit
"And I told you to relax, you should really listen to me often" he says and I chuckle
"Trust me I will be listening to you always" I say
"Good girl"
"You and Mpilo hit it off huh" I say and he chuckles
"He is a good one really, I am going to enjoy having a son you know, I would have loved to also get to know Mzwakhe too but he left and when he was there, he looked reserved" he says and I just can't help but sigh
"Yeah Mzwakhe ne, I don't even know why he was like that last night" I say
"He will come around Sunny, it's harder for some children you know"
"Mzwakhe is not a child love" I say
"Give him some time, on the positive Mpilo and I are going out next week to check the UEFA Champions league match" he informs me
"I hope I am not going to lose you to him" I say and he laughs
"Don't worry love, I am all yours" he assures me
"I am just kidding my love; I am just happy for the relationship you are building with my son"
"He is a good genuine boy I like him" he says and I smile

•MZWAKHE

My wife came home last night after midnight and she was intoxicated, clearly they had a great time, from the way she was drunk to the videos on their statuses, most especially from my sister, I am still shocked as to how Sbahle was so calm and blended with everyone to be honest if it was anyone I thought would mess the whole happy family thing is her but she had a great time with Thuso's daughter's. I felt left out but I don't have the right to be because I decided to allow my father to talk me out into staying and getting to know them. I walk in just when Emily lifted her head from the pillow and groans
"Mmmhhhhhh fuck" she cusses out
"Heavy head" I ask
"You have no idea God" she says facing the ceiling
"Had a great time though?" I query and sit on the edge of the bed
"It was great, they are amazing people Ndlovukazi is lucky to have found the judge he is such a warm person and his children just the same they adore your mother and they weren't afraid to show it" she says and I feel so guilty
"That's nice" I say in a low voice
"Your brother also hit it off with the judge, it was like they have known each other forever, if you had stayed you would have enjoyed like the rest of us" she
"I had an emergency baby" I stick to my story and she chuckles
"You might have fooled everyone with the emergency story Mzwa but not me" she says and I narrow my eyes
"What do you mean Em"
"You left because your father told you so, don't bullshit me with an emergency that doesn't exist" she sneers and I sigh
"Emily listen-" I say but she cuts me off

"No I am listening to you, what you did last night hurt your mother and it showed that you will stand with your father even when he orders you to shoot yourself, when he wanted nothing to do with you, calling you weak your mom was there Mzwakhe trying her best to make you feel important, trying to make you feel good about our life and understanding that you didn't want to be a part of the drug business and this once she asks for support and you bail on her and hurt her because of your fathers ego?"

"Emily don't put it like that" I argue

"That's how it is honey" she says getting out of bed.

"Why can't everyone understand where I am coming from? Why is it so hard to see my point of view? Why must I be seen as evil why?" I scream and she stops and looks at me shaking her head

"Wow" she says and walks out.

•KHAYA

I ended up falling asleep in the cinema, and that was around 11pm and my children and their mother weren't back, it's very frustrating thinking about how they were playing happy families with another man, I am just glad Mzwakhe showed his loyalty and left that damn place, of course I video called him and he was really back at his house. At least one of my children is in their right mind and understands loyalty. I get out of the cinema and get in the bathroom downstairs and gargle with the mouth wash and head to the kitchen, as I pass the dining the is not food on the table but what was I expecting. I get to the kitchen and Smangele is sitting on the kitchen counter and drinking beer.

"You will die of alcohol" I say

"Rather that than dying from an evil heart" she says

"And get your flat ass off the counter. Our food is prepared there, show some respect" I say opening the fridge to find something to eat

"Wavuka umuncu yini (why did you wake up so sour)" she asks

"I live in the same house as you that should be reason enough" I say

"You sure is not about your children meeting their stepfather" she says and chuckles

"No one will ever replace me in my children's lives, I would die first" I say

"I should start planning your funeral then because it's happening dear" she says

"Smangele get out of my face will you"

"How does it feel Khaya to see yourself losing it all" she asks taking a sip straight from the bottle

"Keep telling yourself that sweetheart" I say pouring milk

"Remember how you lied to my sister framing me, saying I am coming on to you? She believed you and I couldn't believe it was happening I was losing my mind, Nono was the only person I had but you took that away from me and it went down south for me, I felt lonely life, I went through hell I needed her but she thought I would hurt her like that and she wanted nothing to do with me because of you, you knew that I would get through to her some day and you broke us apart. I am happy we are okay now but I want you to take a minute and think about all the pain you've caused people and look back to how your life was before and how it is now and tell me if you can't see that you losing it all" she says and memories flood in my mind from when I started being this ruthless son of gun. I did torment a lot of people, I don't know what is with her statement that went deep within me to make me think about all of this and I am afraid that she might be right, these past few days have been somehow I just don't know how to explain it.

"I don't want you to die really it would be really easy for you. You must suffer slowly and realize that everyone hates you and wants absolutely nothing to do with you. I want you to realize that money and power can only get you so far, I want you to feel alone like I did when you took away my only family" she adds and I just storm out breathing heavily

CHAPTER 111

•AFRIKA

Days have gone by so quick it's only 2 days till the grand opening of the club and the tickets are sold out, I have a feeling it's going to be so lit. I really super excited and it had somehow managed to push back everything I read about in the black book to the back of my mind. We just got home and we are in Sbahle's room looking at her fit everything she bought for the day, I didn't buy anything because Mpilo and I have already bought me an outfit and I must say I look amazing in it, we've already agreed on doing the high ponytail as it will make a killer with my outfit.

"That looks good on you babe" I compliment

"I feel like it makes my ass go bigger though" she complains and I laugh

"I don't agree love it looks absolutely stunning" I insist

"So, we are between this dress and the green one?" She asks

"Yeah, but whichever one you chose you will look amazing" I assure her

"Thanks friend, I just hope your friend will be looking good to compliment me" she says and I laugh

"Senzo has never had a problem in the fashion department" I reply and she smirks

"I know right my man's is just always on point" she says blushing

"I just wish Mpilo and I would be able to do matching outfits and all" I say and she comes and sits next to me

"Suck be?"

"Big time Bahle, having to play hide and seek is just hard especially when we just want to love one another everywhere and anywhere" I pull

"I am so sorry babe; it will all work out in the end I promise you" she assures me

"It definitely had to love I just can't live like this anymore" I murmur

"I totally understand but the love you two have for each other is beautiful and real, don't let this whole thing taint it" she says

"Definitely not, your brother is my first and forever" I say and she smile

"I just wonder how I missed your relationship in the beginning" she says and I laughs

"We know how to be discreet babe" I say chuckling

"You deserve an Oscar shame" she replies clapping.

•AMANDA

I had to pump enough milk because my husband asked me to leave our son with my mom and meet him at our house, it's dead cold outside, why didn't he come fetch me again? Damn I swear it feels like I am walking around naked, I quickly get to the stop sign and take a taxi to the neighborhood where our house is, the taxi arrives and I love it because I get off exactly at our gate, this house looks really different God, I don't even recognize it, his car is parked outside and the workers are busy doing the pavement. I greet them and walk in and I gasp for air frozen by the door. The floor is now tiled and the ceiling is amazing. I walk further in and find Lethabo standing in the bedroom.

"Love" I say and he looks back

"Hey, you are here" he says and I go hug him

"Yeah, why did you call me here it's freezing" I complain and he chuckles

"I am sorry, you will soon be warm" he says
"This place looks amazing" I say
"I know Ama it's so transformed I can't believe it's the little trash house we bought a while ago, and I feel so bad that I was sceptical about it" he admits
"This is our home Letha" I say not believing it myself
"And we fully own it, no bond no Dept nothing and all thanks to you my wife for being smart and calculating" he says
"We are a team love" I say and he smiles
"So, the guys are practically done, love they need to tile the last bedroom and the toilet and then the guy doing the kitchen unit and the wardrobes says he only needs to put on the handles and he is done" he says
"What? Are you serious?" I ask
"No jokes love. They just ran out of material they only getting it tomorrow and we can move in next week any day you want" he says and I let a tear out.
"Oh my God no way, I need to get curtains for the rooms mos, can you drive me to the shops Saturday?" I ask and he laughs
"Definitely babe, I am so excited I can't wait to move in, I will be taking the whole week off to help you move everything in" he says
"We will be waking up and sleeping here every day for the rest of our lives" I say
"Living happily ever after" he adds
"Our own fairy-tale babe" I say and we kiss.
"Oh babe, my mom was hoping that we could baptise Kopano" he says
"Oh, thank God! I have been wondering where I would do it, this is perfect, please ask more information from her let me know" I say and he is looking at me shocked
"Really, you don't have a problem with it?" He asks and I narrow my eyes
"Yes, love I want our son to be baptized" I say
"Okay will let her know and get back to you" he says
"It's cold in here" I say
"Good thing I brought a heater" he says taking my hand leading me to the main bedroom and I smile walking in, it's a picnic for two and he has a heater on, it's so cute
"Lethabo" I say
"We haven't had some time alone since we had our son and we got married, I just wanted to do something special for you to remind you of how much I love and appreciate you my wife" he says and I am looking at him in awe

•KHAYA

I was at the lab the whole day as the workers called me telling me that they can't get a hold of Mpilo and they have emergencies only one of us could fix I don't understand why he would just disappear like that without telling anyone anything, this is unprofessional and unacceptable. I had to postpone my things to do his job, he better be somewhere laying in a ditch dying that is the only explanation I will take. I get home fuming and his damn car is not even here. I walk in the house and find his mom and Smangele in the kitchen
"Where is Mpilo" I roar
"Hello to you too Khaya" Ndlovukazi says
"I don't have time for this where is that boy?" I sneer and she narrows her eyes
"He went to the shooting range" his mom says
"With his step father" Smangele adds with a smirk on her face and I shoot her a death stare
"He missed work to go play family with your boyfriend" I ask and Noma sighs
"He is forever working. He deserves a break" she defends
"That's bullshit, that is his job, I had to cancel my things to go spend the day at the lab because he was nowhere to be found and his damn phone is off" I say and she exhales

"It's your business too after all so why are you complaining" she says
"Each and every one of us has a responsibility Nomalanga" I say
"Khaya did you die?" She asks annoyed
"That's not the point" I argue
"Just leave me alone and leave Mpilo alone too my son deserves the break and you know it too" she insists
"Because he is spending the day with your boyfriend, right?"
"Don't include Thuso in this please, keep him out of your filthy mouth" she says pointing the knife she is using to chop at me
"Tell him Nono" Sma adds obviously enjoying our fight
"Wena you seem to forget that I have a gun with your prints" I say to get her in check
"Nono ithingi'thule ke because uyamuzwa uSargent Kokobela uyangi gwajisa (Nono let me keep quiet because the police Sargent is threatening me)" she says sipping her beer
"Good" I say looking at her

•MPILO

I enjoyed my day so much, it was super exciting and I really learned a lot from Bra "Tiki, he is a good guy and he is surely someone my mother deserves. I swear if this man had sons, he would have made the perfect example to them. I haven't known him that long but I already look up to him for a few things. We spend the whole day at the golf course and I think I am a better golfer than I was yesterday. We are at the gold club having some drinks.
"Your mom is going to be so proud" he says
"Yeah hey. I am tired being my father's skivvy"
I say and he nods
"Yeah hey. You did well Mpilo, making life changing decisions. Being your own man is the best gift you will ever give yourself" he says
"It feels that way really" I admit
"Once she knows about the restaurant, I swear it will be our go-to place forever" he says
"You know Ndlovukazi too well" I say
"So, do you think you can organize us a getaway trip, you know she has been going through a lot these past few weeks, both with work and her personal life. I want her to relax and just get her mojo back he says
"Yeah we can work something out for you guys" I reply
"Okay you'll send me the invoice then" I nod
"You really love my mom huh?" I ask and he smiles
"It's impossible not to, she compliments me in every way. You know Mpilo as a man you will fall in love a couple of times, break hearts here and there and also get yours broken too but one woman will come into your life and change it forever, you won't know how you explain to people but you will feel it deep inside of you and for me Sunny is that" he says
"I totally know what you are talking about" I say and we both chuckle
"Your mom did mention something about you and Afrika" he says
"I love that girl so much bra "Tiki I fail to explain it" I admit
"She is your soul mate Mpilo and be grateful that you got to meet her in your young age, make memories with her, travel with her, just do everything with her always. I wish I could have met Sunny early in life but hey better late than never" he says
"That's very true" I say
"I really had a great day with you" he says
"Me too, I learned a lot even. I hope we do this frequently" I say and he nods vigorously
"I would like that Mpilo. You know being a father to girls I couldn't do more things I like. So, having a son is really nice, I hope you don't mind me saying son, if I am being forward-" I cut him off

"It's no bother really I don't mind" I say and he chuckles

•LETHABO

My wife and I had a great day and we couldn't stop discussing about our future and what we would love as our family culture and something's we discussed are just crazy. She explained how we are going to put the furniture in our house, we just had an amazing time just the two of us and we should do this frequently, after all we are the couple. I dropped her off and I could see that she felt really loved and appreciated and that was the intension. I get home and go find my mom

"o'lady" I say

"My dear" she says

"So, I spoke to my wife" I say and she looks at me

"About?" She replies

"The baptism thing" I say

"Oh yes, yes, and?" She asks

"She was super excited; she is all for it" I tell

"Oh okay, that's great I thought she would refuse" she says

"Amanda is reasonable mama, she wants our son baptized, so how will it work" I ask

"She will have to start attending baptism classes at church after Sunday services, they will last a few weeks then the actual baptism event will start" she says

"Okay I will let her know then" I say

"Okay your food is in the microwave" she says

"Thanks ma, I am still good" I say and walk out

CHAPTER 112

•KHAYA

My own son prefers spending time with another man and not me his father, this hurts I won't lie, it hurts knowing that a child you gave life to prefers to let another man play dad to them while I am still very much alive. Mpilo and I have always had the best relationship, I was never just his father but I was his friend, his business partner and one day it all went up in smoke. I miss him I miss how things used to be. A girl that was suppose to come into the business and bring us money just came in and caused havoc, it's crazy. I gulp down my drink and stand to pour another one, I am sitting in my study door open waiting for Mpilo to arrive. We finished with dinner and he was still not at home, his cellphone is still on voicemail. He finally passes by my study

"Mpilo" I say and I hear footsteps cease, he heard me. He comes back and walks in

"You called me" he says standing by the door

"Come in Mpilo" he sighs and walks further in burying his hands deep in his pocket.

"What can I do for you bab'Mdlalose?" He asks

"Where have you been this whole day?" I ask him trying by all means to be civil

"I went out to play Golf" he says

"And you left the lab unattended, there was an emergency and you were nowhere to be found, I had to cancel my entire day to go and do your job" I say and he sighs

"Is the lab burnt?" He asks and I frown

"No it didn't" I reply

"Did you die?" He adds and now I feel disrespected

"Would I be standing here if I was?" I purr back

"Exactly you didn't die, just because you stepped in for half a day doesn't mean anything. I spend all my days there working my ass off, I run everything and I never complain not even

once so I do deserve some time to myself, I don't understand why you must make this a big deal for spending time at the lab that makes you money" he says and I chuckle
"My point is you didn't tell anyone where you were and your damn hone was off" I explain
"I didn't want to disturb that's why my phone was off and they managed to get a hold of you didn't they?" He blurts out
"Oh you didn't want anyone disturbing your father and son moment" I say sounding jealous and he chuckles
"Oh so this is about spending some time with my mother's boyfriend" he asks with a smirk
"What is your loyalty Mpilo" I ask
"Loyalty, do you even know what that means sir? And I don't owe anyone but my mother loyalty so if that is what you are looking for from me then i am sorry but it long relocated I suggest you try Mzwa for that" he answers and the words are like daggers being thrown straight for my heart.
"Get out Mpilo" I say in a low voice because I just can't take listening to my son say all these things to me.

•AMANDA

I got an email from Mpilo sending me work, at least this one is a local vacation, I can finish this in a day or two and get ready to present to the client and this time I am speed confident in myself and my skill, I pulled off the most expensive international vacay this will just be a walk in the park. I am working in my bedroom as my mom walks in.

"Oh you are busy" she asks

"Not really was just reading my emails, I have another trip to plan" I say

"Rich people kodwa, but why will I complain if that's how my daughter will make her money, let them keep on being lazy" she says and I laugh

"Exactly because if they start doing things for themselves, I will be out of work and where will I get R25K from just doing such a fun thing" I agree

"That's very true. You never told me where your husband took you yesterday" she says

"Oh he just wanted me to see that our house is finished, only minor things left ma, we will be moving in next week" I say and her face falls

"So soon, God I am so used to having you back around it's going to be lonely here" she admits

"I am sorry mama" I say and she smiles

"It's okay my babes, you are married now and I can only be grateful to have had the opportunity to have lived with you under nice conditions" she adds

"Exactly Sibho and you will see us frequently plus Kopano will be coming to you when I go to work, Mpilo will get us office space soon" I say

"I would really love to stay at home with him and bring him by any chance you get even when you and Lethabo want to be alone" she says

"I will Sibho and whenever you want to talk I am a phonecall and one taxi away okay" I say and she smiles

"Okay Mandy, but I want you to move out and know that I will always fight to stay away from alcohol, I know what is at stake and I will not my health and my relationship with you and Afrika on the line I promise" she says and I go hug here

"I believe in you mama"

"Thank you my babes"

"And oh my mother in law suggested that I attended their Church for baptism classes so Kopano can be baptized" I say

"Oh that's good, we have been wondering where we would get him baptized" she adds

"Exactly, I am so excited" I say

"I will accompany you to church every Sunday until it's all over" she murmurs

"I'd appreciate that very much"

•MPILO

Everything is ready for Saturday, I hired the best club manager and I know under his leadership everyone who will be working at their best. I informed the restaurant that they should be on their A game as the kitchen will be on duty for the snacks and food. Meaning the restaurant will be closed for the public this Saturday just to get everything ready for the big night, I don't want people waiting long for their orders, everything has to be chop chop. I am planning to go later on and see if everything is in check, my girlfriend will be meeting me there later but for now I need to come clean to my mom about what Afrika and I have been up to. I called her and she is at her office and good thing I was already in the car driving. I get there and go straight to the office, I knock and she shouts come in from the inside, I open and she is sitting behind her desk looking at some case files

"Sthandwa Sami" I say

"Hey baby" she responds closing the file and she takes off her reading glasses

"I hope I didn't disturb you" I say

"I wasn't as busy boy so don't worry about it" she assures me

"Grateful stuff" I reply and take a sit

"You didn't even bring me lunch, how does Afrika deal with a rough neck like you" she complains and I just laugh

"My girl and I are very busy ma, we don't have time to be worrying about food" I say paving the way to start the conversation

"What is that supposed to mean?" She asks leaning in, placing her hands on her desk

"Well I wanted to surprise you and I hope you don't take this in a bad way for not telling you, so a while back my girlfriend made me realize that there is more to me than drugs, she asked me what I would have loved to become if I wasn't in the drug business" I say and she smiles

"And what was your answer" she asks

"I want to have a piece of the pie in the Hospitality Industry" I say and she nods, so I explain everything from buying the restaurant, to opening the club this Saturday, the franchise and the concierge business, when I am done she has her hands on her mouth shocked, eyes already watery

"Mpilo, are you serious?" She asks

"As a heart attack mama" I reply and she comes to me and attacks me with a hug

"I am so proud of you son, I don't even know what to say, what will I ever give Afrika for being such a positive influence on your life. As a mother this is just a moment I lived for, I never wanted you to grow old in the drug business and knowing that you already have one foot out is calming" she says

"I feel the same way ma"

"I need to see this place" she says and I sigh

"You can come through tomorrow with Bra'Tiki to see everything"

"I will call him and invite him but I am definitely coming" she says with so much enthusiasm

"Thanks ma"

"Who did you register all these businesses to" she asks and would have been worried if she didn't

"The restaurant and club in Afrika's name then the Franchise is a shell company's, I still need to register the concierge service company" I inform

"At least" she sighs in relief

"Don't stress I got this" I say

"I see that and I am so proud of you" she says for the millionth time

"Thank you Ndlovukazi"

•AFRIKA

I get to the club and people are busy going up and down, preparations for the grand opening, I just can't wait to see this place come alive to see my boyfriend's dream come true bit by bit. Once his dad goes down he will come out and be the biggest thing in the hospitality industry and there will be no stopping Mpilo then. I get to office and it has transformed, it looks professional now but I am glad to see that they didn't get rid of our bed, I go and throw myself on top of it and take a moment to myself, I haven't been feeling okay today, this thing comes and goes, super annoying. The door opens and I know it's Mpilo so I don't bother opening my eyes or getting up. A second later he gets on top of me and starts kissing me all over my face, I giggle

"Mpilo" I say opening my eyes and opening my legs so he can comfortably be on top of me

"You want some already?" He asks and I laugh

"I would do with some yes" I say and he stops and gets off me

"I am starting to feel like a booty call" he says and I laugh

"Hao my love" I reply

"No more I missed you baby, how was your day Mpilo" he complains

"You created this monster baby, you are the one who hooked me" I say in my defense and he smirks

"I give it to you real good huh?" He asks and I giggle

"Good is an understatement" I say and he comes to me and holds me by my waist

"I am happy to hear that, a man's job is making his woman happy and sexually satisfied babe and knowing that I am doing my job gets a nigger pleased with himself" he adds

"But in all honesty i want you to hold me and talk you know we haven't really been spending time together love" I say

"I agree sthandwa sam, I am also craving intimacy" he says and I kiss him. A knock disturbs us

"Come in" Mpilo shouts still holding on to me, a waitress from the restaurant walks in

"Your order sir" she says

"Thank you please put it there" he says and she places the food on the table and walks out

"Let's eat and go cuddle so you can tell me how school has been and how much you love me" he says and I blush, we let go of each other and go to the food soon as he opens them, the smell hits

"Mmhhhhh this smells not too good" I say and he laughs

"Are you pregnant wena" he asks carefree

"Nah fam, I got the injection babe and it lasts for 3 months" I defend

"Those things are not 100%" he says

"I am pregnant Mpilo man" I stick to my defense

"I am just kidding babe the smell of the dressing is very strong but tastes amazing" he says

"If you say so" I reply and he laughs

"I promise you Muhles, wozodla tu (come eat)" he says

•MZWAKHE

I haven't seen my mom since the night of the dinner with her boyfriend and her kids, I was ashamed to show my face thinking she might have seen right through me the way my wife did. I feel really bad but I can't hide from her any longer. I got to the Mdlalose home a while ago and it was empty with just the helpers. I am in the hallway pacing up and down.

"And then wena Mabena, practicing the drill where are you deployed to" my aunt says walking in and I sigh

"Sma I wasn't aware you were at home" I say

"I just got here, ufunani la (what are you doing here)" she asks and I frown

"This is my home I don't need a reason to be" I say
"If you frequently came around and called your mother then yes, but you are forever MIA" she replies
"Do you have any idea when my mom would be back" I ask and he sighs
"I feel sorry for you boy boy, I hope you open your eyes real soon" she says and I roll my eyes
"What are you talking about now Smangele" I say annoyed
"Remember that what an elder sees sitting down a child will never see it even if they climb up the tree. You mother is coming behind me" she says and leaves me standing there. I snap out of it as I hear the sound of my mom's clicking heels. She appears and sees me
"Oh Mzwa hi" she says
"Ndlovukazi" I say
"I was wondering who is here, I didn't recognize the car" she says
"I got that a few days ago" I reply
"Oh it's very nice congratulations boy" she murmurs
"Thanks ma, and I wanted to apologise for that night" I say and she smile
"It's okay son, you had more important things to take care of I understand" she says and the words hit home
"It's not like that mama I swear" I defend myself
"It's okay son and it's in the past. Let it go" she replies
"Can we go out for dinner" I ask
"Maybe some other time I am really tired" she politely declines
"I love you Ndlovukazi and I am sorry" I assure her
"You are my son and I will always love you, you can stick around for dinner if you want" she says and peck my cheek before ascending the stairs.

CHAPTER 113

•MZWAKHE

Going to see my mom didn't go as I planned, it just went South and I was hoping we could talk about it you know and just get it over with but she wasn't interested in that, and I can't really blame her for that I hurt and disappointed her and how she chooses to deal with that shouldn't bother me at all. All I can do is start showing my remorse and stop preaching how all this is making me feel guilty but do nothing about it. I live having my dad's attention acknowledge and friendship but it's time he learns that I also love my mother and siblings and I also want to see them happy and be in a good space with them and no matter how he reacts I will stick to it, it's no point having one person in my life while losing all the others, it's not how it's supposed to be and I need to change it.

"I was hoping to go out to dinner with our kids tonight" my wife says drawing me back from my thoughts

"Oh, am I invited" I ask

"Of course you are, I am doing this to show them that we are still a family Mzwa, we have been on and off for a while now and our children will end up catching on the negativity" she says and I sigh.

"That's very true and Em I want you to know that I will work harder to go back to being the husband you have always known and appreciate, I will make my father understand that just because she isn't agreeing with other things it doesn't mean it shouldn't be happening, I will make him understand that my loyalty to him shouldn't be measured by being close to people he wants to personally consider his enemies" I say and she is looking at me shocked

"I will believe you when I see it happen Mzwa, not that I don't believe you just that you have been a totally different person for these past few months and it's scary" she says

"I understand babe and I will prove my words with action" I assure her

"I would really love to have my husband back" she says and I nod

"I love you Emily and I will give us back our life" I make a promise I intend to keep.

"I love you too" she replies and pecks my lips

"So, what time should we leave" I ask

"6pm babe, I am going to get them ready" she says

"Let's make it 5pm and pass by the cinema to see a movie, it's been a while" I say and she smiles

"I would really appreciate that" she says and my phone rings, it's my father I look at the screen and look at my wife. She is looking at me intensely to see my next move so I just reject it. She smiles at me and walks out.

•KHAYA

The house is empty again and the table is not set once again, it could only mean they all went out with that dam judge again, these people are really trying my patience band soon enough I will retaliate I will be the big bad monster. The only person who will answer my calls and tell me where everyone is at is my son Mzwakhe. I dial him and it rings and goes to voicemail, I look at my screen and frown. What's going on now, is he rejecting my calls. He better not be backing down and going back to being the pussy he was. I dial Emily and she picks up to my surprise

"Baba" she says

"Emily, how are you?" I ask

"I am very well thanks, how are you?" She replies

"I am very well thanks, is your husband in?" He asks

"Oh yes he is Baba but he is fast asleep" she says

"Oh, mind waking him up?" I ask and she sighs

"He took really strong pills baba because he hasn't been sleeping well these days, I would have to disturb him" she says and I just clench my jaws

"Is it?" I say

"Yes sir, he is really fatigued"

"Shame, but he will surely be okay" I murmur

"Definitely baba I will make sure of it" she assured me

"You do that" I say

"Okay sir keep well" she says

"One more thing Emily" I quickly say

"Yes?"

"Do you have any idea where your mother in law and her kids went to?" I ask

"No sir I haven't spoken to any of them in a while" she says

"I see, okay then enjoy your night" I say

"Bye" she says hanging up. Where the hell could they be.

•NOMALANGA

Thuso and I are driving back to his house, we went to the opening of my son's club and I must admit the place is amazing, I just can't wait to start eating at his restaurant. We left because the scenery was for the youngsters and we started feeling uncomfortable and making them uncomfortable too because they wouldn't want to let loose and have fun in front of their parents, I was happy to see Keneilwe there, Thuso's youngest daughter and it shows that the kids are closer even without us there.

"I am sure you are proud of Mpilo" he says

"Definitely love, he is being the man I have always wished he could be" I say

"I am really happy for him, he wasn't scared to start chasing his dreams, it's not easy but he did it" he adds

"That's very true, he didn't decide to stay in his comfort zone" I reply

"And that girl is good for him, I hope he knows and understands how blessed he is" he says and I nod vigorously

"Afrika is good for him love, if they stick together like this, they will end up being the youngest powerful couple I know" I say and he nods

"There is a lot of potential, and I am happy they are not letting Khaya limit them from securing their future together" he says and I sigh

"It's just sad that they have to hide like this, you know when you love someone you just want the world to know especially at that age" I say

"Exactly, it's not fair on them, but some day they will be together freely" he says

"I believe in that very much; they must get married and give me more grandchildren" I say and he chuckles

"Oh, Granny thinking" he says and I giggle

"I would have a baby myself but I am not as patient as before" I say

"We could try you know and then retire and raise our baby" he says

"And we could attend her graduation on wheelchair" I say and he laughs

"That would be the day" he adds

"Yah ne" I say

"Go untie your tubes and let's see if it could happen" he says and I am shocked to say the least

"Love" I say and he smiles

"What, it wouldn't be such a bad idea, one last one for the both of us, Sbahle and Keneilwe need a sibling" he insists

"They have each other to play with" I say and he giggles

"That's true, I need to find another excuse" he says and I hit his arm laughing

•MPILO

I couldn't believe the turnout; this place is packed I can't even remember how it looks like when there are no people here. This is my place my baby CLUB GENESIS the start of everything fun. The music is on point, the service is so fast nothing is slugging, the live performance are killing it, I honestly don't have anything to fault, my friends and I are at the VIP section and Afrika and my sister are also with us, my girl is having her non-alcoholic cocktails and Bahle is having anything alcoholic. I can't take off my eyes on her, she looks breath-taking, that shot dress and thigh high boots really look amazing, her booty is exposed now that she took off the coat and she is hella sexy, she has gained weight in all the right places and your boy is happy about it.

"Lord Life who is that Mami over there" a friend

Of mine asks looking at my girl

"Keep moving bruh" I say

"Why come on man have you seen the girl, just look at the chocolate skin I wouldn't mind licking on her all night" he adds and he is really getting to me now, sexualizing my woman like that

"J man stop that" I reprimand him

"I know she's your sister's friend but don't cuff her man, I would stick around her a while" he says and I walk away from him before I punch his face, I walk around the club to see if everything is going well and it's popping. I move to the outside and there is a long queue on people by why would they come and waste their time because they saw that tickets were sold out. I walk back in and greet a few people then walk back to where we are sitting and there is laughter and banter is lively, I move my eyes and realize that J is busy whispering in my girlfriends' ear, Afrika is even giggling at what the fool is saying. I am getting angry at the sight of them. I move my eyes to Bahle and she laughs seeing my expression and walks to me

"I didn't think you are the jealous type bro" he says and I click my tongue

"Don't be that person Bahle, tell my woman to come to the office now" I say

"Yoh okay sir I will get the message across" she says

"NOW!" I sneer and take the bottle of champagne on the table and walk to the office, I won't lie I am mad as hell I don't want any dick near my girl, I know my friends because I used to be like that and they have a slick tongue and I don't want them confusing Afrika with stories. I get to the office and remove my jacket and drink straight from the bottle waiting

•AFRIKA

Mpilo's friend is my ear and I am just laughing and not taking anything, he is saying seriously, he is trying to cuff me for the night or so he says and I think that means being his girl for the night, do girls really agree to this nonsense. He continues telling me about his apartment in Sandton and how he is signing a multimillion Rand deal this Monday, I can just tell that he is lying through his teeth just to get me to fall for him but not this girl honey. I see Mpilo take the bottle of champagne and walk away I frown wondering

what would make him so sour at a time he should be happy that his club is doing amazing. Bahle comes to me with a smirk

"What's wrong with him" I ask moving from this lying guy

"You are in trouble friend; he is jealous that you're laughing with his friend" she says and I roll my eyes

"Mpilo can be a baby at times God" I murmur

"He said I should tell you to go to the office now" she replies and I sigh

"Let me go breastfeed my child" I say and she chuckles, I try to move but J holds my hand

"Where are you going now Mami" he asks

"The bathroom" I answer

"I can accompany you" he says and I frown

"No thanks" I say and yank my hand gently then go find my boyfriend. I get in the office and he is pacing up and down.

"You took your time" he shouts and I raise an eyebrow

"Who are you talking to like that" I asks and he stares at me

"What were you laughing about with J" he blurts out and I laugh

"Are you serious Mpilo" I say

"I am so answer me please" he insists and I sigh

"He was making a pass at me but I wasn't giving him the light of day" I respond

"The way you were laughing doesn't agree with what you are telling me now" he says

"Stop it MPILO just stop, I would never look at any other man the way I look at you and that's facts, I love and today we should be happy that CLUB GENESIS is now open and it's a huge success not having disagreements about some non-factor called J" I say and his face softens up

"I just don't want to see any man near you Afrika I am jealous, I want you all to myself and I am sorry for acting childish" he says pulling by my waist

"You are a big baby, but you don't have to be jealous I am all yours baby and it will forever be that way. Let's go out there and enjoy ourselves enjoy your success" I say

"You are right babe but I want to make love to you first then we can go back to the others" he says and I smile, he let's go of me and goes to love the door and comes back his expression has changed. He looks flushed, eyes red, that sight of him gets me wet instantly and I bit my lower lip. He gets to me and takes my lips into his and I moan in his mouth. He moves be back and places me on the edge of the desk stops kissing me, he moves his hands to my thighs and pushes my short dress up and come back with my lace underwear. he helps me out of it and pushes me further on the desk and place my legs on the desk exposing my Honeypot. He gets his head between my thighs and I feel his warm tongue on my clit and I hiss, he starts licking and I come help but shut me eyes taking in the pleasure. He starts doing things with his tongue that sends me straight to cloud 9. I arch my back rubbing his head

"Oh yes baby right there ahh" I moan and he drives me insane as he inserts a finger in and I am I lose my mind that I try to close my thighs but he quickly opens them wider, he licks and sucks and pumps his finger in and out of me. I am curling my toes in the boots my moaning getting louder as I feel my orgasm forming in my abdomen, like he

feels that I am near he goes harder and faster making it come quicker, I scream taking in the pleasure and he stops I feel don't dare open my eyes, the orgasm has all my attention, I feel his pull me to him and I open my eyes right as he slides into me, his facial expression priceless, his eyes are shut and mouth forming a perfect O.

"Oh Afrika, I love you so much" the words are out of his mouth and he thrusts in and out of me.

"I love you too Mpilo only you baby" I respond making him thrust deeper and harder and it feels too damn good,

"This is my pussy baby do you understand me, no one has ever been in here and no one will ever do you understand me" he says and I nod vigorously

"Yes, yes, yes my love yes ohhhhh" he bites his lip and jerk my legs with his head and pump harder and deeper, we've never had it rough but I am not complaining as it feels so damn good. I feel him groan and stiffen his body and I know he is undone. He stops moving and looks up trying to catch his breath and so am I. He pulls out and gets the towel we have here and comes back to wipe me clean and then cleans himself, I am still laying on the desk as he fixes himself.

"I enjoyed that baby, it was amazing like always" he says with a smile

"I hope it took away the tension and I enjoyed it too like always" I reply

"Definitely took off the tension baby, come let me help you fix up" he says and I stand up he helps me put on my underwear and pulls my dress my down. He wipes my lips of the lipstick smear and I wipe it from his lips too.

"You are so beautiful and sexy" he compliments me

"Thanks for picking the outfit I love it too" I say and he smiles

"Can we go back to the others now?" He asks

"Sure" I say

"You go first" he suggests and I nod he kisses my forehead and walk out, Bahle is dancing and I go take my sit and wait for the waitress to come so I can order another cocktail. Mpilo walks back and he is smiling and chatting now I chuckle and shake my head.

"Hai he is much better now" Sbahle says taking a sit next to me

"He was just being a baby and needed some reassurance" I say and he laughs

"I bet you it's because of the sex you gave him" he says and I shoot her a look

"How do you know?" I ask and she laughs

"Only good pussy can make a man switch moods so quick" she says and I hit her playfully

"You are a bad girl" I reply

"Look at the kettle painting the pot black" she murmurs and we both laugh, I move my eyes to my man and he is looking at me, he winks at me and looks away.

"My brother is crazy about you babe I have never seem him like this before" I blush

•MPILO

Last night was crazy, it was more than what I had expected, at 2am we had to close up but the people didn't want to leave, even when the music stopped playing, it took us an hour to get everyone out because the manager and I didn't want to have problems with the law on our first night, the bouncers made sure everyone was out and we locked up and they left. Afrika stayed behind with me and Sbahle left with her boyfriend, I will go drop her off later at Senzo's so they can both get home at the same time to fool Khaya. I woke up first at around 9am and my girlfriend is still fast asleep, I walk up in the club and it's busy, they are cleaning up the mess from last night and others are restocking the fridges and the shelves. It's quiet once again like it wasn't going crazy last night. The manager appears and smiles

"Sure boss" he says and offer his hand I take it and we shake

"What's good man?" I ask

"We are trending number 1 on Twitter. People are going crazy over the place" he replies

"I haven't checked social media streets man" I tell

"It's crazy, we had an amazing opening, the numbers are even proving it" he murmurs band I smile

"Now that's what I want to hear" I respond

"So, will you be doing the deposits or should I" he asks

"I will take care of that for now and then pass it to you in due time" I answer

"Fair enough, okay let me go back to work, prepare to open for the night"

"Sure thing I will be in my office if you need anything" I say and walk downstairs and the restaurant is packed with people enjoying the breakfast, I walk to the one of the waiters

"Morning" I say

"Mr Mdlalose"

"Can we please have 2 greasy breakfast and some coffee" I say

"Okay sir it will be delivered to the office"

"Thank you". I go back up and unlock the door of the office and walk in she's still in bed, I pick up her panties and bra and place them on bed, last night or early in the morning our clothes were flying across the room. I get back in bed and get close to her and she takes my hand and put it over her naked body.

"Morning" I say

"Sthandwa Sam" she responds

"Breakfast will be here soon"

"Oh, thank God I am famished" she says

"You will soon eat Muhles"

"I am so tired God; my ears can still hear the loud music from last night" she murmurs and I laugh

"You will get used to it" I reply

"I guess so, where did Sma disappear to last night" she asks and I chuckle

"She was in the general section, she said VIP doesn't have a vibe, she was chilling with a group of guys and their table was erupting with laughter the entire time" I tell

"Did she drive safely though" she asks concerned

"Sma is boss babe, she wasn't even drunk, she even left with the guys to go drink somewhere they weren't in the mood to sleep"

"Your aunt is something else" we both laugh

"Babe we have about 20 minutes before breakfast arrives" I say

"Okay?" He tone is questioning

"I was hoping we could just" I raise her leg and go down a little and enter her slowly and she is fucken wet from when I don't know but I love it

"Mpilo" she calls my name moaning to the pleasure

"You drive me absolutely insane Afrika, I love being Buried deep inside of you" I confess
"I love it too sthandwa Sam" she replies and I move in and out of her as slowly and passionately as possible.

•AMANDA

My mother and I woke up really early and prepared for church their service starts at 8am and it's out by 10:30am, I must admit it was a beautiful service and I honestly didn't think I would enjoy myself this much, I used this opportunity to kneel down and thank God for all he has blessed me with this year, I am not really spiritual but after the gifts I have received I believe it's time I started building a good relationship with God. My mom and I are standing outside waiting for 11am so we can go to the baptism classes, my mother in law approaches us.

"Dumelang" she says

"Hello sis" my mom responds and they shake hands

"Sawbona ma" I greet back too

"Hai Ama why didn't you stay inside, it's a bit cold for the baby outside" she says

"We thought we had to move out so the meetings they mentioned could take place" I say

"No, it's okay you could have stayed behind and kept quiet that wouldn't have minded" she says

"Okay now we know, but I made sure he is warmly dressed and this baby blanket is very thick and warm" I say

"I can see that and thank you for allowing Kopano to be baptized in the church" she murmurs and I am shocked I have never heard her speak like a human being.

"It's no problem ma I wanted to baptize him and this was a great opportunity" I respond

"Okay then I am sorry I can't stay long as I am leaving with the woman's movement, we are visiting one of the church ladies at her house she is sick so we are taking prayers to her and her family" she explains

"We understand sisi, may she find healing" Sibó says

"Thank you and enjoy the class, hope that my grandson will visit soon. I can't wait to have stay at home full time" she says and I give her a faint smile

"We will visit soon" I say

"Okay good bye" she says and we bid her goodbye too

"Amanda" my mom says

"Sibo" I answer

"This woman doesn't know that you two bought a house, does she?" She asks

"Her son decided that he will tell her before we move" I say and she claps

"Yho Thixo, this is going to cause more drama" she exclaims

"I will be in my house by then, her son will deal with her really I don't have the energy for that woman mama" I say moving my eyes from hers

"You two and your husband. She is going to go crazy I swear" I sigh

"Hai Sibó we will cross that bridge when we get to it" I respond she checks her watch

"Hai let's go in it's five to 11" she suggests and I nod

•NOMALANGA

Thuso and I are preparing Sunday lunch together, he is actually teaching me some of his signature dishes and I must admit this man knows his business in the kitchen, I swear even how he rinses the vegetables is just different, you can tell he is a chef, I find myself starrng at him in total admiration.

"I should ask Mpilo to invite me as a guest chef at his restaurant, it would be so much fun" he says

"That would actually be a good idea love"

"You think?" This time he says looking at me
"Definitely just to showcase your talent to the world" I assure him
"Okay I will talk to him about it at our next golf game" he says and my phone rings it's a contact of mine at the police station. I frown and answer
"Hi...yes she is...what are you serious? oh my God thanks for letting me know I will be right there" I hang up and sigh
"Sunny what's wrong"
"That was my police contact, he says my sister is arrested for drunk and driving and she mentioned me so he called to ask if I might know her" I respond and he chuckles
"Go get here love" he says and I sigh
"How could she be so irresponsible, she put other people's lives at risk not just hers" I argue
"I understand but get her and then explain to her" he adds and I nod, okay let me go there quickly I will drop her off and come back" I murmur
"No problem my keys are in the drawer" I pecks his lips and take his keys and my bag and leave in my basic lazy outfit. I drive and arrive there and call my contact and he comes to the car with her.
"Ndlovukazi" he says
"Yah I told you my sister you gabadiya I told Mina kithi sine clever mina you can't touch me I am bitch never die" my sister says slurring her words and I roll my eyes
"Thanks for calling, I appreciate it" I say and give him a hand shake to hide the fact that I am handing him money
"Anytime my lady" he walks away
"Are you crazy Smangele" I ask her but it's pointless because she is drunk out of her senses, I have never seen anything like this before, I am even wondering how she was able to drive in this state. Even before I drove out, she was out of it dead with sleep.

•EMILY

We had a really amazing family time last night and it showed me that my husband still has it inside of him to be the man I love and married all those years ago. I could even see my daughter's happy and having fun with their dad and that beautiful moment showed me that Khayaletu Mdlalose has to go, I have given Afrika all the time in the world but now she is slacking and I don't think we are in the same page anymore and she has to be brought back.
"Last night was so fun" I admit as he gives me a foot rub
"I had a beautiful evening too; I was thinking we could do something outdoor again today" he suggests
"I would love that baby, what did you have in mind" I ask
"How about we go bowling then go see another animated movie and go have food again, I just want to spend time with all my 3 girls" I smile
"I appreciate you trying babe" I say
"I did promise to give you your husband back didn't I" he reminds me
"You sure did and you are on the right track I swear"
"I love you so much and I will forever be sorry for how shitty I've been treating you" he sincerely says
"It's okay I forgave you and we are working towards being better as a couple and as parents" I say and he nods

•KHAYA

I just need to get out of this house, I didn't sleep a wink this past night, the noises and unseen presences are back and I am just frustrated with everything, I am so tired and it's a Sunday most people I called to visit are busy with their families, some are out of the country and Mzwa isn't picking up my calls, I think I should just go by his house to see why he is

acting like everyone else. I approach the door and it's open, Noma walks in holding on to a drunk Smangele, she reeks of alcohol I can smell it all the way from here.

"Where did you pick up your straatmate sister" I ask

"Masende akho Khaya" she throws an insult at me and I feel so sick.

"Take that back now Noma right now"

"It's okay for you to insult people but you can't take it ai suka" she says trying to walk towards the corridor but struggling because Smangele is drunk and heavy

"You are the reason my children are disrespectful towards me" I sneer

"If you believe that then it proves that you literally live in your head" she says

"You keep taking my children to that man so I am left alone" I say

"I don't need to live in my children's shadow like you dear, they are their own people and they have things they do of their own, don't paint me with the same brush as you" she responds breathing heavily.

"Then where did they all sleep because none of them was here" I ask walking behind her

"Sbahlle and Afrika asked me to go out with a group of their friends, I don't know where Mpilo is he is probably at the damn lab slaving away for your pockets, and as you can see my sister was out all night getting drunk, and I am pretty sure you can guess where I was" she shouts annoyed with me and I shake my head

"Can we just sit down and talk like adults" I plead

"I would be there only adult in the room so no I am not in the mood to have a back and forth with you Khayaletu" she says opening the bedroom, I was about to respond when she shut the door in my face.

CHAPTER 115

FEW DAYS LATER

•MZWAKHE

I decided that I can't be running and hiding from my father now, he had to know how I feel about all of this, and if he really appreciates me as a son he will understand where I am coming from. I realized that my obsession with him has turned me into a person I hate, turned me into a man I never thought I could be and it's really a shame that I realised this after involving an innocent person in all of this and taking away my brothers happiness in the process. I arrive at the Mdlalose office and it's a busy day like always. His PA tells me that he is in so I knock and he shouts come in. As I walk in, I see his preoccupied and he looks really tired. I sigh and gather the strength to not back out of this

"You finally came out of hiding" he sneers and I shake my head

"I wasn't hiding baba, I just wanted to spend some time with my wife and children"

"If you say so" he replies

"So how have you been? You look tired" I ask concerned

"I don't sleep well these days; I am planning on going to see the doctor real soon for some pills I can't live like this" he shares and I nod

"Yeah you do that fatigue is serious"

"So, what brings you by" he asks and I exhale

"Baba, I appreciate the relationship we have built and I am grateful that we managed to mend our relationship from what it used to be before it was too late, I realized that family is way important and we must treasure it"

"That's very true Mzwa"

"I don't like how things are between myself Ndlovukazi and my siblings" I admit

"They are just being difficult those ones, they want us to beg them and they won't see that day" he quickly adds and I sigh

"I understand where they are coming from Dikane, ever since I got close to you I started neglecting everyone else and hurting them and that's not okay, that is not who I am and I want that all to change, I want to be able to be with everyone without feeling like I am betraying anyone" I say and he narrows his eyes

"What are you saying to ma kahle khale Mzwakhe" he asks and I already feel the annoyance in his tone but I will not back down

"I am saying don't measure my loyalty to you by me keeping close relationships with my siblings and my mom, I want you be there for them, I want to support them in all that they are doing because they were there for me for the longest time" I explain

"Even though I don't agree with it" he asks

"Yes, baba even when you don't agree with it" he chuckles

"I should have known that you would never be like Mpilo, you don't have the balls to stick up for shit, why did I think you would grow up. You will always be a pussy that hides behind his mother and wife. I don't believe that you were made from my loins, I am not a weakling and my son has shown that too even when I don't agree with what he is doing right now" he sneers at me and I am shocked to say the least, his words hurt I won't lie proof enough that I will never be good enough for this man and that all along he was just trying to replace Mpilo with me. I stand up bleeding inside

"Yes, turn your back on me like they all have Mzwakhe. You will regret the day you messed with me; I will surely make all of you regret it. I am Khaya Mdlalose I don't need any of you not even one" he shouts and I just walk out, the child in me bruised and ashamed.

•AMANDA

My husband and I moved all our furniture here in the house and I must admit this place looks amazing and it feels like home, our home, I can't believe my husband and I pulled it off and we debt free. I decorated it how I've always dreamed my house would look like and it's safe to say that I am living the dream. My mom and I are here packing my clothes in the closet and Kopano's in his chest of drawers. Lethabo hasn't brought his clothes here because he will be telling his mom about the house today and after that he will bringing them through and then hire the car to go pick up the things we bought for the room. I just hope he manages to explain it well to his mom but I know she is going to take this somehow either way. My mom walks back it as I hang the jeans

"Once the Fridge and TV is in place it will look complete my babes, this house looks amazing" she compliments

"Lethabo will bring them through later on mama, even the bed for the 3rd bedroom" I say

"I just hope his mother takes this positively" she says

"Hai her son will deal with her I don't even want to know how she is going to feel about it, the woman hates me and I don't see why I should be concerned with her. I am just being civil for my husband's sake really" I say

"I understand you but respect her always" Sibho adds

"Koko (knock knock)" a voice shouts from the kitchen and mama walks in to see who it is, a second later I hear loud laughter erupting and after forever they get in the bedroom, it's Afrika I drop the hanger and rush to her

"Mntasekhaya" I attack her with a hug and she returns it

"Mandy, I couldn't recognize this place when I got outside, if it didn't have your Surname on the address I would have passed seriously" she says and I laugh

"It's transformed babe" I say

"I love it from inside out and the huge family picture of you guys in the dining room" I smile

"Lethabo got it without my knowledge and I just fell in love with it" I respond

"You too are goal sis, I am so happy for you guys and how you went about acquiring the property, you are smart" she murmurs

"That's very true my babes" Sibó adds

"Thanks guys"

"Now you look like a complete Mrs. Mafa I swear" Afrika tells

"Oh, babe thanks"

"Where is my nephew" she asks

"He is sleeping in the other bedroom" mama responds and she nods and heads out.

•MPILO

Everything is going well with the businesses and I have started shopping around for office space for Amanda to work now that our client list has grown, and it's really amazing how our clients bring us more clients and so on, it's just amazing I swear. I don't have anything to complain about in my life now and though I have some negatives I just chose not to dwell much on them. My focus is on the good that is happening to me and those I love. I am enjoying a chilled afternoon with my mom.

"Thuso wants me to move in with him" she says

"And what did you say?" I ask

"I said I will think about it and let him know. Mpilo I would jump at the opportunity but my concern is Afrika at this point, I just wish everything was different" she says and I sigh

"I am really sorry mama" I say clasping her hand

"It's okay everything will fall into place; he understands my concerns and he is a good man he also wouldn't want anything to happen to her" I nod vigorously

"He really is Ndlovukazi you have really found a good one there" I say and she smiles

"Thanks boy" we suddenly here some commotion inside the house and we quickly go in, Mdlalose is drunk and he is breaking things in the lounge, smashing everything he can. He sees us standing by the door and watching him

"You Ndlovukazi you are useless. Your useless womb gave me weaklings, weak man that will never live up to my name, you are cursed" he insults ma and I clench my jaws

"I thought he was going some balls and finally be a man like his father but he proved me right he will always be that white bitch's puppet" he adds and ma and I look at each other

"Look at you standing with that one that I loved more than my other children, he turned his back on me because on a poor bitch we picked up well you can be sour all your life because you will never have her in fact I will make her my bitch and fuck her all shades of fucked up" he says and I just want to charge to him and beat him to a pulp how dare he speaks so foul of Afrika, this just proves that he has been trying to keep us apart so he can have her. My mom holds me back from going over to him and killing him

"Let him let him Ndlovukazi let that rotten product of your pussy come and hit me his father because of a bitch that would leave him for another man like you did" he sneers and my mom is keeping a straight face. She walks up to him until they are face to face

"Finally, all my children can see you for the piece of shit you are. You are a sorry excuse of a man, admitting to wanting to rape Afrika you are sick, and let me tell you something try it and see me come for you with everything I have and trust me Khaya I wouldn't mind burning this house with me inside if it would mean getting you off that child do you understand me" she says in a low intimidating voice it's safe to safe I have never seen my mom in that posture and that scary.

"I will break you Ndlovukazi I will break all of you" he threatens back and my mom walks away taking my hand and we leave him in there acting like a mad man

•LETHABO

I had just finished packing my clothes and unmade the bed, unplugged all the appliances and put them in their boxes except for the fridge and microwave, once I tell my mom and uncle my plans the guy with the truck will come and move them to my house. Everything is done now and we need to move in and be a warm happy family, my own family. I walk out and get to the main house and find them conversing about something

"I am sorry to keep you waiting" I apologise

"It's okay son, why did you call a meeting" she asks

"Well I called you here and Malone to inform you that my wife and I bought our first home together" I say and the smile on her face falls

"Lethabo oreng monna (what are you saying) this is good ngwanaka this is how a man works" my uncle voices out already offering me a congratulations handshake

"What happened to them moving here after 3 months" she asks

"Well o'lady as a man I had to look at factors from all sites, I mean you have a problem with my wife and you've never try to hide it and this is your house and I wouldn't want you to live uncomfortably because you have to accommodate Amanda and in the other side I want my wife to be free to do all she wants without reservations and that would have been impossible here and somehow conflicts would have raised and that's what I don't want, I don't want to be caught between my wife and my mom so for peace and my sanity I decided to buy my wife her own house" I explain

"Spoke like a responsible man" my uncle says

"No abuti Lethabo is my only son and who will stay in this house when the Lord remembers me? This is his house abuti so what will become of it?" She asks

"Don't look at it like dad my sister, look at it how Lethabo is explaining it, it makes sense I agree with the decision" my uncle answers her

"Just like that I am losing my son" she says crying

"You are being dramatic and unfair my sister, even the Bible says that a man will leave his mother and father and go build with his wife, or you only read verses that favor you don't be like that be happy for your son and his success" I am loving my uncle today yho. I don't have to say a word.

"You are really standing with Lethabo on this cruel thing he is doing to me" she adds

"You are being selfish and you don't want to accept that he is a man and not a young man that you control, Lethabo is married now and his place is with Amanda accept that it doesn't mean you are no longer his mom"

"Exactly Malone she will always be my mom but as a man I need to build for my son as well" I say

"That's true"

"So we bought it a while ago and it was being renovated, I didn't tell mama because I knew how she would react and I didn't want the negativity so I kept it to myself and I am telling you now because we are moving in, everything is done the furniture is in and all, I just need to take my clothes and the things in my room, a car will come get them now" I say she starts crying

"What has that girl given you Lethabo, you need help to see that she is doing something to you. The son I raised would never do this to me never, she is taking you away from me why can't you see that" she says

"This is why I didn't tell my own mother Malome it's this kind of talk that made me decide to just keep it to myself," I say and my uncle sighs

•MPILO

I was boiling mad, all I felt was anger and hate towards my father. I wanted to strangle the life out of him with my bear hands, how dare he have such sickening thoughts of a girl young enough to be her daughter, Thank God he had slipped up and mentioned his vile thoughts so we can know and be extra careful of him and protect Afrika. I am pacing up and down and my mom is on the bed looking at me.

"You should have let me kill that bastard Ndlovukazi, he doesn't deserve to live"

"I know that Mpilo but I will never allow you to have his blood on your hands I will never allow you to become him"

"Did you hear what that son of a bitch said about Afrika ma did you hear him?"

"I did Mpilo and it was nasty, it made my skin crawl it made me angry but I can't act on impulse because we will be like him we will slip up and find ourselves in deep shit. We need to be calculated when dealing with that two headed snake son, because if we cut one off he will still have the one to bite" I sigh

"I am just so mad mama, to think he has been blocking us just because he wants her all to himself"

"We need a plan and we need soon" I say

"I totally agree mfana wam, but he is going to lay off because he knows we will be watching him like a hawk and protecting Afrika with everything we have"

"Baba is evil ma I don't think I have ever loathed someone so passionately"

"That makes the too of us son. Right now we need to act and come up with a plan to get Afrika out of this house and off the job or find something that will take your father to behave"

"He is not my father and nothing will tame that beast but death"

•EMILY

My husband got home yesterday and he has been in a mood since then, I just wonder what happened, and I know for a fact that it's not something that happened at work because he never lets them get to him or even bring them home. I can't necessarily put a finger on it but I know it's something with his father, it's either he failed to stand his ground with and allowed him to call continue using him and now he doesn't know how to let me know. I sigh and walk to his study.

"Mzwa what is going on with you?" I ask

"It's nothing Em"

"Talk to me will you" I beg

"Let it go Emily please" I sigh

"You are doing it again Mzwakhe. You are shutting me out, you promised me and the kids that you will be the man we know and love now you are back to this place" he exhales deeply

"That's not true" he defends

"You know what I am not doing this with you, I should have known better" I attempt to walk out when he replies

"I went to see my father yesterday" I quickly look back at him

"And I told him that I can't keep hurting my mother and my siblings as well as my own family just to please him, I explain that he shouldn't measure my loyalty just because I don't want to regard his enemies as my own" he explains and I look at the hurt in his eyes

"And what did he says" I ask and he closes his eyes

"The words he uttered is not to be repeated to any wife, he belittled me and reminded me that I will never be Mpilo, words so painful Emily they would break any man" he says and I see a tear fall. I quickly go to him and sit on his lap

"I am so sorry my love" I say comforting him

"He even told me that he doubts that he fathered me, not only did he hurt me with his words he insulted my mother in the process" I gasp for air

"Your father is a monster baby I am sorry"

"And to think I was ready to lose everyone just to have his love and acknowledgement"

"At least you saw him for who he really is before it was too late my love, now you know the truth now you know that you are better off without him in fact everyone is better off

without him, he is abusive and manipulative he doesn't deserve any of you guys" I comment

"That's very true my love" he says and I just hug him closer. It's time I visit Afrika we need to put the dog out now he is done abusing my husband and messing up with his emotions.

•AMANDA

As expected my mother in law didn't take this whole thing well, she saw it as betrayal rather than her son's achievement. My husband got home later yesterday and my mom and sister had already left, he wasn't okay and I couldn't understand why. I tried asking him what she said but he kept on saying it's nothing he didn't handle and from that I knew that she found a way to blame me and make this whole thing seem negative and that's okay I am immune to her and her hatred for me. Lethabo took the entire week off to help with the move and to settle in properly, we just got back from the mall to buy groceries and all other necessities. I am unpacking things and putting them in the pantry and the fridge.

"Hey babe" he says

"Mmmhhh"

"How does it feel?" He asks

"How does what feel"

"All this you know, being married, having a son, living in your own house with your own family, having a job you like, has anything changed" he asks and I look back at him and smile

"No love nothing has changed" I say and his fave falls

"Oh I see" he says obviously disappointed by what I said

"Everything is just better. I am happier, more at peace and definitely fulfilled" I tell and his smile comes back

"You almost gave me a heart attack seriously" I chuckle

"I am sorry hubby, was just pulling your leg" I reassure him

"I always knew I was going to marry you Amanda though sometimes it was questionable because you didn't give me the light of day but I always dreamed of making you my wife and the mother of my children but I must admit love the reality of it is much better than the dream. I've always made the right choices in life Ama but choosing you was the best ever" he says and his voice is sincere and honest. I can't believe you he is mine and unapologetically so

"Thank you for everything Lethabo, I wish I could give you all you ever dreamed of" I say

"You already have baby, but you owe me 2 more kids" he says and I laugh

"You want three kids that's an odd number" I say

"How many then?" he asks narrowing his eyes

"4 maybe" I say and he smiles

"I am game love, one more won't hurt" I smile and Kopano starts crying.

"Can you please get him babe" I ask politely

"Sure" he says and gets out of the kitchen.

•AFRIKA

I woke up feeling somehow and I just couldn't start my day feeling like that so I decided to just stay at home and nurse whatever it is, Ndlovukazi and Mpilo have been hovering around me and it's pretty creepy I swear they know something that I don't but I won't try to

fish it out of them. Bab'Mdlalose was the first to leave this morning and everyone followed after, none of them know that I didn't go to school. I got a call from Emily and she asked to come through. I could hear she wasn't feeling too good so I told her she could come and vent. I am in the lounge as she walks in in her tracksuits and sneakers.

"Hey" I say standing and opening my hands for a hug and she starts to cry.

"what's wrong babe"

"My father in law is breaking my husband apart Afrika, he said the most hurtful things to him he because he told him he is tired of fighting with his mom and brother, because he told him to let you go but he just didn't have it, he told him bluntly that he is his son and he will never love him like he loves Mpilo" she says and I gasp

"Jesus, how can a father say that to a child, he is so evil" I say

"My husband is going through the most, he is going to be depressed I swear and what will happen to my children, so long as that man is around non of us will have peace" she says and the pain in her voice.

"That's true we will never know peace" I agree and at this point I decide that it's time I told her what I found it's time that we put all of this behind us and Mdlalose behind bars.

"I found the black book" I blurt out and she quickly let's go of me

"Whaaaat?" The shock on her face

"Yeah I found it and it has everything he has ever done" I explain and she smiles

"Oh thank God thank you Jesus" she exclaims

"I am coming" I say and go to my room and get the pages, I find her pacing up and down

"Here" I hand her the copies and she frowns

"And this?"

"I made copies, we can take this to the cops and they will follow the information here and find everything" I say

"Everything is in here?" She asks

"Everything on his yes, I removed everything that includes Mpilo though, the wasn't anything on the others just him" I say

"Oh Afrika you did it babe, you managed to do it thank you so much" she says attacking me with a hug.

"Its for justice Emily" I say firmly

"Can I see it though, the actual black book?" She asks and I sigh

"Em what if someone comes back" I raise my concern

"It's still early for anyone to come back" she insists and I sigh, okay let me go get the key. I quickly make my way upstairs and get the key to the safe. As I walk back to the lounge I don't find her so I go check other rooms and she is in the study talking on the phone, well trying to whisper but I can hear her

"Yes pa, she found everything...but it's copies...you can still make an arrest pa...no she removed everything on Mpilo...I know that's not what we agreed on pa but...just let Mpilo off the hook too...no my husband can't go to jail no...okay okay...I will get you Mpilo"

"Emily" I say her name shocked, she quickly looks back at me and her eyes pop out of the socket

"Oh Afrika" she fakes a smile

"You were using me?" I say

"No no it's not what you think I promise" she says

"I heard you, your father is a cop and you want to get Mpilo arrested too but save your husband, how could you do this"

"No friend it's not like that" she says but I shake my head no

"I don't want to hear it no, and you are not taking Mpilo down" I say and she walks near me trying to calm me down.

"Afrika listen babe"

"I said no" I yank the copies from her and attempt to walk out but I feel a blow to my head and next thing I am down lights off.

•EMILY

Oh my God what have I done, I quickly put the vase down and going down to check her pulse, she still has one, I sigh in relief and start pacing I remember that I was on the phone with my father I quickly locate it and it's still connected.

"Pa"

"I am almost at that house" he says

"Oh thank God" he says and I hang up. I take the key in her hand and go unlock the safe, and it's there the book, I take it quickly and lock again. I put the key in her pocket. My heart is racing I am trying to understand what I have done, but this was a necessary evil, My father wouldn't allow Mpilo go Scott free so I needed to save my family and give him what he wants as he was now threatening to tie my husband to everything too. My phone peeps and he says he is outside. I run out to the gate with the book and luckily no guards on site. I hand my father the black book and the smile on his face

"You did Emily I am proud of you, now call everyone and tell them you found her on the phone and you hear her talking with someone about taking the family down to avenge her father and you tried to stop her but she couldn't have it so you acted fast. Get ride of the copies and give me her number I will have one of my partners call her phone and you must answer it so the duration can go on to verify your story, make sure that they call the number back so they can hear that she was working with the cops" he says and I nod vigorously

"Okay" I run back inside and take the copies and go burn them. and start calling everyone, my husband, my father and mother in law and that Mpilo. I feel bad for what I am doing to Afrika but she will thank me one day. They all say they will be home in 10 minutes. I check her pulse again and it's still there. I sit down my back to the wall and hug my knees rocking my body back and forth.

The first two to arrive is Ndlovukazi and Mpilo and they see the situation, he quickly goes and kneels in front of her and tries to wake her up but nothing

"What did you do to her you bitch" he sneers and I just cry

"Emily what happened?" Ndlovukazi asks and I can't stop crying, what I am doing is evil how can I

"If you don't talk I swear I will kill you right now" he roars as my father in law and husband walk in, soon as I see Mzwakhe I stand up and rush to him

"Mzwakhe" I say and he takes me in his arms

"Emily what happened my love" my husband asks

"Emily speak why are you and Afrika in my office and why is she laying unconscious" my father in law adds

"Can someone call the fucken ambulance" Mpilo shouts

"Already done son, they will be here soon" Ndlovukazi says and he continues trying to wake her up

"Emily speak now" Mr Mdlalose says now impatient.

"I came here to check up on her as she said she wasn't feeling well. When I arrived she was in here talking on the phone, she said the person must act fast as she can't live here anymore, she said he has the black and she couldn't understand why he wasn't making an arrest, she mentioned justice for her father Mr Mdlalose killed for his drug formula and how he had to pay for that and all his evil deeds" I explain crying and like a speed of light my father in law quickly takes out a key from his pocket and opens the safe soon as he realizes that the book is not there he screams like crazy.

"Fuck no no no no" he says

"What is a black book Khaya lethu" Ndlovukazi asks

"It's a book that has all things I have ever done in my life" he says and they all gasp for air
"Are you stupid Khaya how could you, we are all going down because of your stupidity" she adds.

"Afrika could never do this" Mpilo says

"Open your eyes damn it she has done it. Fuck how did I not find out that she is Knox's daughter" he roars

"We need to find out who she has been talking to" My husband says

"She was talking to the person on the phone" I say and Bab Mdlalose takes it from the ground and dials the last number.

"Thank GOD Afrika listen my team is almost at the house to make an arrest I am sorry I took so long, we are finally getting justice for your dad" the person on the other side of the call says and Mdlalose quickly hangs up

"Fuck I need to get out of here" he says reaching for the keys but he was too late. The police flood the house and everyone put their hands up in surrender.

"Khaya and Mpilo Mdlalose you are under arrest" a cop says and they are both read their rights and the charges against.

"No no not my son" Ndlovukazi argues but the cops don't give her the light of day

"Mpilo don't say anything until I arrive with your lawyer okay?, I am driving behind you" she says

"No ma, I need you to make sure Afrika is okay get her to the hospital now please, don't worry about me make sure she is okay please" he says and just on cue the paramedics arrive and start checking her as the cops take away Khaya and Mpilo. How did a Thursday morning turn out so ugly so quickly. Ndlovukazi is crying and this is the first time seeing her with tears. She is torn between being with Afrika or going to save her son from jail

"Is she okay?" She asks the paramedics.

"Her pulse is faint ma'am we really need to get her to the hospital" the medic replies

"Quickly please and take her to Siphophelo memorial, I am driving behind you" she says

"Yes ma'am" they say and wheel her out quickly. The commotion and chaos is just too much, the maids are all watching and I feel so bad for what I have just done. My husband folds me in his warm embrace.

CHAPTER 117

•NOMALANGA

My head is all over the place honestly, I couldn't understand what was happening in my house, I am trying to balance the equation but I am failing dismally. I just want Afrika to wake up and give me her side of the story because I am really not understanding any part of this. On the other hand I am damn mad at Khaya for keeping records of everything he has ever done and to fucken include my son in it now he is taking Mpilo with him. I had already called Razor and he was on his way to the police station and I am waiting to hear from the doctors on how Afrika is. I sent the driver to go and get her mother. I am pacing up and down when the driver walks in with her.

"Sawubona sisi" she says and I sigh

"Hello, I am Noma Mpilo's mother" I introduce myself

"I am Sibona, Afrika's mom, what is going on why is my daughter here" she asks and I can't miss the panic in her voice, I let out a sigh wondering how I am going to explain this because I don't know the whole thing myself

"Well my daughter in law hit her with a vase on the head that's all I know for now I am just waiting for Afrika to wake up so she can explain to me" I say and she narrows her eyes

"Oh Lord why would she do that, were they fighting or something?" She adds
"No I don't think they were fighting" I say because I honestly I can't tell her what Em said because last time I checked her family didn't know that she stays with us and is involved in the drug business, so I am going to limit the information I tell her as much as possible.
"Oh mntanami (my child)" she cries and takes a sit obviously scared for her baby
"The best doctor is attending to her I promise she will be okay"
"I pray so Noma" she responds and I sit next to her.
"She will, we need to stay positive" I assure her and she nods. We wait a while until Siza appears. I quickly stand up and she does too.
"How is she?" I quickly ask
"Well fortunately she is not bleeding into her brain and her brain is not swollen, but we are going to monitor her very closely" she informs us
"Oh thank you God" her mother says
"But she is still unconscious" she says
"When will she wake up" I ask quickly
"I can't be too sure because this is not an induced coma so we will just wait for her to open her eyes" she explains and I sigh defeated
"She will be fine though right?" Sibó asks desperate for assurance. I look at Siza and she smiles
"Yes she will be okay but we will know everything once she wakes up but for now we are not picking up any problems" we both nod vigorously
"Thank you so much doctor" she appreciates.
"Ndlovukazi, I will see you later okay" she says and I hug her
"Okay later and thanks my friend" I say and she walks away.
"Sibó I really need to rush somewhere but I promise to be back soon, will you be okay?" I ask
"Yes sisi I will be okay, thank you for sending the driver" she says
"It's a pleasure, I will be back okay"
"I will be here until she wakes up" I nod and walk away, I need to head to the police station to find out what my son is charged with.

•LETHABO

I got a call from my mom telling me that she is not feeling well and asked that I get her so she can go get some medication from the pharmacy, I know she is perfectly fine this is just one of her tactics and it's not going to work with me I refuse. I left my wife busy working at home and luckily Kopano was fast asleep so his mom can push. I get home and luckily she is already standing outside waiting for me. She gets in the car

"Lethabo"

"Ma" I respond

"I didn't think you were going to come" she says

"Why wouldn't I show up? You are sick and you need medication"

"You have been doing shocking things these days so you can't blame me for not trusting in you anymore" she murmurs and I shake my head

"I am not a vindictive person mama you should know this, and I kept the news of my house discreet because I knew you would make me feel guilty for buying it and somehow blame Amanda for it" I say

"I have a question"

"If you must mama"

"Did her family know about the house?" She asks and I just laugh

"Yes they knew"

"Exactly Lethabo, this girl involves her family but tell you not to tell me anything. She is the one married into our family, you married her not the other way round" she says leaving me defeated

"I decided to keep this from you, my wife had nothing to do with this. Stop trying to make Amanda seem like the evil daughter in law because she isn't" I say

"But you would say that I am the evil mother in law" she says

"Yoh yoh ma, I didn't come here to fight with you can we just not do this please"

"No we must do it, you left your home like you were being chased out and moved into your new home and you don't even bother inviting me" she argues

"Invite you how when you are not happy for me? Invite you when I know that you will find a way to insult my wife and make her feel uncomfortable. I got the house because I was trying to keep the peace"

"I raised you all alone Lethabo" she says

"I know that mama and I will forever love and appreciate you, but I am a man now I have my own life to live"

"You could have too if you hadn't married that girl" she says and now I am really annoyed with her

"Why do you go to church and pray ma? What's the point really because you heart harbours alot of hate and judgement, where is the live and peace you preach about and read of in the Bible. My wife has done anything wrong but she has lived me and gave me the life I have always dreamt of you should love and cherish her as a daughter not insult and belittle her every chance you get" I shout

"Lethabo i-" I cut in

"No mama I don't want to hear it anymore. If you continue this way I swear I will cut all tires with you. I swear you will lose me for real and I am not even joking" I say and she is about to say something I just increase the volume.

•NOMALANGA

We have been here for hours now and and I swear they are just stalling, they are just fishing for information and at this moment I wish I was in that damn interrogation room, but Razor is in the so I know he will do the best he can. A cop walks pass me with the widest smile on his face and a box, he walks in the interrogation room and I swear I feel my heart sink in my stomach. After another hour or so Razor walks out shaking his head.

"What's going on, Motaung what are they charging my son with?" I ask

"It's bad Ndlovukazi it's bad. They have him on drug production and distribution. They located the lab and arrested everyone there and they have his work computer and it shows everything." He says and I close my eyes

"Oh my God" I say in a low voice feeling weak at the knees.

"How did this happen Noma" he asks

"Apparently Khaya keeps a black book and he wrote everything he has ever done, Emily claims that Afrika is the one who handed the book to the police as she is working with them to avenge her father, and her father is Siseko Knoxx Mdoda, the man that Khaya teamed up with to produce the drug apparently Khaya killed him and he said to me Knoxx just wanted money for the formula and didn't want to be a part of the empire when I asked him where Knox disappeared to. I don't know how true this is at the moment because Afrika is in hospital unconscious she can't give her side of the story" I say and she sighs

"That one is just fucked Noma, that damn book killed him they showed it to me, they found bodies he burried with the weapons he used and one already came back and the prints on it belongs to Khaya, he is going away for a very long time" he informs me and I roll my eyes

"I couldn't care less about that one I just want to get my son out of this hell hole Razor"

"I am going to do everything in my power to get him out of this I promise you"

"Please he can't go to prison he just can't" I plead with him.

"I've already called my team to discuss a strategy because the damn detective non this case is just a beast" he says

"Thank you and do call if you need help"

"I will, I just need to go push to get a bail hearing for Mpilo please excuse me"

"Sure, I will go talk to him" I say.

•MPILO

I couldn't care less if I was going to prison I just need to know if my girlfriend is okay, I honestly don't believe what Emily told us, Afrika wouldn't hurt me she would never betray me like this, if she knew something she would have told me about. Our relationship doesn't have secrets. I trust in Razor and I trust he will get me out of this damn mess. Right now I am just happy that I am not in the same room as my father because I would have killed him dead, What kind of fool writes down every illegal shit he gets up to, now we are in shit because of his stupidity. Razor assured me that my name only appeared on the book once and with regards to drugs. The door opens and my mom walks in

"How is Afrika ma?" I asks before she is fully inside the room

"She is okay but still unconscious and Siza can't tell when she will wake up as this is not an induced coma," she says and I sigh

"Did you tell them to do everything they can to help her, I only want Siza dealing with her mama, did you make sure that her room is comfortable?" I ask and she sighs

"Mpilo calm down Afrika is fine. You should be worried about yourself son, this is big and the court is going to use this case to make an example to other drug lords, the prosecutor assigned to the case is someone I am not close with and she isn't going to do me any favors"

"I know Ndlovukazi, but Razor is capable"

"He is yes but we are going to need you to keep quiet don't say anything without him or a member of his team in the room okay?" She advises

"I won't ma I promise"

"We are going to get you out of this I swear" she promised me and I smile

"I know but right now I need you to go by Mzwa's and talk to Emily find out what happened, I don't trust her one bit," I say

"Okay I will go but we also need Afrika's side of the story," she says and I nod vigorously

"I know" I reply and bury my head in my hands.

"I just wish we installed those cameras inside the house too but we just had to install them outside only," she says

"We never thought we'd need them because we already have guards around," I say

"That's true but still"

•EMILY

I have been crying feeling too guilty for what I did to that innocent girl but it was either her or my husband and I just couldn't lose Mzwakhe. I had to think for my children first. I just pray that she is alright, I know she will wake up and tell the truth but her story will be cold because they will find out who he father is they will believe that she had motive, to get back her father's business. They already know my father and they know that he is retired because that's what we told them and he had paperwork prepared just in case they sniffed around because I got with Mzwa to spy on them in the first place so everything had to check out and I never mentioned him to Afrika, my only worry is them finding out about my brother because they only know me as the only child of my parents. Mzwakhe is in the kitchen making me something to eat. My phone rings and it's my dad.

"Pa"

"How are you feeling?" He asks

"Guilty as hell" I admit

"Don't be you helped remove two monsters from society"

"I guess so pa, what if they find out about my brother?"

"They won't Emily, I removed the information about him in the book and your brother used your mom's maiden surname even if they tried finding him they won't plus you never shared his name with that girl so don't worry just stick to your story and we will be good"

"Okay," I say

"Try to rest and you will be better tomorrow"

"I will," I say and hang up. The door opens and my husband walks in with his mom.

"Emily," she says

"Hi ma, how is Afrika?" I ask

"She is okay hasn't woken up though," she says and I sigh

"Oh thank God, I feel so guilty I mean she is my friend or I thought so but I couldn't let her betray the family like that," I say

"What happened Emily," Ndlovukazi asks

"So I called her this morning to just find how she's been because we haven't spoken in a while, she said she isn't feeling well and she was even at home, like a good I decide to go check on her and when I arrived the house is silent so I look upstairs first in your room and she is not there so I decide to go check her out downstairs pass by Baba's study and she is in there talking on the phone, she tells the person that she has done what was expected of her and got the black book and gave it to him, she asked why he hasn't made an arrest because he's had the book for a few days now. She mentioned not wanting to be in the house any longer as justice for her father will be served, she went as far as saying that baba is guilty of killing her father for his drug formula. I couldn't stop myself so I called her out and she tried explaining herself and telling me that's it's not what I think it is but I was persistent that she snapped and told me that the family deserves it as they are living the life with what belongs to her and her family, she told me I can't do anything to stop her and she wanted to go pack her things and I couldn't let her go I wanted everyone to come and hear what I heard and I wanted her present to answer for herself as well, so I hit her with the vase so I would be able to restrain her but I hit too hard" I explain crying my eyes out and Mzwa quickly comes to comfort me

"Don't cry love you were trying to help your family," he says assuring me.

"I guess so," I say sniffing

"She just needs to wake up and explain," Ndlovukazi says

•AMANDA

My mom called to tell me my sister is hospitalized, I dropped everything and took my son, luckily Lethabo drove in as I was about to leave to get a taxi. He drove me here and they don't allow kids in the ward so I left Kopano with his dad in the car. I found my mom in her room holding her hand, she is sleeping so peaceful and Sibho is praying once she is done I walk further in

"Ma," I say

"Oh thank God you are here," she says

"What happened?"

"I don't know really, her boyfriend's mother send me a car to pick me up and she didn't have information either, she just said her daughter in law hit Afrika with a vase on the head, we don't know if they were fighting or it was an accident" she explains

"And where are they? Where is Mpilo" I ask

"He hasn't been here, his mom left shortly after the doctor spoke to us and she said she will be back," she says and I narrow my eyes

"That's unlike them, something is going on here mama I can feel it"

"What could it be Amanda"

"I don't know but soon as Afrika wakes up we will know," I say and she sighs. The doctor walks in and we exchange greetings

"I just got some tests back and it seems like Afrika is pregnant," she says and I gasp for air and my mom closes her eyes

"Are you sure doctor?" I ask not believing it, it can't be she has school to finish she has so much to do and a baby at her age.

"I ran the blood tests twice just to be sure, we will do a scan once she is awake" she assures

"Oh Afrika," Sibó says

"Thank you doctor and can this stay between us for us" I politely ask because I know Ndlovukazi is her friend is she might mention it. Afrika will tell them herself.

"No problem. I will be back later to check on them" she says and walks out. I still can't believe this, a baby? Why didn't she use protection or get on birth control at least?

"I can't believe this" I voice out

"She is so young to be a mother Amanda, she hasn't lived her life fully," my mom says

"Exactly ma," I say and honestly I am disappointed but what can we do she is pregnant and nothing will change. Children are a blessing and so is the one she is carrying.

•KHAYA

I am going to kill that girl soon as I am out of here, how the hell did she get to that book how did she even know about it, now it makes sense why I found her in my office twice she was going through my things. How did I not check my safe for an entire week I would have noticed it was missing and I would come up with a plan. The door opens and Razor walks in "Just tell me I am free to go home," I say and he laughs

"How could you have been that stupid to right everything down Khaya," he asks

"I needed the information saved up in case I need something," he says

"That's a useless excuse"

"Just make this disappear Razor I pay you so much money for such things," I say and he shakes his head

"They used your book to find all the evidence, the bodies, the guns everything," he says

"I expected that but I also expected you to find a way to get me out of this mess" I shout

"I am not a magician, there is nothing I can do here it's an open and shut case Khaya it's going to court and they are going to roast us no matter how hard I try to spin it, just plead guilty and don't waste the states time and resources because they will add to your sentence"

"Are you listening to yourself, you are telling me to send myself to jail?"

"Even Jesus can't help you out of this one. Evidence is just too strong"

"Don't tell me that shit Razor, get me out of this or you are fired, I will find a lawyer that knows their job" I sneer

"Okay fine," he says and walks to the door

"Motaung" I call after him but he just walks out

CHAPTER 118

•AMANDA

My sister is not waking up and it's killing my mother with every passing hour. She is scared and so. She has to wake up so she can tell us what happened so that she can be strong for her baby. Mpilo hasn't been around and his phone is off this is really unlike him, that boy loves my sister which makes me believe that this goes way deeper than what we are

thinking. Lethabo and his son just dropped me at the hospital and I am hoping they she is awake today but my mom would have called because she refused to leave yesterday but it needed to because I didn't pump any milk for my little man and I am panicking that he is left alone with his dad. I am walking towards the entrance when a voice calls me out and it's Mpilo's mom.

"Hi ma"

"Hello Amanda, how are you"

"Not too good I am so worried about my sister" I admit and she sighs

"Me too honey, it is just so worrying"

"Where is Mpilo? I haven't seen him here" I ask

"He went to Colombia for some business nana. He is going to take a while there that's why he asked me to look out for Afrika" I nod

"Oh okay I understand"

"She is going to be okay baby, she is a strong woman. Where is your father I haven't seen him around" she says

"Well Afrika and I have different fathers, I don't know mine and don't wish to, but I had the privilege to be raised and loved by hers but she didn't because he was killed," I say with a low voice, thinking how different everything would have been if Abuti Knoxx was alive

"Oh baby what happened?" She asks warmly

"Abuti Knoxx was killed by some guy for his formula or something, that's all we know ma" I say and gasp, I look at her and the horror on her face.

"Are you okay mama" I quickly ask

"I am fine dear, it's just sad to hear this"

"It is, he was a wonderful father and if he was still alive life would have been different in a good way, my sister wouldn't have suffered the way she did," I say

"Everything happens for a reason" she says as we get to her room and my mom is praying from that she hasn't woken up yet.

•LETHABO

I am on daddy duty today as my wife is with her mom and sister. Thank God that I have been at home for a week and I could see how she does things and his routine, I think I got this. He is laying on the couch napping and I watching some soccer I missed a game last night as my wife was watching her things. A knock disturbs me and I frown, who could it be because no one knows we live here and everyone in the neighborhood minds their business. I open up and it's my uncle.

"Big man," I say opening and he walks in

"Lethabo monna this place is nice. I can't believe it transformed from the dump it was to this beautiful house" he says

"All thanks to my wife"

"That girl is good for you in so many ways be proud to have chosen her, most girls her age are not interested in such things, your cousin being an example," he says and I laugh out loud

"I am proud, please come in" we walk in the lounge and he keeps on nodding

"Now that I have stepped foot in my boys home I will sleep better at night"

"I am glad you came uncle it truly means a lot to me to me"

"Where is your wife"

"She is at the hospital, her sister was admitted there so I am babysitting because children are not allowed in that ward" I explain

"Okay son, what I came to talk to you about introducing this place and your family to your ancestors' son, you know Rona ha Mafa believe in those things right?"

"Definitely uncle, I was already thinking about it just that my wife and I want to find our feet financially," I say

"Fair enough and it's good that you were already thinking about it. Another thing is your mother" I sigh

"With all due respect uncle, I am not in the mood to talk or think about mama"

"You know Lethabo your mother was damaged by your fathers people and now she is taking out her frustrations to your wife and that is not right. I believe that she just needs to come face to face with them and tell them how she feels take it out on them so she can feel better and start her healing process and in turn be a good mother in law to maKopano (Amanda)"

"Where will we take my father and his people," I ask because right now I would do everything to help my mother be better for my sake and my family's sake.

"Leave that to me son," he says and I nod

"Okay malome and thank you" he smiles

"Now bring me a drink and one glass because wena you can't drink or you will drop your son and then your wife will kill you.

"That's very true," I say standing up to get him the bottle and mixers

•NOMALANGA

I can't believe it's true, she is truly Knoxx's daughter and now that I think about it she has his looks and skin tone, and her intelligence straight up inherited from him. To think that there is a possibility that what Emily is saying is true but I pray it's not, I don't want to believe that Afrika would do this, she showed us love, showed Mpilo love, she changed him, or was it all to make us sleep as she carried out her plan? But no she is sweet and honest. Oh God, what is the truth and what is not, on the other hand, Emily has no reason to lie, I tried finding one but there is nothing I could find. I walk in and find my son already waiting

"Hey baby"

"Ndlovukazi," he says sounding beside himself

"How are you holding up? Are they treating you well?" I ask

"I am fine mama, the guards are making me comfortable as you instructed"

"I am sorry you have to share with Khaya, they didn't want it to be too obvious"

"Totally understand, how is my girl," he asks and I sigh

"She is still unconscious Mpilo but Siza assured me that her brain looks fine and she will wake up at her own time, and only then they can make a full assessment," I say and he shakes his head

"I am more worried about her more than I am about going to jail I swear. Did you go see Emily"

"I did son and she is still sticking to her story, and Mpilo I made a discovery that kind of supports what Emily said," I say and he narrows his eyes

"What? What did you find?"

"Afrika is indeed Knoxx's daughter. She is the rightful owner of this drug empire Mpilo. The formula belonged to her father and Khaya did kill him for it after he lied to me and said he sold it to him" I say and he is shaking his head vigorously

"No mama, there has to be a mistake somewhere. She loves me way too much to hurt me like this, she would have told me if she knew. You know her Ndlovukazi" he argues

"I heard it from Amanda and she wouldn't give me false information Mpilo it's also hard for me to believe that Emily might be telling the truth," I say and he buries his head in his hands

"No Ndlovukazi please" his voice is trembling, hurting me.

"I am so sorry"

"She needs to wake up and tell us what happened mama she needs to wake up," he says and right now he is completely crying. I quickly go comfort him.

"I am sorry son. I know the possibility of this all being true hurts because I feel the same" I say and he just shakes his head.

•AFRIKA

I am hearing everything, I have been listening to them speak, from my mom praying to the doctor giving them updates, I want to wake up but something is just not giving. I want to wake up so I can stop Emily from trying to send Mpilo to jail. I don't understand why she betrayed me like this, I mean I helped her out of the goodness of my heart and because I thought we shared the same pain but she had her agenda. I guess my good heart and believing that everyone else is like me was bound to be my doom, I just wonder what she told everyone. I feel a hand on my forehead.

"Afrika baby you need to fight to wake up so you can tell us what happened to you, you need to wake up and be strong for that precious soul growing inside of you," my mother says and my heart almost stopped. What does she mean a precious soul growing inside me, am I pregnant no it can't be I mean I took the injection to prevent this. I don't need a baby especially not now. I am screaming in my head and suddenly I feel myself fading away again I am trying to hold on to my mental consciousness but I lose the battle as I drift to the deep sleep once again.

•MPILO

We didn't make bail because the prosecution argued that we had the means and ways to flee the country and that was the last thing on my mind, I just wanted to get out of here so I can go be with Afrika. We are back in the holding cell and Khaya is pacing up and down, he hasn't been able to chill ever since Razor told him that he is fucked and there is no way to get him out of this mess, he is advised to plead guilty but he isn't having it.

"Can you sit down you are giving me a damn headache!" I say

"We need to get rid of Razor he is useless" I chuckle

"I am not getting rid of Razor"

"Mpilo this is a time we should be holding hands and working together to get ourselves out of this mess" I laugh

"You put us in this mess you dumb Fack, off you didn't write in your stupid book we wouldn't be here now would we and I will never work with you I am glad that you are going to rot in here until you die and you will never hurt anyone again"

"You seem to forget that you are in this too," he says

"I don't mind paying for my sins Khaya," I say

"Mxm you are stupid Mpilo, you think your ivy league ass can survive prison" I chuckle

"I can survive anywhere, you should know this about me" I respond and he sighs

"Mpilo please," he says

"Stop begging me, I am not firing Razor you go ahead and change representation and I wonder how you going to pay him since our accounts are frozen," I say and realize how lucky I am that my girl advised me to go legit or I wouldn't have shit to my name but the money I stashed away.

"Damn that girl!" he says and starts punching the wall. I shake my head and let the fool hurt himself.

•MPILO

I am having a meeting with Razor, they are trying, by all means, to come up with a strategy that will see me walking free from all of this but in all honesty, it's difficult, they have everything on me and it's just crazy, I am in too deep in all of this and it's going to take a miracle because the evidence they have against us is just concrete. I trust in Razor but I feel like we are expecting him to be a magician.

"Mpilo did you get that," he asks drawing me back from my thoughts

"I am sorry, but I feel like I am just wasting your time here, you said the evidence is just too much maybe I should just plea guilty and serve my time, after all, I am guilty and I should pay my dues," I say and he sighs putting the pen down.

"Mpilo I have gotten people off on things far serious and devious. I am going to do all I can to see you walk. You are a good kid and you got wrapped up in your father's business. You are turning your life around and I won't have you got to jail for this" he says

"I just feel like the prosecutor is going to drag this and make it seem like I am the devil," I say

"Of course she is because that is her job, son but I am here to make sure that I crash everything she comes with"

"This is all just so frustrating really" I complain

"I understand, I was once in your shoes but because of my wife I walked free, she gave my team a strategy on a platter and I walked," he says

"Maybe you should tell her about me she might come up with something too," I say and we both laugh

"You are right, I will bring it up tonight after we put our boys to sleep" he adds to my humor.

"Thank you for helping us," I say

"You are like a son to me I watched you grow so I am not going to sit back and watch you go to jail," he says and I shake his hand.

•NOMALANGA

Everything is just going South. My son is in prison now I just came out of a meeting and I am suspended pending investigation on the charges facing my son and my ex. They want to find out if I knew or had a hand in all of it. I am just glad that the money that I receive from Colombia can't be traced even though it's clean. I couldn't think straight so Thuso decided to drive me to his place so I can rest. I have explained everything that has been happening and he is just mad that I didn't reach out to him immediately.

"I am sorry just that my head was all over the place," I say

"I understand but I need you to know and believe that I am here for you anytime you need me Sunny"

"Thank you love, I needed someone to listen and comfort me" I admit

"And you have that person in me never feel like you can't talk to me okay" I nod

"I am grateful for your support" I murmur and he kisses my knuckles

"Always. So now that your accounts are frozen are you going to need some money?" He asks and I smile sweetly at him

"No my dear, financially my kids and I will always be sorted but thanks," I say and he nods

"Sunny," he says in a low voice

"Yes?"

"Mpilo wants outright? Out of this whole drug thing, he wasn't just saying it he meant it?" He asks and I nod

"Yes baby he wants out and now that Khaya will be out of his way it will be quick and easy," I say

"Then I will help," he says

"How love?" I ask

"I won't be able to make sure he walks Scott free but I can get leniency or pardon depending on the judge that will be handling the case," he says and I frown

"How will you be able to do that?" I ask

"There is a code between Judges Sunny, can't tell you much about it but I will use it," he says

"That's not the kind of man and Judge you are Thuso, I don't want to taint you and your reputation" I argue

"A man has to do whatever it takes for his family. I take Mpilo like my own son and I am not going to watch him go down without helping him" he says and I just launch to him and give him a tight hug

"Oh Thuso" the words come out as a whisper.

"I love you and the last thing I want to see is you hurt" he admits

"I love you so much and thank you for the sacrifice you are willing to take"

"Just keep this between us please and remember I am not promising that he will go Scott free but leniency in the same time I am not saying it's off the table, it all depends on the judge handling the case"

"I understand thank you so much," I say and he kisses my forehead.

•AFRIKA

I open my eyes and my bladder feels like it's about to burst, but I am hooked up to machines I don't think it's wise for me to just get out of bed and go to the loo, plus my head hurts and my vision is somehow blurry. I move my eyes to my left and my mom and sister are standing by the window talking. I can't believe I am back in this hospital again.

"Mama," I say and they both quickly look back and come to me

"Afrika oh thank God," Sibó says hugging me

"Nana, don't ever scare me like this again," Amanda says tears already streaming down

"I am sorry" I manage to whisper back to them. They are relieved, I can tell that they weren't coping with my unconsciousness

"I should go get the doctor," Mandy says already out the door

"Mama how long have I been out?" I ask

"This is the third day" she answers wiping her tears and I nod as Mandy walks in with a doctor I don't recognize. He greets and starts checking me, he asks my name, if I can see how many fingers he held out, the last meal I had and I answer everything. He gives me an injection and says he will come to check on me soon.

"I am so hungry, can I have food doctor and can I pee please," I ask and he smiles

"You have a catheter you can go on and relieve yourself and I will tell the nurses to organize you something," he says and I nod

"Thank you. He walks out and my mom and sister are giving me an intense look I sigh

"I know you just woke up but Afrika what happened?" Amanda asks taking my hand into hers and I just cry. It's time I came clean to them about everything. They both comfort me until I come down

"I have been lying to you guys" I start and they narrow their eyes

"With regards to what?" My mom asks

"Everything Sibó just everything. It all happened at once and I was just trying to protect you guys I am so sorry" I admit

"Talk to us Afrika," my sister says in a warm tone"

"I haven't been staying at Res, I stay at the Mdlalose house because I almost got kidnapped, Mr. Mdlalose my lecturer was never truthful about the kind of job he gave me. He said we are working on software development but I later find out that I was moving dates for their drug business, soon as I found out I tried leaving but he threatened to ship Amanda off to some European country and sell her into slavery and prostitution, he said they would take

her baby and sell him to Asian people that eat infants and I just couldn't have that so I stayed, Mpilo and his mom have been trying to get me out of it but Mzwakhe and bab'Mdlalose wouldn't have it. I am so sorry" I say and both their hands are on their mouth shocked as hell

"Afrika," Sibó says

"There is more, I also found out that bab'Mdlalose is the one who stole my father's drug formula and killed him" I blurt it out and my mom just screams sinking, Mandy quickly went to the door and closed it.

"Yoh Nkosiyami, Afrika. Oh, this is not happening" she cries in agony.

"Afrika are you sure?" My sister asks

"Yes I am positive, Mzwakhe's wife Emily and I have been working to bring down Bab'Mdlalose as he also killed her brother, we agreed to keep everyone else out of it but Emily had plans of her own, hence she hit me with the vase I assume, she wanted Mpilo to go down with his father but I couldn't have that I refused to give her the evidence but she hit me with something hard on my head and I collapsed," I say and I can tell that this is too much to hear for them

"Nana" Mandy says shaking her head. "Is that why Mpilo hasn't shown up here?" She asks

"I suspect that they are arrested Mandy, and I don't even know what lies Emily has fed them," I say scared out of my mind

"Yoh Afrika, mntanami (my child)" Sibó adds again and I know she is breaking down knowing that she almost lost me the very same way she lost my father

"I am so sorry mama please," I say crying. Mandy is torn between us not knowing who to comfort.

•NOMALANGA

I got a call from Amanda informing me that Afrika is awake. I didn't waste time I got in the car and quickly drove to the hospital, I walked in and I could feel the tension in the room, their eyes are swollen and red proof that they have been crying. The warmth her mother and sister had towards me is gone and I know she told them about the drug business and being forced to work. I don't blame them though I probably would have acted the same way too if something like that happened to Sbahle.

"Sanibonani (hello)" I greet and they respond but it's not sincere

"Hi ma," Afrika says as I take a seat beside her

"How are you feeling," I ask

"My head still feels pain but they said it's expected, I don't seem to have any problems with my brain as the scans came out clear" she explains

"That's very good," I say

"Ndlovukazi where is Mpilo," she asks and there is uncertainty in her voice. I sigh

"Afrika, Mpilo, and Khaya have been arrested and it's not looking good" I explain and she lets her tears fall

"Ndlovukazi what happened," she asks

"I was hoping you would tell me Afrika, because Emily had a lot to say about what happened that day," I say and she sighs

"Ndlovukazi I will tell you the truth. I have been working with Emily to bring bab'Mdlalose down because he killed my father and her brother, I did all the work, I found the black book she told me about and I made copies to read everything, I had removed information on Mpilo as we both agreed that no one will go down with bab'Mdlalose, she came to the house, yes and I told her what I found and she asked to see it, I got the copies with no info on Mpilo and handed them to her but she wanted to see the black book. I went to get the copy of the original key to the safe and when I got back to the lounge she wasn't there I went to look for her in other rooms and she was in the study talking to the phone saying she will give the

person Mpilo, I disturbed her and she said it's not what I am thinking, I didn't believe her so I took the papers and tried walking away but she hit me with something heavy that's when I collapsed" she says and I sigh

"We've known Emily for years Afrika and she doesn't have a brother, she is the only child of her parents. Emily says the exact opposite of your story. She says she hit you with the vase because you wanted to run away" I say and she is shocked

"I swear mama she told me she had a brother and she is lying she is the one who spoke with someone on the phone I swear, she is the one who changed on me I promise you," she says

"We also called the last person you spoke with and it was the cop handling the case, he was thinking that he was talking to you, he was calming you down telling you that the cops are on their way and seconds later the cops burst in and arrested Mpilo and Khaya, so Nana I desperately want to believe you but I need proof, please," I say and she is covering her eyes with her hands.

"My phone mama I have text's on WhatsApp where we spoke about this," she says and I sigh

"Good then, I have it in my bag" I take it out and hand it to her

"Oh God it's flat," she says

"I have a power bank" her sister hands it to her and after a minute she switched it on and I saw her face fall flat

"Oh my God no," she says

"What what's wrong?" I ask

"They are deleted, I don't see them anymore. Only left with our casual chats" she says and I sigh

"Oh Afrika," I say because as it seems Emily is telling the truth

"I know it all points to me but I swear" she adds

"But you can't prove otherwise Afrika" she starts crying hysterically

"Ndlovukazi I am going to ask you to please leave, she can't be losing it like this she has to be calm," her mom says

"Ma, I need to talk to Mpilo please" she asks and I just walk out. I am caught between a rock and a hard place. How do I tell my son that Afrika couldn't prove her innocence or show one piece of evidence that can at least show that she is telling the truth

A day later

•MPILO

My mom just told me upsetting and hurting news. I just don't know how to feel about all of this, but why would she do this, I mean she gave me her body her purity, she reminded me of my potential, we are in love so why would she plot my downfall. I am crying but trying so hard to keep a straight face and make it seem like it's not affecting me but deep down I am falling apart. Razor walks in

"Tell me you found something please," my mom says

"There is no record of Emily having a brother, I got her phone records and nothing is suspicious, this Afrika girl, on the other hand, was on a call with the cop exactly at the same time your daughter in law said. I checked the evidence checking and the book was loaded to evidence a few days before the arrest" he says and it feels like he just finished off my heart

"And the Whatsapp texts she mentioned," I ask hoping that at least he got something there to give her story a fighting chance because right now it's all pointing to her.

"I am sorry Mpilo but the app has an end to end encryption even the best black hat hackers can't break through it," he says and I shake my head feeling so defeated.

"This is not happening," I say in a low voice

"I know it hurts Mpilo but this girl was on a mission and she accomplished it, your father stole the formula and killed her father while on the other hand you run the business and

making money from it. It would make sense why she wanted the both of you to go down"
Razor says

"But why would she work on helping me be the best version of myself, why would she love me like that?" I ask

"You know what they say Mpilo, keep your friends close but your enemies closer, she didn't want you to see her strike. I need you to snap out of it and help me help you get out of here okay" he adds

"I just don't know what to believe, but no one can fake love like that I refuse," I say

"I understand you love her but she was just out to get revenge for her father. Maybe she didn't plan it from the start but once she found out everything she set her mind to it and she did it real good, if she truly loved you she would have told you the truth you did say you don't keep things from each other. She should have trusted you enough, after all, you were trying to work something to get her out of this business but she already had one" he says and I look at my mom

"I am so sorry Mpilo," she says

"It hurts mama, I thought we were in love and wanted a future together but I am stuck here because of her. I fought my brother for her. I showed her how much I love her countless times and-" I can't even finish my statement because it's just so painful.

•AFRIKA

I have been trying to call Ndlovukazi but she isn't taking my calls I won't lie it's painful knowing that they believe Emily over me yes I was wrong trusting Emily over my own man but I would never hurt them like that, I love Mpilo with all my heart I swear. My mom walks in with a takeaway

"Oh my baby," she says

"It hurts Sibho it hurts so bad"

"I know my babes but they are choosing not to believe you and it shows how little they think of you and the kind of person you are," she says

"Can we blame them though?" I ask

"Don't make excuses for them Afrika"

"I just need to see him and explain everything"

"The doctor said to take it easy you just came out of a coma Afrika and you are in the first trimester of your pregnancy anything could happen, it's not just you now baby please" I cry harder thinking about the baby, what am I going to do, how will I raise the baby alone. My mom takes me in her arms and comforts me. A person clears their throat by the door and we let go and look, it's Sma. She greets my mother and introduces herself before looking at me

"Nomnyamazane" she says

"Aunt Sma," I say shocked to see her

"I heard what happened Nana and I was away fixing the issue with the house in MP"

"I didn't want Mpilo getting arrested I swear," I say

"I know I just couldn't believe that white girl, my gut feeling told me she is lying but everyone believes her because of the evidence Afrika, I am so sorry I wish I could help clear your name but she knew how to play her cards but nothing is hidden forever," he says and I shake my head

"I don't know what to do aunt Sma"

"It's all going to be okay trust me she will be exposed to her lies. I believe in you and I will talk in Mpilo's ear and he will believe you too, that's if I won't be arrested by then" she says

"Arrested for what?" I ask

"Murder and other things, remember my prints on the gun" she answers

"Don't worry about that, I wiped your prints off the gun they will find nothing?" I say and her eyes pop
"Afrika, are you sure?" She says
"100%" I assure her and she smiles and hugs me
"How will I ever repay you Afrika?" she says
"By always being yourself and looking out for Mpilo," I say

CHAPTER 120

•AMANDA

My sister is going through the most right now, I wish I can fix it for her but I just can't and it's killing me, I thought finally she is going to have it smooth but seems like she still has mountains to climb and rivers to cross, I mean it's clear that Mpilo and his family are not buying her story and now that she is pregnant it's going to be tougher for her. I am just grateful that my mom is here to help her and be there with her until she gets through this. I am unable to go to the hospital today because Lethabo had to go somewhere and he won't be able to look after our son, I bought my sister some goodies and flowers, so I came to give them to my mom so she can take them with her later on. I get in the house and find her sitting in the kitchen with a bottle of whiskey and a glass in front of her, tears are streaming down her face and the sight of her breaks my already broken heart further.

"Oh, Sibó, no!" I say quickly putting the things down and taking away the alcohol.

"It's so hard Amanda" she cries

"I know mama, I understand how you are feeling but alcohol isn't going to help," I say

"I know but I just wanted something to numb the pain you know," she says and I can't miss the pain in her voice

"I am so sorry" I hug her

"She doesn't deserve all of this Amanda, she is such a good person with a pure heart and whoever that Emily girl is, she saw it and she used it against her and now everyone else is turning their backs on her when she did nothing but try to put the monster that took away her father" she adds and I nod

"It's heartbreaking my love" I agree

"My daughter is suffering in the hands of the family that stole her father from her and the sad part is that she is having a baby with him and they will be tied together for life"

"She has us mama and I believe with time she will get over it and focus on herself and her baby, that baby will be the biggest blessing in Afrika's life, the little angel will be the reason she finds herself again, it might be long but she will eventually be okay" I assure her

"I just want you girls to live your best lives and not have anything or anyone harm or hurt you. I have already made you cry so much in your lives you deserve some happiness too" she says

"We need to keep moving even though the storm because on the other side we will find the sunshine. Mama no one said it would be easy" I reply

"I am afraid Mandy" she admits

"No one is expecting you not to be mama, and you have me for that the same way I have you. When it gets tough I am here for you always Sibó, this is the time to hold hands and be there for Afrika" I tell

"That's true and I am sorry. I promise I didn't even take one sip, trust me I wanted to with all my heart but I just couldn't hurt you two like that again" she murmurs and I nod

"It's okay and I am grateful that you didn't. I love you so much mama" I admit and she holds my hands tight

"I love you more my babes, and I am sorry," she says

"It's okay ma, you didn't do it," I say

•NOMALANGA

The prosecution has pushed and it paid off for them because court date is in a month and a half, that is not enough time for Razor and his team to work. I am afraid that the chances of my son going to jail are high, we only have character witnesses, and the prosecution has some of the guys they got at the lab ready to testify against my son. I don't know what I can do to help my Mpilo I even feel bad visiting him knowing that I am failing him.

"Everything will work out Nono," my sister says walking in

"I highly doubt that Sma, everything is just a mess" I respond

"Trust me someday it will all be a memory and who knows we might even turn it into a joke" she adds

"Can it become a joke right now? Because it's just killing me slowly. I can't even sleep. I feel like a bad mother" I admit

"stop that Nono you are the best mother to your children and they know it too. You are doing absolutely everything you can and you must believe that too" she says and I smile sweetly at her

"I wish I could believe that mntasekhaya but I just can't" I admit this to her and she sighs

"I will be here to remind you"

"Thank you so much Sma, it means a lot to me" I voice out

"I went to see Afrika, two days ago," she tells and I look at her with a questioning look

"Oh, and how is she?" I ask

"She is not okay Nomalanga, she is hurt that no one is believing her," she says

"But it all points to her and she agrees with it problem is she doesn't have the evidence to prove her innocence, everything she said to defend herself we followed its trail but it leads nowhere," I say and she let's out a sigh

"I know that but Nomnayamazane is just too sweet to do this, I don't know but that Emily is just lying"

"She has kids in this family why would she want to bring us down? Even everything of theirs is frozen so why would she shoot herself in the foot" I continue.

"Afrika wiped off my prints from the gun can that at least sway you to believe in her a little"

"Smangele this is just too much for me and in all honesty, I can't deal with everything all at once, right now I need to work on getting my son out of prison," I say and she nods.

"I understand but I need you to know that I believe Afrika and I am going to continue to see her and check on her"

"I respect that," I say

•MZWAKHE

I wish I can do something to help my brother out of this, everything is going down south, now that he knows that Afrika is not who we all thought she is he will not see it necessary to keep a grudge against me, he will probably see that family is everything and that we should work on our relationship and be as close as we used to be. I miss him and being by his side during this trying time will move us to the direction of being on good terms. I get home after work and I haven't even sat down or had a glass of water my wife is already in my ear.

"Mzwa I get to the mall and try to swipe a few things for the girls but it declined, I go to the bank and I am told that our account is frozen, what is going on?" She asks and I sigh

"Oh boy" I murmur and she narrows her eyes

"Don't do that, tell me what's happening?" she says annoyed

"I forgot to tell you love but all our finances are frozen. They found out that we have been receiving money from my family so until the case is complete everything is frozen and if they are found guilty and it can be proved that it's drug money it won't be coming back" I explain

"What what do you mean," she asks

"Exactly that sweetheart, for now, we are going to have to survive on both our salaries," I say and she shakes her head

"That won't cover anything babe, the municipal bill is always up high, the garden company, the helpers, the girls' school fees and extra activities need to be paid. Our policies and insurance for the house, cars, furniture, the list is endless babe, we can't survive on that it's too little" she says adding to my stress

"I have some hard cash in the house," I say to calm her and she rolls her eyes

"If you are referring to the money in the safe then just forget it please because I have been using it," she says and I gasp

"What why would you is that money when you always had our joint account card with you," I ask

"Mzwa this is not the time we need to figure out what we are going to do," she says dodging the question

"Like the head of this house, I will figure something out just give me a little time," I say and walk passed her ascending the stairs.

•MPILO

I just can't stop thinking about her and all the memories we've created, I smile as I remember the day we were driving to Mpumalanga, I got to fulfill my long time dream of ridding an Aston Martin with my girl going somewhere to relax, the moment she told me she was ready to give herself to me was a dream come true I swear I can still remember how good it felt that night and every time after that. The way she would smile and get lost while looking at me thinking I am not aware, I honestly don't believe that a person can fake it like that, but we did say we would never keep secrets from each other but why did she keep this from me if it wasn't meant to bring me down alongside my dad, she watched me trying to crack my skull to find a way to save her while she always knew about that damn black book that could have sent this evil man away forever, love made me weak made me vulnerable so much that I couldn't realize that I was been taken for a ride. I have always been straight with her but she wasn't with me and that's what's killing me.

•AFRIKA

My life is ruined, and I don't have anyone to blame but myself, I shouldn't have trusted Emily over Mpilo. I should have told him from the start, we had a good thing going and I messed it. He was ready to let it all go for me but I was naive and now I have lost him, the love of my life, my best friend and father of my baby. I involuntary move my hand to my tummy and just cry. How am I going to do this without him, how do I even tell him this without seeming to be using it as a way to get him back. He must hate me wherever he is and he has every right, I just wish I could have a minute to explain everything to him eye to eye.

"Oh Afrika, you can't be crying like this every time. You need to keep it together, I know it's hard baby but your baby needs you to be strong or she is not going to survive the stress" she says

"I love him mama, I love Mpilo with all my heart and I am sorry I didn't tell him" I cry

"You were dealing with a lot finding out that his father killed yours was hard for you don't beat yourself up like this please," she says

"I should have been honest with him, I should have told him when I found out, he has never kept anything from me mama I should have extended the same courtesy to him" I reply
"that Emily girl made you believe that she was feeling the pain you were feeling and it was easier for you to relate to her than with that boy. You have a good heart my baby and just because one person decided to use that to their advantage doesn't make you a bad person. Let them all believe her lies but whatever happens in the dark comes out in the light" Sibó says taking me in her arms

"Why is Emily doing this to me mama"

"She is an evil woman my baby let her believe that she has won and someday she will come and kneel in front of you and beg for forgiveness. The price she will pay for breaking you will be far greater. There is a lesson in this pain baby don't miss it" she says and I cry harder

"Tomorrow you are being discharged and I am taking you home, I am going to take care of you and you will love and take care of that angel growing inside of you and everything else will take a back seat. You have people who love and believe in you and that's the only thing you going to focus on" she adds

"I don't know ma," I say

"We are going to take it a day at a time and with each passing day you will regain your strength and you will be the best mother and you will find strength in your pain"

"I will go get my things from the Mdlalose home," I say but my mom just shakes her head

"Never you won't be setting foot at their house. Amanda will go and get everything that is yours, I will tell her to call them so they can expect her" she says and I feel a little disappointed. I was hoping to go there myself and get another chance to convince Ndlovukazi of my innocence.

"Okay" I murmur

"I love you Afrika and everything is going to be okay"

"I love you too Sibó"

"When you've regained your strength I am going to take you to your father's final resting place," she says and something in that statement makes me feel calm.

"I would love that" I smile at her and she kisses my forehead

CHAPTER 121

•AMANDA

My mom asked me to go and fetch Afrika's things from the Mdlalose house, I called Ndlovukazi to tell her I will be coming by and she sent me the location and said she will make sure that everything is packed. I just want my sister far away from these people, as hurt as she is she will find her strength and move on from this after all she has survived far worse than all of this. Sphamandla came by and offered to drive me, my husband enjoys hanging out with his son these days and I feel left out sometimes but soon as everything with my baby girl dies down I will be fully focused on my family again. We get there and boy it is a beautiful mansion I would admire it more if I wasn't angry with them regarding how they are treating my sister. We press the intercom and someone answers and I explain who I am and the gates swing open. My friend drives in and we find a helper already waiting on us, we greet her and she takes us inside and I find Ndlovukazi with a younger version of herself I assume it's the daughter.

"Sanibonani," I say

"Hi Amanda, how are you?" she asks

"I am well thanks"

"Please do take a seat, can we get you anything to drink? Water? Juice?" She asks and I sigh
"No thanks we are fine, we just here for my sister's things and we will be on our way," I say
and her face falls

"Oh okay" she murmurs and looks at the helper

"Hilda please bring the suitcases packed up in my closet" she orders

"Yes ma'am," the lady says and exits. The girl clears her throat

"How is Afrika," she asks politely I can't bring myself to be rude to her

"She will be okay with time," I say

"That's very true, please tell her to pick up my calls, I just want to hear if she is okay," she
says

"I will pass your message" I reply

"Tell her it's Sbahle" she adds and I nod. A guy and some white girl walk in.

"Oh hello everyone," the guy says

"Mzwa hi son, Emily," Ndlovukazi says and I raise an eyebrow

"Hi ma," she says and walks past me. I don't know what came over me but I just roughly
turn her around and gave her a hot slap that knocked her to the ground. She screams

"What the hell" she sneers and the Mzwa guy comes quickly and helps her up, then looks at
me

"Why would you do that?" he asks angrily

"If you think you are going to get away with what you did to my baby sister then you have
another thing coming. I wish I could say I am going to be your worst nightmare but I won't
waste my time because I believe Karma will deal with each one of you and when the truth is
out, let me not see any of you coming to beg my sister for forgiveness" I say and they are
looking at me shocked

"Just get out of my mother's house you hoodrat," this Mzwakhe guy says

"I will knock your teeth out ungangijwayeli mina, and trust me you will pay for introducing
my sister to this drug life. You are yet to follow them in prison and you will kiss your job
goodbye at that university. I am going to tarnish your name and make sure my sister goes to
the cops and report you" I say and he blinks a couple of times

"Everyone calm down please," their mother says

"Spha please come with her bags I can't stand being in their presence"

"Okay friend I will," he says and I walk out feeling so much anger. That Mzwa and Emily
turned my sister's life upside down while they are continuing with theirs like nothing ever
happened.

•AFRIKA

My mom made a plan and hired a car from our neighborhood to pick me up from the
hospital, I am glad to be going home, hospitals are not my favorite place, I don't know how I
am going to pick up the pieces of my life and become the woman and mother my child is
going to need. I got home and it's as warm and homely as the last time I was here. She
changed the bedroom for me and put things that I like and I am grateful. Sibho told me to lay
in bed as she fixes me my meal so I can take my pills, I wasn't really in the mood for sleeping
now but my mother is following the doctor's orders to the last word. My phone rings and
my heart almost stops. It's Mpilo, but how? is he out of prison?. I freeze for a second but
quickly snap out of it and answer

"Baby?" I say my tone questioning but he doesn't answer me but I can hear him breathing
on the other side of this call, a tear escapes my eye

"Afrika why?" He finally says and that's all it took him, two words to shatter my soul.

"It wasn't supposed to be like this I promise," I say

"Why did it have to be like this at all. If it was as innocent as you say why did you keep it
from me" he asks and I just cry

"I don't know Mpilo and I regret ever keeping it from you, I am so sorry," I say
"How do I believe you muhles," he says
"I know it's hard baby, but please" I beg
"I am going away and I am going away for the longest time. I might be locked up for 30 years. There is no hope that I will walk it's just so bad" he says in a low voice and it feels like someone just ripped my heart out of me.
"Mpilo No" I whisper
"It's gotten here, I sold drugs and people lost their loved one's from it, they lived through hell because of the addicts I created with the drugs. I am a bad man and maybe you were my karma maybe I had to feel how painful it is to lose someone because of the drugs" he says and I wish he can stop because with every word he utters he leaves me bruised
"I am so sorry, believe me, I wish I could undo all of this Mpilo I am so sorry. I need to see you" I say
"I don't think that's a good idea. Let's not make this any more painful" he replies I feel my heart in my stomach
"Mpilo I need to tell you something"
"It's okay, Afrika. Just know that I love you with all my heart and thank you for all the beautiful memories you created with me, I don't think I have ever been happy like I was when I was with you. You made my last days as a free man memorable" he says
"Don't talk like this please I beg you" I cry
"Listen I will always love you. You will always have a special place in my heart, but I need you to move on with your life and be happy, be free and fall in love, don't feel guilty about this God knows why it's happening. I am going to serve my time and please don't visit babe it will be harder for me and I just...I love you Muhles wam" he says and the line goes dead. I am trying to make sense of the call that just paralyzed me. This is not happening it isn't.

•EMILY

I still can't believe Afrika's sister attacked me like that and even went as far as going after my husband. It's all too messy. I left my in-laws' house and went to meet up with my father who has been working from home since they made the arrest. We are playing it safe just in case the Mdlalose's look into Afrika's claims. I get home and thankful that my mother is not around she would say an earful regarding what I've done and I am seriously not in the mood for judgment I am already going through the most. My father is in the lounge watching KykNet some Afrikaans channel on DSTV.

"Hello," I say taking a seat on the vacant couch

"Emily," he says cool

"Did you know?" I ask and he gives me a look

"Know what?"

"That all our funds would be frozen?" I say and he sighs

"Emily, it was the next step for the state," he says

"I can't believe you didn't tell me this Pa," I say hurt

"It's common sense Emily," he says and I chuckle

"You were very generous explaining every other thing to me so why not this one" I reply

"Why are you so worked up," he asks

"Because my children and I are going to starve. How are we to survive on mine and be my husband's salary" I sneer

"Watch your tone girlie"

"I will not pa, you gambled with my children's lively hood without mentioning it to me. If I knew this was going to happen I wouldn't have gone through with it" I say

"This is exactly why I didn't tell you" he shouts back

"What kind of father are you"

"one that cares. If that black boy can't take care of you and the kids you are welcome to move back home" he says
"News flash those kids you are talking about are black. They are Mzwa's girls and that will never change no matter how much you hate their father"
"Emily" he warns
"I wish I could have listened to mom," I say and stand up
"Don't you think of walking out on me while we are talking!" he says and I shake my head and leave him screaming my name. I can't believe this.

•MPILO

I am shattered I am broken. I am a husk of a man, I don't know if I am coming or going but I know for sure that nothing will ever be the same again. It's painful but I had to do it. I had to set her free because even a fool can see that I am going to prison and for the longest time, even a beast like Razor won't be able to get me out of this. I haven't told him and I don't think I will tell anyone, they will just find out in court I don't want to drag this more than I have to and further hurt those who love me, everyone needs to accept that this is my reality now. I want all of them to just go on with their lives and just forget about me ever coming back because it's not happening. Afrika will forgive herself and she will be happy again. I don't want to see her and end up hating and blaming her for landing me here, I would rather just hold on to the beautiful memories we have together, I don't want anything to taint that. My aunt was in the room as I made that call.

"Why kodwa Mpilo"

"It's for the best Ncane"

"Best for who because it's only hurting you and her," she says

"It's better this way Sma, I don't want her coming to see me here and blaming herself and possibly have me resenting her for what's happening to me" I argue

"Do you believe her?" She asks and I sigh

"I don't know, but what I know is that I love her with every fiber of my being and I don't want to think about anything else that will take away those feelings from my heart"

"This is just so painful" she replies

"I never thought I'd feel so much pain, I never knew I could cry like this" I admit

"You will get out of here" she insists

"Sma come on let's be realistic, they have me and there is no escaping it. This my life now, this is how you will see me forever. Let's stop lying to each other and saying everything will be okay because it won't" I repeat what I had already told her

"You need to be hopefully Mpilo"

"No we need to be realistic, it will hurt less," I say and she sighs

•NOMALANGA

My son has lost hope and nothing I can say or do will make him feel otherwise, I am at the most painful, confusing, and dark time in my life. I can't sleep, I can't think properly. I don't even feel like myself, I've dealt with things harder than this and I have solved far more complicated cases than this but I just can't this time and I guess it's true when they say a doctor can't heal themselves I turned Khaya's study to my investigation room, trying to find a strategy but with each angle, I hit a dead end. The door opens and my daughter walks in.

"Mama you need to rest," she says

"I know baby, but I have a lot of time on my hands I might as well try to get your brother out of this"

"I understand mama, this is just difficult, I feel like I am losing myself. I never thought I'd wake up one day and we are in this mess" she says voice already trembling

"I am so sorry my baby" I go and take her in my arms

"It's hard Ndlovukazi, I can't even focus at school. I am afraid I will fail"
"Oh Sbahle, oh my baby"
"I feel like I need to get away but I am scared to leave my family" she adds
"But you are finding it hard to cope and I don't want that for you baby"
"What will I do ma"
"Maybe I should just get you into UCT like you had asked," I say
"But everyone needs me, I want to be around for my family"
"I know Bahle but I wouldn't want you to fail or find yourself in a dark hole that will be hard to get you out of. I am already fighting to save my son I wouldn't want to experience this with you too, I would rather be safe than sorry"
"I am so sorry mama I am sorry for adding to your stress I am sorry" she cries
"Shhhh baby mom understands. I will talk to my contact and get you away from this mess, and maybe once everything has died down you can come back home okay?" She says
"Okay"
"I love you baby girl,"
"I love you too mommy" I kiss her forehead

CHAPTER 122

•AFRIKA

I just couldn't listen to him telling me to stay away I just couldn't, I created this mess we are in and I just couldn't let our love go just like that. I wanted to fight for him. I got to the prison to go see him but I got there and when everyone came out to see their visitors he didn't show up, the warden came back and said that he doesn't want to see me, I begged him to tell him that I have something really important to share with him but told the guard to tell me that he loves me and he just doesn't want to make it harder than it is, he told me to never visit him in prison and I should just move on with my life. I am beyond hurt, I just don't know what to do moving forward this is all just too much for me. The Bolt drops me off at home and I walk in. Soon as I step in both my sister and mother sigh in relief
"Oh Afrika don't ever do that" Sibho says already coming to hug me
"I am sorry," I say because I did leave without telling her I know she would have tried stopping me but I needed to try.
"Where have you been Nana?" Mandy asks and I let a tear escape
"I went to see Mpilo but he didn't want to see me," I say and sniff
"I am so sorry baby," my mom says
"I am the reason he is in that place, the reason he might be sentenced to 30 years, the reason why my child is going to grow up without a father. He says he loves me and he doesn't want me to see him like that, he wants me to move on" I cry harder
"Oh mntasekhaya don't do this to yourself, this is not what you planned, that Emily is to blame" Amanda adds
"And so am I, I should have trusted in my boyfriend enough to share this, I knew he didn't know and he was still very young to have been a part of it, yet I chose to trust a stranger I thought was my friend. I am a naive fool and for what I put Mpilo through maybe I deserve yo feel this pain, after all, I am free and he is not" I say
"Stop this please, Afrika I know it's hard but Mpilo has made his choice and it's clear that he isn't going to change his mind, it's time to try and pick up the broken pieces and start gluing them back together, it's not just about you anymore, you have the baby to think of, you have school to think of Nana. God knows why all this is happening to you and you and I both

know that what is yet to come will heal you completely. You have Sibho and I baby. You don't have to do this alone. Stop fighting now and leave it all to God please" she says and the thought of letting Mpilo go is just traumatic. He was supposed to be here with me looking forward to raising our baby with me.

"I will try" I whisper

"That's all we are asking for my babes," My mom says

•NOMALANGA

I have been in contact with my someone at UCT with regards to finding space for my daughter, it was a bit tricky seeing that it's in the second semester, but luckily my daughter is doing semester course, it cost me something hefty but it's worth my daughter's sanity. She will move to one of the apartments of the complex I bought in Cape Town and be comfortable there, a change of scenery will do her good and it will be one less worry for me, I will be able to focus everything on my son to get him out of prison. I walk in the restaurant and Mzwa is already waiting, he asked that we meet up because he has something he wants to discuss with me and I pray it's not more problems because I can't deal with that now.

"Son"

"Ndlovukazi" I pull out a chair and sit

"How are you?"

"I am well ma, what about you?"

"I am fine thanks" I reply

"How is Mpilo and his case going"

"He has given up hope Mzwa, he is ready to serve whatever sentence laid down for him," I say feeling hurt

"He won't see me, I tried visiting a few times," he says and I sigh

"He won't see anyone son, I get to see him because I am working with Razor and I am scared that he might just tell us to stop working on the case"

"This is very sad Ndlovukazi" I sigh

"Heartbreaking, as a mother seeing your child throw in the towel is devastating" he nods

"I can only imagine" he replies

"Your sister will be moving to Cape Town, she isn't taking this well at all"

"Yeah, a change of scenery will do her good. Everything is happening very fast and Bahle has never been in the midst of such turmoil"

"Exactly son, I just don't want her to lose it"

"You took a good decision I swear," he says

"So what did you want to talk about," I ask and he exhales

"It's bad mama, with our funds frozen, my family and I are taking the financial strain. I can't move the one in my offshore account in case they trace it and by the look on things, this is going to drag long. My salary and Em's won't cover everything" he says

"You guys should move in with me. With Bahle leaving and all. At least you won't have to worry about paying the municipal bill, as no one will be using the lights, the water and staff, lay off the maids you have, and the garden service you use. I will ask my Gardner to trim your house once in a while and the helpers will go clean up there too. All you'll do is pay for your insurance. I will cover everything else. I would give you financial bump but with how they are looking at us I want them to think we are making ends meet, let's not give them more reason to dig deeper" I say

"That's a solution ma thanks, it will be a relief for my wife and I. I am just glad the card and everything else we bought cash," he says

"You can move in whenever you are ready"

"Thank you so much mama, I will talk to my wife when I get home," I say

"Okay, let's order I am starving,"

•LETHABO

My wife is dealing with a lot regarding her sister and I don't want to her stress by complaining and stuff, I just miss her attention and I am sure Kopano feels the same way too. My uncle has found my father and he said he asked to have a meeting with him and he didn't mention me or my mom to him because he just wanted the truth to come out in front of everyone. As my mom hardly ever goes into detail with what happened, she just says his people treated her badly and he chose to listen to them than fight for her. I am going through a lot right now and I just need my wife Lets say I probably thought that things were going to berosy after moving in together. She appears from the bedroom holding our son and sits on the couch.

"Your son doesn't want my breast anymore"

"We can't blame him, these days he feeds more on the bottle than his mother breast we should just get him on formula full time and stop confusing him" the words are out of my mouth before I can even think.

"Hao Love what is that suppose to mean?" she asks

"I understand your sister is going through a lot right now but that doesn't mean you have to just leave our son and rush off each time without thinking of him," I say and she is shocked

"But I leave him with you njena love" she adds

"And I don't mind that I just thought Kopano and I would be your priority just like like you both are mine," I say and she closes her eyes

"Lethabo," she whispers

"Are you even aware that I haven't been myself these past few days?" I ask and she blinks a couple of times

"Why didn't you tell me you are not okay?"

"When Ama, you are hardly ever home these days" I reply and she looks a Kopano

"I am sorry it's just that I raised Afrika and seeing her that hurt is just killing me," she says

"I know and that's one of the reasons I knew I needed to make you my wife Mandy I salute you for the job you did with your sister you are a woman amongst woman but you don't have to neglect your husband and son while trying to be there for her. I don't even know how you are taking any of this because before I can even ask you are out the door. This is not what I pictured our marriage to be like I am not saying we should be perfect" I say

"I am sorry my love. I have been so consumed by all of this I forgot that you also need me, I am very sorry" she apologizes

"I will get his bottle," I say standing

"Baby" she calls after me

"I am coming Ama," I say

•EMILY

I hate living like this, I had to let go of my helpers and cancel some of the things because our finances aren't allowing us to keep everything we had before all this mess, but by the look of things we are still in too deep I still need to cancel more so we can survive without being in debt. The study door opens and he walks in.

"What are you doing in here," he asks

"I am trying to see how we can survive on both our salary" I respond

"Are you winning?" He asks and I sigh

"It's bad Mzwa, we aren't going to survive on this last gear I swear, I have already canceled a lot of our things but still it's not enough" I inform him and he comes and sits on the edge of the desk.

"I spoke to my mom," he says and I look at him

"Oh thank God, tell me she's going to help," I say

"Yes she is going to help," he says and I smile
"How much will she be giving us?" I ask and his face falls making me frown
"No money babe, but she invited us to stay with her so we avoid using the water and electricity here and paying crazy bills. She will pay for everything that concerns the girls and other important stuff all we need to do is pay for insurance and keep our salaries" he says and I feel like screaming
"You want us to move in with you mom are you serious?" I ask
"At this moment it's the right thing to do babe," he says
"That is a terrible idea Mzwakhe I am not moving to your parents' house and leave my mansion all on its own," I say
"A mansion we can't afford to live in right now Em. You said it yourself baby it's not looking good" he argues
"Just tell your mom financial assistance would be much better, thanks," I say and he shakes his head
"Okay how much do you think we would need in assistance each month," he asks and I smile
"R100 000 at least" I answer and he nods
"Okay I will collect R50k each month from my mom and you will have to also ask your parents for the other R50k," he says and to say I am shocked would not be doing justice to how I feel.
"Mzwakhe where do you expect my parents to cough out that much?" I ask annoyed
"The same place you expect my mother to cough from. She is giving us a hand here let's not ask for the whole arm. She is going through a lot" he says and walks out. I sigh and realize that we don't have a choice but to move in with her. I am so mad at my father.

A FEW DAYS LATER

•AFRIKA

I am always looking at pictures and videos of us at our happiest, I have found solace in reading our conversations and I have found Melody and music in his voice notes, it's hard trying to accept that he will never come out to see me at prison no matter how much I visit him, and to think I will never see him again in my life hurts the most but at least he left me to grow his seed, someone who will forever connect me to him. I will tell her about her father and she will decide to visit him when she is older, I just pray she won't hate me soon as she learns that I am partly to blame for her father being in prison. My mom has been begging me to go to the doctor to check on the baby as my tummy is starting to show but I am just not ready to do so. All I do these days is go to campus and come back home. Since the income I used to send them is no longer coming in. My mom decided to start a business here in the yard, Sibo's Kitchen. She bought a shack and fully equipped it. She cooks food every day is a different menu, like Monday it's steamed bread and mogudu, Tuesday is pap and stew, Wednesday she does rice and chicken with salads on Thursday she sells inyama yentloko with pap, Friday it's braai with either cops or pap and chakalaka but on each day she sells fat cakes in the morning and I must admit she has been operation for a week but her business is booming her customers are taxi divers you should see the chaos here around lunchtime and in the mornings, she decided not to work on weekends to give her children time. I am proud of her and honestly I draw strength from her, she has been through so much but she is still standing and moving forward. Today is a Friday and it's too busy in the kitchen so I decided to help her out since I didn't go to campus. I woke up feeling sick, this child growing inside of me control my body, my mood, my appetite she controls everything. We serve people and finally, everyone gets their food and the chaos dies down. My mom starts washing the pots and I just decide to listen to his voice notes. I am closing my eyes as I feel someone poke me, I look and it's Sbahle, I am shocked to see her here.

"Bahle"

"Hey friend," she says and smiles
"How did you find this place," I ask
"I went to look for you at res but a girl named Larona told me you haven't been there in months so I asked for your address and I drove here to see you I hope you don't mind" she explains
"I don't mind babe, I am just surprised to see you that's all you know with everyone not believing me and all," I say
"I hear but for some reason, I agree with my aunt Afrika, I don't believe you did this," she says and I sigh in relief
"You don't know how happy that makes me feel," I say
"I have missed you I just wish you didn't shut me out," she says
"I thought you were calling to tell and tell me painful things" I admit
"I understand" she replies
"How is Mpilo, he won't let me see him, he told me to move on," I say and the words leave a lump in my throat
"The case has been postponed to next January Afrika, the prosecution is making everything so hard for my brother and he has just given up on everything. He won't let anyone see just Ndlovukazi" she says and I let out a tear
"It hurts Bahle"
"I know and I am sorry babe"
"I feel like being in this province is killing me, like to find myself again I need a new environment where no one knows me, where I won't have to bump into your family and have them give me an evil eye," I say
"I know how you feel because I am going through something familiar, hence I asked my mom to move me to Cape Town, her contact just registered me a few days ago and I went to deregister at campus today," she says
"Can we swap lives please?" I ask and she smiles
"You don't have to swap lives friend you can simply just come with me, let's move away and we will come back someday when we done with our studies," she says and I look at her blank
"Think about it babe Cape Town is beautiful and the perfect place to heal" she adds and I won't lie this sure does sound like a good escape from it all.

•AMANDA

After the conversation I had with Lethabo a while back, I felt so guilty that I have been neglecting them and I wasn't even aware, I explained to my mom and she understood where my husband was coming from and explained it to me as well in case I wasn't understanding him and his points, the last thing I want this man to feel is neglect and feel like I am not there to support him when he is going through staff because he is always there for me and he always fights for me, I need to be able to divide my time accordingly, be his wife and mother first then attend other things. My sister is the one coming here now and it's working out perfectly and peace is restored in my household. Lethabo just got back from work and he is in our bedroom changing, I finish making his sandwich and he walks in before he can say something my phone rings and it's Ndlovukazi I frown but decide to answer.

"Hello," I say

"Amanda it's Ndlovukazi please don't hang up" she quickly says

"How can I help you," I ask

"My son informed me that you are the one running the concierge service and he wanted you to continue working and making it a success, he wants to renegotiate the terms of the contract as you will be taking on more responsibility, he says you can continue working from home. I hope you are still interested" she says

"I don't know if I still want to continue working with him, with all that is happening" I reply
"I understand but please take a few days to think about it and call me back please" she adds
"Okay," I say
"I will wait to hear from you then bye," she says and hangs up
"Who was that?" My husband asks
"Mpilos mom, they want me to continue running the business and renegotiate the contract,"
I say
"And how do you feel about that?"
"I don't know love, with everything that is happening between them and Afrika, it's just
messy," I say
"You love what you do right?" He asks
"With all my heart babe"
"Then talk to Afrika about this and hear how she feels about you working for them if she is
not comfortable you will stop love and we will find something else for you to do okay?" I
nod
"Okay love, I will go see her tomorrow"
"Oh, and my uncle informed me that the man whose sperm I was made will be coming
through month-end," he says and bites his sandwich
"Are you ready to finally know what transpired between them?" I ask
"Yes love, it's time now, hopefully, it will help my mother heal too," he says and I nod
vigorously
"Me too baby I just hope she finds her healing in the meeting" I agree
"Can you please call Sibho and ask her to save two plates for us?" he says and I frown
"My cooking not good enough now?" He laughs
"Don't be like that I just want braai meat"
"Hopefully she still has some food," I say taking my phone
"Eish yah ne phela those taxi drivers,"

CHAPTER 123

•NOMALANGA

I had to fly in with Sbahle to drop her off and make sure she settles in well at her new apartment. A part of me feels bad leaving her out there all alone but at least she won't be seeing all of the drama that is happening back home. She has to focus on school so she can pass and work towards her goals and dreams and I don't want her being disrupted by anything, not even this. Life has proved to be unpredictable and I want her to have something to fall back on should things go south. The apartment is big and spacious and it's in a good neighborhood, I will sleep peacefully at night knowing that she is safe and sound. I walk back to the lounge and find her on my phone, she quickly hides it as soon as she sees me.

"What are you up to with my phone Bahle?" I ask

"Nothing," she says with a smirk

"I hope you didn't send yourself a crazy amount of airtime,"

"I promise I didn't mama,"

"Bring it here," I say and she hands it to me.

"So when will my car arrive?"

"Uhm the driver said he is 6hours away so it will be here before you go to bed tonight,"

"Oh good thanks mama, I don't do well with Ubers,"

"Sbahle I just need you to promise that you will behave and focus on school before anything, you can see we are already going through a lot with your brother I honestly don't need anything else adding to it," I say

"I understand mama, and I promise to do focus on school and nothing else, I will make you proud mama."

"Thank you baby."

"Thank you for agreeing to this thank you so much."

"It's okay Bahle, I just want you to do good and make yourself proud"

"Definitely"

"I wish I could stay longer but I need to go back home and continue trying to put out the fire," I say

"I totally understand mama. Safe travels, I love you"

"I love you too, and I will call soon as I land," I say and we hug and I take my bag and leave.

•AMANDA

My husband dropped me off so I can talk to Afrika about continuing to work for Mpilo or not. It's good to see her smiling again even though the pain I'd still visible in her eyes. With time she will be okay and this will just be a distant memory and she will have the biggest gift God can ever give a woman, motherhood. We are in the lounge and she is changing Kopano's nappy, it's good practice for her.

"So nana I wanted to talk to you about something important," I say and she looks at me

"Okay?" Her tone questioning

"So I hot a call from Ndlovukazi 2 days ago" she narrows her eyes

"Is everything okay?" She asks

"She wanted to let me know that I can continue working and running the concierge service and they want to renegotiate the terms of the contract," I say

"That's good Mandy, when is the meeting?" She asks

"I told her I will get back to you could I wanted to talk to you first"

"Talk about what sis?" She asks sounding confused

"I wanted to find out first if you wouldn't have a problem with me working for them you know" I admit and she smiles

"Oh Mandy, you enjoy that job and it gives you good money, of course I am okay, I want to see my sister winning always. Go and talk to her and stick to doing the good job Mandy" she says

"Are you sure? It's okay if it's not sitting well with you, I would cut all ties without thinking twice" I honestly need reassurance

"I am very sure sis, I want you and your family to have a very comfortable life, I want you to be financially independent and be able to help your husband," she says and my heart goes to ease.

"Thank you, Nana," I say and she takes a deep sigh

"Since we are on serious mode I might as well tell you this," she says

"What what's wrong?" Sibos asks and I look at her

"Everything here is going to set me back, I will constantly find myself going to the prison hoping Mpilo agrees to see me and I know him, once he has set his mind on something nothing will make him do otherwise, and the fact that I will constantly see his brother on campus is not helping, being around here will just keep reminding me of what I have lost because of stupidity, I need a new environment, one that will allow me to pick up the pieces of my life for my child and once I am strong enough I will come back," she says and I am listening to but I honestly can't understand what she means

"What are you saying Afrika?" My mom is the first to ask already at the edge of her seat.

"I am saying I need to leave Gauteng mama, for me to prepare for my child and to be able to forgive myself and give her all the attention she is going to need from me her mother, it's already clear that I will be the only parent she has and if I don't step up now I will make a shitty mother and mess up her life even before it begins," she says tears streaming down her face and the pain in my heart

"Nana" I whisper

"Oh Afrika" Sibó adds after me

"I know it's going to be tough but I need to toughen up I am a mother now it's time I walk my journey on my own, to find myself and become the woman worthy to mother a child" she adds and I just break down and cry

"How will you survive out there alone with a baby

"I am from a family of strong women and I know I will make it no matter what I just need a breather"

"How will you survive, you don't have a bursary anymore? How will you pay rent? Buy groceries? Necessities for the baby? Nana please going off on your own is just not going to be easy" I say

"I have more than enough money, Mpilo gave me so much money I didn't know what I'd do with it but now I know it will come to good use, I want to move to Cape Town and finish my qualification at UCT," she says

"Afrika that far with your first baby it's not going to be easy," my mom says

"I know but I will make it work, I have to" she adds

"Nothing we do or say will change your mind need?" She asks

"No sis and I am sorry for hurting you but I need to do this" she replies

"I just want to be here for you" I admit

"I know but it's time I go off on my own" she sticks to her

"Just give birth and bring my grandbaby I will look after him," Sibó says and Afrika smiles

"I will think about it okay," she says

"Afrika Cape Town is far" I say still not believing that my sister is going to leave us, I am so used to having her around

"I know and I promise to visit now and again" she says

"When do you think you will leave" ma asks, she is not okay and she is just trying so hard to keep it together.

"Sooner than you can think but I will let you know," she says and I close my eyes

"As painful as this whole thing I will accept your decision and enjoy the remaining time with you my baby, even when you far away always know that you have a home and you can come back anytime you want, we are here for you Afrika always my baby," mama says

"I will always remember that mama," she says

"I love you so much and mama is right as much as it hurts we will support you, and you can bring the baby home after you give birth" I add and she smiles

"I love you too Mandy," she says and I know it is going to take me a while to get used to the fact that she will be away from us. She places Kopano down and comes to hug me and my mom.

•EMILY

My husband and I are busy packing our close getting ready to move to his mom's place, but I won't lie I am not happy with this whole thing, I am used to being the madam of my own home and making the rules, so going to adhere to another woman's rules is just not something I am looking forward to. I tried fighting this whole thing but Mzwa told me if we are to continue staying here, I will have to get the R50K as he also gets it from his mom and I know very well that my family won't be able to afford giving us R50 000 a month until this

whole thing blows up and we get our finances back. We already took our girls there and the maids there are helping us look after them.

"This won't last forever Emily," he says

"Yeah," I say passing

"Em this is what we meant when we said for better or worse," he says and I sigh

"I know babe, I just never thought we would move back to your mom's" I reply

"But you know my mom is sweetheart Em she will never make you feel otherwise and she will make sure that we are comfortable, my sister moved to Cape Town today and Sma is always in and out of the house," he says trying to get me in the groove

"It's more than that Mzwa," I say

"Emily I am trying my best to make sure that we don't suffer and we don't find ourselves in Dept,

Am trying my best here the least you can do is show appreciation to my efforts and my mother's generosity" he sneers and I am just looking at him

"I am trying so hard to do my job as a husband and provider but you are so damn focused on stupid things you can't even realize my efforts, then tomorrow you'll be telling that I am not the man you married," he says

"Mzwakhe," I say and he shakes his head

"I don't know what more you want from me but I don't have it Emily, this is what I can offer you right now and if that is not enough then I don't know seriously"

"I am sorry I didn't mean to-" he cuts me off

"You haven't even taken a minute to ask me how my family is holding up, all you care about is money money money" he shouts and I realize he is right

"Baby," I say and he walks out with the bags. Fuck it Emily, how could you be so stupid?

•AFRIKA

After speaking to my mom and sister I felt lighter and I am glad they understand where I am coming from even though they are hurting. I will come back at some point and maybe then Mpilo would want to see me and he will know that we share a beautiful gift. My sister left and I am glad she came around with Kopano because I had a really good time with him.

Little man is growing up becoming so cute with each passing day. I pick my phone and dial Bahle who picks up almost immediately

"Hey babe," she says cheerily

"Bahle, how are you?"

"I am okay, just tired from all the unpacking," she says

"How is Cape Town?" I ask

"It is beautiful Afrika you, I never really gave it much attention, I'd just go to specific places only but I am happy I will get a chance to fully explore it"

"That's great chom," I say

"Have you thought about what we spoke about?" She asks

"I was calling because of that. I spoke to my mom and sister a few hours ago"

"And?" She asks

"I am in, I am moving with you," I say and she screams

"Oh babe, you made a good decision, I promise you won't regret it," she says

"But how will I get a transfer at this time of the year," I say

"Don't worry about that, I stole the person who registered me on my mom's phone all I need to do is give her a call and offer her something she can't say no to?" she says

"How much will it be?" I ask

"Don't worry babe, I got you, I will take care of it. I am going to call the lady now and I will get back to you soon as I've spoken to her" she says

"Thank you so much Sbahle," I say

"Just get ready to enjoy this beautiful place, we have the best view," she says and I smile
"Okay"
"Don't worry Afrika I promise everything will be okay" she assures me
"I pray so," I say and sigh
"Okay listen email me your documents so I can get to it" she adds
"Okay I will do it now"
"Sharp we will talk later"
"Sharp friend," I say and hang up. I try Mpilo's number one more time but it goes straight to voicemail.

CHAPTER 124

•MPILO

I don't know what is happening with me these days but it's annoying really. I even went to see the prison doctor and she gave me something but I still vomit every morning and I now have a problem of food smelling foul. I don't know why I suddenly have so much sleep. I am forever napping and trust me I sleep throughout the night no problems, maybe it's cause we don't have much to do inside here. Even as we speak I just woke up from a great nap.

"TaMpilo" the warden's voice disturbs me

"Sure Vader," I say recognizing his voice as I am still laying on the bed

"Shadis yakho baba (here are the things you asked for)" he says and I get up and go get them. He hands me a plastic bag and walks away. I go sit on my bed and see what is inside, I smile as I see everything I asked for. I put the packs of cigarettes under my pillow and take out the chicken wings and mageu. This has become my combo, I can't survive days without having this snack I am just super obsessed with them. I feel a strong gaze on me I quickly stop eating and look at my father.

"You will make me choke on my food, why ungihlahlele amehlo? (Why are you staring at me)" I ask

"You know Mpilo I have had the time to think about life and all the decisions I made and I am ashamed," he says and I sigh

"Good for you" I respond

"Listen Mpilo, you and I have always been close, we had an understanding and we weren't just father and son but we were friends too. I was a selfish man and I realize that now. I should have let you be and have a life of your own, even with your siblings I should have let you be different and embrace it as a parent" he adds

"Trust me that's not how you feel you are just stuck in this place," I say

"Even if I can be released I would still feel this way, this experience has taught me what is important" he murmurs and I chuckle

"Forget it Khaya, you and I are going to die in here, I have already made peace with it I suggest you do the same"

"I know that Mpilo and right now we only have each other so it would be best if we hold hands and find a way to survive" he suggests

"I would rather die than do anything with you again. You don't have integrity, you don't know what you stand for and I am done with you. I've said it before and being in jail won't change my mind, you should know this about me" I say and he sighs

"I just hope one day you will find it in your heart to forgive me," he says

"You can die in peace Khaya I don't hold anything against you," I say opening the bottle of mageu.

1 week later

•AFRIKA

Emotions were high as my family dropped me off at Lanseria Airport, my mother was both hurt and worried about me and the baby but I promised that if it gets tough I will send the baby to her, but I don't think I will want my child away from me, no matter how hard it gets I will hold on and fight. Sbahle came through for me and got me registered and I will be starting with classes on Monday, I have the whole weekend to be familiar with Cape Town. This new chapter in my life is dedicated to my baby and her future. It was my first time on a plane and it's a nice experience but the flight wasn't that long 2 hours I was landing. I find Sbahle waiting for me with a huge smile on her face, we hug tight and thank God that I have her in my corner. The entire drive to her place has me looking outside the window admiring the beauty of the mother city. Everything is just so perfect and breathtaking. We arrive in a complex and I can tell only financially stable people can afford to stay here.

"Wow this place is amazing," I say

"You are going to lose it once you see the view from our lounge balcony," she says and I smile

"Thank you so much for everything Sbahle," I say

"That's what friends do babe and Mpilo once asked me to look out for you and that's what I intend to do," she says and the mention of his name makes me emotional.

"Thank you I appreciate it," I say

"Come let's get inside," I hold her hand stopping her

"Before I walk in the house, I want to tell you something," I say and she narrows her eyes

"You are scaring me Afrika, is everything okay?" She asks and I take a deep breath and move the T-shirt I am wearing up to show her my growing bump. Her hands move to her mouth, she is shocked. She stares at it for the longest time, her hand moves and she places it on my belly.

"Does he know?" She asks

"He wouldn't give me a chance to tell him Bahle. Only my family and you now know about this and please don't tell your family" I say and she nods vigorously

"Oh Afrika," she says and pulls me to her and we hug.

"I am scared I won't lie but I am going to do this," I say

"You have me you have your family. We are going to do it. When you are comfortable you will tell my mother about until then I will keep it to myself," she says

"I appreciate this,"

"You are the bravest girl I know. I wouldn't be able to pick up the pieces if I were you, I swear," she says

"I don't have a choice it's not just me now," I reply

"I can't believe I am going to be an aunt, I hope it's a girl," she says and I laugh

"Me too hey, I can imagine her wearing pink skirts and all," I say

"How far along are you."

"I haven't been to the doctor babe," I say

"Okay then we will Google the best OB/GYN around here," she suggests

"Yeah I have to or my mother will come to get me and drag me to the doctor," we both laugh

"Come let's get inside, I will order some food while you shower," I nod and we both get out and take my luggage out of the boot.

•LETHABO

I am driving to the meeting my uncle organized with my father, I am driving with my mom and we are not talking to each other and I am glad for it. I don't want to be exchanging words with her regarding my wife. I finally get to my uncle's place and I see his car parked

and one I don't recognize I guess it's my father's. I walk out of the car first and she follows. As we get to the door I let her walk in first to make it hard for her to try and walk away soon as she sees my father. She gets in the lounge and stops abruptly, she attempts to walk back but I give her a chilling look.

"Please get in the lounge and sit down," I say seriously

"Lethabo why are you doing this to me," she asks tears already shining in her eyes

"Mama it's time I knew what happened between the both of you its time," I say and she shakes her head.

"It's the past please," she says

"Mama get in and sit down because if you walk out that door I don't want to ever see you in my life," I give her an ultimatum.

"Lethabo," she whispers and I step aside

"Your choice," I say and she wipes her face and walks in the lounge and I exhale and follow her. My eyes land on the man that looks exactly like me, I never thought I would see my reflection anywhere else but the mirror. He stands up and his tear falls

"I can't believe this," he says and holds out his hand for a shake I swallow the huge lump in my throat away and take his hand. He nods vigorously while crying. The moment goes on for a while until he settles down and we both sit. I am next to my mom and he is on his own while my uncle is on the individual sofa.

"Ousi, you have been mistreating your son's wife and Lethabo and I thought that it might be because of the way his family treated you in the past, so maybe if we could talk about it and you receive an apology you will heal and learn how to love and support Lethabo and maKopano (Amanda)" my uncle says

"Abuti why did you go behind my back to do this?" My mother asks

"We need a way forward we can't remain like this, Lethabo can't live like this no" he adds

"I am sorry but what do you mean when you say the way my family treated her?" My father asks and my mom starts crying. My uncle and I exchange looks

"Let's not say anymore, maybe you could tell us what happened," my uncle asks

"Your mother and I were fresh from college when we got our first jobs, I was always reserved and I preferred the woman I dated to be the same. She was for the first few months but she started befriending the other teachers at the school where she worked and everything started changing. She would drink the whole weekend with them and hop from shebeen to shebeen, I tried talking to her about it but she would tell me that she is enjoying her youth days, and I let her be because I didn't want to control her. She would come back to my place drunk and she would start fighting me telling me I am uptight, but I loved her so we would talk about the next day and be okay but the next weekend she got back to it. Months later it wasn't alcohol it was men, she started cheating with guys she meets at these parties with her friends, from politicians to principals. My family would tell about it all but I would defend her and ask her about it in private and she would assure me that they are just friends and I believed her because I loved her, but one day I saw it for myself and it was disgusting, I will not repeat the events of that night because I don't want you to look at your mother differently. I decided to let her go so she can enjoy her life. I got a woman who is as reserved as me and wanted the same things as me, and 2 years later I paid lobola for her, your mother found out and resurfaced, I couldn't hurt the woman who put me back after your mom broke me so as much as I loved her I had to stay clear of her, but that very night we became intimate and she asked me to leave my wife for her and I said I would think about it but I never did weeks passed and she said she thinks she is pregnant I gave her money for the doctor and she went there when she got back from the doctor to tell me the results she first asked if I was going to leave my phone and after careful consideration, I told her no and that's when she told me she wasn't pregnant. I never knew about you Lethabo, I only suspected after your uncle contacted me and I wanted to be definite so I begged him

and that's when he told me the truth. Your father and I knew each other back then but we weren't close as your mom and I worked and lived in my neighborhood." He explains and my mom is crying hysterically. I have not shed a single tear. I look at my mom
"Ousi this is not what you told us," my uncle says
"Is he telling the truth?" I ask not looking at her
"I am so sorry Lethabo, I was just ashamed of my past life, I didn't want you to look at me like that," she says and I chuckle
"You gave my wife a tough time, you judged her and made her feel worthless for something she did to provide for her sister where else you did almost the same thing for fun, what kind of human being are you," I ask fuming
"I was jealous Lethabo, jealous oh how you fought for her and to be with her. How you constantly stood your ground and defended her until you married her I had wished that your father did that for me Lethabo I am sorry" she cries
"I can't believe you, you made me believe that he was the monster and you were the angel. You are evil mama" I say and stand up. I just don't want to cry in front of them.
"Lethabo can we have a word please" my father
"I just need a minute. Can you please ask my uncle to bring you to my house later" I say and walk out.

•AMANDA

I just got back from driving school, I need to get my license soon as the company will soon arrive, it's part of the new contract now, some clients want to meet far and in their own spaces so Ndlovukazi saw it fit to have my transportation and so I always make it on time. The petrol, maintenance will be paid for by the company. I just said I will pay for my license. My pay is also good now my husband and I will afford much more and we've already started an education trust for our son. I get home and my mom and Kopano are sitting down on the carpet with the door open for air.

"This sun is blazing," I say

"Too much, I even had to remove his clothes, before he could have a heat stroke"

"Plus he hates heat like his father this one," I say picking him up and kissing him, the toothless smile steals my heart each time

"You must get a floor fan for your house but don't put it close to him, it will cause blocked nose and flu" she suggests

"I will get it tomorrow when we get to town"

"Afrika called," she says

"Is she okay?" I ask

"Not 100% but she sounds better, to tell the truth. I miss her but I guess this was exactly what she needed" she says smiling

"That's good Sibho I will also call her later," I say

"She says she found a doctor and she will go see him before her classes on Monday," she says and relief floods through me

"Finally thank God," I say

"I said the same thing to her, it's time she starts antenatal and takes her supplements" ma adds

"This is the first step to her healing. Soon as she hears that heartbeat nothing will matter more than her baby" I say

"That's very true, and I am glad she isn't alone in that place"

"Me too and mama we can't stay long, I want my husband to find us home when he gets back from the meeting," I say

"Yes you should get going babes" she stands up and starts packing my son's things.

CHAPTER 125

•LETHABO

To say I was shattered wouldn't do justice to how I feel. I just couldn't believe that my mother would be such an evil person. To continuously lie about my father when the poor man didn't know that I didn't exist and to hate and judge Amanda when she lived the same life as her, what kind of human being does that. When I got home my wife was already back and she could see that I wasn't okay, she comforted me until I was calm enough to explain everything to her.

"Your poor father"

"I know Ama. I grew up thinking that I wasn't good enough hence he hated me and rejected me when in fact he knew nothing about me"

"I am sorry, this is just cruel"

"I just want to know why she constantly goes to church and prays when she is so vile"

"I know you are hurting baby but she is still your mom so don't judge her harshly please"

"She doesn't mind doing it to you so I believe she won't mind being in the receiving end of"

"Lethabo no we don't return evil with evil. Don't turn yourself into someone you not"

"That woman stole my life from me baby do you understand"

"I understand that very well, and I can feel your pains because I am your wife, you have the opportunity to get to know your father now and build a relationship with him. Yes it would have been nice growing up with him but you turned out well, the whole experience made you become a great man, and in turn, you are the most amazing father to your son, use this opportunity fill-up the void you've always had growing up"

"That's very true"

"I am not saying forget about the pain your mom caused I am just saying don't find yourself focusing too much on it because it will end up consuming you" she adds and I nod vigorously

"I don't know what I would be without you my wife,"

"Remember that" I laugh and kiss her.

"Baby do you know I don't even know his name," I say and we both laugh.

"Soon as he gets here you will have a chance to ask everything"

"Yeah".

•EMILY

We have fully moved in and it's not so bad, or I guess I just had to snap out of my comfort zone and just stop pressurizing my husband and support him through this, I mean I am the one who got us into this mess after all. The only person making me uncomfortable in this house is his aunt, I don't know why this crazy woman had to move here. I don't want to complain and seem like I am trying to start drama so I'll just suck it up.

"Out of all the curvy girls, Mzwa went out and said I wanted that vasplank," she says behind me and I sigh

"I didn't know you were racist,"

"Me? Racist? Never"

"Why are you always on my case Sma?" I ask annoyed

"I just don't like you Emelitjie,"

"I have never given you any reason to dislike me so I am shocked,"

"You gave me a valid reason when you lied," I narrow my eyes

"Lie about what?"

"You might have fooled everyone but not me. I have the 3rd eye," she says and I just roll my eyes.

"Can you just get to the damn point already,"

"I know for a fact that you lied against Afrika, I know you have something to do with all of this, I haven't pointed my finger to it but I know there's something," she says and my heart starts beating fast, it's taking everything in me to keep calm.

"You are being ridiculous, why would I do anything in the family I am married in and have children, you should stop drinking alcohol it's starting to affect your brain" she laughs

"You can say everything but I know what I am saying"

"I don't have time for this nonsense," I say trying to walk away but she grabs my arm, and brings her mouth to my ear.

"You will slip up soon Emily and I will be there" she whispers in my ear and then leaves. I let out a deep sigh and band my small fist on the countertop and damn it stings. What am I going to do? God, this is going to blow up in my face. What have I gotten myself into, fuck!

•AMANDA

My husband is always available for me when I am going through something and he never slacks but goes above and beyond each time to make me better and get through everything. It's time I take a stand and be there for him like a wife should, undivided attention. What he is going through is a lot and painful. I don't even want to touch on the reason his mother has been a bitch towards me. I am not going to even entertain it but I am going to support Lethabo through this whole thing. His father arrived minutes ago so I fixing some finger foods and drinks. I walk back to the lounge and they are laughing. I place the tray on the coffee table.

"I will be in the other room," I say.

"No baby join us please" I smile and take a seat next to him.

"You have a very beautiful home," his father says

"Thank you, you should have seen it before the renovations, it was a dump no one wanted, but my wife had a vision and we are here now"

"Always listen to your wife" and they both laugh

"I don't want any stress, I'm a peaceful man," Lethabo says and I give him a look while his dad chuckles

"So, have you two had a white wedding?"

"Not yet, we wanted to get a house and everything we are going to need before we can spend money on a wedding," I respond

"That's smart, I wish young couples can do this, acquire assets first before getting into debt,"

"That's very true," I say

"So do you have other children?" My husband asks

"Unfortunately not, my wife had problems"

"I am sorry to hear that, so she won't have a problem with me?" He smiles

"Not at all, she was more excited than me, even wanted to come to the meeting just to see you. She is going to go crazy when I tell her you have a wife and son" I say and we smile.

"She sounds like a lovely lady,"

"She is that's why I didn't take our inability to have children too hard. I am blessed with an angel," he says with a smile, it's clear that this man loves his wife.

"I know what you mean. A great wife is everything," my husband says looking at me.

"That's very true and Lethabo I am very sorry for not being in your life"

"You don't have to apologize you didn't know about me,"

"Even so there were probably times in your life where you needed me,"

"I did but I can't hold it against you now that I know the truth,"

"Let me apologize for one more thing. My wife and I are going to hover around you and your family. We are going to want to be around for everything concerning you. I just hope you won't mind," he says

"It's no problem really,"

"But do tell us if we get too much," we laugh and his phone rings and he answers.

"My dear...yes...he does...he has a wife and son...calm down dodo...okay I will ask them...yes...bye," we hear the one-sided conversation. He shakes his head.

"You see she's already doing it, she wants to invite you over for dinner next weekend,"

"Will she survive till then?" My husband asks

"Definitely not, but she will hold it in,"

"Okay,"

"I just have to take a picture of you all so she can see you".

As great as this is we are going to have a problem. Lethabo's mother will fight his stepmother for playing mother hen. I just pray this is not the case. I say to myself as a conversation between the two continues. I won't lie it's weird since two versions of Lethabo but at least I know he will still look mighty fine even as an older man. I thought the was going to be some awkwardness but the two are hitting it off pretty well no hassles.

•MZWAKHE

I won't lie but being at home removed the stress I had. I am just glad that Emily has stopped whining and complaining about everything, she was honestly starting to annoy the hell out of me. My mom moved back to the main bedroom after Changing the mattress though and we got the second biggest bedroom she was using with Afrika, my girls use their aunt's bedroom since it's upstairs, we didn't want them down there with my aunt she is not the kind of person I want around my children but since she is here I need to find ways to keep them from her. My phone rings and it's a number I don't recognize.

"Yes," I say

"Mzwa," my father's voice says

"What can I do for you?"

"Son I know I was never a good father to you and for that, I am so sorry, I wish I can turn back the hands of time and right all my wrongs" I laugh

"Are you dying?"

"No Mzwakhe I am not"

"Why the sudden change of heart?"

"I've just had time to think about everything and I realized that I was never a good person" he adds

"No dad you realize that you are going to spend the rest of your life inside and you want someone outside to help you," I say and he sighs

"I promise that is not the reason why, I promise,"

"You never do anything without a reason, and everything you do no matter how small has to benefit you in some way," he sighs

"Not this time,"

"You are locked up with you favorite son, I don't understand what you want from a pussy like me after all you did say I couldn't be made from your loins," I remind him

"Mzwakhe, please,"

"No baba I am done being your puppet. I almost lost myself and everyone because I wanted you to see me well no more." I say and hung up before he can say more

•AFRIKA

Cape Town is beautiful no lie, I am going to enjoy living down here and raising my child here, my mom calls me a few times a day just to find out how I am doing and I appreciate

her so much. On the other hand, Sbahle has been taking care of us even though she is extra, she's already registered us for pregnancy yoga and I am not excited at all, I am just doing it because she seems to want to do it real bad. The first day at school was a drag but at least I didn't get lost trying to find auditoriums because I was tagging along with a classmate of mine. It's just after 2pm and I don't have any more classes so I make my way to the student parking lot where Bahle is parked ready to drive me to the OB/GYN. I get in the car and she places the phone down

"Are you hungry?" She asks and I roll my eyes

"No love I just want to go to the doctor," I say

"Yes we are seeing our baby, I am so excited," she says

"I am nervous out of my mind friend" I admit

"It's going to be okay Afrika, I promise," she says and starts the engine. The drive to the doctor is short and my nerves shoot higher. We get in and we are told to go right in as it's our appointment time. We walk in and a black young doctor seats behind the desk in her white coat. It's always nice to see a young black woman do well for herself, I honestly thought she was older but by the look of things she is in her mid-thirties.

"Afrika, welcome," she says standing up

"Thank you doctor, this is my friend Sbahle," I introduce them and they exchange pleasantries. She asks me a few questions and I answer her.

"I just want to know how I got pregnant while on the shot" she smiles

"They are not 100% safe, and you probably didn't wait a while after taking it before you had sexual intercourse," she says

"That's true"

"Come let's have a look at the baby" she leads us to the bed and I pull my T-shirt up and jeans down a bit, she applies the cold gel on my tummy and starts, we all look at the monitor and a loud heartbeat fills the room but something is confusing why is it showing two babies I narrow my eyes and look at the doctor.

"We have two of them in here," she says

"Oh my God, two?" Bahle says and for a second my heart stopped, but I move my eyes back to the screen and there they are, my babies, I am going to be a mother, it feels more real now, the sound of both their heartbeats melts my heart, I can't contain my tears. I can't believe they are growing inside of me.

"They are really in there?" I ask

"Yes and they are healthy and growing, I don't see any problem with them but they are fraternal twins each is in their placenta, see here" she points to the screen and explains. I honestly can't believe this, I thought I was having one, I am scared but this moment is everything to me, now I have 2 reasons to work harder.

"So it could be different sexes?" I ask

"Yes Afrika, most cases fraternal twins are always boy and girl, it's very rare to get boy-boy or girl-girl fraternal twins"

"Oh my God, a little you and a little Mpilo. I can just see all the cuteness, oh my friend" she takes my hand and wipes my tears with the other. The mention of his name hurts me. He was supposed to be doing this with me but he won't be here to even see they grow. The doctor prints out the sonograms and hands them to me. I can't keep my eyes off it. My babies. I notice the EDD (Estimated Delivery Date) and I do a quick mental count and see that they were conceived the very same night I gave Mpilo my body in Mpumalanga. No wonder I gained weight after that trip. She tells me the do's and doesn't but my mind is not here and I am thankful that Sbahle is listening to everything.

CHAPTER 126

•AFRIKA

Two, two children at once, one was scary enough but two is just terrifying, where will I even begin, I won't lie this just changed everything for me. I need a solid plan and I need it now. I have to start preparing for them. They will be here in a few months; I am going to need a nanny one I can trust and one who knows children. I called my mom and told her and she just panicked more and asked me to come back home, but I explained that I will be fine and if things get harder I will surely tell her and ask for help but for now I am going to do the best I can for my children. It's been a week since I found out about them and with each passing day I connect and bond with them. I am in my bedroom wearing only a sports bra and shorts, I have belly buds on playing them their father's voice notes, I want them to hear his voice. I play them his favorite music too. Bahle walks in with a plastics and takeaway paper bag.

"You back?" I say

"Yep I am sorry I was gone for long, I got lost" I laugh

"Why didn't you use maps?" I ask

"I wanted to see if I've mastered the way but clearly I haven't," she said

"You will get the hang of it soon"

"Definitely, I got you some goodies" she hops in next to me

"What did you get?"

"Everything coz I don't know what you like, you never have cravings you never have morning sicknesses, you are just one lucky woman Afrika," she says and I laugh

"They can sense that I am going through a lot already, they are being considerate for Mommy," I say and she smiles

"How does it feel? To know you are growing two human beings inside of you?"

"It's scary as hell, but magical to know that they are in there, knowing that I am responsible for them just changes everything, it's no longer about me anymore but them too. Everything I do must be safe for them. It's crazy how life changes that quick" I say

"I can just imagine really. You are going to make a great mother to them, I just wish Mpilo was here"

"I wish for that every day. Not a day passes without me trying his phone, but now the number is no longer in use"

"Friend remember what the doctor said, you mustn't stress yourself" I sigh

"Yeah. I just wish everything was different"

"Just focus on baking those two and everything will fall into place"

"That's very true. I need to start preparing for their arrival"

"We going to start looking at things"

"Definitely, now let's eat kids, thanks aunty," I say taking out the food from the paper bag

•AMANDA

We went to have dinner with Lethabo's father and stepmother and she is such a darling, I don't think I've ever met anyone so warm and welcoming, I just wonder why God didn't bless her womb. She is excited to have a son and grandson and is way excited to have someone to go to the spa and salon with. I am excited for my husband to have found his father and gained another mother who is genuinely happy to have him as a son. I came to see my mom just to see how she's doing you know, I don't want her feeling alone. She decided to start working even on Saturdays just to keep her mind off things. I walk in and she is in the lounge counting money.

"Business is booming huh?"

"Yes opening on Saturday's was a good idea."

"I am so proud of you mama. You are an inspiration, proving that a person can change and become better than who they used to be."

"Thank you my babes."

"So I just came to check up on you, before Lethabo's father and his wife come by."

"Oh, they are coming over?"

"Yes, they just want to get to know us and I can't blame them they missed years and years of Lethabo's life so they are trying to make up for lost time"

"That's very sweet of them, I just hope your mother in law doesn't see this is some sort of betrayal" I sigh

"Exactly ma, it's just so crazy coz my husband doesn't even want to talk to her, she calls and calls but he won't hear her"

"He still feels hurt and he has every right to be. She hurt him. Allow him to feel and once he is ready he will talk to her"

"I hope so"

"How much is a plane ticket to Cape Town?"

"I am not sure, I also feel like I need to go see her but with everything happening for my husband I don't want to leave him"

"It's okay babes, I will go you stay and be there for your family, you stepped up a lot for your sister, live your life and let me do this"

"Thanks mama. I am just so worried, being pregnant with one baby is hard enough so imagine twins, on the other hand, she has school, now I seriously wish she never left"

•MPILO

Shit is getting serious, I don't know what is going on with me and the doctor still can't find anything. I am starting to doubt this damn doctor. Right now I wish I was a free man I would go to the best doctors and they would have answers if I wasn't careful of what I eat I would think I ingested poison and it's slowly eating through me. I get up from kneeling and rinse my mouth.

"Did you get anyone pregnant Mpilo?" My father asks

"What makes you say that?"

"You are obviously experiencing morning sicknesses and these cravings you keep on having. I was the same when your mother was pregnant with Mzwa" he says and my heart stops

"Nah I didn't knock up anyone" I say not sure of what I am saying. I once joked about her being pregnant and she was gaining a lot of weight and I have always nudded inside of her from the very beginning of our lovemaking experience I never used plastics with her. Fuck she even said she wanted to tell me something important on the phone and when she came here, what if she wanted to tell me that she is expecting our baby.

"Your face says otherwise, and with all that is happening to you lately I would definitely bet my money on it"

"The only problem is you don't have money," I say go stand by the bars locking us inside and think about Afrika. I need to ask Razor to send someone to keep an eye on her and see if she is pregnant or not coz if she is then everything changes for real.

•LETHABO

My father and I are braaing and having beers while my wife and stepmother sit on the camp chairs having wine, we are having a chilled Saturday afternoon with them like we did last night at their home. I am really happy to have him in my life and the fact that he wants to always be around me and my family proves that he wants the same thing. The gate opens and my mom walks in. I sigh and look at her intensely, she finally reaches us

"Sanibonani," she says and everyone greets her back but me

"What are you doing here?" I ask

"Lethabo please ngwanaka (my child)" she begs

"What more lies do you want to tell me, you feel like it's not enough that you kept me away from my father for your selfish reasons?"

"I know what I did was wrong but please hear me out please"

"Amanda baby let's go fix the salad, dodo please go check on your grandson I think he is awake," mam'Flora says and I know it's to give my mom and I privacy. They all go to the house and I am left with this woman I don't recognize anymore.

"What you did was pure evil," I say in a low voice

"I know and I regret it with all my heart"

"If my uncle didn't dig deeper and plan the meeting would you have told me the truth?"

"I won't lie, I would have never mentioned it and I am sorry son, I was selfish and evil for doing this to you and your father. I am glad you have each other now and I want you to know that from the bottom of my heart I am sorry for everything. Please find it in your heart to forgive me. I am praying to God to cleanse my heart so I can be a good mother to you and Amanda I am really sorry ngwanaka" she continues

"I am not yet ready to let you back in mama, you hurt me and my wife so much. Right now when I look at you I feel angry and disappointed. You are no longer the superwoman I always believed you were, but you are the reason why I didn't have my father in my life"

"Believe me I am sorry I promise to work on myself"

"You do that but for now I need some space really, I will reach out once I am ready"

"That's okay son, but know that I am sorry and I love you Lethabo laka" she says and walks towards the gate. It's going to take me some time to see her as my hero again we have a lot to work on before we get there again.

•MZWAKHE

I am with my mother and aunt having drinks by the pool, the weather is beautiful, and for the first time in my life I am enjoying my aunt's company, she has jokes for day and I can see that my mom has forgotten about our problems a while.

"Go get my cigarettes and lighter on the table in the kitchen," Sma says and I stand up and walk to the house wiping my tears from all the jokes she has been cracking. I notice my wife in the dining room and she is whispering on the phone. I walk in and she doesn't notice me. Who is she talking to whispering like this?

"Pa, I am honestly scared to be in this house now coz Mzwa's aunt is watching me like a hawk, she already suspects me and I am scared I will slip up and she will find out that I framed Afrika, imagine what the Mdlalose's would do to me...don't say that...I wish I listened to ma and stopped this revenge thing because as it stands I am the one in the firing line here...my brother wouldn't have wanted me to do this...you are not helping Pa... whatever bye" she hangs up and looks back and jumps a bit. At this point, I am fuming with anger.

"Hey love, how long have you been standing there," she asks failing to look at me in the eyes

"Long enough"

"I was just having a meaningless fight with my dad you know how he can get," she says and I laugh

"You call sending my brother to jail and framing an innocent girl meaningless?" I ask and she closes her eyes

"Mzwa, baby listen to me," she says coming towards me and tries to touch me

"Get your hands off me Emily" I shout and start shaking coz of the anger I am feeling

"Baby please"

"Don't baby me you snitch, don't you dare, after everything we have been through you do this to us" I roar and she walks back. I grab my mother's vase on the table and throw it to her direction and she dodges it and it hits the wall and breaks

"How could you Emily?" I say walking towards her and she tries to run but I quickly grab her and pin her to the wall.

"Mzwakhe what are you doing to her" my mom shouts behind me and Sma comes to remove me from her. I am crying at this point, I am shaking so bad I want to hurt her

"Mzwa what is going on, why would you manhandle her like that" my mother asks shaking me

"Tell my mother why Emily, talk"

"I am so sorry mama," she says

"For what Em what's going on? You are scaring me"

"Mzwakhe please" she cries

"Emily speak or I will make you" I sneer and she jumps

"Afrika was telling the truth about what happened with regards to the events leading to the arrest" she whispers and my mother puts her hands on her head

"I knew it, I knew Afrika wouldn't have done that to Mpilo. I told you white trash that you will never get away with it" my aunt screams and I sit down and bury my head in my hands

"Oh Emily how could you, nkosiyami"

"I am really sorry Ndlovukazi I swear I can explain"
