



LOVE
CHANGES
EVERYTHING
True Love still exists

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**eBooks
Teach**

This Novel provide it

Team's

1

Love! They say it's a complex set of emotions behaviours and beliefs associated with strong feelings of affection protectiveness warm and respect for another person. But to me it's just a four lettered word that means nothing.

Chapter 1

He stumbled into my room drunk as usual and the first thing he does is call my name. I don't answer he's throwing things on the floor am sure according to him am hiding under the lotions and soaps. I am actually under the bed with my hand covering my mouth so that I don't make noise while tears are streaming off my eyes. I can only see his shoes that are full of mud since its raining

outside. I see a different pair of shoes walking into the room and that could only mean one thing that's my mother.

As usual she's begging him to go to bed but no he wants to see me before he sleeps am sure he brought one of his 'clients'. Am silently sobbing under the bed with my fingers crossed hoping he doesn't look under the bed because if he finds out am hiding from him there will be hell to pay

"Where is she Nadia? Where's my daughter" he yelled am shaking what if my mother sells me out. I know once he starts shouting she's going to give in.

"Thapelo just got to bed please" mother pleaded she was even on her knees.

"I asked you a question! Did she go to see her boyfriend" he asked I don't even have a boyfriend. "Where the hell is she Nadia?"

"Thapelo I am begging you just go to bed" she begged him until he finally left the room mother follows him then comes back in but this time closing the door. She kneels down

and my face meet hers. Her eyes are all red and swollen.

"Its ok nana you can come out now" she said and I shook my head what if I come out and he's standing by the door.

"He's sleeping nana you're safe now" she said and I slowly crawled out. Looked around and he really wasn't there. I attacked my mum with a hug and cried in her arms.

"Why does he hate me so much" I cried "Am I even his daughter because I seriously doubt"

"Don't talk like that Amahle" she said

"Why won't we just go to the police?"

"Because he's your father who is going to support us when he goes to jail" she answered.

Why does life have to be so unfair? Why does my father treat me like am not his daughter. I lost my virginity at 14 I didn't even know the guy but one thing I know he came to our house with my dad. He literally forced himself on me and ever since that day my dad turned me into a sex slave. He'd bring different men every night when my mother would try and

stop him he'd beat her so bad that she'd spend a week unable to walk. And when I'd refuse to do what he wants he'd lock me up in my room until I listened to him. Sometimes I question myself if God really exists because if he did then why is he letting me suffer like this.

My name is Amahle Zungu 17 years old daughter of Nadia and Thapelo Zungu. I never had siblings according to my father I was a mistake but at least my mother loves me or whatever that word means. According to my mother her and my father used to be so in love but everything changed when she gave birth to a female child and that is me causing my father to be de-throne yes I was born royalty. My mother says dad wasn't always like this but I find it hard to believe because this man is the devil himself.

The following morning I woke up cleaned the house. My father thinks sending a girl child to school is a waste of money so instead I stay at home and do chores. Then spend most of my time in my room since am not allowed to

have any friends. My mother works as a cleaner in an office downtown and my dad works at a Rail way company. I found some money on top of the fridge and a note saying I should use the money to buy bread. I finished cleaning then took a shower and put the kettle on the stove turned in on low that way I'd have enough time to go to the store and back.

I got to the shops and bought bread. Then headed home I'd see people holding hand and playing around. Just like in the TV

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how I wish too one day have that feeling. I got home and prepared tea for myself while watching the repeat of Scandal on Etv. Just like that the day was over that's when the horror starts when my dad brings one of his 'clients'. Someone of them aren't harsh they just do their thing and leave but others are too rough but I just close my eyes and just hope they finish fast. Every month three months my mother would take me to the hospital to test if I don't have any STD's. Why can't we just get him arrested I mean we can

find a way to survive I can even find a job but no mother is scared of what people will say. What about me? I have to entertain grown men. Men old enough to be my father.

It was a Sunday morning and I was woken up by the alarm. I got out of bed and put on my pink gown checked the calendar and it was the 4th of April 2013 the day I lost everything. I brushed my teeth and headed to the kitchen. The house was quieter than usual and I couldn't find my mother anywhere in the house so I figured maybe she's still sleeping which is unlike her. Because Sundays are church days.

"Mum!" I knocked on her bedroom door since its Sunday am pretty sure dad is already at the bar by now. I let myself in and am met by her feet hanging in the air I rubbed my eyes but no am not dreaming. She hung herself why would she do that? Why would she leave me in this wicked world by myself? I take the letter on the bed and read it.

Amahle

Am sorry am child but it was the only option! I have tried to be strong but I can't anymore this is too much for me. Please forgive me my child and I hope one day you'll find love and happiness. Again am sorry!

Mum

That's it? That's all she's got to say for herself? Killing herself was the only option? What about me? Didn't she think about me before she killed herself? Why would she do this to me I also can't do this anymore but I have never tried to kill myself. I heard the gate opening and that could only mean my father is back. I put the letter back on the bed and rushed out but my father caught me on the passage how come I didn't hear the door closing.

"Amahle!" He called I wiped the tears off my cheeks before turning. Well its a four roomed house. I slowly walked to the dining and stood by the door in case there's any need to run out of the room.

"Yes father!"

"Where's your mother" he asked and I felt the tears form in my eyes. "Am talking to you Amahle" he yelled and I just stood there with tears running down my cheeks.

"Since when are you deaf Amahle" he asked and I just turned and headed to the kitchen. He followed me there I had my back against the sink and he was standing by the door he shook his head and unbuckled his belt and took it out.

"Please don't hit me!"

"I see you've forgotten that am your father" he said charging towards me. I closed my eyes as the belt hit my shoulder going to my back while pleading him to stop.

I don't know when I reached for the knife that was in the sink. I remember continuously stabbing him. I stopped and looked at him God what have I done? I looked at myself through the fridge mirror and I had blood all over my clothes. I just killed my own father I started pacing up and down. What am I going to do? I don't want to jail am only 17. I rushed to my room changed my clothes and wiped the blood off my hands and face.

Rushed to my mother's room and searched her bags and all my father's all together I found R2 454. I packed a few clothes and ran out got to the train station and booked a ticket to Pretoria I don't care where am going or where am going to stay but am getting out of this place. At 17 and am already a murder I cried my heart out on the train I have lost both my parents in one day. I don't even know any relative which means I have no one but myself.

I might have fallen asleep because I was woken up by the train marshals. I looked around and my bag was gone thank Good I had the money in my jacket pocket but all my clothes were gone are there not any good people out there? Where to from here? Where do I go what do I do. People are looking at me like my head is written I killed my father Do I regret it? No! He deserves to die after all that pain I went through because of him and I swear if he was alive I'd go back and kill him. He's the reason my mother killed herself I also hate her for leaving me. In fact I

hate everyone I don't want anybody near me.
I'd rather die than accept help from a person.

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I asked for directions to the cheapest hotel nearby and I got this hotel that charged R50

per night. It's not that bad let's hope its going to last me until I find a job or something. It's just a tiny room but it'll do for now. The following morning I got out and went job hunting and probably some clothes. Life wasn't what I expected hey finding a job wasn't that easy. Days went by and I was running out of the little money I had. Finally I got maid at this house and they agreed to pay me R1 500 a month so I just go there and clean up the place and that's it. The money wasn't enough since I had to pay for the hotel room do I ended up doing some things that I was no proud of I had no choice but to get in the streets ended up selling my body just to survive which I hated myself for everyday I woke up.

At first I'd go back home and try myself to sleep but I told myself no! I have been through worse and am going to build a company and make something for myself. I started saving money. I was 18 by then and didn't care how I made money as long as I didn't sleep on an empty stomach. But not forgetting to save money. I was now on R27

000 and I was ready to start my own business until I went back to the hotel and found all of my things gone. The money gone. The hotel says there were robbed and I was back to square one.

One night I met someone by the side of the road as I was looking for 'clients'. He offered me a lift I told him I was good but he insisted. I had no choice but to tell him that I was 'working'. He looked shocked at first then asked how much I charged. I felt so disgusted in myself

"R200 per night" I looked down

"Get in!" He said and opened the car door and entered I was wearing a very tiny purple dress. He would steal glances and shake his head as he drove but I just kept a straight face.

"How old are you" he asked

"20!"

"You don't look 20 how old are you" he said

"18!" I looked down

"Where are you from?"

"Can we not talk about me" I said

"Ok" the whole drive was silent he drove me to this nice place. It was not bad well I have been taken to more beautiful places than this. It wasn't that bad a double story house two bedroomed. We got in and he disappeared for a while then came back with a jacket and handed it to me.

"Thanks!" I said as I put it on well I was cold
"I'm S'bonelo!"

"Pinky!" I answered and he chuckled

"Your birth name is Pinky?"

"Amahle! I'm Amahle" I answered

"Umuhle Amahle! (You're beautiful)"

"Thank you!" I answered

"Coffee or tea"

"Water would be fine" I said

"Here's your money before I forget"

"Thank you!" I answered

"What is a pretty girl like you doing in the streets?"

"Well beauty doesn't pay bills" I said

"Have you tries looking for a job?"

"Would I be selling myself if I had a paying job" I asked

"Ok"

"Are we going to get on with it or what" I asked

"Follow me"

"OK!" I stood up and followed him he lead me to some room

"Honestly it broke my heart when I saw you you can sleep here"

"Why!" I asked

"Because I paid you!"

"Okay then" I answered

"See you in the morning" he said and I looked at him well what's the worst that could happen

"Ok then! Good night" I don't really trust him no person can just be nice without getting something back in return.

The following morning. I woke up and took a shower well this is the first man I've ever slept at his house and nothing happened. I took my bag and walked out of the room. I'm just going to leave before he wakes up. Well that's what I do with the others. I head to the door and it's locked but I can't find the keys.

"So you're going to leave without saying goodbye" said a voice and it's the guy from last night I can't even remember his name.

"Well I don't usually say goodbye"

That's true I leave before they wake up.

"Can you at least stay for breakfast" he asked and I checked my wrist watch it's 6:23am.

"I'd love to but I have to be at work by 7"

"Where do you work" he asked

"Some house I just do the chores then I knock off"

"So what do you do during the day after work" he asked

"Sleep get some rest"

"Oh ok so what if I also need some help around the house the chores" he said

"That would be R1 500 per month but I'll have to come by 10am"

"Cool with me so where do you live" he asked
That's a lot of questions for one day.

"At the hotel near where you picked me up. I really have to get going because I will be late"

"Can I at least give you a lift" he asked

"Why are you helping me?"

"I don't know" he answered

“Ok then let’s get going”

He drove me to my work place and dropped me off there. We exchanged digits he said he’ll call if he needed my services although I don’t know which one. The woman I clean for is just nasty she’s those type that thinks everyone wants to steal from her well I don’t want to steal from her and there’s nothing to steal here. I knocked off at 9am then go back to the hotel to rest.

The stuff at the hotel has become like my family sometimes I even pay a little late but they don’t kick me out well the manager is kind of one of my ‘clients’. I changed into my black track suit and get under the covers. Every time I close my eyes I see the images of me stabbing my father and my mother hanging some time I see her crying for help asking me to help her. I take a sleeping pill so that I can sleep even if it’s during the day.

I’m woken up by my phone 2pm alarm that’s my go and eat alarm. I eat lunch with the workers and the hotel well I am like family to

them now. I go and have lunch then go back to my room. I have to bath and prepare to go to 'work'. I check my phone and I have 4 missed calls from a number I don't recognise. I call it back who knows maybe it's a new client.

Me: Hello!

Voice: It's S'bonelo!

Me: Oh hie! Am sorry I was sleeping

Him: It's ok

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that's my go and eat alarm. I eat lunch with the workers and the hotel well I am like family to them now. I go and have lunch then go back to my room. I have to bath and prepare to go to 'work'. I check my phone and I have 4 missed calls from a number I don't recognise. I call it back who knows maybe it's a new client.

Me: Hello!

Voice: It's S'bonelo!

Me: Oh hie! Am sorry I was sleeping

Him: It's ok what are you doing tonight?

Me: No plans yet why?

Him: I'd like to book you

Me: The whole night?

Him: Yes! How much is that?

Me: R500

Him: Ok then will pick you up at 6pm dress in anything comfortable

Me: Ok

He hung up and what does he mean by anything comfortable? Well I went back to bed I don't have any friend or family. My friends are people from the hotel the cleaners doorman and receptionist. At 6pm I took a shower and dressed up in a black flared dress and gold sandals with my gold sling bag well I have short hair since I can't afford to take myself to the saloon every month at least a haircut doesn't cost much.

Am outside- a text from S'bonelo comes through my phone. I put the R200 from last night in the safe one of the hotel cleaners gave it to me. That's where I keep my money now.

“Going to work Pinky” the receptionist asked well she doesn’t know what I do she knows that I work night shift. She’s a coloured woman in her early 40s.

“Yes ma! See you later” I call all of the ladies here ‘Ma!’ it’s easier than having to memorise their names than the men I call the uncle or baba.

I got out and S’bonelo was already waiting he’s using a different car from the one he had last night. He got out of the car and opened the door for me. Okay!

“Hey Amahle!” he smiled

“Hie!”

“What’s your surname” he asked

“I don’t tell my clients my surname”

“Not even if they ask nicely” He winked he’s cute

“Zungu! Amahle Zungu”

“MaZungu” he started the car then he drove to some restaurant. But before we got out of the car.

“Here’s your money” he handed me R500 well I usually charge R200

“Thank you!”

"Thank you! Don't get out of the car yet" he said as he got out and I did as instructed. He came to my side of the door and opened the door for me. He's a gentleman. We got into the restaurant and he ordered food we ate finally some proper food.

"Are you always this quiet" he asked

"Mostly yes"

"Well you should talk more you look great when smiling" he said

"Thank you"

"Stop thanking me" he said

"Ok!!"

After eating he drove me back to the hotel. I thought he said booking me for the whole night or he wants us to use my hotel room because he'd have to pay more. Again he opened the door for me. I have never brought anyone with me to the hotel this is time first time bringing my clients here.

"Pinky you're back so soon" the reception lady asked

"Yes Ma! And this is S'bonelo my friend"

"Hie young man"

"Evening ma'am" S'bonelo said and I took his hand and pulled him to the lift because I know this lady doesn't stop talking.

"Is that your mother" S'bonelo asked

"My mother is dead let's go" I said as I got out of the lift and took out my room key.

"This is where you live" he asked

"This is me"

"Not bad!" he looked around

I took off my sandals and sat on the bed while he's sitting on the couch he's different from all the clients I have been with.

"So what do you want to do" I asked

"Anything you want to do" he answered

Well he did pay for his services might as well deliver.

"Ok give me minute" I said then walked to the bathroom. I fixed myself up and looked at myself in the mirror.

'We need the money Amahle' I said to myself that's when I shut down my feeling and do whatever I have to do as long as I get the money after all he's already paid. I get out of the bathroom he's still where I left him. I take out my phone and play John Legend- Tonight

put it on repeat. Am dancing for him he's just smiling. If it were the others I'd be naked by now.

"Baby tonight I'll be the best you've ever had I don't wanna brag but I'll be the best you've ever heard" I'm singing along while I give him a lap dance he's smiling like a lot. I bring my face close to his look into his eyes. He's hasn't moved am waiting for him to make the first move. We take something like 3 minutes staring into each other's eyes.

"You're pretty" he whispered

"Thank you" I whisper back

"I told you to stop thanking me"

"Ok" I chuckle

"You're really beautiful Amahle" he said

Are we going to do it or what? Not that am rushing but the sooner we get on with it the sooner he leaves. I try to kiss him first but he shifts back.

"We don't have to" he said

"But that's what I do?"

"I know but it's not necessary" he said

"If you say so what do you want to do then?"

"Cuddle"

"What is to cuddle" I asked

"I want to hold you in my arms"

"All night" I asked

"Yes" he nodded

"Okay!"

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We cuddled all night and it's nice I've never done it before but it's nice. I'm going to cuddle more with my clients. The following morning I woke up and he was still there odd. I quietly got out of bed trying not to wake him up checked the time and it was 6:13am. I usually wake up at exactly six on the dot well I have a 6 am alarm to be precise.

"Do you do that to all your clients" S'bonelo asks with his eyes still closed. "Do you sneak out while your clients are sleeping?"

"Kind of I have to prepare for work" I answer
"You good at keeping time aren't you?"

"Sometimes!" I answer heading to the bathroom but he stops me.

"So are you coming today?"

"Coming where" I ask

I'm not sure what he's talking about.

"You said you can start at 10 remember"

"Yes I'm coming can you send me your address" I say before closing the bathroom door.

He means cleaning his house. I took a shower when I came out he was still in bed isn't he leaving?

"You're still here" I ask

"No I left 10 minutes ago this is just my reflection"

He's got jokes I see.

"You should get ready and get going" I say hoping he'll get out of bed and leave but he's getting comfortable.

"I'm not allowed to even hang out a little?"

"Yes you should leave" I answer well he's a stranger and I trust no one.

"Come on Pinky this isn't how you treat you favourite customer!" he got out of bed.

Since when is he my favourite.

"You can use anything in the bathroom and you're going to go around smelling like me today" I chuckle handing him a towel

"I'd love to go around smelling like you" he winks

"Fine then"

"You should smile more it suits you" he says heading to the bathroom.

Well in my defence there's nothing to smile about. I went to work and as usual I knocked off at 9 then headed to S'bonelo's house he's not there but he told me where to get the keys funny how he's trusting me with his house. I could steal from him if I choose to. His house isn't even dirty this is getting paid for free because there isn't much to do. He's a very clean man because the house is already clean as it is I just did the laundry which wasn't hard because he has a washing machine. I'm not sure if I should enter his bedroom because that's his privacy. So I called him first.

Him: Hello!

Me: Hie what's your surname?

Him: Ngcobo why?

Me: Mr Ngcobo am I allowed in your bedroom?

Him: No don't enter my bedroom. I have a dead person in the closet (He's got a great telephone voice)

Me: Ok cool that's all

Him: I'm just kidding Enhle you may enter (he chuckles)

Me: Ok! Bye!

Him: Don't leave until I come back

Me: Why?

Him: You'll find out when I come back

Me: Fine but don't take long

Him: Ok

I hung up and entered his bedroom you gotta be kidding me. How do you clean a room that is already clean? Within 15 minutes I was done but now I have to wait for him. I went to the dining and waited for him there.

I think I might have fallen asleep on the couch because I was woken up by S'bonelo that's odd because I never sleep during the day unless I take the pills.

“You’re sleeping at work” he smiles
In my defence I was waiting for him.
“I’m sorry!”
“It’s ok I brought lunch” he says handing me
a plastic bag
“You shouldn’t have”
“I wanted to!” he smiles
“I don’t like hand-outs”
“Okay then this costed R42” he says I dig into
my bag and pull out a 50.
“Here you go! Keep the change Mr Ngcobo!”
“Thanks Pinky!” he chuckles
“I should get going”
“So early” he asks it’s like he doesn’t want
me to go and shouldn’t he be at work?

My phone rang and it’s the hotel manager
that could only mean two things he wants his
money or entertainment.

Me: Hello!

Him: Hey Pinky

Me: How are you?

Him: The usual and you?

Me: The usual

Him: What are you doing tonight?

Me: Tonight! Well.....

S'bonelo tapped me.

Me: Can I call you back?

I hung up and tuned to S'bonelo

"What" I ask

"Is that one of your clients?"

"Yeah why" I ask

"I'd like to book you tonight"

"Again? You know I have other 'clients' right"

I ask

"I know but I booked you first in fact for the rest of the month" he smiles

The rest of the month?

"That could cost you a lot of money"

"As long as you promise me to not sell yourself then I'll pay whatever price" he smile-frowns I have noticed he smiles a lot.

"So how much is it going to cost me?"

I looked at him waiting for the punch line but he's not kidding. This could be it the chance to build something for myself and stop all this 'selling myself' to those gross men.

"R50 000" I say keeping a straight face well that's a lot of money but I want to see his reaction

"What are you going to do with R50 000" he chuckled

"For starters I'd rent myself an apartment and start my own company"

"Nice what kind of company" he asks

"A boutique or hair saloon I'm not yet decided"

"You want to be your own boss I see" he nods he seems impressed

"Exactly!"

"Besides what you've told me what are your plans for the future" he asks

"To be most successfully woman in the country

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what are your plans for the future" he asks

"To be most successfully woman in the country in the world"

"What about settling down and having a family" he asks

"Not in my plan but I'll rather be a single parent. A business woman and a mother"

"But the baby is going to ask about his/her father" he says

"I will tell him/her the truth that I went to a sperm company"

"You're joking right? Any man would give you a baby for free I'd give you a baby for free" he says

"That would be great but I know one day you'll come asking for your kid and I don't want that so I'd want a total stranger"

"You're smart at which level did you finish school" he asks

"I never went to school"

"Why? If you don't mind me asking" he says and I sighed heavily.

"My father thought sending a girl child to school is a waste of time and money"

"I'm sorry" he says "So where are your parents?"

"They are both dead!"

The moment I said those word the images of me continuously stabbing my father flashed through my mind. And my mother hanging from the ceiling

"Don't cry!" he says and I chuckled I didn't even realise I was crying why did my mother have to kill herself now I'm selling my body to survive. Why did she have to leave me all by myself in this wicked world?

"I'm sorry" I say wiping the tears off my cheeks.

"It's ok to cry and let it out" he rubs my back

"I'm sorry I'm not usually like this"

"I'm glad you're like this" he chuckles he likes seeing me crying?

After we finished eating I cleaned up I still have to get to the hotel and bath then come back since he 'booked me'.

"Do you have a bank account" S'bonelo asks

"No!"

"Then where do you keep your money" he asks again he seems shocked

"In a safe!"

"That's not safe what if the hotel burns down what are you going to do" he says

"I'll open a bank account ok"

"Do it today in fact I'll drive you now" he orders

S'bonelo is like my guardian angel sent to watch over me but I don't full trust him I don't know why. I mean how can one be so nice?

"I have to go to the hotel bath and change my clothes" I say

"You look fine to me"

"But I need to shower" I reply

"You can use my bathroom I don't mind" he grinned.

"Fine then!"

I took a nice long shower with the hot water hitting my skin now this is living. I swear if I have money I'm going to buy myself a huge house with a huge bathroom.

"Did you die in there" S'bonelo called from outside the bathroom. I was still enjoying the hot water. I came out of the bathroom already dressed.

"I'm sorry!"

"Do me a favour and stop using the word 'I'm sorry' and 'thank you' around me" he says

"What should I say then?"

"Use your words" he answers

"Will try!"

"Good girl" he smiles

He drove me to the bank. That reminds me I don't have an I.D so I can't open a bank account.

"I think me might have a slight problem" I say to S'bonelo as we reached the bank

"What is it?"

"I don't have an I.D" I answer

"Wow!" he sighed as he turned the car around.

"I'm sorry I should have told you when we left you place"

"What did I say about apologizing?" he warns

"I'm..... Where are we going?"

"To get you an I.D" he answers concentrated on the road

"Where? And I can't get one without my parent's"

"Don't worry I'll handle everything" he smiles

Within an hour I had my I.D Amahle Zungu. I don't know how I can ever repay S'bonelo for

this. Next stop FNB bank. I opened my bank account again S'bonelo 'knew' the people there. Who is this guy?

"I'm hungry do you want to get something to eat" he asks but we just ate not long ago.

"Yeah but on one condition"

"I'm listening!" he murmurs

"I'll pay please let me pay"

"Ok if that's what you want" he smile-frowns well that's the least I can do after helping him.

My phone ring while I'm having lunch with S'bonelo and it's the hotel manager I forgot I said I was going to call him.

Me: Hello!

Him: You said you were going to call?

Me: I was but I got a little busy

Him: So what did you say about tonight?

Me: I can't make it I'm sorry (S'bonelo looks at me when I say the sorry word)

Him: Why?

Me: I have another client and I can't bail out now

Him: Who's more important the man who makes sure you have a roof over your head or some random client?

Me: I know but...

Him: But nothing Pinky it's either you come or find another place to live because you're behind payment

Me: Please you have to understand

Him: You know what I change my mind pack your things and leave the hotel.

He hung up just great! Where am I going to go after this? Why do people have to be so cruel?

"Everything ok" S'bonelo asks as he wipes the tears off my cheek with his thumb I'm doing it gain breaking down in front of a stranger.

"I got kicked out of the hotel"

"Why" he asks

"I'm behind payment"

"Where's the rest of your family? Don't you have relatives around" he asks

"I don't!"

"Please don't cry you can come live with me if you want" he suggests

"I can't you've done so much as it is"

"You can stay with me until you find your own place" he says

"If you insist!"

"I insist" he smiles "Now stop crying it doesn't suit you"

Wow! How can one person have so much love and kindness? He doesn't even know me but he's helping me I guess a little love really changes everything.

4

I went to the hotel to get my stuff and my 'friends' were very sad that I'm leaving but I have to choose but to leave. I'm going to miss them because they are the only people I had that were close to relatives. But I promised to come visit. S'bonelo went to work and left me the house keys he said I can use the spare room I used the last time I slept at his place.

I checked the safe and I have exactly R1 500 but I owe the hotel R2 000 which means I'm R500 short.

"I know I'm R500 short but I promise I'll pay as soon as I get it" I say as I hand the money to the hotel manager.

"Pinky I was having a rough day I didn't mean to say that you don't have to leave and you can pay when you get the money"

"Too late I have already packed my stuff and just take the money I will bring the rest before the end of the month" I say

"You know you don't have to pay!"

"I don't want to owe anyone anything" I say

"Come on Pinky if I say don't pay don't pay"

"You of all people should understand" I say

"So where to from here?"

"I'm going to live with a friend" I answer

"Ok so will I be able to see you? You know will I still be one of your customers?"

"No! But you can call me as a friend" I say

"All the best Pinky"

"It's Amahle!" I chuckle

"Ok Amahle! Don't pay the remaining R500 I got it"

"I will pay it I don't like hand outs"

"You're stubborn do you know that?"

"Bye Mr Gerald see you around" I say before walking out. Said my goodbye to the rest of the stuff then took a taxi to S'bonelo's house.

It's almost 7pm and I'm debating on whether to get started on dinner. Should I touch his stuff without his permission or should I call and ask before I touch his stuff? I hate being yelled at that's why I ask before I do. I try calling him but his phone goes straight to voice mail. So I leave a message then get started on dinner. Take it as a little thank you for everything he's done for me. My phone rings and I was hoping it's S'bonelo but it's David one of the 'clients' he usually calls when he gets into a fight with his wife and needs someone to talk to well I'm a good listener.

Me: Hey Dave!

Him: Pinky how are you?

Me: I'm good and you (he sighs)

Him: Listen! What are you doing tonight?

Me: Sorry Dave I'm booked

Him: What about tomorrow?

Me: Still booked sorry

Him: She's threatening to leave me Pinky
(Told you he wanted to talk)

Me: What happened?

Him: She thinks I'm cheating

Me: What makes her think that? (David and I
have never done it he pays me just so he can
get someone to talk to)

Him: I don't know but I can't lose her Pinky
she my life

Me: Then talk to her and prove to her that
she's the only woman in your life

Him: I knew I'd feel better after talking to
you

Me: Anytime!

Him: How I wish you had a bank account I'd
send you a thank you token

Me: Actually I do

Him: Give me your bank details (Took out a
paper from my pockets and gave him the
details with in a second R1 000 was deposited
to my account

Me: David it's supposed to be R200

Him: Spoil yourself a little

Me: Thank you!

I hung up and went back to cooking it's now 8pm. I waited for S'bonelo but it was getting late so I had dinner then did the dishes waited for him until 11pm....

"Its ok nana you're safe now"- Mum

"Mum why does he hate me so much" I ask

"You have to be strong my child"- mum

"Mum where are you going?"

"I'm sorry my child"- mum

"Mum! Please don't leave me MUM!"

I'm woken up by S'bonelo

"Hey! You're fine look at me you're ok" he says my clothes are soaking wet from the sweating

"I'm sorry I was having a nightmare"

"I figured I could hear you screaming from the dining door" he chuckles

"Hope I didn't wake you up?"

"I just got home from work my phone died and I couldn't call sorry" he says and why is he apologizing?

"Ok!" I rub my eyes "Did you eat? I made dinner"

"I ate at the office but I can eat again" he smiles

"Ok let me dish up for you"

"It's 3am! I got it" he says

"No it's ok I'm not sleepy anymore"

We head to the kitchen and I dish up for him. He opens the fridge and takes out milk and pours it in a glass then hands it to me.

"Thank you!" I say and he frowns "I'm sorry!" I chuckle and he smiles I don't know what he wants me to say.

"Aren't you going to ask about me? I could be a serial killer"

I never actually thought about that!

"I've always wanted to ask your age" I say

"Add 9 years to your age" he answers

"27 years?"

"Good girl" he smiles

"Where do you work?"

"I rob banks for a living" he says and my eyes widen

"I'm just messing with you I owe buildings and people rent them" he answers

"Cool"

That explains why he spends like money grows on trees.

"Where is your wife?"

He laughs

"Well I don't have any yet but I broke up with my girlfriend the night I met you" he says

"Why did you break up if you don't mind me asking?"

"Well I cheated

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I can be a jerk sometimes" he sighs

No comment there I gulped down all the milk.

"Do you want more" he asks

"No I'm good and you?"

Well he's still eating

"I'm good may I say you're a good cook. Who taught you how to cook" he asks

The images of my mother flood through my mind.

"My mum we used to cook together and every night she'd teach me a new recipe"

"You miss her don't you" he asks as he wipes the tears off my cheek I'm doing it I'm crying

"I'm sorry I don't know why I keep doing this"

"Maybe it's because you talking about something you don't usually do" he says

"Maybe!"

"You should go to bed and get some rest!" he says

"Yes I have work in the morning"

He frowns

"Hope you're not selling yourself because you and I are going to have trouble" he says

keeping a straight face he's standing by his bedroom door

"I'm not Mr Ngcobo!"

"Good girl" he says before closing the door

It's now 3:36 I just closed my eyes then my 6 am alarm rang. I took a hot shower then put on my black jeans and a red top with black sneakers. I went to the kitchen and prepared breakfast for S'bonelo well I don't eat in the morning I can eat when it's around 10am. I left a note on the table next to the food that I'm going to work.

As usual I knocked off at 9am then passed by the hotel paying off the remaining R500 I can't believe they miss me already. I have

only been gone for a couple of hours. My clients have been calling funny when I had no roof over my head they didn't call this much. Maybe I should change my number because I can't keep making excuses forever. I went back home (S'bonelo's house) tidied up well the house is not dirty but it's my duty to keep it spotless because Mr Ngcobo looks like a very clean man. By 1pm I was now resting watching music videos on Trace. The land line rings and again I hesitate to answer. What if it's his family or worse his girl-friend?

Me: Mr Ngcobo's hello!

Voice: You make my surname sound cool do you know that

Me: Afternoon!

Him: Are you busy?

Me: No why?

Him: I need you to bring me something to my work place I forgot a very important file on the bed in my room

Me: Ok just send me the details

Him: I'll send an uber

Me: Ok cool

I changed into a floral dress might as well look presentable don't want to embarrass him in front of his employees. The uber came to get me may I say his work place is wow! I mean how rich is this man? I got to the reception and there was this beautiful lady.

"Good afternoon! Welcome to Ngcobo Holdings how can I help you" she smiles

"Hie! May I see Mr Ngcobo?"

"Do you have an appointment" she asks

I don't even know what that is

"I'm here to give him something he called me to bring him this document" I say flashing the document

"Can I call him first?" she says then leans in

"He hates being disturbed the last time I did so he suspended me for a week" she whispers

"He did that?"

"Yeah everyone here fears him. I don't know how his wife manages because this man hardly smiles" she adds

I'm I in the correct company because that doesn't sound like S'bonelo at all

"Are you talking about S'bonelo Ngcobo?"

"Shhh don't say his name he hates it when we use his name" she whispers

Is his he same sweet S'bonelo I know?
Because it doesn't sound like him at all. She
picks up the landline and punches a few
numbers then start talking

"Sorry to bother you sir.....I know you're
busy but there's..... I'm sorry Mr Ngcobo"
she says she's stammering I can tell she's
scared of him she holds the phone with both
hands.

"What's your name" she asks

"Amahle!" then goes back to talking on the
phone

"Her name is Amahle sir..... I'm so sorry Mr
Ngcobo.... Right away sir" she hangs up and
stands on her feet

"I'm sorry ma'am I didn't know you were Mr
Ngcobo's guest please follow me" she says
leading me to the elevator.

"Relax!" I say pressing the elevator button for
her she's literally shivering

"He's mad! He's going to fire me"

"Fire you? Why?" I ask

"Because I kept you waiting I'm sorry!"

"But I didn't wait" I say

"I'm screwed!"

"I can tell him that I didn't wait if it makes you feel better" I say

"Please do! Please!"

"Okay now relax" I say and she exhales heavily

Wow she's really scared of him but why I mean S'bonelo is the kindest man I have ever met that's if he's not. I'm now confused what if he's not what I think he is but then why would he be nice to me and be a devil to the whole world?

5

The elevator door opens and the receptionist smiles

"After you" she says

"Thank you!"

"I'm Stacy by the way" she pushes her glasses back

"Amahle!"

"I love your dress Amahle" she says
"Thank you!"

We get to Mr Ngcobo's office Stacy opens the door for me.

"Afternoon sir!" she says

"Hey Stacy can you bring Amahle something to drink" S'bonelo says concentrated on his phone

"No I'm fine" I shake my head

"Will that be all sir" Stacy asks and he dismisses her I don't know what she was worried about.

"Your documents Mr Ngcobo" I chuckle

"Thank you Miss Zungu"

"Let me not keep you I bet you have work to do" I say

"Not really I just needed the files that's it"

"Ok!"

The door opens and some light skinned lady enters the room and may I say wow! She's so pretty her skin is flawless and she looks like she just came out of the T.V. How can one look this good? Everything about her is on point. She looks at me and smiles.

"Hey sugar-foot" she says I'm not sure if she's talking to me or S'bonelo?

"Hie" I say almost whispering

"Cute dress!" she says then turns to S'bonelo

"And you why didn't you come for dinner last night"

"I had work to take care of" S'bonelo answers

"Ever heard of calling" she scolds and I chuckle. Who is this woman anyways?

"Please don't embarrass me in front of my guest" S'bonelo says then the woman turns to face me.

"I'm his mother and you are?" she says
His mother? I look at S'bonelo.

"She's my step-mother and Jude this is Amahle and..."

Jude huh!

"Is she our new daughter in-law?" she interrupts him

"I'm just a friend" I answer and she seems confused

"We're just friends Jude" S'bonelo says

"Ok then Amahle who's just a friend I'm bored lets go shopping" she says

Shopping? She seemed to have great fashion sense I don't think I can even afford the same underwear she wears. Everything about this woman screams 'expensive'. I look at S'bonelo hoping he can help me out but he smiles.

"Shopping!" I swallow hard

"Yeah we can even check out the new spar down the road"

I've never been. Again I look at S'bonelo.

"Just say ok! She doesn't take no for an answer" he whispers

"But I don't have the money and she looks like she wears expensive clothes" I say folding my arms. She's (Jude) now talking on the phone. How does one look so flawless? And how old is S'bonelo's father if he's married to such a young woman I don't need to know her age to tell she's in her 20's.

"Relax you can use my card" he says.

I can't do that

"S'bonelo no! You've done so much as it is"

"Listen! I know Jude and she's good at manipulating people so might as well take the card plus it's not like you going to use it

because if she invited you which means she's paying" he answers

"I don't know!"

"Just take the card and I'll text you the pin" he smiles.

"Fine but I promise I'll pay back every cent"

"I forgot you don't like hangouts" he chuckles

"Quick question how old is your father if your step mother looks this young?"

"He's in his early 50s and she's 30" he answers

"Wow! 20 year age difference she must really love him" I say looking at Jude who's still on the phone.

"She does! At first I thought she loved him for his money but it turns out she does really love him and his money is just a bonus"

"Wow!" I whisper

"Do you believe in love Amahle?"

Do I?

"Let's go Amahle" Jude says pulling me by my arm

"Wait!" S'bonelo calls as Jude opens the door but she doesn't stop she just lets go of my hand and starts talking on the phone standing

outside the office door more like giving me
and S'bonelo room to talk.

"You forgot the card and if she bothers you
just call and I'll come get you" he says

"Ok!" I chuckle

"I heard that let's go Amahle" Jude says
pulling me to the elevator

"Have fun!" S'bonelo calls

"We will" Jude yells back

I have noticed she uses her phone a lot. She's
taking call after call. Finally she hangs up
looks at me and smiles does everyone in
S'bonelo's family smile like this? Her phone
rings and the smile on her face widens.

"Hey Honey!I was just thinking
about you.....I'm going shopping with a
friend.....Will see you tonight. Love you too"
she says then hangs up and turns to me.

"I'm sorry about that" she says

"It's ok!"

"Maybe I should just turn it off" she says
before throwing it in her bag

"You didn't have to I don't mind"

“Well I don’t want it disturbing us” she smiles as we get out of the elevator passing by the reception I wave at Stacy. Jude takes my hand and leads me to her car and I have no comment the car is gorgeous. She opens the car door for me. What is it with these people? Why are they all this nice? She gets in and starts driving. My phone beeps and it’s the card pin from S’bonelo. I send a thank you text back.

We start by the boutique and everyone seems to know Jude it turns out her full name is Judith Zanele Ngcobo. She picks up everything that she runs into. Things in this store are just expensive. I pick up this black sleeveless dress and its gorgeous exactly my size. I check the tag and it’s R899. That’s just too much I could buy 8 dresses with that.

I’m just looking at it

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the fabric is nice exactly my type of dress.

“Do you like it” Jude asks snapping me out of my thoughts.

"It's pretty!"

"Why don't you go try it on" she asks

I'm scared to tell her that it's too expensive for me.

"Ok!" I fake smile

"You don't talk a lot do you?"

"Something like that!" I answer

I get into the changing room and put it on it is pretty and it suits me well.

"Did you die in there" Jude calls I step out

"What do you think" I twirl

"I love it and I know just the shoes that will go perfectly with that" she says handing me a pair of sneaker heels well I'm a sneaker girl. I put on the shoes and they are a little big so I try on a smaller size. Wow!

"You look great" she takes out her phone and the flash light flashes in my face. Did she just take a picture?

"Come see how gorgeous you look" she says and I look well it's me but it's not. I check the shoes tag R999 you gotta be kidding me. I'm not buying this. I change back to my clothes and some lady comes and takes the clothes we were trying on. Then comes back with

shopping bags all packed I'm confused aren't we supposed to pay first.

I give Jude the look and she smiles

"Don't worry I paid for everything"

"You shouldn't have" I say

"Well my husband paid to be precise so don't worry"

"Ok then thank you" I say we take the bags and head to the car. She pulls up at some diner and we order lunch again she's paying.

"So are you and S'bonelo really friends or there's more" Jude asks

"We are just friends"

"Just friends? With S'bonelo?" she says

"We are just friends he's just helping me out. He's actually the nicest person I have ever met"

"Are we talking about the same S'bonelo here? Because there's nothing nice about S'bonelo in fact he's the rudest person I've ever met. It's like he doesn't have feelings at all" she chuckles

I'm lost. S'bonelo is the nicest person ever.

"I'm confused because he has been nothing but kind to me. He even let me stay with him"

"He did? S'bonelo is the type of guy who loves his privacy he doesn't even bring any of his girl-friends back home with him" she says
"Maybe it's because I'm just a friend"

"I think there's more to that so how did you two meet" she asks

I can't tell her that.

"He offered me a ride and that's how we became friends"

"Which house did he take you to" she asks
What does she mean which house?

"I don't understand"

"The flat or the double story" she asks

"The double story"

"I see!" she chuckles am I the only one who didn't get it?

"Finish up it's getting late" she says.

"I'm full!"

"Ok then Amahle friend of S'bonelo let's go" she says

"What?" I chuckle

"Have you two slept together?"

I laugh but she's not joking

"Like I said we are just friends and no we've never slept together" I answer

"Okay do you by any chance like him?"

I've never actually thought about it.

"I don't know ok I have a lot going on in my life right now and liking someone is the last thing on my mind" I say

"What has you stressed at your age because you look very young?"

"Well a lot of things" I answer

"Like what Amahle?"

"Like a place to stay and a job" I say

"How old are you?"

For a second I wanted to say 20

"I'm 18" I answer

"And where are your parents"

"They died a year ago and please don't feel sorry for me" I say

That's the last thing I need right now.

"My parents also died when I was 6 but hey it's not the end of the world so chin up"

"You're pretty" I say

"No you're pretty this is makeup"

"Still you look very beautiful" I say

"Thank you Amahle I had fun today"

"I had fun too and thank you for the clothes and food" I say

"You use the word sorry and thank you a lot"

"So I have been told" I chuckle.

"Do you know why I asked if you've slept with S'bonelo?"

"No why" I ask

"S'bonelo is the type that toys with girls and then dump them he doesn't do relationships and he is the kind of guy that gets with a girl then dumps her the next morning. You seem like a nice girl Amahle so be careful"

"I will!" I answer

"Good girl will come check on you since you said you staying with S'bonelo"

"Ok drive safe" I say getting out of the car. I wave her goodbye as she drives off.

I check my wrist watch and it's now 5pm I should start cooking before S'bonelo comes back from work. I enter the house and I'm greeted by the delicious smells coming from the kitchen. Is S'bonelo back? I head to the kitchen and find him cooking he's wearing an apron. I didn't know he can cook?

"Hey!" I chuckle

"You're early"

"Well we were done" I answer "I didn't know you can cook?"

"Well you learn these things when you live alone and you're not married"

"Why aren't you married? If you don't mind me asking" I say

"Well honestly I don't know. I've never actually thought about settling down"

"Oh ok" I say

"Can you pass me the knife?"

"Sure!" I say picking up the knife as soon as I hold it in my hands the picture of the stabbing my father flashes in my mind and I drop the knife and rush out of the room.

6

What just happened? I look at my hands and they have blood why do my hands have blood? I rushed to the bathroom to wash my hands but it won't come off why won't it

watch off? I'm getting frustrated and at the same time crying.

"Amahle is everything ok" S'bonelo asks
I don't answer I continue washing my hands.

"Why won't is wash off" I scream

"But there's nothing your hands are clean"

I close my eyes for a second and exhale then
check my hands they are now clean.

"Are you ok" S'bonelo asks

"I'm fine!"

"What happened back there? Did I say
something that upset you?" he seems
worried. He won't understand even if I tell
him plus how do you explain to someone that
you killed your parents and it's haunting you.

"I have bad memories of knives I didn't mean
to scare you" I answer

"Ok then we'll put away all the knives in the
house"

"Then how are we going to cook?" I chuckle
and the tears voluntarily run down my cheeks

"We'll get a cook!"

"Why are you so nice to me" I ask

"You're a good girl Amahle and for some reason it makes my heart rejoice when you're happy. Is that weird?"

"A little!" I wipe the tears off my cheeks

"Why don't you take a second then come down for diner"

"Okay!" I nod

"Hug!"

"Okay!" I move closer and he pulls me into his arms he's warm and I love it. He tightens his grip a little pulling me closer. Why does it just feel right? I wish he could hold me forever. He lets go and smiles before walking out of the room. I love how he doesn't pressure me into saying things that I don't want to talk about.

I take a deep breath and look myself in the mirror I hate looking at myself in the mirror because I see her every time I look in the mirror. I look just like her my mother. I also question myself how life would be like if she didn't kill herself. My phone buzzes in my sling back I forgot I'm still carrying it. It's an unknown number.

Me: Hello! (I sniff a little)

Voice: Are you crying?

Me: No! Who's this?

Voice: Jude!

Me: Oh hie! Did you get home safe? (I sniff)

Her: Yes and why are you crying and don't you dare say you caught a cold because you looked fine when I dropped you off.

Me: Really I'm not crying

Her: Did he do something to you? I know S'bonelo can be harsh sometimes.

Me: No Jude he didn't do anything

Her: You know what I'm on my way there

Okay! That's not I expected. I wash my face and head downstairs.

"We might have a slight problem" I say to S'bonelo who's sitting on the couch arm busy with his phone.

"What's up?"

"Jude called and she asked me if I was crying and I said no but she insisted you did something to me so she's on her way her" I say playing with my hands. I'm expecting him to be a little angry but instead he laughs.

“Trust me they are all looking for a reason to come here” he answers

“I’m lost!”

“My family! I never let them come to my house so now Jude is using you as an excuse” he chuckles

“But they are your family?”

“They are annoying and I like my privacy” he answers

“I’m sorry!”

“It’s ok plus you get to see my crazy family then you’ll understand why I want them far away from me” he answers

His family! I guess they are all fancy just like him and his step mother. Within half an hour they were all here. His step-mother his father and his brother S’bonginkosi and he brought his girlfriend Leah.

Talk about happy family there was nothing happy about my family it was just tears and pain. I could just watch S’bonelo’s family all day I love how they are united how they treat each other equally. Jude is almost the same age as S’bonelo but he respects her and his

father now I see where S'bonelo got the good looks from. They brought dinner thank God because I don't know what rich people eat. After dinner everyone was chilling by the fire place with a glass of some sort of alcohol in their hands and they're drinking it like its water.

I excuse myself and head to the kitchen.

"Hie!" Leah smiles

"Hie!"

"You and S'bonelo huh" she says

"We are just friends"

"Friends who happen to live together" he asks

"Yes!"

"I doubt

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you know being a female friend to S'bonelo is like using a sugar cane as a walking stick I means when you feel thirsty you're going to eat it" she says as she gulp down all the wine in her glass then pours another.

I don't know what she's talking about and what everyone keeps talking about but S'bonelo and I are just friends and if he wanted to do something with me he'd have done it the night I literally threw myself at him.

"I don't know what you talking about but we're just friends" I say

"Well you don't have to explain yourself I mean who would want to be with the rich Ngcobo brothers:"

"His money has nothing to do with it Leah" I say

"Okay then Amahle"

Honestly I don't know why I'm getting pissed.

"How old are you?" Might as well change the subject.

"I'm 23 and how old are you?"

"18 going on 19" I answer

"Whoa! S'bonelo likes them young I see"

"What do you mean" I ask

"Quick question how do you date someone like S'bonelo. The guy is just too serious and too uptight?"

"He's not like that when with me" I answer

“So there is a moment what are you? Friends with benefits”

I’m just going to leave the room before I lose it because I can feel the anger inside me building up. I try to walk out of the kitchen but she holds my arm. One thing I hate in this whole wide world is being touched. Wanna have a serious problem with me then touch me.

I know it sounds weird coming from someone who was a hooker but I had my rules.

“Please don’t touch!” I whisper

“Look Amahle!”

“I said don’t touch me Leah” I yell

“Girl you need to take a chill pill”

“Girl you need to watch your mouth” I say
Might as well admit that I have a problem because I can feel my inner demon awakening. I take a deep breath.

“I’m sorry Leah I just don’t like being touched” I say

“It’s ok let me get back to other are you coming?”

“Right behind you!” I fake smile

I take a second inhaling and exhaling. I liquid drops on my leg and I quickly look down BLOOD. Where is the blood coming from? I look at my hand and I have the knife if my hand and I’m holding on it tight I can feel that it’s cutting me but for some reason I keep tightening the grip. When did I pick it up?

“Amahle!” a voice screams

The knife drops on the floor there’s blood on the kitchen table. I don’t even know how to explain myself I don’t even remember picking up the knife.

“How did you cut yourself” S’bonelo asks

“I don’t know”

“What do you mean you don’t know? How do you cut yourself and not know” he asks

“I was holding the knife and I know....”

“Now I see why you said you have a bad memory of knives” he says getting the first aid kit under the kitchen sink.

“I’m sorry!”

"You're sorry for cutting yourself" he chuckles
"For messing up your kitchen"

"What is it with you and knives anyway if you
don't mind me asking" he says
That's my line.

"I don't want to talk about it"

"Is it why you have the nightmares" he asks
and my eyes widen. He knows about that?

"How do you know about that?"

"It's hard not to when you wake up screaming
every night" he says

"I'm sorry!"

He's bandaging my hand

"You should see someone about that" he says
I love how he's so chilled out about all this.
S'bonelo is not uptight well maybe they don't
know him like I do.

"Does it hurt" he asks

"A little!"

"I don't want you near the knife you hear me"
he says I can't help but chuckle. Its nice
having someone who cares for once someone
who's able to ask the million dollar question
how are you?

"Thank you S'bonelo thank you for
everything"

"I told you to stop thanking me" he chuckles
"I can't because you've done a lot for me.
Thanking you is the least I can do"
"And next time try not to cut yourself for me"
he says
"I'll try!"
"You're cute" he says returning the first aid
kit
"Cute?"
"You're not cute you're beautiful" he says

There's something about a guy that tells you
that you're beautiful.

"Thank you Mr Ngcobo!"
"You're welcome Miss Zungu" he smiles and
looks at me directly in the eyes.
"You also have pretty eyes" he whispers
How does a person have pretty eyes? Shifts
closer moves his face close to move. My heart
is racing. I can feel his breath on my face. I
bit my lower lip and he smiles. He places his
hand on my neck and pulls me closer.

"What are you two doing?"

He almost kissed me I swear if Jude didn't walk in he was going to kiss me. S'bonelo is kind of hard to read because he's generally a nice person and I can't tell if this is love or kindness whatever the word love means. I quickly shift back S'bonelo looks pissed he even cursed the time Jude walked in.

"S'bonelo what's going on here. What are you two doing" Jude asks and she's smiling. I just look down.

"What do you want Jude" S'bonelo exhales heavily

"We want more wine remember you left saying to getting wine" she says

"Well I was coming" S'bonelo answers

"I wanted to check what was taking so long but now I got my answer" she says

"It's not like that" I whisper

"Amahle really you don't have to explain yourself" -S'bonelo

"Of course!" Jude she smiles
"I'm going back to the others" S'bonelo says
before walking out of the kitchen.
"I'm sorry!" I say to Jude
"For what?" she chuckles
"What you walked in on"
"Look Amahle! S'bonelo is a grown man and
he can handle himself so don't worry. So
what was really going on? Were you two
going to kiss?" she winks
I find myself blushing why am I blushing?
"Nothing he was just bandaging me up" I
show her my hand.
"Really that's not what I walked in on" she
lightly pushes my shoulder with her fist.
"Well maybe we got caught in the moment
but that was it nothing more"
"Okay! I hear you. Do you like him" she asks
He's a great guy but like is a strong word.
"He's a great person but....."
"But nothing it's a yes or no question" she
interrupts me
"I don't know"
"That's a yes to me because if you didn't you
would have said you don't" she says
I don't know what she's talking about.

"Don't put words in my mouth. I said I don't know plus he's older than me"

"Please! That's the oldest trick in the book plus they say age is just a number. Look at me I'm married to a man 20 years older than me but we are happy" she says

"I know but I don't know I've never been in love before"

"What? You're joking right?" she chuckles

"I'm not I have ever had a boyfriend or have fallen in-love with anyone"

"Not even a high-school crush" she asks

"I never went to school" I look down

"Why?"

"Well my parent thought it was a waste of time and money. Well I grew up....." I paused

"Hey its ok I'm not going to judge you"

"Can we not talk about my past it holds some memories I have been trying to bury" I say

"It's ok and whatever happened in the past does matter now what matters is that you grew up some couldn't make it this far. They say our past cannot be changed but the future is for us to hold and change"

"Oky!" I nod

"I can take you back to school if you want"

"I don't want to go to school I want to have something tangible for myself. I have already lost so many years as it is going back to school isn't the smart move for now" I say

"You're too clever for someone who didn't go to school"

"Well I learnt a lot about life when I lost my parents" I answer

"What happened to them? Your parent!"

I swallow hard. I'm not ready for that chapter yet.

"I don't want to talk about it. Is that ok with you" I ask well she is older than me.

"Ok sweetie but if you ever need to talk I'm here ok"

"Thank you! You people are so nice" I say

"Well you are likable and pretty no wonder S'bonelo keeps you close"

"We should go back to the others" I say

"Yeah let me get the wine. Do you drink?"

"No!" I answer

"Well trust me as long as you're in this family you will soon"

I don't know what S'bonelo was talking about but his family is actually nice. They are all kind and sweet. I guess maybe that is what my family was missing LOVE I guess with a little love everything would have been different. S'bonelo's family left and now it's just me and S'bonelo well I'm not a talker so sometimes I run out if things to talk about. I never talked much growing up since I grew up around dolls and was always looked in my room. I never went to church or played outside my only friend was my mother.

"Amahle!" S'bonelo calls snapping me out of my thoughts.

"Yes!"

"You really didn't hear a word I said" he asks

"Sometimes I get lost in my head forgive me"

"Tomorrow is month-end and I think you should stop working" he says

"Why?"

"Well didn't you say you wanted to make something for yourself?" he says

"Yes but leaving work won't help either"

“Well you did say if you had R50 000 you’d start something for yourself” he asks and why is he smiling

“But I do not have it”

“Are you sure about that” he asks

“Yeah I’m pretty sure”

“Check your phone” he commands and I give him the blank look. He looks at my phone on the table and signals me to pick it up using his head. I slowly pick it up and there are two texts. One from Telkom you know those recharge you’ll get free minutes texts and the other is from the bank. Exactly R100 000 has been deposited to my account from S’bonelo Ngcobo. I have never seen this many zeros in my life. I’m speechless really I don’t know whether to scream or what.

“Oh my God thank you!” I say I can’t help it tears are running down my cheeks I am too excited. My guardian angel has done it again first he gave me a place to stay and now this.

“I promise I’m going to pay you back every cent” I says

"Okay Pinky! I keep forgetting you don't like hand-outs" he smiles

"You are a heaven sent S'bonelo thank you" I hug him.

"No you're the heaven sent" he whispers whatever that means.

One hundred thousand rands! I can't even sleep

Sponsored

I keep tossing and turning checking my phone if I'm dreaming but this is reality. I'm going to need Jude for this one because I need to decide on whether to go for the saloon or S'paza shop. I can't sleep and I cannot wait for it to be morning. I think I might have dozed off at around 4am.

"Amahle come here" he orders and I look at my mother first who's silently sobbing in the corner

"I said come here Amahle" he yells

"Please! I'm not feeling well" I answer

"Nadia tell your daughter to come here before I make her" he commands

"I don't want to ok! You don't know what these men do to me enough ok do you hate me that much" I yell with tears running down my cheeks

"Oh so you now can talk back at your father Amahle" he unbuckled his belt and takes it out. Just when I thought he was going to hit me he goes for my mother. Of course he won't hit me because the 'clients' wants me unbruised

"I'll do it please stop!" I scream but he won't stop he keeps going and going.

"Please stop!"

"Amahle!" I can hear someone calling me but from a distance the voice keeps getting closer and closer.

"Amahle!"

I quickly sit up it happened again. The nightmares. S'bonelo is sitting on the bed next to me he has the worried look again.

"Are you ok" he asks

"I didn't mean to wake you"

"I was already up its 7" he answers

"Oh!"

"You really need to see someone when did this start?" he says on a low note

"After my parents died"

"You need to see a doctor Amahle" he's worried

"No it's ok I didn't mean to wake you up I'm sorry"

"What causes the nightmares" he asks

"Sometimes I see my parents and I'm just being a baby about it"

"You wake up screaming I don't understand" he says

"It's complicated!"

"This is serious Amahle you do this almost every night and I'm getting worried" he says I thought it had stopped maybe it's because I stopped taking the sleeping pills.

"Don't worry about me!"

"Easier said than done" he tries to touch my head but I shift back

"I'm sorry!" well I'm a little freaked out too

"I think you need help please at least see a psychologist" he says

"A what?"

I've never run across that word in my life.

"A doctor I have one for my...." He clears his throat "I also have a problem and he helps me"

"Ok but will it cost money?"

"No! He's a family doctor" he answers

"But I'm not family"

"Let me handle that ok" he says

"Okay!"

"I will talk to him then get back at you" he smiles and I nod. He pulls me into his arms.

"I'm sweaty!"

"It's ok" he whispers.

Again my guardian angel is at my rescue I don't know where I would be if I never ran into him that night. S'bonelo said I should stop working so I went to 'work' to say my goodbye and turns out the lady actually likes me and she paid me R2 000 rand an extra R500 for being the best cleaner she has ever had.

I passed by Steers to get S'bonelo some lunch another thank you since he doesn't want me saying it. So I'm sitting busy with

my phone waiting for my order when a guy more like a man tabs me on the shoulder.

"Excuse me!" I say

"You look familiar"

"I'm sorry sir but I think you got the wrong person" I answer

"You look just like her"

"I don't know what you're talking" I turn the other way maybe he's one of those robbers who act like they know you.

"I'm sorry for being rude but I'm"

"Please leave me alone" I say heading to the counter as my order gets called.

He follows me out I swear if he keeps following me I'm going to scream. He runs up to me and blocks the way.

"What do you want from me" I ask

"I'm sorry if I scared you back there look I'm a police officer" he shows me his I.D and I ease up a little. But what if it's about my parents I don't want to go to jail. I'm sweating I start breathing fast. I do that when I'm scared.

"I didn't mean to scare you. Relax" he says handing me bottled water. I can't relax I'm scared.

"What do you want from?"

I'm now crying

"Look I didn't mean to scare you ok it's just that you look like someone one I know" he says trying to calm me down. I take a deep breath and calm myself down.

"Please sir can I just go!"

He could tell that I'm scared so he lets me go.

8

I'm still a little shaken when I reach S'bonelo's office but I shook it off maybe that policeman just mistaken me for someone. And let's hope my past isn't coming to bite

me. I reach the reception and Stacy is there I guess she didn't lose her job after all.

"Hey Amahle!" she smiles

She still remembers me.

"Hie! Is Mr Ngcobo in?"

"Yeah you still remember his office right" she asks

"Yeah! I got you something" I hand her a plastic bag well I was in a good mood before I ran into that police officer.

"Thanks Amahle" she smiles

"You're welcome!"

I head to S'bonelo's office and found him yelling on the phone whoa! I didn't know he can get this angry. I'm even scared to enter I quickly go back but run into Stacy when I'm about to enter the elevator.

"Did you see him" she asks

I want to lie but what if she mentions it to him I'll seem like a creep.

"Not really!"

"Let's go" she takes my hand and leads me to S'bonelo's office who's still yelling on the phone we can hear him from outside the room. I don't know why I'm scared maybe it's because I've never seen him angry or the fact that I hate it when people yell it reminds me of my dad.

Stacy knocks on the door. Then opens but I stay outside for a moment.

"This better be good Stacy!"- S'bonelo

"Amahle is here" she answers and I enter the room fake smile and wave. He looks at me and smiles he looks relieved you know that one person that you see and they brighten your day it's like that. His smile widens I smile back.

"Mrs Tlou was asking if lunch is still on" Stacy asks

"Can you shift that to tomorrow" he answers

"Okay!" then she turns to me "Do you need anything Amahle?"

"No I'm fine thanks"

She leaves the room.

"What do I owe this special visit Miss Zungu"
S'bonelo asks

"I brought you lunch!"

"And what did I do to deserve such special treatment" he smiles

"For being you!"

"Wow! That's the first no one has ever bought me lunch just for being me" he says as I hand him the plastic bag

"Well there's a first time for everything"

"True!" he sits down and opens the food.

"I don't know what you like so I just went with it"

"I like anything that you choose" he answers
I have noticed he never says anything negative about me.

"I should leave you to it"

"No stay" he insists

"Are you sure?"

"Dead sure!" he bites his lower lip he's cute or handsome is the correct word.

"Why do you do that?"

"Do what" he asks

"Act like I brighten your day"

"I don't act like it you do brighten my day" he smiles I smile. Why I'm I blushing?

'And you always know the correct words' the inner me said.

"So how's S'bonginkosi?"

"Are you asking about my brother?" he chuckles

Well I don't know what to say.

"I guess so!"

"Well he's fine thanks for asking" he answers

"Good to know!"

"How come you never talk" he ask

"I do talk"

"Yes but not like other normal girls not that I'm saying you not normal but I'm saying you're too quiet" he says

"Well I never grew up around a people not that I'm saying you're not a person but I was raised indoors with just my mum and dad"

"Ok Pinky I hear you" he answers

"Yes S'bonelo!"

"What happened to Mr Ngcobo" he asks

"Okay Mr Ngcobo"

"Good girl and you look beautiful today" he says. Wow he's over doing it today because the only thing left is for me to start biting my nails. You know there's this feeling I have been getting since last night it's like an urge

to always be around S'bonelo and I don't know why. I can't explain the feeling but I love it.

"Do you want to join me" he asks he's halfway into his food and he's asking me now.

"No I'm fine I ate at home"

"You sure" he asks

"I'm sure Mr Ngcobo"

"Okay Pinky" he winks

I prefer Amahle though.

He finishes eating and may I say he eats like a baby

Sponsored

I ate at home"

"You sure" he asks

"I'm sure Mr Ngcobo"

"Okay Pinky" he winks

I prefer Amahle though.

He finishes eating and may I say he eats like a baby I walk to his side of the table and help him tidy up.

"I can do it Amahle" he says

"Its ok I got it"

"Don't let me get used to you spoiling me because you won't like it in the future" he laughs

Future?

"I don't mind" I smile

"Now that's good news" he answers

"You have something on your lip"

I use my thumb to wipe it off. Wow! The feeling I got when I touched him. What is going on with me? I smile and look at him I never noticed he has a small scar on top of his eye.

"What happened here" I ask touching it

"I got into a fight in grade school"

"What? Why" I ask

"Over a toy car"

"And how old were you" I ask

"10 and don't judge me I loved my toy car"

"And how did the other opponent manage to scar you for like" I laugh

"He threw a stone at me but hey I roughed him up like no man's business"

"I can imagine" I laugh

"First time seeing you laugh"

I quickly frown.

"Hey don't! I love seeing you smiling" he touches my arm didn't realise I was that close. "How did you get this scar?"

Yes I have a scar on my arm near my hand.

"I burnt myself with an iron"

He flips my arm looks at my wrists and his eyes widen.

"Amahle!"

"I was young oky" I look down I have tried to kill myself before. I saw it on a movie and tried it but it didn't work. I took a knife and cut my wrist.

"I'm sorry" he stands up and hugs me. I don't know why he's apologising. But hey I love being in S'bonelo's arms I feel safe when I'm in his arms I feel things I've never felt before.

He pulls out of the hug and cups my face.

"No matter what you go through never attempt to kill yourself ok" he says

"Okay" I nod

"Promise me?"

"I promise!" I answer

He moves my face toward his and plants a kiss on my forehead. You know there's something about the forehead kiss.

"Gosh you're pretty" he lets go and sits down.

I go and sit on the chair opposite him.

"I liked it better when you were next to me" S'bonelo though.

"Why don't you come this side" I say
He chuckles and stands up I was just joking. He sits on the table facing me I can't help but smile.

"The view is better from here" he says and I just smile well I'm not a talker.

"So how's it like being the boss?"

I don't know why I asked that.

"Fun! Sometimes but also annoying" he answers

"Cool!" I look down

"Can I see something" he uses his hand to pull my chin up making me face him "That's better" he smiles well I'm not good at keeping eye contact. I don't know why.

"Amahle" he sighs

"Yes!!"

"What makes you happy" he asks
I don't know I have never been asked that question before.

"Honestly I don't know"

"Take it as your homework I need you to think about one thing that makes you happy or something that you love" he says

LOVE? I don't think I love anything

"Okay will sleep on it"

"Good girl!" he smiles "So where are your other family members" he asks

"I don't know I only knew my parents and that's it"

"No distant cousin or uncle" he asks

Why is he asking about my family?

"Nope! Why?"

"Well where are the cows going when getting married" he asks

"Marriage" I laugh

"What? You're illegal and pretty anytime soon someone is going to fall for you and just like that you'll have a different surname"

"Will be waiting for that day plus I'm too damaged it'll be adding baggage to someone's life" I say

"When you love someone you make room for the baggage you'll be accepting everything about your partner"

"Well I doubt" I say "At some point you're going to fight and mention each other's flaws. I saw it with my parents"

"Not every relationship is like your parent's Amahle and relationships differ"

"And how do you know Mr Ngcobo" I ask

"See love changes everything love is the most powerful resource ever it can destroy and build at the same time"

"Well I wouldn't know because to me it's just a four word letter" I answer

"Maybe it's because you haven't found that one special person"

"Maybe! What about you have you found her yet" I ask

"I have"

"And how do you know she's the one" I ask

"Well when she's the one you know you feel it. It takes just 3seconds"

"But I doubt it's takes time to get know the person" I say

"True! But it only takes seconds to fall in love"

"Really?" I say
I seriously doubt
"You're stubborn for a quiet person" he
laughs
"I'm not stubborn"
"Trust me you are" he says
"And what makes you say that?"
"Firstly you couldn't let me buy you lunch and
don't you dare say you don't like hand outs"
he says
"Honestly I have lost everything and I can't
lose my respect. My pride is all I have"
"Wow!" he whispers
"What?"
"I'm impressed" he says
"So who's your lucky someone?"
Damn Amahle did you have to ask that? He
just smiled.
"Take a wild guess?"

I'm still in S'bonelo's office I'm waiting for Jude I need her help on choosing which business to go for. She said she'll come get me from S'bonelo's office and that was an hour ago and she's still not here. I feel like I'm keeping S'bonelo from working and it's embarrassing I tried convincing him to work and that I don't mind but we all know S'bonelo. Then he calls me stubborn.

"Maybe I should go I feel like I'm keeping you from working" I say

"If you were keeping me from working I'd have mentioned pretty Amahle"

Like he would.

"Fine! But what would you be doing let's say if I didn't show up unannounced" I ask

"I'd still be angry at S'bonginkosi for scratching my car"

That explains why he was yelling when I got here. And how many cars does he have?

"I'm sure it was a mistake" I say

"Oh he did it on purpose"

"How do you intentionally scratch a car?" I chuckle

"There are ways pretty Amahle there are ways"

"Stop!" I giggle

"Stop what?"

"Calling me pretty" I blush

"But you are"

"You're abusing the word that's enough for one day" I laugh

"I can't do that sorry I mean have you looked at yourself in the mirror?"

I hate looking at myself in the mirror because I look just like my mother and it reminds me of her.

"Who doesn't look at themselves in the mirror" I ask

"If you do then you'd know how pretty you are"

"Well I don't feel pretty that's one thing for sure" I say

"Why?"

"That's a tough question but I don't know" I answer

"You should you have to accept yourself for who you are first"

"You should try being a motivational speaker it suits you" I say

"The funny thing is that I wasn't like this a month ago"

"Then what changed" I ask

"You!"

"Me? How" I ask

"Like I said love changes everything"

I don't understand but I just smile. I'm wearing a leather jacket it's getting hot in the room.

"Can I take this off" I ask

"Really Amahle do you have to ask" he laughs I don't know why but I've gotten used to asking before doing.

"It's a habit" I chuckle

"I see!"

We went quiet for a moment I'm playing with my hands and I can feel his eyes on me. You know that feels you get when someone is staring at you and its making me very uncomfortable. I clear my throat.

"So you're the first born?"

Damn Amahle don't you have anything to talk about! He laughs before answering.

"You run out of things to say huh"

"Sometimes!" I whisper

"Or you prefer keeping quiet?"

"Both" I answer

"Well it's hard to tell how you feel when you're always quiet. How can I tell if you're angry or it's just your normal self or whether you're happy or it's your normal self?"

I just chuckle.

"See you're doing it" he says

"Doing what?"

"Not using words you just smile and that's it" he says.

"Well am I supposed to say something?"

"Yes! You should learn how to speak for yourself and most importantly how to defend yourself" he answers

"Defend myself from what?"

"For example let's say you're in the supermarket and a guy tries to try his luck with you and you not feeling him you should be able to tell him to back off" he says

"Oh you mean like that night when you insisted on giving me a lift even though I told you I was good?"

“Yes like that night but I’m glad you gave in because a lot changed about me when since I met you” he says

“It’s only been a week S’bonelo”

“You won’t understand” he says

“I do understand even my life changed since I met you. I now have a place to stay and I’m no longer a hooker all because of you”

“I think you stopped because you chose to because if didn’t want you’d have told me no” he answers

“Well you did say we’ll have trouble is I go back there” I laugh

“I said that?” he joins in

“Yup and I’m glad I let you give me a ride that night. You’ve done a lot for me thank you!”

“I don’t want you to feel like you owe me you met me because it was meant to be. If you weren’t on the road that day maybe I wouldn’t have met you see God works in mysterious ways” he says

“God huh! I think I gave up on him when my father.....” I pause “Well a lot has happened in my life and it got me doubting his existence”

"Don't! Who knows maybe the same God that you doubted so much is the one that led me to you" he answers

Maybe he's right S'bonelo is my guardian angel.

"Maybe! So do you go to church?"

"Would you believe me if I say I've never been" he says

"What? Then how do you know about God?"

"Everyone knows about God Amahle whether you've been in church or not" he answers

"Well I've never been to church either"

"Birds of the same feather" he laughs

"Yeah something like that" I giggle

"If I could pause time I'd freeze this moment you have no idea how my heart rejoices when you smile or laugh"

"I'm glad I'm able to make someone smile" I say

"Not just smiling but you make me happy Amahle"

I do? That's the first

"Oh!" I press my lips together.

"I mean it" he's serious

"I'm glad you feel that way"

"Let me return the favour" he walked to where I was sitting. Return the favour?

He took my hand we now sitting on the office couch. He holds my hands caressing them with his thumbs. I look down and he lifts my chin up making me face him. I don't know why he does that or he just likes seeing me blush because I'm not good at keeping eye contact.

"Let me return the favour Amahle let me make you as happy as you're making me?" he says.

"You don't have to return the favour"

"I want to please let me" he says

"Why?"

"I know we have known each other for a week but Amahle I can't help how I feel about you" he says.

How he feels about me?

"S'bonelo!!" I try to release my hands from his but he holds on to my hands.

"I can't help it I felt it the moment I saw you that night. I know it's a little weird but I did" he smiles.

“Trust me I’m not the kind of girl you want around you I’ve done some bad things in my life. You’re a good person and I don’t want to do that to you”

“I don’t care what you’ve done it’s all in the past. I swear I didn’t plan this but I couldn’t wait any longer you need to know.” he says
“Know what?”

“I love you Amahle I’m in love with you. You’re that special someone to me” he says I could feel the tears rolling down my cheeks. That’s the first time someone telling me they love me.

“No S’bonelo this isn’t right you can’t love me I’m too damaged to be loved”

“That’s what you think its all in your head. To me you’re perfect I love you as you are with your flaws” he says

“That’s the problem S’bonelo. I don’t know what love is

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I don’t know how to love”

“Like I said give me the chance to make you feel what I’m feeling” he wipes the tears off my cheeks. I sigh.

"I really would like that but you deserve someone perfect someone who's in your league I'm just a nobody"

"Not to me Amahle you're the first girl I've taken to my house you're the first girl that I've introduced to my family. You've changed me into a better person ever since you came in my life I changed. You changed me" he says

"But I didn't do anything"

"And you don't have to falling for you changed me" he says

"Changed how?"

"I wasn't always like this even I don't know what I was but you bring out the best in me. You bring out a part of me I never thought existed" he answers

"I don't know" I say he presses his head on mine

"You do know just listen to the inner voice in you" he whispers

Well the inner me is broken and tired.

"How do I know something I've never felt before?"

"You'll know it because it'll be something new" he says he's too close. I'm getting goose bumps.

"S'bonelo you can have any girl you want why me"

"Because I want you I don't want any other girl but you" he answers

"What's special about me?"

"You're the one my heart chose that's why I want you" he says

"S'bonelo I was a hooker"

"Was not anymore" he answers

"I'm not perfect"

"I'm not perfect either" he answers

"You don't understand"

"Then make me understand" he says I sigh

"Any more excuses" he asks I can't help but chuckle.

"I don't know what love is"

"I'll teach you let me teach you" he whispers I think I feel it. My body heating up the strange feeling in my stomach. His head is still pressed on mine he closes his eyes for a moment

"Tell me you're not feeling what I'm feeling"
he whispers. He's making me feel foreign
things I have never felt before he moves his
face towards mine. My heart is racing he's
going to kiss me just as his lips were about to
touch mine the door flew open

"I'm here! Sorry I'm late I got caught up with
something forgive me" Jude says she always
looks on point and dressing like she's going
for a photo shoot. I think I have a female
crush.

"I'm starting to think you're the devil"
S'bonelo sighed

"I'm sorry did I interrupt something?"

"Yes!" S'bonelo stands up and I do the same

"I'm sorry!"- Jude

"No it was nothing" I say

"You really should work on your timing"

S'bonelo says I love how they always picking
on each other how they are relaxed around
each other because we know the step-mother
and step son never get along but not Jude
and S'bonelo.

“Whatever! Amahle let’s get going” she says walking out of the room I turn to S’bonelo.
“See you tonight” I say trying to walk away but he holds my hand and gently pulls me towards him he plants a kiss on my lips.
Wow!

“See you tonight” he says
“Does it always feel like this?”
“I don’t know” he chuckles
“I should get going Jude is waiting”
“Let her wait” he kisses me I don’t want him to stop.

10

I follow Jude to the car and I’m smiling like a child. Is this the love they all talk about? Or maybe it’s all in my head. But the kiss was out of this world wait! Are things going to be awkward around the house? How am I going to look at him after we kissed me? On the other hand I feel the urge to see him again I

want him to kiss me again. I think I'm losing my mind. I can even smell his cologne on me.

"Earth to Amahle!"

I forgot I was with Jude. We are at some eatery we having smoothies.

"I'm sorry what" I ask

"Day dreaming I see?"

"I'm sorry sometimes I get lost in my head" I answer

"Out with it"

"Out with what" I ask

"Don't act like I didn't walk in on you and S'bonelo kissing"

"We just kissed that's it" I say

"Really? Is that why you smiling by yourself?"

"I'm not smiling by myself" I can't help it a smile escapes.

"Oh my God you falling for him"

"Maybe!" I answer

"I'm so happy S'bonelo needs someone like you in his life"

"What does that mean" I ask

"He's changed a lot since he met you"

"That's what he said too" I say

"Which means you must be special to him plus I like you so you're safe"

"You like me?" I say

"You're a great kid kind and lovable"

"You met me days ago" I chuckle

"Just days? Then why does it feel like I've known you my whole life?"

"You're a nice person you got a great heart" I say

"Then you expect me not to like you you're so adorable" she hugged me why does being with Jude feel like I have the mother I never had.

"Okay let's talk business why did you want to see me" she asks

"I was thinking of starting my own business and I need some advice"

"Okay what kind of advice" she sips on her smoothie

"What kind of business would make me a lot of money?"

She laughs I'm not joking I want to make a lot of money.

"What do you like" she asks

"Like as in?"

"Something that you like you know something you've always wanted to be growing up" she adds

"To work as a waitress"

She laughs again.

"No Amahle you're starting a business not looking for a job. You're going to be your own boss" she says

"I want to open my own eatery"

"Now that's a great idea so you want to build it or rent a building" she asks

Build it? What am I a millionaire?

"Renting is the best for now"

"What's your budget" she asks

"100K!"

"Let me add another 50K for you" she says

"No you can't do that"

"Take it as a gift for changing S'bonelo's stinking attitude" she says

What stinking attitude?

"He changed on his own"

"After he met you" she says

"Fine!"

"I know a few people and in a month's time the restaurant will be ready to go but you'll

need to buy a lot of things and spend money more than you have”

“Maybe an eatery is not a good idea”

“It is and don’t worry about money you have me and S’bonelo in your corner” she smiles

“But you guys have used a lot of money on me I feel bad as it is”

“Plus S’bonelo owns buildings he can find something for you” she says

“No! I don’t want to bother him”

“This is S’bonelo he won’t mind. I’ll talk to him for you” she smiles

“You guys have done a lot for me as it is”

“I’m not taking no for an answer and I’m not S’bonelo whom you can hit with the I don’t like hangouts story” she says

“How do you know that?”

“Well S’bonelo and I talk” she answers

“About me?”

“Well you’re all he talks about so yeah” she answers

S’bonelo talk about me to Jude? What about me exactly?

“Oh!” I say

“Enough about S’bonelo what are you going to call the eatery?”

"Amahle's!"

"I love it" she smiles

Her phones buzzes and she frowns

"I am sorry Amahle but I have to rush somewhere can you please take an uber or I'll call S'bonelo to come get you" she says picking up her bag.

"No it's ok I can find myself back home"

"Are you sure" she asks

She cares a lot.

"I'm sure now go"

"Ok take care of yourself because S'bonelo would kill me if anything happens to you" she hugs me goodbye. The Ngcobo's care too much. I'm finishing my smoothie while listening to music on my phone.

Someone taps me on the shoulder I take off the earphone. It's a guy he looks like he's S'bonelo's age.

"Is this chair taken" he asks

"You can sit I was leaving anyway"

"Okay" he sighs

I know he's a stranger but there's always that look a person has when stressed. He has that look

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he looks like he's S'bonelo's age.

"Is this chair taken" he asks

"You can sit I was leaving anyway"

"Okay" he sighs

I know he's a stranger but there's always that look a person has when stressed. He has that look I wanted to ignore it but I couldn't.

"Are you ok" I ask

"Yeah! Thanks" he looks down.

The voice inside my head is screaming 'Leave it' but I cannot.

"You don't look fine is every ok" I ask

"I'm just going through a rough patch that's all"

I know I should have said sorry and left but for some reason I didn't.

"Do you want to talk about it" I ask

"I don't know!"

"Well you'll feel better once you take it out of your chest"

"Months ago I found out that my parents are not really my parent and so I have been searching for my biological parents only to get a call that they were involved in a car accident and died on the spot"

Well I feel his pain nothing hurts as losing a parent.

"I'm sorry I know it hurts but at least you still have the ones that were taking care of you all along." I say

"Yeah but I wish they had told me earlier maybe if I had found them earlier maybe things would have been different"

"Well what's done is done might as well accept reality and move on. Maybe there's a reason why you couldn't meet them" I says
"Maybe!"

"Feel better" I ask

"What's your name?"

"Amahle!" I answer

"Thanks Amahle I really needed that I feel better"

"You're welcome!" I smile

How I wish I had someone to talk to me when I ran away from home.

"I should get going" I say standing up

"Thanks Amahle for being here and taking your time to talk to me"

"You're welcome" I say trying to walk away but he stops me.

"I know we are strangers and that I'm way older than you but can I at least have your number"

"Uhm why don't you give me yours" I say He takes out his wallet and pull out a small card and hands it to me.

"You're not going to throw this away are you? Because I know girls"

"No!" I chuckle well that's what I was planning to do I look at the card for a moment. "You own a restaurant?"

"Not anymore!"

"What do you mean" I ask

"I'm selling it"

"How much?" I say and he chuckles. I bet he thinks I'm joking I mean could this girl afford a restaurant?

"What you want to buy a restaurant" he laughs

"Actually yes!"

"What do you need a restaurant for at your age" he asks

"I have my reason so how much?"

"Eleven hundred thousand" he answers
keeping a straight face

I only have hundred thousand.

"How big is the space?"

"You're actually serious about this" he asks

"Yes!"

"I'm leaving the country next month and since you cheered me up I'm willing to strike a deal with you" he says

"I'm listening"

"You can take the restaurant as it is but one condition" he says

"Define 'as it is'?"

"I mean with the furniture and all the machines" he answers

"What's the condition?"

"No one loses their job nothing changes around the restaurant except the owner. The workers are good people and I don't want them losing their jobs" he says.

That's a great deal but why does it seem too good to be true.

"Ok can I get back at you?"

"Sure but don't take long" he says

"Ok bye!"

"May I say your ancestors are with you" he laughs

"Why?"

"I don't usually talk to strangers and I hate this place but something pushed me to come here" he says

"Maybe I'm highly favoured" I smile and walk away.

I'm starting to think S'bonelo is my lucky charm how come ever since I met him good things have been happening in my life. I took out my phone and texted Jude telling her about Ntando's (the guy from the eatery) offer.

I took a taxi home well an uber is expensive. I get home near home to be precise I pass by the super market to buy some toiletries that's when I got a call from Jude.

Her: You should take the offer

Me: What if it's a scam?

Her: Its not I called him and pretended to be a buyer this is legit Mahle! (My mum used to call me that)

Me: ok I'll call him tomorrow

Her: Good girl and may I say you're highly favoured

Me: Bye Jude

Her: Bye love you!

I hang up I've noticed how Jude used uses the words I love you like its nothing. I can't even say I love you to money something that doesn't talk and I love money. I get home and S'bonelo is already there I can tell by his car parked outside. I take the toiletries to my room the go to greet him in his study.

I hesitate to enter as the images of us kissing replay in my head. But I have to greet him. What do I do? How do I react? While I'm still standing by the door debating with myself the door opens.

"Hie!" I scratch my head

"Hey Pinky" he smiles and I look down. "I could see your shadow from inside you know"

He could?

"I was coming in"

"What are you shy because we kissed?" he chuckles

"No!"

I am am even blushing. That reminds me since we kissed does this mean we are together?

"Come in" he orders

"I just wanted to say hie I'm going to get started on dinner"

"Don't worry I got us a helped so get in" he says

I swallow hard before entering. I know he's going to start talking about the kiss. He closes the door and comes to sit next to me.

"About the kiss" he says

I knew it. I don't say a word I just press my lips together

"I really like you Amahle and I know you don't feel the say yet but I'm not going to rush you. If you need time or I'm pressuring you please tell me. In fact feel free to tell me anything" he says

He's not pressuring me at all I don't say anything I just nod.

"And I'd like you to be my girl-friend" he adds
Girlfriend? Like a relationship? I've never been a girlfriend before. I swallow hard.

"You can think about it of course" he says

"Okay!" I whisper

"And take all the time you need"

"No! I'm saying ok as in agreeing to be your girlfriend" I answer.

I don't know if this is the right move but I'm just taking a leap of faith.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes!" I chuckle it's like he wasn't expecting that. He places his hand behind my neck and pulls towards him and we kiss. I feel like I'm floating. Now I understand the saying love is sweet when you're with the right person. We heard downstairs and we just won't stop kissing and the things he's making me feel are just out of this world.

#Love changes everything.

The past months has been the best months of my life. I managed to buy the restaurant from Ntando with my master negotiator Jude on my side of course and she did add the 50K she promised. I'm a boss now it still feels like a dream me Amahle just a year ago no one knew me.

S'bonelo and I are officially dating and he took me out on our first date and everything was perfect I feel like I'm in my own fairy tale. I'm my own Cinderella and I have found my prince.

S'bonelo and I might be dating but we still sleep in separate room well I don't want to keep him up with my nightmares and he said

he doesn't want us to rush into things and that he wants us to do things the correct way. Whatever that means. He insisted I see a professional and I'm starting the session next week.

I thought things were going to be awkward now that we are together but not us everything is just perfect and for the first time in my life I can say I'm happy and I'm a boss even though still new at it Jude got me an assistant more like a mentor because I need to learn a lot about running a restaurant and her name is Edith she's in her 40s and she's just the best. I have been working with her for 6 months now and I've learnt a lot from her.

My phone rings and it's S'bonelo it's funny how he always calls I mean we live together. Doesn't he get tired of talking to me? I still don't talk much even at work. I'm not the yelling type plus I don't like people who yell I prefer sitting down and talking like civilized people. Edith says I'm too soft and that they should know whose boss but half of the

people here are older than me and its awkward bossing around someone old enough to be your mother.

I answer the phone.

Him: My Love! (I giggle)

Me: Hey you!

Him: How are you?

Me: I'm fine and you?

Him: I miss you!

Me: We saw each other 2 hours ago.

Him: Feels like a month

Me: A month? (I laugh)

Him: I just wanted to hear your voice that's all

Me: Ok!

Him: Take care of yourself for me

Me: Always!

I hang up and go back to what I was doing. For the record I changed my phone. Later that day...

"Jude in the house" she says entering my office my female crush I adore this woman she's my idol.

"Hey!" I stand up to hug her

"Looking good Miss Zungu"

"Thanks" I smile well she takes me shopping every week.

"Now I wish I was you S'bonelo's father won't let me work I'm tired of shopping and sitting around"

I wish I was her imagine shopping and spoiling yourself all you want. I just smile.

"So my dear Mahle how's everything?"

"Everything is great I'm happy" I smile

"I'm glad and S'bonelo? Is he treating you like a princess that you are?"

"More like a queen" I answer

"I'm glad!"

She clears her throat and I can tell she wants to say something.

"What" I ask

"I know we should have asked you first but S'bonelo and I have been searching for your family"

What? Why?

"I told you my parent were dead and I don't have other family members" I say

"You do Amahle everyone does you know distant uncles and cousins"

"Not me!" I say

Even if I did I want nothing to do with then those people are related to my monster father and I want nothing that connects me to them. If they cared they should have looked for me after my parent's death.

"We hired someone to find your family and we found them"

"You did what" I ask

"I know we should have told you"

"You had no right Jude those people abandoned my family when we needed them and they are the reason my father did the things he did to me" I say well I'm not the yelling type.

"I know but"

"But nothing Jude I want nothing to do with them stop searching for them" I say even thinking about them makes me want to scream. I hate them I hate them for what

their brother or son did to me and I wish he rots in hell.

"Yeah about that we've found them and invited them I thought it'll be best if you knew"

"Which side of the family" I ask

"Your father's!"

"I can't I'm sorry but I don't want to see them why did you call them without asking me first" I ask

"Because we knew you'd refuse and we need them"

"For what?"

"S'bonelo loves you ok and he wants you to be officially his"

"But I'm already his" I say

"Not when you're still a Zungu he wants to do thing right"

What?

"He really loves you Mahle and he wants you to be his and only his" she says

"Fine!"

I'm only doing this for S'bonelo. But if it was upto me. I'd just be with S'bonelo and I don't need their approval.

I couldn't even concentrate at work the whole day on the other hand I don't want to worry S'bonelo because I know how he gets when I'm not ok. So I had to accept all this madness for him. After work Jude came to get me from work even though S'bonelo usually does. I still don't know how to drive but I'm taking driving lessons. I wonder what the other family members are like are they like my father?

I don't know why but when I think about him I start crying everything that happened is repaying in my head. What if they know that I killed my father what if they hate me for it? The images I'm losing my mind I'm sweating its happening. When it starts I start seeing the blood in my hands. I can't!

"Stop the car!" I cry

"Are you ok?" Jude parks the car on the side of the road. I need some air I get out of the car and she follows me.

"I can't!" I say

"Why? What's wrong?"

"I change my mind" I start walking back and forth.

"What's going on Amahle? What aren't you telling me?"

"When my parents died and I ran away from home

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I get out of the car and she follows me.

"I can't!" I say

"Why? What's wrong?"

"I change my mind" I start walking back and forth.

"What's going on Amahle? What aren't you telling me?"

"When my parents died and I ran away from home that's when I came this side" I answer

"If you're scared they are going to take you away then don't worry they just want to

confirm if it's the correct Amahle we don't want the cows going to the wrong family"

Cows? This is serious than I thought

I nod I just see them and they confirm it's me that's it. Again doing it for S'bonelo. We head home and there are cars outside 5 cars. How

many of them did the invite? I'm scared to go in.

"Relax!" Jude rubs my shoulder

"I can't"

"I'll go call S'bonelo" she says getting out of the car. A few minute later S'bonelo gets into the car and starts driving I don't know where he's taking us. The only thing on my mind is my father. Why did he do that to me? Now I have to live with the guilt of killing his my whole life.

We go to some apartment and S'bonelo has the key I just can't hold it in the hurt I feel inside I thought I was over it but no the past has come to haunt me tears are just streaming off my eyes. S'bonelo sits in front of me and wiped the tears off my cheeks but they won't stop.

"I need you to talk to me Amahle. What's going on" he asks

"I ran away from home"

"Is that why you scared to see your family" he asks and I nod. "I need you to use your words my love"

"I don't want to see then S'bonelo it'll just take me back to that place"

"What place" he asks

"I don't want to talk about it"

"Amahle you need to tell me something anything. First you don't want to talk about your past you have nightmares and now you don't want to explain to me. How do I help you if you don't tell me what's wrong" he asks

"You won't understand"

"Try me how do I marry you when I know nothing about you" he says

"Marry me?"

"I love you Amahle and I want to do it right but you need to open up a little" he says
What if he doesn't love me after this?

"What do you want to know" I sit up and wipe the tears off my cheeks.

"Everything why did you run away from home what's with the nightmares" he asks

Well he wants the truth I'm going to tell him the truth.

"I'm the only child of Nadia and Thapelo things have never been greet at home. Both

my parent were working but couldn't afford the bills I thought that was one of the reasons why they never took me to school. My parents would fight all the time my dad didn't care whether it was in front of me or not. Every morning when my father left for work I'd ask my mother why he hits her and she'd say it's for my safety" I exhale

"When I was 14 my mum came into my room and told me how much she loves me that there's no other way and that she wished things were different. She ran a bath for me and helped me bath she gave me a nice floral dress and told me to put it on. She even put cologne on me I asked her why since it was at night and she says so I smell great she left me sitting on the bed and walked out a few minutes later a stranger walked in"

"Stop!" S'bonelo says

"I was scared he wasn't even gentle he didn't even care if he was hurting me. I tried to scream and push him off me but he was too strong for me"

"That's enough Amahle" S'bonelo whispers

"I begged him to stop but he kept going when I'd scream...." S'bonelo stops me.

"That's enough ok!" he said holding me in his arms.

"I hate him S'bonelo even if he's dead I hate him. He's the reason my mother killed herself and he's the reason I ran from home"

"It's ok! You have me now we have each other" he says

"You still love me?"

"Of course I still love you" he answers

"You still want to be with me?"

"I told you I love you for you and your past has nothing to do with it. But you need to see a psychologist for the nightmares" he hugs me tight

"Thank you! For being my safe place"

"You don't have to thank me. Let me call Jude and tell her we can't make it back" he says

Told you he's my guardian angel he always knows how to make me feel better. I'm glad he still loves me even with my flaws. I'm still in his arms

"I have anger issues" he says randomly.

How do you react when someone tells you that? I sit up and look at him.

"They say my mother had the same condition and I think I got it from her. I always felt like I wasn't complete even though I had everything I felt like something was missing and it frustrated me. Everything changed when I met you it's like you were the missing piece in my life. Loving you changed me Amahle" he says

"I'm glad I met you too being you is the best thing that ever happened to me"

"And I love you" he kisses me on the forehead.

I like him a lot and I think I'm falling in deep and it scares me. We spent the night at the apartment it turns out it's his other house and yes we slept in different rooms.

#Love changes everything

12

I thought it was over but it's still haunting me
I woke up screaming again and as always
when I woke up my guardian angel was next
to me.

"You're fine" S'bonelo hugs me

"Why won't they leave me alone" I cry

"It's ok I'm here oky" he held me tight

"Is this what you want? Walking up in the
middle of the night because I'm having
nightmares?"

"It's not your fault Amahle it's not like you
asked for this and like I said I love you for
you and that means accepting all your flaws
and past" he hugs me tight

"You're the only person to love me in this
world you're the only one who has accepted
me even though the world had given up on
me"

"Because I love you" he kisses my forehead

"Why do you love me so much?"

"I don't have a reason but I love
unconditionally" he says

"Do you want to sleep with me tonight?"

He laughs

"I mean sleep in the same bed with me" I giggle

"I'd love to" he said getting under the covers. I'm in his arms laying on his chest I love being in his arms.

"How did you find them my family" I ask

"Jude hired a private investigator and it wasn't that easy since there were so many people with the surname Zungu but we found them I didn't know you were royalty I mean I knew you were special but I didn't know you were royalty by blood"

"According to my mother they disowned them because she gave birth to a female child" I say

"I'm sorry"

"That's my line" I chuckle

"I promise Amahle I'll make you the happiest woman on the planet even if it's the last thing I do"

"And I promise to give you my all" I say

"It sounds like we are making wedding vows" we laugh.

"Thank you for being in my life" I smile

"Thank you for letting" we kiss things are heating up he's running his hands all over my

body and my body is trembling at his touch. The feeling is out of this world our tongues are dancing to the same tune.

I'm questioning myself does he want us to be intimate well we have been together for 6 months now. For some reason I'm scared why am I scared I means I have done this countless time or maybe it's because I'm with a person I actually like. He's kissing my neck going down. I thought he was going to stop when he reaches my stomach but he's going further.

"Stop!" I say catching my breath

"Relax!"

I think he can also feel my body tensing.

"Relax! I got you" he says I nod and lay back.

I close my eyes and I'm feeling foreign things he goes down on me. I'm holding on to the bed sheets I feel it building up. My first ever orgasm.

I cover my face with my hands he removes them.

"She's shy"

"Stop teasing me" I say

"I don't know what you're talking about" he starts tickling me. I thought maybe we were going to do it but he said we are doing it for me. I don't want to do it for me I want to do it for us but S'bonelo wants to do things right.

It's late really late but we are still not asleep well this is our first night in the same bed as a couple.

"Are you sleepy" he asks

"No and you?"

"I'm scared if I sleep and wake up to find out this was all a dream" he says

That would be something what if I'm in the hotel dreaming or something.

"This is reality sweetheart"

"You called me sweetheart" he tickles me

"Stop!" I giggle

"I love you Amahle Zungu"

I just look at him well saying the word back has always been hard for me because I've never told anyone that I love them. He smiles and plants a kiss on my lips. I smile back.

"Can you call my family and tell them I'm ready to see them" I say for S'bonelo he went into all the trouble finding them.

"Are you sure?"

"As long as you promise they are not going to take me away from you" I say

"I'd die first before I let them take you from me"

"Cross your heart" I say

"Cross my heart!"

I fell asleep in his arms and woke up in his arms. I feel special I feel like a princess I feel loved. I don't know why but I feel happy. I sleep wearing S'bonelo's pyjama shirt. I went into the bathroom and there's a new toothbrush well I'm sure S'bonelo bought it I'm using it anyway washed my face then went to the kitchen to check if there's anything to eat or cook. The fridge is full

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washed my face then went to the kitchen to check if there's anything to eat or cook. The fridge is full plenty of food I prepare eggs bacon and toasted bread for S'bonelo. I'm

going to bring him breakfast in bed like in the movies.

I'm standing by the stove and I feel hands on my waist.

"Good morning" he whispers

"Morning Mr Ngcobo"

"You left me all by myself I woke up and my queen was gone" he hugs me tight

"Was making breakfast"

"Smelling delicious" he says

"That's the point"

"Aren't I getting a good morning kiss" I turn around and stand on my toes with my hands on his neck. Every kiss feels like the first.

"Happy?"

"Maybe if you kiss me again" he bites his lip

"I'm cooking here"

"Just a perk" he says

We have breakfast then bath I'm still wearing the same clothes as yesterday so I pass by the house before going to work S'bonelo was driving me of course. I told him to invite my family for dinner well Jude and S'bonelo's

father will be there in case they start ganging on me Jude's words not mine. I wanted to cook but S'bonelo insisted the helper will handle everything.

After work he came to get me from work honestly I'm scared to meet them but I can't make S'bonelo cancel again. I have to suck it up. They are already there when we get there I can tell by the cars parked outside Jude's car is also here.

"We can cancel if you want" S'bonelo says

"No! I'm fine"

"Are you sure" he asks

"Yes!" I nod

"Take a deep breath and exhale"

I did as he instructed he planted a kiss on my lips and told me everything will go just fine. He took my hand and led me inside the house I'm met by my father's look alike. A part of me wants to run as far as my feet can take me but I can't mostly because S'bonelo is holding my hand.

I spot that police officer from Steers and he smiles he's with two other men and an old lady

"I told you I saw her" he says and they all look excited to see me. The oldest one of them stands up and walks up to she looks at me S'bonelo lets go of my hand and move back a little.

"My grandchild!" the woman hugs me "You just like your mother"

I do look like her a lot

I don't know what to do or say the rest of the family comes to hug me. We have diner well Jude is a free spirit she's the one talking with them. I'm quiet I don't know what to say.

S'bonelo keeps smiling at me.

"When did you leave home Amahle" he old woman asks

"After my parents died!"

I watched their eyes widen they don't know?

"Thapelo and Nadia are dead" the police officer asks

"When was that?"

"Almost two years ago" I answer

"Who has been taking care of you then?"

"S'bonelo" I look at him and he rubs my thigh under the table.

"He's also the man in my life"

I don't know if I should announce that but what the hell.

"Thank you very much son for taking care of our daughter" the police officer says

They started talking about random things well I was quiet the whole time and S'bonelo my guardian angel was next to me the whole time.

It's nice to have a family that cares for once they left with S'bonelo's father discussing God knows what. I'm left with Jude and S'bonelo.

"You did well today" Jude hugs me

"She's a natural" S'bonelo hugs me also

"Why didn't you tell us you were a princess"

S'bonelo's father asks as he joins us

"Well I was going tell you" I say

"Princess Amahle we are in the presence of royalty" S'bonelo kisses me on the cheek

"Let us get going see you tomorrow Mahle"

Jude says

“Thank you Mr Ngcobo for finding my family”
I say

“Anything for our future daughter” he hugged
me goodbye

Future daughter in-law. We walk them out
and now I’m left with S’bonelo. We are now
watching a movie a romantic movie. He’s
holding me in his arms and I’m feeding him
popcorn.

“Your grandparents say you have to come
home for a cleansing” he says

“What cleansing” I sit up

“I told them that I want to pay lobola for you
and they say the ancestors don’t know you”
The hell what ancestors?

“Why do you want to pay lobola for me” I ask

“Because I love you and I want you to be my
wife”

“No S’bonelo it’s a little too soon don’t you
think you’re rushing things” I say

I can’t be his wife not while I still have the
nightmares and feeling the guilt of killing my
father.

"I'm sorry I know I should have told you first before deciding but sometimes I get too excited"

"I want to be your wife but not with the nightmares and all that" I say

"I can get you the help you need"

"I have something I have to tell you" I say

"You can tell anything"

"Promise you won't look at me differently after this" I say

"I've told you a million times that nothing can ever change the way I feel for you"

"But this might" I say.

It's now or never I'm telling him the reason why I ran from home. If he chooses to stay with me then he truly loves me.

#Love changes everything

13

I'm scared to tell him this is different from being a hooker. I killed a person I killed my

own father and I might go to jail for it if my family finds out they are going to hate me. S'bonelo is going to hate me. I don't want him to have me because I'm falling in love with him.

I feel the warm liquid rushing down my cheeks and he looks worried he hates it when I cry especially in front of him.

"Please don't cry" he wipes the tears off my cheeks using his thumb.

"Promise you won't leave me if I tell you" I say and he snaps

"How many time do I have to tell you that I love you Amahle I won't leave you. I told you I'm willing to accept everything about you didn't I" he yells

I hate being yelled at and he knows that. I don't say anything I start crying. He feels bad I know he feels bad he takes a deep breath and kneels next to me.

"I didn't mean to yell I'm sorry but it frustrates me Amahle what do I have to do to prove that I love you" he says

"I'm sorry I shouldn't have doubted you"

"I'm sorry for yelling at you. I love you Amahle I'm not with you because I feel sorry for you or anything but because I love you"
"I love you too" I say and he quickly looks at me. Even I can't believe I just said that but I mean it I do love S'bonelo and I think he should know the kind of person he's dating or should I say the kind of person he wants to marry. I have to tell him about what I did back home.

"You love me?" he smiles

"Yes" I giggle I can't believe I was crying just a few minutes ago.

"I love you more than anything I love you to the moon and back" he kisses all over my face.

How I wish things would always stay like this. We did not get the chance to talk about what I wanted to tell him and I did not want to ruin the moment either. Again we slept in the same bed cuddling maybe we should just use the same room we are together after all.

Finally weekend is here I don't work weekends but the restaurant will be open. Weekends are when S'bonelo and I spent some 'us' time this weekend we are going to Durban S'bonelo has been taking me places I have never been to in my life. I have also started taking online lessons and seeing a psychologist at first I was scared but it's actually helping having to talk about all that stuff.

"I think you have to tell him" says the lady who's helping me (Psychologist) well that's what S'bonelo calls it "Helping".

I'm at my 9am session.

"What if he leaves me after I tell him" I ask
"He'll be shocked at first but if he really loves you like you described he'll never leave you"
She sounds sure but I'm scared this is killing someone we are talking about.

"I really love him a lot and I don't want to lose him" I say

"Well don't you think you're going to hurt him more if he finds out from someone else?"

"No one knows except me and you you're not going to tell him are you" I ask

"Of course not that is not my business. My job is to help you and that's it"

"I'm scared!" I fold my arms

"Don't be they say the truth will set you free"
Maybe! Or maybe not. The truth might destroy the one thing I treasure most in the world.

Just like that an hour was gone S'bonelo couldn't come pick me up so he sent S'bonginkosi instead (his brother).

"Soon to be Mrs Ngcobo" says S'bonginkosi as he opens the car door for me he's sweet just like his brother.

"Hey! How are you?"

"The usual I'm great" he smiles they also look alike but S'bonelo is more handsome.

"I'm going to the office" I say as he takes a wrong turn its Friday.

"I have a surprise for you"

That's the first!

"How's Leah" I change the subject

"She's happy!"

"Ok!"

"Are you always this quiet" he asks after a while

"Sometimes"

"Well you're cute but don't tell S'bonelo that I said that because he'll kill me" he says

"You make it sound like he'd really kill you" I laugh

"The way he loves you he might"

I can't help but smile does he really love me that much and where is S'bonginkosi taking me? After what seems like forever he stops the car

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in the middle of nowhere. I want to ask what the surprise is but I don't. He comes to my side of the car and opens the door for me the Ngcobo's treat me like royalty. He helps me out of the car. There's another car parked next to the road he leads me to it. What is the surprise and should I call S'bonelo.

"This is as far as I can take you" S'bonginkosi says

"You not going to leave me in the middle of nowhere are you?"

“Don’t worry you’re in great hands I promise nothing will happen to you” he says I don’t trust him I don’t trust anyone except S’bonelo. I swallow hard and enter the car although a part of me doesn’t want to.

The driver starts driving I’m trying to call S’bonelo but he’s not answering. We reach some place.

“Here!” the driver says giving me a key

“What for?”

“I was told to give it to you when we reach here I’m sure it unlocks the house” he answers. I slowly get out of the car. This place is beautiful I head to the door and he’s right it does open the house but why am I here and is this the surprise S’bonginkosi was talking about? I enter the house looking around honestly am lost I mean why am I here? While I’m still looking around when I feel hands on my waist. I scream!

“Relax it’s just me” S’bonelo laughs

“You scared me how are you here?”

"I thought I'd spoil my lady a little" he smiles pulling me towards him

"Is this the surprise S'bonginkosi was talking about?"

"Something like that" he kisses my forehead

"Well I love it"

"Are you cold" he asks well its winter

"A little!"

"Why don't you go take a hot bath I need to handle something. I promise it won't take long" he says

"Okay!"

"I love you" he kisses my hand I nod and he frowns I know he wants me to say it back. I smile and perk his lips.

"Where is the bathroom?"

"Upstairs second room on your left" he answers

"Ok will come back down when I'm done"

"Take as long as you need" he calls as I go up the stairs

"I will!"

Don't tell me this is also his house too?

There's a nice dress and coat on the bed with boots next to the bed I guess that's for me

and all my toiletries how did he get these things here? I take a nice hot bubble bath. Now this is living who'd have known that me Amahle Zungu would be living fancy. I have a man that loves me and my own business.

I'm relaxing in the tub with my eyes closed.

"What's on your mind?"

"S'bonelo!! You startled me" I say

"Sorry wanted to see what was taking so long"

"Can you pass me the towel" I ask he hands me the towel and turns to face the wall.

Really now we are together after all. I don't say anything.

"I'm decent now" I say

"I'm afraid I won't be able to control myself"

I chuckle and head out to lotion myself we're in the same room but he's not looking at me well he has self-control I gotta give him credit. We have been together for months and he has not tried to sleep with me

"I'm dressed now" I say

“Good!” he walks upto me and pulls me towards him. Kisses the living hell out of me. “My beautiful Pinky with short hair” he says and I giggle

“I love my short hair”

“And I love you” he kisses me again he’s a good kisser my inner goddess wants him I want him. I’m breathing heavily he’s breathing heavily. I am holding on to him tight I want him to have me I want him so bad. But I can’t tell him that. He looks at me in the eyes breathing heavily. I know he feels the same ways as I do right now.

“Let’s go downstairs before I rape you” he whispers

“I want you to rape me”

Wait what? Did I really just say that? He just laughs it off takes my hand and leads me out of the room. He picks me up and continues walking. Carrying me in his arms.

“Where are you taking me” I ask

“To the fire place don’t want you catching a cold”

I want to ask if we are still going to Durban because I was looking forward to it but I won't ask I'm scared to ask. I sit on the couch.

"Coffee or tea" he asks

"Can I make the coffee?"

"Why don't we make the coffee together" he insists

"It's just boiling water S'bonelo I got it"

He never lets me do anything he says as long as he's my man I'll live like the princess but I'm no princess I'm just Amahle Zungu. We make the coffee together then go back to the fireplace. I feel warmer he insists on taking the cups to the kitchen.

He comes back makes me stand up. He's holding my hands.

"I know I'm not the most romantic person in the world but...."

"What are you talking about you're the most romantic guy I have ever met" I interrupt him

"I'm glad you think that way because many people think I'm a jerk" he chuckles

"Well to me you're perfect" I say

"You bring out the best in me Amahle you're the woman I want to spend my life with" he says and he's giving me the look. He's never looked at me like that before. He's looking at me like I'm the only girl in the world he's looking at me like I'm a snack.

"What?" I chuckle

"You're beautiful Amahle and I love you" he says

"I love you too" the smile on his face widens

"Please say it again"

"I love you S'bonelo" I giggle

"I can't hear you my love can you speak a little louder"

"I love you S'bonelo!" I laugh I'm blushing like no man's business. He goes down on his knees. Tell me it's not what I think it is.

"I love you Amahle and I want to spend my life with you. Will you marry me Amahle Zungu?"

No! Not this he's still on his knees.

"S'bonelo I can't"

I can't marry him because he has to know about me killing my father he deserves to know the truth. But I'm scared how do I tell him this? What if he leaves me? S'bonelo is the best thing that has ever happened to me. He's still on his knees and the moment I said 'can't' his face got worried. I'm not saying I don't love him I love him more than anything in this world and I do want to marry him but I have to tell him the truth first.

"I have something I need to tell you first" I say he gets up and looks at me in the eyes rubs my chin with his thumb.

"I've told you before and I'll say it again whatever happened in the past doesn't matter. I love you no matter what" he pecks my lips.

"I know and that's why you need to know this" I say we sit down and he holds my hands. I'm nervous my hands are shaking. I take a deep breath.

"My mother killed herself" I say he looks confused but gives me the go on look. I swallow hard.

"My father!!!.... Uhm I....." the tears voluntarily run down my cheeks as the images flash in my head.

"What happened to him" S'bonelo asks

"I..... I was angry at my mother and I didn't mean to"

"What did you do to your father Amahle" he asks. I tighten my grip on his hands and look down with the tears falling on my coat. It's now or never Amahle.

"I killed him" I whisper he lets go of my hands and stands up.

"I swear it wasn't planned even I don't know why I did it. After reading the note my mother left before hanging herself I was hurt and I blamed him for that" I cry he walking around and I'm still sitting on the couch crying.

I'm crying my heart out and he's just standing there watching me I know he hates me. Who was I kidding no one would ever love me in this world.

"S'bonelo" I call but he doesn't answer

"S'bonelo say something" I cry

He won't talk I'm pleading with him to talk to me but he's not he won't say anything instead he walks out on me. He promised to love me no matter what.

He hates me the one person that ever loved me now hates me. I run to the kitchen if S'bonelo hates me then I have nothing else to live for. I reach out for the knife might as well join my parents. I know it's going to hurt but at least it'll be over soon. Should I leave him a letter? No I can't write a letter right now. But what if my family thinks that S'bonelo killed me? Maybe I should write a letter.

I'm debating with myself while holding the knife in my hands I don't know why I never hold it by the handle I hold it by the blade. I'm standing by the sink just like that

Sunday. I can see the blood on the sink my blood. It's all replaying in my head.

***"Please don't hit me"

"I see you've forgotten that I'm your father"
he yelled***

Why do I remember it like its yesterday? I feel hands hugging me. I'm still holding on to the knife.

"Give me the knife" S'bonelo whispers I don't answer. He slowly opens my hand takes the knife and opens the tap. I flinch as the water hits the cut.

We are now sitting on the kitchen chair and he's bandaging my hand.

"Should I start getting worried" he says I look down.

"Are you going to start cutting yourself every time something like this happens" he asks and I don't answer.

"I didn't not walk out on you because I no longer love you. I just didn't want to say something that'll hurt you Amahle. Like I said

before I have anger issues and at that moment I was mad at you why didn't you tell me this sooner" he asks

"I wanted to S'bonelo I did!"

"Then what stopped you" he asks

"I was scared ok

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how do you tell that to the man you love? I was scared to lose you"

"You'll never lose me ok" he rubs my chin

"Ok!" I nod

"I told you never to hurt yourself because you'll be hurting me too" he says "How do you think I feel seeing you like this? You know very well that I love you"

"I'm sorry!"

"Is this the reason why you have the nightmares" he asks

"Yes!"

"What happened that day I want to know everything" he says

"S'bonelo!"

"Amahle you have to find peace with yourself trust me you'll feel better once you talk about it" he says

“Okay!”

I take a deep breath he wants to know everything? Then I’ll tell him everything. I swipe the tears off my cheeks.

“Where do you want me to start” I ask
“From the beginning”

“It was a normal Sunday just like any other I went to my mother’s room to wake her up which was unlike her to wake up late. I knocked on her bedroom door but she did not answer so I decided to let myself in. I found her hanging from the ceiling” I breathe
“Just like that she had killed herself and left a note saying she couldn’t hold on any longer even I couldn’t hold on any longer but I didn’t kill myself. All she did was to leave a note just a note. Why would she kill herself leaving me behind she knew how he abused me and went ahead killed herself leaving me all by myself”

“If your mum hanged herself then how and why did you kill your father” he asks and he’s saying it as it is ‘KILL YOUR FATHER’.

"I wasn't in the correct state of mind he was about to hit me and I lost it"

"Is that why you ran away from home" he asks and I nod.

"I know he was my father but that man put through hell and back. I'm glad he's dead he's the reason my mother killed herself"

"Okay" he takes a second "Who attacked first"

"S'bonelo I just told you that I killed my father and you asking me that"

"Yes but there has to be a reason why you did it" he says

"He was going to hit me he got into the house and asked where my mum was. I ignored him so he lost it"

"Did this happen on the same day when your mother died" he asks

"Why are you asking me all this? I just told you that I killed my father"

"Amahle I need to know ok I need to know whether it was self-defence in case when the police take your statement" he says

"Police? You're going to report me to the police" I stand up

"You have to report this Amahle"

"So you want them to lock me away because they will" I say

"Not if you tell them exactly as you told me"

"This is killing someone S'bonelo they are going to lock me away and throw away the keys" I cry

"Not when you have me in your corner"

"No S'bonelo! Not even you can keep me out of jail" I say

"Please just trust me!"

"I'm not turning myself in I'm sorry" I rush out of the room and lock myself in his bedroom.

I don't want to go to jail. Living with my father was jail itself and I'm not confessing to the police I might spend my whole life in jail because of this. There's a knock on the door I know its S'bonelo.

"Amahle open up" he says calmly and I ignore him

"Please open up" he adds

"I want to I just want to be alone" I answer

"Amahle we'll figure it out together just open the door"

"I just want to be alone S'bonelo" I call

"I'm coming it" he says the door opens of course he has a spare key. He sits next to me.

"Listen to me Amahle! We are reporting this no one is going to take you ok I'll get you the best lawyer there is" he says

"I'm not confessing to anyone"

"You don't understand Amahle its better if you confess yourself" he says

"I said no!"

"Why do you have to be so stubborn? Can't you see I'm trying to help you here" he yells

"Then stop helping me S'bonelo I didn't ask my father to sell me and I didn't ask for you to love me ok. This is why I didn't want to be with anyone. I'm better off alone just let me be S'bonelo I told you I was bad news and you stuck round. Just leave! Leave my life I'm used to it anyway everyone leaves me" before I knew it a slap landed in my face.

"How many times do I have to tell you that I love you? I'm here aren't I? Would I have come back if I didn't love you?" he yells
I silently cry holding my cheek.

"You're not a child anymore get yourself together" he says then takes a moment I'm still holding my cheek did he just slap me then then me that he loves me? He really does have anger issues.

"I'm sorry" he whispers

I stand up and try to walk away but he pulls me back and holds me in his arms.

"Never walk out on me or even attempt to"
he holds me tight

#Love changes everything

I know S'bonelo has my back but confessing to the police isn't a good move I don't want to go to jail. Things are now awkward again I have ruined the moment S'bonelo had gone through all the trouble just so we can have some alone time and I just had to ruin it with my past as always.

He even proposed does this mean he changes his mind about wanting to marry me I mean who wants to marry a murderer. We are sitting on the bed he's quiet too quiet and that is unlike S'bonelo.

"I'm sorry I ruin the day" I say
He looks at me and rubs my chin.

"You didn't ruin anything"

"So we good" I ask

"We are always good and I'm glad you told me" he pecks my lips

"Thank you for understanding"

We go silent for a while what is on his mind? I bet he's thinking 'I'm in love with a murder who's an ex-prostitute'. I sigh hoping he'll say something but we're quiet ghost silent.

"Marry me!" he murmurs

What? He still wants to marry me

"Excuse me?"

"Now that there are no more secrets marry me" he says

"You still want to marry me even..."

"I told you nothing could ever change the way I feel for you" he answers

Where did he come from? Because he's one of a kind.

"Okay then I'll marry you" I answer

"You sure? You know what don't answer that because you might end up changing your mind"

"I won't change my mind because I love you and I can't wait to be Mrs S'bonelo Ngcobo" I kiss him

"And I can't wait to be your husband"

Are all men like S'bonelo or I just got lucky because I have never met anyone like him! I've learnt a lot from him these past months he's taught me how to love again and I'm glad I ran away from home because I wouldn't have met him. Today was our first

argument as a couple yes we have disagreed in the past today was the first time he yelled at me usually I'm the one yelling which is weird because I hardly say anything but when I become angry I just vomit it all out.

"Amahle when is your birthday" S'bonelo asks

"I don't have a birthday"

"Everyone has a birthday" he says

"Well I don't"

"I see what you doing!" he rushes his hands to my ribs he's tickling me

"4 June! 4 June" I giggle

"That was 3 months ago and you didn't even bother to tell me?"

"It never crossed my mind plus every day feels like my birthday" I say

"Yeah but I was going to make something special for you"

"You already make every day special for me"

I kiss his cheek

"Can't get your hands off me I see"

"Maybe you should tie them up" I smile

"I love seeing you smile"

I smile I don't know how to respond when he says something like that I mean do I say thank you or what?

"So you're 19 now" he asks

"Yes Mr Ngcobo"

"Reminds of when I first met you you used to call me that a lot" he chuckles

"Well it was weird calling you by your name"

"I love you" he says randomly well I'm used to it now

"And I love you too!"

"Music to my ears" he kisses my forehead

I look at my hand I have a diamond ring in my hand. I don't know much about rings or diamonds but I'm sure this costed a lot.

"You like it" he asks

"You or the ring?"

"The ring" he laughs

"I like it"

"I'm glad I met you you know I used to be a play boy I used to hurt women but everything changed when I met you" he says he's getting serious

"How did I change things for you?"

"I loved you! I had given up on life also the woman I loved was cheating on me. I was going to propose but I found her with someone else. I couldn't control myself and I beat the living hell out of her" he sighs
Should I be worried? At this point in life I can't take any abuse let's hope he doesn't lose it with me. I don't say anything though. He holds my hands and kisses them.

"I thought I had killed her so I was going to take my life also the plan was to just lock myself in my car and open the gas tank die a peaceful death" he says

Guess we have a suicidal couple here and why did he have a gas tank in his car. I give him the go on look.

"But I didn't kill myself course because I ran into you that day you saved my life Amahle" he says

"But I didn't do anything"

"You didn't have to being on the side of the road that night saved me" he kisses my hands

"On my side you also saved me who knows what would have happened to me if I didn't meet you"

"I think it was meant to be" he smiles

"It is meant to be"

"Before I met you I never believed in having one girlfriend" he laughs

And let's hope it stays in the past

"And before I met you I never believed in love"

"Love changes everything" he says

I smile he's my heaven sent my guardian angel

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my safe place my shoulder to cry on and I love him unconditionally.

"What's on your mind" he asks

"I can't wait to be your wife and bear your children"

"What happened to being a successful single mother" he laughs

"Yeah that was before I fell in love"

"Are you happy" he asks

He's asked me this before. I nod

"Use your words" he says
"I'm happy you make me happy"

We start kissing I know we said we'll wait and do things right but what the hell we've both done this before. Just his touch sends chills down my spine. I want this I want him.

"I love you" he murmurs
Today it's definitely happening I take off my coat well I'm no longer cold he takes off his. We are kissing and for a moment I forget about everything right now we are the only people in the planet it's just me and him.

His phone rings. Really!

"Let's ignore it" he breaths

"Maybe its important" I whisper his lips are kissing every inch of my body I don't want him to stop but his phone won't stop ringing.

"You should get it" I say he gives me the 'are you serious look.

"We can continue after the call" I say he rolls his eyes and get the phone well we were still dressed.

S'bonelo: Timing Jude you should seriously work on your timing

(He puts the phone on speaker)

Jude: Hope I did not disturb?

S'bonelo: You did!

Jude: Sorry ok this is important. Where are you?

S'bonelo: Jude why are you calling?

Jude: You guys need to come back home ASAP

S'bonelo: What's going on?

Jude: I can't explain right now but you and Amahle need to get here

S'bonelo: Ok we're coming

Jude: Now S'bonelo it's urgent

S'bonelo: We are coming take a chill pill

He hangs up and faces me I'm already wearing my coat. He pulls me by my waist and kisses me.

"Why does Jude always have to disturb us" he asks

"I don't know" I laugh

"We should get going" he kisses me gain.

We drive back to his place I can't wait to show Jude the ring. How I wish I had a friend or a sister to tell all this. I have my head on S'bonelo's shoulder while he's driving. I wish we could always be like this. He kisses my hand I smile.

"You're too quiet" he says
I do talk but in my head.

"I'm not quiet"

"You are and you cry a lot the next time I see you crying we are going to have some serious trouble" he says and I laugh. He's not joking.

"I promise you won't ever see me crying again"

We all know that's a lie.

"Good! If you want to cry lock yourself in the bathroom then come out smiling" he adds

"Tears aren't something that can be controlled but I will try"

We get home and Jude is already waiting outside. Again there are cars outside why are they here? Let's hope it's not about the cleansing thing because I do not want to be

cleansed by anyone these people did not want me when I was born. I try to get out of the car but S'bonelo stops me.

"Let me talk to Jude first" he says

"Is everything ok?"

"I'm not sure just stay in the car" he kisses me then gets out of the car I can see him talking to Jude but what's taking so long? S'bonelo is getting angry now I'm curious what are they really talking about? Is it about me?

I hear a loud bang S'bonelo just hit one of the cars what is going on? I want to go check but he said stay in the car. Jude is trying to calm him down but he won't listen maybe I should go talk to him. I get out to the car and walk up to them.

"Amahle I told you to stay in the car" he snaps

"S'bonelo calm down"- Jude

"What's going? Jude why is my family here" I ask

"They are here...."

"Jude you shouldn't have called us here you should have warned us first" S'bonelo interrupts her

"It's now or never" Jude says

"We are right behind you"- S'bonelo

Jude walks into the house. S'bonelo looks at me he's scaring me.

"You have to be strong ok" he says then kisses my forehead my stomach turns a little. What do I have to be strong for? He takes my hand and leads me into the house.

I can't believe my eyes this can't be happening

#Love changes everything

16

No way! This can't be happening maybe I'm seeing things. S'bonelo is holding on to my hand. I want to run out so bad I want to scream and shout. He's looking at me he's looking directly onto my eyes. A part of me

wants to strangle him the other wants to break down and cry my eyes out.

Maybe this isn't real maybe I'm seeing thing. I look at S'bonelo and he's worried he hates seeing me cry. We are still standing by the door

"AMAHLE!" he murmurs

I can't!

The next thing I wake up in bed maybe it was all a dream. He can't be live he's dead I saw him die. I sit up and rub my eyes the door opens.

"Hey you're up" S'bonelo says

"Hie! How long have I been sleeping?"

"You kind of fainted" he says

"But I've never fainted in my life"

"Yeah but you did" he says

"Tell me it was all a dream?"

He shakes him head! So he didn't die? My father survived but how? How come he never looked for me? Does he still hate me as

before? And why is S'bonelo avoiding eye contact. I'm going crazy.

"Why are they here" I ask

"They are here for you"

"I don't want to go with them" I say

"They just want to see you that's all"

"No I don't know these people and how is my father still alive? I saw him die" I ask

"I don't know but they say they want to see you and won't go with the lobola negotiations until they see you"

"What do they want to see me for" I ask

"I wish I knew Amahle but I don't!"

They just want to take me away from S'bonelo that's what. There's no way they can just want to see me these people never wanted me when I was born. And my father! That man hate's me to the core I know he wanted me to be a boy. S'bonelo manages to convince me to go talk to them he promised not to leave my sight.

We head to the dining they are laughing like nothing happened well that's if they know

that their son (My father) abused me all those years. I'm walking behind S'bonelo honestly I'm scared to face them. Jude is there she's their waitress today and she is running around serving them drinks. S'bonelo's father is here and some men I have never seen before.

"Amahle my child" Thapelo (My father) says with a huge smile on his face. He can't just smile at me like nothing happened. I don't answer I get behind S'bonelo.

"She's shy just like her mother. Come here Amahle" says the old woman honestly I don't know who's who.

"Go!" S'bonelo whispers

"No!"

"They won't do anything I'm right here" he whispers

I'm fine! Can't they see that I'm fine? I slowly walk to them it's like the more I look at him the more I think about that day. My mum hanging from the ceiling and me stabbing his with a Oh! Now I remember it was a butter knife no wonder he survived. I take a deep

breath and greet then one by one shaking their hands. They might be happy to see me but I'm not happy to see them.

I reach my father I don't want to shake his hand I hate him. He's the reason I was selling myself he's the reason my mother hung herself. He's smiling why is he smiling at me? I don't shake his hand I skip him and everyone notices.

"Amahle greet your father" the old woman says. And who the hell is she maybe they should just introduce themselves because I know no one here. I'm not shaking his hand I walk back to S'bonelo and cling on to his arm. I'm sure they think I'm full of myself well I don't care and I don't trust them.

"Can we please talk to Amahle?" says Thapelo I don't want to talk to them I hold on to S'bonelo's hand. Now everyone is looking at us.

"Yes she can even come with some for a day or two" says one woman.

A day or two? For what?

"Yes that's a good idea"- Thapelo

Of course he'd say that

"I can't come with you" I answer

"Why?"- Thapelo

"Because I have a business to run and I can't just leave" I answer

It still sound weird I have a business. Plus I can't just go with them what if they send me to the police for attempted murder. It's not like anyone would believe me if I told them that my own father would sell me for prostitution.

"Or we can talk here" I say

"That's also fine" says that police office I ran into at Steers.

They all look at each other like they are talking with their eyes then one of them nods.

"What do you want to talk about" I ask and Jude clears her throat

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I look at her and she raises her eyebrows am I supposed to know what that means?

S'bonelo squeezes my hand.

"Fine can you excuse us?" I say to S'bonelo the Ngcobo's excuse themselves now it's just the Zungu's. I join them on the table sitting far away from my father of course.

"How are you Amahle? Are they treating you well" the old woman asks.

"Yes they are treating me very well and I'm happy" I answer

"I don't mean to be rude but I only know one person in the room and that is (Clears throat) Thapelo"

Yes I called him by his name he does deserve the title call me disrespectful but I don't care.

"Don't call your father by his name nana ok? I'm your grandmother and your father is my first born child" she says

Ok grandmother Zungu then the others are my uncles and grandfather Zungu is also here grandmother was introducing them all.

"That boy wants to pay lobola for you"-

Grandmother

He's not a boy.

"Yeah that's what he said" I answer

"Ok but first we have to do a welcoming ceremony for you"- Thapelo
Why are they so bent on this ceremony?
And welcoming me where? I don't want any welcoming ceremony. I was about to say I can't but grandmother interrupted me.

"The ancestors don't know you Amahle" she says

And let's keep it like that

"We want to do things the right way my child we know that we rejected you in the past but we are still your family and we love you" she says.

"Fine I'll do the ceremony but here"

"No we have to back where it all started in KZN" she says.

And why are the men quiet?

"Okay but I have to talk to my fiancé first" I say

Well he is my fiancé after all they looks at each other again then one of them speaks

"Okay that's fine with us"

"You're all grown" – Thapelo

Whatever!

“Amahle why did you run away from home”
he asks and everyone looks at me.

I ran away because I thought I had killed him
but I don't say it I keep quiet.

“Yes and why would you tell us that both your
parents are dead when they are not” uncle
police man asks

“Because I thought they were” I look at
Thapelo I hate him with every fibre in my
body.

“Her mother hanged herself” Thapelo says
and everyone gasps guess they didn't know
well they seems not to know anything.

“Why would Nadia kill herself” Grandmother
cries

“Because....”

“I'm so happy to see you Amahle” – Thapelo
interrupts me.

I can't say the same.

And why is he interrupting me the whole
family needs to know what kind of person he
is and if it was up to me I'd kill him again
that's how much I hate him.

They said the cleansing or so they call it is going to be in a week's time and my father wanted to talk to me privately but I can't I'm not ready to open that chapter yet.

After 'talking' I quickly left the room and left Jude and S'bonelo's father talking to them. I went and joined S'bonelo in the kitchen.

"How do you feel" he asks

"I don't know it feels like I'm dreaming mean I saw him die S'bonelo"

"Well like you said you weren't in the correct state of mind" he says

"I don't know what's real and what's not"

"Don't give up yet you still have me" he says

"Yeah I still have you my future husband"

"Are we still going to Durban" he says

"If you want to"

"And I'm asking you if you want to go" he asks

"Ok let's go then I'll start packing"

Maybe our weekend isn't ruined after all. We just went to see the city couldn't go to the beach since its winter. It was the best

weekend of my life with my guardian angel on my side.

Just like that a week was gone and now I have to go for this cleansing. A part of me doesn't want to but S'bonelo said I need to do this and that I need to make peace with my father. I don't know about making peace but we'll see.

S'bonelo drove me all the way to KZN he insisted honestly I don't want to go a piece of me still thinks this is bad idea.

"Relax it's just two days then I come to get you" S'bonelo says

"Can we do this some other time? We can postpone"

"I know you're scared but I promise I will be checking up on you and you'll be fine" he says

"What if...."

"He won't hurt you Amahle not with all these people around I'll call every hour if that makes you feel better" he kisses my hand

Just two days and I'm out of here I'll just make sure I don't cross paths with him. The first day they brewed alcohol and slaughtered a cow. Everyone is referring to me as princess Amahle now. Honestly I don't care about the title I just want to go back home to my fiancé. They made me remove the ring I don't know why. Finally the ceremony was over I wanted to leave right away but they said I'll go the following day I'm still avoiding bumping into my father. I'm sharing a room with some of the cousin that treat me like royalty I don't understand why everyone is so nice to me.

"You're getting married" says one of the cousins she's the only one that actually has the courage to talk to me and the others just smile and act weird.

"Yeah I'm glad that I've finally found love"

"You're marrying a prince you might be excited. I've seen him before he's handsome and tall every girl would die to be his wife. You're lucky Amahle" she says
She's seen S'bonelo?

“He’s not a prince by blood but he’s my prince” I smile

“But grandmother said that you’re marrying Prince Nqoba”

“Who’s that” I ask

“I should go check the pots” she rushes out of the room.

This can’t be happening. I knew this ceremony think was too good to be true.

17

I can't sleep I can't eat. I just want to get out of here I knew this was a bad idea from the word go. Why do my so called ancestors hate me so much? I don't want to get married to a man I've never met I want my man I want my S'bonelo. And where the hell is my phone? How come I can't find it. I have to call him he has to com get me.

"Amahle you have to eat something" says one of the cousins a male one this time.

"I'm not hungry!"

"What happened? You were happy a few minutes ago" he asks

Well that was until I found out that they wanted me to marry a stranger.

"Did they do something to you" he asks and what does he care these people can't wait to eat my lobola money.

I don't answer I just ignore him but he won't let me be he keeps insisting I eat I don't want to eat anything from these people who knows they might try to kill me and my father I just wish I could run into him and this time I'd make sure he dies.

"Amahle tomorrow is a big day and you have to...."

"May I use your phone" I interrupted him

"Why?"

"I need to call someone" I answer

"Male or female?"

"I want to call my friend so she can join me on my big day tomorrow" I fake smile

"Okay!"

The digdigs into his phone and pulls out his phone hands it to me without hesitation. Then excuses himself. Ok call S'bonelo! I know his number by heart since he calls so much. He answers right away.

Him: Hello!

Me: S'bonelo please come get me

Him: Amahle! I have been trying to call you are you ok?

Me: I'm not ok please come get me

Him: Relax! Tell me what happened

Me: Come get me please!

Him: I'm

The phone just switched off. Even the universe is against me. Why would they take my phone its enough that they took my ring.

"Who were you talking to" says Thapelo I know his voice even in my sleep.

Can he stay away from me because I don't want to go to jail. I swear at this moment I'd kill him without hesitating. I don't answer I try to walk out of the room and he holds my arm.

"Please don't touch me" I whisper

"Amahle my child!"

"My child? You have no right to call me that" I answer

I'm not his child and I definitely do not want to talk to him. I just remove his hand off me. Why didn't he die? Maybe it'll be better if I actually went to jail than seeing his face.

"I know you hate me" he says

"I don't hate you I actually loathe you"

His eyes widen I guess that's not what he expected. He expected me to be the Amahle that cries in silent.

"Amahle I'm your father!" he says

"The same father that sold me the same father that abused me all those years. You're not my father in fact you're dead to me. I'm an orphan now" I answer

"Don't talk to me like that I'm still your father" he yells

"You're not my father!" I yell back

He's taking me back to that place his facial expression has changed he's angry now. My cheek stings he just slapped me. Where's my guardian angel because I need him now. I hold my cheek with tears running down my cheeks.

"I tried to reason with you but seems you're stubborn just like your mother. Now listen to me and listen carefully you're going to be a good girl and go back to the girls room and rest. Tomorrow we are having a wedding ceremony your wedding ceremony and you're marrying Prince Nqoba you're a princess and you will marry a Prince" he says calmly

"I'm not marrying any Prince"

"Don't ruin this for me Amahle my parents rejected me because of you and now they finally accepted me. Do me a favour and suck it up like a big girl so you owe me this much" he answers

I owe him? I didn't even ask to be born. Is it my fault that I became a girl child. I'm not marrying anyone over my dead body.

"You're going to be a good girl tomorrow

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smile and marry Prince Nqoba" he orders

"S'bonelo is coming to get me I'm leaving this place and not even you can stop me from leaving this place"

"He better not try to stop the wedding because he will join your mother" he says
He's just blabbing I know he's blabbing.

"Your boyfriend might be rich but I gained my heritage and trust me I can make him disappear all I have to do is snap my fingers"
he says

"You wouldn't!"

"And don't forget you almost killed me do you know that you can go to jail for that? I can actually get the best lawyer in the world" he laughs

"You can't even afford a lawyer"

"Or take the easy road get rid of your boyfriend" he says

Don't tell me he'd actually get rid of him not S'bonelo I'd die if anything happened to him. How can one be so heartless to his own daughter. I'm starting to doubt if he's really my biological father because no father would treat his own blood like this. This man is the definition of pure evil.

"I hope I made myself clear Amahle you marry Prince Nqoba and trust me you do not want to go against me" he says and I nod I know S'bonelo is on his way and he's going to come and get me.

"Now call him and tell him you're fine" he hands me my phone. Lord help me so he's the one who took my phone he had this all planned I see. I guess I'm the ticket to his family accepting him.

I take a deep breath and dial S'bonelo's number. He answers right away like he was waiting for me to call.

Him: I'm on my way my love

Me: I love you!

Him: I love you too Are you ok?

Me: You don't have to come get me I'm fine

Him: Are you sure?

Me: Yes! You know my I'm a cry baby!

Him: Yeah but no one just cries without a reason

Me: I just missed you that's all

Him: If you say so

Me: I love you so much

Him: You really do miss me. Am I still getting you tomorrow?

Me: No! They said I should stay for another day

Him: Ok I'll be checking on you

Me: Ok bye

I hung up and handed him the phone.

"Good girl now go to bed tomorrow is a big day"- Thapelo

"Why?"

"Excuse me" he asks

"Why do you hate me so much? What did I ever do to you?"

"Go sleep Amahle" he ordered

"What about S'bonelo? I'm still his fiance' after all

"Fiance'? Might as well forget about him" he says I got on my knees

"Please don't do this! I know I'm not what you wanted but I'm begging you don't take the one thing that makes sense in my life"

He doesn't answer and just walks out of the room. I have to get another phone and call S'bonelo or just run away because I'm very much good at it. Unfortunately they locked the door and I can't find the keys so I guess that's not an option.

I couldn't sleep all night I was crying the whole night. What if I never see S'bonelo? But I love him so much.

The sun is coming out I just wish I could talk to S'bonelo even if it's just for a second. I just want to tell him how sorry I am and how much I love him. It's better if he finds out about this wedding thing from me. Where's grandmother maybe she might understand me woman to woman but I can't find her.

They tell me to go and bath then put me in a Zulu attire.

They are really going with this everyone is happy except me I'm crying the whole time and not one even bothered to ask me if I'm ok.

"Can I please talk to my father" I say to one of the ladies that were helping me with the attire

"Yes princess Amahle" she walks out and within a minute he was there he asked everyone to leave us. It's just me and him how I wish I had a knife right now.

"Do you need anything" he asks

"Yes! I want to speak to S'bonelo"

"No!" he answers

"I want to talk to S'bonelo or there will be no wedding because I will make sure I kill myself before this wedding"

"Do you know that your mother was also suicidal? She tried to kill herself 4 times in the past" he says

Well she succeeded the 5th

"Do you blame her? I mean who's want to be with you"

The next thing I'm kneeling on the floor. He went for the stomach he can't bruise the bride after all.

"Call S'bonelo and break up with him" he throws my phone and the screen cracks.

Who am I kidding he won't stop until I marry this Nqoba person might as well accept defeat. I dial S'bonelo.

Me: Hey my love

Him: My other half

Me: How are you? Did you eat?

Him: Yes but I miss you though

Me: I miss you more

Him: What are you doing?

Me: About to get married

Him: (laughs)

Me: They making me marry some Prince I've never even seen

Him: You're joking right?

Me: I'm afraid this has to end

Him: Amahle!

Me: Find yourself a girl that's not complicated like me. Find yourself true love.

Him: You're not making sense right now

Me: Bye S'bonelo you'll always have a place in my heart

Him: Amahle stop being crazy.

Me: I'm getting married any minute.

Him: I'm coming there

Me: Don't! I don't want you to come. I won't be able to handle seeing you

Him: You know I love you and this what's with this crazy talk?

Me: Move on

Him: Don't do this Amahle

Me: I love you ok and don't call me because hearing your voice will make things worse.

I hung up of course I had to say that he's standing by the door and listening if I say anything stupid so he can hit me again. I know S'bonelo said no matter what I go through I should never dream of killing myself but I think I might because I can't live like

this. My life makes no sense without S'bonelo in it.

18

People are already ululating everything is ready. No matter how much I wipe the tears off my face I can't seem to stop them. Can God just send me a miracle! Where's S'bonelo? I need him now more than ever after all he did promise to always be there for me. This is really happening I've cried so much I can't even cry anymore.

Cars come to take me I thought the ceremony was taking place in KZN but it's actually far from KZN how is S'bonelo going to find me now worse I have no phone. We get there after what seems like forever seems they were all waiting to me. I slowly walk into the tent where the ceremony is taking place Prince Nqoba or so they call him is already waiting for me in his animal skin outfit. My father wanted to walk me down the aisle but I'd rather walk alone than let him.

'I've been through worse' I said to myself walking down the aisle. But what if this Nqoba guy abuses me what if he's worse than my father? The wedding goes on can someone please try to stop the wedding how come in the movies the true love always stops the wedding guess I'm only a princess by title. The wedding goes on and everyone is having a blast of a time except the bride.

"Are you ok?" – Nqoba whispers

"And if I'm not what are you going to do about?"

"Then I have to figure out a way to cheer my wife" he answers

"Stop the wedding then"

"My parents would kill me pick another thing" he smiles.

"Then you can't cheer me up"

"I'm sorry I can't cheer you up" he says

He seems like a nice person but I don't want to be his wife and his in-laws are monsters.

And do people still have arranged marriages in this century? We both change to the next outfits he's wearing a navy blue suit and I'm

now in a dress that matches his suit how did these people even know my size? I wonder what S'bonelo is doing is he thinking about me as much as I'm thinking about him? Or has he moved on like I told him to?

Finally the wedding is over I have to go with my husband to spend our first night together he drives us to his place and I don't even know where we are. Even if I was to call S'bonelo where do I say I am I don't even have any clothes with me am I supposed to sleep in this attire? I haven't talked to Nqoba since we left the wedding venue.

We enter the house and I sit on the couch he disappears for a while then comes back with two mugs and hands me one its coffee well it looks like coffee

"Why does it taste weird?"

"Or sorry that's my cup" we swap cups

Why is he looking at me?

"Do you have a headache" he asks

"Don't tell me you can also read minds?"

"You were crying the whole ceremony so I figured you must have a headache" he smiles
"I do have a headache!"

He stands up and disappears again this time he comes back with pain killers. My head is actually killing me as I was about to take 3 when he stops me.

"Hey you'll kill yourself take one" he says
I didn't know taking a lot of pills can kill because I'd have taken as much as I can this morning.

"Thanks! For the pills"

"Don't mention!"

I just want to get out of this dress

"So we are husband and wife now" he says

"I'm not going to sleep with you if that's what you were about to say"

"I'm not that kind of guy Amahle" he chuckles

"I'm not a virgin either"

"That's not a surprise" he mumbles

"Excuse me? What is that supposed to mean"

"Look Amahle I didn't marry you because I wanted a virgin I married you because by tradition I'm supposed to marry a princess

and you're pretty so I'm sure we can get along just fine" he says
"I didn't want this in fact I still don't they forced me into all this"
"I'm sorry but we are married now might as well accept it" he says

"I'm in love with someone else"

Might as well tell him

"Why don't you go get some rest then we'll talk in the morning" he says

"Sleep where?"

"Come with me" he stands up and I follow him. "I figured you wouldn't want to sleep in the same bed as me so this is your room" he says.

"May I use your phone?"

"So you can call the man you love? I'm sorry but no" he says the walks out

I guess I'm sleeping in this dress then I take off the necklace and the shoes. I hear a knock on the door is it Nqoba? Or are there other people in the house? I open the door and it's Nqoba.

"Are you hungry" he asks and I shake my head no "I'm just in the room opposite yours if you need me" he says I nod.

"Are you going to sleep in that dress or should I give a gown" he asks

"A gown is fine"

He literally storms to his room and comes back with a gown I fake smile and take that gown.

"Do you need more blankets" he asks

This guy is too much

"I'm fine Nqoba thank you!"

"Okay see you tomorrow then" he smiles but I don't smile back. It's not like I'm going anywhere

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I fake smile and take that gown.

"Do you need more blankets" he asks

This guy is too much

"I'm fine Nqoba thank you!"

"Okay see you tomorrow then" he smiles but I don't smile back. It's not like I'm going anywhere I'll still be here in the morning. I miss S'bonelo I miss him calling me every two

minutes. I manage to sleep these days I don't have the nightmares.

I'm used to having S'bonelo wake me up so I wake up when the sun is out. I check the wall clock and it's now 8am. I sit up and look around it wasn't a dream I'm really married to a man I don't even know. The door opens and it's Nqoba he has a tray of food in his hands. Breakfast in bed is it me or I only run into good men these days.

"Good morning" he smiles I just look at him. "I brought you breakfast" he says again I just look at him. Maybe if I ignore him he'll let me be. He puts the tray next to me on the bed walks out and comes back again with a bag this time.

"Toiletries!" he says "Everything you'd need is in here and there's a dress too"

"Where are we?"

"Mpulanga" he answers

Okay so S'bonelo is in Pretoria I should start learning the map really because even if I had the chance I can't even go to S'bonelo.

"Thanks for the food"

"You're my wife after all it's my duty to spoil you" he says

Every time he says wife I feel like vomiting and this ring in my hand. It's tight I can't even take it off. He leaves with the tray after I finish eating I swear I almost choked he's looking at me like I'm his favourite food. I take a shower and change into the so called dress. It's a floral flared dress very ugly. I haven't left the room and I'm not planning to.

Another knock! This time he knocks once and lets himself in.

"Do you want to go get some air" he asks

"No I'm fine!"

"You don't talk much do you" he asks and I ignore him.

"I'm Nqobayezwe Bengu" he says

"I don't want to be here"

He sighs

"I know but can we at least try and make this work can you at least meet me half way" he asks

"How do I meet you halfway when I don't even like you?"

"You will grow to love me just give me the chance to prove myself" he says

"Do you even like me?"

"I do! I know this whole thing was arranged but I believe in love and I believe I can make you love me" he says

"How do you make someone love you?"

"I can't make you as such but I can replace that hate you have for me with love and the rest will happen automatically. Love changes everything after all" he says

"I doubt I can love anyone else besides S'bonelo"

"You can it's all in your head and you've told yourself that you can only love one person" he answers

"May I please make one phone call? Please!"

"I can't Amahle the more you talk to him the harder it'll be to let go" he says

"Honestly I don't like it here I just want to go to my fiancé' please can you just let me go?"

"I can't I'm sorry you're already my wife and as time goes on you'll forget about him I know it's going to be hard but you'll have to" he says

His phone rings and he answers it ring away

Nqoba: Good morning!.....Yes she's fine.....We are getting along it's just that she has to get used to me after all I'm just a stranger.....Ok you can talk to her.

He hands me the phone and the moment he says hello I feel like throwing the phone on the ground.

Him: Hope you are behaving? Don't try anything silly there. Be a good wife and listen to your husband we don't want to be embarrassed having you sent back at home. Your husband paid a lot of money for you so we can't afford them demanding their money back.

Me: I'm fine thanks for asking

I hang up and hand the phone back to Nqoba. He tries to touch my face and I shift back but he doesn't back down he uses his thumb to wipe the tears off my cheek I'm crying again.

"I'm sorry" he says

"May I please make one phone call just one phone call?"

"I'm sorry Amahle but I can't the sooner you forget about him the better" he leaves the room I don't want to forget him and I can't forget him.

#Love changes everything

19

I miss S'bonelo! I miss him a lot. I just want to at least hear his voice. I want to know if he's really ok I want to tell him the reason why I got married. He needs to know that it was not my idea he needs to know that I was forced into all this. Nqoba won't let me call him he won't get me a phone either. The landline in this house doesn't even work. This is worse than prison. Is this how my life is going to be like? Don't I get a happy ending like other princesses?

Where is my knight in shining armour?
Where's my prince charming? Am I destined

to suffer my whole life? I'm not saying Nqoba abuses me or ill treats me he's a great person but I love S'bonelo. I might be married to Nqoba but my heart is with S'bonelo.

It's been 2 weeks now and I'm starting to lose hope might as well accept that I'm now Mrs Bengu. But it's hard Nqoba is trying I won't lie but it is difficult to actually meet him halfway because my heart is with S'bonelo Ngcobo.

"Amahle!" Nqoba says

"Yes!"

"Didn't you hear what I just said?" he says
I was lost in my thoughts again.

"Do you want to come with me to the shops"
he asks

"No I'm good!"

"Come on Amahle it's been weeks can you at least try and cheer up" he says
I can't cheer up.

"I'm fine don't worry about me you can go to the shops I'll be fine"

"I'm your husband I'm supposed to worry about you" he says

"I'm fine really I just need some time to myself"

He sighs. I'm sure he's thinking 'You always say that' its starting to sound like a broken record.

"What do you want Amahle? Tell me what you want and I'll give it to you anything just name it" he asks

I want S'bonelo! I want to get way from here.

"Nothing!"

"Amahle please! We agreed that you're going to meet me half way" he says

I wish I could but I can't God knows I have tried but I can't.

"Let's go to the shops then I could use some fresh air" I say

"Ok let me get your shoes" he stands up and disappears to the bedroom my bedroom.

Life isn't life without S'bonelo. I can't seem to get him off my mind the kisses the hugs.

Every time I close my eyes I see him. I still know what his cologne smelled like. I miss him! I miss him a lot I'm actually losing my

mind. I wonder that happened to my restaurant? I wonder who runs it now.

“Hey!” Nqoba snaps his fingers on my face

“I’m sorry”

“Got lost in your head again” he asks

“Something like that”

“What will you be thinking about” he asks

“Just random stuff let’s go”

We walked out I haven’t been outside in two weeks now. It’s nice being in the sun.

“Let me get that” Nqoba says opening the car door for me. He’s actually a nice person a gentleman a prince. He knows how to respect and treat a woman too bad this heart is already taken.

“Thank you!”

He get into the car and starts driving

“You good” he asks and I nod. We drive off to some mall I wanted to stay in the car but he insisted I go with him. We’d run into couples who are actually in love and it’s weird since he’s never even touched my hand well I don’t want him to.

He insists I buy a few more clothes I guess that means I'm stuck with him my whole life we get a few groceries and some toiletries. As for the cooking part I don't cook his helper literally does everything for him I'm just his wife by title. On our way home we pass by Steers to grab something to eat. I actually feel sorry for Nqoba nothing hurts as loving some who doesn't love you back.

"Are you ok" he asks

"I am fine Nqoba you don't have to ask every two minutes" I chuckle and he smiles.

"I have to be sure" he says

"I'm a big girl and I'm fine"

I have been through worse this is actually nothing compared to what I have been through. We drive back home there's a car that wasn't there when we left. He insists on getting the bags

Sponsored

I make my way into the house only to be met by my father and some woman. I don't say anything I just look at them.

"Hie to you too Amahle" –Thapelo

"Hello"

"So this is our daughter Amahle?" the woman asks standing up

What does she mean our daughter?

"Amahle this is your new mother Bridget and Bee this is Amahle" – Thapelo

Did he just call her Bee? She walks up to me and hugs me okay I wasn't expecting that.

"Hie Amahle nice to finally meet you I've always wanted to have a daughter" she hugs me tight. I don't say anything I just fake smile then head to the kitchen. I have never been into the kitchen well I'm used to being served.

"Hie ma'am" the helper smiles

"Call me Amahle! And how are you?"

"I'm very fine thanks and you" she smiles

"I'm fine!"

She walks out. I stand by the sink looking outside there's a window.

(Flashback)

Me: I have bad memories of knives I didn't mean to scare you

S'bonelo: Ok then we'll put away all the knives in the house

Me: Then how are we going to cook?

S'bonelo: We'll get a cook!

Me: Why are you so nice to me?

S'bonelo: You're a good girl Amahle and for some reason it makes my heart rejoice when you're happy. Is that weird?

I'm going it again getting lost in my head thinking about S'bonelo. How come I can't seem to forget about him? I feel someone touching my hand the hands takes the knife from my hands. I did it again holding on to the knife cutting myself. Nqoba takes the knife from my hands.

"Are you ok" he asks

"I'm not ok! Don't you see I don't want to be here" I cry

I don't care if my father is here I don't want to be here.

"It's ok" he pulls me into his arms. Hello I just cut myself. He calls the helper to come bandage me up from the looks of it he doesn't do well with blood.

I'm not sitting alone in the kitchen do not want to sit with the others I'm not going to play happy family. Bridget enters the kitchen and sits next to me.

"Hie!" she smiles

"Hie!"

"What is going on" she asks

"What is going on with what?"

"Your husband says you are always sad and he's really worried about you Amahle" she says I don't say anything I just look away.

"You can talk to me Amahle woman to woman" she says

What is she now? My mother?

"I don't want to be here"

"I know marriage isn't fun but you have to be strong ok" she says

Does she even know that I was forced into this?

"I don't want to be here"

"It's going to be ok don't worry" she rubs my back then she starts talking about her first marriage and how it did not go well. At least she wasn't forced into it. Finally they leave I'm now left with Mr Husband.

We are in the kitchen I was already there he's the one who joined me. I'm sitting opposite him I can tell he wants to say something but he's hesitating.

"What happened earlier" he asks
Which part? I don't ask I just keep quiet.
"You were literally cutting yourself Amahle"
he says guess I scared him
"I have a bad experience with knives"
"So what happens at that moment" he asks
"I don't know something takes over me. I didn't mean to scare you I'm sorry"
He sighs! I guess only S'bonelo can handle me because he looks freaked out.

"Here! Call him" he hand me his phone
"What?"
"Call him I'm going to go get some air" stands up and heads out. Who's him? Does he mean

call S'bonelo? I quickly dial S'bonelo's number. He answers after what seems like forever.

Him: Jude can you please just let me be! I told you I'm fine didn't I.

Me: Hey!

Him: Amahle! Is this you? Where are you?

Me: I'm in Mpumalanga they made me marry some Prince

Him: Why didn't you tell me? I went to look for you and they said you just left

Me: I miss you! A lot!

Him: I need to see you Amahle! I'm losing my mind without you everyone is worried about you and Jude blames me for your disappearance

Me: I wanted to tell you S'bonelo but he wouldn't let me (crying) now I'm married to someone I don't even love

Him: Is it legal?

Me: What?

Him: Is it on paper?

Me: No it was a traditional wedding

Him: I'm coming to get you

Me: S'bonelo you can't just come and get me

Him: You're my fiancé' Amahle and I'm coming to get you

ME: okay.

He's coming to get me what about Nqoba? Is he going to let me go?

#Love changes everything.

20

S'bonelo is coming to get me! Is Nqoba going to let me go? I am his wife after all. But I'm sure giving me his phone means I can be with S'bonelo. I don't know what's what anymore I'm just pacing up and down the house and where the hell is Nqoba? How long does it take for someone to get some air? S'bonelo said he's coming coming where he doesn't even know where I am.

I check the wall watch and it's now 7pm
Nqoba still isn't back should I start getting

worried? Please let's hope he didn't go to my father's house because that man made things clear that I should never dream of ruining things for him. When I'm nervous I start thinking about the worst and thinking about the worst always makes me cry. Honestly I don't know where all these tears come from.

"Ma'am! I mean Amahle are you ok" the helper asks I never even got the chance what her name is.

"I'm fine thanks!"

"Should I get you some water" she asks she really seems worried. Maybe there are good people out there.

"That would be great thanks"

She disappears for a second and comes back with bottled water I'm sure she figured I can't even hold the glass right now.

"Relax! Take a deep breath" she says

Now she sounds like S'bonelo. Okay breathe Amahle. 1...2...3. I'm fine nothing is going to happen S'bonelo is going to come and get me everything is going to be fine.

The door opens and it's Nqoba. Our eyes meet as soon as he enters the house but I quickly look away. The helper quickly rushes out of the room.

"We need to talk" Nqoba says calmly he gives me his hand. I can't read his facial expression I can't tell if he's angry or what. He helps me up from the couch and leads me to his room. Please don't tell me he wants to sleep with me. I'm standing by the door he's sitting on the bed. My heart is about to burst with fear. He takes off his jacket.

"Come!" he murmurs I won't lie I'm scared I don't want to sleep with him.

"We are just going to talk" he adds I take a deep breath and slowly walk to him sit next to him on the bed. He takes my hands and sighs.

"Relax I just want us to talk" he says I can't relax right now a lot of thoughts are running in my mind.

"Are you relaxed" he asks and I chuckle its rare for someone to ask you if you're relaxed.

"I'm sorry!"

"For what" he asks

"For not being the wife you want me to be after all you did pay your money for me"

"Well we can't have it all right" he says

"Yeah!"

"What's going on between you and your father" he asks

"Why?"

"You seem scared of him and you said you were forced into all this" he says

"My father isn't what he says he is and he forced me to get married to you"

"Why didn't you just tell him no" he asks

"Threatened me so I had no choice"

"Threatened you how" he asks

"Why are you asking me all this?"

"I'm a lawyer and I handle human rights" he says "I have handled so many cases like yours and I can't believe it was right in front of me and didn't even realize"

"I'm not a case Nqoba!"

"I know! That actually came out wrong I'm sorry. I meant to say I understand your situation and I want to help you" he says

The only way he can help me is letting me go

"Help me how?"

"You said he threatened you right? What did he use" he asks

I don't answer

"I'm on your side here I can't help you if you don't tell me the whole truth" he says

"I tried to kill him I thought I did until months ago"

"Okay! Why did you try to kill him" he asks

"Because!"

I can't! I hate talking about it. The tears are just rolling down my cheeks.

"It's ok" he rubs my shoulder

"I know it's hard but you have to tell me" he says

"He used me as a prostitute growing up and my mother hanged herself because of him. I was angry at my mother I was angry at him because he's the reason she killed herself after all"

"So you just attacked him from nowhere" he asks

"Why does everyone keep asking me that. I didn't wake up and plan to kill my father" I cry

"Because I need to know if it was self-defence Amahle"

"Of course it was self-defence do you think I'd actually voluntarily kill my own father" I ask
"I didn't say that calm down"

"I hate him! Honestly I wish he had died its better if he was really dead" I answer

"Come on you don't mean that"

I do! I really mean that. We go quiet for a while like he's thinking. And why is he asking all these questions why does he feel the need to know?

"Were you engaged when you married me" he asks

"Yes!"

"Where's your fiancé" he asks

What's with a million questions anyway?

"He's in Pretoria" I answer

"Did you call him? Does he still love you?"

WTF!

"Yes I called him and he still loves me

Sponsored

like he's thinking. And why is he asking all these questions why does he feel the need to know?

"Were you engaged when you married me" he asks

"Yes!"

"Where's your fiancé" he asks

What's with a million questions anyway?

"He's in Pretoria" I answer

"Did you call him? Does he still love you?"

WTF!

"Yes I called him and he still loves me I still love him too" I answer

He sighs and rubs his head.

"I love you Amahle I know it sound weird but I do. You are actually a great person and you'd make a great wife and mother"

Where is all this coming from I just told him that I love someone else.

"I'm sorry!" I say

"It's ok! The heart wants what it wants after all and your heart is with S'bonelo!"

Yeah my heart is with him! Wait how does he know?

"How do you know his name is S'bonelo?"

"That doesn't matter I'm going to help you with your case and you're free to go" he says

He's making it sound like I was in jail or something.

"What about my father and the wedding?"

"We are not legally married and if your father gives you trouble we'll take him to court" he answers

We? Who's we?

"Why are you doing all this for me?"

"Because I love you! If I didn't I'd have forced you to stay with me but I love you and your happiness means the world to me" he says
Love does change everything!

"Thank you Nqoba! You really have a good heart and I hope one day you find yourself a good wife" I hug him I don't usually hug people but I'm really excited.

"I will don't worry!" he smiles

Some people really have good hearts. He's really letting me be with S'bonelo I still can't believe it.

"I have any early Christmas present for you"
Nqoba says

"A present for me?"

"Yes Miss Amahle Zungu!" he smiles

"Why are you so nice?"

"Let's say my mother raised me well" he smiles

"I hope we can still be friends after all this?"

"Sure!" he says helping me stand takes my hand and leads me outside to the car. He's such a gentleman he still opens doors for me even after what just happened.

"Where are we going" I ask

"It's a surprise!"

Let's hope he's not taking me back to my father because that would be my worst nightmare. I don't know where he's taking me but I'm very much sleepy. I'm yawning like no man's business I swear I'm going to swallow him.

"You can sleep I'll wake you up when we get there" Nqoba says

"Okay!" I lay back the seat and drift off to dreamland

I'm woken up by the sun hitting and the urge to pee of course I wake up and head to the bathroom bumping into the wall and all that

well I'm still sleepy. I grab I toothbrush and brush my teeth. I rub my eyes. Wait were am I at least I still have my clothes on. The last thing I remember is being in the car with Nqoba.

Where am I? Most importantly whose toothbrush did I just use? I've never been in this room before. I walk back to the room where I was sleeping and sit on the bed my arm hurts maybe it's from sleeping in the car seat. I want to go out of the bedroom but a part of me won't let me.

The door opens and Nqoba enters Thank God at least it's not my father's house.

"Good morning! Shower and let's get going"
he says

Go where? When we getting to this so called place

"Where are we?"

"At a friend's you fell asleep in the car and you weren't comfortable so we had to stop"
he says

He brought me clean clothes I take a shower and then we have breakfast and go back on the road. We reach some house he insists on covering my eyes guess its part of the surprise.

"No peaking Amahle!" he says

"I can't even see anything!"

"Remember when I said I have any early Christmas present for you" he asks

"Yes!"

Duh isn't it why we here?

"Okay you can take off the blind fold" he says and I take it off

"No way!"

#Love changes everything

21

No way? I can't believe it's really him I'm not daydreaming it's really him. A part of me wants to scream and the other can't wait to

be in his arms. I look at Nqoba and he smiles how did he even know? This is the best Christmas present ever.

“Go!” Nqoba says and I rush to his arms

“Thank you so much”

“That’s the least I can do” he answers I rush to S’bonelo’s arms

“Hey my love” S’bonelo says and he hugs me tight.

“I missed you so much!”

“I missed you more” he answers then turns to Nqoba “Thanks Nqoba!”

“You know each other” I ask

“Nqoba is my lawyer and we are childhood biddies too” S’bonelo answers

“You should have told me earlier that I was married to your girl imagine if I had slept with her” Nqoba laughs

“Let’s hope you didn’t touch her”- S’bonelo

“Like she’d let me” Nqoba answers

Wow! These two really know each other I can imagine the drama if they didn’t know each other.

“Thank you Nqoba” I say

"Anything for my homeboy S'bonelo plus you were always crying I really had to do something. S'bonelo please don't hurt her she really loves you"- Nqoba

"And I love her more" S'bonelo answers

"I should get going" Nqoba says

"Thanks again" I hug him he's really a great person.

"Okay that's enough touching" S'bonelo pulls me from Nqoba's arms.

"Dude I'm just saying goodbye" Nqoba laughs

I'm so excited I'm even crying I cry when I'm sad I cry when I'm angry I even cry when I'm happy

"She cries a lot"- Nqoba uses his thumb to wipe the tears off my cheeks I can tell he really meant it when he said he loves me

"That's my Amahle for you" S'bonelo answers as he pulls me to his arms and kisses me on the cheek.

"Bye Amahle!" Nqoba says

"Bye and thank you" I answer

"I'll handle your father ok so don't stress"

"I don't know how I'd ever repay you" I say

"Don't worry your fiancé' will pay me"

"Why do I have to pay?"- S'bonelo

"Well you can't just take my wife from me just like that" Nqoba answers

"I really owe you man"- S'bonelo

S'bonelo walks Nqoba out I don't know what they are discussing. It still feels like I'm dreaming I mean I'm back in S'bonelo's arms. I'm finally with the love of my life. I'm still sitting on the couch how many houses does S'bonelo have? This is the 4th so far. The door opens and I rush to hug him I missed him so much.

"I missed you too" he says

"I'm sorry I just left I had no choice I'm so sorry"

"It's not your fault ok" he answers

"How have you been?"

"Losing my mind that's for sure and please call Jude and tell her you're fine before she kills me" he says handing me his phone.

"I'm sure she has been worried?"

"She blames me for your disappearance" he answers

"Why?"

“Because I’m the one who insisted you this cleansing thing” he answers

Well it did help because I no longer have the nightmares anymore

“I’ll call her!”

“Do you need anything” he asks

“No I’m fine Nqoba and I had breakfast before we came here”

“I need to make a few call call Jude and tell her that you’re fine” he says

“Okay!” I answer he kisses me on the forehead and heads out. I dial Jude’s number and she answers right away.

Her: If it doesn’t involve Amahle then do yourself a favour and hang up

Me: It’s me Jude!

Her: Amahle! This is not a prank right

Me: It’s not a prank it’s really me

Her: You don’t know how happy I am have been worried about you.

Me: I’m fine met up with S’bonelo today even I’m still in shock

Her: Are you ok? Where have you been? We have been worried about you

Me: I'm fine! I'll explain everything when I get to you

Her: I'm glad you're fine

Me: Ok I'll call you later

Her: Ok Mahle love you!

Me: Bye!

It's nice to actually know that there's someone who still cares about me. I head to the kitchen to get myself some water. There a knife on the floor S'bonelo must have accidentally dropped it. I pick it up and place it on the sink that's the first actually holding the knife and not thinking about my father or cutting myself maybe the cleansing thing really worked or maybe it happens when I'm angry.

I'm still standing by the sink it still feels like a dream I can't believe just yesterday I was at Nqoba's house crying my heart out. Wait! What is going to happen now that I'm back with S'bonelo? What is Nqoba going to tell his family when they ask about me? Worse what is he going to tell my father?

I feel hands touching me I know its S'bonelo well I know how he smells like and he wraps his arms around me

"I'm really not dreaming" S'bonelo whispers in my ear and it sends chills through my body "It feels unreal" I close my eyes and focus on his touch

Sponsored

this man drives me nuts. How is it possible to love someone so much? I turn to face him. I love him so much I love how he makes me blush and how I'm so weak at his touch.

"Nice house! Is it yours" I ask

"No it belongs to S'bonginkosi"

His little brother.

"I can buy it for you if you want" he says

"What am I going to do with a house?"

"I don't know live in it" he laughs

"But I live with you"

"We could sell mine and buy you a new one" he says

"You mean buy us a new one?"

"I'm saying you because it's going to be in your name" he smiles

"You're too much for me"

"I'm glad I'm enough" we kiss

"I'm sorry I no longer have the ring they took it from me"

"I can always get you another one" he pecks my lips seems today he can't get his lips off mine. I wrap my hand around his neck and we lock eyes I can't look at him for a minute without looking away.

"I love you so much Amahle Zungu" he smiles

"I love you more S'bonelo Ngcobo" we kiss I could kiss him all day

"I'm sorry for forcing you to do the cleansing if I knew this was going to happen I wouldn't have let you go" he says

"It's in the past now plus we didn't know my father was going to marry me off to Nqoba"

"I'm glad you're back in my arms" he smiles I rest my head on his chest I feel at home in his arms.

We stay in that position for a while he's running his hands on my back. There's this

vibe that we are passing at each other but no one has said anything. He runs his hands up my thighs sending tingles to my goddess my head is still on his chest his hands are making me wet. He pulls out of the hug uses his hands to pull my chin up and make me face him then plants a kiss on my lips.

"I love you" he whispers

"I love you too" I smile he's more serious now his eyes full of lust and pleasure he picks me up and we head to the bedroom we are kissing he's not rushing me we are taking our time. My dress falls on my ankles he just unzipped my dress and I haven't had sex in almost a year now. A lot of thoughts are running in my mind right now I used to be a stripper what if he's also thinking about that?

"Relax Amahle" he whispers I think he can sense my body tensing up. 'Relax Amahle! Don't ruin things not today' my mind keeps screaming as his lips kiss every inch of my body.

"You okay" he asks I nod I can't speak right now I'm breathing heavily

"I need to know that you're ok" he says
catching his breath

"Can we please not talk?"

"Wait one second" he gets off me

"S'bonelo come on"

"It's worth it" he smiles

Then reaching for his phone and plays John Legend- Tonight. I remember I played this song for him when I gave him a lap dance. This song holds a lot of memories.

We made love he's really the best I've ever heard he's hitting the right spots while John Legend is on repeat. He's making me feel foreign things.

"Baby tonight's the night I let you know baby tonight's the night we lose control. Baby tonight I'll be the best you ever had!"- John Legend- Tonight

I'm really losing my mind he's taking me places I've never been. If I could freeze time I'd freeze this moment.

#Love changes everything

I feel good! I feel loved I feel beautiful I can't even explain it. I woke up in his arms that's the first usually when I wake up they are gone or about to leave. He looks so cute when sleeping I run my hands on his chin gentle brush lips with my thumbs.

"What are you doing" he asks with his eyes still closed

"Thought you were sleeping?"

"I was!" he smiles

"You're so handsome" I say and he laughs

"That's the first!"

"I love you so much I wish we could always stay like this" I say

"You mean stay naked and making love all the time?"

"You know what I mean silly" I chuckle

"Yeah me too I wish we could always be like this"

"So when are we going back to your house" I ask

"You mean our house?"

"Yes! Our house when are we going there" I asks

"Whenever we feel like it"

"So we just make love in S'bonginkosi's bed" I laugh

"Yeah don't tell him that because I promised I won't do it in this bed"

"He'll get mad if he finds out" I say

"Well he doesn't necessarily have to know"

"Thank you for waiting on me" I say

"You are worth the wait my darling Amahle!"

"You're the best" I cuddle close

"You did call Jude right?"

"Yes she's very excited and she said I should see her as soon as I'm in Pretoria" I answer

"I still want to marry you you know?"

"Well you can" I answer

"I want to do things right"

"It's ok to break the rules sometimes" I answer

"What about your family?"

"I don't care about them as long as I'm with you" I say and I mean it

"Hey don't say that they are still your family"

"Those people sold me to a man I didn't even like S'bonelo" I say

"I know but they are your family and eventually you are going to have to forgive them"

"I don't want to forgive them" I say

"For your own peace of mind you have to ok"

"Those people are just cruel S'bonelo" I say

"But you're not. You have to forgive all of them including your father"

"My father? No way! Over my dead body" I answer

"Holding the grudge will only make you bitter and miserable trust me just forgive him and move on with life"

"But he hurt me?" I say

"I know! But doesn't kill you makes you stronger right?"

"You're just too kind" I kiss his cheek

"This is all you baby you bring out the best in me"

"I'll think about it but I'm not promising anything" I answer

"Good girl make peace with your father then I can pay lobola for your pretty self"

"You know we can just go to court and get married there" I ask

"I know but I want to do thing right! You deserve it"

"You are really a heaven sent" I say

"So promise me you'll fix things with your father I'm not saying do it right away but promise you will?"

"If it makes you happy but for the record that man is evil" I say

"That man is your father and you are nothing like him ok"

"Ok" I nod

"Kill him with kindness babe"

"You really have a great heart and you deserve a treat" I say getting on top of him.

"I do don't I" he smiles "Should we play our song"

"No!" I giggle

"I think we should"

"I'm getting off you is you play that song" I laugh

"Well I love it so I'm going to play it"

I guess we officially have our love making song LOL. We spent the whole day in bed then around 6pm we went and cooked dinner he was cooking I was watching him cook. I know he said I should forgive my father but I can't that man hurt me too much I'd be lying if I said I forgive him.

"S'bonelo when's your birthday" I ask

"Next week Wednesday"

"As in three days from today" I ask

"Yes ma'am"

"Is my eatery still there" I ask

"Of course it's still there

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Jude has been handling things for you"

"Okay!" at least I know where to get the money because I'm going to give him the best birthday of his life.

The following day we went back to S'bonelo's and everyone was there waiting to see me as if I'm the new born baby that everyone is dying to meet. Jude was the happiest I love

how humble she is and she's just sweet. Leah and S'bonginkosi were also there.

"Hey!" I said as I hugged Leah then
S'bonginkosi

"You look amazing" Leah says I know she's
just being polite because I have lost a lot of
weight in the past 2 weeks. I look thin

"Hope you and S'bonelo didn't have sex in my
bed" S'bonginkosi laughs

Only if he knew

"Not at all" I answer

S'bonginkosi leaves and now I'm left with
Leah.

"I gotta say S'bonelo really loves you he was
going crazy when he couldn't find you. Why
does he love you so much" she asks

Honestly I don't know

"He loves me because I also love him"

"I think there's more to it" she says

"Like what? Love potions don't tell me you
believe in that"

"You're a lucky girl Amahle not all of them
could tame him" she says

This girl speaks in riddles but I won't let her
ruin my day

Finally it was S'bonelo's birthday I had planned him a surprise party and invited all his friend even Nqoba. I got a little help from Jude and S'bonginkosi of course. On his birthday I woke up in early in the morning and prepared him breakfast I'm so going to spoil him rotten today

"Hey!" I shook him

"Hey!"

He's not a morning person

"I made you breakfast!" I say

He sits up yawning I know it's 7 but I couldn't wait

"Amahle it's 7am what time did you wake up?"

Not to mention I have already bathed

"It doesn't matter happy birthday" I say

"Thank you" he chuckles

"So do you want breakfast" I say pointing at the tray "Or breakfast!" I drop my night gown on the floor I'm wearing this sexy number that Jude made my buy.

"I don't even need to think about it" he says pulling me to bed.

We spent almost the whole day in bed well that will also give Leah and Jude the chance to organise everything because the party is happening here in his house so my job was to make sure he does not get out of the bedroom by all means possible even if it meant having him humping on me the whole day.

"Now this is the best birthday ever" S'bonelo says

"I also have a present for you" I say as I reach for the drawer and pull out a box "It's not really your birthday present but I want you to have it"

"Well if it's wrapped and in a box it's definitely a present" he says opening it

"Really" he says

"I told you I don't like hand-outs"

"Amahle I don't want this" he says

"I don't want it either and you can't reject a gift so take it"

"Fine but you didn't have to give me back the R100 000" he says

"I wanted to!"

Well I did promise to pay him back. A text comes through my phone from Jude

*** Get ready to bring down the birthday boy

"Let's go bath" I say

"I prefer what we were doing"

"No I want us to go somewhere" I say

"Fine but I prefer this"

We take an innocent bath and he dresses in his black jeans and white shirt I put on my off-white flared dress. He really wasn't expecting the party and Jude did a really great job on the décor and the cake everything looks amazing.

Everyone is having a blast of a time some are drunk well I don't drink so I'm in the kitchen making sure everyone gets snacks and drinks.

"Hey you!" says a vice

"Hey Nqoba! You made it"

"I wouldn't miss it for the world plus I get the chance to see you" he smiles and scratch my

ear and continue with what I was doing he sits on the kitchen stool we go quiet. After some time he speaks
"I really love you Amahle! I have tried but I really love you" he says

Love changes everything

23

I'm still in the kitchen with Nqoba he just told me he loves me I bet that's just the alcohol speaking because everyone in this house is drunk except me. Nqoba is really a nice guy and I wish him the best for him but unfortunately my heart is with S'bonelo. Nqoba is still confessing his feeling I don't know what to do maybe I should just leave the kitchen. Really how do respond to what he's saying?

"You're drunk Nqoba!"

"I don't drink" he chuckles "Plus I still have to drive back to Mpumalanga"

"I should go and check on S'bonelo" I try to leave the kitchen but he pulls me back

"S'bonelo is fine you should sit down and rest"

"For what" I ask

"You have been running around serving grown people that have legs you should rest a little"

"I don't need to sit down I'm fine" I answer

"I insist!" he makes me sit on the kitchen stool and pours me some juice "Here! Do you also need some snacks?" he hands me the glass

"Sure!" I answer

"Sit down for a moment I haven't seen you resting since I got here"

"I did rest maybe you didn't notice" I say

"No! Because I have been watching you all night"

"You have" I ask

"It's hard to take my eyes off such a beautiful lady"

I don't answer I just smile and sip on the juice. I don't like that ways he looks at me it makes me very uncomfortable.

"Does my father know yet? About me leaving"
I ask

About him giving me back to S'bonelo sounds like I'm a parcel now.

"Not yet and I still haven't told my family they are going to kill me if they found out I let you go"

"I'm so sorry I wish things were different" I say

"I wish so too Mrs ex-Bengu!"

"Some weird doesn't it" we laugh

"Yeah and you used to cry so bad it's actually nice seeing you smiling for once"

"I'm sorry for making your life hell for the last 2 weeks" I say

"I should thank you for the feelings you made me feel"

"What feelings" I ask

"I didn't even know if my heart functioned anymore but hey I guess it still works after all"

"You're crazy!" I laugh

"Honestly having you in my life was the proof I needed to know if love really exists"

"You're too nice" I clear my throat "I should go check if anyone needs something" I says

"You should sit down Amahle if anyone needs something they will come and get it themselves ok"

"But I have to..." he interrupts me before I could finish

"Sit down! Do I have to tie you down to make you rest" he says

"Sit down and do what Nqoba?"

"You're talking to me isn't it" he says

I don't think S'bonelo will like it if he found us in the kitchen alone I know we are not doing anything doggy but I wouldn't want to tick S'bonelo off. I don't know why but I feel like that.

"We should go to the others" I say to Nqoba

"What are you so afraid of Amahle it's not like we are doing anything?"

"I'm not comfortable can we just go" I answer

"Are you scared of S'bonelo? Wait does he hit you?"

I choke on the juice. Hit me? No! S'bonelo would never do that to me. Right?

"No! Of course not S'bonelo loves me and he'd never" I answer

"Good because he'd have me to answer to"

I'm not comfortable at all I just want to leave this kitchen and go back to S'bonelo. This man has said a lot of things today including him confessing that he loves me. We are just quiet I can feel him looking at me but I'm staring at an empty space stuffing myself with lays chips hoping he'll leave the kitchen any time soon.

"Why do you have short hair" Nqoba asks
What kind of a question is that I have short hair because I have short hair.

"I like my hair short"

"Have you ever thought about plaiting it" he asks

"No I love it short"

"I think you'd look prettier with braids" he says

"Why are we talking about my hair?"

"I don't know maybe I'm stalling you from going back to S'bonelo" he answers

"Why?"

"I kind of enjoy your company" he says

"You're being weird!"

"I'm sorry!" he sips on his juice

"You don't have to apologize"

"Oh so you're the only one who's allowed to apologize?" he tries to touch my hands but I shift back a little.

"So when are you going back to Mpumalanga?"

"You want me to go already? That's hurts I thought we were getting along" he touches his chest

"No that's not what I meant I'm just asking"

"Hey I'm just messing with you" he laughs and I join in

"What are you two laughing about?"- S'bonelo

Sponsored

I stand up and walk to him he places his hands on my waist and pulls him towards him. He's been drinking like a lot his breathe smells like alcohol or maybe it's because I'm not a fan of alcohol.

"I was just about to leave! Wanted to say bye to Amahle" Nqoba says

"You leaving so early" S'bonelo asks

"Yeah! I still have to drive back to Mpumalanga"

"Okay Amahle will walk you out" S'bonelo says then perks my lips "Right babe!"

I fake smile he's drunk and I don't like it one bit but hey today is his birthday might as well suck it up.

I walk Nqoba out the only sober person in the party is leaving. Honestly I wish he doesn't go.

"Drive safe ok" I say

"You're worried about me" he smiles

"Of course I'm worried it's dangerous in the road worse it's so late"

"It's nice having someone who cares" he smiles

"Drive safe Nqoba and call when you get home"

"Now I see why S'bonelo loves you you're so sweet" he says "As much as it pains me I wish you and S'bonelo all the best and today

was great I got to meet the lovely Amahle Zungu" he says getting into the car. What does he mean by "As much as it pains me"?

"Bye!"

"Now go back inside before you catch a cold" he says

Nqoba is just too extra it is not even cold. I wave at him goodbye and watch him drive off.

I walk back into the house the birthday boy is having a blast of a time mission accomplished. My only wish today was for S'bonelo to have the best birthday ever.

"Hey Mahle!"- Jude

"Hey! Thanks for the help everything looks amazing"

"Anything for my step-son and his future bride" she winks

"Don't tell me you're leaving already?"

She's holding her purse

"Yeah I have to go back home my husband needs me" she answers

S'bonelo's father couldn't make it today for reasons I don't know of

"Ok and please drive safe ok"

"Ok by love you" she hugs me then heads out I'm just going to go and sit in the kitchen well there's lesser noise there. I'm tidying up when I feel S'bonelo's arms around me. I love him but he's drunk right now and I can't wait for these people to leave I'm so tired.

"Thank you for today" S'bonelo kisses my cheek

"I'm happy that you're happy!"

He turns me around to face him

"I love you so much and I cannot wait to officially make you Mrs Ngcobo" he pecks my lips

"Enough you two you'll have plenty of time alone once we leave" S'bonginkosi says

"Or maybe you guys should leave so that I can have some alone time with my Amahle"-
S'bonelo

"Quit being a baby" S'bonginkosi literally drags S'bonelo out the kitchen well I'm not getting involved.

People start leaving one by one and it's late about past eleven. I head upstairs and take a shower I just want to sleep and never wake up. I shower then put on my nighties. S'bonelo is already sitting on the bed when I enter the bedroom. He looks sober than earlier or maybe it's because he's on the bed. He stands up and meets me half way before I could reach the bed.

He attacks me with a kiss and he doesn't even have to use his words I know what he wants.

"S'bonelo wait" I shift back a little

"What?"

"I'm tired sorry" I murmur

He just ignores it and starts kissing my neck

"S'bonelo wait!"

I don't want to lie I'm really tired I want to but I'm tired

"I'm sorry! I promise I will make it up you" I say

"Then what am I supposed to do this?"

He's speaking about an erection as if it's a gift that he bought and can't return it

"Take a cold shower or something" I say

"You're joking right" he's serious now
"I'm sorry!"

He takes a moment picks up a vase that was next to him and throws it at the wall.

"Goddamn it" he shouts

"S'bonelo!"

"Shut up" he yells

What?

Love changes everything

24

There's glass on the floor is this still about sex or there's more to it? S'bonelo just lashed at me for reason I don't know of I grew up around a lot of violence and if there's one thing I do not like its being yelled at. I never yell at anyone so I do not expect the same. I know S'bonelo is drunk but that's not excuse.

He sits on the bed and holds his head takes a moment I'm sure he's digesting what just happened even I'm still in shock S'bonelo has never lashed out at me. In fact he's never gotten angry at me.

"I'm sorry!" S'bonelo says after a while I don't answer I'm standing next to the bed

"I didn't meant to Amahle I'm so sorry!" he adds

I want to be mad at him but I can't I love him too much I can't even get mad at him but a part of me is still puzzled. I mean why would he just lash out at me like that?

I kneel down and start picking up the glass from the floor but he stops me.

"It's ok I'll get it" he insists

"No you're going to cut yourself sit down I'll get it" I say walking out of the room then came back with a broom and dust pan.

I can't let him pick up the glass he's still drunk after all. I can feel him looking at me while I'm sweeping and picking up the glass. His eyes are just following me around finally I

come back and get under the covers I'll talk to him in the morning when he's sober.

He's still sitting where he was when I started picking up the glass. Maybe I should talk to him because it seems something is bothering him

"S'bonelo come to bed" I say

"I didn't mean to lash out at you Amahle! I am so sorry!"

"I know but please just come to bed" I say

"I just hate that he got to marry you first"

"What are you talking about" I ask

"Nqoba!"

What?

"He said it was ok for me to come back to you" I answer

"He loves you Amahle! You might not have been able to notice it but he does and still at the end of the day he's still your husband traditionally we are committing adultery Amahle we shouldn't be doing this"

Yet he wanted to get on top of me just minutes ago I guess he's sobering up if that's even a thing.

"S'bonelo it's late and I'm tired can we please do this in the morning and where is this crazy talk coming from" I ask

"I know you're tired but hear me out Nqoba paid lobola for you and married you Amahle. He's now your husband and you're his wife"

"You are not making any sense right now" I say

Maybe he's still drunk because he is not making sense at all.

"I'm not his wife S'bonelo I'm your fiancée' Nqoba said so himself that he's ok with us being together" I answer

"We have to make things right"

"Make things right? How" I ask

"I don't know but we have to go back to KZN this time we do things right I don't like this I don't like living with the fear of having your father come and take you away from me"

"S'bonelo I know you're scared of losing me then you shouldn't be my father will never separate us again and I am not going back to KZN" I say

"I know last time things didn't go well but this time give me the chance to go and fix things well not me exactly but my elders to go and

Speak to your family and see if they can work something out”

“How S’bonelo please tell me how because I know my father and he will never let you have me he said so himself” I answer

“We have to try!”

“I don’t know!” I sigh this is just madness

“I’ll talk to Nqoba! He can take you back to your family then I’ll marry you again”

“S’bonelo I am right here why do you feel the need to give me back to those people? Then marry me again that’s just a lot of work”

“Because you’re still Nqoba’s wife Amahle don’t you get it? You’re Amahle Bengu now? Traditionally he’s your husband whether you with him or not” he yells

“Please don’t yell?”

“I’m sorry! It’s just that I’m losing my mind right now” he answers

“S’bonelo I can’t go back to that place”

“It’s only for a couple of days while we fix this whole thing” he says

“You’re trying to get rid of me aren’t you?”

“Amahle come on” he says

“Just say you don’t love me anymore S’bonelo

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I'll understand if you tell me truth"

I'd be crushed if he says so

"No that's not true and you know it" he says

"You don't love me S'bonelo that's the truth"

Now I'm crying if he loves me then why does he want me to go back? He walks to my side of the bed and kneels next to me.

"Look at me Amahle! My feelings for you haven't changed. I still love you the same way I did when I first met you" he whispers

"Then why are you trying to get rid of me?"

"My love I'm not! I will never try to get rid of you" he wipes the tears of my cheeks my guardian angel is turning on me.

"Amahle please don't cry please you're hurting me when you're crying like this" he says

"I don't want to go there S'bonelo"

"I know but you're not going there you're just going to Nqoba and I'll fix everything just trust me" he presses his head in mine

"No I don't want to lose you"

"Okay don't go then but give me the chance to fix things?"

I nod but I'm unsure about this whole thing

This is madness I don't want to go there.
Nqoba already confessed that he loves me
and I'll be walking straight in his arms.
"Please don't cry!"-S'bonelo he hold me in his
arms.
"Promise you won't let them take you from
me?"
"I promise!" he kisses my forehead

Two weeks went by and S'bonelo is 'fixing'
things like he promised I still think it is a big
mistake what if I got back to Nqoba and then
he doesn't want me to go back to S'bonelo
plus my father will never let this madness
happen. Jude is here finally someone with
some positive energy.

"Hey Mahle!" she hugs me
"Hey!"
"You look great by the way what's your secret
these days girl you're glowing?" she smiles
"Nothing just the same old stuff I have been
using"

"Well you look great but that's not why I'm here" she says

Here we go again

"Do you need anything to drink?"

"No I'm fine like I said I'm here on urgent business" she answers

"Ok I'm listening!"

"We are going to KZN this weekend!" she says

"Why?"

"To fix things" she answers

"You also going?"

"By 'we' I mean S'bonelo's uncles and father are going there to try and talk to your family" she says

"You're just wasting your time Jude!"

"We talked to Nqoba and we know just how to do it with your go ahead of course" she says

"Fine but don't say I didn't warn you"

"Can you at least think positive please" she asks

"Fine think positive"

"Good! Think positive and pray about it everything is going to be great" she says

Since when did she start praying?

"Oky!"

"Good where's S'bonelo" she ask

"He's in the study do you want me to call him?"

"No let him work after all my work here is done so let me get going" she says standing up and I walk her out.

"Everything will be fine ok" Jude says as she hugs me goodbye

"Yes think positive and pray about it I got it"

"Good girl!" she says

I walk back into the house and find S'bonelo sitting on the couch.

"You just missed Jude" I say

"I'll call her later"

"Are you done with work" I ask

"Yes now you have my full attention!"

"Thank you for skipping work to spend the day with me" I perk his lips

"You means after you begged and cried so that I don't go to work?"

"I didn't cry" I say

"You did and you just a baby these days it's so cute"

"What is so cute about crying" I ask

"I get to give you make up sex that's the best part"

"I'm hungry!" I say

"You are always hungry let's go make you something to eat"

He carries me to the kitchen

"Jesus Amahle what are you eating" he says

Maybe I gained a kilo or two who's counting

"How can I not get fat from all the sex you've been giving me" I say

He looks at me like he's thinking like he's calculating in his head.

"What" I ask

"When did you last get your period?"

"I don't know sometimes I skip" I answer

"Let's hope you're not pregnant Amahle because this would ruin things for us I have to call my uncles and tell them to get on with this because if"

"Baby calm down ok I'm going to go get a pregnancy test then you can panic afterward ok" I say

"Don't joke about this"

"What's the big deal anyway" I ask

"This is already wrong as it is do you want to top it off by telling them you're pregnant?"

"Who doesn't know we together" I ask

"You are someone's wife hello!"

"I'm sure it's nothing!" I say

Plus I'd feel it if I was right? Incoming! I think I'm going to throw up it's the tinned fish that S'bonelo just opened. I rush to the sink to vomit I guess we all know what that means.

#Love changes everything

25

S'bonelo is losing his mind I'm a little scared I don't want to lie. I don't want to be a mother at least not yet. Not when my life is a mess like this. What if my father takes me away from S'bonelo and my child never gets to see his/her father. I don't want my child to suffer growing up like I did that's if I'm really pregnant because vomiting isn't enough proof.

"S'bonelo calm down we are not sure yet" I say

"My father will kill me he made it specific that I don't do anything silly before we fix all this"

"S'bonelo we not even sure yet!" I answer

"Then let's go to the doctor's right now!"

"S'bonelo look at me! Calm down ok" I say

"I'm calm!"

"You're not calm! Maybe it's just a false alarm ok" I say

"Let's go to the doctor's get your shoes"

"Can I at least change" I ask

"No we don't have time for that let's go!"

"Relax Mr Ngcobo!" I laugh

"Easy on you! You want your family to murder me"

"Who knew S'bonelo Ngcobo can get this scared" I laugh

"Let's go!"

"Yes sir!" I laugh following him to the car "Let me drive before you kill us"

I now know how to drive but I don't have my licence yet. We drive to the nearest hospital well S'bonelo knows the whole world so we got special treatment they attended to us

right away. I know I was acting tough but I'm now scared. I really love S'bonelo and would love to carry his child but I'm scared at the same time.

I do the pregnancy test and we wait for the results.

"I can't S'bonelo I feel like I'm going to have a heart attack" I say

"It's ok! I'm sorry I panicked earlier but I promise whatever results it's going to be its fine with me"

"I know but a child!" I say

"I know but we have each other and we'll figure it out together"

"I don't even know how to take care of a kid!" I say

"Think positive!"

"Now you sound like Jude" I laugh

He holds my hand and kisses it. This is it the doctor enters and she's smiling.

"Mr and Mrs Ngcobo!" she says

"Am I pregnant?"

I want to know! The doctor laughs!

"Yes Mrs Ngcobo! You are two weeks pregnant" she answers

I know I'm not Mrs Ngcobo but what the hell

I'm pregnant? How come I don't feel anything? Some doctor enters the room and I feel the urge to puke. I rush to the bathroom. This is not happening! So I'm really pregnant meaning I'm going to be a mother in other words I'm carrying S'bonelo's child. Wow!

I fix myself up and go back to S'bonelo and the doctor

"Are you ok!" S'bonelo asks

"Yeah!" I nod

"Don't be scared ok" he rubs my shoulder

"I'm going to be a mother that's scary"

"Yeah but you have me and Jude and S'bonginkosi" he kisses my forehead

"Yeah! It shouldn't be that bad!"

Right?

"And I'm going to be a father" he spins me around

"Stop you're making me dizzy!" I giggle

"I hope it's a girl and she's going to be pretty like her mother. I am going to spoil her rotten" he says excitedly

"You not mad at me? For getting pregnant unplanned?"

"Mad! I am so happy I don't even know how to explain it" he says

"I should call Jude!"

"Yeah and I will call my dad and uncles I have to make you Mrs Ngcobo before you start showing"

Mrs Ngcobo!

We drive back home and when we get there S'bonelo starts making calls. I also called Jude!

Jude: Miss me already?

Me: Sort of are you busy?

Jude: I'm never busy for you what's up?

Me: I have something to tell you

Jude: Is everything?

Me: Yeah but I'm not sure if it's good news or bad news

Jude: Ok! Out with it

Me: After you left I went to see the doctor

Jude: And?

Me: I found out that I'm 2 weeks pregnant

Jude: (She screams)

Me: Ok don't block my ears

Jude: You're pregnant?

Me: Yes I just found out

Jude: I am coming over there I am so excited. Are you craving anything?

Me: Craving to see you (Laughing)

Jude: I am on my way God I'm so happy

Me: Ok try not to die before you get here drive safe

Jude: I am coming!

Jude is one hell of a character

Sponsored

drive safe

Jude: I am coming!

Jude is one hell of a character at least she's happy. God really took his time when making the Ngcobo family because they all have a good heart.

"Do you need anything?" S'bonelo asks

"S'bonelo we just found out that I'm pregnant an hour ago"

"I told you I'm going to spoil you rotten" he kisses me on the cheek

"You're too sweet but I'm fine"

"I love you!" he says

"And I love you more"

Within a blink of an eye the whole Ngcobo family was at our house. They are all happy like it's their first time they are seeing a pregnant person. Leah was already talking about designing the baby's room. Rich people!

Finally they left and it was just me and S'bonelo. We are cuddling and he keeps brushing my flat stomach.

"So what are we going to name the baby" he asks

"I'm just two weeks!"

"So what? You're carrying a Ngcobo remember" he says

"We'll name him S'bonelo Junior!"

"And if it's a girl we name her Amahle" he says

"We still have 9 months to decide on the name ok"

"You've made me the happiest man ever! Ever since you came into my life everything have been just perfect. I'm glad I met you

Amahle" he kisses my forehead I drift to sleep.

I'm in our old house (my parents) it still smell's the same. I am wearing the same gown I was wearing that morning the day I lost it all. I'm in my room but how when I was with S'bonelo just minutes ago. I head out of my room. My mum is in the kitchen.

"Mama!" I rush to her but she shifts back

"Mama I thought you were dead?"

She won't talk to me she won't even look at me

"Mama!" I try to touch her but she shifts back

"Mama!"

I'm woken up by S'bonelo please don't tell me the nightmares started again? I'm sweating

"You're fine!" S'bonelo holds me tight

"She wouldn't talk to me S'bonelo!" I cry

"It was just a dream ok!"

"I finally get to see her but she won't talk to me it's like she's angry at me" I say

"She's not angry ok it was just a dream" he holds me tight.

A week went by and I'm still getting nightmares about my mother I see her but she never says anything. Why do I keep seeing her? I am sitting by garden getting some sun when cars drive in S'bonelo is at work so it's just me. Three cars okay! I stand up and walk to them. Nqoba gets out first but his face isn't happy he's not the bubbly Nqoba I know.

"Hie! What a pleasant surprise" I say

"I'm here to get you!" he says quietly

"Get me why" I ask

"Because I said so"- Thapelo gets out of the other car

I swallow hard I knew this day will come the day when I will be forced to go back to Nqoba.

"So you left your husband to be with your boyfriend" Thapelo yells I look down

I wonder who is in the other car or it's back up in case I refuse to go with them.

"You are a disappointment Amahle! You have a nice man with you and you don't even appreciate. You are so ungrateful"- Thapelo

"The yelling isn't necessary ok" Nqoba says

"Get in the car right now" Thapelo orders I don't move! He attempts to walk towards me but Nqoba stops him. I swear that was slap coming.

"Can I please handle my wife myself"- Nqoba says and Thapelo goes back into the car I'm now left with Nqoba

"Let's go! I will explain everything on the road" he whispers

"But I can't just leave without telling S'bonelo"

"We'll call him in the car" he answers

"I don't want to go"

"I know but we have the elders with us and we don't want to disrespect them" he says

"Why did you bring them here in the first place?"

"I had no choice ok they want us back together and you know how the elders get" he says

He leads me to the car why do I feel like this is the last time I get to be in this house. My father is already mad as it is and he warned me to stay away from S'bonelo or there will be consequences. Not to mention I'm pregnant.

#Love changes everything

26

The old Amahle would be in tears right now but no I have to be strong for my unborn baby at least now I have something to live for. I don't even know where we are going Nqoba is just driving. I have my phone in my hand and I'm debating on whether I should call S'bonelo or should I wait until I'm alone.

"Are you ok" Nqoba asks

"Where are you taking me?"

"We going to my house then tomorrow we might go to KZN but I'm not sure yet" he answers

"What did you say to them when they asked about me?"

"That you left!" he answers

He let me go he should have told him that.

"My father is going to kill!"

"They won't do anything to you you have me in your corner" he says

"You don't know my father"

"Yeah but as your husband I won't let him do anything to you" he says "But don't tell S'bonelo I said that" he laughs

"Why are you so nice?"

"I don't know" he chuckles

"You're a great guy Nqoba really your parents are happy to have a son like you. I'm sure they are proud of you"

"Yeah my parents are not as proud of me as you think" he says

"Why?"

"They want something that I can't give them" he says

"And what is that? If you don't mind me asking"

"They want grandchildren and I can't have kids" he sighs

"Do they know?"

"No!" he shakes his head

"You have to tell them"

"I will! After this whole mess" he says

"I'm sorry for adding problem to your life"

"Are you kidding me? My life has never been this fun" he laughs

"You are one hell of a character! I love it"

"I'm glad you like me" he says

"What if they make us get back together?"

"You have to convince them that you love S'bonelo stand up for yourself" he says

"Easy for you to say"

"You shouldn't be afraid of your father and you have to tell him the truth" he says

"And what is the truth?"

"That enough is enough! You're not a child anymore he can't keep controlling you" he says

"Will try!"

“Don’t try do so and I know he’s put you through a lot but it’s also high time you forgave him” he says
“You and S’bonelo are like the same person”
“Great minds think alike!” he laughs
“Can I call him?”
“Yeah sure!”

I dial S’bonelo and he answers right away

Him: Hope you’re not crying

Me: I’m not!

Him: How are you? Hope Nqoba is taking care of you?

Me: How do you know that I’m with Nqoba?

Him: It’s all part of the plan so relax ok

Me: What plan?

Him: I can’t tell you that

Me: S’bonelo what is going on?

Him: I will explain everything when the time is right

Me: At least tell me something anything!

Him: Just trust me on this one ok?

Me: Fine we are going to Mpumalanga but I guess you already know that?

Him: Yes I know!

Me: I don't know what to say

Him: Say you love me

Me: I love you!

Him: I love you more. I'll call you don't call me I'll call you

Me: Is it part of the plan too?

Him: Yes!

Me: I don't know what you are upto but ok

Him: Good girl! Take of my baby for me

Me: I will!

Him: Listen to what Nqoba tells you

Me: Why?

Him: Please do so!

I hang up and turn to Nqoba

"What is going on" I ask

"You're not supposed to know anything sorry"

"What are you and S'bonelo planning" I ask

"The less you know the better"

"So what now? Where to from here" I asks

"When we get home you're going to apologize to your father and admit that you were wrong"

"Apologize? I'm not apologizing I didn't do anything" I say

"You did! You ran away from your husband"

"You love using the world husband don't you"

I ask

"Well you are still my wife even the ancestors know that"

"The ancestors" we laugh

"You're going to apologize in front of the family or be taken back to KZN to be taught respect by your aunties is that what you want?"

"Of course not!" I answer

"Good! Then you're going to apologize and tell them that you are ready to play your wifely duties"

"Is this part of the plan too" I asks

"Amahle!"

"Fine apologise I got it" I roll my eyes

"Please take this seriously"

"Yes sir!" I say

"Being pregnant is turning you to a rude person ayy what happed to the sweet Amahle?"

"You know" I ask

"Of course I know"

We get home and there's only two cars now. We enter the house and sit down. Stepmother is also here and from the looks of it my father wants to strangle me to death. Bridget (stepmother) asks to talk to me in the kitchen and we excuse ourselves. Here comes the lecture.

"What happened Amahle? Why would you run away from your husband" she asks

Is that what they told them? That I ran away. I don't answer I'm just looking down popping my hands

"I know you said you were forced but you should have talked to me Amahle I'd have helped you" she says

"Helped me how? Please tell me how you'd have helped me?"

She doesn't answer she just sighs and looks don't yeah thought so.

"I'm on your side here"

"I know you're with my father but that man isn't what he says he is and you better leave him while you still can" I say

"I love you father Amahle and he's the best man I've ever met"

"I guess you don't know him as I do" I say

"I met your father at the hospital when he was fighting for his life. I was a nurse at that hospital and I got to know him better. There's more to him than you think"

"Look Bridget

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I'd have helped you" she says

"Helped me how? Please tell me how you'd have helped me?"

She doesn't answer she just sighs and looks don't yeah thought so.

"I'm on your side here"

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"I love you father Amahle and he's the best man I've ever met"

"I guess you don't know him as I do" I say

"I met your father at the hospital when he was fighting for his life. I was a nurse at that

hospital and I got to know him better. There's more to him than you think"

"Look Bridget you don't know what that man put me through" I say

"Forgive my child! Forgive and you'll find happiness"

"You have no idea what he put me through" I say even thinking about it makes me cry

"Everyone has been through a lot Amahle but we stand up and continue living. Please forgive him make that might change him a little love is what he needs in his life. With just love in his life everything will change and who knows he might let you be with the man you love"

"That man hates me" I say

"Yeah but you love him"

"I don't" I answer

"You do because if you didn't you'd call him by his name and calling him your father means there's still hope. You just don't want to admit but a part of you is glad he survived"

"He told you" I ask

"Yes he told me"

"I want to forgive him but I can't" I say

"Just take the hate you have for him and replace it with love after all love changes everything. Add love and everything will fix it's self automatically"

"I don't know!" I say

"You know I see an old me when I look at you it's like you're living the same life I lived"

"Where you also raped by man old enough to be your father" I roll my eyes

"Yes!"

Okay I wasn't expecting that

"I'm sorry!" I feel bad really

"I was almost your age but younger I was coming back from school and some man asked for directions. I swear if I knew that was going to happen I wouldn't have stopped when he called me"

"I am so sorry!" I say

"You weren't supposed to know that but I wanted to tell you that I spent all my life pushing away the people I love because of it. I hated every man around me because of. I hated my father for it"

"Why your father" I ask

"I felt like it was his fault he used to pick me up every day in school and that day he didn't show up"

"But this time it was my father's fault he literally sold me to other man" I cry

"I know and I'm sorry but you have to forgive him just like he forgave you"

"Forgive me for what?" I ask

"You tried to kill him remember?"

"That man threatened me to marry Nqoba or go to jail" I say

"I know but you have to forgive him Amahle that way he can accept your relationship with S'bonelo"

How does she know about S'bonelo?

"Who's side are you on" I ask

"I'm on your side you need your father's blessing and you need him for the lobola negotiations"

"You're confusing me right now" I say

"You have to move on I get he hurt you but you have to put that behind you forgive and forget"

"I don't need him!" I say

"You do and you have to make peace with him if you really want to be with S'bonelo then make peace with him"

"Did he send you to talk to me" I ask

"He doesn't even know we are having this conversation"

"Why do you feel the need to help me" I ask

"Because I just want to see you happy I don't want you to live a miserable life like I did"

"I'll think about it" I say

"Good girl at least that's progress" she smiles

Do I forgive him?

#Love changes everything

27

Forgive him? I don't want to forgive him he has to ask me to forgive him not the other way around. He might be my father but this man put me through hell and back. What did Bridget mean when she said if I really want to be with S'bonelo I have to make peace with

my father. I'm still in the kitchen my father
Bridget and Nqoba are in the dinning
discussing God knows what.

Leah (S'bonginkosi's girlfriend) walks in what
is Leah doing in Nqoba's house? What aren't
these people telling me?

"Hey girl" She sits on the chair like there's
nothing wrong with that.

"You're here?"

"Yes you're not seeing things" she smiles

"But why are you here?"

"I'm the helper I'm here to look after the
Prince's wife" she answers

"The helper?"

'S'bonelo will explain everything" she says

"What are you guys upto?"

"The less you know the better you just focus
on the baby and we'll handle the rest" she
says

"If you say so"

"Good so do you want some tea or coffee"
she asks.

"Really?"

"I have to play the part"

I can't even act normal they have to tell me something anything. My phone rings and its S'bonelo.

Him: Are you comfortable enough or you preferred Jude?

Me: What are you guys upto?

Him: You'll find out soon!

Me: So why is Leah here?

Him: To make sure there aren't any surprises like last time

Me: What is she supposed to do? Tell you my every move?

Him: Sort of

Me: You guys have to tell me what you're upto

Him: Just focus on mending your relationship with your father and I will handle the rest

Me: Handle what? You have to give me more than just your word

Him: Please trust me? I promise this time you have my word

Me: Fine! I miss you

Him: I'll come see you tomorrow

Me: Here?

Him: Don't worry I'll find you just get ready at noon

Me: I don't even have any clothes

Him: You do we packed for you

Me: I guess you guys had everything figured out

Him: Yes! I love you and don't answer that we don't want your father walking in on you.

Okay! I'm more confused now. I'm still with Leah and she's acting all normal sipping on tea. Bridget walks in and Leah leaves right away.

"Why don't you come join us in the dining"

Bridget says

"Why?"

"Come sit with your father and husband" she says

What happened to team S'bonelo?

"I'm right behind you"

"Don't be shy" she takes my hand and leads me to the dining making me sit on the same couch with my father. I'm uncomfortable I don't want to lie.

"I hope your mother knocked some sense into you"- Thapelo

I hope he dies! And since when is Bridget my mother. I don't say anything I just look down and play with my hands.

"Don't be so hard on her Thapelo she's a kid after all" Bridge says

Woman! I'm going to be a mother soon so I'm not a kid. The inner me wants to run out of the room so bad

"Excuse me" I stand up

"Where are you going honey" Nqoba asks
Since when am I honey?

"I want water"

"Why don't you sit and I'll go get in" he insists

I sit back down and face the other direction I can't even look at him without wanting to cry. Nqoba comes back with bottled water.

"Here you go!"

"Thanks honey!" I roll my eyes

"Anytime" he kisses my forehead is that also part of the plan? I look at Bridget and she's smiling.

"Amahle you...." Thapelo says but Nqoba interrupts him.

"Amahle has something to tell you"- Nqoba

"No I don't!"

"You do honey remember what you said in the car? On our way here" Nqoba answers I don't read signs I don't know what he's talking about. I'm just giving him the blank look. I look at Bridget and she nods oh they mean apologize mxm. I turn and look at Thapelo. With my teeth clenched.

"I'm sorry I ran away from my husband I promise it won't happen again" I say

"Let's hope so" he answers

"Excuse me" I rush out of the room

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I need some air.

"You did great!" -Nqoba guess he followed me

"Whatever!"

"Hey! I know you hate him but you have to let it go ok" he says

"Easy for you you weren't abused growing up"

"I know and I'm sorry but you have to forgive and forget ok" he says

"Ok!"

"What happened to quiet Amahle" he laughs
"She got pregnant"

"I guess we have a month to fix all this before you start showing because they are going to think the baby is mine and we don't want to confuse my parents" he says

"True and S'bonelo said he's coming tomorrow"

"Yes he already told me" he smiles

"Thank you! For having such a kind heart and if I give birth to a female child I'm going to let you marry her"

"Yeah I'll be dead by the time she's illegal" we laugh

"They say age is a number"

I'm just kidding no child of mine will marry an older man

"Thanks I'll keep that in mind mother in-law" we laugh

"Nice to see you two getting along"- Thapelo
And he had to come and ruin it he's with 'mother'

"We are leaving" Bridget says

"Let's hope she won't run away again"-
Thapelo

I wish! I fake smile and Nqoba squeezes my waist more like say something.

"I won't I have learnt my lesson" I fake smile

"Thank you father in-law for helping bring back my wife" Nqoba says

"Call me next time she runs away again" they walk away they are going to have to see themselves out.

"You called them" I ask Nqoba

"Yes!"

"Why" I ask

"The lesser you know the better"

"Can everyone stop saying that" I say

"It's also part of the plan ok! Now let's go get you warm clothes before you catch a cold and S'bonelo kills me"

"I'm hungry too" I chuckle

"Let's go make you some food"

"God you're too sweet" I say

"I make a great husband don't I?"

"You do"

The following day a driver comes to pick me up from Nqoba's house I'm going to see S'bonelo for lunch. It's like I haven't seen him

for days yet I was with him the previous morning.

"I want to know everything" I say to S'bonelo

"How are you?"

"I'm fine now tell me everything" I say

"You look pretty"

"S'bonelo come on just tell me" I say

"Hope the baby isn't giving you troubles?"

"Are you trying to tick me off" I ask

"Is it working" he laughs "Funny you've never gotten mad at me?"

Why is he avoiding telling me?

"I've never gotten mad because you've never done anything that ticks me off compared to me" I say

"I'm sorry!"

"For what" I ask

"For losing my cool the other day"

"Are you apologizing for something that happened weeks ago" I chuckle

"Yes! And I love you"

"And you're weird" I answer

"Your father is coming to see you today"

"How do you know" I ask

"I just know try not to kill him this time ok"

"I don't want to see him because I might kill him" I fold my arms

"You're going to see him. Please see him? For me?"

"Fine!" I sigh "But if he crosses the line"

"You'll kill him I know" he laughs

"You're enjoying this aren't you?"

"A little" he laughs

The driver takes me back to Nqoba's there's no one in the house not even Leah. I thought they said my father was here? I guess he waited until he gave up and left. I'm sitting on the couch watching the Kardashians when the doorbell rings. I rush to get it and there he is Thapelo Zungu. He's getting older even has grey hair. This man put me through hell.

"Amahle!" he snaps his hands in my face I got lost in my head again

"How can I help you" I'm still standing by the door

"This child! First you call me here and now you asking me if you can help me?" he shakes his head

I didn't call him here

"Come in!" I say

"So why did you call me here" he asks. I didn't! I don't answer I just look down I'm sitting as far from him as possible. We go quiet for a decade I don't know what to talk about.

#Love changes everything

28

I have never been in the same room with my father for more than 5 minutes even when my mother was alive I hardly talked to him mostly because I hated him with every fibre in my body. I can't even look at him without the past images flashing in my head. We have been quiet no one has said a word the tension!

"You look just like your mother" he breaks the silent I just fake smile I don't know if I should say thank you or what.

"She was your age when we first met you remind me of her" he adds

"Do you need anything to drink" I ask I might as well change the subject. I'm not comfortable talking about my mother especially with him.

"Water would be fine"

"I'll go get it!" I stand up and leave the room. In other words this man does not see anything wrong with what he did to me? I don't want to lie I was tempted to poison.

"Here you go!" I said as I handed him a glass of water.

"Thank you my child!"

I want to roll my eyes so bad.

Haven't killed each other yet? -I text comes in from S'bonelo

I text back

Me: I'm not comfortable at all

Him: Relax he won't do anything not with people in the house

Me: There are people in the house?

Him: Do you actually think we'll let you two be together alone? What if you kill each other? (Laughing)

Me: You enjoying this aren't you?

Him: So what are you two talking about?

Me: Nothing! We are not talking

Him: You should!

Me: Talk about what? I don't have anything to say

Him: Anything that comes in mind I'll text you later

Me: Ok

This is harder than I imagined I don't even know what to say I don't know where to even start but a part of me wants to ask what he did to my mother for her to take her life like that? He must have done something to her there's no way she just woke up and killed herself

"Do you....." I sigh and he gives me the go on look.

"I'll go make you something to eat" I rush out of the room. I get to the kitchen and stand by the sink. Why is this so hard?

"You're doing great" Leah says

"I can't even talk to him I want to but I don't know what to say to him"

"What is the one thing you've always wanted to ask him" he asks

"I want to know why he hates me so much"

"Then go ask him that who knows maybe he didn't hate you you're the one you just assumed he hated you" she answers

"I didn't assume anything that man hates me no questions asked"

"Well he's here why don't you ask him" she says

"What if he lashes out at me?"

"He won't!" she answers

"Where's Nqoba?"

"In his room!" she answers

"I don't know! Maybe it's a little too soon for this making peace thing"

"There's no such thing Amahle go back and talk to him he needs to know how you felt he needs to know how you feel right now and there's only one way he can know and that is when you tell him" she says

"I don't know!"

“Come to think of it he wouldn’t have come here if he really hated you” she says

“Maybe you have a point but today I’m not ready”

“I know but it’s now or never so go” she says pushing me out of the kitchen

“Fine!”

I walk back to the dining he’s busy with the T.V. I sit down and take a deep breath.

“Where is the food” Thapelo asks

“Am I really your daughter because?”

I don’t know why that’s the first thing that came to my mind.

“Of course you’re my daughter how can you even ask that” he answers

“Then why do you hate me so much? If you were really my father you wouldn’t have done half of the things you did to me”

“I don’t hate you Amahle” he answers

“Then how do explain selling me to older men I lost my virginity at 14 I was a child”

He looks down and shakes his head

“You abused my mother

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you abused me”

“I know I was wrong but...” he says

“But nothing! I’m your daughter your blood and you sold me like I was some piece of object. Those men forced themselves on me”

“Amahle my child!”

“Don’t call me that! No!” I rush out of the room.

He’s sorry? Is that all he can say that he’s sorry. No! I deserve more than a simple sorry. I want an explanation I went to my room and silently cried. I can’t do this. I know they said I need to make peace with him but I can’t not yet.

“You did great!” Nqoba says

“Yeah right!”

“You did better than we expected baby steps ok.” he rubs my back

“He couldn’t even tell me why he did it he can’t even explain”

“It’s ok we’re getting there soon he’ll open up” he hugs me “At least we made progress today”

“At least!”

"Now stop crying you also have to go somewhere" he says
"Go where?"
"It's a surprise!" he smiles
"Too much surprises for one day"
"We can postpone if you want" he asks
"No it's okay!"
"First let's get you something to eat" he says
"I'm already ate had lunch with S'bonelo"
"Okay then I'll give you a moment come downstairs when you're ready" he says
heading to the door
"Thank you Nqoba!"
"You don't have to thank me well at least thank me after the plan works" he says
before closing the door. I head to the bathroom to wash my face my phone rings its Jude.

Her: My favourite person

Me: Hey Jude

Her: Hope Nqoba and Leah are taking care of you?

Me: I'm being treated like a princess I tell you

Her: You are a princess remember plus you're carrying a Ngcobo so get ready to be spoilt

Me: Maybe I should stay pregnant and always get this special treatment

Her: Wait till you're Mrs Ngcobo we're so going to spoil you rotten

Me: I'm glad you guys came into my life I can't imagine my life without the Ngcobo's

Her: We are glad you came into our life you were the missing piece to the puzzle

Me: You're just sweet!

Her: I should get going take care of yourself ok?

Me: Okay thanks for calling

Her: Anytime!

I head to the dining my father is still here. Why is he still here? He and Nqoba stop talking when they see me I sit next to Nqoba.

"Are you ready" Nqoba asks

"Ready for what" I whisper

"You'll find out in a moment"

"Quit it with the surprises you guys have to tell me something"

"Didn't S'bonelo tell you" he whispers

"Tell me what?"

"Let's go" Thapelo stands up
"Go where" I ask
"Your father wants to show you something
Amahle"- Nqoba
I'm not going anywhere with this man.
"Are you coming" I ask
"Uhm!"
"Please come with us" I say
"If it's ok with your father"-Nqoba
"You are her husband after all"

We heard out Nqoba is driving my father keeps looking at me through the view mirror. I'm trying not to look at him but our eyes keep meeting. We finally reach some place were are at the grave yard. He wanted to show me my mother's grave. So she's in there? I didn't even get the chance to say goodbye maybe that's why she was angry at me.

Love changes everything

We are still at my mother's grave when I close my eyes I can still see her with her her pretty face and afro long floral dress

(Flashback)

"One day you'll grow up my child and you'll find a man that is going to love you unconditional"- mum

"Love doesn't exist!"

"You say that now but one day you will find love you'll have a loving husband and you'll have beautiful kids" she said

"I also want those big houses the ones that have stairs inside and I'm going to buy you one just like it"

"Yes nana and I'll spend the day with my grandchildren while you at wok

"Are you ok" Nqoba rubs my back got lost in my head again it has become a habit

"I didn't even get the chance to say goodbye"

"Its ok don't cry!"- Nqoba

"We'll give you a moment" – Thapelo says

"We'll be in the car ok"- Nqoba

"Okay!"

I wipe the tears off my cheeks and sit on the grave I don't know if that's even allowed but for some reason I feel tired so I'm going to sit down

"Hey mama!" I chuckle

I'm going to start talking to myself.

"Mama why did you leave me? Why did you leave me all alone in this wicked world? I went through a lot after your death I ran away from home and I couldn't find a job. Life is tough in Joburg finding a job isn't that easy. I ended up selling my body mama"

I take a deep breath and wipe the tears off my cheeks.

"I met a man I love him and he love me. I finally found my true love mama. He's the best I ever had he treats me like a Queen. I really wish you were here to see how happy I

am when I'm with S'bonelo to see what a handsome man I have" I cry

"I'm also pregnant! Now your grandchildren won't get to see their grandmother. What am I going to tell them when they ask about you mum? Where do I say their grandmother is? I hated you for leaving you mum I hated you for only thinking about yourself. Why didn't you take me with you is what I asked myself all those years. I miss you mum! And I forgive! And I love you" I cry

I feel like a whole load has been lifted off my shoulders this is the closure I needed. I really needed this. I stand up and head to the car.

"Are you ok" Nqoba asks as he starts the car

"Yes actually I feel great" I chuckle

"I'm glad!"

"And I'm hungry!" I say

"Yeah me too" Thapelo says

'Why don't we pass by McDonald and get something to eat" I say

"Yeah that's a great idea" Nqoba answers then leans in and whispers "Progress!"

He's right we have made a lot of progress in just one day. After eating we dropped my father off at our old house he invited us in but I'm not ready for that chapter yet. On our way home...

"So do you want to go straight home" Nqoba asks

"Yeah I'm so tired!"

"You did great today better than I expected" he says

"And what did you expect?"

"I don't know but you were very brave" he smiles

"Of course I was brave I had you in my corner"

"We make a great team don't we" he asks

"We do!"

"Does that mean I qualify to be the child's godfather" he laughs

"We'll see I'll put you on the list"

"There's a list" he asks

"Yes there's Jude then Leah"

"I'm sure I have earned a few points to be on top of the list" he says

"Get a wife first!"

“What happened to giving me the baby if it’s a girl” he asks

“You can’t be the godfather and the husband at the same time”

“Why can’t I be both” he asks

“You just can’t you have to choose one title”

“Can I think about it” he asks

“Sure you have 8 more months” we laugh

Nqoba is just great company I’m always in stitches when I’m with him. We get home and I head straight to my bedroom I just want to sleep and never wake up.

I’m woken up by Leah I hate it when someone wakes me up. Since I can now sleep without having the nightmares can I at least sleep in peace?

“Hey Leah” I yawn

“Hey soon to be Mrs Ngcobo”

That remind me Leah and S’bonginkosi aren’t married yet

“How long was I sleeping” I ask

“I lost count but it’s now 7pm and I was getting worried so had to wake you up”

"I'm just tired S'bonelo's baby won't let me rest" I yawn

"Don't tell me you want to sleep again?"

"I do! I wish I could just go back to sleep" I say

"Let's go have diner then you can sleep all you want plus its awkward being with Nqoba I'm not used to him"

"Nqoba is the sweetest person I have ever met after S'bonelo" I say

"Maybe he's sweet to you but I'm scared of him"

"You're crazy let's go!" I say getting out of bed "How are things between you and S'bonginkosi?"

"We are going through something but we're fine we'll get through it and we always do"

"What is this something

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let's go!" I say getting out of bed "How are things between you and S'bonginkosi?"

"We are going through something but we're fine we'll get through it and we always do"

"What is this something if you don't mind me asking" I say

“He wants us to get married and I’m not ready”

“But you love him right” I asks

“I do but I’m just scared”

“Look at me I’m going on 20 and I’m already pregnant” I say

“Maybe I should also get pregnant then our kids can play together”

“That’s a great idea actually” I say

“You’re crazy let’s go eat”

A week went by everything is going perfectly even though I still don’t know the so called plan but S’bonelo and I meet up every after 2 days and Jude calls I’m being treated like a sick person yet I’m just pregnant I guess this is what happens when you carrying a Ngcobo baby. My father and I are getting there I guess him and Bridget once visited and we actually talked even when I was fake smiling and talking in my head most of the time but we’re getting there. Baby steps like Nqoba said

“Hey” Nqoba says as he sits next to me

"What is it this time?"

"You are going to visit your parents tonight for diner" he orders

"Why?"

"Because he's your father and that is what kids do they visit they're parents now and then" he says

"Are you coming?"

"No! You're going to have to do this alone!" he answers

"I don't want to"

"I know but you have to ok for your relationship with S'bonelo" he says
That's everyone's new line

At 5pm I got ready and Nqoba drove me to my father's house the last time I was in this house was when my mother died and when I ran away from. The yard haven't changed at all the mango tree is still there even the door mat LOL. I take a deep breath and knock. Bridget opens the door fired up as always.

"Hey Amahle! What a pleasant surprise" she hugs me

"I was in the area and thought I should pass by and say hie"

We all know that's a lie

"No need to explain yourself come in" she smile "Thapelo!" she calls

"Amahle is here" she calls and he come rushing out like he couldn't believe I was actually there

"Hello!" I whisper

"Amahle you're here" he moves closer and I step back we are not yet there.

The house still hasn't changed at all the curtains are still the same and the furniture is still the same it still smells the same way it did before and the kitchen where I almost killed my father.

"How are you Amahle" Thapelo asks

"I'm fine thank you"

"Do you need anything to drink before I get started on diner" Bridget asks

"It's ok I'll go get the water. I still remember where everything is" I head to the kitchen and for some reason I end up in my old room. My clothes are still here feels like

yesterday when I left this place running away think I had killed a person. I sit on the bed and the images flash in my head all the abuse started in this bed I remember I used to hide under it hiding from my father.

"May I come in"- Thapelo I nod and he slowly walks in and sits next to me. We go quiet for a moment.

"I got you something well I didn't actually buy it but I'm sure you'll love it" he says

"Thank you!"

It's my mother's favourite necklace a locket necklace according to her it belonged to her great grandmother and it is passed from mother to daughter. I put it on and go back to being quiet.

"I'm sorry my child!" he says "I know what I did to you is unforgivable but I am sorry and I hope one day you'll find it in your heart to forgive me" he adds

"Why? I want to know why you sold me like that"

"I was selfish forgive me I didn't realize I was hurting you" he answers

"I was 14" I say with a breaking voice

"I wish I could turn back time and fix my mistakes but I can't. I am a changed man now Amahle! When I met Bridget I changed. Love changed me" he says

"You didn't change because you forced me to marry Nqoba I was engaged"

"I was just trying to secure a better future for you I thought maybe if you were married by a rich man you'd live the life we couldn't give you" he answered

"I told you I was in love with someone"

"I can't justify my actions Amahle and all I can say is how deeply sorry I am" he says

"Forgiving is a process and I'm going to need some time"

"Take all the time you need" he says "Might as well give you this" he hands me my engagement ring the one S'bonelo gave to me.

#Love changes everything

I'm starting to show now I'm getting fatter by the day. I'm making sure I wear baggy clothes so that no one notices. My father and I are now in speaking terms and everything is going well so well that everyone is starting to forget about the plan. Everyone is getting a little comfortable playing along. S'bonelo still visits now and then.

"What are they feeding you?" S'bonelo says hugging me.

"Are you calling me fat?"

"I didn't say anything don't put words in my mouth" he laughs

"I'm going to go back if you continue picking on me"

"Being pregnant suits you" he says

"We both know I'm fat and ugly"

"I didn't say anything" he laughs

"Did you bring me something to eat?"

"You didn't ask me to bring you anything" he shrugs

"But you know I want something to eat I'm always hungry you know that"

“Okay I’ll get you something to eat” he says

“Yes I’m hungry!”

“You’re always hungry” he mumbles

“It’s your child!”

“I’m just kidding ok!” he laughs

“It’s not funny ok everything smells”

“Do I also smell” he asks

“Your cologne does!”

“I’m sorry!” he smiles

“Why are you smiling?”

“What do you want me to do then” he says

“Bring me some food”

“I feel sorry for Nqoba and Leah who spend the whole day with you” he says

“Don’t start ok I’m not in the mood!”

“Okay what do you want to eat” he asks

“Anything that has fat lots of it”

“Okay!” he starts typing on his phone

“Say it!”

“I rather not” he smiles

I’m sure he’s thinking no wonder you’re gaining weight.

“You’re getting along with your father” he says

“Yeah we talk and we’re getting there”

"Then we can proceed with the plan right" he asks

"Wasn't all the plan?"

"Yeah but that was the easy part" he answers

"Should I be worried?"

"No! Not at all but we are not sure how your father is going to react" he says

"Ok now I'm worried"

"Don't be it's nothing serious" he says

"I'm going to trust you on this one"

"Good girl" he smiles

"Where my food?"

"Just a few minutes" he laughs

Later that day he drives me back home Nqoba isn't yet back at work and Leah is with S'bonginkosi so it's just me myself and I. I'm watching TV with a pack of Lays yeah I eat a lot don't judge me. The door opens and it's Nqoba he's back from work.

"Hey you!"

"Hey!" he sighs

"Long day?"

"Yeah had a new case" he answers

"What is it about?"

"Murder! My client killed her husband" he answers

"Whoa! What happened?"

"According to her he tried to force himself on her and she was just trying to defend herself" he answers

"So how many cases do you handle a day?"

"Maybe 3 or 4 it depends on how fast I solve it" he says

"I also want to be a lawyer stand up for people like you do"

"It's not late yet you still have the chance to study and become a lawyer if you want to" he says

"I won't be able to manage with the restaurant and this little trouble maker on the way"

"Who said a mother can't go back to school" he says

"I can?"

"Yes there are schools for people who missed their chance to study" he smiles

"I'll look into it"

"By the way we are going to KZN tomorrow" he says

"Why?"

"You'll find out tomorrow get some rest you'll need your strength" he answers

"You guys love leaving me in suspense right"

"Sort of I'm going to go shower will come down for dinner" he says heading upstairs.

I dial S'bonelo!

Me: Hey did you drive safe?

Him: Yes I just got home how are you?

Me: I'm hungry

Him: You're always hungry

Me: Don't start ok

Him: In 5 months you won't be able to walk if you continue eating like this.

Me: Well I have you to buy me a wheelchair and push me around with it

Him: Yeah true! So did you eat?

Me: Obvious!

Him: Good then

Me: I miss you already

Him: Just a few more weeks and we'll be together again

Me: Weeks! That's a lot of time

Him: I know but it will be worth it

Me: Can't wait

Him: I need to take care of something will call you before you sleep ok

Me: Okay

Him: Don't sleep before I call like yesterday

Me: Will try!

Him: Love you!

Me: love you more

I'm so sleepy it's like the only thing I do these days is eat and sleep. The following day Nqoba and I got ready for KZN. He still won't tell me the reason why we are going there. We get there and my parent are there Bridget and I are now getting along

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she's a great person and good listener I love talking to her she also gives out the best advises. Nqoba's parents are also here. We are sitting in the dining even the uncles are here. I wonder what this meeting is all about.

Maybe I should leave the room and let them talk I try to stand up but Nqoba holds my hand. This does not look good. Anything that involves the uncles isn't good.

"Nqoba why are we here" mother in-law asks
I remember her from the wedding

"Yes we don't have all day" Nqoba's father
says. That's the first Thapelo is quiet.

"I know everyone had something to do and
I'm sorry for calling this meeting at such
notice but it is important"- Nqoba

"We are listening Nqoba we don't have all
day"- father in-law and I thought my father
was strict.

"Amahle and I don't love each other" Nqoba
says

Is this the plan?

"We have tried to make it work but we just
don't work" he adds

"What are you saying" Thapelo asks

"We have come to an conclusion and that is
to separate" Nqoba answers

"Separate!" Thapelo gasps

I feel bad really I have put Nqoba through
hell and back he's doing all this for me and
S'bonelo. I don't know how I'll ever pay him
for all this.

"Are you crazy Nqoba are you telling us that you couldn't make things work with your wife"- Nqoba's father

"They just need something to look forward to maybe they should have a baby" Thapelo says

"We don't want a baby! We have made a decision and have thought about it"- Nqoba

"Makoti is this true? Why didn't you tell us earlier maybe we would have come-up with a solution" – mother in-law

"Yes its true Ma!" I look down I wish they had at least given me a heads up. "It has been going on for some time now and we tried fixing things but we just don't work"

Might as well play along

"But what went wrong? You two were fine when we used to visit" Thapelo says I'm sure he's thinking about the lobola money right now"

"We didn't want you to know our business but we were already having troubles" Nqoba answers

"Maybe you should have a baby the baby will help you have something to look forward to

something that will bring you together"-
mother in-law.

"I can't have kids mum I did a test and I'm
infertile" Nqoba answers

Wow!

"So what now"- Nqoba's father asks

"We are separating and Mr Zungu you don't
have to pay us anything your daughter is a
great person but unfortunately I'm not the
right person for her" Nqoba answers

"This is madness" Nqoba's father walks out
followed by his wife then the uncles

"I'm sorry Mr Zungu but I'm going to have to
bring her back" Nqoba says

"It's ok" Thapelo sighs

Okay I didn't expect that reaction Thapelo
and Bridget walk out too I'm now left with
Nqoba.

"Are you ok" I ask

"I'm fine you?"

"I'm ok thank you Nqoba I know that wasn't
easy. Thank you very much" I say

"I told you I love you"

"You really have a kind heart God bless you" I
hug him.

Since I'm the rejected wife I couldn't go back to Mpumalanga with Nqoba so I stayed with my parent. A month went by Nqoba brought me my clothes and now it's hard to hide that pregnancy because I'm showing. It was a Thursday afternoon and I was alone in the house I was still in my gown and I tight t shirt that was revealing my belly.

"You're pregnant!" says a voice I recognised it right way it's Thapelo

"Well I..." I stammered

"You're pregnant Amahle how?"

How do I begin to explain this?

Love changes everything.

31

Love changes everything

By *Cathrine Phiri*

Chapter 31

I thought I was the only one in the house I've ruined the plan. How do I explain why and how I got pregnant? I haven't been out of the house in weeks now let's hope he doesn't think the baby is Nqoba's. He's just looking at me Bridget is also here. Why are they home? I thought they said they coming back late and I shouldn't wait up.

"You're pregnant!" he says it's like he's never seen a pregnant person before. "How are you pregnant" Thapelo asks

"I can explain"

"The Ngcobo's are coming to pay your lobola and you're already pregnant" he says "We have already set a date how do I explain this to them?"

They are coming?

"Well the baby is S'bonelo Ngcobo's" I whisper

"The one that wants to pay lobola?"

"Yes" I answer

So he was threatening to hurt S'bonelo when he doesn't even know him?

"They will pay the damages Thapelo get your I.D and let's go" Bridget interrupts him

"You'll be the death of me Amahle just a month ago you separated with Nqoba and you're already pregnant" he shakes his head heading to his bedroom.

"So! When where you planning to tell us" Bridget asks

"I was going to tell you" I say to Bridget

"How have you been hiding this?"

"Baggy clothes" I whisper

"Wow! How far are you?"

"3 months!" he answers

"Have you gone for the check-ups?"

"Yes I usually go with..." I pause

"S'bonelo I know you two are inseparable"

"I really love him you know" I say

"I'm glad you've found love you deserve to be loved. You have been through a lot. I wish you the best" she smiles

"Thank you!"

"Thapelo did you die in there? We are going to be late" she calls

"I was talking to the Ngcobo's we are shifting the negotiations to next week" he says

Yay! Finally

"And you cover that stomach" he shakes his head and walks out

"Okay!" I nod

"I'll talk to him" Bridget whispers before walking out.

Finally I'm going to be S'bonelo's wife and how did they manage to convince my father. I quickly call S'bonelo.

Him: My Love!

Me: He knows I'm pregnant and shifted the negotiations to next week

Him: How did he find out?

Me: I thought I was alone in the house and they walked in on me sorry for ruining the plan

Him: It's ok the truth was going to come out anyway

Me: You not mad

Him: Let's blame the pregnancy

Me: I love you and I can't wait to be Mrs Ngcobo

Him: I love you more I miss you it's been 2 weeks.

Me: We'll have all the time in the world once I'm your wife

Him: Can't wait

A week goes by and finally the time has come I'm in a doek and long dress making sure I hide my belly of course. The in-laws and my uncles are in the dining S'bonginkosi is part of the negotiations. It has been 3 hours what is taking so long I mean it's just naming the price then I'm S'bonelo's wife. Right? They are loud! Like they are disagreeing on something.

A text comes through my phone from S'bonelo.

Him: Just a few more hours and you're officially mine

Me: I was already yours

Him: Yeah but now we will have your parent's blessings and no one can take you away from me

Me: What do you think is taking so long? It's been hours

Him: Can't wait?

Me: Yes I just want it to end and be over with

Him: Just a few more hours

Me: Thanks you for insisting on giving me a lift that night

Him: Thank you for standing there that night

Me: You're the best thing that has ever happened to me. Ouch! He's kicking!

Him: That's daddy's little man I wish I could feel it

Me: You will! After all this

Him: Hope they'll let you leave with me

Me: They have to!

Him: Whatever the princess wishes

Me: They are calling me let me go

Him: I love you

Me: I love you.

One of my cousins covers me with a blanket then leads me to the dinning

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let me go

Him: I love you

Me: I love you.

One of my cousins covers me with a blanket then leads me to the dining I sit on the floor and they tell me to remove the blanket.

"Is this her" Thapelo asks
Really? Would they pay lobola for the wrong person?

"That's her" S'bonginkosi smiles

Some of the cousins and uncles are in the kitchen cooking the guests get served and everyone is having a blast of a time. Finally the family get to see my handsome man I just can't stop stealing glances at him. I haven't seen him in weeks. God he looks great.

"Stop drooling" my aunt hits my shoulder

"You have the rest of your lives together"

I'm in the kitchen looking at S'bonelo who's outside with the uncles and male cousins

"Sorry!"

"Young love" she smiles "Respect him ok give him that's his anytime he wants it"

And what's his?

"Yes aunty"

"Do not talk back him no man wants that" she adds

"Okay!"

"I know you're thinking this old fool but take my advice and you'll be a happy wife. Respect him and he'll treat you like a princess" she says and I nod.

He already treats me like a princess and I respect him. Another week goes by and my husband comes to get me yes I said it he's MY HUSBAND. We drive from KZN to Pretoria I'm really tired it's like I haven't slept in a decade.

"Hey don't sleep" S'bonelo tabs my shoulder

"S'bonelo I'm tired!"

"I know but don't sleep we are almost there" he smiles

"You just took a wrong turn"

"I didn't" she kisses my hand

"What are you upto?"

"You'll find out in a minute" he stops the car

"Why are we stopping?"

“Just trust me” he gets out of the car and comes to open the door for me.

No way!

“The hotel!

“Yup! Remember the hotel” he asks

“How can I forget I lived here when I ran away from home”

“Do you want to go in” he asks

“Sure!”

We walk in and get to the reception nothing has changed the receptionist is still the same. Everything still looks the same. This place hold a lot of memories.

“Hey Ma!” I greet the receptionist

“Pinky!” she rushes to hug me “Whoa! You’re expecting?”

“Yeah! How are you?”

“I am fine! God you have grown” she smiles then calls the staff. These people are only thing in this world that I can call friends.

Everyone was so happy to see me I was also happy to see them. We heard out back to the car and he starts driving

“Thank you! For taking me to them”

"Anything for the love of my life" he smiles he stops the car again. We get out of the car.

"Do you know where we are" he asks

"Am I supposed to?"

"This is where we first met" he chuckles

"Yeah! I forgot"

"A young girl standing on the side of the road in a purple dress" he says

"You still remember?"

"Of course because that girl stole my heart" she answers

"Stop!"

"You changed me to a better person Amahle. I never thought I'd love the way I do until I meet you" he says "Love changes everything your love changed me. You were the missing piece in my life" he goes on his knees not to mention we are in public.

"Amahle Zungu! Will you make me the happiest man on the earth and marry me" he asks

"Yes!" I scream

#Love changes everything

Finale

Love changes everything

Cathrine Phiri

Finale

1 Corinthians 13:1

“Love is patient love is kind. It does not envy it does not boast it is not proud. It is not rude it is not self-seeking it is not easily angered and love keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth”

This is exactly the kind of love I got from S'bonelo the agape kind of love. They say love is the most powerful source in the world they say with just a little love we can end wars and build a better world. I never believed in love and coincidences until I meet S'bonelo. I'm not saying people should start abusing their children and makes them run away from home but if you think of it if my

father wasn't the monster he was my mother wouldn't have killed herself. If my mother had not killed herself then I wouldn't have tried to kill my father and if I hadn't ran away from home I wouldn't have met S'bonelo.

Just like the Bible says "Our plans are not his plans and our ways are not his ways". Sometimes he question God we question his existence. But no he knows the plans he has in store for us he's letting us go through the pain preparing us for a better tomorrow.

"You said you wanted to see me" Nqoba says standing by the door

"Yes!"

"Well here I am" he says "I didn't do anything right?"

"No I just wanted to say thank you Nqoba!"

"For what" he asks

"Thank you for being you thank you for having a kind heart. I wouldn't be here if it weren't for your kindness thank you"

"I'm sure you would have done the same if I was in your position" he smiles

"The world needs more people like you"

"Now you're going to make me blush" he chuckles

"Thank you!" I hug him

"You're welcome and you look great by the way"

"Thanks!" I smile

"Let me go! See you out there"

He leaves the room and soon after Leah walks in with my little boy he's 9 months now she's carrying him in her arms.

"Say hey to mummy" Leah says

"Hey baby!" I kiss his tiny face we named him Blessing and he's our little blessing. Jude named him Akeem well we all know Jude.

"No don't take him you have to get out now. We don't want him crying for you" she says

"Please just for a second!"

"He'll ruin your dress with his lollipop" she answers "Are you nervous?"

"A little! But more excited"

The music starts playing

"That's you girl go marry the love of your life" she rushes out. I look at myself one last time this is it. I take my bouquet and walk out. My

father is already waiting for me I'm finally having my white wedding.

"I'm proud of you Amahle! And I'm glad that you've found love" Thapelo whispers and he walks me down the aisle my eyes are fixed on S'bonelo. My husband the love of my life my guardian angel.

"Take care of my daughter Ngcobo!" Thapelo says as he hands me over to S'bonelo
"Always!"

It still feels like a dream I'm really getting married I never pictured myself getting married. I won't stop crying Leah would stand up now and then to fix me up but the tears won't stop she ended up giving up. How I wish my mother was here to see that I have found my other half. We asked to say our own vows confessing our love for each other to family and friends.

"S'bonelo Ngcobo! My guardian angel

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confessing our love for each other to family and friends.

"S'bonelo Ngcobo! My guardian angel my safe place my other half the love of my life the father other of my children. I never believed love existed until I met you. You loved me for me you never cared about my past loved me with all my flaws. Thank you for not giving up on me I was broken when you first met me. My heart was a million pieces but you mended it up with your love. We went through a lot to get where we are today you never gave up on me you waited for me. Even times when I thought there was no hope you were there you were there to keep me going. I vow to give my all to you I will love you and respect you as my husband" I say and he wipes the tears off my face with his thumb.

I'm not finished yet! I take a deep breath

"I promise to be faithful honest and a loving wife. I vow to hold your hand in my hand and your heart in mine. I love you and you are my husband for eternity. Today I give you my love and my all"

It's easier when you see it in the TV it's his turns. He smiles first he's looking deep into my soul and he's looking at me like we are the only people in the room like I'm the only girl in the world.

"Pinky!" he chuckles "I'll never forget the first time I saw you I was crazy about you the moment I laid my eyes on you and still am. Your love changed me you made me believe in love you made me trust again right at that special day" he exhales

"I will take your love to give me hope give me joy and make me a better man. I promise to listen to hear and to always consider your feelings and thoughts as we travel together on this journey. I vow to love and honour cherish you forsaking all others as a faithful husband as long as we both shall live" he says

"With the power vested in me I pronounce you Mr and Mrs Ngcobo. Mr Ngcobo you may kiss your bride" the priest says

This is the best day of my life I look over at my father and he's sitting with mum. God gave me second mother. They seem happy I guess love really changed him. Leah and S'bonginkosi are having their traditional wedding along with our tomorrow Leah said having a white wedding isn't a big deal well it was to me.

"Stop crying Pinky" S'bonelo says

"Sorry! I'm too excited"

"Thank you for being part of my life" he kisses my hand

"Thank you for letting me"

"We've come so far" he says

"Yeah we have"

"Remember that song that you love" he asks

"Don't tell me you want us to dance to that song that's a love making song"

"Well it is our song" he says

"Don't you dare S'bonelo?"

The M.C announces that it's time for our first dance S'bonelo stand up first. God please not that song. He gives me his hand and helps me up.

John legend- All of me starts playing thank God.

"I figure since you love John Legend so much might invite him to sing at our wedding" he says he isn't blabbing he's really here.

"I love you! And John legend of course"

"Don't make me regret inviting him" he laughs

I'm finally Mrs Ngcobo!

Love changes everything

The end!!!!

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