

KEPT



WRITTEN BY
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"By the power vested in me, I now pronounce you husband and wife. You may kiss the bride."

The crowd erupts in ululations, whistling and the loudest clapping of hands as my husband and I seal our forever union with a kiss.

Right...

This isn't how love stories begin, right? This part right here happens at the very end, or towards the end at least.

In all normalcy, boy meets girl, he proclaims his undying love for her, she maybe gives him the run around and he chases just as fast until he catches her and she gives in. They face a couple of, if not a lot of hurdles along the path

that they have chosen, there may be a break up or two and a couple of tears shed too until they get to the alter and they look back and think of how far they have come and how much it was all worth it.

... but that isn't the case for my husband and I

My husband...

A man I have only known for twenty-eight days, gone on two dates with, just had our first kiss in front of our families and the Reverend that was smoothed talked into officiating our marriage by my parents because neither my husband nor myself have set foot in a church in many, many years. We only met him four days ago when he conducted a couples counselling to make sure we were ready to be joined together as one. We

must have been convincing enough if he went through with being our officiator.

We hardly know each other, but we have achieved my husband and I.

In the past twenty-eight days, we managed to get a house we could call a home, we fully furnished it and we have adjusted our lives to fit this new life that we have both just signed up for.

When we turn to face the crowd, I see my parents seated on the first row alongside my big sister, her husband and their eldest son. On the opposite side I see my new family, my in-laws. My mother in-law has an elated look on her face and it truly does warm my heart, even though I have known her lesser days compared

to my husband, she has been more than welcoming to me. My father in-law proudly looks at my husband, his first son. He really has made him proud. Next to him sits my brother in-law who also served as the best man and my sister in-law whom I have nothing to say about.

The rest of the church is filled with relatives and church members who came out to support my parents and everyone rises as my husband and I make our way out of the church.

I feel exhausted because this wedding started three days ago and I have not gotten any rest since Thursday.

He gets the door for me and he gets in after me as our driver takes us to where our reception is being held, the same place where we will be

taking pictures before joining everyone else.

"It's done" he says looking at me and I nod at his words

I find myself wondering what a normal couple would be doing right now. Just after saying their 'I do's' and on the way to celebrating their union. Would they be making out right now? Gossiping about the attendees maybe or simply cuddling and basking in their hot flamed love.

I guess I will never know.

This day was one of the requests I made when we were sorting the agreement. I had always dreamed of a day like this, one where I would dress up in my beautiful Tsonga traditional and

bridal themed dress. I love how they now make them using traditional cloths rather than having them in plain white. I wanted to experience this, the rush of planning, the joy of seeing it all come together, everything. I may never get to experience what it feels like to be married to someone I consider to be my best friend but I will always remember this day and hold it dear to my heart

It will always be, my wedding day.

"It is" I smile looking out the window "When do you think the awkwardness will wash off?"

"That depend on us, after everyone has left and we enter our new home. It will all be up to us to make our marriage work"

"And you are still sure about this?" I ask him

"Just as I was when I asked you to marry me" he says. This would be so romantic if it were coming from someone who used to be a boyfriend, a lover or even a male bestie at this point but even though he has been none of those things, I still find comfort in his words.

We arrive at the venue, pose for so many pictures, sit through the speeches and eat while accepting well wishes from our guests. The party starts and the master of ceremony makes sure that everyone has the time of their lives accompanied by lots of laughter. This is exactly how I imagined my big day would be and he has given that to me, he has delivered it, exactly how I asked for it

Sitting here and looking at everyone, I find myself thinking about everything that has happened in the past twenty-eight days. How I woke up one morning to attend a friend's wedding with just the thought of celebrating her big day with her. I never planned on meeting someone, I never even counted on it either because that wasn't what I went there for but just as fate would have it, or whatever forced us to look in each others direction and now we are here.

We are sitting in the midst of our wedding reception, all dressed up, wedding bands weighing heavy on our fingers and a bunch of mixed feelings that we have to work through. If anyone would have told me a month ago that I would be here I would have laughed at their face in full savage mode. I could have never

seen this coming, not with the bad luck I've had when it comes to love, I could have never ever seen this coming. And now here we are, here I am...

A married woman.

***And that's how we kickstart our new ride. Get yourself a copy of THE SURROGATE while at it



The next update will be on Thursday and from there we work with Mondays and Thursdays.

Happy reading 

CHAPTER 1

TWENTY-TWO DAYS AGO

I kill the engine of my car, pull my chair back and reach by the passenger side for my cute black stilettos then I kick off my slippers and apply lotion on my feet before putting the killer shoes on. I then reach for my make-up bag at the back, pull down the sun visor so I can use the vanity mirror to see my face to make sure I still look good, I love that my matt lipstick doesn't need to be reapplied time and again, it still looks fresh on my lips. I brush up my weave and make sure its still in place then I pack everything away and reach for my cute silver clutch bag with a long chain. I stuff my cell phone, small packet of wipes and lipstick in it then I step out of my car and lock it then I throw my keys in there too.

I look down at my dress. It's silk, thin material nicely hugs and outlines my body and I look

perfect in it. I give myself one last take then I start walking towards the entrance of the restaurant with the sound of my heels echoing behind me. I feel and look confident, it really is amazing what dressing up can do for ones level of confidence and I love it

With every step that I take, I feel it get real. This is it, I'm here to make a life changing decision and I can only hope that it works out just as planned or imagined. A lot of people dye their hair just for change, they change their dressing style, get a new car or house or even a pet, they change career paths or maybe plan something more spontaneous just to spice up their lives and then there's me...

I'm about to agree to marry a man I've only seen twice before this evening...

It's crazy.

And I'm here for it...

I step inside the restaurant and the hostess approaches me with a welcoming smile and she asks that I confirm my reservation. I clear my throat and I give her a name, she lets me know that he is already here then she leads me to our table. When he sees us, he gets up from his chair and fixes his suit jacket before getting the chair for me, there's still hope for chivalry.

"Thank you" I say pulling my chair closer to the table once I'm seated

"You're welcome, you look beautiful" He says

and I look down at my dress with a smile like I'm seeing it on my body for the first time

"Thank you, you look good too"

He looks just as handsome and breathtaking as when I first saw him and when we went on our first date, he's exactly how I would describe an alpha male lead in one of my stories. He's tall, his muscles aren't too exaggerated but he's the buffed up type with broad shoulders, his chocolate skin is oh so smooth and those hands... He has short hair, and a trimmed beard making him look even more manly, I love a man with a beard. The icing on top? He's the suit type. A complete hot, straight out of the books kind of greek God, If I may.

I order a drink and get comfortable, I've been

thinking about this date for days now and I almost chickened out because I was nervous but I reminded myself that I have no reason to fear him. Sure he wasn't trying to go the boyfriend and dating route and the fact that he was very clear about his intentions, even when he hardly knows me made me more curious about this man sitting opposite me right now

We have our food served and I get my favourite sweet red wine. We eat in silence, he's either not much of a talker or he's thinking about the reason we are here today, for all he knows I might be here for the free meal then I turn him down and go home, which would be exactly what any normal person would do but not me... Yeah, I've just realized that I'm not the normal type considering that I'm even thinking of giving this a chance...

When our table is cleared and left with our drinks only he looks at me "I take it you thought about what we spoke about the last time"

"I did"

"And?"

"And I'm here..." I say and he nods, he's waiting for me to continue "But I still have my doubts. We hardly know each other"

"Can you honestly ever say you know someone?" he asks

"Maybe not completely but after being with someone for some time you are bound to know

parts of them"

"Or you only know what they give you access to, you only see what they want you to see in order for you to stick around"

"So you think it's better to take the plunge and marry a complete stranger?"

"If we are both clear and honest about what we want then why not? Whether it's five years or five days, it truly makes no difference if the intentions are clear and not to just lead the person on"

"Why me? Of all the women that you saw that day, why did you go for me?"

"I wasn't out scouting for women, I don't know how it happened but when I saw you, I knew I had to talk to you again"

"And had I said no to your proposition on our first date?"

"I would have gotten the message loud and clear, I wouldn't continue trying to pursue you"

"So if I get up and walk out right now you will just forget about this?"

"Do you want to walk out?" he asks calmly

"Just answer my question"

"I'd follow, because you being here tells me that there's a very big chance that you want this too, that you might just be a little scared because this can be viewed as an unusual way of doing things but it really isn't. Arranged marriages have been happening for many years and many are a success"

"Normally arranged marriages are arranged by the two families, not the main parties involved"

"We aren't doing this for our families benefit, it's for us" He says and I go quiet

When he sees that I'm not saying anything he intensifies his gaze on me and leans a little closer to the table keeping us apart

"What is it that you want in a relationship? And please, be as descriptive as you can be" He asks with a smooth baritone that rings bells of pleasure in my ears and other places I dare not to mention

I ponder on the thought for a moment then I look at him "I want to be respected, I want stability and commitment, I want to be able to build a life with someone, to have them cherish, protect and love me. I want honesty and I want to get married and have a family." I stop and chuckle, feeling all kinds of silly, with the way he's looking at me. I can't tell if he's thinking that I'm too wishful given the era that we live in where people are quick to deceive each other and dive from one partner to the next. Commitment really does seem like a thing of the past.

"I want a family, I want to settle down, get married, provide for and protect my wife as I should. I also expect respect, honesty, loyalty and transparency" he says and it almost sounds like we are negotiating terms of a deal

"And love" I add

"Love..." he says slowly like it's his first time hearing of the word, it almost sounds foreign coming from him

"Yes, I want to be loved"

"What is love, exactly?" he asks and I'm left speechless for a moment. How does one describe love?

Is it the feeling of butterflies in your stomach when you see your significant other? Is it a feeling or an emotion? How can one fully explain what love is when there's so many meanings and definitions of it

"Love is a strong feeling of affection towards someone, their presence in your life makes you feel good and positive. It's this emotion that keeps you bonded with a person on a much deeper level"

Yass, I killed that textbook a.k.a Google explanation.

"And what happens when you fall out of love with someone?" He asks and my face falls

" You must have been in a couple of relationships, surely you know how it goes "

" I do, but I want you to tell me, Khanyisa. One day you're so deep in love with this person and the next you feel nothing, that emotion you described is gone, what then?"

I go quiet again

" What happened with your last relationship? "he asks

" It didn't work out"

I'm not about to sit here and explain to this man how I got my heart broken by a man I thought

was the one, he doesn't need to know how dumb I've been when it comes to love and relationships

"One of you fell out of love"

"You could say that"

The truth is the bastard never loved me and I learned that the hard way.

"What about you? What happened to your last relationship?"

"I couldn't be there for her in a way that she desired"

"You couldn't love her..."

"Love is an illusion, I doubt it exists and if it does then it's a mere attraction that lasts for a short while, the rest of the time is spent with one trying to convince themselves that all the sacrifices that they are making are to keep that love alive meanwhile it eats away their very being, in the end the only thing that's left is resentment and regret. "

" I hear you... If we are to do this, We would both know what we are in for"

"Yes, We both want commitment, loyalty, stability, a family. We both want a place we can go to at the end of the day and feel like we belong. This arranged marriage would work because it's foundation will not be built on an

illusion that's bound to die down at some point but the things that we both wish to have and can help each other acquire. Being my wife would mean you're my first priority, that you trust me enough to let me lead and I would make sure that you never find yourself lost"

When he first said this to me I was a bit thrown off, we live in a world that now views relationships and marriages as a 50/50 kind of thing...

Then there is Nkosiyabo Mdlalose.

A man who does not believe in neither love or the 50/50 arrangement. He believes the man will always remain the protector, the provider and the head of the family. This isn't new to me, I've seen bits of it with my parents and honestly

it somewhat resembles the life I want to live.

Some view submissions as a witness, well it can be if you are being oppressed but if you are willingly doing it because you trust that the person you married will always have your best interests at heart then I believe it is worth a try. I haven't been lucky when it comes to love and it makes me think that maybe, just maybe I've been going about it the right way. I'm agreeing to having a loyal, dependable and straightforward husband. I can easily take care of myself but I love the fact that I will be taken care of, he is actually giving me something to submit to and not wanting to oppress me, I'll still be free to do whatever I want, but my livelihood will not depend on whether or not I have a job, and who said being a house wife was such a bad idea anyway?

These are the things I've been saying to myself to further convince myself that I'm not entirely off the track, this could work for the both of us

I also can't explain what it is, but something about this man feels right, it feels like this is where I should be

...or I've just simply lost my mind.

"I want to" I say in all seriousness

I've given this a lot of thought and this is it. I want to try this, I want to do this with him

"You'll be my wife?" He asks again and I nod

"I will"

CHAPTER 2.

KHANYISA

Moving out of my parents house.

At the age of 25, I still live with my parents... Or should I say lived seeing that that's about to become a thing of the past.

I grew up in a house of four people. My dad, mom, big sister and I. My big sister, Caroline got married to her high school sweetheart 5 years ago and since then it's been my parents and I. Maybe that's why I never felt pressured to move, we weren't crowded and my parents made it known they enjoyed having me around...

And I was spoiled rotten, for me, there truly was no place like home.

Even with my part time gallery gigs, I never used any of my earnings for household things, my dad wouldn't have it. He always said having this family was part of his plans so he didn't need help maintaining his household.

As I pack the last of my belongings because I didn't get a chance to do it before the wedding I find myself playing with the ring on my finger, reminiscing about the years I've spent here, the happy memories, the sad, the funny and the ones where sesi Caro and I got in trouble and tried to cover for each other, like all the times she would lie and say she was going to a study session on Saturdays meanwhile we both knew she was sneaking off to see her boyfriend

Although I don't have friends here, I do have people that I grew up with, went to school with and chilled with on the corners when I was too bored at home and I'm going to miss them. Meadowlands is the only home I've ever known and the thought of leaving is bittersweet

"swi famba njhani? [how's it going]" my mom asks walking in my room

"se na heta [I'm almost done]"

She looks around my room and I catch a glimpse of the frown she's trying so hard to hide

"I'm going to miss you" she quickly wipes her

tears

"Mama-"

She raises her hand to stop me "No, don't feel bad. It's okay, it's normal for a parent to feel this way, I felt this way when your sister left and now you're leaving too so the feeling has made it's way back. I'm sad that you're leaving but I'm happy that you're starting a new chapter of your life. I want you to be happy n'wananga [my child]"

" Your tears are breaking my heart mama" I set down the books I was packing and walk to her trying to lock my own tears in, this is all so bittersweet

"Khanyisa, ndzi ku navelela swa kahle ntsena, n'wananga. Se u kurile, u ya sungula wa wena ndyangu [I only wish for the best for you] and for that I'm proud of you, kovaku aswi olovi ku vona n'wana wa wena a famba, swi nge tshuki swi olovin kambe swi fanerile ku humelela loko munhu se a teke xiboho xo ya sungula wa yena ndyangu.

[It's just that it's not easy to see your child leave and it will never be easy but when a person has decided to go start their own family then it must happen in that way] "

"I'm not moving to another country, mama. I'll just be here on Bedfordview. You can always visit and I will always visit too" I assure her

"No, no. At least take time to grow accustomed to your new life, it will allow your father and I to

also make peace with it being just the two of us in this house."

"So you'll be the ones visiting?" I ask with a sly smirk

"Hayi Khanyisa, We don't want to invade your personal space with your husband. Give it a few months, get used to living with each other then we can talk about visits"

My parents don't know that I've only known Nkosi for about a month. For one simple reason, My dad would have never agreed on it. As much as we have this open relationship, I've always drawn the line when it came to my dating life so they've never met anyone as my boyfriend, I only have one ex and even though we were together for 4 years mostly long distance, I

never introduced him. I was going to do it when he finally decided to ask for my hand in marriage, little did I know that he was planning that with another woman while taking me for a ride.

Only my sister knows the truth and the first thing she said when I told her was "Wa pengana? [Are you crazy?]"

I remember explaining to her and she calmed down, the more she listened, the more she came to understand.

"Kuna vanhu kwala? [Are there people in here?]"
sesi Caro's voice makes it's way from outside and she asks again when she's in the house

" In here! "I yell and soon she appears

" Hmm, mommy and daughter final moments huh? "She playfully nudges our mom who returns it with a smack on her arm

" Final moments ya yini seni [for what now?] it's not like she's going to die, we will speak everyday on the phone"

"Best believe it sesi, mom will be calling you three times a day like you're laying on your deathbed" sesi Caro says and my mom narrows her eyes at her "Na hembra? [Am I lying?]"

" You're exaggerating "Mom responds

" Okay, Khanyisa will see for herself then "She says

" I'll call you just twice. Morning and afternoon, I don't want to disturb evening things with your husband " she says teasingly and sesi Caroline laughs

" Mama" I frown at her, only igniting the sound of their laughter

"Oh come on, We know what you newly weds get up to, right Caro?"

"Oh yes, we know all of it, we've been there and now it's your turn" my sister continues to tease me

If only they new that my mind isn't even there yet. I just want to settle in nicely and get used to having a husband before even taking things a step further

Mama excuses herself to go and find my dad, he's been keeping himself busy since mornkng and we haven't gotten a chance to speak. I know he's avoiding having this talk with me because it's bittersweet for him too and he worries about me but I wish he wouldn't be distant. I wish we could just rip this band-aid off at once then move on to happier times.

I remain with my sister and continue boxing my stuff, she starts helping me while we chat

"Are you ready?" she asks

"Yeah, just a bit nervous that's all" I respond honestly

"It's to be expected and it's normal. Even for couples who have been together for years, finally getting to live together is a huge step"

"Any advice?" I ask with a smile. I've already gotten the typical "Bekezela [Persevere] advice or rather instructions from my aunts and old ladies who are still convinced that a submissive woman can never have a voice in her marriage and while I physically appeared to be listening to all they were saying, I didn't take any notes. If Nkosi decides to start messing with me then I will not take it lying down. There's a thin line between being submissive and plain dumb, and I'm not dumb.

"I don't know man, there isn't a formula or book of instructions for this marriage thing. You and Nkosi just need to do you, do what makes you feel happy and comfortable, Communicate clearly instead of running different directions when trials hit you. Be open and honest with him and relax, this isn't a job where you have to impress your boss for a raise or promotion. He's your husband and this is your forever, so you have the rest of your life to learn and improve on things that you aren't satisfied with "

" Look at you, the ultimate marriage counselor " I say jokingly and she picks up a pillow to smack me with

" Okay ke, you want advise? here's advise. Sesi!

N'wanuna wa khinsameriwa and awu dyi loko yena angase heta. Na loko oka anga vuyi anga tengisiwi n'wanuna, wo tsaka uku mi vuyil ka papa?

[Sister! You must kneel for a man and you never start eating when he isn't done with his meal. Even if he doesn't come home you don't cross question him, you just rejoice when he eventually returns and ask if daddy's back] "

She mimics our aunt, Florah with that stern tone of hers and by the time she's done I'm rolling on the bed with laughter, tears streaming down on both our cheeks while we hold on to our stomachs

" The weed she smokes is of high quality, I swear" I say when I eventually catch my breath

"Worse, the weed she smokes also smokes weed. What kind of shitty advice is that? She should be ashamed of herself" sesi Caroline says disapprovingly

"Do you really think she believes that we truly carry out her instructions? Imagine me sitting on a bamboo mat waiting for Nkosi to finish eating so I can eat too"

"As if she does it with her husband, she's misleading that one, never listen to her or you'll be crying all alone while she's living comfortably in her house"

Mom calls us out to help with the cooking so we can have lunch together before I leave, we

did the same when my sister left so it kind of feels like tradition. On my way to the kitchen I see my dad sitting on the veranda and I see it as an opportunity to approach him "I'll join you guys soon" I say to my sister then I walk outside and grab a chair to sit next to him

"Papa"

"Ntombi ya mina [My girl]" he looks at me with a smike "Are you done packing?"

"Yes, Sesi Caro helped"

"That's good"

"You're not happy" I say and he shakes his head

"Don't mistake this for unhappiness. You are happy, right?" he asks and I nod "Then I'm happy too. I'm just coming to terms with letting my youngest child go, don't worry about this, it's just old man syndrome" he chuckles

"You're not that old, papa" I says

"It's creeping up on me, soon I'll be planning my retirement"

"I think you'll be working forever, the way you love that school" I say and he smiles proudly

My dad is the principal of a high school here in Meadowlands and the love he has for this school is undeniable. Come what may, he

remains unshaken and always insists on doing right by the learners

"That's what happens when you're passionate about something. You work on it, you water and nurture it and watch it grow, you continuously trim it and keep it looking good, you make sure it stays pure and you don't hold back, you fight for it with everything you've got because it's yours, if you don't step up for it then who will?"

It feels like we are no longer talking about the school now

" I hear you" I say thoughtfully

"I know your aunts have probably said a lot but Khanyisa, I want you to always remember that

you have a home. I'm not sending you off into the wild. I'm sending you off to a man whom I expect to treat you just as you should be treated, You've seen how I am with your mother, the respect we both have for each other even in trying times. I'm not saying follow in our footsteps you guys are young and will figure your own way out but maybe learn a thing or two... And if the heat ever becomes unbearable, if you ever feel unsafe, remember that you aren't without a family, this house will always be your home, you will always have a bedroom here, whatever time of night or day it is. "

" I hear you papa, and I want you to know that I'm not becoming a stranger. Just as sesi Caroline has remained your daughter, I will also remain your daughter too" I say and he smiles

"And thanks to the both of you, I now have two sons too, what a gain!" he says looking all better now

I leave him to help with the cooking and we find ourselves having a girls chat again, the mood is lighter and everyone is joyful. My mother is making a lot of jokes and even says she's glad her car will now rest, I teasingly ask her to let me keep it and she loudly refuses, telling me that that car was a gift from her husband and I should wait for mine

Just as we set up on the table, Nkosi parks outside in his double cab. This is the second car I've seen him drive and I wonder how many he has. When he comes into view I fight my smile, the door is widely open so I see a clear view

"A whole snack" my sister whispers in my ear making me chuckle

She's not wrong.

He's wearing formal pants with a golf Tee tucked in and a belt around his waist. He looks semi-formal and I'm glad he's not adhering to the whole suit jacket thing that tradition demands, it's hot and I'm sure my dad doesn't mind.

I see him sit where I was seated earlier with my dad and they exchange greetings and converse. I keep stealing glances wondering what they are talking about, I wish I could eavesdrop.

He looks relaxed and my dad is smiling so all

should be well. When my mom sees him she goes outside to greet him then she ushers him in to where sesi Caro and I are setting up. My heart skips a beat and I immediately look down at the cutlery

"Sanibonani [Hello]" he greets and my sister greets back while I simply shoot him a smile

"Sawubona bhut' Nkosi, uya phila?" [Hello, brother Nkosi, are you well?]

"Ng'yaphila sisi, wena unjani?" [I'm well sister, and you?]

"Mina ng'right" [I'm alright] she smiles then looks at me "awu xeweti?" [Don't you greet?] she gives me a look and I finally lift my eyes to meet his,

his gaze is unwavering, I last spoke to him this morning when we spoke about him coming to get me and now it's hella awkward with everyone around

"Uright?"

"Ng'yaphila, wena?"

"Nam ng'right"

Sesi Caro can't help but laugh closed mouth
"You guys are cute" she says and I ignore her, so does Nkosi but I do see him smile a bit

"Take a seat, we will start serving soon." My sister says with a smile and he does just that. I

continue with what I'm doing and I feel his eyes on me, I'm looking down and wonder if everyone else is noticing that he's looking at me

My dad joins and they continue chatting, He's so easy going and very respectful towards both my parents plus my sister and I'm glad to see that they got off to the right start, I know I still have to have a moment like this with his family and I wouldn't say I'm worried, I'm just not sure about his sister

We start serving. My mom dishes up for my dad as always and I follow her dishing up for Nkosi and making sure he has a bowl of water and clean cloth for his hands. My sister is the last one to dish up and she sits alone on one side of the table

"It's two by two on this table, Amu should have been here" She pretends to frown but ends up smiling

"Where is he and the kids by the way?" my mom asks

"They went to a birthday party for one of his colleague's kids"

"You could have gone too, I hope you didn't drop him for me" I say suddenly feeling guilty for pulling her away from her husband and kids

"And miss the chance of seeing my svara [brother inlaw], I don't think so. We need to get used to each other, right bhut' Nkosi?"

"Of course, but there's a lot of time for that, in time we all get used to each other" he answers with a smile and the conversation goes on

When we are done eating I want to help with the dishes but my mom and sister insist that they've got it and I can leave so Nkosi loads my things at the back of his car and soon we are on our way to our new home

It's a silent drive but I don't mind because I'm exhausted from all the packing anyway and when we get there I help him offload, he insists on carrying all the heavy stuff into my temporary room

Yes, I was shy to move right in with him so I insisted that he takes the main bedroom and I'd have one of the other rooms. I truly don't mind

and he didn't protest either, we aren't in the business of pushing each other and will take this at our own pace, or my own pace because his exact words were "Anginankinga nokulala nawe ekamelweni elilodwa [I don't mind sleeping with you in one room]"

But me being me, I declined.

He orders food for later incase we get hungry even though we had a big meal at home before we left and I proceed to my room. I look at all the boxes awaiting me and I sigh, I hate packing, I'll do it later

I search for my toiletry bag and pajamas then I head over to the shower in the bedroom, it's been a long day and I need to freshen up or I'll struggle sleeping. I keep the water lukewarm,

on a normal day it would be hot water but the hot November sun burnt me out so I need the water to be cool

When I'm out I lotion up and get dressed, then I lay on the bed relaxing.

The plan was to say goodnight to Nkosi before sleeping but the drowsiness side tracked me and caught me unexpectedly so I doze off right there.

CHAPTER 3

KHANYISA

My alarm goes off, jolting me out of my sleep and a dream that I instantly forget as soon as I open my eyes.

I look around and it takes a moment to remember where I am, I remember getting on the bed with the intention of relaxing for a bit before going to bid Nkosi goodnight but with the way I was exhausted I ended up dozing off

I sit up and realise the I have a fleece blanket covering me, I didn't have this last night and I'm pretty sure I had my slippers on and the lights were on too. Now my slippers are off and so are the lights. The only explanation I can come up with is that he came and tucked me in bed, he made sure I was comfortable... That's very sweet and considerate of him

I get off the bed and neatly fold the blanket before laying it carefully on the edge of the bed then I walk in the ensuite bathroom to brush my

teeth and wash my face then I step out and rummage through my suitcase for something to wear, I really need to pack my clothes neatly and not live from a suitcase but I'll sort through that later. For now I need to find something to wear so I can walk out of this room

I find a nice floral thin straps dress and a pair of sandals that I change into, I leave the weave off, my hair isn't messy after all then I grab my cellphone and make my way out and heading to the kitchen. I know he's already up because he has to go to the office today after having taken a couple of days off work

He is the COO of his family business. They manufacture and sell cars as well as car parts. Only after going out with him for the second time did I do my research and find that he is

that Mdlalose. They aren't necessarily celebrities but their business success has put them on the map and they are well known

I asked Nkosi about it and he told me about how his father started the business from scratch, he took his time explaining how they got where they are today and that two of his siblings, Bangizwe and Liyana also work in the family company while the one that comes after him, Lwazi, is in the army and currently deployed in Mozambique. I was intrigued as to how this one decided the army was the way to go instead of joining the rest of his family but there seems to be no bad blood between them so I'm assuming they respected that it was his personal choice to make.

I get to the kitchen and start preparing Nkosi's

lunch and breakfast. I smile when I think of how this is my life now, this is what I'll be, what I am... A house wife. Not that I'm complaining, it actually gives me a lot of time to work on my books. I've already published three books and the market loves them, currently I'm working on my fourth standalone book and I now have time to focus my energy on it and take it as far as I would like to

"Good morning" Nkosi enters and I look up at him

"Good morning"

"Ulale kahle?" [Did you sleep well?]

"Ngilale kahle, wena? " [I slept well, you?]

"I slept well too"

"Thanks for tucking me in" I say and he nods

"You're welcome, I waited and waited for you to come and have supper with me, when you didn't I figured you must have fallen asleep" his eyes move over to the take outs on the counter

"Sorry about that, that was my intention but sleep got the better of me"

"Was it sleep only?" He does that thing where he focuses his full attention on me. He doesn't move but looks at me and I feel shy whenever he does this

"What else could it be, Nkosi?" My voice runs thin

"Angazi [I don't know] maybe you started having second thoughts"

"It's a little too late for that, don't you think?" I chuckle mindlessly but he keeps a straight face and walks closer to me

"It is a little too late. Getting married was only the beginning but we are in it now, we need to start making this work and avoiding each other won't work, Khanyisa."

"I wasn't avoiding you" I assure him "I'm in this and I'm not having second thoughts. Yes, it's

still a little awkward but it will wear off soon"

"Come have lunch with me today"

"At your office?"

"Yes, this will be part of us getting used to each other and you seeing the family business"

"I'd like that " I serve him his breakfast and he gets comfortable in the kitchen

"Then it's settled, you can use one of the cars in the garage and I'll send you my location"

"And when I get there I say..."

"Tell them you're my wife, nobody will give you a hassle"

"Okay"

I'm not a breakfast person so I settle for coffee while he digs in. I use this as an opportunity to subtly check him out, it's like every time I see him I'm taken aback by his looks, Nkosi is a handsome manly man and everything about him screams attraction, even the way he speaks, I could literally listen to him all day and I know that that's dangerous because then I'd be starting something he will not be able to reciprocate and that will only complicate things between us. I knew what I was signing up for and it's too early to start thinking otherwise

He soon leaves and tells me he will see me later. When he's gone I go back to bed and start thinking of things to do to keep myself busy. Of course I have the house chores but I don't have to do all of them because he has a cleaning crew that comes three times a week, he used them in his penthouse and now they will be coming here. The only thing they won't be touching is our bedrooms and the laundry. I will obviously do the dishes and cooking too but the rest of the cleaning is left to them because this house is way too big for me to clean alone.

I decide that I'm going to look for a nearby gym too and maybe see if there's a shopping center nearby, not forgetting a McCaffe, their caramel frappes are to die for.

I struggle to fall asleep again so I decide to

start packing my clothes, I know I shouldn't get comfortable in this room because I'm going to have to move out eventually but while I'm here I can't be digging in my suitcases each time I want something to wear

Packing takes up most of my morning and when I'm done I feel satisfied with the open space left where bags and boxes were cluttered

This room doesn't have a bath tub, it can only be found in the main bedroom and I desperately want to take a hot bubble bath right now. I could always use the public one in the house but the one in the main bedroom is wider and I love it, I take advantage of the fact that Nkosi isn't here and I take my toiletry bag and towel then I head over there

I gently open the door and when I enter I'm engulfed in his scent. His cologne is very much alive in this room like he's still in here. I chose the furniture for this room but being in here feels awkward, like I'm invading his personal space, like I shouldn't be in here without his knowledge

I quickly shake those thoughts off, This is my bedroom too and I'm welcome here. I proceed to the bathroom and run myself a hot bubble bath. I soak myself for a while then clean myself up then I wrap myself in my towel and walk back to my bedroom to get dressed

I'm going to his workplace so I can't just show up in a pair of jeans and sneakers, I somehow feel the need to match his dress sense so I pick out black pencil skirt and pink blouse then I take

a pair of heels with me as I walk out. I can't drive in heels so I wear my pumps, I'll change when I get there

I pass by the kitchen and swap the lunch bag for a basket instead and I place more food in there then I stare at the keys. There's keys to a coupe, convertible and an SUV. I stare at them a little longer and I go with the SUV, I love big cars

I got the location text from Nkosi then I put on my playlist and get on the road, the music helps to keep me calm and before I know it I'm parking and getting off the car

I walk in the building, It's quite busy with people walking around. At the center there's a reception table with two ladies there. I read their name tags, Janice and Ameera, then I

clear my throat and clutch onto the basket that I'm carrying

"Good afternoon" I greet and they both look at me and greet back

"I, uhm... I'm here to see Mr. Mdlalose" I say

"Which one?" Janice asks with a smile and I remember there's three of them here including the dad whose the CEO and founder

"Oh sorry, Nkosiyabo Mdlalose"

"Do you have an appointment? What's your name?" She starts checking what looks like a diary

"No, I'm Khanyisa Khosa... Uhm I mean, Mdlalose... Khanyisa Mdlalose, his wife"

This is awkward.

Their eyes go wide with shock but they try to hide it

"Newlyweds... I'm still getting used to the surname change" I say with a smile

"No problem ma'am. I'll show you to Mr. Mdlalose's office" Janice says coming around the table, If you will follow me

We get in an elevator and get off on the second

floor, there's another receptionist there

"Lindi, is Mr. N. Mdlalose in?" Janice asks

"Whose asking?" Lindi asks without sparing us a look

"His wife" Janice responds and only then Lindi looks up

"Oh... Hi there Mrs. Mdlalose" She composes herself and puts on her customer service smile

"He's still in a meeting, maybe you could wait for him out here"

"Or she could wait in his office" Janice quickly says

"You know how he feels about that, Janice"

"I don't think he will mind, Lindi" Janice grits out

"But-"

"It's fine" I cut Lindi off "I'll wait out here, it's not a big deal" I say then turn to Janice "Thank you" I smile at her

"You're more than welcome" she smiles back then turns to leave

I sit on one of the chairs laid outside and I set my basket on the other chair and busy myself with my cellphone.

I can feel Lindi's gaze on me and I'm trying hard not to look up, clearly people didn't know that Nkosi got married and she's very shocked.

"He will be done soon" She says and I briefly look up and nod then I focus on my phone again. My issue isn't about waiting out here, It's actually about sitting out here and bumping into my sister inlaw who for some reason doesn't like me and does very little to hide it

Think of the devil and she shall appear.

I spot Liyana walking with another lady and when our eyes meet hers immediately turn ice cold. It takes everything in me to keep a neutral expression

"Hi" I say when they reach me. I'm still seated and they are towering over me, the other lady has plastered her eyes shamelessly on me

"What are you doing here?" Liyana asks coldly

"I'm meeting with Nkosi"

"I'm sure he's busy right now, he's at work"

"He asked me to come, This isn't a surprise visit" I say already feeling sick of her attitude towards me

"And whose this?" the lady with my sister inlaw asks her

"This is Khanyisa... Nkosiyabo's wife" she replies with a strained voice as if this fact hurts her, and she's giving me a side eye

"Oh" The lady says and before she can continue, the boardroom door opens and Nkosi enters with a group of three men and a woman behind him

I get up when I see him and he walks to where I am just as the others scatter

"Have you been waiting for long?" he asks blatantly ignoring his sister and the lady with her

"Not that long" I say and reach for the basket

"I'll take that" He reaches for it from my hand

"Aren't you going to introduce us?" The lady asks

"I'm sure Liyana already told you that she's my wife" he answers with a blank expression

"I didn't know you were getting married..."

"I didn't announce it" he says then turns to look at Lindi "Lindiwe, next time my wife arrives here and I'm not in my office just let her through instead of making her wait out here" I can't tell if he's angry or annoyed or simply giving out an instruction but she quickly nods and gives a "Yes sir" which he doesn't wait for as he leads

me into his office. Leaving Liyana and the mystery lady standing there.

***BONUS CHAPTER AGAIN 😄

CHAPTER 4

KHANYISA

Nkosi closes the door behind me and I take slow steps to where his table is. I'm still bothered by how Liyana spoke to me, I haven't had that much interaction with her but I'm not oblivious to the fact that she does not like me. I find myself wondering if I should ask Nkosi about it but I decide against it when I remember why I came here in the first place, it isn't to dwell on Liyana.

I look around his office, he kept it simple with minimum furniture. His wooden desk at the center, his leather big boss chair with two visitors chairs. He has a brown couch on one side with a coffee table next to it. His walls are grey and completely clean, no pictures or any form of art. There's one photo frame on the side of his table. I turn it around and see that it's one of our wedding pictures, I can't help but smile

His table is kept neat with files stacked one side, his laptop in the center and a cute little hour glass on the one side

"Nice office" I say turning the frame back then I walk back to join him on the couch

"Thank you, I didn't really put much effort into it"

"I thought that maybe you just liked it like this"

"I would like to decorate the walls but I don't have the time, energy or patience for it" he says as he starts taking the food out and I sit next to him

"I can help with that, if you don't mind"

"I don't, a wife's touch is exactly what this place needs" He says and I smile then it goes quiet. I don't know what to say but at the same time I don't want this lunch to be awkward. The whole point of this is for us to be free around each other and not be scared to talk, well Nkosi has no problem with that so I must just get out of my shell

"Have you always had this office or is it a recent thing?" I really have no idea where this is going but well, we will see

"No, I got it three years ago when I got my promotion to be the company's COO"

"And you've been working here since after varsity?"

"Yes, I've never worked anywhere else, this is like a second home to me, my father built this for us and now we are working together with him to keep it standing"

"He really worked hard, that's for sure" I say and he smiles a bit

"He did, it's a good thing that he's living to see where all his hardwork and sacrifices went" he says and I nod then start eating too

The conversation starts flowing as he tells me more about this company, the way in which he speaks about it reflects a lot of passion. He's passionate about what he does and keeping his father's legacy alive, I could easily say this means everything to him

When we are done eating I pack up and get ready to leave but he insists on giving me a tour of the building, he leads me out of his office and we walk side by side as we go from floor to floor using the elevator. It's like an orientation for a newbie at work, except, I'm not coming to work here, I'm just here as a family member, as

his wife

There's a lot of greetings going around and those who somehow already know that we are married are quick to congratulate us. I take it all in and follow his lead, I wouldn't say he's cold in how he carried himself in front of the staff but they know not to try and make small talk with him, he's the serious type.

He walks tall and ever so confident so I know I can't be cowering next to him, I need to radiate the same level of confidence, just with a wider smile compared to his straight yet sincere face

We go down to the ground floor and he leads me to the next building where there's a mini show house. The cars in here are all so breathtakingly gorgeous and there's trucks

outside delivering new stock

Nkosi checks in with the staff to see if everything is still good and they confirm this to him, when he gets a bit busy I also busy myself by looking at the ones that are already offloaded, I walk a bit further from him just admiring the beauty that's in front of me

"See anything you like?" A guy says from behind

"Yes, a lot of what I like" I say still looking around, for car lovers, being in here would be such an amazing feel

"Same here" He says with a smirk "So tell me, are you a coupe kind of girl?"

"An SUV kind, there's just something about big cars"

"Like that one?" He points at a new arrival

"Exactly like that one"

"But you'd look tiny inside that beast" He says jokingly "It will literally swallow you up

"Oh come on! I'm not that tiny" I roll my eyes at him

"I'm just kidding, it would suit you perfectly" He says and I smile then look at the car he was showing me as I walk closer to it, he follows "My name is Tumelo, and who might I say the

gorgeous lady is?" he asks

"She's no one you should be trying your luck with Uma ufuna ukuqhubeka nokusebenza la [If you want to keep working here]" a deep male voice says but it's not Nkosi, I turn and find my brother inlaw, Bangizwe, starring deadly at Tumelo

"I was just showing her around " Tumelo says

"Ayikho into engcono ongayenza? Okhokhelwa yona [Don't you have anything better to do with your time? Maybe something that you actually get paid to do?]"

"I... Uhh" Tumelo nervously rubs the back of his neck

"Awuyiboni I ndandatho esandleni?"

[don't you see the ring on her finger?] Bangizwe asks aggressively and Tumelo takes a step back, I find myself feeling bad for him, Bangizwe is just as intimidating as his brother, he has me tight-lipped too

Nkosi joins us" And then?" he stands close to me and keeps his hand lightly on my back

"Tumelo was chatting up your wife" Bangizwe says and I can't believe how quick he was to tell on the poor guy

Nkosi looks at Tumelo "Is that so?"

"Boss, I didn't... I"

"Usase lah? [You're still standing here?] " Nkosi asks

"I also asked him the same question" Bangizwe says and with the two men starring deadly at him, he turns and walks away

"Careful, otherwise bazok'thathela [They will take her from you]" Bangizwe teases his brother

"uTumelo?" Nkosi asks with a 'seriously?' expression, he clearly believes that Tumelo has nothing on him and clearly Bangizwe feels the same because he starts laughing

"Maybe not him but hey..."

"Usuqalile lombhedo wakho [You've started with your nonsense] "

"Ngiyasho nje [I'm just saying] " Bangizwe continues taunting him

Nkosi ignores him and he turns his attention to me

"Sisi, it's good to see you here, this man of yours didn't tell us you'd be visiting today"
Bangizwe says looking a lot happier now

"It's good to see you too" I say to him

"Was I supposed to run it past you?" Nkosi asks

"Yes, I would have made a grand entrance for our new edition. Angithi wena uhlulekile [Because you failed], we were supposed to be called in the boardroom to meet Mrs. Mdlalose but ke, because it's you " he says jokingly

"Umkami [my wife] is not some display doll for people to ogle at"

"You mean for Tumelo to ogle" Bangizwe teases

"uyabheda ke manje, ukhuluma udoti manje" [You're speaking rubbish now]

"I'm better than you, Bringing your wife down here and leaving her to be surrounded by vultures"

"In order to be better than me you'd need to have a wife first, bafo [Brother] . We aren't even in the same league or level" Nkosi brags and Bangizwe makes an annoyed face

"Mxm, look at you. Busy shining ngoba bak'zamile [They upgraded you] . God help those of us who are yet to find wives"

"Nandi?" Nkosi asks and Bangizwe's grimaces

"Ey ungabuzi bafo [don't ask] , that's just another pandemic on it's own"

"You're calling your woman a pandemic?"

"What's that saying again? Only the pot knows how hot the fire is, " Bangizwe says and Nkosi just laughs at him

"Ake ngibuyele emsebenzini [Let me get back to work], Sisi, it was great seeing you, I hope to see you soon again" He comes for a hug then leaves

Nkosi then leads me back to his office so I can get my handbag and the basket. When I've gotten them he walks me out again and this time we bump into the lady that was with Liyana earlier, the way she looks at him tells me that they know each other naked, she wouldn't look so hurt to see him with me otherwise. I decide that I'm going to ask rather than sit with

this thought in my head so when we stop by the car I ask

"That lady that was with Liyana earlier, is she an ex?"

"Yes, she is" He answers calmly

"And you're sure she's an ex?"

"What do you mean?"

"The way she looked at you... Are you sure you're really done?" this is cringe worthy but has to be asked, I'd hate nasty surprises

" Bengingeke ngikucele ukuthi ube umkami [I

would have never asked you to be my wife] if I wasn't done with her, I can't control how she feels and it's really not my responsibility, you are" he speaks calmly

"I am" I nod

"Yebo mfazi wam, now stop worrying about her. You didn't marry a confused man"

"Alright" I try not to blush at the fact that he called me his wife and I tell myself that I won't worry unless I see a change "I'll see you at home" I get in the car

"Drive safe" He shuts the door and waits for me to drive off

Days pass and I get into the routine of waking up early and making breakfast and lunch. I meet the cleaning crew as well when they come and I busy myself with writing, I call my parents separately as they are at work and in the evening I prepare supper and wait for the husband to get home

This house wife thing doesn't appear to be bad at all, if anything , I'm happy to not be at an office or anything of that sort, within just days I've written 7 new chapters and I should be ready to publish in a few months

Nkosi's mom called and asked that we come over on Saturday, and so we have plans for for the next weekend.

On Friday morning I finally decide to hit the gym, If I'm going to stay sane then I need a bit of an outdoor experience so I signed up online days ago.

The gym is only twenty minutes away and when I get there I grab my bag and walk in. I've been to a gym before so I didn't sign up for an instructor and so I hit the tread mill first. Just as I'm taking out my ear pods a lady comes to stand next to me

"I thought it was you" She has a wide smile on her face, gorgeous blue eyes that sparkle matching her smile... and I'm just there like huh?

"Oh I'm so sorry, My name is Cheryl, your new neighbor" She says happily

"Neighbor..."

She chuckles at my confusion "Nick always says I'm too forward and now I see it. I actually wanted to come greet you and your husband but he stopped me saying it would be creepy and that the two of you wouldn't appreciate a stranger just rocking up at your door step" she rolls her eyes dismissing what her husband told her

"Oh... Neighbor" I chuckle too " Sorry, I just got confused for a moment, I haven't seen you before "

"I thought so, I was hoping we would bump into each other soon though, I hope I'm not coming

on too strong, I'm always eager to make new freinds" she says and I'm still trying to wrap my head around this conversation

"It's okay, thank you for approaching me. I'm the shy kind" I say and she keeps her smile on

"I'm just glad you don't think I'm weird"

I kind of do.

"Not at all" I try to smile "I'm Khanyisa"

"Lovely to finally meet you Khanyisa, Well, let me not disturb you, neighbor" She smiles and gets on the mill next to mine

We both listen to our own music as we work out and somehow we move to the sets at the same time and this is how we end up talking. Besides Cheryl being upfront and in my face, she actually appears to be a nice person and I learn that she and her husband stay just two houses from us, that's how she knows we are new and it gets a lot less creepy as she explains that she just happened to be outside when we were moving in

When we are done we both get ready to leave

"Are you headed for the showers?" Cheryl asks

"No, I'll shower at home... I'm not fond of public showers"

"I thought I was the only one, privacy is everything to me" She sighs

"I feel you, plus I prefer a hot bath. You headed home?"

"Yeap..." I see she wants to ask but is scared to come across as creepy again so I put her out of her misery

"We should exchange numbers... And maybe hang out sometimes?"

"I'd love that!" Her eyes go wide and she hands me her phone and I dial my number and call her so I can have hers too

"It was great meeting you, Cheryl. I'll see you around"

"Oh you definitely will, I don't exactly have friends in our neighborhood" she says shyly and I wonder how such a bubbly person like her doesn't have a friend

I drive home and rush to Nkosi's bedroom so I can run myself a hot bubble bath. I'm not expecting him to come home until later so I feel okay stripping my sticky and sweaty clothes on the bathroom floor and stepping inside the tub

I lay back and close my eyes as I feel my body start to relax.

When the water starts getting old I refill it with

hot water and then I bath. When I'm done I get out, make sure the tub is clean and wrap myself on a fresh clean towel then I prepare to walk out

When I open my door I'm met with horror.

He's back.

Without thinking, I shut the door too loudly, he obviously knows I'm in here now

"Khanyisa?" he calls out from the other side of the door and I don't respond "Haibo, Makhosa?" he calls out again and this time he's closer to the door

"Hmm?"

"Kwenzenjani?" [What's wrong?]

"Lutho" [Nothing] I lie

"Lutho?" he asks and sounds like he's trying not to laugh "Khanyisa, angilumi" [I don't bite]

"I know that, Nkosi." I answer feeling so embarrassed.

Am I really hiding from my own husband? I could have totally played this cool and walked out without giving a care but I went and created this situation, this very embarrassing situation... How do I undo it?

" Phuma ke [Come out then], unless if you are planning on sleeping in there"

I roll my eyes at him knowing he's right. Why do I even feel like I was caught doing something wrong?

I open the door and step out with while holding my clothes tightly against my chest, he's standing right there, looking at me wrapped in nothing but a towel

"What will it take for it to sink in that we are husband and wife?" He asks all serious

"I know we are" I mumble

"Oh, is that why you ran from me?" he steps closer but I stay rooted in one place. My feet won't move and he looks so damn hot when he's all serious

"I wasn't -" I'm about to lie when he digs his gaze deeper onto my eyes, daring me to finish my lie

"Two things... Don't ever lie, no matter how small the lie might seem. And stop running from me"

I swallow hard then I nod.

Nkosi takes another step and he towers over me then he slowly speaks "This is your house, your bedroom, your bathtub and your husband.

All yours. Stop running from it and embrace it"
he says so close to my ear he has me pressing
my thighs so hard

"Uyangizwa?" [You hear me?]

"Yes" I manage to say and do my walk of shame
while I feel his eyes on me until I shut his door

Way to go, Khanyisa!! Bravo!

I get to my room and shut the door then lean
against it then take a deep breath. I really
embarrassed myself out there and I still have to
face him for supper.

I can't hide that I'm attracted to him, nor should

I be hiding that fact. I don't even know why I'm delaying the inevitable, why I'm not sleeping next to him every night or giving myself to him like I should be... Like I want to.

I've never done this before... I've never been that intimate with a man before. I thought my last boyfriend would be my first, I waited for this right moment and he was patient with me, or at least I thought he was, but we never got there and now here I am, a married virgin who hid from her husband in their bathroom.

Yho , Khanyisa!

CHAPTER 5

KHANYISA

The week progresses and the bathroom mess is forgotten or rather swept under the rug, whichever one it is, I'm glad he didn't bring it up again because I'm very sure I'd die of embarrassment if he does bring it up.

This also means I've been depriving myself of the bathtub, showers have been the way to go and although I miss being soaked up in the spacious bathtub, I'm not ready for another run in with Nkosi.

On Friday morning I wake up, make my bed and go to my bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. My hair is starting to get messy and I don't want to show up like this tomorrow at my inlaws house so I need to find a salon. I decide that I'll ask Cheryl, surely she knows her way around here, I suddenly feel grateful that she

came over and introduced herself.

I put on my leggings and a shirt that goes just over my bums then I wear my slippers and head over to the kitchen, before I get there I pass Nkosi's room. The door is open and there's shuffling, I stand there deciding on whether to pass and go get started with breakfast or ask if he's okay.

A normal wife would check if he's okay.

I push the door further open and he's standing near his drawers, he just finished bathing, I can tell because he only has a towel on him, he's definitely running late.

"You overslept?" I ask walking in the room and

he turns to look at me

"Yeah, I don't know how that happened"

"You must have been exhausted" I move to his closet and decide I'll pick out his suit for him so I start looking at the well placed suits, I pick out a three piece navy suit and a white shirt and when I turn to give them to him, his in his boxers only giving me the perfect view of all his glory, if I could just feel those abs and biceps..
Mmh-

"Thank you" He says and I snap out of it

"Yeah... You're welcome" I give him the clothes and try not to cower with how he's looking at me

I decide to pick out a tie too and then his shoes and socks just so as to keep myself and my eyes busy busy while matching his outfit for the day

When he's all done he stands up straight and I look at him, He looks good, I did great. I can't help but smile at my choice

"Yisho phela, ngimuhle" [Say it, I'm handsome] he praises himself

"umuhle Nyanda" I compliment him and for the first time ever, he smiles shyly

"Ngiyabonga [thank you]"

"You're welcome, we should make this a thing" I say checking him out once again

"It is now" he chuckles

"You'll find me in the kitchen" I turn to leave but he stops me

" No, leave it. I'll get something at work."

"Alright"

He reaches for his car keys and briefcase "What does your day look like?"

"Nothing much, some writing and the Salon"

"Lunch maybe?"

"I could do that, I'll let you know when I'm on my way" I tell him

"Okay, see you later" He says then walks out and I get started with my day

I wait for 8 o'clock in the morning and then I text Cheryl

"Need a hairdo, you know a place?"

"I know just the place, meet outside my house in one hour?"

"Sure, but I'll take my own car. Meeting with hubby later"

"Cool, see you soon!"

I put my phone away and start with my day. I make coffee then start with my cleaning, I start with my own bedroom then I move over to Nkosi's. We are both neat so there's not much cleaning to do and the music helps with me getting done in such little time.

NKOSIYABO

I'm all smiles as I enter the building. What started out as a rushed morning ended up as something I'd call progress.

I'm not proud to say it, but I tricked my wife.

I did not wake up late.

I never wake up late, Sometimes I'm up before my alarm even goes off but today I had an idea

Khanyisa is still closed off and she's set these unnecessary boundaries for herself in her own house. I wasn't expecting this to be easy I mean we are two strangers who jumped a lot of stages to be married and now we live together, It's a huge adjustment for both of us but it seems to be weighing more on her side, I like that she's reserved and all but I want her to be free, I need her to be comfortable and I need us to get through this period of our lives where we

still have to tiptoe around each other

So instead of lecturing her like I did with the bathtub thing I decided I would just create scenes and see if she won't come to the party, which she did, full force and man she didn't disappoint.

Like someone who's used to picking out my clothes she went in the closet and not once did she ask what I'd want or what I think, she trusted her decision and left it up to me to decide whether I go with it or not and now I'm here grinning like an idiot because of this suit that I've worn quite a few times but today it feels like I'm wearing it for the first time, it fits the same but different. It feels more special today and yes if I was that guy I'd tell everyone that my wife picked it out for me, but I'm not

that guy, my private life is exactly that, private. Only my family will have access to Khanyisa, to a certain extent even, otherwise, she's off limits to everyone who has no connection to her.

I get in the elevator with my serious face back on and there's a few people in there, including Refilwe.

"Morning" I say and they all respond then I get a spot to stand and mind my business until it dings indicating that we've come to a stop. I get off and feel her following behind me. I have never liked creating a spectacle and I'm not about to start right now so I continue walking

"Good morning, sir" Lindiwe greets me and I respond with a nod just as I step in my office

Refilwe shuts the door and leans quietly against it. This is one of the things I disliked during the course of our relationship, Her having a problem and expecting me to guess what it is instead of being adult enough to say it.

"Do you need something?" I ask while sitting on my chair

"I thought we could talk" She walks to where I am and stands between the two chairs placed opposite me, she folds her arms and gives me a sad look and I just know it's not going to be a good chat and it has absolutely nothing to do with work "Nkosi, when were you going to tell me that you're married?"

"I wasn't aware that I needed to tell you" I say and she flinches like I just insulted her, but I just spoke the truth.

"I'm not saying you were obliged to, but just as a courtesy"

"Courtesy? Ngobani? [Why?]"

"Because we were together and we still work together, imagine how I felt when Liyana introduced her as your wife..."

"Uyangidida manje Refilwe [You're confusing me now], so because we have a past means I need to tell you about my personal life? Do you see me asking about yours?"

"No-"

"So why are you here pestering me about things that have nothing to do with you, We both get to live our lives as we desire, isn't that the whole point of a break up? The same break up that you asked for?"

"I didn't think you'd give in that easily, I didn't think you'd just let me go, I thought I meant something to you"

"And I told you that I couldn't be what you wanted from a man, Why are we still here because we both agreed to cut ties"

"We are here because you're married! You married someone else!" she yells bit when she

catches my eye she lowers her voice "I'm sorry-"

I get up and walk closer to her "lalela ke sisi [listen here, sister] You will not come to my office and raise your voice at me like that, ever, you know better than to do that with me. We are not kids, you wanted to be let go, I let you go. What did you want me to do? Force you to be with me? Force the relationship? Force my expectations on you? Is that what you wanted Refilwe? To be forced? "

" I wanted you to fight for me, to show me that you do care, that you do want to be with me"

"I told you from the beginning that I'm not one for games, I'm clear about what I want and I asked you to be clear too but what did you do? You played these games of yours and I had no

time for them. I still don't"

"So that's it? You're just married to someone you don't know? What is it? Is she the little obedient wife that always nods her head and says yebo baba without any questions? Is that why she was good enough and I wasn't?"

"I won't discuss my wife with you and If you think I'm that much of a bad husband then what are you doing here? Shouldn't you say you dodged a bulled and it landed on another woman?"

"I just need to know one thing"

"What is it?"

"Did you ever even love me?" she whispers the question and I can see the flood gates of her eyes getting ready to open up

"I told you I don't do love, I was honest from the very beginning and at no point did I mislead you into thinking I was something that I'm not"

I answer and she nods trying to blink her tears away but it's a little too late. I would be a gentleman and offer her a handkerchief but I need to draw boundaries here, I'm not trying to start an unnecessary thing and it is not my place to comfort her, the last thing I need is her feeling like we can have more of these conversations

"And she knows that? She knows that she's married to a man who will do just about

anything for her but will never open up to her, she knows that she will never get that kind of affection?"

"You're trying to discuss my wife again. I've already told you not to cross that line"

"Okay" she says while nodding "I'm sorry I bothered you, it won't happen again."

"Good, It shouldn't." I say and she walks out, closing the door behind her.

CHAPTER 6

KHANYISA

As agreed I meet Cheryl outside her house and

she leads the way to the salon. While driving behind her, my sister calls

"Mhani Mdlalose, minjhani?" [Mrs. Mdlalose, how are you? "

"Hi pfukile, minjhani"[I'm well and you?] I smile, only she calls me Mhani Mdlalose and she does it teasingly

"Na hina hi pfukile, tiri yini?" [I'm also good, what's up?] "

" Ah, ati rhasi [Nothing much] I'm just headed to the salon right now, I've got a thing with Nkosi's family tomorrow"

"You mean your family" She rectifies me sternly and I roll my eyes taking advantage of the fact that she can't see me

"Yes, my family"

"You don't sound happy about it" she says and I look for a way to downplay it

"I'm just nervous, that's all"

What I mean to say is, I'm nervous about Liyana.

"That's why this is necessary, for you guys to get used to each other"

"I know, what have you been up to?" I change

the topic

"Nothing much, just work, Amu and the kids. You know, my life is pretty much plain at the moment and I so wish I could spice it up"

"You must plan something for you and boti Amu, a couples weekend away, I could always look after the kids"

"Nkosi wouldn't mind?"

"I doubt it, just let me know when"

"Alright sesi, I will. Let me get back to you, there's a call coming though"

"Sharp [bye]"

We arrive and I follow Cheryl in the salon. It's not so packed and we are attended as soon as we enter. Cheryl is here for her nails and I get someone to do my hair, I want to wash it and braid a simple hairstyle that allows me to wear my weaves, I love weaves so much that I have a collection of them. Between them, shoes and handbags, I can't seem to decide where my obsession lies the most

Cheryl and I aren't so far from each other so we keep the conversation going

"Nick's mother is coming this Saturday. I'm going to need to stock up on my liquor" she says dreadfully. In the few days that I've known her, I've learned just how much her mother

inlaw despises her, she tries to hide it but I see how much it hurts her, what hurts more is that there's nothing she can do. The woman is her husband's mother, she has no choice but to stick it out

"Maybe it won't be that bad"

"You think?" She says making a face "That woman wishes she could make me disappear, I'm telling you, she's going to make my life a living hell for the duration of her stay"

"I'm sorry, I wish she would see how much of a strain she's putting on you"

"I wish so too, But I believe she does and just doesn't care, I can't with that woman, nothing I

do is ever good enough" she frowns

"If it's any consolation, I won't have it easy this Saturday too."

"Liyana?"

"You know it, she's coming too and I'm not looking forward to seeing her" I mumble

"What's her deal anyway? Did she want to marry her own brother?"

"Girl, the day I find out, you'll be the first to know. Now I just need something strong to get me through the evening"

"I have an idea! Let's get stoned and turn this weekend into a complete shit show" She says and we both laugh out loud

"I'm not prepared to come face to face with Nkosi's wrath, I'll pass"

Imagine.

"You might come back to the news of Nick and I getting a divorce. I can't, I really can't and one of these days I'm going to let my tongue loose"
She shakes her head

"Don't give that old hag the satisfaction, show her whose the woman of the house, she's just a visitor there."

"Hey, I like that" she smiles at what I just said

"Only if you stand up to princess

whatsername"

I chuckle at this, mostly because I'm imagining what Liyana would say if she heard us

"I will try"

"Don't try, just do"

"Okay, let's do" I say

"Deal"

I end up getting my nails done too, then we both get pedicures done, it's the perfect salon date at

around 2 in the afternoon I call Nkosi that I'm on my way and I pass by a restaurant for take aways before making my way to his workplace

When I get there I see Janice only and we exchange greetings before I go up to see Nkosi, This time Lindi tells me his in and she smiles politely

I knock once and enter

"Ngangicabanga ukuthi ngizobulawa indlala" [I thought I was gonna die of hunger] he complains and I smile shaking my head at him

"It's not even that late"

"If I had breakfast then yes, letha phela [bring it]"

I pass him his take away and he thanks me then I get comfortable on the chair

" You're going to have to pack for the weekend, it looks like we will be there until sunday evening and we are leaving this evening instead of tomorrow"

"Huh?"

"I know, it's Ma's idea. She wants to get to know her new daughter"

I go quiet feeling nervous all over again "I can

cancel if you aren't comfortable yet" he adds

"No, don't." I say

"You sure?"

"Yes, this is a step in a right direction. Right?"

"It is" he agrees

"Then we will go for the weekend, no problem" I purse my lips and decide not to overthink it, these are all firsts, the moment they become a norm then the nerves will go away.

I don't stay for long because I now need to pack for the weekend and he has a meeting. He

accompanies me to the car and I have this urge to hug him but I don't, Instead I smile and say goodbye

The second I get home I start packing. I start with his bag, no suits needed because he won't be at work then I go to mine, I also discover that this man has no sleepwear, none at all. If I was going to my parents house I'd be taking baggy tee's and leggings or shorts but I'm not going to my parents house... Dresses will have to do. I don't have a lot of maxi dresses but the dresses I have are still okay, besides, I don't want to create an image I cannot maintain, I'm not a maxi long sleeve dress and headwrap kind of wife, and I don't want then to think I am, but I still can't rock shorts.

I finish up packing and make sure I have my

charger and powerbank fully charged too then I wait for Nkosi to get back. We don't waste time when he arrives, he gets our bags and drives us to Hyde Park

I know this is a well off family but I'm taken by surprise each time, like when we park outside the house, it's quite a big house

Nkosi gets the door for me and I follow behind him nervous and all, I wish I could reach for his hand but he has made no attempt to get physical with me at all so I keep my hand to myself

He doesn't knock when he reaches the door, he simply opens and leads me inside and his mother rushes to us

"Finally! Kade sinilindile! [we've been waiting for you] she first hugs him then comes to me"
Waze wamuhle [You're so beautiful]

She holds onto my arms before pulling me in for a tight hug and a kiss on the cheek

"Ngyabonga ma [Thank you]" I reciprocate her warm welcome

"Nkosi don't just stand there, Thatha izikhwama uye ekamelweni, uzosithola esitting room [Take the bags into the bedroom, you'll find us in the sitting room]" she instructs and he does as his told

"Woza ngane yami [Come my child] She

reached for my hand and leads me further into the house

When we get to the sitting room, Bab'Mdlalose is watching the news but he turns the volume down when he sees us

Nkosi's mom sits next to me and his dad looks at me "sawubona makoti [hello daughter inlaw]

" Sawubona baba" [hello dad]

"Are you well?" he asks

"I'm well thanks and you?"

"I'm also well, I'm just happy to see you, we've

been looking forward to this visit so we can find out if Nkosiyabo is doing right as a husband "

"Ngoba vhele aningithembi [because you guys don't trust me]" Nkosi says joining us and he sits next to me

"You can never be too sure" His father teases just as Bangizwe joins us

We also exchange greetings and the two brothers take digs at each other making the rest of us laugh. The house is buzzing with laughter and my worries have long gone out the window

Nkosi's mom and I excuse ourself to go to the kitchen and she tells me she was about to dish up

"How's it going with you guys?" She asks as soon as we are alone

"It's going good, ma" I say and she looks at me, and I mean carefully looks at me

"What?"

"I was once in your shoes, you can be honest with me" She says

"You were?" I can't hide my surprised look

"Yes, The same way Nkosi asked you to marry him is the sane way his father asked me to marry him 35 years ago. I would have never

guessed that any of my boys would ever follow on their father's footsteps, but if it was ever going to be one between the three, it was always going to be Nkosi"

"Why do you say that?"

"Of our three boys, uNkosiyabo is the one whose taken most of his father's traits. When I look at him I see a lot of his father when he was at that age"

"I'm hoping that's a good thing" I chuckle and she smacks me lightly

"You're in safe hands"

"Rich ones too" Liyana says joining us

We both look at her as she enters and she has her eyes on me, she looks disgusted

"Lili my girl, I was starting to think you forgot about this weekend"

"I was still busy at the office" She says going in for a hug then she looks at me again

"Already feeling at home, I see"

"I'm just helping ma" I say

"Help her with the water" Her mother instructs and she gets a jug of warm water while I take

the bowl and dry cloth so they can wash their hands. I first stop by my father-in-law "Joys of having a daughter-in-law" He says with a smile before I move on to Nkosi who thanks me and I shoot him a quick

"You're welcome" then we end with Bangizwe

Just as we go back to the kitchen, their mom is now holding her own plate after serving the other. I get to the kitchen wanting to dish for myself and leave but Liyana has other ideas

"What did you do? she asks

"Huh? "

"What was it for you? Money? It's always the money" she lets out a dry laugh

"I'm not doing this" I mutter to myself and reach for a plate

"I asked you a question"

"And I'm choosing to not answer you" I say back

"So she has a mouth" Liyana says and claps once "I figured you're one of those wives who don't dare answer their inlaws in fear of upsetting their husband"

"You thought wrong, I do have a mouth. I'm just choosing to not engage in whatever it is you're trying to start with me" I say and it takes her by surprise, she wasn't expecting me to talk back

"What do you want from my brother? Khanyisa, and don't bullshit me with love because we both know that's not it"

"A husband" I say simply

"What?"

"A husband, Liyana. I want a husband from Nkosi and he wants a wife, Now we both have what we want"

"Except you stand to gain a lot, You don't ever have to work a day in your life, you're a rich house wife now, are you really that much of a gold digger?"

"Liyana!" We are interrupted by their mother
"wenzani [What are you doing?]

" I'm just asking questions that no one else sees the need to, uBhut'Nkosi is single one day and the next he's getting married. Something isn't right here ma"

"Do you think your brother will appreciate you questioning his wife like this?"

"We need to know-"

"You don't need to know anything! I married your father the same way Khanyisa married your brother. Are you going to brand me a gold digger too?" Mrs. Mdlalose asks and she

sounds hurt, Liyana immediately casts her eyes to the floor

"Ma..."

"No, I've always warned you about this judgmental attitude of yours and now you've taken it too far. You might not understand the way in which your brother chooses to live his life but you don't get to judge him or his wife, show some respect,"

"Ngiyakuzwa ma [I hear you]"

"Apologise" her mother demands and Liyana's eyes go wide

"What?"

"You disrespected her, the least you can do is show a sign of manners or even remorse, I raised you better than this"

"Sorry" she mumbles hardly looking at me then storms out

"Ngane yami [My child], don't take it to heart, people are quick to judge what they don't understand"

I can't bring myself to say anything so I just nod.

I join the others and Liyana there acting like nothing happened in the kitchen. My mood is

already ruined but I try not to show it so as to not attract any questions and as soon as everyone retires to bed I do the same

That's when I remember that I have to share a bed with Nkosi.

I let him lead me to the room and when we are in he starts stripping down until he's left in boxers then he fixes the covers and gets on one side of the bed

I, on the other hand take my time, I slowly change into my pajama shorts and top. I even sit on the chair next to the dresser pretending to be fixing my weave until I hear Nkosi shuffling from behind

"MaKhosa" He calls out lowly

"Hmm?" I respond still with my back against him

"Woza embhedheni [Come to bed]" he's not asking and sounds very serious

"Ngiyeza" [I'm coming]

"Manje [Now] , Khanyisa"

I'm glad he can't see my face because I'm trying to not laugh at my ridiculousness right now.

I get up and walk to the other side of the bed and I get under the covers with him looking at

me, the lamb lights are still on making his gaze on me even more clearer

I leave a bit of space, feeling nervous. Not the kind that stems from fearing that he might harm me, But the silly girl in me that's been shying away from moving into my bedroom

"Sondela" [Come closer] he commands again and I don't protest

I move closer to him and he puts his arm around me pulling me closer to his chest then he leaves it there, my lips are so close to his bare chest and I have this desire to plant a kiss there but I settle for just grazing

"Are you comfortable?" He asks

"mmh" I hum in response

"Good, Manje tshela mina ke mkami [Now tell me, my wife] what ruined your mood earlier?"

CHAPTER 8

KHANYISA

Weeks pass and in the blink of an eye we are in mid December. It's quater to Christmas and it's raining closing functions and Christmas parties. Malls have already put up their trees and decorations and it's always packed in there, the season for choice assorted buscuits and custard is officially upon us, as my fellow Southies would say ke dezemba boss! [It's December]

Normally, during this time of the year I'm either planning to go to Limpopo with my parents or I'm helping sesi Caroline prepare a Christmas lunch at her house but this year I'm the host and it's quite exciting. The thought of having both our families present with us on our first Christmas together is truly heart-warming. He has however mentioned that he isn't sure if Lwazi will make it back home for the festives but we are hoping he will come home. I've only spoken to him on the phone and he sounded freindly so yeah, maybe we will get along just fine

I've been busy wrapping up my upcoming book and I feel confident about publishing it early next year, If I have my way, it will be on the shelves in the first week of February. It will be kind of a new years gift to myself.

I'm a self publisher but I outsource things like book covers and editing. If I stay focused I should be able to send in my book for editing in January, meanwhile I've already asked my book cover designer to start working on something, we normally schedule a photoshoot with his models and so I need to make time to meet with the people who will represent my main leads, this might look like an easy task but it's not. I feel that the people on the cover that represents my story should really connect with those characters, I don't have a best way to explain it but that's just how it is. This is all too exciting to me and my readers are patiently waiting too, they can't wait to see what I cooked up this time and I have a feeling they are going to love it.

I enjoy writing about love, I mean who doesn't

love a good love story?

Things have gotten pretty good between Nkosi and I, except the man enjoys teasing me. He realised that I can't keep my eyes off his chest and what does he do? He walks around the house shirtless. I'd say he doesn't know what he's doing but the glint in his eyes gave him away but if I'm being honest, the shirt off thing is just an added bonus. He looks sexy with and without clothes.

He steps out of the bathroom in boxers then he looks at the clothes laid out on one side of the bed

"Jeans?"

"Jeans." I bite my lower lip trying not to laugh at the look on his face

"Njani?" [How?] he has his eyebrow raised now

"kahle" [Perfectly so] I manage to swallow the laughter but the smile remains

"MaKhosa" He says looking at the pair of denims on the bed "I'm going to a staff function"

"You're going to a Christmas party slash closing function. You must look the part or you'll ruin the mood"

"My suits ruin the mood?" he has a smile

playing on his lips as he asks this

"That's not what I'm saying"

"What are you saying then?" He asks teasingly

"I'm saying a bit of casual dressing is what you need for these type of functions. You guys will be outdoors, do you really want to be that odd guy in a suit?"

"So my suits are a problem?" He asks and I see him fight off a smile again, he's being unnecessarily stubborn and he knows it

"I love your formal look, you look extremely handsome and very, very sexy in it but not today,

today we go with jeans"

"Very sexy?" He asks with a smirk and I look away trying to hide my blushing state

This is what I've been having to deal with for the past few weeks. I find myself saying suggestive things and he repeats them, wanting me to say them again or own up to them and each time I feel myself shy away but lord, I feel the bits of strings holding together tear up each time he looks at me the way that he is right now.

He looks at me intently and I lean more on my hands that are stretched behind me on the bed then I press my thighs together when I feel the heat rising on my lower region. His eyes move to my pressed thighs then up my face again where our eyes meet

"Kwenzenjani? wangibuka ngathi uyangihalela?"
[What's wrong? You're looking at me like you're
craving me?] he asks and my eyes go wide

Trust Nkosi to say something like this.

"Khuluma phela, uyangifuna? " [Speak, do you
want me?] he asks and I let out and cracky
chuckle, does he have to be this blunt?

If blushing doesn't kill me today...

I'm sitting on the edge of the bed and he comes
to stand in front of me, he uses his knee to part
my legs and keeps his leg between my parted
ones to prevent me from shutting them, he
leans in causing me to lean back further until

laying on my back and his hovering over me but he supports his weight with one arm while his free hand carresses my skin, he rests his forehead on mine and our eyes stay locked on each other

"Uthini MaKhosa?" [What are you saying?] are we finally consummating our marriage? " he asks lowly with a full smirk on his lips and I run my tongue on my lower lip, I've lost my ability to form a simple sentence.

I part my lips to say something but when his eyes drop to them I'm at a loss for words again. When he presses his lips against mine, my eyes involuntarily close and I put my hand on his arm. He waits a moment before he starts moving his lips and then I let his tongue invade my mouth, Not even our wedding kiss felt this good. I let

out a small moan and he holds on to me tightly while kissing me hard

The feel of him being this close to him, and doing what we are doing now is more than enough to get me all hot and bothered and judging my his member that keeps poking my belly I know he's feeling it too

His hand travels from my thighs to the middle of my legs and even though his touching me from the leggings that I'm wearing, it feels so good, when he starts rubbing his fingers against me I can't stop the moans that escape my lips

I pull back when I'm out of breath and I'm breathing out of my mouth "You'll be late" I tell him but he doesn't move

"Ucabanga ukuthi ngisafuna ukuhamba?" [Do you think I still want to go?] He asks with an amused expression making me laugh

"kumele..." [You have to...] I tell him and he groans because he knows I'm telling the truth, He can't just decide to not show up

"Okay" he puts his hand between my legs again
"Uzonginika uma ngibuya" [Will you give me when I come back?] he's all serious as he asks this

"Nkosi-" I smile and look away again

"Ngiphendule phela, uzonginika?" [Answer me, will you give me?]

I nod but he waits for me to say it in word
"ngizokunika Nyanda" [I'll give you]

His lips break into a full grin and he leans in to
kiss me again before getting up to get dressed

When he's all done he grabs his car keys and
tells me he will see me in a couple of hours, he
has said this countless times but now it feels
like it's a date

I lay on the bed a while longer still thinking
about that hot kiss, I can still feel his lips on
mine... I can still feel his hand on me and the
desire in his eyes when he looked at me. The
way in which I needed him that close, I still feel
it all and I just need a moment to collect myself

before I lose my mind

When I'm all good I get started with my chores. I need to take his suits to the dry cleaners so I get ready to leave. I leave my leggings and baggy shirt on then I put on my sneakers to complete the laid back look before heading out

I get to the dry cleaners and drop them off then I pass by McDonald's for a caramel frappe before heading home and straight to the bedroom so I can get a bit of writing done before I have to start cooking

I start with a new chapter but I struggle to get passed the second paragraph, that's because my mind is occupied. I'm too busy thinking about tonight. I'm very inexperienced, My readers don't know this because I write the

most steamy sex scenes, thanks to sister google, but in real life I've never done any of those things, I've never felt any of those things I write about and now I'm nervous...

What if I mess up?

I don't exactly know what I'd would have had to have done in order for the night to qualify as a mess up but I totally do not wish to embarrass myself in front of Nkosi, I still have the rest of my life to live with this man and if this night goes horribly wrong it will forever live rent free in my head.

Okay, now I'm just overthinking. I've researched about this, I've written about it, surely I can put my words in to action now...

When I realise that I'm now being ridiculous I shut my laptop and go to the kitchen to find something to snack on. There goes my productivity for the day.

CHAPTER 7

KHANYISA

"I'm waiting"

He has his chin above my head and I've rested one hand on his chest, I can feel his heartbeat. I also love the feel of his skin, so much that I almost forgot what he asked me

"It's nothing serious" I say

"But it got you upset. You were with Liyana and Ma. It definitely couldn't have been Ma, so I'm going to go with Liyana, what did she do to you?"

"Nkosi-"

"Ngikubuze umbuzo MaKhosa, ngicela ungiphendule" [I asked you a question, please answer me] His voice is so calm but the authority that comes with it makes it clear that he is not going to repeat himself

"She just said some things" I sigh

"What things?"

"She thinks I'm with you for your money. I guess it doesn't make sense to her why you'd marry me in such a short space of time"

I explain my encounter with his sister and that his mom helped calm the situation but he's already tense and worked up, I have this feeling that if we weren't already in bed he would be going to confront her right now. This is something I wanted to avoid. We are here to relax with the family and for me to get used to them, to build a bond with them too, the last thing I want is a fallout with me in the middle of it all

"I'm going to have to talk to her" He says when I'm done telling him

"You don't have to, Ma already called her to order"

"You're not Ma's wife, Khanyisa. I'll speak to her and make sure she understands that she can't just attack you like that, my life choices have absolutely nothing to do with her and she has no place disrespecting you the way that she did, she should know better" he mutters the last part

"I don't want things to get tense, Nkosi. This is supposed to be a good weekend without any bad scenes"

"I know, I don't cause scenes, I simply set the record straight and I need to stop this kind of behavior before she gets too comfortable with it. Liyana knows just how much respect means

in this house" he says calmly and I know there's no way I can convince him not to say anything

"Just don't fight with her"

"I won't, I promise" He says and kisses the top of my head. This is the second time Nkosi kisses me, the first being on our wedding day,

I relax in his arms and yawn when sleep starts wanting to over take me

"Get some rest, and don't worry about what other people think of you. At the end of the day you are now the main reason that I get up and go to work, don't let anyone make you feel guilty for something that is rightfully yours, okay?"

"Okay" I say quietly

"Goodnight" he kisses my forehead again, this moment right here feels intimate and I can't help but bask in it. I know I shouldn't get comfortable with it because Nkosi promised me everything except love, so I cannot afford to let these feelings grow because it will hurt like hell when he doesn't reciprocate them.

But how am I supposed to shut them down when he's being so good and protective of me?

I'm the first to wake up and even though he moved his arm away from me sometime in the night, he's still laying close to me, his bare chest and eight pack is on full display and I watch his

chest rise and fall as he peacefully sleeps, even in his sleep, he looks so handsome, and bossy.

I move off the bed as quietly and calmly as I can so as to not wake him up and I go over to the bathroom to freshen up and change from these shorts and top into a dress so I can go outside

I put on my sandals and weave then I tie a doek to pull back the hair back then I reach for my phone and walk out

I check my messages while heading tp the kitchen and there's one from Cheryl

"Send help!" she added a frowning emoji

"You still breathing?" I respond and she texts back immediately

"This witch is driving me insane. Do you think orange will look good on me?" I can't help but laugh at this

"Absolutely not! Stay calm and criminal record free" I add a laughing emoji and she responds with red faces

I find Nkosi's mom in the kitchen and she smiles widely when she sees me "An early riser like myself" she happily says and I smile

"How are you, Ma?"

"I'm good sisi, wena [You?]"

"I'm also good"

"There's a hot pot of coffee if you want, we can start with breakfast later, the people in this house tend to sleep in on Saturdays and Sundays"

She shows me where the mugs are and I feel her watching me as I move around her kitchen, it kind of makes me self conscious so I glance up at her with a shy smile

"About what Liyana said..." She starts then purses her lips

"It's okay, I didn't take it to heart" I assure her

" Good, because I don't want you to stop coming here, I want to have a good relationship with you Khanyisa and I hope that Liyana will get her act together so you can get along too" she says and I really don't see that happening, Liyana doesn't like me and I'm not going to force anything with her. At this point I'm even thinking it's best if we just stay out of each other's way but of course I won't say that to my mother in law

I sit next to her and sip on my coffee

" Are you and Nkosi settled in your house now?" She asks and I nod

"I am, I'm getting the hang of it"

"I know what you mean. Just give it time and uzobona [You'll see] Everything will just start falling into place as it should"

"Last night, you said this is how you got married too?" I ask

"Yes, oh you should have seen me then, I think you're handling this a lot better than me" She laughs and looks ahead like she's thinking of a memory

"Tell me about it" I says and she sits up excitedly

"You're in your mid twenties now, right?" she asks

"Twenty-five"

"So you guys have a eight year gap. I was twenty-one and we have a good ten year gap. I had just returned home from a teaching college when I bumped into this ever so handsome and charming man at a local store. He eyed me one time then walked to me to greet me by saying 'Sawubona mfaz' wam'[hello my wife]

I looked at him like he was crazy but of course, his gaze made me look down and start drawing senseless things on the floor like a silly little girl. He tried to converse with me but I was too shy to hold a conversation with him and when we parted I figured that was it, I wasn't going to

bump into him again"

She's all smiles as she explains this.

"And then what happened?"

"We bumped into each other a few more times. I think he orchestrated the whole thing each time, the one time we met he had actually asked me to meet with him as a date. I thought he was going to ask to be my boyfriend, but he had more plans than being a boyfriend. He asked me to be his wife, I couldn't believe it, we hardly knew each other but he was so certain that I was the one and somehow I felt it too, I hardly knew the man but I wanted to give in"

I'm reminded of that night I sat with Nkosi at a

restaurant and he asked me the same thing. I fully understand what she's saying, I hardly knew him but it felt right, it feels right.

"Then I moved into the Mdlalose household back in KZN" she continues "I was met with a mother in law from hell, and what made it worse was the fact that my husband was this side, trying to build a life for us. It was really hard" she frowns

"Was it that bad?" I ask her

"Yho! awazi wena! [You don't know] That woman hated me until she took her last breath. I wasn't the woman she wanted for her son so she made my stay with her unbearable. The number of times I thought of going home? I lost count, everyday without my husband there

would end with my pillowcase being wet from my tears, at least when he was around she toned it down a little. I only found peace when he came to fetch me, then I'd only have to deal with her during visits." she explains and I'm just looking at her with my eyes wide open

" I can't begin to imagine how you felt"

"It was at that point that I decided that I was never going to be that kind of mother in law. I endured the worst kind of abuse from a woman who could have welcomed me and treated me like her own child, I refuse to continue that cycle" she reaches for my hand and squeezes it "You're my child now, this is your home, whatever time of day or night it is, this is your home just as it is Nkosi's home."

"Ngiyabonga ma, lokho kusho lukhulu kimi" I place my other hand on top of hers

"Wamukelekile ngane yami" [You're welcome my child] Now let's get started with breakfast before people wake up and get all moody on us.

We start and set up in the dining room just as everyone else wakes up. Just as I'm about to go fetch the plates from the kitchen I see Nkosi emerge. He looks at me and smiles making my heart do a happy dance

"Wangibalekela ekuseni kangaka" [You ran from me so early in the morning]

I roll my eyes at him "I didn't run, I just didn't want to disturb your peaceful sleep"

" MaKhosa, did you just roll your eyes at me?

"It's a very low tone but enough to get me to bite my lower lip and actually run from him this time, I still hear his chuckle from behind

We all gather around the table and yet again, it's very merry. Everyone is in a great mood, Mr. Mdlalose is keeping the table entertained with his jokes and stories. I catch Liyana stealing a glance a few times but I ignore it. Bangizwe keeps getting calls and ignoring them

"Kungani ungaphenduli" [Why aren't you answering?] his father asks

"Akuyona into ebalulekile" [It's nothing important]

"Ngempela? [really?]" Nkosi asks eyeing him and he just glares at him and excuses himself to go answer the call

When breakfast is done Liyana and I start clearing after her mother asks us to accompany her to the shops to buy baking stuff.

We silently start washing the dishes, one would laugh if they saw us right now. I'm washing and she's rinsing. We are standing close to each other but not saying a word to each other. She's still clearly not happy to have me here.

"How much would it cost to have you leave him alone" she finally says as I place the washed frying pan in her part of the sink

"Not this again" I say looking at her "I'm not trying to milk your brother"

"But you know he's rich, he's next in line to becoming a CEO when our dad retires, you must have known this when you agreed to be his wife"

"I did, and that still wasn't a huge role player into the decision I made" I say and she looks at me like I just told the biggest lie

"This will not end well, you need to leave, it's still early to get out"

I can't believe she's out here trying to convince me to walk out on this marriage. Is her hatred

for me that deep? We don't even know each other for that to be a possibility

"What's your problem with me?" It comes out harsher than expected

"My problem?" She asks and again we are interrupted, this time it's Nkosi and he doesn't look pleased at all

At the sight of her brother, Liyana cowers and her whole demeanor changes

"I'm glad you're both here" he says and we both stop what we are doing to look at him

"Kunento engifuna siyilungise ngokushesha"

[There's something I want us to set straight,
fast]

"What's wrong?" Liyana asks innocently

"it's become apparent that you have an issue
with Khanyisa being my wife" he says and she
looks down again

"It's not like that" she denies

"I won't even ask what it's like"he says and I
wonder how he is able to have such an effect
while using a very calm voice

" I'm not asking you to be best friends, but you
will not cross question or make unfounded

assumptions about her. Liyana, Uzomhlonipha umkami [you will respect my wife] the same way you respect me. Futhi ngeke ngizwe kuthiwa akakhululekile lapha ekhaya ngenxa yakho [and I will not hear that she's feeling uncomfortable here at home because of you] "

Liyana looks up at him and nods. What happened to the hardcore character I saw just a moment ago?

" Ngiyethemba ukuthi ngeke ngiziphindaphinde" [I trust I won't be repeating myself]

"Ngikuzwile, futhi ngiyaxolisa" [I heard you, and I'm sorry] she says

He gives us one last look and then walks out, I

let out the breath I had been holding in and find her glaring at me

"You just had to run to him" she clicks her tongue and walks away just as her mother enters

"I'm ready" she announces

"angisahambi" [I'm no longer going]

"haibo, Kwenzenjani manje?" [What's wrong now? "

"Lutho, angizizwa kahle" [Nothing, I just don't feel well] she doesn't wait for a response as she proceeds to storm out of the kitchen leaving her

mom baffled and me feeling like maybe I should have just made something up when Nkosi asked what was wrong last night.

The rest of the weekend goes easy, I spend a lot of time with my mother in law either baking or cooking or sitting and relaxing as she shares stories about Nkosi and the family. Liyana hardly shows her face and when she does, I can't help but feel her gaze burn me

When Sunday evening arrives I'm ready to get back to my own space just as I'm glad I got to spend time here. The next time we gather will be on Christmas. Nkosi and I will be the hosta and we will invite my side of the family as well then from there we will be off to KZN to spend new years day there, I'm excited about that too

We say our goodbyes. Ma packs some of our baked goodies in different containers and gives them to me saying she will use the return of her tupperware as an excuse for me to come over before Christmas then we hit the road

The house is obviously quiet whrn we get there and Nkosi switches the lights on as he moves around the house. It's half past nine and I feel like just going to bed so I walk to the bedrooms and then I think, I can't honestly go back to separate bedrooms, we've shared a bed the entire weekend and this will just be a step back, I don't want to take a step back

I gather my courage and get the door to the main bedroom, Nkosi turns and the sudden sound and when he sees me enter he tries to

fight off a smile but it's too late, I've already seen it

I decide that since I'm now officially moving in then I'm not going to deprive myself of my beloved bubble baths anymore so that's the first thing I do as he gets ready for bed. I soak myself for about forty minutes then I get out and get dressed right there in the bathroom

When I step out, my lamp is the only one with the rest of the bedroom lights off, he's facing the other side and so I quietly get on the bed and face the opposite direction. In less than a minute I feel him turn, then I feel his arm around me as he pulls me closer to his chest so we are laying in a spooning position. I reach for the switch and the room goes dark but there's so much light in my heart as I fall asleep in my

husband's arms yet again.

CHAPTER 9

NKOSIYABO

I make it to the venue and I can't wait to leave already. So much that as I park my car, I think of ways I can cut this short and go back home.

I grab my wallet and cellphone then I exit the car, putting the wallet in my back pocket before locking the car and walking to where the others are

The organizers went for vineyard with an outdoor buffet and an open bar, there's three long tables set out and it's already packed with everyone engaged in their own conversations.

I spot Bangizwe whose standing on the side talking on his phone, he looks a bit stressed and I figure it's Nandi handing his crap to him straight like she always does, only she can get him worked up like this.

Liyana is by the bar with Refilwe and when they spot me, Refilwe gets up and walks to where I am leaving Liyana behind. I've realised that she hardly wants to come to contact with me and I tell myself that I have to talk to her, if this is still about Khanyisa then she really need to get ahold of herself because it would really be senseless for her to pull away from her own brother simply because things didn't go well with her friend and I

"Hey" Refilwe says, she has a huge smile on her

face, she looks very excited compared to the last time we spoke, she hadn't approached me since then unless if it about business, until now

"Hey"

"You look good, I don't remember the last time I saw you in casual clothes"

"Yeah, it's been a while" I say finding a spot to sit

"You look happy too..." she says and when I look at her, she's staring right back at me

"We are not doing this" I lower my voice

"We aren't doing anything, you're a good looking man, a handsome man and I'm just complimenting you, Nkosi." She pulls a chair and sits next to me

"Okay then" I glance at my watch wanting to get done with the speeches so the fun time can start and I can just leave.

It's crazy how all I can think about right now is getting back to my wife and making sure that she makes good on her promise. I'm not blind to the fact that my wife is very beautiful, the word 'attractive' doesn't do her any justice. She is gorgeous, breathtaking, and when she wears those very short shorts of hers to bed... I'm surprised haven't caught a cold yet with all the cold showers I've been taking when I wake up each morning. The things I want to do to her -

"Am I that boring?" Refilwe jots me out of my unholy thoughts

I look at her and can't find anything to say so instead I get up and grab everyone's attention. My father isn't here today so I have to step in and make a short speech and that's exactly what I do. I express gratitude and appreciation for everyone's hard work, Crack a few jokes then declare the party started

Everyone spreads around and I go over to the buffet section to get something to eat before joining a grumpy looking Bangizwe

"Bese wena? Wamuncu kanje, ithini indaba yakho?" [And then you? You're so sour, what's

your story]

"Mxm, Nandi" he clicks his tongue in annoyance and shakes his head

"Wenzeni? " [What did she do]

"Usefuna ukungihlanyisa, angazi kungani kumele siqhubeke nokulwa ngento eyodwa" [She now just wants to drive me insane, I don't know why we have to continue fighting about the same thing], everyday it's the same damn fight.

"Kodwa nawe bafo, put yourself in her position. She's been your girlfriend for so many years and wena Awunyakazi [You aren't moving] when it comes to taking your relationship futher and

making her yours for life, She's obviously going to get tired" I say and he looks at me, clearly conflicted, he might not want to hear it but he knows I'll always say it as it is

"Ngizothini ke [What will I say then] If the prophecy comes to pass? Ngizama ukuvikela lento esinayo, ngizama ukuvikela uthando lwethu, Kodwa yena akakuboni lokho" [I'm trying to protect what we have, I'm trying to protect us but she doesn't see that] to her I'm just playing a game, I'm also not happy that we are stuck in this position.

" Ucabanga ukuthi kuzokwenzeka ngempela?" [Do you really think it's going to happen?]

"Angazi, bafo [I don't know, bro] but I'm not ready to take that risk yet" he takes a sip of his

beer "and why was I the one chosen to carry his name and this burden? Why not you? " he asks playfully then chuckles

" Uyahlanya [You're crazy], why me? "

"Wazalwa kuqala futhi unamandla ukubhekana nalokhu" [You were born first and you're strong enough to deal with this]

"Mhlawumbe naye wayehlanya njengawe [Maybe he was just as crazy as you]" I say and we both laugh

I see him lighten up a bit and even though I might be making jokes, I hate seeing him like this. I can't imagine what it must be like being in his shoes. Knowing that the day he marries

uNandi is the day he's going to meet the woman chosen for him by our late great-grandfather, this is a messed up situation

But all this might just be a myth and he might be living in fear for no absolute reason. It's not like our great-grandfather is alive to confirm this theory or so called prophesy

His phone rings and it's Nandi again, He shakes his head but has a smile on his face, one wouldn't say they were fighting just now

"Sthandwa sam" [my love] he answers calmly... Uyazi, bambo lwami. Ngiyakuzonda ukulwa nawe and Ngiyaxolisa ngokukuthethisa [You know, I hate fighting with you and I'm sorry for yelling at you] he gets up and walks away leaving me to my own company

I stick around and socialize a couple more hours and when people start with the 'after party' I get ready to leave

Liyana has disappeared and Bangizwe is chilling with some guys, I tell him I'm leaving and he tells me to greet Khanyisa for him.

"Leaving already?" Refilwe says from behind

"Yeah"

"Why so early? Everyone is still having fun and there's no work tomorrow"

"I've stayed long enough"

"Is it the wife? Is she one of those? Always wanting you around the house even though she really wants nothing from you at that moment"
She chuckles

"I thought I told you that my wife is off limits" I stop walking and look at her

"I'm just making conversation, The way you're so overprotective of her, one would swear she's so fragile"

I know this, I know when she's trying to rile me up and it may have worked a couple of times in the past but it won't now, I simply have no interest.

"Enjoy your evening" I start walking and leave her standing right there, I have much better matters to attend to right now.

KHANYISA

I hear him when he enters the house and I'm just about done wiping the sink after washing the things I used while cooking. I keep my hands busy when his presence fills the kitchen and I don't turn to look at him. Only when I feel his body pressed on my back and his hands on my hips do I stop pretending to be busy

"You're back?" I ask

"Mmh" He hums in response then pushes my weave to one side of my neck

"Are you hungry?"

"Yes" he responds

"Let me dish up for you" I say and attempt to move but he flips me around so I'm facing him, I look up at him and see what has to be the hottest look on his face

The flames of lust are very much alive in his eyes and when he kisses my neck he ignites my own fire "Asambe, uzongiphakela embhedeni"
[Let's go, you'll dish up for me on the bed]

He picks me up effortlessly and I wrap my legs around him then he turns and starts walking. I don't know how he's not missing a step with

him keeping his eyes on me and also, his gaze makes me shy away so I lower my head and just as I do he chuckles softly, clearly amused by my lack of confidence

When we get to our bedroom he gets the door and shuts it with his foot then he pins me against door, my legs are still around his waist. He kisses me hard and hungrily and I put my hands on both both sides of his face and deepen the kiss. He groans then starts walking again without breaking the kiss and this time I land on the bed

I feel his hard on when he grinds on me and it only dampens my undies more, He feels so good against me. His hand goes under my T-shirt and he cups my breast through my bra squeezing it and earning a moan from me. The

way my body is responding to his touch is like I'm under a spell, under his spell

He pulls up my T-shirt and I raise my arms so he can pull it off me, then he reaches for my legging shorts and pulls them off too then he starts leaving a trail of kisses from my neck and down the valley of my breasts, he goes down my stomach and I tense up when I feel him go lower

He spreads my legs even more and the kisses trail leads to my inner thigh, when he gets up between my legs he moves to my other thigh leaving me wanting. My breathing is now heavy and slow and it hitches when he pulls down my panties

He reaches up and unclasps my bra and I'm left

fully exposed to him. He moves and stand by the edge of the bed and starts stripping off his own clothes with his eyes glued to me, I feel a little shy laying there with my legs spread so I start closing them

"Don't" He says now looking me in the eyes
"Ngikufuna ngalendlela" [I want you in this way]

I focus my attention on him and when he pulls his boxers down I have to fight to keep a straight face when I look down at him but I must be doing a terrible job seeing he's smirking at my reaction. He stands there and strokes himself a couple of times before hovering over me again and capturing my lips in a desperate kiss all over again

He moves to kisses me all the way down again

and when his tongue makes contact with my sensitive and wet skin between my legs I feel so many sparks form from my feet all the way up

He starts slow with his hands on my thighs keeping them further apart so he can devour me with his mouth. I shut my eyes and feel the pleasure of it all, the pleasure of feeling his tongue flicking my folds and his lips pursing my clit pulling me into this daze, he really is taking my breath away

With one hand I grab onto the sheets and the other goes to his head. I look down at him and something about his face being buried between my legs is so erotic, it's a huge turn on, on its own

He eats me out hard and I lay back and arch my

back not sure what to make of the pressure that's building up from deep within, it drives me over the edge so much that I start pushing my hips forward to his face even more and when it gets intense I pull back but he grips my hips and keeps me in place as he delivers an intense flow of tingles all over my body, I feel it wash over me and all I can do is gasp and look up at the ceiling, my body has completely given in to him and I couldn't move even if I wanted to, this is amazing.

He gets up and gives me a moment to recover while staring at my face, I must look like a mess right now

"Umuhle" [You're beautiful] he says as though reading my mind then he hover over me and runs his hard on over my slit further intensifying

the the throbbing between my legs, this feels so hot "Manje sekuyisikhathi sami sokudla"[Now it's my time to eat]

"Remember" I whisper wanting to remind him that I've never done this before

"I do, I'll take it easy tonight" He says and I nod

I feel him on my entrance and he leans in for a softer kiss "Ready?" He asks lowly and I nod and that's when he starts pushing into me. I feel this hot sensation and the pressure of him entering me slowly so I shut my eyes and squint them as he keep going. My hands are firmly holding onto his arms

I wince at the bit of discomfort that comes with

the intrusion on my body

"Are you okay?" He stops moving

"Yes, keep going" I don't want to have many attempts at this, this one timw has to be it

My body jerks up and I let out a loud cry when he fully penetrates and tears into me, it does hurt and he holds and kisses me without attempting to move inside me until the pain subsides "You're okay" he whispers before pulling out and stopping midway before pushing himself back in, the first few thrusts are accompanied by pain but the pleasure of it soon overpowers it all and I'm left moaning his name as he moves in and out of me

I feel my body start to shudder under him and that feeling comes back and it builds up from my stomach and yet again I'm gasping when the pulsating tingles take over my body once again. His groaning follows and I feel him tense up before he releases inside me then then collapses next to me on the bed

We are both breathing hard and our chests are rising and falling rhythmically, it hits me that he's just made me his and the look on his face tells me he's beyond proud of himself

"I like this look on you" he speaks with a low voice

"What look?" I ask him knowing I definitely look like a hot mess, nothing about me is pretty right now

"The look of a well fucked wife" he says leaving me tongue tied.

CHAPTER 10

KHANYISA

On Sunday morning I lazily turn on the bed and look at Nkosi's empty side of the bed. It's gotten cold so he must have been up for a while now.

I'm naked under the sheets and when I stretch my legs I feel the soreness, it serves as a reminder of yesterday.

After we caught our breath he ran me a bath and I soaked my body but then I remembered

that I had left bloody sheets on the bed and I needed to clean that up so I rushed out the bathtub only to find that he had already taken care of that. We ended up going two more times before I fell right asleep and now here I am, wishing I could lay here for the rest of the day but I can't, plus I want to go to the shops for some things that I need in the kitchen so I get up and get dressed then I make the bed, brush my teeth, wash my face and head out.

I find him in the dining room with a cup of coffee and his laptop on

"Morning" I say and he looks up from the screen with a smile

"Morning, ulale kahle?" [did you sleep well?]

"I did, you?"

"Me too, I'm just responding to a few emails" he nods at his laptop

"Alright, I'll leave you to it" I say then walk away

I should be feeling happy that I've finally gotten over these fears or restrictions that I had set for myself with Nkosi, I mean I did give myself to him repeatedly last night and I should be having these wonderful flashbacks but instead my soul feels heavy, I'm sad.

I know why I'm sad.

It's because I know that between the two of us, I'm the one whose going to break the rules, I'm the one whose going to fall for him and I feel that that day is near. What will become of me then? Will I still be able to withstand all of this?

Nkosi has been very kind to me, there's really no question about that. He hasn't been this cold husband that one would expect from an arranged marriage. He's been taking care of me and treating me with respect... But I do see his resistance when it comes to opening up, He is closed off emotionally and I fear that that will start knocking hard on me, I just know it.

By the time I'm done making breakfast I decide that I need some time away from him so I tell him I'm heading to the shops. I was only going to go later but I'm starting to feel overwhelmed

and I don't want him to see me like this because he will ask and I won't know how to explain myself to him

With my emotions all over the place I get in the shower and start silently crying. I hate it when this happens, I start overthinking and it ends with me crying and I can't even come up with a reasonable or proper explanation as to why I'm crying. I hate this.

I remind myself that this is what I wanted, this is still what I want and he hasn't done anything wrong, I'm the one whose getting out of line and I need to get back in it very fast if this is going to work.

I finish with my shower and get dressed. I put on my high waist jeans and a pink long sleeve

shirt with one side tucked in then I wear my pink heels to complete the look. I put on some make up and go with my gray bob weave, I grab my Dior sling bag, pack my essentials then I'm ready to go

Nkosi is on a phone call when I go to find him where I left him so I just wave and he waves back and mouths a "see you later"

I drive to the mall and take my sweet time cruising around the shops. I only came here for groceries but I find myself checking out the shoes and clothes and handbags, I can't help myself and knowing that I'm not limited to getting anything is what turns on this spoilt brat in me that comes alive whenever I'm surrounded by clothing shops

After a couple of hours I push my trolley out to the parking lot and load my stuff in the boot then I put the trolley in its aisle. I'm in no rush to go home so I go back inside and find a nice restaurant to dine in. The time is now 3 o'clock and I think I will leave this mall at around 5 p.m

While waiting for my order I scroll on my phone while sipping on my drink patiently so because when restaurants prepare your food, it's almost like they first go out to source the ingredients then only do they come back and prepare the meal

"What's a beautiful lady like yourself doing here with no company" a deep male voice speaks and I look up, totally not in the mood for this

"Waiting for my food" I give him a blank stare

and a shrug

He chuckles slowly "Okay, that was a dumb question. I'm waiting for my take away, I'll just wait here with you" he says sliding on the seat opposite me

"Sure, go ahead and invite yourself at my table" I murmur and he smiles when he hears me

I decide that I'm not going to give him the time of the day so I focus on my phone again

"Igama uMduduzi [The name is Mduduzi] but you can call me Mdu" He says

"Okay" I respond still focused on my phone

"Hawu, are you just going to leave me hanging?"

This time I look up and I'm very sure that irritation is written all over my face, he's just choosing to ignore it

"What?" I ask him

"Your name"

"What about it?"

He has an amused smile and keeps his eyes on me, my attitude is doing nothing to him "Ubani igama lakho, Nkosazana?" [What's your name, princess?]

"Khanyisa"

"Khanyisa, the one who brings light. Such a beautiful name for a beautiful woman like yourself"

"Mmh"

"I'd like to get to know you better, miss Khanyisa" He says and I glance at him, then at my ring, then back at him. He starts laughing "What? Some are taken, some are taken for granted. I'm not sure where you fall but the fact that he let you come dine on your own says something about him as a husband, I know I wouldn't let you out of my sight"

"Sir, I don't know who you think you are but you don't know me, you don't know my husband either so don't even try that with me" I say harshly wiping the smug smile off his face. I do not appreciate him speaking about Nkosi in that manner, even worse, he's a stranger

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean to upset you"

"Well you did, now if you will leave me alone..." I look at him and luckily his food arrives. He takes the package and gets up

"I'm sorry, again" He says then walks away

After a while my food arrives and I dig in, I'm calm now and over him so I peacefully enjoy my meal then I pay and leave the restaurant. I have

one last stop before going back home

Last night we didn't use protection and I'm not on contraceptives. We have talked about kids but I feel it's too soon so I head over to clicks to buy morning after pills, I know they can't be a long term solution and I'll need to get on some kind of contraceptive but for now I'm going to rely on this plan B

The pharmacist hands me a questionnaire to fill in and honestly it's quite annoying that I have to fill in this much information just for a plan B. When I'm all done I head over to the tills, I'm going to use my own card for this transaction, I don't want to bring up unnecessary arguments but I know I still need to have this conversation with him to wait at least a year or half a year then we can start trying

Just as I pay for the pills and a bottle of still water I see him standing next to me again. He obviously sees what I'm paying for and I ignore him then walk out but he follows behind

"Khanyisa, wait"

"Hayi! This is harassment now" I say stopping in my tracks

"I know, I'm sorry. I don't mean to scare you" He takes two steps back and raises his hands "I won't harm you, I promise"

"You're following me, in a mall. Do you know how creepy that is?"

"I realize that it's suspicious but I promise I'm not a kidnapper or anything of that sort. I'm just trying to get to know you"

"I'm married, Mduduzi. I have no interest and pursuing married women is wrong , you should be ashamed of yourself"

He chuckles when I say this "You're here alone, dining alone and buying morning after pills. There's definitely a lot going on in your marriage."

"And you're a marriage counselor? I told you to stop that nonsense. You don't know anything about me." I click my tongue and start walking then I stop and look back at him "And don't even

think about following me or I swear the next time I find you next to me I'll scream for security and cause one big scene, you will trend!" I warn him then walk away

I decide to use the other exit point but then I change my mind. He could still be following me or waiting for me outside. So I decide to stroll around the mall a bit longer and just pass time, hopefully he will get the message and leave me alone

I decide to do a bit of window shopping to pass time, forty minutes later I decide to leave. When I get closer to my car I open the small box and water then I gulp down the two small white pills. I throw the box in the bin then get in the car and drive home. My mood has not improved and I now blame Mduduzi, if he hadn't annoyed me I

would have found a way to cheer myself up, but he had to ruin it.

I play some feel good music and as soon as I start singing along I feel myself relax and feel happy again. All that tension dissolves and I just enjoy being on the road and singing along to my favourite songs

When I get home I park and take some of the shopping bags with me, I'll come back for the rest. I enter and leave them in the kitchen then I go further into the house wanting to change my shoes so I can go back to the car. There's a loud laughter and chatter coming up from the lounge, it's Nkosi and someone else so I decide to see who it is. When I enter I stop in my tracks when our eyes meet

It's him.

He also looks very shocked to see me but he quickly hides it

"Ubuyile" [You're back] Nkosi says as they both stand and I nod, what the hell is he doing here, my eyes involuntarily glue to him

Nkosi comes to next to me "This is my cousin, Mduduzi." he says then looks at him "bafo, Umkami lo, uKhanyisa" [brother, this is my wife, Khanyisa] Nkosi introduces us

Mduduzi walks closer and stretches his hand "Ngiyajabula ukukwazi, mfazi ka bafo" [It's nice to meet you, my brother's wife] he says like it's his very first time seeing me, Nkosi is looking at

me so I shake Mduduzi's hand

"Same here" I manage to say

"I didn't know we were expecting a visitor...I wouldn't have left" I look at Nkosi

"Nami bengingazi, Umuntu uvele watheleka nje"
[I also didn't know, he just showed up]

"I wanted to make up for missing your wedding. I feel really bad that I missed it"

"It's okay man, don't stress about it" Nkosi tells him

"I hope you don't mind me just showing up" he

says to me

"Not at all, you're family" I say "I need to change my shoes" I announce then walk away

He could have been anyone, the man who shamelessly tried pursuing me, followed me around and then proceeded to see me buy morning after pills could have really been anyone in this world but he had to be my in-law

Lord.

CHAPTER 11

KHANYISA

The dinner table is very loud tonight. Nkosi and

Mdu are having the time of their lives and if I hadn't had that interaction with Mdu earlier I'd actually find him very funny, he's a good story teller and entertainer too.

I get up and clear the table when we are all done

"Thanks for the food, sisi. I enjoyed it" Mdu humbly says offering a smile

"You're welcome" I respond with the same tone

"Now I see why this guy has gotten bigger and fat, it makes sense now" He laughs

"Ngiyakukhohlwa unje uma ususuthi, Ukhuluma

umbhedo" [I forget you're like this when you're full, you speak nonsense " Nkosi says but clearly he hasn't taken offense

" Ngiyadlala bafo, phela wena uyi'sgora, uMr Muscle wangempela" [I'm just joking, bro. You're a tough guy, the real Mr. Muscle] he acts out a muscle man and we all laugh

I leave the two men and go to do the dishes, My feet hurt from all that walking I did in heels so I think I'll have an early night. That and the fact that I don't think I can survive any more hours with Mdu, it just feels awkward

"Can we talk?" He says with a hushed voice and I turn to look at him, I look behind him just to make sure Nkosi isn't behind

Now that my heels are off, he's a little more taller than me compared to earlier, he's about the same height as Nkosi and almost the same body type, only he's a little skinny but now that I've seen them together, there is some resemblance between the two of them

"About?"

"Earlier, I don't think there's a need for Nkosi to know I was making moves on his wife" he says, not bothering to beat around the bush

"So you want me keep this from him?" I raise my eyebrow, I obviously wasn't going to tell Nkosi but it feels good seeing Mdu in this position. He's not being arrogant or forceful,

humbleness does suit him, he should practice it more

"If you tell him then he will think I'm trying to hit on his wife and that will cause tension"

"You were trying to hit on me" I remind him

"There's a difference"

"Oh really? How so because you knew I was married even then"

"There's a difference koti. A difference between a married woman and umfazi ka bhut'wam [My brother's wife]"

"So you're saying you'd still feel no shame if I wasn't Nkosi's wife?" I ask and his smirk makes its way back

"I guess we will never know... Look, I don't want to make things awkward, uNkosi indodana ka bab'omkhulu [Nkosi is my uncles son], he's practically my brother and you are his wife. I'm not looking to start any trouble and honestly had I known from the beginning who you were, I would have never tried anything "

"I hear you."

"Can we just start on a clean slate and get to know each other in a complete different way compared to what I had in mind earlier? Who knows, we might even become friends, I mean we already are family" he actually sounds

sincere and I can tell he's very worried about Nkosi finding out, I'm also not trying to cause any tension here. I know it won't go down well if I tell him and I believe it's a good thing that Mdu sees his wrongs

"You won't be a jerk?" I ask

"I won't, I promise to behave and not even mention that other thing" He says

"What other thing?" I narrow my eyes at him

"Nothing, nothing at all" he says

"Okay, I'll forget that this afternoon happened" I say and see the relief on his face

"Thank you, sisi. Thank you" He says then turns to leave

I know he's going to stay for the night and so when I'm done with the kitchen I fix a room for him then I tell them I'm off to sleep and which room I fixed for Mdu

When I get to the bedroom I change out of my clothes and put on my pajamas then I get in bed. A long day it has been.

NKOSIYABO

It's always great to see uMdu. We grew up together and spent so much time getting up to no good while covering for each other, The four

of us with Bangizwe and Lwazi caused so much havoc in our youth and it was mainly because we knew we could fight our way out of it and we had each other's back up. He's only a year older than me but he never misses the chance to announce himself as my big brother whenever he can

He worked with the rest of us until until he met tenderpreneur friends and he decided to quit. There was no badblood even then, everyone has always had the freedom to choose what they want to do with their lives, hence Lwazi ended up in the army. My father has always been a firm believer that a person will only excel in their job or position if their heart and mind is it, if not, then they will fail the company miserably, thus rendering all his hardwork useless and worthless

We sit and have a couple of drinks until late into the night as he tells me stories about his businesses and partners. From what he's saying, things are going down south, fast.

"That's part of the reason I actually came to see you"

"I knew it wasn't about your guilt for missing my wedding" I mess with him and he cowers

"No man, I do feel bad about that. I would have loved to see you two tie the knot"

"I know, I'm just messing with you"

"But you did well hey, she seems like a good

woman" He says and I think about Khanyisa, not that she's not always at the back of my mind anyway if not occupying my entire mind

"She is, she really is" I say thoughtfully, I know it hasn't been a long time but I have a good feeling about us, we are going to make this work

"What about you?" I turn the question on him and he smiles

"Wayekhona engangibeke ilihlo lami kuye, Kodwa usethathiwe" [There's one that I had my eye on, but she's taken]

"eix, kubi lokho" [That's bad]

"Yah man, but you never know, situations change all the time and I might just get lucky"

"Ngiyakukhohlwa ukuthi unje umthetho wakho"
[I forget that you're like this] I say and he busts out laughing

If there was ever a thing that Mduduzi was notoriously known for while growing up, it was taking other people's girlfriends, he had no boundaries at all, except when it came to his family and close friends. Beyond that, no one was safe, anyone's girlfriend was up for grabs, not even a beating could stop him

"Ngiyadlala nje, sengikhulile" [I'm just joking, I've grown up] he says

"Sizobona" [We shall see]

"Eix bafo man" he chuckles "Lalela phela"
[listen], the other reason I came to see you is
that I need a favor" he changes from being
playful to being serious

"What kind of a favor?"

"I need a job... I want to come back to the
company. With the way that things are going
with these tenders, There's no stability and the
risk is no longer worth it. I'm losing too much
and if I don't change something then I'll wake up
one day with nothing to my name and no cent in
my bank account" He explains

"Uhlal'utshelwa ukuthi ungabuya noma nini,

uyakwazi lokho" [You've always been told that you can return whenever, you know that"

"Ngiyazi bafo. Ukuthi nje bengingazi ukuthi ngingabuza kanjani, kade ngilwa nalokhu futhi ngiyazi uzodinga ukungivulela isikhala, angizami ukuthi kuxoshwe muntu." [I know, brother. It's just that I didn't know how to ask, I've been battling with this for a while now and I know you'd need to clear up space for me, I'm not trying to get anyone fired]

" Khululeka, akekho ozolahlekelwa umsebenzi. Ngizokutholela okuthile bese ungaqala onyakeni omusha" [Be free, no one will lose their job. I will find something for you then you can start in the new year]

"Ubuzongisiza ngempela" [You would have

really helped me]

"No worries man, family looks out for each other"

"That's true, and you've always looked out for me. I will always be grateful for that"

"Don't start being emotional with me " I brush off this intense moment, I don't do well with showing emotions

"Yea yea" he laughs it off

"How long are you here for? Maybe you could join us for Christmas?"

"I would love to but I have to go home. Uyamazi umam'ncane wakho, Uzobe ekhala ethi anginandaba naye [you know your aunt, she will be crying saying I don't care about her] if I don't go home."

"Alright then, we will see you when we get there just before the new year"

"It's gonna be fun like old times" He says excitedly and we continue talking until midnight when I finally tell him I'm off to sleep, knowing Mdu, we could sit and talk until sunrise, as long as the booze keeps coming

When I get in the bedroom, I get ready for bed then I join Khanyisa, she's deep in sleep, she's such a quiet sleeper that one would have to check if she's still alive if it wasn't for her chest

rising and falling with each breath that she takes

I get closer to her and put my arm around her before kissing the back of her head and silently telling her goodnight. This is the only time I can ever hold her like this, when she's not aware. I know my terms, I clearly remember them and I don't want to cross them. I don't want to put us in a position to one day wake up and feel like we can't do this anymore and that's exactly what happens with most marriages or normal marriage as one would put it. People fall out of love all the time, all it takes is for one thing to bust the bubble and it's all done. I don't want to be open to that kind of vulnerability only to have it come back and bite me in the ass. At least this way, we both know what we are in for. The love illusion was never a foundation in our marriage and so it can never break us.

CHAPTER 13

KHANYISA

"Mama!" I throw my arms around her and squeeze her so tightly

"N'wananga!" [my child] she hugs me back

"Okay sesi, you're squeezing too tight" she chuckles but I continue holding on to her.

Words can't describe what I'm feeling right now and the only reason I'm holding my tears back is because I don't want my parents to mistake them as a sign of me being mistreated by Nkosi

"Na mina ni kona" [I'm also here] I hear my dad say and I let go of mom and go straight to his arms, hugging him just as tight

"I missed you guys" I say keeping an arm around my dad

"Ungaswi hlayi, nale ndlwini akaha fani wena ungari kona" [Don't even mention it, even the house isn't the same without you] he says

"Yah, there's less noise" my mom says as Nkosi joins us

"Sanibonani" he cheerfully greets and hugs my mom then shakes my dad's hand "Niyaphila kodwa?" [Are you well?]

"Siyaphila, wena unjani?" [We are well and you?]

"Nami ngiphilile futhi ngijabule kakhulu ukuthi nifikile" [I'm also well and very happy that you arrived] he says then shows them to where everyone is and my anxiety rises as I worry more about what Liyana might say or do in front of my parents. I can take all her insults and nasty behavior, just not in my parents presence

He stops and looks at me while my parents follow the noise

"Uright?" he eyes me

"Yah" I respond without thinking and I instantly regret it when he stares right at me

"Ngathini kuwe ngokuqamba amanga?" [What did I say to you about telling lies?] he asks very

seriously

"Wathi ngingaqambi amanga" [You said I shouldn't lie]

He looks at me a moment longer then says "Okay, we will fix this bad habit of yours later" he says lowly and it sounds like a warning

I follow him to the lounge area where everyone is and I sit next to my mom on the arm rest and I put my arm around her

"Na sweswi waha endla swo ni damarhela?" [Even now you still want to stick to me?] she asks and I move even closer just to annoy her

"Ina, ani nahari n'wana n'wina" [Yes, isn't it I'm still your child?] I playfully nudge her and she scoffs

"awahari n'wana, ute ulak tekiwa se hi leswi, famba damarhela nuna wa wena, no ni hisa wani hisa" [You're no longer a child, you said you want to get married so go stick to your husband. You're even burning me] She says trying to sound serious and Nkosi's mom laughs

"Abafuni neze ukukhula laba [They never want to grow these ones] , they always want to be mama's babies." "uLiyana naye unje" [Liyana is also lime this]

"What did I do manje?" Liyana asks her mom

"You're a mama's baby just like your sister in law"

When her mom mentions me she looks at me and I look right back at her, her eyes don't reflect peace so I choose to look away "Let me get you something to drink" I get up

"Liyana, Hamba uyosiza uKhanyisa ngeziphuzo"
[Go help Khanyisa with drinks]

"Haibo, Kodwa lowo ngumsebenzi wakhe, angithi uyena makoti la" [But that's her job, isn't it she's the bride here]

Her mom opens her mouth to speak but I stop her "It's fine, ma. I'll manage" I say

"I'll help" Nandi gets up and follows me

When we get to the kitchen Nandi helps with the glasses and and I carry the drinks. I see she wants to say something but I don't force it out of her, reason being that I don't want to discuss Liyana, especially since I don't know how close their relationship is

We get back and serve the drinks and the chatter goes on for a while until we move to the dining room to eat

I get praises for my work and I must admit that it feels good, I love that they are appreciative and express it too. Before we dish up, bab'Mdlalose asks to say a few words and we

all give him our attention

"Uyabona namuhla, ngijabule kabi kabi, Ukuba lapha nomndeni wakwaKhosa osekuyinto eyodwa nathi ngenxa yezingane zethu uNkosiyabo noKhanyisa. Ukuba nezingane zethu lapha nathi, yize kukhona ongekho kodwa ngiyethemba ukuthi sizombona maduze. Uyabona-ke lena ngenye yezinto ejabulisa ikhehla njengami. Ukubona indodana yami ikhula futhi iba nomthwalo wemfanelo futhi iqala owakhe umndeni, yilokhu sithanda ukukubona njengabazali, ngakho ngithi, sengathi singaba nezinsuku eziningi ezifana nalezi, Lapho sihlangana khona sonke futhi sijabule"

[You see today, I'm beyond happy. Being here with the khosa family, which has become one

with us because of our children, Nkosiyabo and Khanyisa. Having our children here with us, even though there's one who isn't here but I trust we will see him soon. You see, this is one of the things that make an old man like myself happy. Seeing my son grow and become responsible and start his own family, this is what we as parents like to see, so to that I say, may we have many more days like this one. Where we all meet and have fun]

He raises his glass and everyone follows suit. Everyone starts dishing up and eating. Conversations start flowing again and my mom comments on how beautiful the house is

"You need to take me on a tour after lunch, this is one gorgeous house" She says dreamily

"It is, your daughter really hit the jackpot with my brother" Liyana says looking at my mother and I feel myself tense up

"Liyana" her mom warns

"Yini [What?] ma? Am I lying? Am I lying Khanyisa? You went from being a loxion girl from Meadowlands to being a rich house wife overnight. Your life has been significantly upgraded sisi and for that we thank my hard working brother. Now you get to sit and enjoy the rewards of his hard work and all you have to do is roll over and play the submissive wife" she says looking at me

"ungenwe yini?" [What's gotten into you]
Bangizwe asks her

"I'm just telling it like it is, I won't sit here and pretend-"

"Sekwanele" [That's enough] Nkosi says getting up

"But I'm just getting started, how can you all not see through her? She's no different to those blood sucking gold diggers who would do anything just to secure the bag. That's what you're here for after all right? To secure the bag?"

"Liyana" Nkosi says in the coldest way and she slowly turns to look at him "Uzosukuma ungilandele, khona manje" [You will stand up and follow me, right now] He says and starts

walking and she does as told

The whole table has gone quiet then bab'Mdlalose starts trying to salvage the situation with my parents. I get up without listening to a word he's saying, just wanting to be anywhere but here, so I walk out too.

NKOSIYABO

"Yini la manyala owenzayo? " [What's this rubbish you're doing?] I ask her and she goes quiet, now suddenly when the damage has been done she decides she doesn't have a tongue?

"Unesibindi sokudelela umkami [You have the audacity to disrespect my wife] after I warned you to stop with your attitude? Did I not warn

you?" I'm trying so hard to remain calm right now and not cause more commotion but just looking at her drives me off edge

"Ngiyaxo-"

"Ungalinge, uxoliselani? [Don't you dare, what are you sorry for?] Because all you said in there was not a mistake, you planned a full attack on my wife, in my house, in front of all our parents. You planned this shit show and now you want to stand there and say you're sorry!?"

She keeps quiet and it only fuels me even more. Where was this quietness just minutes ago? Where the hell has her bravery gone all of a sudden?

" Ungiphoxile Liyana "[You've disappointed me] this isn't how I know you, this isn't how you were raised. In a room full of elders you just decided to start spewing shit all over the place? And what the fuck gives you the right to even think that you can have a say over who I marry? All this because you're friends with Refilwe? Is that it? She's so important to you that you'd undermine me and disrespect the woman that I sober mindedly chose to be my wife? "

" It's not that, bhuti.. I... I" She shakes her head and wipes her tears

"Crying will not do anything for you, I get that we've always protected you and treated you like this fragile being. And best believe that I do love you, you're my little sister and you know that I'd do just about anything for you but you've

crossed a line. One you should have never been tempering with in the first place "

" Bhut'Nkosi-"

" No, I don't want to hear it. Ngizocela uphume uphele emzini wami" [I'm going to ask you to leave my house]

She shakes her head and starts to say something but I stop her

"Until the day you learn your place and learn to give Khanyisa the respect that she deserves, I don't want you anywhere near this house. Not even by mistake"

She wipes off more of her tears then finally gets it together "My bag..."

"Wait here"

I get her bag for her and then I return and wait for her to leave, she whispers that she's sorry before walking out of the house. I don't get how she can pull that stunt and instantly turn to look like she regrets all of it. I have no idea what's going on with her but it's gone too damn far.

KHANYISA

The door opens slowly and I turn to sleep facing the other side so I don't have to look at him but of course he comes around the bed and lays on the other side. My pillow is wet and I probably

look like a mess but who cares? The day's been ruined already anyway

Nkosi puts his arm around me and starts gently rubbing my back with the palm of his hand, it's a soothing feeling and I just keep my eyes down while trying to stop crying. I've never felt so embarrassed in my whole life, I think what makes it worse is that she did it in front of my parents...

"Ngiyaxolisa [I'm sorry] MaKhosa" he says and I shake my head, he's not the one who should be apologizing

When I finally get my voice back I look up at him
"Nkosi, what did I ever do to your sister?"

"Nothing, you've done nothing wrong. I don't know what's gotten into Liyana but whatever it is, that's on her not you"

I wipe my tears while replaying the moment she ruined everything, yho, the thought of it alone is suffocating

"I need a favor"

"What is it?"

"I need you to send everyone home"

"Cha khanyisa, Uyazi ngeke ngikwazi ukukwenza lokho" [No, you know I can't do that]

"How am I supposed to face them then?"

"Everyone that's in that room is worried about you. Do you really think sending them home will do any good?"

"I'm not concerned about doing good, Nkosi. I just want this day to be over and done with, that's all"

He sits up the bed then pulls me up to his chest, still with his arm around me, he kisses my forehead. This has got to be the first time Nkosi holds on to me like this and if I wasn't feeling like crap it would be a perfect moment

"You and I will go out there and have a Christmas lunch with our family, You won't hide

in this room because for one, you have no reason to be hiding in the first place and this is your house, you will not let anyone make you feel out of place and if they do then they can go right ahead and leave, I'll personally throw them out but what I will not do is let you hide in your own house from the people who are more concerned about your well being than the stunt that Liyana pulled earlier"

"I don't think I can stand to be in the same space as her"

"She's gone" he says and I look up at him

"You kicked her out?"

"I did what I had to. She had to know what was

coming when she pulled that little show"

"Thank you" I cosy up to him even more wanting to hold on to this moment and he tightens his arm around me

"Uzohamba nami?" [Will you go with me] he asks

"I'm not sure"

"It's two by two out there, ufuna ngibambe ikhandlela? Ngempela? Hayi mkami [You want me to be the loner?no my wife] don't do that" he pleads and I try not to laugh

"Nkosi you're being dramatic"

"How? You want me to sit there looking all lost?"

"Fine, Let me wash my face first"

"That's more like it" he says happily

I get off the bed and go to fix myself. When I feel satisfied I go back out and find him waiting

"Ready?" he asks

"Yeap"

He reaches for my hand and holds it in his, this

is also a first

Today is definitely a day of firsts and I'm not complaining, I'm liking it very much

We walk out and I feel myself get nervous again. I already feel like Christmas has been ruined already but Nkosi is adamant that the day isn't over yet, so we will see

When we walk in they look at us and I try to keep my head up, I know I can't put more worry on my parents. The chatter starts again they try to uplift the mood so I don't drag it down any further, the elephant in the room is still very much there but there's no hostility from any of our parents so that's a plus

Later Nandi helps me pack up and we decide to do the dishes

"I'm sorry for what Liyana did" she starts and it annoys me that everyone feels the need to apologise for her behaviour, she's not a child, she knew exactly what she was doing

"It's fine" I say not wanting to be rude to Nandi

"It's not, I don't know her to be like this. She's a very nice and friendly person, this isn't like her at all"

"Well I guess I had to be the one to know the other side of Liyana Mdlalose that you've all been spared from. I took one for the team, you're welcome" I joke and she laughs with me

"You sure did, but just so you know, I believe you're a genuinely good person. Don't let her try and taint your name"

"Thanks Nandi, that's very kind of you"

"You're welcome"

We end up exchanging numbers and spending the rest of the afternoon and evening next to each other. My mom and Nkosi's mom are having a conversation of their own while our dads move to the bar with Nkosi and Bangizwe

The more hours that pass, the less heavy my chest feels. I relax and enjoy Christmas just as I was supposed to from the beginning.

I decide right then that I'm going to stay far from Liyana. I'm done trying to keep the peace, from here on I'm just going to flat out ignore her and if she tries this stunt with me again then I definitely will not be holding back. I've tried being the bigger person, it didn't work. Now I'm just going to give what I get.

CHAPTER 12

KHANYISA

The endless pings from my phone pull me out of my sleep and I groan while trying to reach for it on my nightstand with my eyes still shut.

When I finally get ahold of the cold device, I slowly open my eyes and use the facial recognition to unlock it so I can see who dares to send so many messages simultaneously at

this time of the morning

As soon as I access my whatsapp, all I see are chain messages, pictures of santa clause and baby Jesus, and a couple of videos, these messages are coming in even from people I haven't spoken to in the longest time. They probably just selected "Send to everyone" and unfortunately, I'm part of everyone

I respond to a few being my mom, mom inlaw, sesi Caro and Cheryl then I make a mental note to respond to the others later. It hits me that I'm going to be seeing my parents for the first time since the day I officially moved out and the feeling is so exciting, I really can't wait to see them and this makes me realise just how much I've missed them. This has been quite an adjustment and Nkosi has been nothing but

patient and supportive, however, we all know that nothing can ever compare to being under the same roof as your parents if you have such a close bond with them

I slide my phone on the nightstand again then attempt to get up but I'm stopped by Nkosi trapping me with his arm and pulling me back against his bare chest

"Uyaphi ekuseni kangaka? " [Where are you going so early in the morning?] he asks with his morning raspy voice that leaves tingles on my spine

"Nla ku ya sungula swo sweka" [I want to go get started with cooking] I respond

"hay, uzosweka later" [You will cook later] he mixes our languages making me giggle at how how he's saying it

The way his hands have started roaming around my body, coupled up with his heavy breathing gives me an insight on the kind of dream he might have had just moments ago

"I'm sure the people you want to prepare for are still in bed too, there's no rush" He says lowly kissing the back of my neck and bringing his hand up and under my pajama top to cup my breast and squeeze it a little

My body tenses up at the contact and I press my back more against his chest while he plants more kisses on my neck and shoulder, In a flash he's flipped me so I'm laying on my back and

he's hovering on top with one leg between my thighs

He continues feeling on my body while lowering his face to kiss my lips, at that moment, not even the worry of morning breath is enough to get me to pull away, with the heat he's putting me under, Once again, he has me under his full control

I feel him tug my shorts and I raise my hips so he can pull them down once with my panties. I moan when he starts touching me, I'm already wet and when he starts rubbing on me it only intensifies this heat that I'm feeling. He retrieves his hand and pulls down his boxers then positions himself between my legs then he enters me slowly, filling me bit by bit until I feel him touching my wall making me shut my eyes.

This is the second time we are doing this and it takes a moment to get used to him

"Are you good?" He asks and I open my eyes

"Mmh" I answer unable to say it in words

"I'm good too" he smirks before he starts moving

Unlike the first time, this time, his strokes are hard. He pulls out then slowly in again harder than each previous thrust and he watches me as he does it

He bends my knees and holds them in place making me spread more for him to go even

deeper

"Oh my god, Nkosi" I gasp and he keeps his eyes on me making me look away

"Khanyisa"

"Yes" It comes out as a moan

"Ngibheke" he says and I keep my eyes glued to one side "Bheka umyeni wakho" [Look at your husband] he demands

When I don't respond he thrusts harder and I gasp then involuntarily look at him, that's what he wanted

"Lento yakho yokuba namahloni eduze kwami iyaphela manje" [This thing of you being shy around me is ending right now] the statement that actually sounds like a command is followed by another hard and deep thrust

"Uyavuma noma?" [Are you agreeing or?]

I nod my head but that's not enough, he thrusts again "Angikuzwa mkami" [I can't hear you, my wife] he says

"Ngiyavuma" [I agree] I say or rather moan the word

"Good"

He keeps going with long, hard and deep strokes, making me cry out his name louder and louder, thank goodness it's just the two of us in this house. I reach my high just before him and my legs start shaking with how hard his going and soon he follows while clenching his teeth and groaning as he releases inside of me then lays besides me

We lay there naked with the covers on the floor and the sheets all wrinkled and covered in our sweat

"Merry Christmas" He says and I chuckle once

"Merry Christmas to you too" I say

I see this as an opportunity to bring up the baby

matter because I know after this, I'm getting pills again and it's risky to use then almost simultaneously. I need to find a doctor.

"I was thinking, that I should get a doctor" I start

"Why?"

"So I can get on birth control. I know we spoke about having babies and I haven't changed my mind, I just feel it's too soon"

"Okay, I understand that" he says calmly

"You do?" I ask and it takes him by surprise but he doesn't act on it

"Yes, I'm not going to force you to carry our baby so early into our marriage. I agree that we can wait a couple of months then start trying, there's no rush, as long as you haven't changed your mind about wanting kids"

"I haven't" I assure him

"Then we are good, do you want me to help find a good doctor?"

"No, I'll be okay. If all else fails then you'll just have to start wrapping it up" I say trying to keep a straight face

"Angizwanga?" [I didn't hear] he narrows his eyes at me and I bite my lips trying not to laugh at his reaction "Uthini kahle kahle, MaKhosa?"

Uthi wrap ini?" [What are you saying? You're saying wrap what?]

"Wrap it! Mdlalose!" I can't stop my laugh as I get off the bed and walk to the bathroom while he mumbles some things from behind

I run myself a shower and get ready for the day

I start cooking at around nine in the morning. Back at Meadowlands I would be on my way to church right now and later my mom and I would return to cook up a storm or pack up and go to my sisters house. I'm a little sad that she won't be here today. They went to Limpopo for the holidays and so I won't see them until next year

With my maxi dress on, my weave and the headwrap around it and my apron and flat gold sandals I work my way around the kitchen while playing music on a portable speaker. I'm making sure that there will be enough to eat for everyone to even have seconds and this is the time where I'm most grateful that I took time to follow my mom around the kitchen, I know for sure my food tastes great, if I weren't into writing stories I'd probably have one of those pages where they showcase the food they make. I don't want to stretch it and say I'd be a chef... But somewhere along those lines

I find Nkosi leaning by the wall with his legs crossed, he's looking at me but seems to be far in thought. I wish he wouldn't do that, look at me like that... It will only make it harder for me to not cross this daring line, but what am I

saying? I'm sleeping with the man, I'm married to him, can I really not catch or am I just playing myself?

"uhlekete yini?" [What are you thinking?] I ask

He wants to say something but shakes his head
"What are you making?" He opens my bowls
"Hmm, may I have some?" he's already reaching for a sticky chicken wing

"You can't eat before the guests arrive, Nkosi"

"Hmm-mm, I can eat whenever, kukwami lah"
[this is my place] he says closer to my ear
standing behind me making our bodies touch

I press my legs together and he chuckles then moves away, sly bastard.

I finally ignore him and continue with what I'm doing so I can be out of this kitchen when everyone arrives.

Bangizwe is the first to get here and he brought a plus one. They walk in hand in hand and she stands closely to him as we exchange greetings then he introduces the both of us to each other

"Sthandwa sam [My love] this is my sister in-law, Khanyisa." He says to her then looks at me "Sisi, uNandi lo [This is Nandi] the love of my life" he looks at her again and she blushes, they are so cute and inlove, it's such a sight to see

Nkosi then calls Bangizwe outside and Nandi offers to help me set up and I agree

"You have a beautiful home" She comments looking around

"Thank you" I say while taking out the cutlery

"How has it been? Married life?" she asks

"It's okay, it's good... It's still early days anyway"
I smile

"I bet the early days are the best, the honeymoon phase and all that" she says dreamily

"The same phase you and Bangizwe are on right now?" I ask and she blushes

"But I'm still his girlfriend, have been for seven years now" She says with a frown

"Maybe it's just a matter of time" I say not knowing what else to say

"I'm starting to doubt if we will ever get married, I think even him bringing me here is just a way to shut me up, make me feel like I'm a part of his family meanwhile he knows very well he has no intention of marrying me, he's just waiting for his real wife "

" Don't say that, he wouldn't mislead you like that, surely... "

" You don't know "She says lowly then casts her eyes down

" Don't know what? "

" He's going to meet the woman whose destined to be his wife... On the day we get married. "

" Huh? "

What the...

" Yeap, ancient stuff. But ke, If he marries me, then he's going to meet her and have to take her as a second wife"

"Yho... Nandi" I whisper with my eyes wide open and hand on my figure

"I know, It's crazy... But I'm just tired of waiting, he's putting off the inevitable, until when?"

"So you want him to go ahead and marry you, with the risk of meeting this other woman on your wedding day?"

"Can I be honest with you?" She asks and I nod, we barely know each other but what the heck

"I'm tired, if this lady is going to show up then she must just show up. I just want us to progress, get married and have a family"

"Even if that means having her..

This third party involved?"

"We can work around it" she shrugs "I can learn to accept her if she doesn't disrespect me. We wouldn't be the first women to share a husband" she says and I'm too stunned to say anything

I don't think I could be this accepting if Nkosi had to take a second wife, but then again, she's known about this for ages, I guess she accepted it with time... Or worst case scenario, the reality of it all will hit her too late

We finish up setting the table and the doorbell rings, I go to open and it's my parents in-law...

With Liyana

"Welcome!" I says moving from the doorway

Ma pulls me into a hug "You look great" she says and I thank her

"Makoti, Kunuka kamnandi man. [Daughter in-law, it smells great in here] you went all out huh?"

He asks with a beaming voice

"Yebo baba [yes father] only the best for our guests"

Liyana and I look at each other and she goes quiet, so I start "Hey" It's hard to smile but well

"Hi" she says then Nandi appears with Nkosi and Bangizwe

"Nandi ngane yami nawe ukhona" [Nandi, my child, you're also here] Ma says excitedly and opens her arms to her while everyone else exchanges greetings

Liyana also reaches to hug Nandi with a wide smile "Awazi ukuthi ngijabule kanjani ukukubona" [You have no idea how happy I am to see you] she squeals

"Nami futhi" [Me too] it's been so long] Nandi says and they hug again

"Bengiqala ukucabanga ukuthi umshiyile lo" [I

was starting to think you left this one] she points at her brother

"Ashiye bani? Abanomona sibabona kanje"
[Leave who? This is how we see those with jealous]

"Oh please, we all know she's too good for you"
Liyana continues teasing her brother

"Ungavumeli usathane akusebenzise, Liyana"
[don't let the devil use you] Bangizwe retorts
"This one is mine for life"

" sizoma ngasemnyango usuku lonke noma?"
[Are we going to stand by the door the whole day or?] Nkosi asks grabbing everyone's attention and they all follow him further into the

house

Liyana links her arm with Nandi's and gives me a blank stare as they walk away

It is at this moment that I realise that maybe having both families here wasn't a good idea, what if she starts acting up with my parents around? But would she go that far?

CHAPTER 15

KHANYISA

The next morning is quite a busy one. I woke up before Nkosi and took a bath to wash off traces of last night and just to wake my body up then I got dressed and went down to find that it's a full house

Seeing that there's a gathering here for the new year's eve and all the way into the new year itself, there's a lot of people around and Nkosi's mom has taken the liberty to introduce me to everyone.

There's people that I met at our wedding, who I shamefully cannot remember their names but I just smile when we exchange greetings and just let the conversation flow, I'm not good at remembering names, unless it's a name that catches my attention for the sole purpose of me wanting to name a character in my stories, beyond that, I'm terrible at remembering whose who

Liyana and I cross paths and I don't spare her a second look. Luckily she gets the hint and stays

out of my way.

That is until my mother in law hands us both small grass brooms and instructs us to sweep the yard

One thing about village yards? They are huge and there's always this steep, the ground is never leveled so sweeping on its own turns out to be a serious workout

She leaves us and we stare at our brooms then at the yard then at each other. In order to get done before the sun officially shows off all it's glory we are going to need to split and work fast so I swallow my anger towards her for a moment and start "I'll start that side then we can meet in the middle" I point to the other end

"Okay" she nods and I move away from her

I focus on my task until I feel someone looking at me, when I look up I find Mduduzi starring at me with much amusement, I stare back and he winks then walks away. That leaves me a bit unsettled because the last thing I want is to have anyone getting the wrong message here so I look around and see nobody else looking in my direction

Liyana and I make it to the middle and we started clearing the collected dirt quietly so. If this was Mrs. Mdlalose's way of getting us to talk then she failed, she failed dismally because I'm way past the point of wanting to talk to her

We go our different directions after she offers to dispose of the dirt and I make my way to the

kitchen to make myself a cup of coffee. It's scorching hot but I still love my coffee, I can't help it.

The kitchen is empty when I get there so I wash my hands and fix myself the hot cup then I sit by the kitchen island and enjoy the quiet space

"Bhaaa!"

The sudden noise startles me and I jump from my chair, spilling the hot coffee all over the counter and getting a few splashes on myself

"Oh damn, I'm so sorry"

"Hayi man! Mduduzi!" I yell when I see him

"Ngiyaxolisa, Let me get something to wipe off the mess" he quickly finds a clothes and dabs it on the counter absorbing the liquid "Did it burn you?" he looks at me with concern

"No"

"I'm very sorry, that was dumb of me"

"It was, I could have burnt myself" I scold him

"I'm sorry" he says again "Let me see" He reaches for my hand but I step back to maintain the distance

"It's fine, just wipe that off before it spills on the

floor and makes a mess"

"Yes ma'am" he smiles widely and finishes up then he throws the damp cloth in the sink and insists on making me another cup of coffee even when I tell him it's not necessary. He makes two cups then pulls a chair next to me

"Thanks"

"You're welcome... And I'm sorry again"

"Will you stop apologizing?"

"Why? Is it annoying you?" He asks with a childish grin

"It is, I already told you that it's fine"

"Alright, if you want me to stop then I will stop, miss" he says and I just remain quiet. All I wanted was some peace and a nice cup of coffee before getting to see just how many people are in this house, but somehow Mduzuzi has added himself into the equation, like he always does

"What time did you guys arrive last night? Phela we waited and waited until I just couldn't anymore"

"It was around midnight, the road constructions delayed us"

"And you're already up?"

"I'm an early riser" I shrug

"Your husband's still sleeping?"

"Yeap"

"That's a bummer, I thought I'd catch up with him before it gets busy"

"Busy?"

"Yes, it's the 31st, remember? We normally have this big gathering and we stay up all the way to the new year"

"Oh yah" I said remembering "He will probably be up soon, you can come check him later"

"Or I can sit here with you until he's up"

"That's also an option" I mumble "Do you live here?" I ask out of curiosity

"No, but home is just next door. For some reason, my dad and his brother figured it would be a great idea to build houses next to each other"

"Oh, okay"

" There's a lot of us, let's hope you're good with remembering names" He says and before I can

answer, a woman joins us, she's just around the same age as my mother in law

"Nguye lona? Ubuqinisile uma uthi muhle" [Is this is her? You were right when you said that she's beautiful] The lady looks at me in awe and I look at Mduduzi, whose smiling with the lady next to him while they both look at me

"Yebo, nguye umakoti wethu." [Yes it's her, our bride] he smiles at me, not once looking at the woman standing besides him

"Uyaphila ngane yami? Wee waze wamuhle " she asks me still smiling [Are you well, my child? You're so beautiful]

"Ngiyaphil-"

"Nami ngiyaphila" she doesn't wait for me to finish or ask how she's doing "I'm Mdu's mother, uMam'Nozizwe" she says proudly

"It's nice to meet you, Ma. I'm Khanyisa"

"I know, Mdu has told me so much about you"

Again, I look at Mdu, the man hardly knows me

Ma joins us "Bengizibuza ukuthi ushonephi" [I was wondering where you went] she says to me then look at Mam'Nozizwe "Sawubona"

"Yebo sawubona" Mam' Nozizwe responds and the hostility is on full display

"Khanyisa sisi, Bengicela ukungiphelezela ezitolo kunezinto okumele ngizithole ngaphambi kokuthi kugcwale" [I wanted to ask you to accompany me to the shops, there's things I need to get before it gets full] Ma says and before I can respond Mam'Nozizwe jumps in

"Hawu, kodwa bengizomcela ukuthi angisize ngaphandle?" [But I was about to ask her to help me outside]

"I asked first"

"Nihlala ndawonye eGoli, sinikeze ithuba lokuthi simazi nathi. Ungabi selfish, Tholakele" [You stay together in Joburg, give us a chance to

know her too. Don't be selfish] Mam'Nozizwe says all heated up

"Haibo, Ukhona izinsukwana, usazombona"
[She's here for a few days, you'll still see her]

"Kanjani lapho usufuna ukumgcina kuwe, Tholakele, ngiyaphinda, yeka ukuzicabangela wena" [How when you want to keep her to yourself, Tholakele, I repeat, stop being selfish]

Ma is left gobsmacked and so am I. I have both ladies partaking in a starring contest and neither of them seems to want to back down

"Nozizwe, gada indlela okhuluma ngayo nami"
[Watch how you address me] Ma says with a calm, yet stern tone, exactly how Nkosi would

say it.

"Ngizokuphelezela mam'khulu" [I'll accompany you, aunty] Mduzuki says and they break the contest

She stares at mam'Nozizwe for a while then she sighs "Okay" she then looks at me and gives a small smile "I'll see you later" she brushes my arm before walking out with Mduzuki

"There we go! You'll find her right here when you get back. Asambe wena makoti wami [Let's go, my bride]" she reaches for my hand and we walk out

When she said 'help' what she meant was to slaughter chicken and clean them....

Yah no... I could have totally left with ma.

I follow her lead and clean chicken for chicken with her and the other ladies with us. She proudly tells them about me as if we've known each other for the longest time and when we are done with the chicken she insists on sticking to me like glue. Even when ma is back

By two in the afternoon I'm done, I'm just done. The sun has fried me to the last level and I've had enough of Mduduzi's mom sending me all over and I could do with a drink, an ice cold drink

A teenage girl walks to me while we are still busy "Sis'Khanyisa" she says shyly and I look at

her "Ubhut'Nkosi ucela ukuthi uyomsiza [Nkosi is asking that you go and help him] he's in your room"

"Alright" I quickly walk away from the ladies. I wipe my wet hands with my apron as I walk in, he's nowhere in sight so I walk to the bedroom and find him laying on the bed, not looking like someone who needs help

I get in and close the door "You called?"

"Yes"

"You need help with?" I lean against the door and he turns to look at me

"You needed help" he says and I quickly catch on

I smile as I take off the apron and kick off my shoes then I lay on the bed facing him "Thank you" I whisper

"You're welcome. I know how overbearing Ma and mam'ncane can be"

"Yho, don't mention it. What's the deal with them?"

"I'm sure you've noticed that uMam'ncane can be bossy, I believe it's in her nature but Ma also gives as good as she gets"

"She sure does" I stretch my feet and try to relax

"You can hide in here for a couple of hours, no one will come looking for you when they know I asked for you"

"You're a sly one, Nkosiyabo" I chuckle

"Oho, Ngizokubuyisela ku mam'ncane Nozizwe"
[I'll send you back to aunt Nozizwe " he says

" No way, I'm good, I'm thanks" I say and he chuckles at my broken english

"You're welcome" he repeats and I shake my head at him

"What were you doing in here anyway?"

"Nothing, I was just thinking"

"About?"

"Plans for the next year"

"Oh, you're one of those resolutions kind of people" I say and he gives me an amused look

"What do you mean? Don't you have any plans for next year?"

"I do, I have my pending book then I'll take it

from there"

"The one where you keep getting plot twists?
When exactly are you planing on publishing?"

"Late February maybe... Or March"

"Hayi MaKhosa, you need to set a date and stick to it. Procrastinating won't help you"

"I know, I know... I'll get there"

"Not if you don't have an exact date" he says
and I know he has a point, but I'm too tired to
think about a definite date right now

"I'll decide on the date as soon as we get back

home" I say while yawning

We lay there looking at each other, I want to close the gap between us but I don't want to be out here doing too much. I don't want to do anything that might leave me feeling embarrassed so I lay right where I am. I slowly drift into sleep and he gets closer to have me under his arm

"Get some rest" he kisses my forehead before I fall asleep

When I wake up it's late in the afternoon and I'm alone. I get up the bed and put my shoes on, I leave the apron off then I grab my phone and

walk out

When I get outside I see groups of people sitting together while music plays. I look around trying to choose which group to join. Definitely not the men, definitely not Mam'Nozizwe... I see a group of people my age, but there's Liyana there, so no.

I spot the girl who Nkosi sent earlier, she's with others who look around her age and that's where I head to. Plus teenagers are fun, they are all about "Good vibes"

"Do you mind if I sit?" I ask when I get to her and she taps the free chair. I join the circle and introduce myself to those who weren't at the wedding. Once that's done with I sit and listen to their first year shenanigans. It's quite

entertaining and I find myself laughing to some of their stories. I get offered a drink as a bribe to not tell on them for drinking alcohol when they aren't allowed. They specifically make me swear to not tell mam'Nozizwe as they will never ever hear the end of it and will forever be branded the alcoholics of the family

I opt for a plastic cup too just like them then I continue listening in on the stories while I try to catch their names.

"So you chose the kiddies club?" Mduzuzi asks pulling a chair next to me

"Are you judging?"

"Of course not, but what could you possibly

have in common with these cartoons ?"

"They are entertaining, I like them"

"Really? These kids? Or you're just running from you know who"

"Who?"

He looks ahead and I follow his gaze, he's looking at Liyana "What's the deal with you two?"

"Nothing, why?"

"Hayi, it's just that I've been observing the two of you. There's definitely some tension there"

"I don't know, if there is then it isn't from me" I shrug "And what do you mean you have been observing us?"

"Nothing" He clears his throat "Just something I caught in passing"

"Oh" I say and he leans back on his chair

He ends up joining the 'Kiddies club' as he referred to it and when ask why he doesn't join Nkosi and the others he says he'd suddenly rather listen to kiddies talk

Hours pass and the countdown begins, the elders have long retired to bed and now it's one big circle with me sitting with Nkosi, twenty

minutes before we enter into the new year we get the fireworks works ready and just in time we lit them up decorating the dark sky on different colours. Everyone starts celebrating and I turn to. Look at Nkosi who has an arm around me while I snuggle onto his chest

"Happy new year" I say looking up to him

"Happy new year" He leans in and kisses me. With so many wishes rushing through my mind.

CHAPTER 14

KHANYISA

"Are you done?"

"Almost" I reply with a thinned voice

"But that's what you said thirty minutes ago"

"That's when I thought I was almost done... "

"And then what happened?" I hear the impatience in his tone

I bite my lower lip, fix my glasses then look up from the screen to find him looking at me expectedly "Plot twist"

"Plot twist?" he has this confused look on his face

"Yes, but I'm almost done. I promise"

"Fifteen minutes, or else Ngizokushiya mina
nale plot twist yakho [I'll leave you behind with
this plot twist of yours]

He grabs the last bag and walks out leaving me
to my typing. I wasn't planning on writing today
but there's this chapter that's been bouncing so
hard in my head and leaving me restless so I
finally gave in and just when I thought I was
done, another idea came through and now I'm
here trying to wrap it up as quick as I can before
Nkosi returns

We are heading to KZN and I'm quite excited, I
always am when it comes to taking long
distance trips. After the Christmas disaster I
wasn't so sure that I wanted to spend anymore
time around Liyana but it was too late and

either way, we are still going to have to meet at some point. I might as well get this over and done with but I swear, if she dares starts with me this time, I will not be holding back, I'd rather it becomes a whole circus than take anymore insults from her. I'm human, I also have limits and I've reached them where she's concerned

I pack my laptop away after saving my work then I put my sneakers on just as he calls me on the phone

"Uyahamba noma?" [Are you going or?]

"I'm coming, Nkosi" I say then hang up and rush outside, the sun is starting to set and I know we will arrive there late at night

He takes off as soon as I have my seatbelt on then I pair my phone to his car's bluetooth so I can play my music mix. As soon as the sound comes through, Nkosi looks at me then shakes his head "Uyayibona lento yokushada ama2000" [you see this thing of marrying people born 2000's]

"Please, you know I'm not a skrr skrr and deep house isn't a 2000 thing, it's a 90's kinda vibe, old man" I mumble the last part but he hears me

"Mina? Old man?" he sounds offended but I can't stop laughing

"Ngiyadlala" [I'm joking] I try to stop the laughter but his facial expression is killing me
"Ngiyadlala Nyanda, you're still a young one,

very young...at heart"

"Awungiboni yazi" [You don't see me] he tries not to smile but his lips betray him

"Ngiyakubona wena khehla lami [I see you, my old man] and I lo-like you just as you are" I quickly correct myself hoping he didn't catch on the mistake I almost made. I look at him to check, if he did, then he's doing a good job of acting like he didn't

He laughs off my teasing and the moment doesn't turn sour or awkward, that's when I know I can breathe easily

It's a long drive to KZN and we make two stops on our way there for a restroom break and

getting more snacks and water. Nkosi lets me hog the radio the entire ride and does not complain even when I start playing my Xitsonga music. It's a bad passenger habit but it is what it is, I'm trying to stay awake here

We spend more time on the road due to the endless road constructions and his mom keeps calling to find out how far we are. He ends up telling her that she can go to bed because our arrival time will be delayed but she insists on staying up. He attempts to argue with her about it but I stop him. It's only natural that she will worry about us being on the road this late at night, my own mom has texted quite a few times and I know she won't sleep too until I let her know that we've arrived, it's a mom thing I guess and if staying up gives them peace of mind then let them

I end up dozing off after endless efforts of trying hard to stay awake and the next time I open my eyes we've stopped moving. I look around and it's obviously dark outside but there's lights on making it easy to see around me

"Sesifikile" [We've arrived] Nkosi says killing the engine and opening his door to get off. I remove the seat belt from me then stretch my arms then get off too. There's this homely village smell, I don't know how to explain it but it's like this even when I'm at Limpopo, it has this freshness and calmness to it, not the polluted air we breath in daily.

"Finally!" I hear his mother say while coming to meet us outside "Bengiqala ukucabanga ukuthi nizofika ekuseni" [I was starting to think that

you'll arrive in the morning "

She's in her gown and has a towel wrapped around her waist and a doek on her head, she looks exhausted and I feel for her, it's almost midnight

"Askies [sorry] ma, we didn't think the traffic would be that bad"

"Yikho bengithi hamba uyophumula" [That's why I was saying go get some rest]. Nkosi says to her and she just shakes her head, clearly too tired to argue with him

I follow them in the house and as expected it's quiet "Manje ngingalala, ngizonibona ekuseni" [Now I can go to bed, I'll see you in the morning]

she yawns and walks away after reminding him to make sure the door is locked

He does as told then carries our bags and leads me further into the house. Like the house in Joburg, this is a huge double story house and it is extremely beautiful. I look around as I follow him up the stairs until we get into one of the bedrooms.

NKOSIYABO

I throw the bags on one corner of the room and then I go to make sure that the bedroom door is locked before turning to look at Khanyisa. She's sitting on the loveseat, taking off her shoes and socks.

She's wearing a polka dot wrap dress which stops mid thigh. How I've managed to not touch those thighs throughout the trip is beyond me but right now I've just let go of the last string of self control that I had while driving. I'm done.

My wife has a gorgeous body and this dress is showing it off perfectly, it flows so smoothly down her waist, hips and rests on her thighs, perfectly so. I watch her stretch her feet and wiggle her toes as I kick off my own shoes. It's been a long drive and when we arrived I felt exhausted but now that we are in here and I'm properly looking at her, I don't feel so tired anymore, I want her.

I walk to her as she gets up and pull her closer "Are you too tired?" I ask kissing her weak spot between her neck and collar bone, she doesn't

respond but tilts her head to one side granting me more access to her neck, that's the only green light I need. I move my hand to the knot on the side of her dress and undo it opening up her dress. I run my hands on her smooth skin and move my lips to meet and capture hers in a starved kiss, those hours on the road were pure torture

She takes off the dress completely, letting it fall to her feet and then she reaches back with her hands and lets her bra come loose, also dropping to the floor then the panties follow. I quickly strip off my clothes too then walk her to the bed without breaking the kiss, at this point I doubt I'll ever get to a point where I've had enough of these lips, they respond to perfectly to my lead

When the back of her knees hit the bed I lay her on it then make sure she's laying on the center of the bed. Her legs are still pressed together with her knees up and she's trying to hide the fact that she's checking me out so I get on my knees on the bed and give her a full view of what's hers and hers alone, the look in her eyes is somewhere between being cute and turning me on even more than I already am

I look down at her thighs "Ngivulele" [Open for me]

She spreads her legs a little for me and I smirk then I part them even more "Ngifuna ungivulele kanje, phela okwami lokhu " [I want you to open up like this for me, this is mine, after all] I look her in the eyes and she nods

She's already wet and glistening and I know I'm taking the last of her energy so I don't hold back. I push inside her until I'm buried deep in her, I swear this feels amazing each time, she feels amazing. I start moving in and out of her and her moans are music to my ears, they fuel me up more and more. I look into her eyes and I think of that moment in the car. The one where she almost told me that she loves me...

I've never been so conflicted with myself as I was at that moment.

I was stuck between wanting to hear her say it and wanting her to stop and not cross that line, the frustration of it was too real and when she opted for a lighter word I felt this ping in my heart but of course I didn't show it because it also carried some relief, she had not said it and

the part of me that wanted that was glad and relieved

I got into this knowing what I wanted from her and what I'd be able to give her as a husband but right now, in this moment as I continue pleasuring her and myself, hearing her whisper my name as she nears her high, feeling her hands on my skin while I pound harder and deeper into her, sucking out all of her energy and feeling myself get closer to exploding inside of her, I can't stop these feelings that are pooling inside of me and demanding that I take note of them, I can't ignore this feeling that she's giving me and I can't ignore the possibility that I might have just played myself.

CHAPTER 17

KHANYISA

We rush to one of the crime scenes while Bangizwe and bab'Mdlalose rush to the other one and when we get there it's a mess. Two lanes on the Mabopane highway in Pretoria have been closed and the traffic is insane as Nkosi tries to get us closer to the scene

From where we are, I'm able to see the fire trucks and police vans and paramedic cars and when we finally get to stop I see the one car that will break anyone's heart with just one look, the coroner van. It is a fresh reminder that two men lost their lives today, two men with families who are looking forward to either seeing or hearing from them tonight

I have to keep my emotions intact as I follow behind Nkosi. This is heartbreaking, why did

they have to kill them? This looks nothing like a hijacking. Whoever did this wasn't looking to cash in, hence the burnt cars, but why kill the drivers?

They let us through the barricade tape after Nkosi explains who he is. They let us know how they found the scene. They ask a couple of questions then we go through the "We will do everything we can to catch the culprits" stage just before the coroner van leaves

It gets dark and we still have to go break the news to the deceased's family. Chances are, they've seen this all over the news and have tried to contact their family members with no luck but we still need to go and break the news to them in a respectful way. It's going to be a hard thing to do and I see the tension rise on

Nkosi as he enters the location and starts driving but it must be done, We need to do this.

We arrive in Soshanguve a little after Eight in the evening and with every step that I take, it becomes harder and harder to lift my feet off the ground. Nkosi takes my hand in his and when we get to the door he knocks gently. After a moment, someone gets the door, it's a boy whose around the age of sixteen or seventeen and when he looks at Nkosi, his eyes become glassy, however, he swallows hard and responds when Nkosi greets.

Nkosi asks if this is the Mogotsi household and the boy nods then he lets us in

He leads the way to the living room which is packed. There's two men and three women, a

young girl and boy who looks exactly like the one who opened for us. There's one woman who quickly catches my attention, she's on edge, she's nervous and I can literally see her chest rise and fall hard from the deep breaths that she's trying to take... She's the wife and she has this dreadful look in her eyes like she already knows what's coming but she's hoping that she's wrong, how I wish that we had news that would spare her from what she's about to deal with

"Sanibonani" Nkosi greets when we are seated and one of the men responds. It takes a moment for him to start talking, he first introduces himself, then me then he goes quiet for a moment, he looks down then he faces them again. The moment he mentions the company name, the extremely tense woman starts wailing, she lets out the loudest cry filled

with complete disbelief. Nkosi's presence has just confirmed her worst fears, he doesn't need to say the words, I'm sure they had already seen the news and tried calling, now Nkosi showing up just confirms her worst nightmare, it confirms that her husband is really gone

Her daughter starts crying too and the one that opened for us quietly excuses himself and his brother follows him quietly. One of the ladies reaches for the girl and walks out with her while the other remains comforting the wife then she helps her up after a while and they leave too, I watch her until she disappears from my eyesight

My heart breaks for Mrs. Mogotsi, her cries are piercing and full of sorrow. It hurts to see someone go through this, to know that nothing

can be done to take the pain away and that right now, she and her kids have no choice but to go through this.

My own tears start to flow and Nkosi puts his hand just above my knee "I'm really sorry for your loss. I know that no amount of words will make this right or take the pain away but please accept our condolences" He says looking at the men

"We really have no words, we were hoping that it wasn't him. We had hope that he would walk through that door but now..." the man can't finish his sentence and he just shakes his head and looks away

"What are the police saying?" The other one asks and Nkosi explains what we were told and

shares all the information he has. When he's done he tells them that we will be our way now and that he will be in touch. They need time to process this before anything else is discussed.

When we get in the car I let out a deep sigh and squint my eyes "That was hard" I quietly say

"It was." he says then he takes my hand in his "Are you okay?"

"I am, My emotions got the better of me earlier, I'm sorry"

"Don't apologize for being human. Anyone could have broken down in there, I'm just glad you were there with me" he says reaching for my hand again and bringing it up to kiss it before

letting go and starting the car

Before going home we start by his parents place to let them know how it went and to hear from their side. They definitely look like us. I've never had to break such news to a family and I honestly wish I never have to do this again. It is unbearable, but I can appreciate how Nkosi and his father didn't just leave it to the police to go knocking on those doors, they saw it fitting to have direct contact with the families

We stay there for two hours then head home, it's been an emotionally taxing day and I feel that I just need to soak myself in the bathtub and allow myself to go through these emotions, that's the only way I'll be able to get some rest or I'll be tossing all night

When I'm out I get dressed in my red lace satin night dress then I put on my matching robe and tie the belt around my waist. I put on my slippers and walk out of the bathroom. The lights are deemed and his sitting on the corner couch with the sliding door open. There's a whole bottle of cognac on the side table and a glass with some of the liquid in it. His shirt is completely unbuttoned and he has both arms on the sides of the chair while he lays back with his eyes closed. He's exhausted and I feel for him

"Nkosi" I say leaning against the sliding door and he opens his eyes to look at me "You should get some rest"

"Come here" He beckons for me to sit on his lap and I do just that. I straddle him, digging my

knees on the sides of the couch and his arms immediately go around me pulling me even closer to his bare chest. I rest my head on the side of his face, inhaling his cologne mixed with the smell of alcohol with each breath that I take.

"What are you thinking?" I ask him after a moment

"A lot of things are not making sense. It's obvious that company like ours has insurance so either way we will recover our stock, we will also reassure our customers that we are on top of things and surely they've seen the news so they know there's no miracle that will happen in the next few hours."

" So maybe it wasn't about the cars or trying to ruin business for you"

"Then what was it about? What was so bad that two people had to die just for the person or people to get a message across and even then, what is the damn message? What are we supposed to be gathering from all this?"

I feel his frustration, nothing is making sense. Hijackers would have taken the haulers with them but these people had no intention of taking the cars. Even so, they could have just burnt them without hurting anyone but they killed the drivers, he's right, nothing is connecting here, it's one big mess

I straighten my face and look at him "There's a lot we need to find answers to but for now let's just focus on the funeral and making sure that this doesn't shake the business itself. After the

funerals then everything else will follow"

"I don't think the police will do much"

"Then a P.I will do, let's deal with one thing at a time, right?" I ask him cupping his cheeks with the palms of my hands

"Right" he smiles a little then I feel his brush up on my thighs , moving the soft material up my body"I could use a distraction"he says lowly and the look in his eyes clearly communicates the message

"I'm here" I respond and start undoing the knot of the silk belt on the side, leaving the robe open, he slids it off me, leaving me to feel the breeze coming in through the open sliding door.

He then puts one hand at the back of my neck and pulls me closer so we can kiss, I taste the liquor on him as he deepens the kiss

I take off his shirt and move my hands up and down his hard chest and arms. I'm startled a little when he gets up and tighten my grip on him

"Relax, I won't let you fall" He says then walks to the bed and lays me there. He takes off his remaining clothes and mine too and in no time he's slamming into me and having me utter things that probably make zero sense while gripping harder on the sheets with each thrust until I reach my high and he follows soon after

It is when he holds me in his arms afterwards that I feel the flood of feelings I've been locking

in, flow through my body. I look at him and I want to tell him that I've fallen for him, that I am deeply and helplessly in love with him... I want to say it to him and it's no longer even about him saying it back, I just want to say it

"Nkosi..."

"mama?"

I sigh a little "Everything will be okay" I chicken out...

He kisses my forehead then continues resting his chin above my head "It will, I just has to be"
He kisses me again and it goes quiet

"Khanyisa?" He says after a moment

"Hmm?"

He also goes silent for a while "Thank you for being there" I smile at this

"You don't need to thank me, that's what a wife does, isn't it?"

"It is, my wife"

"Let's get some sleep, it's going to be a busy morning and week" I tell him and we fall asleep while holding onto each other.

I guess it'll be said another day.

The week is quite a busy one. Nkosi is still tense but like I suggested, he's choosing to focus on one challenge at a time. Everything else can follow after the burial of the drivers.

Him and his dad both splitted their attention to each family but of course as the CEO, his dad also had to go see the other family and pay his respects

On Thursday they hold a memorial service for the men and I get ready to go attend once I'm done with my housework. When I get there, Janice spots me and she walks up to me

"Mrs. Mdlalose" she greets with a smile

"Hey Janice, How are you?"

"I'm well, given the circumstances. It's quite a somber day"

" I know hey, it's going to be a hard day"

"Indeed, shall we head there?" She gestures to the warehouse. They cleared it so they could have enough space to accommodate both families alongside colleagues and people who came to support the family

"You know, when I first met you it didn't click that you are Miss. K.Inks" she says and I look at

her trying not to show my amusement at her discovery and the use of my pen name

"When did you figure it out?"

"I heard Mr. Mdlalose talking about it with senior Mr. Mdlalose, I wasn't eavesdropping or anything, I just happened to be there when he mentioned your pending book and then I connected the dots" she says excitedly "I can't believe all this time I've been interacting with you and I had no idea it was you" she whispers

"Come on Janice, I'm not some celebrity. I'm not that big" I chuckle

"If any of your four books are anything to go by, I'd say you're quite big. I've read all of them and

can't wait for the coming one. My book club is so excited about it too and when I told them I've met you in person they couldn't believe it"

"We should snap a pic for proof" I say jokingly

"Would you? I mean it would shut their mouths"
She smirks at the thought

"Sure, I don't mind" I say

"Maybe check if everyone is settled, Janice, instead of standing here and chatting away"
Refilwe cuts her joy short and her smile immediately disappears

"We'll take that pic after the service" I say with

a smile

"Alright, Miss K.Inks" she says it as one word without the full stop and winks, making me chuckle

"So you're a writer?" Refilwe asks with this belittling tone

"I am" I answer clearly

"That's nice, I haven't heard of you before"

"You're a reader?" I ask with the same tone she used when asking if I'm a writer

"Yes, I've read a lot of great stories"

"Oh yeah? Whose your favorite author?" I ask

"A few" she clears her throat and I nod, she's not a reader, a reader will be ready to tell you all about their favorite authors work without even having to think hard about it

"Alright" I say turning to walk away but she stops me

"Hows being a housewife working out?"

"It's great" I look at her again

"How old are you again?"

"Turning twenty-six"

"So young and you've already decided that this is the life you want to live?"

"Is there something wrong with that?" I ask her calmly

"There's a lot wrong with it, Khanyisa. Especially with a man like Nkosi, he's successful, rich and very dominant. He needs a woman who can match him, not a stay at home wife, he needs someone with ambition, someone with the drive and clear vision"

"Someone like you" I walk closer to her, keeping my eyes steady on hers. I'm not about to take this bullshit today

"If you see it like that-

"What I see is a bitter ex. You don't know me, Refilwe. We aren't friends and prior to me marrying Nkosiyabo we had never even set eyes on each other. Now, do you see those two women there?" I move my eyes to the two women mourning their husbands then I look back at her" I came here for them, I came here to honor their late husbands but most importantly, I came here to stand by my husband. I didn't come here to collect your insults and belittling statements or the assumption that you know exactly what my husband wants because honestly if you did know, you'd be the one married to him right now"

"I was just making conversation" she tries to defend

"No, you were trying your luck with me but I'll tell you now, today is not the day and I am definitely not the one. Try me on a different day and maybe I'll have the patience to let your repulsive behaviour pass but not today. The company you work for has just suffered a hard knock and you see my presence as an opportunity to try and get under my skin? I might be young but surely we both see who has child like behavior between the two of us. I don't know what you thought you were going to do right now but just go ahead and dissolve that plan because it won't work"

"Is everything okay here?"Nkosi asks standing next to me with his hand on my back

" Yes, everything is just fine" I respond still looking at Refilwe and she nods

"Everything is okay, I'll see you around" She walks away

When she's far Nkosi asks again "Are you really good?"

"I am" I respond honestly

"Alright, come" He takes my hand and walks me to the front of the row where the employees are seated and I find myself sitting between him and Mduduzi

"Hey, are you well?" Mduzuzi asks me

"I am, you?"

"Me too, I'm just unsettled by all of this. This is painful to watch" he says and I agree

"It really is"

"I hope whoever did this is found and made to answer for their actions. This is inhumane, it's pure evil. They could have just taken the cars or done whatever, now these families are left without breadwinners" he says angrily

"Let's hope they will be brought to justice" I say right before the service begins

We all sit there as speakers take turns addressing the crowd, there's an orchestra on one side playing hymns in between speakers. It's all sad and gloomy and by the time it is done, everyone seems to just be emotionally done with the day.

CHAPTER 16

NKOSIYABO

The first four weeks of the year are a smooth sailing. Everyone is getting settled again at work and we've signed new clients for our car parts. Everyone is still basking in this new year energy and one can feel it all round the building. It might just be another good year.

I get to the office early as usual on a Friday morning and get started with my day. There's a specific delivery I'm waiting on today and I check with the guys at the warehouse reminding them to let me know as soon as it arrives then I get back to work

A couple of hours later there's a knock on my door and I answer loudly for the person to enter

"Bafo, I hope I'm not disturbing" Mduzuzi says standing by the door

"Not at all, come in" I say and he does just that
"Are you settling in okay?" I ask remembering that this is his first week back

" Yes yes, uBangizwe has been of great help" he

says and I nod

"That's good, I'm glad you're settling in" he isn't in the same position that he was in before he left and I know it can't be an easy thing to adjust to, him having to report to Bangizwe, but it's the best I could do. Hopefully as time passes he will work his way up

"Bengifuna ukukubonga futhi, ngokunginika leli thuba. [I wanted to thank you again, for giving me this opportunity.] You might not know it, brother, but you've really thrown me a lifeline and I'll always be grateful"

"Akumele ulokhu ungibonga Mduduzi. Siwumndeni futhi umndeni uyakhathalelana" [You don't have to keep thanking me, Mduduzi. We are family and family looks out for one

another]

"Alright, I'll stop" He chuckles and I check the time again "Are you waiting for someone?"

"For something, a car..."

"Are the car haulers late?"

"No, it's not that. I got a car for Khanyisa so I took it in to get customized"

"Hee! look at you, already husband of the year and we're just getting into the second month of the year" he says and I chuckle

"Ngizothini bafo? [What can I say, brother?]"

some of us are good at this husbanding thing,
we were born with this thing " I say and he
laughs

"It means I'll come to you for tips the day I
decide to settle down too" He says and it's my
turn to laugh

"Wena? Settle down"

"Yebo bafo, people change" He says while
laughing, clearly not believing his own word

"Ngizokukholwa uma ngikubona" [I'll believe it
when I see it]

"One of these days I'll surprise you, uzobona

[You'll see]" he chuckles

"Like I said, to see is to believe"

"Alright, alright. Ake ngibuyele emsebenzini ngingakangeni enkingeni nomphathi wami" [Let me get back to work before I get in trouble with my boss] he says then walks out

Once I get the call I've been waiting for, I make my way to our warehouse to see my delivery. It's our latest SUV, the first time I saw it, I knew this was the one I had to get for my wife. Her love for SUVs is out of this world, I know this because of all the cars we have at home, that's the only one she ever uses

"Is it ready?" I ask the guy handling it and he

nods then gives me the keys. When I open it, My expectations are met over and beyond. The interior is exactly as I envisioned it with the burgundy and shiny black colour, I can already imagine the look on her face when she sees this and it gives me this proud feeling. I can't exactly explain what it is, all I know is that I can't wait to see the look on her face

I asked her to come over today and I asked Janice to bring her straight to the warehouse as soon as she arrives so when I see them walk in I close the door and wait for her to get to where I'm standing. She's obviously unsuspecting, from her view of things, this is just another normal day with cars all round

Janice walks back when they spot me and Khanyisa walks ahead

"Hey" She greets me with a smile, I can tell she's a little curious because I didn't tell her why I asked her to come over, I just asked her to come at this specific time

I have this urge to hold her in my arms but I stay rooted right where I am. I'm still trying to get myself back in line but it's proving to be a little hard with each passing day, especially since she's clearly decided to not cross that line. Yes, she's more free around me now but I feel the barrier that she's put up and whenever it starts to bother me I remind myself that she's only doing what we agreed on. So I need to sort myself out too, just as she's done with herself

"Hey, you look beautiful" I say, I'm not prohibited from giving my wife compliments, am I?

"Thanks" She blushes and the invincible strings tug at my heart once more. "New arrival?" She asks turning her attention to the car

"Yes"

She looks at it from the outside then reaches for the door handle "May I?" she asks and I not

When she sees the inside, her eyes go wide "Wow! This is... Wow! Look at these seats" she runs her fingers through the leather material

"Get in" I say and she looks at me for a moment before climbing in, her hands go everywhere, on the power steering, 12 inch touchscreen and everything else that's standing out to her, all

this while, she's very silent

"Uyayithanda?" [Do you love it?]

"More than the word love, the owner will be very pleased with you, I'm telling you" she says excitedly then starts to move off the car and I help her get off

"That's music to my ears then" I reach for the keys in my pocket and give them to her

"Wait... Wait... You mean?" Her eyes grow wide again

"It's yours" I can't help but smile when realization hits her

"Oh my gosh! Nkosi!" She first covers her mouth with her hands then looks at the car again then at me and then she throws her arms around my neck with so much excitement, it takes me by surprise but my body responds naturally to her as I wrap mine around her waist

"Thank you" She whispers

"You're more than welcome, plus I was starting to miss my car atleast now you'll have your own so may I please have my car keys back?" I tell her and she laughs then tries to pull away but I keep her right there, not wanting to let her go. She looks up at me and when her eyes drop to my lips I lean in and kiss her, not caring that there might be extra sets of eyes around, there's not a lot of people here and this is

definitely out of character for me but in this moment I couldn't care less. Just when I thought I had made progress with my discipline, it feels like I just took ten whole steps back.

We don't break eye contact when we pull away and I still have her in my arms, she's happy and I'm happy that she's happy

"Test drive?" She asks excitedly

"Let's go"

KHANYISA

I can't get over my new car.

I love everything about it, inside out. Nkosi made my day yesterday but that's not the part that's playing in my head as I get ready to meet with Cheryl so we can go for a ride in my new whip

I'm thinking about how he held me and kissed me, right there, in public. I haven't known Nkosi to be a public display of affection kind of man and it shocked me a little, but not as much as it made me feel all giddy on the inside, and the way he looked at me afterwards? Goodness me!

I replay that moment like it's a video stuck on play in my head and I have no intention of stopping it. He walks on our room while I'm getting dressed with a smile still plastered on

my face

"What's gotten you so happy?" he asks and I look at him then quickly away

"Just a memory"

"What memory?" He asks coming closer, he knows exactly what I'm thinking about

"Something" I give a closed mouth smile and he reaches for me, holding me against his chest then his hands rest on my bums. All this touching, there's not a time when it doesn't shock me, but of course not in a bad way, just in a 'I'm not used to this' kind of way

"Tell me about this something?" he has his very low voice on right now

"When I get back"

"Do you have to leave?" He lowers his head and kisses my cheek

"I do, she's already waiting"

"Okay" He says squeezing me "Ngizobe ngikulindile" [I'll be waiting for you]

"Okay, I'll see you later" I say then start moving but he doesn't remove his hands, instead he tilts my head up and kisses me, just like yesterday, only today it's with his hands feeling

on my body and it's quickly escalating into something more

My phone pings and I pull away "Later" I peck his lips once then get going

I drive over to Cheryl's house when she gets in the car she lets out the loudest scream of excitement hyping me up too

"Kay, this is amazing!!"

"I love it!" I squeal excitedly

"I love it too! Oh my word, I might just be falling in love with big cars" she says dreamily

"Buckle up, lady. We've got to go" I say and she clasps the belt around her

"I'm ready, let's hit the road" she says loudly then I press open the sunroof and blast the music through the speakers

We have our joyride and we cruise around and end up at a mall doing some shopping, a habit we both seem to lack control in

"There's these new shoes I saw online, you're going to love them" She says and of course, we end up loving more than shoes, we love the a couple more pairs and a couple of handbags to match the couple of pairs. At this point, I've gotten used to not worrying about overspending, and the constant worrying that Nkosi might call me out on my shopping habits has died down

too

We later pass by McDonald's drive through for our favourite drink, Cheryl can't pass the food shop without wanting caramel frappe too and she blames it on me because each time we've gone out, even if we dined on a fancy restaurant, on our way back home I'd insist on getting a frappe

Late in the afternoon we drive back and I drop her off then I go home. I park my baby and grab my shopping bags then I walk in and go straight to the bedroom to put them away before going to look for Nkosi around the house. I find him on his study and he's on the phone, the look on his face tells me that whatever he's being told on the other end isn't good at all so I start walking back to give him privacy but he shakes

his head indicating that I shouldn't leave

When he hangs up, his eyes linger on the phone a little bit longer

"What is it?"

"Two of our car haulers that were out for delivery in different locations were hijacked, at the same time"

"Oh my... The drivers?" I ask and he clenches his jaw and shakes his head

"They were shot dead" He says

I stand there frozen, not knowing what to say

then he continues "Whoever it was, their intention wasn't even to get the cars, because after killing the drivers, they set the cars alight and created a huge spectacle"

CHAPTER 19

KHANYISA

We rush over to the hospital, we have no idea how my father in law is doing or how bad the damage is. All we can do is hope that it isn't that bad. We seriously cannot be dealing with more bad news. How is it that the year started on such a sour note? Things are just falling apart and it makes me wonder what else is coming

I watch Nkosi as he drives, his attention is

clearly set on the road. I want to tell him that everything is going to be fine but at this point, even I am having a hard time believing that. Things are just going south so fast, it's like we can't catch a breath

When we get to the hospital he quickly parks the car and I don't wait for him to get the door for me as I get off while he does too. We follow the sign to the ER and rush through the hallway until we find Bangizwe pacing around. He looks up and stops pacing when he sees us

"How bad is it?" Nkosi asks Bangizwe

"Ey, kubi bafo" [It's bad, brother]

"Ukuphi?" [Where is he?] Nkosi asks Bangizwe

He points further down the hallway "The doctors are busy with him in the theatre"

"Why theatre?" Nkosi asks and I feel my nerves heighten

"They say he suffered from blunt trauma which caused internal hemorrhage, so they are performing an emergency surgery on him right now to stop the bleeding" Bangizwe explains with a strained and exhausted voice

Nkosi looks at the direction that Bangizwe pointed in then he clenches his jaw and nods "Okay...Uphi uMa?" [Where's mom?]

"In the waiting room" gestures at an open door

next to him

Nkosi pats Bangizwe on the shoulder then moves towards the door. I follow behind him. Ma and Liyana are sitting quietly in the waiting room, each lost in their own thoughts.

"Ma" Nkosi says sitting next to her and taking her hand in his. When she looks up at him, tears stream down her face and her eyes reflect nothing but fear

"Ungakhali, Uzophila. Odokotela bazokwenza konke abangakwenza ukuze bamsize" [Don't cry, he will live. The doctors will do whatever they can to help him]

She shakes her head as if to dispute what he's

saying "Mina angazi kwenzakalani Nkosiyabo, kusuke kubhedane nje, angazi ngempela " [I don't know what's going on, it's one mess after another, I really don't know]

"Kuzolunga ma. Okwamanje ake sibheke ukululama kukababa, Konke okunye kuzolandela" [It will be fine, for now let's focus on dad's recovery, everything else will follow] he says and she nods.

Liyana gets up and walks out the room saying she needs some air and the rest of us remain seated there, waiting for the doctor to come and give us some news

Mduduzi also shows up while we are waiting, I'm guessing he heard from Bangizwe too. He gets in the room, greets then sits quietly with us

after getting an update from Nkosi. He also tells his aunt not to worry, that bab'Mdlalose is strong and will pull through

After a long time of waiting I decide to go get some coffee for everyone and Mduduzi offers to help me. We walk to the cafeteria quietly and I place my order but when I'm about to pay he quickly offers his card

"You don't have to"

"And what kind of man would I be? Letting my own sister in law pay for things while I'm around?" He asks

"I don't mind"

"Well I do. I was raised better than that" he insists

"You don't always have to force the situation you know"

"And you don't always have to be stubborn" He looks at me then smiles. I have no energy to argue with him so I let him pay

We sit and wait for our order by one of the tables there

"You know, I'm asking myself exactly what's going on here, is this one big coincidence? Was it planned?" he asks or rather says to himself in so much thought

"We all wish to get the answers to those questions" I tell him

"This just seems orchestrated, you know. It's all just too much of a coincidence. One after the other"

I know better than to mention that Nkosi hired a PI so I just nod. We collect our order then walk back to the waiting rooms, just as we pass the first one I catch a glimpse of Liyana sitting alone with her face buried on the palms of her hands while she rests them on her thighs

I first pass so we can deliver the coffee then I take two cups and walk out. I know she hasn't been welcoming to me, if anything, she's the one person in this family who has not only expressed pure dislike for me but has gone as

far as humiliating me in front of my parents... but my conscious won't let me ignore the fact that she's sitting in that room alone, if it were my dad in surgery right now, I know I'd want someone to be with me.

I walk back knowing that I might be met with much hostility but then at least I'll know I tried and she responded in her usual nasty self. It won't be on me.

I step in the room and she looks up to see who it is, her face is wet with tears and her eyes are all puffy and red, she covers her face with her hands again and I gently shut the door behind me then I take slow steps to where she is, getting ready for the worst of course

"Hey" I whisper and she removes her hands

from her face but doesn't look at me "He's going to be okay" I proceed to say after setting both cups of coffee on the table in front of us

She starts sobbing loudly and her body starts to shake. I move closer so I can hold her, she's literally trembling and I hold her tight trying to get her to calm down, as she starts calming down, she lays on my lap, crying silently with me whispering that she's okay, over and over while rubbing her back until her body relaxes

"This shouldn't have happened" She says with a hoarse voice after a while, still laying on my lap while the rest of her body is crouched on the couch

"I know... But it's going to be okay, we have to believe that it will be okay"

"He has to live, Khanyisa... He can't die... Things aren't supposed to be like this" She starts crying again

"He won't die, the doctors will do everything that they can to help him" I hope I'm not lying as I say this

After a while, when she's calm I ask her "Do you want to join the others again?"

"No, I just want to sit here for a while... Will you sit with me?"

Her question takes me by surprise, I wasn't expecting this from her, if anything, I expected her to tell me to get lost at first glance

"Yeah, of course" I say even though I want to check on Nkosi too, but I know she's not in a state to be left alone either so I get comfortable and sit there with her

NKOSIYABO

As soon as my phone pings, I excuse myself and walk to the basement parking to meet my PI. This needs to stop and I need him to speed this whole process up, I can't sit and watch anyone else go through something like this, be it my own . Even though the police don't suspect foul play with my father's accident, the fact that the person who pushed him off the road took off just makes it clear that this was intentional, not an accident

When a black 325i approaches I straighten up and make myself visible so he can see me. When he parks he walks out and approaches me. In his vest, shorts and flip flops, one could easily underestimate Mfanafuthi's skills or mistaken him for some chacer but he's far from that , he's the perfect example of 'don't judge a book by it's cover'

"Bozza yam" [Boss] He says coming closer

"Eita, ugrand?" [Are you good?]

"ahy ukukhala akusizi bozza" [Crying doesn't help]

"Iqiniso lelo" [That's true]

"Sure mlung'wam. Zishani ngezibhedlela manje?" [Yes boss, what's up with hospitals now?]

"Ubaba waba sengozeni yemoto" [Dad was involved in a car accident]

"Eish, hade bozza yam [Sorry boss], I hope he will be fine" he says sympathetically

"That's actually why I called you here, There's got to be a connection here" I go straight into it

"Ngiyakuzwa [I hear you] , and you might be right. I'll start working that angle too"

"Fana, I need this information as in yesterday,

time is a luxury I don't have right now"

"Sure bozza, Uyazi ungathembela kimi [You know you can trust in me] Remember our last mission took less than forty-eight hours?" He asks and I'm reminded of the last time I asked him to dig up info on someone for me. That was the worst period of my life and having to do this again takes me back to her betrayal, something I could do without thinking about

" Let's make this twenty-four. Give me something in that time and you'll earn a bonus"

"Nazo! Now let me go do what I do best. I'll be in touch"

"Cool, don't let me call you, Fana." I say and he

nods

"Obvious bozza" he says then gets on his car and drives off, leaving me to nothing but bitter, unpleasant memories

The last time I required Fana's services, I was stuck between a rock and a manipulative, serial lying woman. All of this is quickly reminding me why I took the path that I took with Khanyisa, and I realise right now that I've been careless with her, I've let my guard down and allowed myself to feel things I shouldn't be feeling or entertaining. This moment right here reminds me that I need to be in control of every aspect of my life, my marriage included. We need to go back to our agreement because this will not work out, at all.

Bangizwe calls to let me know that the doctors are done and I rush back in to be with my family. Thankfully they managed to stop the bleeding and they believe he will be fine. We are given a few minutes with him and we agree that mom should be the one to see him, the rest of us can wait. He's obviously still out of it and it has gotten very late so I try to convince my mother to go home and get some rest when she walks out of the room

"Ngeke ngivele ngimshiye lana, kumele kube khona umuntu lana uma evuka" [I can't just leave him here, someone must be here with him when he wakes up] she protests

"Udinga ukuphumula, ma. Ngizohlala naye lana ke ningeza nizombona ekuseni." [You need to rest, ma. I'll stay here with him then you can

come see him in the morning.] I tell her, not willing to have her spend a night on a chair, I'll stay here with him.

"And if anything changes, you'll call me"

"Ngiyakwethembisa" [I promise]

"Nami ngizosala, Mduduzi uzokwazi ukubashiya ekhaya?" [I'll also stay behind, Mduduzi, will you be able to drop them off at home?] Bangizwe asks

"Yah, lokho ngeke kube yinkinga" [That won't be a problem]

"You can go with them" I say to Khanyisa, she

looks exhausted too

"No, it's okay. I'll wait with you guys" she says

"maKhosa, hamba noMduduzi. You can't be sitting here all night" I insist knowing she won't start a dialogue about it in front of everyone

"Alright" She says and they get going

As soon as everyone is out of sight we walk back in the waiting room and I lean back on the couch only to feel Bangizwe staring at me

"And then?"

"I should be asking you that" he says

"Ukhuluma ngani manje?" [What are you talking about now?]

"You pushed your wife to leave, why?"

"Was I supposed to let her spend the night here?"

"If it were any other person, I'd believe that they did that out of wanting her to get some rest"

" So because it's me, you somehow think I didn't do it because I want her to rest? "I eye him and he doesn't back down, that's when I know he's about to hand it to me, I'm about to be told a couple of truths and I will not like it

" Ngiyakwazi mfowethu [I know you, brother]
Yes, you do want her to get some rest but the truth is you're pushing her away, the question is why? I mean you guys have been doing good. What happened?"

"I gave myself a reality check, I was treading along dangerous lines and I need to get back to the correct one"

"By reality check you mean you decided that you'd rather have control over every aspect of your marriage and so you're not going to allow yourself to fall for her or vice versa"

"Yes"

"Nkosiyabo, Kungani uzincisha kanje?" [Why are you depriving yourself like this?]

"Usuqalile" [You've started]

"Hayi bafo, Angilwi, engikubuzayo ukuthi, uyazi ukuthi kumnandi kanjani ukuthanda nokuthandwa?" [I'm not fighting, all I'm asking is, do you know how great it feels to love and be loved]

"I know, I've tried that or have you forgotten?"
My tone is cold and he catches on

"You can't compare them, I haven't known Khanyisa for that long but I can confidently say akafani naloya mthakathi [She's not like that witch]"

"Angishongo ukuthi bayafana, [I didn't say they are the same. I've just learned my lesson and things are better off this way for both Khanyisa and I. I never misled her, she knows what she agreed to and we need to get back on track, that's all"

"Ahy, if you say so but I'll say it again,
uyazincisha [You're depriving yourself]

I ignore him knowing very well that my mind is made up. When Khanyisa and I got married, these things that I'm feeling for her weren't part of what we agreed on, it won't be easy but we need to go back to our agreement. I can't risk allowing myself to feel this and act on it only to have it be the one thing that tears me apart again. I know better now and I know that I'm not

willing to risk not having Khanyisa in my life
when this so called love turns to hate

We are married, she's my wife. I have every
intention to keep my promises to her but I
cannot love her, That's a line I can never and will
never cross.

CHAPTER 18

KHANYISA

On Saturday we attend the funeral at
Soshanguve and it is a rainy day. The weather is
a reflection the mood itself as it is not only
raining from the clouds but also from the eyes
of the bereaved family members.

My heart breaks for his wife and children once

more because I know that once today is done with, once everyone returns from the cemetery to eat then bid them farewell, only then will grief and reality hit them and stick around for a longer period of time compared to the relatives that have been with them throughout the week. They will start to feel the shift in their family when it's just them and their mom left, that's the sad reality of death.

We start at the family home but Nkosi and I and a few other people remain outside in order to give the family enough space and privacy to view their loved one for the last time. From there we head to a church for the service. There is a somber and gloomy atmosphere all round but the church choir does their best to uplift our spirits through their amazing hymns in between the speakers of the day. When it's Nkosi's turn, he stands by the podium confidently so, he's

wearing a fitted black suit with a white shirt and black tie, he trimmed his beard and as he stands there talking in front of everyone I don't hear a single word he's saying because I'm too busy checking him out, I know this isn't the time or place for it but I can't help it, this man is too good looking and I can't keep my eyes off him

The Reverend is the last one to stand and his sermon is also uplifting, he doesn't take up a lot of time and then the deceased's colleagues render a musical item in honor of their friend and colleague. It is a dignified and peaceful service that insure his family appreciates

When that's done we move to the cemetery, it's drizzling outside so Nkosi holds out a huge black umbrella for the both of us as soon as we start walking towards the burial site. I'm glad I

chose to wear block heels otherwise the mud all round would be showing me flames right now

Nkosi holds my hand firmly as we walk on the uneven, slippery and muddy ground and when we come to a stop he keeps his arm around my waist, keeping me very close to him.

We get through the last part of the funeral then everyone heads back to the family home for lunch. Some of the employees sit with us as those who knew the deceased driver very well reminisce about the times they spent with him, two hours later we say our goodbyes and head home

When the week starts, Nkosi gets ahold of a PI who comes highly recommended by one of Lwazi's associates. Things are still not making sense and I know that there will be no peace until we get answers as to who is behind this whole mess and why

Bangizwe, bab'Mdlalose and Liyana are the only other people in the company who know about this PI business and they all agreed that it is best to keep it under wraps just in case the culprit is someone with ties to them or the company, so whatever meetings they are going to have with this guy will be held at our house

"How long did the guy say again?" I ask him on Tuesday morning while preparing his lunch

" He asked for a couple of days"

"He's that good?"

"He comes highly recommended by Lwazi, so I believe he is"

"So uLwazi is into these secret service kind of things?" I ask and he chuckles

"Let's just say he knows people who know people and his people are always reliable"

"You sound like you've done this before" I say and his face changes

"I have, but that was a long time ago" he checks the time on his wrist watch, he's indirectly

telling me that he doesn't want to talk about it
but curiosity gets the better of me

"Who were you investigating?"

He looks at me as if deciding whether or not he
wants to tell me "An ex"

I choke on my own saliva then I start coughing
until I feel better "Nkosi, why would you
investigate your ex?"

"Yinto endala maKhosa Futhi awudingi
ukukhathazeka ngakho noma ngaye" [It's an old
thing and you don't need to worry about it or her]

"But this isn't some usual thing Nkosi. What

happened for you to end up making a decision to investigate her?" it must have been very bad if be resorted to such measures

"Khanyisa, ngiyacela[Please] let it go. Maybe one day we will talk about it but not right. One issue at a time, right?" he asks, still calm as ever

"Okay...but one day you're going to have to tell me about it"

"I will, I promise, just not today. I'll see you after work, are you still meeting with the photographer?" and just like that, we've moved past the conversation about PI business

"Yeah, after my gym session with Cheryl"

"Alright, have fun" He says and comes closer to take his lunch bag, at first it looks like he will lean in for a kiss but he doesn't, which leaves me disappointed but I'm not about to show it "Thanks, I'll see you later" he says then walks away

After he leaves for work I start with my daily chores before getting ready to go to the gym. I started slacking during the festive season and now it's time to burn off all the Christmas mayonnaise.

I get done with the cleaning, pack the suits that I'm supposed to leave at the dry cleaners before heading to the gym then I meet with Cheryl. She's also been slacking so we both have a hard time on the treadmills this morning, when

it's time for our sets, we are just done with

"That's it, no more slacking off" Cheryl groans when we are finally done and sitting on the floor feeling the heat of our lazy attitudes during the festive season

"I agree, we can't be suffering like this"

"Someone is going to need to carry me out of here" She says and I chuckle

"Call Nick and tell him you have an emergency"

"I can just see his face when he gets here" she laughs "He would make sure I never forget the day I made him ditch work because I became a

cry baby after a work out"

"Then get on your feet and let's go home, woman" I said getting up, maybe we over did it a little

"No, I can't Kay, everything hurts" she sulks

"Come on, I'll buy you a Frappe on our way home"

"Uh-uhh, those are the reason we are here, we over indulged and now we are paying for it"

"Green tea then?" I ask teasingly, she hates it

"Ughh, disgusting. A frappe will do" she gets up

and we get ready to leave

I don't spend a lot of time with her because I have to shower quickly and meet with my photographer. I just need to write the Epilogue of my story then I send it to my editor and right now I'm struggling with what to write so I'm hoping to find some inspiration at the photoshoot, I need to connect myself with the story again after the hectic week and this has helped before so I'm hoping it will help again

"Honey! I'm home!" I yell playfully when I reach the venue that Didintle sent to me and she rushes to leaves her equipment to come for a hug

"Bathong wena! Where the hell have you been hiding?"

"Eix askies, I've just been a bit busy"

"Too busy that you had to postpone our appointment, twice even! Awoa Khanyisa, this isn't on" she says and because I knew what to expect, I reach in my handbag to take out a gift I got for her. Didintle is a lover of jewelry so I got her a star and moon set necklace to apologize for my slacking. She's right, I've been slacking and she hates slackers, I think she's only putting up with me because we've built such a good working relationship

"I see you trying to bribe me... And I accept!" She moves from frowning to having a wide smile "Wena! You're lucky I love you or I would have ditched you a long time ago and you'd be stuck using pinterest pictures for your cover"

"God forbid!" I act mortified and she rolls her eyes at me" I'm sorry, Didi. It won't happen again, struu" I cross my index and middle finger and hold them up trying not to smile

"Mxm, come meet your people" she says leading me out to a garden setting

This is what I love about Didi, she loves playing with ideas and does not restrict her photoshoots to indoor setting. Oh, and she hates fake flowers too so outdoor setting does it for her

She introduces my photoshoot couple to me and then we get the ball rolling. This is another romance novel and so the shoots are quite

intimate but not R-rated of course, I'll leave all of that to the chapters in the book

I sit back and watch as Didintle works her magic, watching them interact and puts me back in the zone and the epilogue starts playing in my head. Now I can't wait to get home and finish with my baby

As soon as we are done, Didi and I start sifting through the pictures choosing the top three then two and then one. It's a process but we both love and enjoy it. When she's done she edits the picture and then puts a banner on one copy covering most of it so I can use it as a teaser for my cover reveal in my social media pages. All of this is very exciting and the minute I post it, comments start flooding in with my readers expressing how they can't wait to get

their hands on a copy

I say goodbye to Didi then I drive back home. When I get there I first start with the cooking so can relax and not feel pressured to finish writing because I still have to prepare supper. When I'm done with the pots I go to Nkosi's office, I get comfortable on his chair and start typing while the scene is still fresh in my head. I love it when this happens

When I type "The End" I feel a sense of pride hit me. I did it again and I'm so excited. I just need to go through it one time before sending it to my editor on Thursday. Even though I know she will be on the lookout for my mistakes, I still feel the need to skim through the chapters first before sending it through. I've done the same with all my books.

The door opens and he appears, his suit jacket is off and the sleeves of his shirt have been rolled up to his elbows

"Tell me you finally finished" he says with a smirk and I smile and lean back on his chair

"Yes sir, all done" I say proudly

"That's what I like to hear, when are you sending it to the editor?"

"Thursday, I need a day to go through it one last time"

"This writing thing is a piece job, all that typing

and reading" he says walking closer to his table

"It isn't if you enjoy it, It's so much fun actually"

He pulls a chair opposite me then slumps back on it "I wouldn't survive, but I'm very proud of you, wife" he says and I can't help but smile

"Thank you, Husband" I say and he smiles too, I think about our conversation earlier and even though he shut it down, there's this question that's been lingering on my mind all day and I decide to ask it

"Nkosi?"

"Yebo?"

"I know you said not now, but I have one last question"

He sighs and slightly shakes his head "Okay, buza mkami [ask, my wife]"

"Is it Refilwe?"

"No, it's not." he answers and I nod. I want to change the topic but his phone rings and he answers

"Bafo" I gather that it's Bangizwe "Nini? Uphimanje?" [When? Where is he now?] The look on his face makes me nervous, when he stands up, I just know it's bad "Siyeza manje" [We are coming now] he says then hangs up

"What?" I dreadfully ask and it comes out as a whisper

"ubaba was involved in an accident, we need to go"

Yah no! When it rains, it pours.

CHAPTER 20

KHANYISA

Days pass and although bab'Mdlalose is out of danger, he's still being monitored at the hospital. At this point we are all just grateful that he's alive. Besides the internal bleeding, he has a fractured arm and a back injury.

All three siblings went back to work so I've been spending my days and evenings with Ma. We've been going to the hospital each morning while the others make time during their days to go and see him. Nkosi has been the busiest, having to take in his father's duties while minding his own work keeps him away longer than the others and he tries to see him in the evenings when he can

Beyond his busy schedule, I can't help but feel like there's more to his unavailability...

We hardly talk, When we do, he keeps it short. He also never wants to find himself with just me around and when it is just the two of us at bedtime he keeps his distance and faces the other way. Nkosi is putting up this invincible

wall where I can't access him emotionally as well and each day he makes it even higher than the previous day

Now don't get me wrong, I knew what I was getting into but he was never this cold or emotionally unavailable. He spent a lot of time getting me to be comfortable in our home and he was always focused on us, on me. Nkosi was clear from the beginning about his stance on love but what he did not realise is that although he never said the three words out loud, his actions have been a pure symbol of love. I've felt safe, wanted, prioritised and special and that for me, was a clear indication of love, so much that I ended up falling for him and even though I've never said the words too, if he could see what's in my heart, he would see just how gone I am. He would see that it's not only my mind that's in it, but my heart, soul and body as

well, every single part of me, had fallen deep for him

I'm inlove with my husband... And right now, with his change of character, I can't be too sure whether that's a good thing or if I'm headed straight for a disaster.

Nkosi has completely shut down and I could easily blame it on the recent happenings if I really wanted to act like it had nothing to do with our marriage but I'm not dumb, nor am I that ignorant... I know it has everything to do with us

I'm at his parents house on Wednesday evening and I've just finished cooking. Today was the same as other days. I slept here last night so in the morning after cleaning, Ma and I had

breakfast together then we went to the hospital. Bab'Mdlalose seems to be doing good and when we saw him he was hopeful that soon the doctor would give him the green light so he can return home

While I've been here, I've been working on my book again and today I finally sent it in for editing. Ntsako, my editor wasn't very pleased with the delay as I was supposed to have handed it it last week Thursday already but she understood when I explained that I got caught up and now we are getting ready to meet the deadline againz that's the one exciting thing in my life right now

When Nkosi arrives, he checks on his mom as usual, he tells her how his evening visit at the hospital went then he says he's going to make a

phonecall in the bedroom that we use when we are here. I know it might have to do with the PI, he's been very frustrated with him because the guy hasn't found anything concrete. I decide this is my chance to ask him what's going on

When I walk in he's just hanging up on the phone and loosening up his tie

"Nothing still?" I ask him after closing the door

"Nothing, this isn't like Fana. He always delivers but right now... I really don't know" he slumps on the bed and sighs after completely undoing his tie and unbuttoning the first three buttons of his shirt then sitting back on the bed with his back against the headboard while making sure his shoes don't touch the bed covers

"Give him more time, you said he's the best, right?"

"He is, I know this for a fact but right now he's not living up to his reputation"

"Then maybe this runs deeper than we are imagining or thinking it does".

"That's what I'm starting to think too, I'll give him more time"

"Okay" I say and he scrolls on his phone again

"Mdlalose..." I say while leaning against the dresser

"Mhh?"

"Are we okay?" I ask and he looks up then puts his phone away

"What do you mean?"

"Nkosiyabo, you know exactly what I mean"

"I thought we would talk about it later when we get home, but since you've brought it up then we might as well get into it" he sits up and I feel myself get nervous

"Get into what?"

NKOSIYABO

I look at her as she looks at me expectedly, I don't want to hurt her feelings, I don't want to make her sad or even risk breaking her heart, the thought of doing that tugs unpleasantly at my heart, which is why this needs to stop. This is a clear indication that I've tempered with my own restrictions, I've crossed a line and now I'm paying for it by feeling what I'm feeling right now

I'm no longer sure if I should continue but we've already started talking and she's looking at me for answers, I cannot lie to her. It's crazy how I know myself to be this straightforward person, I say what I want, when I want and how I want but right now, in my head, I'm dancing around my words because of the woman that's

standing in front of me

"Nkosi" she says and silences my internal conversation "What is it?"

"I think we need to go back to what we agreed on, in terms of what our marriage should be based on" I speak slowly so I can clearly watch her reaction. I'm nervous about how she's going to respond and it stems from me not wanting to hurt her

"We've been doing good, haven't we?" she asks looking a little confused

"We've been getting too close, I know you also feel us crossing boundaries a couple of times"

"And that's such a bad thing?"

"Khanyisa, I've already explained that I can't go that far with you" I try not to sound harsh and I keep looking at her face but she looks away, causing me to shut my mouth, not wanting to push her to the edge or even reduce her to tears. Fuck, this is hard.

"Is that why you've been pulling away?" she finally looks back at me, her voice is thinned and her eyes never meet mine, she darts them everywhere but never where mine are

"Yes, I didn't know how to say it without risking upsetting you"

"All I ever asked for was honesty" She's now

looking me in the eye as she says this and I can't read the look in her eyes, it's almost as though she's feeling nothing. She's starting to shut me out.

"I know, and I promised to always be honest with you"

"And I'm grateful that you're being honest right now, I just wish you wouldn't have waited for days to tell me what's on your mind. I wouldn't have fought you on it. I know what I agreed to, Nkosi. I know that I agreed to be a kept wife and I know that you said wouldn't be able to explore love with me. Nothing about that is a surprise"

I'm taken by surprise at her words, I wasn't expecting her to be welcoming of this. Of course I wouldn't have liked it if she tried to

convince me otherwise but I must admit, her calm demeanor has me a little worried

" So you're okay with us going back to our agreement, Nothing more?" I ask for reassurance

"You laid it all out for me and I still agreed to be your wife, didn't I?"

"You did" I agree

"Then you can breathe easy knowing that I still accept our terms" she smiles a little

"That's good" I say to her not knowing what else to say

"Yeah... You'll find me downstairs when you're ready to leave" She says then walks towards the door. I watch her as she opens it, walks out and shuts it behind her

As much as this is what I wanted, to remain in control of evrything and not find myself falling for the trap again, it isn't an easy feeling.

KHANYISA

I lean against the door for a moment trying to catch my breath with my eyes shut

Jesu, I thought I was going to suffocate in there.

I force the knot formed in my throat back down, I'm not going to cry...

I will not cry.

I chant this sentence in my head over and over until I'm certain that I really won't cry over what Nkosi just said. I remind myself that I'm not some sort of victim here, this isn't news to me. I sat in that restaurant and agreed to this, now I need to make good on my word. We fumbled when we began because we got too close too fast and now things are going to be how they were meant to be from the beginning.

I descend the stairs still trying to just catch my breath. I get to the lounge area and find Ma watching TV, I join her and try to get comfortable and soon enough Nkosi appears

looking ready to leave

"Niyahamba manje?" [Are you leaving now?] Ma asks

"Yebo, It's late and I have an early morning tomorrow" he says and I get up from the couch

"Alright, drive safe" she says to him then smiles at me and tells me she will see me tomorrow

Nkosi leads the way and when he opens the door he almost bumps into Mduduzi, he has two suitcases on both sides and his parents are behind him

" hawu, nihamba njengoba sifika" [You're leaving

just as we arrive] Mam'Nozizwe asks

"Besicabanga ukuthi nizofika kusasa ekuseni"

[We thought maybe you were arriving tomorrow morning] Nkosi says

"Besithe sizofika kusasa ekuseni kodwa sashintsha umqondo"

[We had said we will come tomorrow morning but we changed our minds] his uncle says

"In that case, Sizohlala isikhashana"

[We will stay a bit longer]

He moves to make way for Mduduzi to pass and when Mam'Nozizwe sees me she rushes to embrace me in a tight hug

"uright kodwa makoti wam?" she asks me after letting me go

"Ng'right ma. You?"

"Nami ng'right, sthandwa sam [I'm also good, my love], I've been looking forward to seeing you again, it's just a pity that we have to meet under these circumstances" she says and I nod

When we get to where Ma is, she has a surprised look on her face, I'm guessing she also didn't know they were on their way

"Hawu, you're here? Besicabanga ukuthi nizofika kusasa ekuseni" she repeats what Nkosi said

"Change of plans, sisi. Besazi nje ukuthi kumele size sizokweseka kulesi sikhathi esinzima" [We just knew we had to come and support you in this tough time] Mam'Nozizwe says

"hayi kanti yena ubaba uyalulama" [He's recovering] Ma says

"Noma kunjalo Tholakele , umndeni kufanele unakekelane, futhi asinankinga nhlobo ukuba lapha, akunjalo baba? " [Even so, family is supposed to look after each other, and we don't mind being here at all, right?]

"Kuyiqiniso lokho mkami. Ngeke kulunge ukuthi ngibe ngiseNatal umfowethu esesibhedlela" [That's true, my wife. It wouldn't be right for me

to still be at Natal while my brother is in hospital]

"Of course, bhut'Mandla, kanti ke nathi siyajabula ukuba nani lapha.[we are glad to have you here] It lets us know that we are not alone" Ma says

"Good, Ngoba sizoba lapha size sibone ukuthi uyalulama. Yize le mpilo yenu yaseGoli kunzima ukuyijwayela kodwa singathini? Isimo siyasiphoqa" [Because we will be here until we see that he's recovering. Even though this Johannesburg life of yours is hard to adapt to but what can we say? The situation forces us] Mam'Nozizwe says making it sound like she'd really rather be anywhere else than here and Ma catches on the tone too, I see it in her eyes, she's annoyed

"Tea? Anyone?" I quickly cut through the brewing tension between the two ladies

" Yes my darling "Mam'Nozizwe says with a wide smile" Mdu, Hamba uyokhombisa uKhanyisa ukuthi ngilithanda kanjani itiyela lami"
[Go show Khanyisa how I like my tea]

"uKhanyisa knows how to make tea" Ma says

"Angikuphikisi lokho, if anything, I know uMakoti wam knows her way around the kitchen very well but there's a specific way that I want my tea made and uMdu knows, he will show her"

After Mduduzi's father also confirms that he also wants tea we walk to the kitchen and I refill the kettle then turn it on

"Don't mind my mother, she's always cranky when tired" Mduzuzi says

"It's no biggie, although she could have just asked you to make the tea" I shrug

"Yeah, you're right" he chuckles "I don't know why she always has to create a process where there's no need for it"

"I wonder too, but you'll make it, right? "

"Yeah, no sweat" he says and we go quiet

"How is your book coming along?" he asks

"It's going good, currently being edited"

"You must be excited"

"I am" I smile at the thought of my new book, it's always an amazing feeling

"I went and bought your previous books online"

"Really?"

"Hawu, don't look so surprised!" he laughs "I got excited when I heard that we've got an author in the family. And I may not have gone through two books already"

"Wow, I never pictured you as a reader"

"Me neither" he chuckles again " But you're a great writer, Khanyisa. You keep your readers hooked and I've fallen victim to your words, Now I just have to get through the remaining books so I can get ready for the new one, but this time I want a hardcopy and it must be signed of course " he stops and looks at me

" You'll definitely get one" I smile happily

"One question though? How do you think of the stuff you write about?", he asks and the rest of our tea making session is filled with me explaining how my characters and plots come about. Mdu listens attentively and we almost forget that we have tea to deliver until we look down at the mugs, luckily it's still hot


We go back to join the others and Mam'Nozizwe praises my "tea making skills", Mdu and I exchange a quick glance knowing very well that I didn't make it but I gladly nod and take the compliment

An hour and a half later, Nkosi and I leave and when it's just us in the car I feel my foul mood return. I'm still trying to wrap my head around how drastic the change will be and I'm honestly not looking forward to it. I'd rather have Nkosi not ever tell me that he loves me but still show it than to have neither of those things. It will hurt.

We get home and we don't turn all the lights on because it's already late and we just want to get to bed. I quietly change into my sleep wear while he strips down to his boxers then we both

get on the bed. Normally he would have my back against his chest with his arm around me but tonight he's on his on side and he lowly says a "Goodnight" before turning and looking the other way after turning off the lights

A journey this will be.

***Bonus chapter just to show my appreciation for the likes, loves, follows and comments. You guys keep me going 

CHAPTER 21

NKOSIYABO

It's a hectic couple of days, with the recent activities with my father and the company, I'm stuck splitting myself over different duties at a

time. Bangizwe has been helping out by taking a portion of my COO workload while I fill my father's position and for that, I'm very grateful to him. It's at this time that I find myself feeling very grateful that I have shadowed my father for the longest time and learned how to run the company for the past ten years now. All those lessons and trainings and following him around while acquainting myself with other shareholders is paying off now because everyone still believes that even in my father's absence, the company is still in good hands. Which is the truth, Between my siblings and I, none of us will ever let our father's hardwork go to waste and the last thing we want is for him to return to a company that's sinking.

I've managed to go see him a couple of evenings after work, it's normally just myself or with Bangizwe. The last time I went to see him,

My father in law went with me. To say I was nervous to see Khanyisa's father again after the whole Christmas nyovadam [disaster] that Liyana stirred up would just be me putting it mildly. I was nervous about him holding that over my head but when I saw him, his eyes held nothing but warmth, so I did not dare bring it up again, at this point I can say the man still trusts me with his daughter and that's all I'll ever ask for

I also liked how he and my father were getting along like old friends, so much that I ended up sitting quietly in the room while they had the time of their lives chatting, that's when I learned that they also do talk on the phone from time to time, which explained the whole friendly aura that was going around in the room

Right now I'm on my way to fetch him from hospital, he's finally coming home and him being the person that he is, he refused to let everyone come and flood his room and requested that I be the one who gets him from the hospital, so the others are at home waiting for us, my mother has called me atleast two times to check if we had left the hospital, she really missed her husband and we missed our father.

Right now, we are all just grateful that things didn't turn out to be worse than what they were and that we still get to have him with us, as grown as we are, he will always be our father and he will always hold a very special place in our hearts and lives

I get to his room and find him trying to put on

his slippers, he's groaning from having to bend and I quickly rush to his side to help

"Ake ngikusize" [Let me help you] I kneel with one knee then help him put both slippers on

"Ngiyabonga ndodana" [Thank you, son] he says then leans back on the chair groaning again while squinting his eyes. I want to ask why he didn't ask one of the nurses to assist him but I know my father, he probably refused their help and told them that he will manage

"Uzizwa unjani namhlanje?" [How are you feeling today?] I ask him when he's relaxed

"Ah, ngizizwa ngingcono. Ngijabule nje ukuthi ngiyahamba kulendawo" [I feel better, I'm just

happy that I'm leaving this place]

"Usho ukuthi bebekuphathe kabi ngaleyondlela?" [You mean they were treating you that badly?]

"Awazi wena, akukho lutho oluhle ngokulala lapha uzizwa ungenamandla. Futhi ngiswele ukudla okuphekwe ngumkami, hhayi lombhedo abangiphakela wona lapha" [You have no idea, there's nothing nice about laying here feeling helpless. And I'm missing food that is cooked by my wife, not the nonsense they serve me here]

I see the smile on his face when he mentions uMa, I find myself wondering how he made it work for over three decades. I know that he arranged their marriage just like I did with

Khanyisa, for different reasons maybe, but that's how their marriage started and they are still going strong. Do I think my parents love each other? Absolutely, was it always like this? According to them, no... So that just brings about a lot of thoughts in my head regarding my wife and I. I decide against asking him about their marriage

"Alright ke Khehla [Old man], sukuma sihambe [Get up and let's go]"

"Ubiza bani ikhehla? [who are you calling an old man?] I'm still strong just like you" He defends himself

"I'm just kidding, Asambe balinde wena ekhaya" [Let's go, they are waiting for you at home] I reach for his bag "Will you need a wheelchair?" I

ask him teasingly

"Ngizokukhahlela [I'll kick you] Nkosiyabo" he threatens, making me laugh at the look on his face

"Before we go, there's something I want us to talk about" He stops me

"I just knew something was up when you made it clear ukuthi I should be the only one who comes to get you"

"Hayi, I didn't want your mom to show up holding 'get well' balloons like I'm a child, I don't do well with embarrassment" he says "Sit there" he gestures at the free chair and I do just that. He's all serious right now and so I quit playing

too

"Kwenzenjani?"

"It's nothing bad, I just want us to talk about the future, the future of the company" He starts and I nod "it's time, Nkosiyabo. You need to step up now and take the ropes from me"

"I thought that was only happening later on the year..."

"I know, but with me still needing to recover, I don't see the point of delaying what we both know has to come to pass. You've been well trained for this and I believe that you are ready, so am I. I'm ready to step down and let you lead"

"Are you sure?" I ask wanting to be sure that the accident didn't pull a number on him and now he's making rushed decisions

"Nginokholo kuwe ndodana. " [I have faith in you, son. You've been working so hard and you've proven yourself to me over and over again. I have no doubt that I'm leaving the company in good and capable hands because these are the same hands that I raised, nurtured and taught. I'm responsible for these hands and they come from my very own"

I look at him as he says this, everything about how he's looking at me tells me that my father believes in me, he believes that I will not run the company down and honestly, I believe in myself too. I've known since I was a teenage boy that

one day this day would come, however, it comes with a bittersweet feeling because I've been working with my father for the longest time. We've fought a number of times, not agreed on certain ways of doing things but at the end of the day it's always been my father and his three children, now that's about to change... But change is good, right?

"Thank you, For believing in me and I give you my word that I will continue to take care of our legacy, I will run this company as best as I can"

"I have no doubt about that, son. No doubt at all" he smiles proudly

"But I will require some consultations from time to time" I tell him

"No problem, but I'll have to charge you for my services. Angikwazi ukusebenzela mahhala [I can't work for free]" he says making me chuckle
"Oh, and I'm going to make this announcement tonight at the dinner table, I just saw it fit and necessary to talk to you about it first"

"Alright khehla, I hear you"

"Umzwe esengibiza ngekhehla kodwa akakangiphi ngisho nomzukulu oyedwa" [hear him calling me an old man but he hasn't even given me a single grandchild]

"Hawu, baba waba personal kanje, manje?"
[Why are you being personal like this now?]

"Personal wani? Give me grandchildren then I'll allow you to call me an old man" he says and I don't continue poking him, I know better, if I don't stop he might just ask me if I'm sure that I can make kids

We slowly make our way outside to the car and when he's all buckled up, I drive us home, careful as ever on the road. Throughout the way I update him about Fana although there's really nothing to report on, Fana keeps on hitting dead ends and not only is it frustrating me, it's getting to him too because he prides himself in being able to uncover anything and everything, he's even gone as far as telling me not to pay him until he has something concrete to tell me

When we get home, ubaba is obviously met with a warm welcome from everyone. Ma

immediately reaches for his hand and leads him to the lounge area and straight to his one sitter couch then she starts fixing the cushions and making sure he's comfortable, watching them interact is something I could do everyday

Everyone sits on the other couches happily so, Liyana even pulls a chair so she can hook her arm around his and sit next to him, of all of us, she's the one whose been taking this the hardest and now that he's back she's beyond elated, so much that she just wants to be right there next to him

I'm seated next to Khanyisa and when I see that everyone is busy fussing over ubaba I ask her to follow me to our room. As much as my father saw it necessary to talk to me first, I also see it necessary to tell her before he makes the

announcement, I want her to know first and not be surprised alongside everyone else

"Is everything okay?" she asks after shutting the door

"Yes, I had a talk with ubaba earlier before we left the hospital" I tell her and she keeps her eyes on me

"And..."

"And he's stepping down from the CEO position"

"Which means it's you... You're next next in line!" she says excitedly and her excitement rubs off on me "Congratulations Nyanda, you deserve

this" she says happily while wrapping her arms around me for a hug and mine naturally go around her waist

What's supposed to be a quick congratulatory hug ends with me burying my face on the side of her neck and inhaling her scent, she smells so good, so good that I take a couple more breaths of her. Without thinking, I plant a kiss on her neck, and another... And another, until I'm moving my lips up to her jaw, her cheek and then finally, her lips

She welcomes me with so much desire and just from this, I'm already worked up and ready to take her

Khanyisa moves her hands to my chest and I feel her start to unbutton my shirt "What time is

the announcement?" She mumbles against my lips

"After supper"

"Then-"

"Uh-uhh, just a couple of minutes, a quickie" I say not wanting to stop what we are doing right now, I want her and her responsive body tells me that she wants me too

I capture her lips once more, kissing her hard while she battles to match the pace, she's wearing a tight dress and when my hands cup and squeeze her bums she let's out a muffled moan that turns me on even more. I pause and go to lock the door then I rush back to her,

instead of taking off her entire dress, I pull it up and move her panties to one side then I touch her, she's already ready and when I look at her she smiles

"Quickie" she says

With one hand I loosen my belt, undo my pants button, pull down the zipper and pull out my hard shaft and then I hoist her one leg up on my arm then I enter her slowly, taking in the pleasure of being inside my wife once again

I lean in and kiss her then I start moving, yes, it's a quickie but this isn't a chore that I'm in a rush to finish, I want to enjoy her and I want her to have the same pleasure so I hit it hard at a slow rhythm while picking up my pace as I go in and out of her

I pull my face back and look at her face, with every thrust, she gasps and has me wanting to give her more of this

"Nkosi..."She whispers my name when her body locks under me and I go harder

" Yes, mama" I grunt feeling my own release coming

She whisper calls out my name a couple more times, making me wish we were in our own house so she could scream as loud as she wants

Our breathing gets heavy when we both reach our high and she shuts her eyes letting the

pleasure of it wash over her. I rest my forehead on hers for a moment before pulling out of her then we start cleaning up and fixing our clothes

"Alright, you go first" she says and I look at her

"Huh?"

"Go first, we don't want to make it obvious now, do we?" She rushes me and I do as I'm told

I exit the room and head back to where everyone is, my father glances at me when he sees me and he has a sneaky smile on his face while I do my best to keep a straight face then I pull a chair and sit on the other side of his couch, now he's between myself and Liyana

" Kusho ukuthi bayeza, huh? " [It means they are coming?]

"Abo bani?" [who?] I ask him

"Abazukulu" [Grandchildren] he says and I purse my lips trying not to laugh

A while later Khanyisa gets back and quickly blends in, I keep stealing glances at her but not once does she look at me, the feeling I got when we were done with our quickie sneaks up on me again. It felt like she immediately put up a wall when I got off her, I don't know how to explain it but... It's like she mentally locked me out and now as I watch her interacting with Ma and Mam'ncane, all bubbly with smiles but not once bothering to look at me, I feel it again... Or maybe I'm imagining it... I'll have to test this

theory.

KHANYISA

We end up having dinner in the lounge so as to accommodate bab'Mdlalose. He is still in pain and the normal dining chair wouldn't be comfortable for him so we all gather with our plates on the couches. I'm still a little flushed from our quickie session and the memory plays fresh in my head. I loved every bit of it but that's over now so I push the memory far back, at the back of my brain not wanting to play myself by dwelling on it.

When we are done with supper, as per norm when I'm here, Liyana and I wash the dishes together. We still aren't on speaking terms but her hostility had gone down, she has never

apologized to me, but she no longer pokes at me for no reason. I still feel like her and I are just at a strained point and I will not be the one to try and fix things. Being quiet around her works just fine for me, it's perfect.

When we get back to the lounge, bab'Mdalose let's us know that he was waiting for us then he asks for everyone's attention. Nkosi and I obviously know what's coming, and so does Ma, judging by the proud smile on her face

"We aren't at the office so I'll keep this short. While in hospital, I had a lot of time to think and reflect. I've worked hard to get to where I am today. I've worked tirelessly, with the unending support of my wife, uMaNxumalo, to build a legacy for our kids and now I feel that it's time for me to step down, enjoy my retirement and

let young blood lead us into even more greener pastures. With that said, I know we've all known for many years who my successor is going to be but I just wish to announce it formally. As I step down, the person to take over and continue where I left off will be uNkosiyabo " he says and just then Liyana and Bangizwe happily clap their hands

" Ngiyajabula ukunibona nijabule nomfowenu"
[I'm happy to see you rejoicing with your brother]
I also believe that the two of you will be his biggest supporters in carrying our company forward " he adds

" Ofcourse, you know you can count on us bhuti"Liyana says with a wide smile

"Always, bafo. We've got your back" Bangizwe

adds with the same emotion as Liyana

The chatter goes on and on until Mam'Nozizwe speaks with a cold tone

"Ngicela ukubuza, unqume kanjani ukuthi uNkosiyabo kube nguyena ozothatha izintambo kuwena?" [May I ask, how did you decide that Nkosiyabo will be the one to take over from you?]

"Usho ukuthini? Uyingane yami endala, kusobala ukuthi bengizomqeqesha kuqala futhi ngibeke umthwalo kuye ngaphambi kwabancane." [What do you mean? He's my oldest child, obviously I'd be training him first and putting the responsibility on him before the young ones]

" Ohh, so unqume mayelana nokuthi ubani omdala?" [You decided with regard to who is older?] she asks again and we all look at her, bab'Mdlalose clearly getting irritated from her questioning

"Yebo" he answers

"Uma kunjalo, ngiyesaba ukuthi wenze iphutha" [If that's the case, I'm afraid you've made a mistake] she folds her arms and glares at him with an angry expression

"Ma-" Mduduzi starts but she silences him by raising her index finger, not once does she take her eyes off bab'Mdalose

"Kahle kahle uthini Nozizwe? Khuluma

kuzwakale" [What exactly are you saying?
Speak clearly] Ma says also glaring at her

With a very loud voice and dramatic facial expression she starts speaking again "Ngithi mina, uMbhekiseni wenze iphutha ngokukhetha uNkosiyabo ukuthi athathe izintambo kuye ngoba akayona ingane yakhe yokuqala. UMduduzi nguye ingane yakhe yokuqala!"

[I'm saying, Mbhekiseni made a mistake by choosing Nkosiyabo to take over from him because he is not his first child. Mduduzi is the one whose his first child"]

CHAPTER 22

KHANYISA

If a pin could drop right now, we would all hear it.

The room has gone cold, eyes are wide open while mouths are completely shut. It literally feels like time has stopped since Mam'Nozizwe dropped a bomb on us and she's the only one sitting there calmly like she did not just say her eldest child was fathered by her brother in law, that is until she looks at her husband, only then does the reality of what she just said start to set on her

"Nozizwe? Uthini?" [What are you saying?]
Bab'Mandla finally speaks up breaking the silence

Mam'Nozizwe bites her lower lip and casts her eyes down, she looks nervous now as she

starts fiddling with her fingers

"Awusakwazi ukukhuluma?" [You can no longer speak?] He asks her

"Ngiyaxolisa [I'm sorry] baba"

"Uxoliselani? Yimbudane yani lena oqeda ukuyisho? " [What's this nonsense you just said?]

"Bengingaqondile ukuthi kuvele ngale ndlela, ngivele ngacasuka kakhulu" [I didn't mean for it to come out this way, I just got too upset] she shrugs

"Usho ukuthi lokhu osanda kukusho

kuyiqiniso?" [You mean that what you just said is true?] he asks and she goes quiet again
"Nozizwe! Khuluma man!" his livid voice booms in the room and I flinch, so does Liyana

Hey, it's hectic.

"Yebo baba, Kuyiqiniso, uMduduzi indodana kaMbhekiseni [It's true, Mduduzi is Mbhekiseni's son]

" Hayi, ngeke! lokho akukwazi ukuba yiqiniso" [That can't be true] Ma says angrily looking at Mam'Nozizwe

"Uphikani wena Tholakele? Ngiyakwazi engikushoyo" [What are you denying? I know what I'm saying]

"Ukhuluma umbhedo wena Nozizwe [You're speaking nonsense] you don't get to come to my house and spew the nonsense that's coming out of your mouth right now! At a time like this? Have you no shame!"

"Mbhekiseni,yini lena engiyizwayo [What is this that I'm hearing] " Bab'Mandla stares at his big brother for answers

"Nami angiyizwa le nto ayishoyo. Uthini ngempela Nozizwe? " [I also don't get what she's saying. Nozizwe, what exactly are you saying]

"Baba..." she starts then looks up at her husband, his blazing stare makes her look down

again "Lena into eyenzeka ngaphambi kokuthi ngivume ukuba ngowakho" [This is something that happened before I agreed to be yours]

She stops but he continues looking at her, his eyes urging her to continue

"Uyazi uMbhekiseni ubengakaze abekhona ngempela ekhaya kodwa noma yinini uma ebuya ngangiba naye. Kwakungeyona into eserious kodwa ngagcina ngikhulelwe. I was around two months ngikhulelwe waphinde wabuya futhi, ngangifuna ukumtshela kodwa angilitholanga ithuba ngoba ngaleso sikhathi kwasabalala izindaba zokuthi usehlangane nenye intombazane wayesefuna ukuyishada ngaleso sikhathi."

[You know Mbhekiseni was never really around

at home but whenever he would come back I would be with him. It wasn't anything serious but I eventually fell pregnant. I was around two months pregnant when he came back again and I had wanted to tell him but I didn't get the chance because that was the time when news spread that he had met another girl and wanted to marry her right then]

"Bese kwenzekani?" [And then what happened?]

"Mina...Bengingeke nje ngibe yilo wesifazane owazala ingane yakhe, bese eshada omunye. Cha, bengingeke ngikwazi" [I couldn't be the woman who gave birth to his child and then he goes on to marry another, no, I couldn't] She says bitterly

"Pho wena wabona kufanele ukuthi ungenze

isilima?" [So you saw it fit to make a fool out of me?] you came to me knowing that you were already carrying my brother's child and just a month down the line you tell me you're expecting my child?

"Kodwa ngangingenzi Mandla? angikwazanga ukumtshela uMbhekiseni ngoba ubezovuma ukunakekela ingane hhayi mina" [what could I have done, Mandla? I couldn't tell Mbhekiseni because he would agree to take care of the child and not me] you know how strict my father was and I couldn't risk uMduduzi having troubles follow him due to not being connected to his blood family, I wanted him to be raised a Mdlalose and he was because that's who he is"she says, all remorse gone.

One can see that she's standing by her decision, according to her, she did what she had to do and no one can or will tell her otherwise

"So what you're saying is that you married me just so you could be in the family? You couldn't have uMbhekiseni so you settled for me just because you knew just how much I loved you"

"Kodwa ngafunda ukukuthanda Mdlalose" [But I learned to love you]

Hey yah, no it's really hectic.

"Thirty-four years, Nozizwe? Why should we believe you? There's no way you can be quiet about this for so long. Inkinga yakho ukuthi unomona! Konke anakho uNkosi, ukufunela

indodana yakho. [Your problem is that you are jealous! Everything that Nkosi has, you want for your own son] " Ma says

" Awazi ukuthi ukhuluma ngani [You don't know what you're talking about] infact, you should be thanking me because I allowed you to have the best thirty-three years of marriage! It's all me Tholakele, I chose not to bring in the child from outside into your wedding marn! I did you a favor! "

" A favor? You call this a favor? "

" Yebo sisi, you're all sitting here judging me for doing what's best for the family. uMduduzi ukhulele kubo, eduze kukayise omzalayo [Mduduzi grew up in his home, next to his biological father] wena Tholakele ulapha, uhlezi

unethezekile ngaphandle kwestress se step son
[And you Tholakele, you're here, sitting
comfortably without the stress of a step son]
well that was until now"

"So Mam'ncane, Ubiza ukugcina le mfihlo ifavor?
Kuyo yonke le minyaka, ubuwazi iqiniso kodwa
wakhetha ukungasho lutho" [So aunt you call
keeping this secret a favor? All these years you
knew and you chose not to say anything?]

"Nkosiyabo, I will not discuss my life choices
with you, don't even try me"

"But he has a right to ask, angithi uthi uMduduzi
is his brother" Ma says

"Namanje ngiyasho and ang'jiki lapho."

"And you see nothing wrong with what you did angithi"

"Hey! Hey! Tholakele manje usufuna ukungihlanyisa. Ngibulaleni ke! Ngibulaleni! [Now you want to drive me crazy. Kill me then! Kill me] Because there's nothing I could have done" she throws her hands in the air with her eyes wide open and voice booming against the four walls, Jesu!

"You could have told the truth" Bab'Mdlalose says "Iqiniso Nozizwe. Yilokho kuphela obekudingeka kuwena" [The truth, that was all that was required from you]

"And have you turn me into a baby mama? Do I

look like baby mama material to you? I also had dreams of getting married, having a family, I thought one day you would see that and do what right kodwa hayi! Not where Tholakele was concerned, One meeting nje, just one! And you just decided "

" Just like you decided to let me raise a child that's not mine? "her husband cuts in

" Baba, uMdu is as good as yours, he has your family blood running through his veins, he's not from outside, that should mean something to you"

I can't believe my ears.

Bab'Mandla shakes his head "Now how am I to

know that the others aren't his as well?"

"Mfowethu, angisoze ngakwenza lokho kuwe.
Ngisho nangosuku olugcwele izimanga"

[brother, I would never do that to you, not even
on a day full of wonders] bab'Mdlalose says to
his brother calmly

I don't think Mam'Nozizwe realises just how
deep this goes. These are two brothers who
could possibly be torn apart forever because of
this revelation, relationships might be ruined all
round and she's not admitting to being wrong

"Those are your children, Mandla. We can even
do DNA if you want"

"DNA will necessary for this situation here" Ma

says

"Uqonde ukuthini Tholakele?" [What do you mean?] Mam'Nozizwe asks

"Ngiqonde ukuthi ulinde iminyaka eminingi kangaka ukusitshela lokhu [I mean to say you waited so many years to tell us this] and you had to say it at such a convenient time? When ubaba wants to step down? Ngeke Nozizwe, we will not be made fools by you"

"So you think I'm making it up?"

"Whose to say?"

"Alright ke sisi" she says then looks at

bab'Mdlalose "Mbhekiseni, Awukaze ulale nami?" [Have you never slept with me?]

"Haibo!" Liyana gasps

"Ngempela ngempela uzimisele ngokung'delela ngale ndlela? Phambi kwezingane zethu? Akwenele ngendlela ongiphoxe ngayo vele sekumele uqhubeke?" [You're really determined to disrespect me in this way? In front of our kids? Are you not enough with how much you've humiliated me already? So much that you have to keep going?" Bab'Mandla asks and my heart breaks for him

"Ngiyxolisa baba kodwa khuzani uTholakele, Khuzani uTholakele!"

"Tholakele has done nothing wrong here, you did this, you caused this! When you're done you want to continue stripping me off my dignity while I sit right here, yeses man! Awungiboni Nozizwe, hey Awungiboni man! "

"Ngiyaxolisa baba"

"Awuxolisi lutho man, Uyabona wena? Uma sifika ekhaya, ngifuna uqoqe konke okungokwakho uphume emzini wami" [You're not sorry for anything, you see, when we get home I want you to pack everything that belongs to you and leave my house"

"Kodwa baba-"

"Sengikhulumile ngiqedile. Kusasa ekuseni

siyahamba" [I've spoken and I'm done,
tomorrow morning we are leaving]

"Sihamba kanjhani [How do we leave] without
resolving the matter at hand?"

"Awungizwa? Ngithe sengiqedile. Uzosala ke"
[Don't you hear me? I said I'm done, you will
remain then]

"Kuphi? [Where?], definitely not in my house
because I don't want her here" Ma says firmly

"So what should I do because you're forcing the
DNA issue?"

"And I will force it until it happens! uMduduzi is

a grown man, he doesn't need you to hold his hand though it, unless if he will find a place for you to stay because I assure you, you will not be staying here"

Bab'Mandla gets up and walks away and the room goes quiet again and Bab'Mdlalose speaks

"I need to be sure that you're telling the truth, so a test will be necessary. However, let me be clear about one thing, whatever the outcome, I will not be changing my mind about who my successor will be"

"How? Because this is something meant to be done by the eldest child" Mam'Nozizwe asks

"And had you told me thirty-four years ago that Mdu is my son then things might have been different, but you didn't and I'm not going to risk my company trying to fix the mess you made. uNkosiyabo is the next CEO. I've spoken, I'm done." he gets up and walks away too

Nkosi and Mdu get up at the same time and walk out too, I follow Nkosi, leaving the rest there

I follow him up the stairs and into the bedroom, he doesn't stop walking, he just keeps pacing around the room, lost in his own thoughts. I hate having to ask if he's okay, nobody is after what just happened but I also don't know where to start so...

"How are you feeling?" I ask and he stops

moving, he looks at me as if he's only realising now that I'm right there with him

"I'm okay"

"Nkosi... You don't have to pretend"

"I'll be fine. I just need a moment... Alone" He says and I get his message, he wants to be left alone

"Okay... Look, I know we are trying boundaries and all but if you ever want to talk it out, or anything... I'm here, okay?"

"Okay, thank you" He says and I nod my head then head out

I don't want to be inside the house, the tension in here is thick so I make my way outside and I walk to the terrace, it's quiet and a bit chilly from the evening breeze but I need this cool air to cool me down

What in the hell just happened in there?

I keep replaying everything in my head. I never thought it was possible for things to go this far, to learn that Mduduzi and Nkosi might actually be real brothers. They've always referred to each other as brothers... Little did they know. I find myself wondering a lot of things. What now? Will this break their relationship too? What about the senior brothers, how will they overcome this? I know for a fact tha Ma is done with Mam'Nozizwe-

"Do you mind if I sit?" Mduzuzi stops my train of thoughts

"No, it's okay" I say and he sits on the same couch as me. He roughly runs his hands over his face and head repeatedly. He smells of tobacco too

"I didn't know you smoke" I say

"It's not a habit, only under stressful situations. I think this qualifies as one" he sighs

"It does" I say and he leans back on the seat

He lets out a deep breath then shakes his head

"What a fuckery, huh?"

"A complete shit show" I say then immediately bite my tongue when when he looks at me

"Sorry"

He chuckles lightly "Don't be, you're right. It's a fucking shit show that my mother put on"

"It was quite tense..."

"Yeah, it was"

"Can I ask?"

"Yeah, shoot but not to kill" he says and I smile

"Did you know?"

"Yes... She told me a couple of years back. I couldn't wrap my head around it, even now, it's a difficult thing to do"

"Why didn't you say anything back then?" I ask and he looks at me intensely

"And say what? That the man who raised me isn't my father, that his brother is the one that fathered me and my mother decided to keep it a secret, having my real father's brother raise me as his own? How could I say all of that without breaking my father? Did you see how he looked in there? She literally stripped him of his dignity, she took it and mopped the floor with it, leaving

him bare. I could never imagine doing such a thing to him... He's my father... " he says sounding defeated and very disappointed in his mother

" I'm sorry" I say again

"I don't get it, I was prepared to go the rest of my life without this coming out and she just said it so simply, all because of a fucking position I don't even want" he clenches his jaw angrily

"So you don't agree with her? That being the first son, you deserve the chair" I ask wanting to know where his head is at

"I couldn't care less about it. That chair belongs

to Nkosiyabo. Everyone knows that, even when we were young, we all knew it would be him. uMa is just grasping at straws, I can't just become CEO over night"

"I'm -"

"Please don't say you're sorry again" he says softly

"I just don't know what to say... I mean what happened in there, it can't be easy on you"

"It's not. I think I'm hurting more because I know my father is hurting and I keep asking myself if this was all worth it. I never wanted him to feel like this, now I don't even know if he wants anything to do with me"

"He raised you, of course he will still want to be in your life"

"But I'm a painful reminder of my mother's deceit, Khanyisa. This... I don't know how I'm going to fix it"

"It's not your duty to fix it, Mduduzi, you didn't do this nor did you ask for it."

"But I knew... I knew and I didn't say anything"

"Because you didn't want to hurt him, surely he will understand"

"You're too kind" He smiles a little at me

"I try"

"No, you are. You could have told me to get lost but you're sitting here, talking to me... Thank you"

"You're welcome, we're family, right?"

"Right, we are..."He places his hand on top of mine" I'm gonna go have another smoke, see you later? "

" Yeah, sure"

When he's gone I decide to go ask Nkosi if we are leaving tonight, I'm feeling exhausted. I

make my way in the house but before I can go far Mam'Nozizwe stops me

"Khanyisa, sisi. Thank you for what you're doing for my son" She says with a smile

"Huh?"

"Being there for him. You know, uMdu will definitely need someone in his corner, you saw how hostile Tholakele is"

"Ma is just shocked, she wouldn't mistreat him, she's not like that" I tell her

"You never know, and I need to leave with my husband tomorrow. Kuzomele ngiyolungisa

umshado wami

[I have to go fix my marriage] I can't let it go down the drain like this and I know that Mdu is in safe hands with you, I trust that you'll always have his back and be on his corner"

"Ma-

"Ngiyabonga [Thank you] Khanyisa, you have no idea how much it puts me at ease to know that my boy is not alone, ohh it warms my heart" she says then pulls me in a very tight hug "Take care of my son for me, please" she kisses my cheek and leaves me stunned right there.

CHAPTER 23

[UNEDITED]

KHANYISA

We end up sleeping over instead of leaving. It's a very long night with Nkosi's tossing and turning, his restlessness is making me restless. I don't push him to speak, Something I'm quickly learning to master when it comes to Nkosi is that I should know when to take a step back, because if I don't then I'll only hurt myself when he doesn't respond in a way that I wish he would

In the morning when I wake up he's not there, I figure that he must have left already because he needs to pass by the house and get clean clothes, I'll only be leaving a little later. I get up and make myself presentable then I walk out of the bedroom, I don't know what the situation is like today but it will obviously still be tense with everything that happened last night, I, myself am a bit unsettled with Mam'Nozizwe

I get to the living room and find her checking her bags, Something about what she said last night doesn't sit well with me and I'm hoping to address it now before she leaves

When she sees me, as usual she comes for a hug but her smile isn't the same as other day, she must have gotten an earful from bab'Mandla last night when they were alone because even her eyes are puffy

"You're all done" I look at her bags

"I am, He wants to leave very early and I do not want to give him reasons to leave me behind" She says and I nod, there's no one else in the room except us

"Uyazi [You know] it pains me to have to leave my son here, especially after everyone now knows the truth"

"Your son is a thirty-four year old man. I'm sure he will be fine"

"It's the treatment that I'm worried about, Ngikhathazekile ukuthi bazomphatha kanjani abantu bakulo muzi [I'm worried about how the people in this house will treat him], kodwa ke, one thing that gives me comfort is that he has you, you will remember what I said to you last night, right? "

"Actually, Ma...that's what I wanted us to talk about before you left"

"What about it?" She asks with a smile

"Last night, it felt like you were completely disregarding the fact that I'm married to Nkosi"

"Me? No I never did that. All I did was to ask that you take care of Mduduzi. Nkosi already has enough people in his corner, my son is all alone" there goes that dramatic pity voice

"Ma, there are no corners here but even then, I need you to know that if I was in a position where I had to choose sides, I'd choose my husband's side. Instead of trying to make corners you should be encouraging peace, this thing of trying to push me towards Mduduzo will not help this situation at all and quite

frankly it makes me uncomfortable "I tell her honestly.

Last night after she walked away I had some time to think and reflect back, everything that I had been brushing off, not wanting to start unnecessary family fights but I have this feeling that if I don't voice it out right now it will escalate and that's the last thing I want

"Kodwa Khanyisa, I'm not trying to cause any division here. I'm just looking out for my son. uNkosi has his parents and siblings. uMdu has no one this side, absolutely no one and you know how he's so fond of you, He likes you and I love you, you're kind, soft spoken, welcoming and not judgemental. That's the kind of person I need by Mdu's side when I'm away. If you could just do me that favor sisi, be there for him and

check on him, be close with him, he needs it"

"Yinto angeke ayenze leyo" [That's something she will not be doing]

Nkosi walks in and he doesn't look pleased at all, I thought he had left already but clearly not and now I'm wondering just how much of this conversation he caught

"Mam'ncane. Angiyizwa kahle lento yakho yokuthi ufuna umkami abe zonke lezo zinto kuMduduzi" [aunty, I don't understand this thing if you wanting my wife to be all those things to Mduduzi]

"Kodwa naye uwumndeni wakhe, akunjalo?" [but she's his family too, isn't she?]

"Angikuphikisi lokho [I'm not disputing that] but the line has to be drawn somewhere. We've never mistreated Mdu and we won't start now, if he needs something, he knows he can contact any of us, but you leave uKhanyisa out of it. She's not about to become another man's shoulder to cry on"

"So now you want to dictate who he can talk to, just as I thought"

"I really don't care what you're thinking right now" he says coldly yet calmly and it takes her by surprise "Mam'ncane, you can make everyone in this house dance, but not me. Khanyisa is my wife and I have spoken, she will not be starting any close or special relationship with uMdu. That's final. Nizohamba kahle [You'll

travel well] " he says and she has no come back
then he turns to me "I'll see you at home"

He walks out just as his uncle walks in with Ma.
We exchange greetings and he gets their bags
then walks out with her following behind him.
Bab'Mdlalose is nowhere in sight and Ma
doesn't look good. When they are gone, she
slumps on the couch

"Finally" She mumbles

"You look tired" I tell her

"I had trouble sleeping, You see that woman?
One of these days I'll wring her neck, I'm telling
you" she says shaking her head. I don't know
what to say so I just sit quietly on the couch

"And I wanted us to talk" she sits up and looks at me, she looks very troubled

"What's wrong?"

"Yazi, kukhona engikubonile kuNozizwe [There's something I've noticed with Nozizwe], with the recent events it might sound as though I'm just being a heartless step mom but I feel I have to say this ngane yani [My child]"

"I'm listening, Ma"

"I've noticed the way she's always wanting you to spend time with uMdu... Something about it seems off man, maybe I'm just expecting the worst, seeing that she's already thrown a bomb at us.. And after hearing what she said to you

last night, it kept me restless. Khanyisa, that woman is out to get Nkosi, I just know it. She's out to get the company and she's out to get you, It's not a normal thing but then again, this is Nozizwe we are talking about, nothing is normal with her, please understand that I'm not trying to be somehow "

" I know Ma, and I believe what you're saying"

"You do?"

"I do. It's not normal for her to ask that I form a close bond with Mduduzi, And yes, She's been pushing me towards him and now it seems suspicious, especially with the recent developments"

"So you'll be careful around her? I'm not asking you to pick sides, I'm not even trying to divide our family"

"I will, And you don't have to worry. I know exactly where my loyalty lies and that is with Nkosi, always" I tell her and she relaxes

"We will get through this" she says lowly

"We definitely will" I assure her

I don't know how, I don't even know what's coming but something is definitely coming. There's no way Mam'Nozizwe will rest, she wants that company, she wouldn't have revealed a secret that could potentially ruin her marriage if she didn't want it, I just wonder from

which angle the hit will come from.

NKOSIYABO

I get to the office and never have I been this relieved to have work to do. After the shitstorm we've been in, I need this distraction

With my father confirming that he's not changing his mind about me being his successor, I have only a few days to prepare myself to move office. Bangizwe will be moving to my position and Liyana stays in the finance department. I have a few loose ends to wrap up, I could easily pass them over to Bangizwe but I feel the need to oversee them so it's still going to be a busy couple of days because I'm still in between two positions

I set up my laptop and Lindiwe brings my coffee then the day officially starts. When I'm at work, I shut everything out, I usually manage to keep personal thoughts away but right now I'm very annoyed. Mam'ncane really tried me this morning and once again, she saw nothing wrong with her actions, but of course that's who she's always been and we've always tried not to entertain her but not this time. She's not going to try that stunt with me

Is it jealousy that I feel? Damn right it is. I don't like the fact that she insinuated that Khanyisa could be the only one to be there for Mduduzi, he's a grown man, he knows to ask if he needs help and I sure as hell won't have my wife roped in whatever it is that Mam'ncane thinks she's doing

I decide to shake it off and focus on my work, she's gone and what's left now is to find a way to move on from this. There's a knock on my door just as I get ready to work and then the door opens

"Hey, are you busy?" Mduzuzi asks standing by the door

"Come in, what's up?"

"I thought we could talk... I was hoping to catch you earlier at the house"

"I left early" I say and nods, he then takes a seat opposite me

"Angazi ukuthi ngizoqala ngaphi, kodwa ngakho konke obekushiwo izolo [I don't know where to start] , angifuni lento ingene phakathi kwethu [I don't want this coming between us]"

"Did you know?" I ask him the one question that's been on my mind. He was less shocked yesterday compared to everyone

"I did" He nods "She told me a while back"

"And you kept quiet about it?"

"I didn't know how to say it without hurting ubaba, you saw how he was yesterday. This is exactly what I've been trying to avoid bafo"

"So you were prepared to die with this?"

"I was, to me it didn't make a difference. My father raised me and he's the only father I've ever known. uMa telling me that bab'mkhulu is in fact my biological father... That's something I wished I could unlearn with every waking day because since learning the truth, I've had to live with this burden of knowing I'm keeping a secret from my father"

"But you could have told me, I thought we were tight like that"

"It wasn't easy, Nkosi. I also didn't want you to start thinking I'm after what's meant to be yours"

"But that's what Mam'ncane wants, she wants you to be the CEO"

"And I don't want that, I know I don't have what it takes to run a company, not like you. You've had your whole life to train for this and I can't jusg sweep in and take over, I know it doesn't work like that, but she doesn't. She thinks it's all too simple "

" And she thinks we are all going to turn our backs on you, hence I found ber trying to coerce my wife into being in your corner" the thought of it again riles me up

"She what? Ngangingazi ukuthi wayecabanga ukwenza lokho [I had no idea that she was

planning to do that], I swear"

"But why would she? What would make her think it was okay to approach Khanyisa like that?" This is another thing that's been bouncing in my head, how is it that mam'ncane felt too comfortable to even suggest this to Khanyisa

"Nami angazi [I also don't know], I've never given her any reason to think it's okay to approach Khanyisa in that way, unless..."

"Unless what?"

"The time I told her about how I first met Khanyisa, and that I almost made a mistake but Khanyisa was able to look past that when we

both learned that we are connected to you"

"Mduduzi, what are you on about right now?"

"Eish bafo... Please don't get mad at her, it was all my doing"

"Khuluma ndoda [Speak, man]" I feel myself get impatient with him

"The day I came over to your house, Earlier I passed by the mall and that's where we first met. I found her sitting alone in a restaurant, tried making a move on her but ofcourse it didn't amount to anything, she shut me down immediately"

"And when you two pretended to not know each other at the house" The words are hard to say

"She was just following my lead, clearly too shocked to see me there... I later found her alone and asked that she doesn't tell you about our interaction earlier. I didn't want to make things awkward"

"You made a move on my wife"

"I swear I didn't know... I wouldn't have done that had I known...I told ma about it and from there, I don't know what she's been thinking, I really don't know"

I look at Mduduzi, I'm burning with anger on the inside but a lot of it is not directed at him. I

know that right now, he might be sitting here, waiting to get a rise from me so I need to be very careful of how I react but that doesn't mean that I'm fucking good but I'm not. How many times have I spoken to Khanyisa about lying?

"I see, so your mother is trying to play match maker with you and my wife. Where exactly does she draw the line?"

"I'll talk to her about it"

"Do that, because I will not be entertaining this nonsense any more than I already have"

"I hear you... I just want to be sure that we are good, and also that you know I'm not behind my

mother's actions"

"Mduduzi, you stood there and shook my wife's hand like it was your very first time seeing her and now you sit here and tell me you knew her before then. Do you think that makes us good?"

"No... I'm very sorry about that, it wasn't my intention to deceive or disrespect you, I just wanted to keep the peace and not create tension in your marriage"

"I see, I'll get back to work now. I have a busy day" I say and he gets the message loud and clear

"Okay, I'll get back to work too" he gets up and leaves

The moment he closes the door, I know my day is fucked. What I also know now, is that Mduzuzi is strategic like his mother, why wait until this specific time to tell me about his first meeting with Khanyisa, and if he convinced her not to say anything, Another fact that's pissing me off right now, why say it now? Why tell me about it now when things are this tense?

I've never thought to look at Mduzuzi as anything except my brother, even without knowing that he's my real brother but now that I've had this talk with him, I know that I need to do a double take.

KHANYISA

It feels great to be home, I love being at my in-laws but yho, I'm happy yo be in my own house

I got home and relaxed a bit then I called Ntsako, she's started editing my book and as usual she's not shy to let me know how she loves the fact that she gets to read my work before anyone else, she even comments on the characters and plot twists, her excitement always rubs off on me and I find myself counting down to the days until we hit the shelves

In the evening I start with supper, then I sit and read a little while waiting for him and when I hear him come in I shut my book. I hear some fiddling until he reaches the lounge

"Hey" He says lowly

"Hey, how was your day?"

"Eventful" he says looking at me, he's not happy

"What happened?" I ask and he just continues looking at me

"Maybe later" he starts moving and I'm left with questions and this uneasy feeling at the pit of my stomach

I don't go after him, instead I go to reheat supper and then I dish up for the both of us and sat up in the dining room, he comes back down, his gotten rid of his tie and suit jacket but kept his shirt and dress pants on. He's rolled up his sleeves and let some shirt buttons loose, he still

looks pissed as he sits down and I serve him
supper

"Thank you" he says looking me in the eyes
again, his gaze is beyond intimidating at this
point

"You're welcome" I manage to say under his
watchful eye then I take my seat and pull plate
closer

"Nkosi, are you okay?" I ask him, unable to hold
it off

"No, I'm not but I will be"

"You want to talk about it?"

"Ngizokhuluma MaKhosa, just wait" [I will talk]
He says so calmly then starts eating, his
behavior is off

I start eating too and when I'm done I clear the
table and clean the kitchen, he's cooped up in
his office so I decide to go to bed, he will find
me there when he wants to talk. I get in my
pajama shorts and top then I get comfortable in
bed then I continue reading

A while later he comes in, still with the same
look on his face. He slowly closes the door then
moves to the middle of the room and starts
undressing, I'm still holding my book but my
focus has shifted to the man that's stripping
in front of me but I don't directly look up at him
but I do manage to see that he's completely

naked before he climbs the bed and hovers over me, making me shut my book before he puts it away

He starts kissing me and I respond, he slides me lower so I can fully lay on the bed and he undresses me, leaving me naked, like him. He continues kissing me while his hand goes between my legs, as usual, I don't need much to be ready for him but his touch does things to me, especially when I feel his fingers slide over my slit before he pushes them in and starts working them, making sure that my need for him intensifies

He pumps then in and out hard and moves them in circles until I reach my high and explode on his fingers while crying out his name. He doesn't give me a chance to recover before

he's leading himself inside me, he stills for a moment and kisses me possessively then he starts thrusting into me, he isn't gentle, it's hard thrusts and it's a mixture of pain and pleasure, which sets me off because I can't decide which is which but one thing I know is that I don't want him to stop

His next thrust makes me scream and then he stops moving

"Khanyisa?"

"Hmm?" I moan out

"Ngathini kuwe ngokuqamba amanga?" [What did I say to you about lying]

"Huh?"

He thrusts hard again

"Ngathini kuwe ngokuqamba amanga?" he repeats

"Uthe ngingaqambi amanga" [You said I shouldn't lie] I answer him

"That's exactly what I said, MaKhosa, Kodwa wena wenzani? Huh?" [but what did you do?]

"What?" I ask unable to think straight with how this man is ramming in and out of me while asking these questions, when did I lie? What did I lie about? "

" ngithi wenzeni [I'm saying what did you do?]
makhosa, stop making me repeat myself"

"I don't know, ah"

"You don't? Well then, why don't I remind you,
my wife. The day you met Mduduzi, at the mall"
He says and my heart surely skips a beat

"What? You don't have anything to say?" he
asks

"I... I, I didn't think much of it"

"You didn't think much of being asked out by
the the same man that I later introduced as my

cousin?"

I go quiet, he's putting me in an impossible place, questioning me while fucking my brains out, I can't even think

"And then you listened to him when he told you to not say anything to me. Tshela mina [Tell me] Whose wife are you?"

"Yours, I'm your wife"

"Then how do you listen to another man tell you to keep a secret from your husband?"

" Ngiyaxolisa [I'm sorry] Mdlalose"

"uxoliselani mkami?" [What are you sorry for, my wife]

"For not doing what's right"

"And what would be?"

"Telling you that I had an encounter with him before"

"Oh" he says

I start apologizing again and he flips me over so I'm laying on my chest, he moves off the bed and pulls me to the edge, he hooks an arm around me and had me on my knees and hands on the bed with my legs spread wide for him to

ram into me from behind relentlessly

"You were saying?"

"Ngiyaxolisa Nyanda, it won't happen again" I say and he goes at the fastest pace, I feel all of him, way too deep and I fist the sheets while he drives both of us to a release

When he pulls out of me I collapse on the bed, I'm done.

He returns with a warm cloth and cleans me up then a while later he tucks both of us in and has me in his arms again, its been a while

"I hate surprises, Makhosa. I'm sure you saw

the mess that happened at home. I don't want anyone telling me things about you that I don't already know because it will drive me insane."

"I hear you, it won't happen again"

"It better not, no matter how small or insignificant it seems, you let me know or we are going to have serious problems.
Ngiyethemba ungizwile [I trust you've heard me]
"

"Ngikuzwile" [I heard you] I confirm with a lazy tone

"Good. "

***BONUS, Don't say I don't do nice things for you 🤔😁

CHAPTER 24

KHANYISA

Days pass and the tests get done, when they come back, they confirm what I believe we all already knew. Mduduzi is Bab'Mdlalose's son. It's not much of a shock because we obviously believed that his mother wouldn't risk it big like this over a lie but of course there is that uncertainty of what the future holds, especially for the two senior brothers seeing that bab'Mandla has not been on speaking terms with his brother ever since all of this happened.

As a result, they've decided to go home for a

few weeks because bab'Mdlalose wants to fix his relationship with his brother. Personally, I believe he's done nothing wrong, there was no infidelity that took place, only Mam'Nozizwe withholding crucial information from everyone and then deciding to announce it without speaking privately with her husband about it first but at the end of the day the brothers only have each other left so I guess I can see why there's a need for this visit.

The day for Nkosi's first address as the company CEO arrives and it's excitement all round. I'd expect him to be a little nervous or even scared maybe but not him, he's overly confident and chilled about the whole thing

When I asked if he wasn't nervous about speaking to the staff this morning he looked at

me with a straight face and said "I've spoken to these people on many occasions, the only difference with this morning is my position but I'm still the same me"

As much as he didn't want to make a big deal out of it, I went right ahead and picked out the best three piece suit for him, while at it I found myself an equally best dress seeing I'll be going with him and so will his parents

I snap a few mirror pictures while waiting for him to finish up so we can leave then we hit the road. I use my own car seeing that after the morning meeting I'll head back home

When we arrive, he leads me to where the meeting will be held and people are starting to gather there and fill the chairs. I spot Mduduzi

speaking with Refilwe, they seem to be having a heated discussion but obviously trying to keep it subtle. I can't help but be annoyed with him, but more so with myself. I never should have put myself in a position where I trusted him to keep this "Secret" of how we first met, I should have just said it right there and then in front of the both of them when I got home that day

But I've learned.

Our eyes meet and I just continue walking to where Nkosi is leading me. He had this apologetic look on his face but I'm not buying it, not anymore. After confronting me, Nkosi went on and told me about his suspicions when it comes to Mduduzi and we both agreed that we'd be more transparent with each other and that I'd play far from him, that shouldn't be too

hard

We sit in the front row, joining Nkosi's parents, Bangizwe and Liyana. The two siblings seem very happy and that makes Nkosi happy too, their smiles rub off on him and I catch him smiling too. I chat a bit with Bangizwe and Liyana flat out ignores me, I do the same.

Mdudzi and Refilwe sit on the row behind us and I feel his eyes on me, or maybe it's hers. Whoever it is, I feel them watching me but I maintain my cool

Bab'Mdlalose takes to the podium first and he makes the longest speech, starting from the very beginning of the company and how far its gotten. It's a good thing that he's good with words or he would have lost people on the forst

fifteen minutes.

When he's done, he announces his retirement and also announces his successor, this is when Nkosi takes the stand and addresses everyone as the new CEO, have I ever mentioned how much I enjoy watching him speak? I get lost on watching him so much that I miss some of the things that he says but judging by the clapping of hands, he's got them good.

He also thanks his father for all his hardwork and so do the other shareholders and then bab'Mdlalose is presented with a plaque that has a black brass plate and gold engraving on it. The morning goes extremely well and everyone is in high spirits by the time the speeches end

People come around to congratulate Nkosi and

let him know just how much they believe in him just as they did his father. There's snack tables around and when I see some of the sugary treats I can't help myself so I walk away from him while he converses with other people

"Hey"

Even the sound of his voices sets me off but I remind myself of where I am and exactly what I should avoid doing

"Hi" I respond not turning to look at him

"Are you good?" he asks

"I'm great, yourself?" this time I turn to look at

him, wanting him to see that his little stunt didn't work, if anything, it earned me a mind blowing orgasm

"I'm good too, I hope I didn't get you in trouble the other day" he says all remorseful

"With?"

"You know... What I told Nkosi"

"What did you tell him?" I raise my eyebrow at him and he shifts uncomfortably and rubs the back of his neck

"That we met prior to him introducing us at the house... And that I kind of made a move on you

and convinced you not to say anything to him...
And that we fooled him by pretending to not
know each other "

"You told him the same thing you begged me
not to tell him?" I set my plate down, cross my
arms over my chest and stare at him

"I'm sorry... I don't know what I was thinking"

"Is that so?"

"Yes, I'd never want to bring problems in your
marriage... I thought he would have confronted
you about it, I've been so worried" this time he
doesn't sound just as sorry

"You don't need to worry about me, Mduduzi"

"Yes, but-"

"But it's clear that I on the other hand need to worry about you. What happened back then wasn't such a big deal to me, hence I easily let it go but had I known that it would resurface months later I would have just gone ahead and told Nkosi"

"Did he go off at you? Because I can speak to him and try to reason with him" His hand comes up to touch my arm but I quickly move back

"Like I said, You don't need to worry about me or my marriage,I'm not your problem" I tell him, get my plate then turn to walk away, but by the

corner of my eye, I see Refilwe approach him again, something about these two unsettles me

"What did he want?" Nkosi asks when I reach him

"To find out how much damage he caused by telling you"

"And?"

"I didn't even confirm if you confronted me about it or not" say glancing back at those two
"Something about them feels off"

"You're right, At first I figured it's because they're sleeping together but with everything

that's been going on, I don't know... maybe I'm being paranoid"

"No, you're not. You should be worried because with the tests proving that he's your father's son he might just come for you hard"

"He's going to get his fair share, but that's just about it"

"And if he demands the position?"

"He's not getting it." Nkosi says adamantly and I nod.

I still feel like we haven't seen nothing yet

"Whatever happens, however he might claim to not want anything now, best stay prepared" I tell Nkosi and he looks at me with this amused look on his face, I could humor him and ask what it is but I'm not about to. Nkosi wanted boundaries right? Boundaries are what he's going to get.

Over the weekend we have Bangizwe and Nandi over and we have a braai for four people. I know he thought of Liyana but he didn't invite her, she hasn't set foot in this house since her Christmas debacle and I wasn't about to extend an invitation that would leave me feeling just as I did the last time she was here having the time of her life by spewing nonsense about me

The only thing that gets to me is seeing how it

gets to Nkosi, but I didn't do this and I refuse to initiate peace when she came for me with absolutely no reason to. Yes we had a moment back at the hospital but that's all it was, a moment. I would have comforted anyone just as I did her because it's very hard for me to look away when someone is hurting but that's all there is to it, I still prefer being far from her venomous tongue

Nandi on the other hand is a whole vibe, we are chilling together by the pool with our feet dipped in the water while we indulge her homemade cocktails

"You need to teach me how to make these" I say to her while taking another sip

"I would love to, just don't go and start a

business without me" she nudges me and I
laugh

"I wouldn't dream of it"

Bangizwe is seated a bit further from us with
his brother and they seem to be having a
serious chat

"I wonder what that's about" I say slowly

"It better be about our wedding" she says while
glaring at him

"He finally asked?" I look at her with excitement
but it quickly dies down when I see her
annoyance

" Oho, kuphi? He's still dancing around the subject but I finally put my foot down, I'm enough of this nonsense now"

"What did you do?"

"I gave him an ultimatum, he either gets it together this year or on the first of January next year I'll be a single woman" she says

"You threatened to leave" Yeah, I don't think she's going anywhere

"Yes... I mean I know I'm not going anywhere but I had to do something and girl did he look scared when I said it"

"And he said?"

"He would do something about it, so that better be him doing something about it or I swear, I'll turn my threat into a promise. I done with this, I'm done Khanyisa"

"But are you really prepared for what's to come? I know we spoke about it but are you really, really prepared or these are just your emotions talking? Because if you aren't then you might end up leaving him anyway if this lady shows up and turns on the heat"

"We can't even concieve" she whispers sadly
"Does it really get worse than that?"

"I'm sorry...do you think it's because of the pending woman?"

"It is, he's supposed to marry her first before I bare his kids... This is messed up, and my heart just had to choose him" she frowns

"It will be okay" I squeeze her hand, I have no absolute idea how they are going to get through this but I know she doesn't need any negative talk around her right now

"It has to be, I'm tired of fearing the unknown... Besides, polygamy wouldn't be starting with us, my grandfather is a polygamist too"

"I think if you two agree on it, and still have each other's backs then there might be some light at

the end of the tunnel"

"I love him" she says looking at him again "I know there's no such thing as perfect but he's been amazing to me. He respects me, he's a great lover and isn't afraid to show it, I feel right at home when I'm with him... And then there's this one big flaw" she sighs

"You said it yourself, there's no such thing as perfect" I smile at her and she smiles back

"Enough about me and my mystery second wife drama, tell me about you, how's it going with you and the big boss over there"

"There's really nothing -"

"Haibo, have you seen how he keeps looking at you, that's not nothing" she says and I look at Nkosi, just as he looks at me top and our eyes meet. I blush and look down at the water

"See? Come on, tell me"

"You know how our marriage came about, we are just doing what we agreed to"

"So neither of you have caught yet?and you share a bed each night. It can't be, even Zwe thinks it's just a matter of time before one of you confesses"

"Tell him not to hold his breath" I scoff, With each waking day, Nkosi and I are falling into this routine where we are getting good at shutting

down our feelings, it still stings but it's doable
and it's safe

"You sound like you've lost all hope"

"I haven't, I just know better than to have that
expectation with Nkosi. With him, I know
exactly what I've gotten myself into and
honestly, I'm okay with it" I say and she laughs

"You're okay with it?"

"Yes, just as you're okay with wife number two" I
say and she gives me a side eye

"I'm kidding" I put my hands up in surrender and
she loosens up then we continue with our lazy

day

NKOSIYABO

"Are you even listening?"

"Nkosi"

"What?" I turn my attention back to Bangizwe

"ngithi usazincisha naa?" [I'm asking if you're still depriving yourself]

I give him the look, hoping he will shut his mouth but his wide smile indicates otherwise

"I'm just asking" he says and I give him my own
come back

"Ushada nini?" [When are you getting married?] I
ask and it's his turn to frown

"Phuma lapho, bafo. Phuma"

"hawu, nami ngiyabuza nje" [I'm also just asking]

"It might be sooner than you think" he says

"You've decided"

"She's threatening to leave, I don't want her to
leave, I love her" he says, all jokes gone

"I know you do, and I also know that she's not going to leave you because Naye uyakuthanda [She loves you too] but that doesn't mean you should continue stalling, she might just prove me wrong"

"I know that, and I'm going to make things right, come what may" He raises his glass and I raise mine too

My eyes go back to Khanyisa and Bangizwe says lowly "You know, she's not Nobuhle"

"I know that"

"She doesn't have a husband and twin kids stashed up in another country and you're not

going to find all this out just days away from marrying her"

"Bangizwe, ngiyakwazi lokho" [I know that]

"Then act like it, you're keeping her at an arms length because of your past scars. She didn't cause them and if you're going to limit yourself because of what that witch did to you then you're only allowing her to still have power over you, think about it. Khanyisa is already your wife, you know for sure she's clean, no deep dark secrets, she's your chance at happiness and you're here settling for just ogling her?"

" Are you done? "

" Oho, let those of us who love freely go and

love on our women" He gets up and walks to where they are seated, leaving me to my own thoughts

When Fana presented me with information on Nobuhle, I felt my world come crashing down. I had put myself out there, did everything that I believed made her happy and made our relationship stronger. I shared a bed with this woman day in day out and when I proposed to her she even had the audacity to cry and pretend to be so touched. Only for the truth to come flooding in just days before my family went to see hers, or should I say the uncles and aunts that she rented in order to maintain her lies.

Then I picked myself up, built myself up and made an even stronger return. Nothing could

shake me, not even the embarrassment of having called off lobola negotiations just days before. I refused to be bitter, but I also refused to fall for this charade called love, once again

I don't fear anything, I face everything head on but now here's the thing. I'm inlove with this woman, and it's the scariest thing ever. Even for me.

And each time I look at her, I feel like I'm giving in. The crazy part? The will I had at the beginning, or thought I had, to stop this from happening, is slowly letting loose.

KHANYISA

Our visitors are too tipsy to leave so we have

them sleep over, I really don't mind because I spend more time with Nandi. We've somehow gravitated towards each other and I really enjoy moments like these with her

Nkosi and Bangizwe had long disappeared into his study and later on she got a text, her smile told me it was her man and in less than a minute she got up and said "Goodnight" then winked at me and walked away

I first cleared the room before making my way to Nkosi's office. I knocked once and went in, he was just sitting there and when his eyes met mine, he smiles a little

"Hey" He says still smiling

"Hey"

"I thought you'd be in bed already"

"I'm on my way there" I say leaning against the door. His eyes roam around my body, mainly my exposed legs as the dress I'm wearing stops at mid thigh

"kukhona into oyifunayo" [Is there something you want?] He asks with a low voice

"Mhh" I nod

"Woza uzoyithatha" [Come and get it] he says, still undressing me with his eyes

I walk slowly to where he is and he pushes his chair back then takes his pants off while I slide off my panties then I look at him, He's looking at me like he wants me to take control. Nkosi knows I don't have experience but he does not seem to mind when he leads me to straddle and sit on him while taking him in

I remind myself that even though I've never done this, I know what I'm supposed to do and I'll just go with what feels right. Worst case scenario? I do it wrong and he dies with that piece of information because I know for a fact he will not say anything that might knock down my confidence

"I'm not exactly..." I leave the sentence hanging once I'm on him

"Do what feels right, don't focus on pleasuring me because just having you like this on me is pleasurable enough. Now, ride me for your own pleasure, baby, angithi uthe uyayifuna [You said you want it, right?]

I hum in response

" Ithathe ke" [Take it then]

That's all I need to start moving on him, I started slowly, gyrating on him, grinding on him while watching his facial expression, then the pleasure kicks in and I start bouncing on him, up and down and in circles I go and when I get closer I go faster and bury my face on his neck, I feel my knees start to go weak but I keep going because I feel him get closer too, I want to take him there with me and I sure do, with his

hands pressing on my bums pulling me even closer as I let loose and he spills his seeds in me

I stay on him, catching my breath and his hands never leave my body until I get up, fix my dress and pick up my panties. The look on his face right now makes me so proud, it also let's me know that he's right where I wanted him, right before I put up my wall again

"Goodnight" I say flatly already walking towards the door

"Huh?" he asks sounding very confused

"Goodnight, Mdlalose" I don't look at him for the fear that he might see me fighting off a smile

Goodnight, Mr. Boundaries.

***Maybe a hundred shares for a bonus tomorrow?? 😊

CHAPTER 26

KHANYISA

When the door closes, I wait a moment before shutting my diary and placing it back where it was then I sigh and look up at the ceiling

I had to do this. Nkosi went from being affectionate to being closed off and then some days he's in between. I couldn't keep up and so I've reached the decision to create this space

until the man is very clear about what he wants

Sure it'll hurt if he decides that boundaries are what he wants because I could totally go for him never saying he loves me but still show it in his actions, like he used to, that would be more than enough for me because actions do speak louder than words, there's a huge difference between someone telling you they love you and someone showing you. And knowing there's a chance that he might keep up this barrier from here onwards freaks me out, but he doesn't know that because I refuse to break down over something I agreed to in the first place

Just as I'm about to pull the covers and sleep, the door opens again and I sit up again

He walks in and shuts the door behind him then

he gives me a look

"Did you forget something?" I ask calmly, trying not to look surprised but I am

"Cha" [No] he shakes his head

"Then? Aren't you supposed to be sleeping?"

"Sleep can wait"

"Nkosi-"

"Le nto ngeke isebenze, MaKhosa, Ngeke isebenze nhlobo" [This thing won't work, it won't work at all] He says

I bite my lower lip because I suddenly have this urge to laugh. He couldn't last a night? A single night?

"But you agreed" I force the words out, the look on his face brings me a lot closer to laughter right now and this is supposed to be a very serious moment

"MaKhosa, Ngiyaphinda futhi, lokhu ngeke kusebenze, sidinga ukukhuluma ngalokhu [I repeat, this will not work. We need to talk this out] he speaks firmly and the Nkosi I know has officially resurfaced. Not this June/July stunt he's been pulling on me

"Usho ukuthini?" [What do you mean?] I narrow

my eyes at him and he pulls a vanity chair then comes to sit right in front of me, his gaze is piercing but I don't back down, if Nkosi came here with the intention to continue with this uncertainty or confusion or whatever its called, I'm not going to allow it, we either really start living the way we had planned or we give us a try in a different light compared to what we both had in mind, I won't settle for back and forths and he needs to know that

"I don't want to sleep in a separate room, I want to sleep here, with you, next to you" his voice is very calm

"But I've already told you why I can't, I need time to get myself together Nkosi, it's not easy for me as it is for you, you know... I can't just shut down and pretend I don't feel anything"

"It's not easy for me either, having to hold back each time"

"But you're the one enforcing it" I tell him

"I know that too, I thought I had it together, I had it all planned and figured we could make it work in that way but honestly, I've been seeing for a while now that I just played myself. There's no way I can be married to you, live in the same house with you, sleep on the same bed and not feel anything. It's impossible and not just because that's what's expected when a man and a woman live together, but because it's you, Khanyisa. Specifically you, you're doing things to me, things I have no absolute control of and I might look like I have it together but I'm really freaking out about it because I had sworn to

myself to never fall for this again"

" Which is why I suggested the space-

" Awungizwa MaKhosa [You're not hearing me],Ngilalele kahle, I don't want this space because I don't want to hold back anymore. And yes, it took you politely kicking me out of our bedroom to realise that I was becoming the one thing I despise. I don't like games, you know this. And so I don't want to find myself playing hide and seek with you when I could have just came in here and sorted things out with you"

"I know you have a past, but so do I, Nkosi... We might not have had the same experiences and maybe yours were worse but I dont believe that our marriage needs to suffer because of that. I'm not the woman you had to end up

investigating, and you're not the guy who went and got married behind my back, leaving me to find out through social media, imagine if I were to pull away because of that? "

" You're right, it wouldn't be fair and I haven't been fair and for that ngiyaxolisa, I'm really sorry"

"I know what we agreed on... And if that's how you want to things then believe me, I won't fight you and chances are I'll get used to it and we will make it work, just don't confuse me, Nkosi. Don't be letting me in one day and shutting me out the other, I know I deserve a lot better than that. You said it yourself, I didn't marry a confused man, don't become one right now"

"You're right, you didn't marry a confused man"

he gets up from the chair and takes off his shoes, pants and shirt then he gets on the bed with me and pulls me to his side "Look, I know I have things to work through and I'm going to start doing that. But I don't want to limit us anymore, I don't want to limit how great we can be together, I also don't want to downplay what I feel for you"

"So what are you saying? no more boundaries?"

"That's exactly what I'm saying... I'm also saying I won't just transform over night, I need to know if you can be patient with me"

"Will you turn one day and decide you want to go back to the arrangement?"

"No, I won't do that, those days are long gone"

"Okay, then my answer is yes, I will be patient with you" I answer him feeling like a ton of bricks has been lifted off my chest

"Khanyisa, I..." he starts then sighs "I want you to be happy, I know we will have our off days but I need you to know that I care for you and your happiness means so much to me. I don't want to keep running around what I feel for you, even when you aren't around... You've become a very big part of my life. I might not be that good with words but you can trust my actions, they will never mislead you. Just know that I don't ever want to lose you"

"I'm not going anywhere, I want to see where this goes... And I want to say something but

that doesn't mean I expect you to say it back,
Okay?" I turn my body so I can look at him

"Okay" he answers nervously and I laugh a little

"Don't be nervous, remember, you aren't obliged
to say it back, I just want to be able to say it
without risking you shutting me out" I say and
he nods

With my heart beating fast and my own nerves
coming to play because I don't know how he's
really going to react, I reach for his hand and
look him in the eyes

"I am in love with you, Nkosiyabo Mdlalose. I
love you so very much and I want to show it and
say it without reservations. Ngiyakuthanda

Nyanda, kakhulu futhi [I love you, a lot]"

He smiles and tries looking away but I've already seen his blush "Are you blushing?" I tease

"Haibo, Indoda efana nami? [A man like me?] Blush? Kuyini lokho vele [What is that anyway?] He tries to deny it

" I saw you, you can't deny it" I laugh and he shakes his head

"Awubonanga kahle [You did not see well] I don't blush"

I resume my sitting spot but he quickly slides

me on the bed and gets on top

"I'm sorry for being a jerk. I asked you to trust me to lead us and I haven't been such a good leader, will you forgive me and give me a chance to redeem myself?" he asks maintaining the eye contact

"I forgive you"

"Ngiyabonga" [thank you]

His eyes drop to my lips and in an instant he crashes his on then and kisses me hard then he pulls away

"Uzonginika manje?" [Will you give me now?]

"Ini?" [What?]

He slides his hand further up my thighs and touches me "Okungokwami, ukudla kwami" [What belongs to me, my food] he grins against my lips

I nod my head and he starts leaving a trail of kisses on skin after pulling the silk piece of clothing off me then he holds it up

"And you just said 'I'm gonna put this on so I can drive him crazy while kicking him out of out bedroom' huh?" he asks and this time I can't stop the sly smile

"I don't know what you're talking about" I deny

"Oh, you don't know?" he asks with a daring stare

"I don't know" I repeat

"Let me show you then, angithi you don't know?"

He doesn't wait for my response, he tugs my underwear and tears it off in one go and the ripping sound, alongside the action itself makes my eyes go wide

"You bring out the caveman in me" He smirks then slides himself down with his head landing between my legs

I tense a little and notices "Don't be nervous, if it's not working for you, all you have to do is tell me and I'll stop, okay?" he says reassuringly

Sometimes I forget that I'm going to have all my firsts with him and I end up feeling silly when I react just as I did now, but his calmness rubs off on me and I relax

He spreads my thighs further apart and starts my planting kisses on each inner thighs and then his lips move up and up until they rest on a spot that makes me abuse the sheets under me with the grip of my hands

I've researched this before for writing purposes but I'll say it now, reading about it and actually experiencing a tongue flick my folds and french kiss my clit are two complete different things

Nkosi keeps checking my face as he does this, probably for indication that I want him to stop but I wouldn't even dream of it. I don't want him to stop what he's doing but when I feel the pleasure multiply I try shutting my legs, completely disregarding that I might just suffocate him

He keeps them apart and hold a firm grip on my thighs just as he works his tongue harder and harder on my skin until the tingles build up all to my toes. My body locks and then I feel it hit my body like some sort of pleasurable shock that I can't put in words, I even feel the pulsating in my ears while my eyes are wide open

When he gets off the bed I start moving to one side but he quickly cages ankles and pulls me

closer to him

"Ucabanga ukuthi uyaphi?" [Where do you think you're going?] You still have to account for kicking me out of our bedroom, wife. " he says and I just know I'm about to get it.

NKOSIYABO

I have her exactly where and how I want her. Legs shakily apart, messy hair, sweaty skin, glorious and sexy moans and a face that lets me know I've done her proper.

I first have her against the wall with her legs wrapped around me and then I have her facing the wall, we move to the dresser where I take her from behind and when her legs can't

anymore, we get on the bed and I go slowly, I love how she looks at me with each thrust I give and if she wasn't so drained after this last round I might have just had her until sunrise

She falls asleep almost immediately after we've gotten comfortable on the bed and I keep her in my arms while watching her, or rather admiring her beautiful facial features. The night replays in my head and I know for sure that had I slept in that room I'd wake up regretting it in the morning, there's not a time where I won't fight to keep Khanyisa. Be it to share a bed with her or a life with her, there's no way I'd be willing to let her leave without doing whatever I can to make her stay with me

My past actions are shameful, I made put her in a position where I never should have because

of my anger, resentment and trust issues that I earnest from Nobuhle, I feel guilty about that and I know for a fact that an apology in words won't cut it, I'm more of an actions man, and so I need to show her that I want this, That I want her and that I do feel bad for building a wall around myself when she never wronged me to begin with

Bangizwe was right, I've been depriving myself. I got a taste of what it would be like to love her and then I went ahead and decided against it, and in the midst of that, I know I hurt her, she might never say it straight up but I know what it feels like to not have emotional access to your significant other and I'm going to work on that for my sanity and for us. We deserve that much

And again, guest bedroom? Me? It could never

be.

CHAPTER 25

NKOSIYABO

I get ready for work and as it's now become a thing, Khanyisa picks out a suit for me. Over the past few months, I've had my suit collection increase and there's been different colours added. Normally I'd go for my usual black and a white shirt but Khanyisa has taken it upon herself to make sure I don't "Look like I'm repeating the same outfit on most days" those are her words.

Today I'm wearing a royal blue and black scotch suit with a matching charcoal grey tie and handkerchief. I feel good, no, I feel great

I walk from my car to the main reception and I greet the two ladies there and then I head to the elevator and just behind me, Refilwe follows.

"You look good" She says and seeing that it's just the two of us in here, I know she's talking to me

"Thank you" I find myself smiling a little. Not because Refilwe just complimented me but because Khanyisa said I'd be getting quite a few of those today and we agreed I'd tell her how many people told me I look good during the cause of the day

But Refilwe mistakes that smile for something else "You're welcome" She smiles too "I've never

seen you in this, it must be new"

"It is, My wife got for it for me"

"Oh... Okay" she retreats and I keep quiet

We get off the elevator and walk out together, I greet Lindiwe while passing to my new office and get another "You look good"

"Uh... I've been meaning to check if you're good with Mdu and I.... As we... Uhm..." The sentence never reaches the end and I just see where this is going

"With you two being together?" I ask and she nods "That's really none of my business"

"I know, but since his your blood brother and we used to have something going..."

"Yes, he's my brother, as it turns out. But who he chooses to get with is his own choice, whatever you guys decide to do in your own time does not concern me as long as it doesn't in any way affect the company" I tell her when we both stop by my door

"Alright, I just needed to make sure there won't be any animosity should we become something serious"

"It definitely will not be coming from me"

"Okay, Have a good day" she says and walks

away while I step in my office

As soon as I get in my office I call Mfanafuthi
and he picks up at the second ring

"Bozza, I was about to call you"

"That means you've got something"

"Not a major something... But it's something"

"Get to it,Fana"

"I managed to track down the guy who hit the
old man's car"

"That's good..." I wait for him to continue

"I tried tracking him down and found his family but the problem is, they haven't seen him since last week"

"Hayi Mfanafuthi, these people are hiding him, check again"

"No bozza, I checked, this guy has vanished into thin air... It's almost like he never existed"

"And what the hell is that supposed to mean?"

"One of two things... He's either in hiding, or the people who sent him got rid of him because they don't want loose ends... But I won't stop

digging"

"Continue searching for him or his employer, I want a name soon Mfanafuthi" I say sternly then hang up. This has gone on for two long now and this guy disappearing only raises more questions. I'm even considering hiring a second PI at this point

I get on with my day knowing that I'm going to have a hectic day but before I start, I look at the additional photo frame on my table, it's a picture of Khanyisa and in the midst of all this, looking at her happy face brings me peace and comfort, it's almost like this picture carries her presence in this office, it instantly calms me down and I love it.

KHANYISA

It's a good morning.

I start my day with the cleaning crew and while they clean the rest of the house, I focus on on the rooms they don't touch and the laundry as well so I'm busy for most of the morning, later in the afternoon I'm going to go over to Cheryl's place to help her set up for a dinner thing that she and Nick are hosting this evening with his associates and their spouses. I suggested that she find someone to help when I saw her panicking but she insisted on doing it herself and now we are here.

After the cleaning crew packs up and leaves I go to the kitchen to fix myself something to eat. I've been hungry for a while now but thought it would be rude of me to make food while

someone spring cleans my kitchen, I know my mom hates that, you can't even get a glass of water if she's doing the dishes

I make myself a fruit bowl then I go to eat in the lounge areas while catching up on with my favourite series, just one or two episodes should do

But unfortunately my phone rings and I groan but immediately stop when I see that it's my sister

"Sesi"

"N'wana mhana mina, u pfukile?" [My mother's child, are you well?]

"Ni pfukile, n'wina?" [I'm well and you]

"mina ni kahle, no vona kulo whii" [I'm okay, you're too quiet]

"Eish ya, akuri busy man [It was busy]

" I figured, twana, hi hlangana rini hita vulavula hi ntirho wa mhani na papa? [listen, when are we meeting so we can discuss about mom and dad's celebration?]

"Uhm, mi kona rini? Mina ni nga endla nkarhi hambu kova rini" [When are you available? I can make time whenever]

"From tomorrow I'll be on leave, so you'll let me

know ahi ta ya hiya vona na munhu wo rhunga
[We would also go to see the tailor]

" That sounds like a good idea, I'll let you know
tomorrow "

" Alright, swi famba njhani swa buku [How's it
coming along with the book?] my colleagues
can't wait to place their order... And I might
have promised them signed copies" she says
the last part slowly

She always does this but I don't mind, if there's
one thing that sesi Caro will do, it's to tell the
whole world that shes Ms. K.Inks big sister, she
will be meeting with a person today and
tomorrow she's already persuaded them to buy
my work.

"Ni mi tiva miri so vhele" [This is how I know you to be] I laugh

"Hitaku yini hi beburiwe na switsari swa ndhuma?" [what can we say if we were born with famous writers?] she boasts and a big smile is plastered on my face

"I can only hope you didn't promise them anything else"

"Uhmhhh maybe personalised bookmarks?" she asks

"Yeah sure, I'll send you the prices then you will pay for them"

"Hayi ka Khanyisa"

"Nop, you want bookmarkers, you're paying for them" I try not to laugh ad she sulks "No tlanga [I'm just kidding] the first fifty buyers will be getting them free, make sure your people are first in line"

" Vo boheka [they have no choice]" She laughs

We talk for a while until I have to make my way over to Cheryl's and when I get there, it's beyond chaotic

"Why did you do this to yourself again?" I ask her

"Because I want to prove to my rude and judgemental mother in law that I'm not useless"

"She called you useless?"

"So many times, I just figured that if I could pull off this dinner, Nick would obviously let her know that I did it and it would shut her mouth... But it's a mess, a fancy dinner for ten people? What was I thinking?" she sighs and throws herself on the couch "You'll help me, right?" she asks with pleading eyes

"I'll help you, alright... But there's no way we are pulling this off with just four hands, and you know yourself Cheryl, it'll be like two and a half

hands" I say then laugh and she joins in, she knows herself

She looks defeated again as she relaxes on the couch and I decide to help her snap out of it

"Look, babes, I'm very sure Nick knows who he married and although his mother's words sting, she won't be here tonight and even if she was, she would still find something to fault you on. Tonight is about him and that's what you need to focus on, you don't want him to be left embarrassed when he walks in here, right?"

"I don't, this means a lot to him and so it means a lot to me too" She agrees

"So you're going to make a few calls and get people to come in and help us, Make this exactly what it's supposed to be. You know by

now you'll never impress his mother anyway
and this is not the event to try and do it"

"You're right, what the hell was I thinking" She
says reaching for her cellphone

NKOSIYABO

I called to let Khanyisa know I'd be home a little
late because I had a meeting further away from
the office and now as I park my car I can't wait
to sit and eat because I'm starving. I declined
ordering something to eat at the restaurant
where I had my meeting because I knew she
would have cooked and it wouldn't be pleasant
if she does all that and I get home and not eat,
plus I love my wife's cooking

Love... I seem to be using this word quite a lot where Khanyisa is concerned

When I get in the house I first go up to take off my jacket, waistcoat and tie then I loosen up my shirt a little before going back to join her, she's still dishing up when I walk in the kitchen and grab a chair near the island

"So my sister called today, we have to start planning for my parents 30th anniversary in May"

"That's a wonderful thing, do they know about it or it's a surprise?"

"They know, I think they are a little too old to be surprised like this, we don't want any health

scares on the day" she says with a chuckle

"That's true, plus chances are once the invites start rolling, someone would definitely slip up"

"Imagine" She says smiling again "Anyway... I'm going to need to assist obviously" she lowers her eyes

"I hope this isn't you asking for permission to use money, Uyazi awudingi ukwenza lokho nami [You know you don't need to do that with me]

" I know, but I see it necessary to do so"

"I don't, they are my family too and you're my wife, you have enough right to the money, I've

already told you" I say sternly because I don't like how tense she looked when she mentioned it, I don't want her to think she has to seek permission to use money, just her letting me know is enough

"Okay, thank you"

"Uyaphinda [You're doing it again], what are you thanking me for?"

"It seems rude to not say thank you, I was raised to show appreciation, so thank you" She says again, with a wide smile this time and I end up smiling too

She then serves me and sits opposite me

"Thank you" I say and she smiles

"You see? Why are you thanking me because it was expected anyway that I'd serve you" she asks and I know I've lost this one

"Okay, you're right" I tell her and she giggles

"Of course I am"

After supper I have to make a few calls and she excuses herself to go soak herself in the bathtub. It's a while until I hang up then I go up to our bedroom

She's exiting the closet, wearing one of her sexy and very, very short black satin night dress. The

top part is made in lace and cups her breasts so gloriously, my mind races of to last night, she left just when I was getting started and now with one look at her, I'm aroused and I want her

"Oh good, you're here" she says putting on her matching robe but leaves it loose, allowing my eyes to feast longer on her perfect legs, thighs and chest

"Nkosi" she says putting her hands on her hips, why is everything she's doing turning me on even more?

"Uh yeah?" I finally get my voice back, my mind? Not so much, it's very much still in the gutter

"We need to talk"

Okay, now she has my full attention.

"MaKhosa, isn't it a bit too early for those words?"

She looks at me and lightly shakes her head trying to fight off a smile "No man, it's not that"

"What are we talking about ke mkami?" I take steps closer to her and when she fold her arms underneath her bust, you can guess where my eyes land

"This arrangement, it's not working for me"

"Huh?"

I swear I keep floating in and out of this conversation

"You said boundaries right? I don't think we started out correctly, okay no, we did but along the way we lost direction and now it's hard Nkosi, I can't do this if there's no space between us"

She just said space?

"Wait, is this the beginning of you leaving me?"

"What?no..."

"Then why is it sounding like a break up,

MaKhosa? "

"We can't break up, we are already married" she moves away and sits on the bed crossing her one leg over the other

Again, everything my wife is doing this night, every movement, is causing my rock hard friend to stir uncontrollably in my pants, I wonder if she's even aware of what she's doing

"I'm not breaking up with you, but we need space. I can't be trying to tow the line while sleeping next to you each night, it's a very hard thing to do" there's something about the way she says hard

"So what are you saying? You can't leave our

home" I feel panic hit me at the thought of her moving out

This is similar to what happened last night, I'm stuck between being horny and having to keep up with what she's saying

"Your mind is racing" she gets up and walks to me, when she's close I'm thinking she's going to put her hands on my chest but she never touches me "I'm not going anywhere, Mdlalose. I just think we need to sleep in separate bedrooms, that's all" she says softly

"Huh?"

"It will help us, I know it will with regard to these boundaries and remembering why we got

married in the first place"

"That's just a step back" I protest

"A step back that we both need, well I know I need it because I'm kind of struggling a little right now... You said it yourself, we should go back to the real reason and foundation of our marriage, my lines got blurred a little and I think so did yours"

"But-"

"No, it's really okay, I want this to work. I want us to work. If you don't want to leave this room then it's okay, I'll go back to that other one"

"No, it's only fair that you keep this one" I quickly say knowing how much she loves this room, mainly because of the bathtub and it wouldn't be fair of me to keep it

"So we are good?" she asks with a smile

"Uhh... Yeah" it comes out as a question

"Perfect! now I'll just get started with the anniversary planning before I sleep. I've sorted out the bedroom for you, Goodnight" she says while moving to her side of the bed then she gets on it and reaches for her diary then starts writing on it

"Goodnight" I say slowly making my way out

Entering the guest bedroom, I look around and I'm anything but happy. I'd rather be in our bedroom right now, making sweet love to my wife and holding her in my arms until she falls asleep, I want to be next to her, not just inside her but next to her because that's what feels like home, that is home and I'm slowly reaching a realisation here...

Another thing, Did I seriously just get kicked out of my own bedroom?

No man, kahle kahle, whose in control here?

CHAPTER 27

NKOSIYABO

I get up before Khanyisa, normally she hears me

get up and does the same but this morning she's still in deep sleep so I make sure I don't wake her up as I get off the bed. The covers are only covering a portion of her body but her legs and arms are left uncovered and spread on the bed, Just one look at her makes me want to get back on the bed and have her in my arms, or even better, wake her up by making love to her all over again.

But I can't do that, not with all the responsibilities that await me so I get in the shower and get ready for work. I'm physically washing last night off but the memories are fresh in my head. I'm replaying every moment in my head and it's almost like a video that's been turned on. Now I know for sure that if I had allowed myself to sleep in that other room I'd be regretting it right now, and things would be tense but most importantly, Khanyisa would be

walking around thinking that I don't feel anything for her and that's very far from the truth

Her telling me that she's in love with me took me by surprise. It's like with each day, Khanyisa is breaking out of this shell and showing her confidence, I love that, but then again, I love everything that has her at the center of it and I know I'm very lucky to get to call her my wife. I'm a very lucky man and I don't intend on taking this luck for granted

I never thought I'd find myself at this point ever again. I had completely taken it off the cards and figured that since I still wanted a family of my own I'd have to go about it in my own way because I got burned the last time

I tried with Refilwe but that obviously went south and I know I'm partly to blame because I couldn't be open to what she wanted. Which then makes me wonder how it's all coming so naturally with Khanyisa, She doesn't even have to try hard with me. All she has to do is give me a look and that's all, that's it, I'm done

I turn off the water and get out the shower then I go to my side of the shelves in the bathroom. Once I'm done there I grab a dry towel and wrap it loosely around my waist before walking out

She stirs a little but goes back to sleep and I move to the closet to get dressed, I quickly get dressed while minding the time then I put on my watch and walk out when I'm satisfied with how I look

I walk to her side and lean in to kiss her
goodbye but she wakes up

"You're up? What time is it?" she asks wanting
to get up but I stop her

"It's okay, I'm already done and I'm about to get
going"

"You should have woken me up" she says
stretching her arms

"You needed the rest" I tell her with a proud
smirk on my face while replaying our night of
passion in my head and she smiles while facing
down which tells me she's thinking the same
thing

"And now you don't have lunch" she says

"Come have lunch with me at the office"

"I'd like that"

"I'd like that too, so I'll wait for you to come by, just let me know what time so I can move my schedule around"

"You don't have to if you have a busy day"

"I want to, lunch will be better with you around, so later?" I ask her and her nods

"Okay, later"

"Great" I kiss her forehead and get up so I can leave and she gets comfortable on the bed again

KHANYISA

I fall asleep almost immediately after Nkosi leaves. He left me drained last night and I'm still struggling to keep my eyes open so I don't force it, I'm not rushing off to anywhere especially now that he's gone already

When I wake up again it's exactly ten o'clock in the morning. The one thing I don't like about over sleeping is that I end up not wanting to wake up at all for the rest of the day, it just becomes a lazy day all together

I force myself to get up, make the bed and hit the shower because I know the bathtub will only add on to this laziness

When I'm done I put on my legging shorts and T-shirt then I slip on my flip flops. I start with my house chores and because I'm a little lazy today, I decide some Tsonga music will do the trick and it sure does because before I know it, I'm done with my cleaning and I'm all energized

I then start making lunch and packing it in the basket then I go up to change my clothes. I swap my laid back clothes for a pencil skirt and a shirt. I keep my flip flops but grab a pair of red bottom stilettos so I can change when I get there. I keep my make up minimal, focusing a lot on my lipstick more than anything else then I

put on my weave and then I hit the road

When I park, the first thing I do is change my shoes, then I get out and reach for the basket. I make my way in and greet the two ladies at the front before getting in an elevator. Nkosi's office changed but it's still on the same floor so I get off there

"Mrs. M, Welcome" Lindi says with a warm welcoming smile

"Hey, you good?"

"I'm good thanks and you ma'am?"

"I'm good too, is he in?" I point over to the

direction where his office is at

"He's in the boardroom but you can go through, I'll let him know you're here"

"If he's in a meeting then it's fine, I'll wait"

"He's just in there with potential interns, it's nothing big and he said I should let him know when you're here"

"Okay then" I nod and walk to Nkosi's office. I shut the door behind me. I place the basket on the corner cute coffee table next to the couch then I move to his main table around the table. I see the added frame next to the ones I already knew and when I see that it's a picture of me, I pick it up and take a closer look. It's not one of

our wedding day pictures, this one was taken without me being aware as it's a side profile. How he got it? I don't know but this cute act warms my heart

I set it on the table again carefully then move to the big windows and take a peak outside through the blinds, the door opens and I immediately turn around to see him enter. He closes the door, then locks it and then he walks to where I'm at and in an instant, he has me in his arms with his lips on mine

He places his hands on my butt and pulls me closer to him while deepening the kiss, he kisses me like he last saw me days ago but I'm not complaining, I love this.

"Sawubona mfazi kaNkosiyabo" [Hello,

Nkosiyabo's woman] He says when he pulls away, keeping his hands right where they were and me? I'm just being a melting mess

"Yebo myeni kaKhanyisa" [Yes, Khanyisa's husband] I respond and he smiles proudly

"Whose blushing now?" He asks making me laugh

"Oksalayo [fact remains] I made you blush first" I say right back at him

"Oho, keep telling yourself that" He laughs it off

"Why did you lock the door?"

"Ngoba angifuni ukuphazanyiswa ngisadla"
[Because I don't want to be disturbed while I eat]

"It's just lunch, Mdlalose" I roll my eyes at him

"My lunch, maybe I want to eat after eating, or should I start by eating before I eat?" there goes that voice that always sets me off. He says this lowly closely to my ear then he plants kisses on my neck "Hmm, MaKhosa, which one should I do first?" he asks and I feel the heat between my legs rise

"Eat" I say and his lips capture mine the second that word leaves my mouth. He start walking me backwards without breaking the kiss. We stop when I feel myself again his table then he unzips my skirt, letting it fall to my feet

He slides off my lace panties too then picks me up and places me on the table. I hear him fiddle with his belt and zipper then he holds up my leg and swiftly enters me. I grip on to his shoulders and bite my lip knowing very well that these walls aren't sound proofed so I can't be loud but with how he's ramming into me, one would swear that he's working to make me lose the control I have and risk exposing what we are doing in his office

It takes everything in me to remain quiet and when I can't he muffles my moans with his mouth as he drives us both to the edge

He pulls out and we use the box of tissues on his table to clean up then we get dressed and move to the couch so we can have lunch

He sits very close to me and we eat while he tells me about how his day is going. I won't lie, I'm currently floating on cloud nine and I want to stay right there. I love that we are back here and it's even better this time because I don't have to tiptoe around my feelings anymore or worry about him waking up with second thoughts.

NKOSIYABO

I walk Khanyisa out to her car and the entire time I have my hand on her back, The only thing standing between my hand and her ass is that I'm at the office and I need to stay professional. If not for that, my hand would be all up on her because I love touching her there, I love touching her everywhere and I love the reaction is earns me

When we stop I she unlocks the car and I put in the basket then I have her against the door and kiss her slowly once I'm sure we are in the clear
"I'll see you later"

"Later" She says then I get the door for her and wait for her to drive off then I walk back to my office, ready to get on with the rest of the day

When I get in, Refilwe follows with the stack of files that I requested

"I thought you didn't do love" She mumbles placing them on my table, exactly where I had Khanyisa on earlier

"What was that?"

"I said, I thought you didn't do love" She repeats clearly this time

"And you're bringing this up because?"

"Because when you walked her to her car, the two of you looked nothing like an arranged couple"

"And this concerns you how, Refilwe?" I ask and she looks at me with disbelief

"There's really no need to be rude about it Nkosi, I was just making a mere observation"

"About my marriage? Even after I told you not to

ever go there"

"Shoot me for being taken by surprise, you were never like that with me so that's why I'm surprised" she says and I know she's telling the truth, a full year and she never got as close to me as Khanyisa has managed to do in just a couple of months

"Are you ever going to let the past remain just that?"

"I'm not trying to revive anything here... I mean, now that I'm with Mduduzi, I'd hate to even think about reviving what we had but a girl can't help but wonder Nkosiyabo... She must be something special" She says and all I have to do is give her a look and she raises her hands in surrender "I know, I know, Your wife is off limits.

I'll stop"

"Good, I'd hate to have to repeat myself. Was this all?" I ask eyeing the files

"Yes, boss." she says then starts walking then she stops and turns to look at me "I'm meeting his mother soon, any tips?" She asks with a wide smile and I'm baffled as to why she would ask me for tips instead of Mduduzi, he knows mam'ncane best

"None, just be yourself, I'm sure she's going to love you" I say and she nods then walks out

"Good luck" I mumble to myself when the door shuts, she's going to need it.

KHANYISA

I continue with my tsonga music while driving home. I'm still all smiles and living in my mind. My phone starts to beep with messages coming through, I'm unable to read them as I'm driving but when I quickly check who it is I see that they are from Ntsako, my editor

It's obviously about my book and it gets me excited to know that we are now going to the printers. It is done and my new baby is here

My phone rings and it's her

"Lovie" I answer

"Babes, ulekwin? [Where are you?]"

"Nle ndlelen yo ya kaya" [I'm on my way home]

"You're driving?"

"Yep"

"Okay... We will talk loko u fika [When you arrive]" she says and I sense the worry in her tone

"Is everything okay?"

"Uh.. Just check your messages when you park... I'll call you back" She says then hangs up before I can say anything else

Now I'm in a rush to get home

Ntsako's tone unsettles me and I'm now nervous . She didn't sound happy at all for someone whose excited about a new book and now I wish to just see these messages

I get home and park in the garage, I kill the engine then take off my seat belt then I grab my phone not willing to get off the car first, I want to know what's going on

I go straight to Ntsako's whatsapp message

"Khanyisa, what's going on? What the hell is this?"

The text is followed by images and I quickly download them. The first is the front of a book cover

"In twenty-five days"

Wait... This is my book title

"By Kedirile Hartman"

Okay... Authors have the same titles all the time... Must be a coincidence... These things happen all the time

I move to the next image and it's the back cover with the summary. I quickly read through it and

the further I read the more my heart starts beating violently against my chest like it wants a way out. I feel my airway get tight and it gets very hot in the car

This is my summary, my damn book synopsis. What the hell is this?

I check the other images and she took random chapter pictures, skimming through them, I realise that this is my book, the same book I've sent to the printers, what the hell!

With shaking hands I dial Ntsako

"What is this, Ntsako?"

"I'm shocked too, it's all over the internet, she's promoting the book as hers and apparently it landed in the book stores today. What happened Khanyisa?"

"I don't know! I don't even know this Kedirile woman"

"She's a first time author. According to her, this is her first work"

"But it's my work! Mine! How can she say it's hers?"

"I don't know what's going on but all I know is that this book hit the shelves today and with the amount of exposure she's getting, which is also very suspicious seeing she's new, these books

are going to start selling like hot cakes"

I run out of words, my vision turns blurry and right there in my car, I feel like my heart is about to stop beating

"Are you there?" Ntsako asks

"Khanyisa??"

"Please say something, oh gosh"

"I'll call you back" I manage to say then I hang up

The reality of what's happening hits me hard and I have no strength to move so I start

sobbing in my car. How can this be happening?

CHAPTER 28

NKOSIYABO

I race home immediately after cutting my call with Khanyisa. I couldn't really make up everything that she was saying because she was crying through it but from what I gathered. Her book was stolen.

The thought of it makes me grip harder on my steering wheel, who the hell would want to do this her? After all her hard work? And how the hell did they even manage to steal it because I know for a fact she never takes her laptop in public, she always writes at home and for the last few weeks she's only ever taken it to my

parents house. Maybe she was hacked? But still, why?

I can't stop the little voice inside me that keeps telling me that this might be my fault somehow. She's released four books prior to this one and none ever got stolen. Then she gets married to me and at around the same time where an unexplainable mess is taking place, this is added on. It has to be connected somehow.

When I arrive, I rush to find her in the house. She's lying on the bed and I hear her soft sobs. They drive a sword through my chest and make me want to find the person who did this and deal with them on a very personal level. I've already sent Fana the name to track down this bogus author then I'll take it from there. If my suspicion is right, she's just the poster girl,

someone either gave or sold this book to her and that person, is the one I want to have a word with.

I take off my shoes and get on then bed with her then I turn her so she can look at me. She tries speaking but only ends up crying again, this makes my own eyes burn but I swallow that knot on my throat and comfort her

"I'll find the person who did this, I promise you" I feel hopeless knowing that I haven't been able to get through with the last problems but this one shouldn't be too hard seeing that this woman's name is all over

"What am I going to do, Nkosi? I already have orders lined up. What do I tell my readers?"

"We could say there's been a bit of a delay, they know you and they know you always deliver"

"But I have nothing to deliver now, my book... It's already there but it's not my name that's on it..."

"Those books will be recalled"

"How?" She asks, she's already lost hope but seeing her like this. I know I need to get those books off the shelves, soon "and even if they do, there's those who've already started buying, they are already reading and they think it's all Kedirile's work but it's not"

"Not all hope is lost sthandwa sam [My love]"

There's got to be a way and we will find it, okay?"

She nods her head and I keep her in my arms until she falls asleep, this has drained her emotionally and I know that since all her readers are looking forward to tomorrow, she needs to have a statement ready. Whether or not she wants to tell them the truth, I'll hear from her but whatever she decides, I know I need to stand by her and support her

My phone vibrates and when I check, I find that it's Fana

I gently get off the bed and walk out of the room then I answer his call

"Mfanafuthi, I swear this time if you're calling me with another dead end then this is where you and I cut ties"

"I got her info, bozza. I know I've been a disappointment as of late but I swear I'm doing the best I can. It's just that whoever planned these attacks made sure to clean up the second they were done or there's someone who knows I'm looking into it so they are always a step ahead"

"Only my wife and siblings know, what are you saying to me?"

He hesitates for a moment "Nothing bozza yami, back to Miss. Hartman, she works at Rosebank College in braamfontein as an information specialist assistant. You'll find her in the

campus library and I'm sending through her personal number right now and home address incase you don't want to wait for tomorrow, she lives in a secure estate. I managed to get a password for the gate, you use it once to enter and exit then it becomes invalid"

This is the Fana I know, how he is struggling to find the person behind the company mess and my father's accident is still a mystery to me.

"I'll go see her right now, thanks"

"It's the least I can do Bozza"

"I'll transfer your payment right now too"

"No please don't, take this as me making up for my slacking. You know I'm good at what I do but with this current mission it's like someone purposely keeps throwing stumbling blocks to block me so take this as a show of good faith"

"Alright, we'll talk soon"

"Sure bozza yami, and one more thing... I'm not trying to start any trouble with your family but if I'm struggling to get ahead like this then maybe the enemy is closer to you than imagined. I just think it's something you should take into consideration" he adds and I agree

I know I can't use my emotions to make judgements, I need to be logical and use my brain. Fana comes highly recommended by uLwazi, they've worked together at some point

and the one time I hired him, he came out shining with damning information and pictures all the way from Swaziland, so if he's saying I need to start looking closer to home then I know that's exactly what I need to do.

I immediately eliminate my parents from this list, there's no way my father would orchestrate his own accident and kill his own employees, Khanyisa is definitely clean, there's no question about that, Lwazi is too busy ducking bombs to concern himself with the company... Which then leaves my two siblings or three now with Mduduzi. I can't stomach the thought of Bangizwe and Liyana being behind all this, and what would they really stand to gain.

Then there's Mduduzi, with the recent developments, the shoe could easily fit him...

But first I have to deal with the current burning issue on my list

And the top of my list right now is this Kedirile Hartman. It's just after six in the evening and I need to go but I don't want to leave Khanyisa alone, not when she's like this, so I go in our room, quietly take her phone, go out and dial Cheryl's number, I just hope she's available because I know I won't be able to rest without talking to this thief and finding out exactly who gave her the book

The phone rings twice then she answers "Hey hun"

"Hi, Cheryl, It's Nkosi"

"Oh hi, sorry I thought it was Khanyi"

"It's alright, listen, we have a bit of a situation here-"

"Oh my gosh, is everything okay?" she starts panicking before I even explain anything. I remember Khanyisa telling me that she can come across too strongly and I have a feeling I'm about to witness that right now so I activate my patience

"Yes, I mean not really. Someone stole Khanyisa's book and published it as their own so-"

"Jesus Christ!! Who the hell would even think of doing a thing, oh my sweet Khanyi, where is she?"

Is she okay? Do you need me to come over!? Oh gosh Nick you won't believe it!" great, now she's holding a conversation with her husband

"Cheryl, are you there?" I ask

"Yes, yes I'm here, I'm so sorry"

"I'm actually calling to ask you for a favor, I need to step out for a while and I don't want to leave her by herself -"

"You don't even have to ask, I'm on my way" she says then hangs up before I can say anything else

Well at least she's coming over.

It doesn't take long for Cheryl to get here and when she does I don't give her much information about where I'm going, I just make up some story about the office but she doesn't seem to care much about it, she's more concerned about her friend and I can tell it's genuine, she's very hurt on Khanyisa's behalf.

After checking on Khanyisa one last time I make my way out. I enter the location sent by Fana and drive to Kedirile's complex. When I arrive I punch in the five number password at the visitors gate and it opens, and they call this place a secured estate?

I find a visitors parking then I follow the numbers up until I find her apartment number. It's now dark, I'm a stranger who found illegal

means to enter this estate and now I'm knocking on a woman's door, this is psycho behavior but I know I'd never harm her, I just came here looking for answers, I won't even insist on entering her apartment so she can see that she's safe

A woman gets the door, she's in her formal wear and slippers and she has a glass of red wine on her hand

"Miss Hartman?"

"Whose asking?" she cocks up her eyebrow while shamelessly checking me out

"Nkosiyabo Mdlalose, the husband of the woman whose book you stole and published as

your own"

That gets her attention and she stands up straight

"I have no idea what you're talking about, and how did you know where I live? Are you stalking me? Did you come here to hurt me because I swear-"

"There's no need to be dramatic about all this, I don't go around hurting people, I'm here for answers and you're going to give them to me"

"I don't know what you're talking about, that book is mine, I worked tirelessly on it days and nights for you to come here and accuse me of such a heinous act. I'm an author, I know what it

takes to write and complete a book and I know how much it would hurt if someone published my work as their own, why would I want to cause your wife that much pain when I don't even know her? "

" So you've never heard of K.Inks?"

I ask and at this, her eyes go wide

" Thee K. Inks? " she asks with much disbelief

" Who gave you the book, Miss. Hartman? "

" Look, I'm a fan of your wife's work but I swear, I would never dream of stealing her work. This book is mine, I swear"

"Stop with the lies already, You and I both know you never wrote that book because I was there with her as she wrote it chapter for chapter, Now let me make something clear here incase I wasn't clear enough the first time. I know you published my wife's book as your own, that's not the question I came to ask, what I want to know is how you got your hands on it"

"That's it! You need to leave. You're going to attract unnecessary attention with my neighbors and I don't appreciate you coming here to accuse me of theft. What you're doing is against the law, this is harassment, Mr. Mdlalose!"

"And yet it's nothing compared to what you did. I will leave, that's alright but keep this in mind. I

will put my legal team on this and I'll make sure that they tear you apart in every single possible way, not only you but the stupid publishing company that was ignorant enough to associate themselves with you, by the time I'm done with you, I will not be your only problem. And I won't stop there, I'll make sure that you never, ever publish any work again incase it's someone elses work too. You see the thing is, you stole from the wrong person and I'm going to make sure that you don't get away with it if it's the last thing I do. I have the determination, energy, time and money to let this drag on for years, Miss Hartman, do you have the same? Because trust me, it will not come cheap and I guarantee you this, I will not stop until you feel exactly what my wife is feeling right now"

We stand there looking at each other and I can see that I've shaken her up. She never

anticipated that things would run this deep and now that I've given her a glimpse of how far I'm willing to go to ensure that she pays for what she's done, she realises what a mess she's walked into" You'll be hearing from my representatives" I tell her then start walking

"Wait... Wait, maybe we could talk about this...alleged book theft" she says and I walk back to her

"I just need to know who gave it to you"

"I don't know them, I never met or spoke to the person..."

"Are you stalling? I'm running thin on patience Miss. Hartman"

"No, it's not that... It's just, me admitting to this... What does it mean? Am I going to jail? I mean I didn't know it was stolen work, I just recieved a text asking if I was interested in putting my name out there, you've got to understand, I love writing but I've never gotten that far with it, this was going to be my blow up moment, it's like my prayers had finally been answered and when they also offered free sponsorship I just... I..."

"She shrugs then quickly wipes a tear off her cheek

"I need a name" I tell her not wanting to hear anything else other than what I came for, she can wallow and drown in her guilt later

"I don't have a name... But I have a number"

"How exactly did you get your hands on this book?"

"A USB was sent to me through a courier company after speaking to this person via text messages. Just... Give me a second, I'll get my phone"

She goes back in and then comes out with her phone, with trembling hands she unlocks it, clicks on the text messages then gives it to me

I see everything from where the scheming started, they even sent her money so she could self publish and afford other things instead of entering a contract with a publisher she didn't even have to pay a cent. Whoever did this wasn't looking for financial gain, they were out to destroy Khanyisa

I take pictures of the chats with my own phone and I make sure to get everything.

"Do you still have the USB?"

"I'll go get it" she does just that, I know there's nothing much I can do with it but I feel the need to take it anyway. When she returns with it, including the packaging with her name on it, I get an idea. She's recalling these books whether or not she likes it, she's just handed me the smoking gun without even realising it and I make sure it's safe in my grip

"What happens now?" she asks with a shaky voice and glassy eyes, she's very close to having a break down, which then makes me

wonder why she agreed to this when she knew she wouldn't have the balls to face the consequences should they arise, she couldn't have possibly been too naive to believe that all of this would work out smoothly

"You get those books recalled"

"What? I can't do that, they are already out there and it's going to cost me-"

"Does it look like I give a damn? I don't care what happens to you, these are the consequences you should have thought of before accepting a shady deal. Tomorrow, Miss. Hartman, I'm going to check and when I do, those books better be off the shelves. Now that I have evidence of how you got the book, it's really in your best interest to get them recalled

before I have to do it for you"

When she realises what she's just done, her face turns grief stricken and this time she can't stop the tears. They do nothing to me though, she helped to hurt Khanyisa in the worst possible way, she can cry all the way to the following year for all I care

Once I'm in my car I call Fana "I'm sending you numbers, find out who they belong to, hack into them and find every single text or number they've ever called, I want it all and by the time I park in my garage you better have the answers I'm looking for"

"On it" He says then I hang up and forward everything to him

I drive home not wanting to keep Cheryl longer than I should at the house and when I get there, the call from Fana comes in like he was just waiting for me to park

"Do you have my answers"

"I do" he speaks nervously then goes silent

"And??"

KHANYISA

I feel some shuffling next to me and I try to get up but the headache pills that Cheryl gave me earlier are making me very drowsy, probably

because I didn't eat before taking them, my whole body feels weak

I then feel arms around me and I don't need to wonder who it is

"You're back? Did you find anything?" I ask barely able to finish the sentence. When Cheryl told me he had gone out I figured he was out looking for answers

"I'm back... Go back to sleep sthandwa sam [My love] everything is going to be okay, I promise." he says and I feel myself drift back to sleep but before that I hear him whisper "Ngiyakuthanda MaKhosa [I love you]"

CHAPTER 29

KHANYISA

I wake up and the first thing I do is check the time, it's already half past eight in the morning and I know by now Nkosi has left. I was hoping to catch him before he left so he could let me know if he found anything. I guess I could always call him or he will call because he knows how much this is stressing me out

I don't know where to start.

Today was supposed to be the best day for me and it's turned into a complete nightmare. My readers are waiting and I don't know what to tell them, should I be honest? Should I downplay it? But how will that help me because the book is out there already

The thought brings tears to my eyes again, this hurts.

I try to get up from the minutes but my body feels frail, I'm shaking and when I stand I feel dizzy so I take a moment and sit back down to try and regain some strength. I last ate yesterday in the afternoon then I proceeded to take pills after my body underwent shock. These must be the after effects.

I notice the note that Nkosi left on my nightstand "I had to go in at the office but it will be a half day. I'll be back soon - Nkosi"

I place it back and when I feel like I can get up again I do then I wear my slippers and head to

the kitchen to make something to eat. I need something quick so go for cereal and milk, whatever can help me regain strength at this point.

After a few spoons, my appetite does a number on me and I can't stomach any more of the cereal. My whole body is acting up and this dizziness is taking longer than it should. I decide to make myself a cup of tea, that should do.

I take it with me to his study where my laptop is then I call him. It rings unanswered and I don't bother leaving a message. I then decide to call my sister

"Sesi" She answers and the sound of her voice just loosens up these strings I've been trying to

hold together and I start crying again

"Khanyisa?"

"Khanyisa swilo yin?" [what's wrong?]

"Its a mess sesi" I say sniffing

"What's a mess? Ku humelela yini seni?" [What's going on now?] I hear the panic in her voice

"Someone stole my book and published it as their own, it went out yesterday and I was supposed to launch it today... I don't know... I don't know what to do"

"What? Who would do such a thing?" she asks

and I take my time telling her the story. By the end of it she wants to come over but I insist that she doesn't because her daughter isn't well and she's with her at home so I don't want to strain her

We eventually hang up after then I start typing my statement... Or attempting to because I can't find the right words

I decide to go with the truth.

I explain the situation to them but I leave out names, however I do mention that the book was released yesterday because I'm angry and I do want to expose this Kedirile woman but at the same time, I know I need to be very careful of what I post online

My post is met with a lot of anger directed at the thief and my readers saying they wish I will still publish the book as my own. There's already a lot of speculation going on but I decide to log out and catch a breather

Minutes later, I get a text from Cheryl telling me that she's outside. The cereal seems to have helped because I feel stronger now

"I found her, I found the witch!" Cheryl says when I get the door

"Who?"

"Kedirile Hartman, I found out where she works from her Facebook account, she's got to be

there right now, let's go. You deserve answers and she's going to answer for her actions"

I look at my pajamas and slippers then back at Cheryl's 'ready to beat someone up' face

"You know what, you're right. Let's confront the witch" I say rushing back to my room and she follows

I take what I consider to be the quickest shower ever then I put on my jeans, blouse and sneakers. I finish up quickly then we jump into my car and drive to Rosebank college. When we get there I produce my license as identification then ask where the library is, The guard directs me then we head on over there

When we park we both rush out the car like two mad women

We stop at the help desk and an elderly lady attends to us

"Good day"

"Yea, hi. We are looking for her" Cheryl points at the young lady behind and she looks at us, dread fills her face

"I've got this, Veronica" she says coming around the help desk

"Is everything okay?" The old lady asks

"It's fine, I'm just going to speak to them" she quickly says "Please follow me this side" She says quietly and we follow behind her

She leads us to one of the study rooms then closes the door

I look at her and she can't hold my gaze, she knows exactly who I am

"You know why I'm here" I say and she nods

"I'm very so-"

"Nope, we aren't at that part yet. How dare you? Do you know the damage you've done? The distress you've caused my friend and you stand

there looking like a lost puppy?" Cheryl goes off at her

"Why did you do it? Why did you steal my work?" I ask her

"I honestly had no idea it was yours-"

"Oh, so had you known you would have targeted someone else? Is that what you're saying?" I say

"Please let me speak"

"You don't get to tell us what to do, you're the thief here and you're going to listen to whatever she has to say because you have screwed her over and beyond. You should be ashamed of

yourself!" Cheryl tells her

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Mdlalose... I made a mistake and I don't even have an excuse for my behavior. I saw an opportunity and I grabbed it not thinking about the after effects"

"You did not stop to consider the kind of damage you would be causing the original author? My work! My hard work and you just took it and put it out there as your own? What kind of a heartless monster are you?"

"I'm sorry" she whispers with tears streaming down her cheeks "I really did not give it a second thought... I was selfish, I agree but I'm very sorry"

"Your tears won't work with us ma'am, and I'll have you know that my husband is a hot shot at his law firm and he will gladly deal with you"
Cheryl threatens

"How did you get it? How did you get my work?"
I throw another question at her, I don't care that we are suffocating her with a confrontation right now because she deserves it

"I've already told your husband... The text messages, the USB... Please, I'm not looking for anymore trouble, as it is I'm in the process of recalling the copies... Please, I'm trying to fix this"

Did she just say my husband?

"My husband?"

"Yes, when he came to see me last evening... I gave him everything, please believe me when I say I'm sorry..."

Cheryl and I exchange a look, we are thinking the same thing

"We will be in touch, stay away from other people's work! And those books better be recalled" Cheryl says before leading the way out then she goes back "I'm going to need the number that you gave her husband"

She gets the number then we go back to the car

"What the hell is going on, Cheryl? Why wouldn't he tell me he has a lead?"

"Maybe he's still going to tell you hun..."

"When? No... There must be a reason Nkosi didn't tell me, there must be"

"We also have the number now"

I don't have Fana's number, plus I wouldn't be able to contact him without tipping Nkosi off, he's loyal to him

"I don't know anyone who can track or trace them" I tell Cheryl

"I know a guy" she says

"You know a guy? From where?"

"From the time I thought Nick was having an affair with his colleague" she lowers her eyes

"What? Cheryl, when was that?"

"A long time ago, before we became friends, it turned out that I was wrong though and he gave me endless grief about it when he found out"

"I'm sorry..."

"It's okay, it's one of the times where I let his mother fill my head with these nonsense ideas

that he wanted a woman who could match his ambition, it didn't help that she was good looking too... But anyway, we aren't there right now, let me call this guy and get us some answers, right? "

" Right"

I start the car as she makes the call then she sends through the number. I drive us to her place and she gets us a bottle of red wine as we sit and wait for the call back

"No Cheryl, something is off here. Nkosi is keeping quiet for a reason, he knows who it is and judging by his silence, I have my suspicion"

"I do too, but let's wait for confirmation"

A while later her phone rings and she answers, when she hangs up she gives me a look and I just know, just then my tears decide to make themselves visible again

"I'm so sorry hun, you don't deserve this" she places her wine glass down and comes to embrace me in a tight hug

NKOSIYABO

I didn't sleep a wink.

I kept tossing and turning and waiting for it to be daytime so I could get to the office.

I looked at Khanyisa this morning and the guilt that hit me is unexplainable, I dragged her into this mess by marrying her and knowing that I was keeping the truth from her, that I was leaving without waking her mainly because I wanted to confront the culprit first before answering her questions was just piling up the guilt

I still cannot believe it.

I got to the office quite early and when I checked if she was in yet I was told she's got back to back meetings that I could not pull her out off, so I waited

Last night when Mfanafuthi gave me a name. For a moment, everything stopped and it felt like I hadn't heard him correctly so I asked him

to repeat what he had just said to me and he did

Same name.

Now I'm here, sitting in her office, waiting for her to come in so she can answer for herself

When I hear voices outside, I fix my posture and fix my eyes on the door and I watch as it opens

"Nkosi? I didn't realise you were in here" Refilwe says with a very surprised look on her face

Liyana steps in from behind and looks at me, I glance at her then I look back at Refilwe" Leave us" I say and she gives us both a look before

turning to leave

"Bhuti...Ngabe konke kuhamba kahle" [Brother, is everything okay?]

"Yini le ongibuza yona Liyana" [What are you asking me?] I get up from her chair

"Angiqondi-" [I don't understand -]

"Nami angiqondi [I also don't understand] I don't understand how my own sister, could do something like this to my wife. What has gotten into you? Does your unfounded hatred for Khanyisa run that deep that you've had to become this... I don't even know what to call you "

" Bhuti I... I don't know what you're - "

" Are you really going to stand there and deny it? How much of a fool do you think I am? " I ask and she goes quiet" Ngikubuze umbuzo! " [I asked you a question] I snap at her

"Bhut'Nkosi ngiyaxolisa [I'm sorry] I never wished for things to go this far"

"Why did you do it then?"

She goes quiet again and I lose my cool

"I took a risk! Instead of telling Khanyisa what I found, I came here to talk to you first because for some reason I was hoping it was all a

misunderstanding. But since you won't talk to me, fine. You'll have have to talk to the cops because best believe, that's exactly where she's going once I get home and tell her and I will not be doing anything to stop her"

I get ready to leave but she stops me

"Bhuti, please wait... Please... " she starts begging with tears in her eyes, this feels like another confrontation with Kedirile except this time it's with my sister, my own sister, dammit!

"Wait for what? You're not willing to talk to me about the shit stunt that you pulled on my wife. Do you even realise what you've done? That is her work, hers! And you just snatched it from her like it's nothing! What happened to your fucking conscious? Do you not have any left? "

" I didn't mean-"

" I don't fucking care what you meant for! She's never done anything to you, nothing at all yet she's been a victim of your vile and unbearable attitude, as if that were not enough, you had to go and pull this stunt? All for what? Tell me! What the hell is it that you want from Khanyisa!
"

" It's not about her! " she cries out

" It's her book that you stole, how can you stand there and say it's not about her! "

"Because it's not, it's not about her... She just got caught up in this mess"

"Khuluma into ezwakalayo, Liyana. [speak clearly] I won't stand here and beg you to speak like you're a child. You know exactly what you've done"

I have zero patience with her right now because my own guilt is eating me up. Me leaving the house the way I did will come back to bite me and she's here thinking I've got time to waste?

"Ngimoshile Bhut'Nkosi, kakhulu futhi [I messed up, a lot]... I'm in so much trouble, I've sunken into this whole and there's just no way out, everyday there's something, everyday it's someone making a demand! I'm tired" She sobs loudly but covers her mouth with her hand

" Liyana? "

She shakes her head" I never wanted things to get this bad, I never wanted any of this but it's not ending... It's not ending bhuti and I just can't keep up anymore, I feel like I'm losing my mind"

"What have you done?"

"You're right, it's me... Khanyisa's book? Yes that was me but not just that. Everything that has been going wrong in this company has my name on it. The burnt haulers, the death of those drivers, dad's accident and the death of the guy who caused it, Fana not finding anything... It's all me! It's my fault okay! I'm drowning here, I need help, please!!! "

She continues crying in sorrow, clutching on to her stomach and taking deep, desperate breaths

" I'm in hell bhut'Nkosi and there's no saving me, instead, people just keep on wanting!" she says with a cracky voice

She falls to the floor and starts having trouble breathing. I quickly reach for her trying to make sense of this all as she has a full blown panic attack in the middle of her office.

CHAPTER 30

KHANYISA

I sit with Cheryl in her house a lot longer than expected and when it's time to go home I'm on

my third glass of wine, Luckily home is just a few houses away and I'm not that drunk

"You're not driving home like that" Cheryl says grabbing my keys from the counter

"I'm not drunk"

"But you are a bit chemically off balance sweetheart. I'll drive you home then walk back"

"You've been drinking too"

"I had one and a half glass, you went straight for three"

"Can you blame me?"

"No, if I was in your shoes I'd be on my second bottle right about now" she says and we both chuckle

We are interrupted by my phone ringing and I check to find that it's Nkosi. I watch it ring until it stops, this is one conversation I want to have face to face. A phone call won't be enough

"Alright, he's probably home" I say getting up from the couch

"Let's go" she leads the way

We get to my place and I walk her out then turn back to enter the house. I don't plan on telling Nkosi that I know who the person behind this

mess is, I want to see if he will bring himself to tell me himself, I think I need that reassurance, knowing I can trust him to tell me the truth even when the person behind my pain is his own sister

I brace myself then enter the house then I walk further into the house and when I stop in the lounge area I see them

He brought her here? What is this?

I feel my anger rise at just the site of Liyana but before I can open my mouth to say anything, Nkosi gets up and approaches me. I can't stop myself from glaring at him but I know he won't suspect that I already know, he will just take this as another tense encounter between his sister and I seeing the last time she was here

he threw her out and told her not to return until she had learned to respect me and what did she do? She went and stole my book and gave it to someone else, I'm convinced I've finally met the devil in a form of a human, that's exactly what she is, the devil. Somebody give her her horns and the fork please.

"Can we talk?" Nkosi asks standing in front of me and blocking my view of his devil of a sister

"About?" My tongue rolls out this question in the sharpest way

"Not here, in our room" He says and I eye him. The combination of my anger and the wine I downed has me wanting to scream at the both of them, more especially Nkosi because he knows exactly what she did, he knows and he

still thought it would be a bright idea to bring her here. Does this man not care about my mental well-being? Is he looking to see this house turn into a crime scene?

I turn and start walking and when we get there, as soon as he shuts the door I turn and ask him "What the hell is she doing here?"

My tone takes him by surprise but he lets it slide "There's something I need to tell you" he says looking at me

"Okay, what is it?"

He goes quiet for a moment and I wonder what's going on in his head, is he making up lies? I honestly cannot wait to hear what's going to

come out of his mouth and how he's going to explain her presence in our home after what she's done

" Yesterday I tracked down the lady who stole your book. I then went to see her and in the midst of my confrontation she confessed to it, she told me she never met with the person who gave her your book but she had a number... I had Fana trace that number... "

" And? "I feel my heart beating furiously against my chest

" And it turns out that the person who stole your book is my sister... "

I look away feeling emotional again, then I turn

away from him

" MaKhosa, please don't turn away from me"

I ignore his plea and silently wipe my tears, I hate that I'm an emotional mess, it's like I have zero control of my emotions and my tears are taking full advantage of that, when I'm sad it's extreme, everything is extreme and intense

"Mkami-"

"And you decided that the best thing for you to do is to bring her here, in our home. You figured that you'd bring the very person whose behind my pain to be right in front of me? What are you hoping to see, Mdlalose?"

"That's not it, I'm not hoping to see anything"

"What is it then, Nkosiyabo? What do you call this?"

"There's something else going on"

"What's going on is that your sister's hatred for me has gone too far, she's gone too far and this time I'm not going to sit and not fight back, whether or not you support me"

"I'll never not support you Khanyisa" he says and I scoff at this

"Is that why she's here? Because you support me?look, I get that she's your sister-"

"And you're my wife" he steps closer and puts his hands on my shoulders still standing behind me " not only that, you're also the one who was wronged. I'm not turning a blind eye here, MaKhosa, I'm fully aware of Liyana's actions and I do have the proof that she did this and if you want to go to the cops then please believe that I will not try to convince you otherwise and I will stand by you like I promised to always do. I'm not trying to hurt you or make you suffer any more than you already have"

"Then why is she here?"

"She's here because while confronting her, she also confessed to being the reason behind everything that's been happening in the company"

"What?"

"Yes, and before I could get anything else out of her, she had a panic attack"

I can't help but chuckle dryly at this "So Liyana causes this much havoc, and then she fakes a panic attack and the first thing you do is bring her here?"

"She's still my sister, Khanyisa" he snaps

"Yes, yes she is" I turn and glare at him

"I don't mean-"

"No, you're not going to say anything more. I've heard enough" I start walking towards our door

"Uyaphi manje?" [Where are you going now?] he asks but ignore him and I'm too angry to speak so I shut the door behind me, leaving him in there

NKOSIYABO

She locks herself in one of the rooms in the house and after my failed attempts at pleading with her to let us talk I finally move from the door

She's angry and I can't blame her for that, she also feels betrayed by me because it appears that I'm picking Liyana, I'm not even sure what it

is that I'm doing at this point because I'm stuck between a rock and a hard place and I have a feeling things are about to get worse

I couldn't let Liyana go home, she was in no state to go home and beyond that, I need answers. I need to know exactly what she meant when she said everything is her fault

I compose myself and walk back to the lounge where I left her and when she sees me she grows tense again

"I shouldn't be here..." She whispers

"You shouldn't but you are" I take my seat again

"I don't want to cause you anymore problems"

"Liyana, did you not see Khanyisa's face when she walked in here? The disappointment in her eyes which was directed at me? You've caused me enough problems already and we are not going to sit here and discuss them Ngoba akukho ongakwenza [Because there's nothing you can do] "

" Ngiyaxolisa bhut'Nkosi"

"Yeka ukuxolisa uqale ukukhuluma" [Stop apologizing and start talking] I look at her expectedly

She goes quiet and I give her the moment she seems to need, after some time, I grow

impatient

"Liyana, I'm not sure if you see this or not but you have me backed in a corner here. I did not risk having to fight with uKhanyisa for you to come sit here like you've suddenly lost the ability to speak. I want you to tell me everything, The drivers deaths, dad's accident and Khanyisa's book. Every single thing and if it means we sit here until sunrise then so be it"

"Okay... I'll tell you" she finally speaks

"Good, start talking"

She plays with her fingers for a moment then she starts speaking "Uyamkhumbula uNhlakanipho?" [Do you remember

Nhlakanipho?]

"Your dodgy ex boyfriend, Ungenaphi la?"

"You and Bangizwe were right about him... But I only saw it when it was too late... So, uNhlakanipho got mixed up with some bad people and obviously he came to me for help, I'd always help him pay off debts and things like that, even after you warned me about his bad habits... but this one time, He crossed someone worse, A mob boss... Money wasn't going to be enough to make amends and so he offered me instead"

She stops, takes a deep breath then she continues

"One evening, he told me that the recent person he had crossed had a dinner thing going on and that he instead that Nhlakanipho must bring a plus one so they could start on a clean slate, it was dodgy but I never questioned him because I trusted him and believed he would always look out for me. I agreed and we went to this guy's house... When we arrived, There was no fancy dinner and uNhlakanipho introduced me to the man, when he was done he got ready to leave and that's where I started panicking, I asked what was going on and the man told me that Nhlakanipho had offered me as a sacrifice in order for him to spare his life after he stole from him. He explained it all to me then Nhlakanipho left, that's where my nightmare started"

"What did he do to you?" I ask already fearing the worst and she ignores my question

" He already knew who I was, which family I was from and my position in the company, Informationen I figure Nhlakanipho disclosed while bargaining with him. So he said decided that I'd start working for him too"

"Working for him how?"

"Cleaning his money... For the past two years, I've been cleaning Miguel's money using our accounts and I've been cooking our company books to make everything look legit and that his money goes back to him clean"

It feels like I've been run over by a bus, I can't begin to process a word she's just said

"He used you guys to make sure I did as he said and he had me watch him kill a man just as a demonstration of what would happen if I didn't do as he said... I had no choice" she whispers as she starts crying again "Nhlakanipho got me into this mess and he left me to see myself out, for some reason, all of Nhlakanipho's wrong doings became my problem and I became the sacrifice.... I had no choice, believe me..."

"Did he ever put his hands on you, Liyana?" I ask again, and again she ignores my question

"Liyana-"

"Bhu'Nkosi please... I'm begging you, don't..." she looks so shattered as she says this

It takes everything in me to sit there and listen to her and by the way her face changes each time I ask, the answer is clear as daylight

"Okay, tell me about the recent happenings" I decide that if she doesn't want to go there, I won't force her, but this doesn't mean I'll just let it go

"About a year and a half after I started cooking the books, Refilwe caught on to what I was doing. We were still friends at the time so she kept quiet, I think it had a lot to do with your relationship. Because of you, I was in her good books. And then she found out you got married and I hadn't told her. She went off the rails and started making these demands and threats... Everything I've ever done to Khanyisa, It wasn't because I wanted to, I even had to record

myself while doing it as proof that I was making her life difficult "

she reaches in her bag and takes out her cellphone then she starts playing the recordings, starting with the Christmas one, and then she shows me the chats between her and Refilwe where she applauds her for a job well done each time

" I got tired of her demands so one day, while at Miguel's place, I lost it and told him I wanted out, I told him that I was done and he warned me that there would be consequences for my actions, I felt done so I walked out of his house just like that... The next morning, he had the drivers killed and then it was dad's accident... He then told me that their blood was in my hands, that I was responsible for their deaths

because of my unwillingness to do as told and that if I continued 'misbehaving' he would finish off ubaba and then mom would follow and the rest of you until I'm left alone.

I couldn't risk it... I just couldn't.. Not after he made me watch him kill repeatedly, that man is an animal and he's cruel"

"The book?"

"Another one of Refilwe's demands... She's out to ruin Khanyisa and she knew that this would hurt her. She always threatens to go public and if she does then I'm going straight to jail and our company will sink, we will be investigated and believe me. Miguel won't be understanding about this, the life he lives requires that he keeps a low profile... I have no way out. I have

to keep both Miguel and Refilwe happy or I'll either wind up dead or in jail where Miguel will kill me anyway because I'll no longer be an asset to him but a liability... I have no way out, bhut'Nkosi, I'm ruined"

"And where the hell is Nhlakanipho now?" I ask wanting to get my hands on that fucker

"He's dead, he couldn't stay out of trouble so Miguel killed him too..."

"So this man thrives of on killing?"

"It comes naturally to him just like breathing. He is ruthless and no doubt if I ever try to leave him again then he will kill again just to teach me a lesson. The only way everyone stays safe is if I

continue doing what I'm doing"

"Cleaning his money in our company? Doing whatever else he demands of you?"

"I have to" She says helplessly

I sit there speechless and shocked

"I'm sorry" she says in between sobs "I know it doesn't fix anything but I'm very sorry for dragging our company into this... I never thought Nhlakanipho could throw me to the wolves like this but for the past two years all I've been trying to do is stay alive while keeping my loved ones alive too... I know I've tainted the company and if it ever comes out that I'm linked to a mob boss and the company is basically his

front to clean money then we will all be ruined...
I'm sorry for Khanyisa's book and how I've been
treating her... I'm sorry"

I can't just sit here and pretend that seeing my
sister in this much pain does nothing to me, I
wouldn't be human then in that case. The way
Liyana looks right now breaks my heart, what
breaks it more is that for the past two years
she's been carrying this with an emotionless
face and we always figured it had to do with
Nhlakanipho's disappearance... The first few
months after she stopped mentioning him we
noticed the change and as much as I tried
getting her to open up, she just said the break
up was taking its toll on her, then she got better
at hiding it because she went back to her
bubbly self... Or so we thought and now I'm here,
looking at her cry uncontrollably as all her walls
fall and for the first time in a long time, I'm

seeing the true version of Liyana. The broken, scared and defeated one, it's almost like she's accepted that this is her fate and there's nothing she can do.

I get up and sit next to her so I can comfort her. Never have I been this torn in my life, Up there, I know Khanyisa is probably crying too because of what Liyana did to her and here in front of me, Liyana is having a break down, finally having to tell someone exactly what's been happening in her life.

CHAPTER 31

LIYANA

I toss and turn the entire night. The talk I had with my brother left me emotionally messed up

and I'd do anything to get out of this moment and just lock everything up like I've managed to do all this time. All I had to do was keep meeting Miguel's demands without involving my family, that's all I had to do and everyone would continue being safe but Refilwe had to butt in and make things worse than they already were for me. To think there was a time I considered her to be a true friend, I really am a bad judge of character, her and Nhlakanipho are proof of this, I trusted them and they turned around and used that trust against me

I know I should be feeling relieved, even if it's just a little bit because I've finally spoken about the burden that I've had to carry for the longest time but I'm feeling the complete opposite. The weight that I've been carrying with me has multiplied by ten and I don't know how I'm going to continue going after last night, everything is

just so messed up

I'm worried, I know my brother won't just let this be, he won't just ignore the fact that I've been risking with the comapand that Miguel had me trapped in a corner. He will want to find ways to save me from him and that's what worries me, the fact that he might get caught in my mess and lose his own life,while trying to save mine. I could never live with myself. Besides, I'm far too gone for saving, my life is already ruined and sometimes I wonder why I'm even fighting to stay alive, or maybe it's because I know that Miguel won't go easy on me, it won't just be a bullet to my head but he will first make sure that I suffer before he puts an end to my worthless life and that is what scares me. I'm scared of having to watch him torture and kill my family right before my eyes, that is why I keep doing what I do, that's why I've been

carrying this on my own because they don't deserve all of this, my brothers warned me about Nhlakanipho and I didn't listen so this is the price I have to pay for being stupid.

Nkosiyabo has always looked out for me, all my brothers have always looked out for me and protected me even when it felt like they were suffocating me and being unreasonable, they never stopped being my overprotective brothers and we may have fought about it before, like when Nkosi and Lwazi always screened my boyfriends once they got to know who I was dating at that time

It's why I hid Nhlakanipho from them for as long as I could, I didn't want them to ruin what I believed we had and now looking back... I was foolish for ever even thinking that he loved me

and I wish I would have listened to them, but it's too late now and I'm already in this too deep to still have wishful thinking, no one is coming to save me.

I force myself to not think about Nhlakanipho because the memory of him comes with a lot of resentment and unpleasant memories that I'd rather keep far from me. I don't think I've ever hated a dead person the way that I do him. I still wish his soul is stuck floating aimlessly around with no peace because of how he just offered me to Miguel, not caring what would become of me. I hate him.

When my mind lands on Miguel, I know I need my sleeping pills so I dig in my hand bag for them and this time instead of just two, I decide that three will do, I need to fall asleep fast

enough for me to stop thinking, that's the only way I can escape him.

The next morning I wake up quite late like someone whose not going to work, I might just take the day off because I feel like crap and I know Refilwe will be on my case demanding to know why Bhut'Nkosi was looking all upset in my office. I'm hoping that my brother has already left because I can't stand to continue the conversation that we had last night.

It feels weird to be in this house, considering the mess I made the last time I was here and how I got thrown out... I realise that I've put my brother in an impossible position and that my presence is definitely causing a lot of strain in his marriage, also having to face what I've done to Khanyisa. It's not that I'm not aware of the

pain I've caused her, the humiliation as well. I'm aware of it all and it has been the worst having to treat her in that way but I know that even if I try explaining that to her, she will not believe it, rightfully so.

I've done too much, from the moment I learned that she was to marry my brother because I knew what was coming, I knew Refilwe wouldn't just accept this and if I'm being honest, there was a time I felt like her presence made things worse for me. Not to say she deserves everything I've ever done to her because she doesn't, at all and by being in her house I'm only rubbing salt to her fresh wound, which was inflicted by me. I need to go back to my apartment.

Just as I'm making my bed, my other phone

rings and when I see it's Miguel I consider letting it ring, then I remember what happened the last time I ignored his calls

"Hello" I try not to sound shaky at all, he can't know that I went and told someone else about what I do for him, I meant it when I said what he does requires him to keep a very low profile and if he finds out that Nkosi knows he will not hesitate to order a hit on him

"Do you like testing my patience, sweetheart?"

"I'm sorry... I got caught up with work"

"What did I say about excuses?"

"I know... It won't happen again"

"I want my money, this morning. Don't make me have to call you again, You know how that always ends, and too much make- up doesn't look good on you"

"You'll get it, I have to go" I swallow hard, feeling eager to end this call

"Enjoy your day, beautiful"

Okay, change of plans, no day off for me.

I look around for my laptop bag and I don't see it, it must be downstairs so I go down to fetch it and as I'm turning back. I find Khanyisa staring

at me. She looks like she's going out and I don't miss how she clenches her fingers on her handbag as she looks at me

"Morning" I mumble but she remains quiet, I don't know what to say, where to start. A lame apology will not even do it and I know chances are she will only take it as if I'm mocking her, I've pushed her to a point where she might never look past my cruelty towards her

"I was just looking for my laptop bag..." I don't even know why I'm telling her this but her stare is piercing for me to stand still

" You don't need to explain yourself. After all, this is your brother's house, and I'm just the gold digging wife, right? "she speaks calmly and I purse my lips knowing that I deserve her

coldness, I deserve it and more

" Khanyisa-

" Don't " she whispers angrily "I don't want to hear it. You've been looking for ways to cause me pain since I married your brother. You've been nothing but cruel to me and you've even gone as far as doing it in front of my parents. And that still wasn't enough for you, you had to drive the dagger in a lot deeper, didn't you? You just had to excel, and you did. I'll give that to you, you've outdone yourself this time, so seeing me like this must be very satisfying huh?"

" Believe me, it's not- I never wanted to do any of those things to you, I swear"

She looks at me with glassy eyes filled with so much pain, not even anger but pain. Looking at her right now takes me back to every single thing that I've ever done to her, including the times I opted to avoid her because I didn't know how else to approach her. I remember the night she comforted me at the hospital, Khanyisa put aside how cold I had been towards her and she was there for me, that alone shows what kind of person she is and it makes this even harder because she is kind even when she hasn't been receiving kindness.

"I can't throw you out because Nkosi decided to bring you here, but I will not sit here and listen to you try to find ways to justify what you did"

She says then walks away leaving me feeling

worse for being a thorn in my brother's marriage on top of everything else that I've done.

KHANYISA

I leave her standing there and I don't look back. I'm still very much angry at Nkosi, disappointed even. At what point did he reach the decision that having her here was the best thing, did he even consider how I'd feel or I'm just expected to roll with it because it's his sister? The same sister that did me wrong in the worst way?

After last night, I decided I that I need some air and I wasn't going to sit and entertain Liyana, so I'm meeting with my sister so we can start planning our parents anniversary.

The books have been recalled and everyone is waiting on me to tell them if they should put mine out there. I asked for a bit of time, to think things through. I don't know if I want to change the title maybe or add a sub title or even try to rewrite the summary at the back just to change it a little... I really don't know, but this is my work and throwing it away isn't something I'm willing to do

This might seem like it isn't much but to me that's not the case, my work was stolen. Liyana completely disregarded all the time, effort and energy that I put into my book and she stole it like she was just stealing a pair of shoes. It took a long time for me to write and perfect this book, I connected with my characters and felt the emotions through each chapter. And she just ripped all of that away from me without a

second thought and now she wants to act all apologetic, maybe it will work with her brother, not me.

And then Nkosiyabo sees it fit to put her under the same roof as me. And he thought I'd just sit through it? I have never wondered what goes on on his head but right now, at this very moment? I'm not understanding

I stop by the mall and buy a couple of toy gifts and candy for my nephew and niece then I drive over to my sister's place, I find her and my niece at the house.

"Mhantsongo! " [Auntie!] Little Enelo screams at the top of her lungs excitedly when she sees me and I pick her up then fill her cute chubby cheeks with kisses

"baby girl, u pfukile?" [Are you well?] I ask and she nods her head

"Oh, awaha vabyi kasi?" [You're no longer sick?]
My sister asks her and she hides her face on my neck making us laugh

We walk to the living room with Enelo still on my arms and I keep her there when I get seated. She's such a cute child and she loves cuddling, a lot. She also has this thing where she will kiss my cheek and tell me she loves me, out of nowhere. She's too adorable.

My sister carries in the gifts and then she sets up on one corner so Enelo can sit and play there

"How is she?" I ask looking at her

"She's getting there, you know kids and flu"

"Shame man, she's even lost weight"

"Yeah... But she will be fine. Although we always fight when it's time for her to take her medication, like we are about to now"

"Let me try" I say and she gladly hands me the syrups and spoon, the look in her eyes tells me she's challenging me to see if I can succeed and I accept the challenge "Nelo and I are tight like that, you'll see" I say and she laughs

I sit on her mat and I don't even struggle one bit.

She willingly takes all of her meds with a smile, leaving my sister shocked. When she's done I pick her up and sit her on my lap and in no time the meds kick on and she falls asleep

"She should just move in with you ke" Sesi Caroline says when she returns from tucking her in

"Imagine how much fun that would be"

"She'd return home a spoiled brat"

"Who says I'd return her?" I look at her with a sneaky smile

"Believe me, you would" She says she sits down

and looks at me with concern

"I saw the books got recalled and she released a lousy statement"

"Yeah, I saw that too" I say

"Did you find out how she got it?" she asks and I consider telling her, but that would open up a lot of questions and right now I don't have the energy for that, nor do I have the energy for a confrontation between Sesi Caro, Liyana and Nkosi because that's exactly how it will go. I'm also bothered by what Nkosi said, that this leads back to the deaths of those drivers and his father's accident, so I decide to not tell her anything yet

"Still working on it"

"I still can't believe it, you know. Vanhu vana timbilu to biha" [People have cruel hearts]

"They really do..."

"So now that they have been recalled, will you make yours public? I mean you worked hard on it Khanyisa, you can't let her win"

" I will... But can we not talk about the book for now? Let's do something exciting, the anniversary?"

"Yes! I've already found an events organizer to help us but I told her we will only meet with her

once we've had our own meeting"

"So let's have our own meeting now" I say and the mood lightens up. I'll do anything to not think about my problems even if it's just for a while

She gives me a notepad and I start by jotting down everything we will need on that day, from the decor, the food and the outfits, then we move to the theme and that's how the rest of our day goes. I get a few missed calls from Nkosi and I don't feel like talking to him right now.

My nephew, Voni, returns from school and in the evening my brother in law arrives too and it's a full house. The kids are all too excited to have me around and the adults are tip toeing

around me like I might just start crying.

I help my sister in the kitchen, or rather I sit and eat her carrots while watching her cook, I might have just found new love with carrots, but by the time she dishes up I feel bloated and can't stomach any proper meal

"You know I love having you here right?" she asks as she puts the dishes in the dishwasher

"Yeap, I do" I say holding up another carrot, I couldn't help myself

"It's getting dark outside, won't Nkosi be worried?"

"Actually... I was hoping to spend the night here... If you don't mind, I'll leave tomorrow"

"Khanyisa, what's going on?"

"If I said I miss you and the kids would you believe me? " I smile at her but she doesn't buy it

"I wouldn't believe that that's all there is to it. What's going on?"

I keep quiet but she looks at me waiting for me to explain "I just need a place to crash for the night, but if its a lot of trouble -"

"You know it's not, and if you don't want to talk

about it yet then it's fine. I'm just worried about you, that's all"

"I know and I'm sorry for worrying you, I'll talk when I'm ready, for now I just need a bed to sleep" I say feeling very exhausted although I didn't do a lot of work today, must be the strain I'm taking from this mess

"And your husband?"

"I'll call him" I say and she nods

She leads me to their guest bedroom and she fixed the bed with me then she excuses herself

I get comfortable on the bed then I send Nkosi

a text telling him I'll be spending the night at my sister's place and I'll be home tomorrow. I wait for his response but it doesn't come. The moment my head hits the pillow, I drift off to sleep

I feel like not a lot of time has passed before my sister is waking me up

"Khanyisa" She says shaking me a bit

"What?" I groan

"Wake up, Nkosi is here"

"Huh?"

"He's here, get up."

I should have known that him not responding to my text was actually a response on its own

"Okay"

She leans against the door and eyes me carefully "Should I be worried about you leaving with him?"

"No, it's nothing like that. I'm still safe"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, You know I would have told you if anything like that was going on"

"Alright then, Go home and face your problems head on because there's no way he's letting you sleep here. It's written all over his face" She tries not to smile and I just roll my eyes at him

NKOSIYABO

I watch her as she emerges with her sister behind her then I get up from the couch

"Usukulungele ukuhamba" [Are you ready to leave?] I ask and she looks at me, if it were anyone else, I'd be worried about her causing a scene but I know my wife, she will not be creating a scene in front of her sister and family

"Yes" she answers then we say our goodbyes

"You didn't bring your car" she says when we get outside

"I didn't see the point of having a convoy when I could drive us home in one car"

"And you were sure that I'd return home with you?" She asks lowly but I hear her

"Why wouldn't I be sure? You're my wife, aren't you?" I ask and she hums in response

She could not have possibly thought I'd go home and sleep without her in our home. It's not happening, not like this.

The ride home is a quiet one and I wonder what's on her mind but I know this isn't a conversation that must be held while we are on the road so I wait for us to get home

When we get there I park and we both go in the house, it's just us so I switch on the lights as we go further until the lounge

"Do you need to get a new phone?" I ask and she gives me a puzzled look

"No, why?"

"Because somehow, when I called you didn't answer and you didn't bother returning those calls but you were able to send and sms, so I'm just going to go ahead and assume that you

phone has problems"

She doesn't answer me, instead she slumps on the couch but I'm not done here

"And while we are on that , do I need to buy a bigger house too?"

"This one is just fine"

"It can't be fine if you're seeking out places to sleep instead of your own home"

"You know why I left, You know. I wasn't going to argue with you on who to bring to this house and who not to. I'm gonna go to bed" she says getting up and she starts walking but I reach for

her hand

"No Khanyisa, you're not walking away from me again" I pull her to my chest and hold her firmly, she doesn't fight back

"I agree, the timing of it was completely off but I wasn't trying to hurt you further by bringing Liyana here. MaKhosa I'm aware of the pain she's caused you, I'm not turning a blind eye or downplaying what she did to you. It is wrong and even now I'm saying that whatever you decide to do, I'll stand by you... I just need you to hear me out, I will not try to convince you to let this go or anything but please, just listen to me, can you do that? "

" Yes" She sighs

I sit then pull her to my lap then I put my arm around her and start explaining the mess.

CHAPTER 33

NKOSIYABO

Our plan to get dirt on Miguel has had to be put on hold because he's out of the province and Liyana can't just show up at his house in his absence. It's causing a delay but at least we have a plan, all that's needed is to execute it. Fana has provided Liyana with the necessary equipment to access and copy files from his devices, we thought of bugging his office but Liyana says his tech team swabs his entire house for bugs on a regular basis, so that's out of question.

A week later, I've been trying by all means to have things return to normal. Ofcourse we won't have peace until Miguel is out of the picture but we can't spend each waking day stressing about him, he will be taken care of, when the time comes. Hopefully it will be soon because I want this mess behind us. It's been a shitty year from the get go and we are only approaching May now, we are not even halfway through it but the nonsense we are having to deal with just won't stop coming. The fact that my father has retired makes things a lot better, imagine having to tell him that his company is being used for money laundering. His absence at the office makes keeping this thing concealed a lot easier.

At the office, everything still appears to be as it was. Refilwe is still sticking to Liyana like glue,

there's not a day where I don't see them together. As eager as we are to get rid of her too, Liyana knows that she cannot show any sign of change, neither can I, so I stick to the story that Liyana and I aren't on speaking terms unless if it has to do with work.

The one good thing about this week is that Khanyisa's book finally made it to the shelves. This is exactly what she needed to lift her spirit, knowing that her work didn't completely go to waste. I hated that it started taking its toll on her physically, it started worrying me but she always insists that she's okay, that she's just tired and doesn't have an appetite, I feel like if this persists then she will have to get checked up before it gets worse.

As of late, she has been very busy with her

signed copies and having to send them out to her readers. It feels so good to see the smile on her face again and I want to keep it there a little longer, so I've gone and done a little something for her and I'm going to show it to her this evening.

Today is no different compared to the past few days. I get to work and head straight to my office. Before I get started with my day, I call Lwazi, I also haven't heard from him in days. I can't always be calling him but I know he's waiting on me to give him a ring after he connected me with the guns guy.

"Bhuti, we have to be quick" he answers after a while, he sounds like he's on edge so I don't waste time on greetings

"I found the stuff. We are good to go once Liyana delivers on her side "

"He's still not back?"

"Not yet"

"I wish I was there to take out the fucker myself, a single shot will not be enough to make him pay for ever hurting uLiyana"

"I feel the same, He deserves much more"

There's a bit of commotion on Lwazi's end then he goes quiet

"Usekhona?" [Are you still there?]

"Yah, listen, I will be unreachable for a while. I'm getting rid of this phone so don't try calling it. Once I'm able to, I'll contact you. Stay strong Bhuti, I know you'll get everyone out of this mess"

"Be safe" I say before the call gets cut

It's times like these where I wish uLwazi had chosen the family business instead of the military service. I've had these kind of calls from him before, I'm also always the one he reaches out to before entering into a mission and that's if he can. Like all other times, I tell myself that I'll hear from him soon and I force my brain to focus.

I get busy with my work and later on the day I get a call confirming that my surprise for Khanyisa. This makes the rest of my day.

By the time I leave the building, everyone else is also leaving and I meet Mdu by the parking lot and I stop when he greets me

"I hardly see you these days" he says

"I've been busy"

"I can tell, How is Khanyisa? How's she holding up with the whole book mess? I saw her post about it the other time and I wanted to ask about it but I was swamped"

I can't tell if he's looking to get a rise from me or simply trying to annoy me. I wonder if he knows about Refilwe's scheming, if he's a part of it. I know I can't trust him enough to say anything to him and I also can't reveal that I know about something I'm supposedly in the dark about

"She's okay, she went ahead and published hers anyway"

"That's great news, I'm glad she didn't let this get to her, she's too much of a great woman to have to suffer like this" he says

"She is"

"And the thief? Any word on them?"

"We hit a dead end, but what matters is that things are working out"

Refilwe comes to join us and when she reaches us she snuggles up next to Mdu and he pecks her lips then she looks at me "Nkosi"

"Hi"

"You good?"

"I am, you?"

"I'm great" she answers then smiles at an equally happy Mdu

"You ready to go?" he asks

"Yeap, I'm done for the day"

"I'll see you tomorrow" I say to Mdu then I start walking to my own car leaving the couple behind me

KHANYISA

By the time I get done with sorting my orders I make myself a cup of tea then I lay with my feet up on the couch. It's been one busy yet fulfilling week and I'm glad I went with the decision to still put my book out there. It's rightfully mine after all.

One thing I've learned about this whole ordeal? It's to not leave the copyrighting until the last

day of publishing. As soon as I'm done writing I need to register my written work so it stays protected, should something of this nature occur again, although I hope I do not have to go through this again

I lay on the couch feeling lazy to cook, I think I'll just order in something for the night, plus I need to stock up on groceries tomorrow. With everything hanging over us, this has been a calm week for me and even now that things are calming down, I'm still on this high

Nkosi gets home and finds me still on the couch

"Hey" He kisses my forehead and I sit up

"Hey" I respond while stretching my arms "I was about to order something. I was too tired to cook, what do you feel like having"

"We can sort that later, for now we have to get going"

"Where are we going?"

"Uzobona [you'll see] put on your shoes"

"Where are you taking me?" I ask again

"It's a surprise MaKhosa, we are going on a drive. Shesha phela [Hurry up]" he gets up and I put my sandals back on

"What about supper?"

"We'll stop for something on our way back"

"Can we get a caramel frappe too?"

"Whatever you want, mkami" he looks and me and I smile

He holds my hand all the way to the car then gets the door for me, then we hit the road. I'm excited to see where we are going and I fight the urge to ask him one last time, he also looks happy and through his drive he keeps glancing at me

"Keep your eyes on the road" He says just after

we've joined the freeway and I do as told. He moves away from the fast lane and drives a little under the speed limit, something Nkosiyabo never does. I also don't query this, instead I enjoy the ride, it's already getting dark outside and the lights are up already

"Any hint?" I can't fight my curiosity

"Eyes on the road mami, take note of your surroundings" he says with a smirk

"Alright" I sigh and face forward

I look at the other cars, the buildings that we are passing and the billboards

The billboards.

I see the first one

"Oh my God!" I gasp and look at Nkosi, his smile grows as he sees it too

"Nkosi"

"Eyes on the road, Sthandwa sami" He says yet again

We pass a second one and a third after a while and that's when he stops on the side and we get off.

I look at the billboard in full amazement. They

are advertising my book and it is so breathtakingly beautiful. I can't believe Nkosi went and did this for me. I can't even take my eyes off it after letting out a few screams of excitement, it's so unreal!

"What do you think?" He asks from behind me

I turn around and find him very close to me, I can't form the words so I hug him instead and wet his shirt with my tears. Here we go with the waterworks again, argh!

"Ngiyabonga Mdlalose" I say still clinging onto him, I can't believe it

"Remember when I told you that not all hope was lost?" he asks and I nod

"I remember"

"Things didn't work out how we initially expected them to but you pushed and you made it work and I want you to know just how proud I am of you mkami, you've held me down and you've pushed through a hard situation and I want you to know that for as long as I'm around, hope will never be lost. I'm a proud husband right now"

"You're a sweet one too, doing all of this for me? Thank you" I say pulling away so I can look at him

"Your happiness matters to me, so much and I want you to know that I'll always do whatever I

can to maintain this smile on your face, I hate seeing you unhappy"

"You've made me very happy this evening" I tell him honestly. I wasn't expecting this at all.

"So these are tears of joy?"

"Definitely tears of joy" I laugh "I love you so much" I reach up and kiss him and he hold me up his arms

I try to pull back but he keeps me there "Don't be stingy with your kisses" he says before kissing me again

We get pulled in the moment and everything

about it is perfect, the billboard, us kissing on the side of the road with cars passing by, the night time. My heart is full and I'm loving every bit of it, I'm loving every bit of him.

"Let's go, before we get in trouble for public indecency" He says against my lips then sets my feet on the ground again

I take a couple of pictures... Okay, not a couple but he's patient with me and then when we are done we pass by Nandos drive through then we go home. The joy I have in my heart right now overshadows everything that has happened with this book and I have my husband to thank for that.

***Early update because the network in Limpopo is showing me flames ,so Im taking

any little chance I get to connect, I will try to update on the days I set but if I don't then please know the network is being very unkind to me 😞

CHAPTER 32

KHANYISA

When restlessness finally wins some time in the night I quietly get off the bed, slip on my gown then I walk over to the sliding door that leads to the balcony. I quietly go outside and close it behind me then I just stand by the railing and look up at the full moon like it carries some sort of solution or answers for me.

After Nkosi explained the whole situation to me I was left speechless and drained. Luckily he

wasn't looking to have me answer or make decisions right then, he stayed true to his word, he just wanted to explain and explain he did.

I hug my gown tighter feeling the midnight breeze, normally it would calm me down but nothing is working for me at this moment

Everything is a mess, my book being stolen, everything Liyana has, Refilwe, this Miguel guy.

She's done me wrong, so wrong and I feel like she could have confided in Nkosi about Miguel and Refilwe. Instead of being the horrible person that she's been to me, instead of stealing my book but it's all done now. The damage has been done and Nkosi has left it in my hands to decide what I want to do.

He forwarded me the pictures of the chats and gave me the USB. It's all up to me now. I'd love nothing more than seeing Liyana, Refilwe and Kedirile pay for what they did, the tricky part?

If I act on it, Liyana will end up in jail, maybe not for stealing my book but because Refilwe will start singing and then things will go downhill fast. Then this Miguel guy will come after her.

It's not even about Liyana only at this point. Could I really live with myself knowing that I led her to her death? Could I look my parents in law in the eyes and watch them suffer a loss of their daughter? What about Nkosi, would things still be the same or relatively close to normal for us? How could we ever be if something were to happen to Liyana and the person who set off

the chain of events being me?

I'm not trying to hurt anyone, I'm definitely not trying to get her killed either and with this mob boss mess that she's in, that's exactly what's going to happen if I focus on getting my own justice. My justice will come a price, at a cost... At Liyana's life.

I hate that through everything she's ever done to me, I'm here worrying about her safety. I do not want Nkosi to mourn his sister, does that make me weak? Maybe it does, Maybe I am but I don't see how I can ever look Ma in the eyes again and watch her suffer emotionally and not feel guilty, if it ever happened. It's a lot it's just too much...

Is this what's meant by "Making sacrifices" In a

marriage? Is this it? worrying more about the people I hold dear to me than my own justice. Hating what Liyana did to me but Hating the thought of seeing Nkosi, my parents in law and her other brothers hurting at just the risk of losing her for good

I sigh and shut my eyes for a moment. It's a lot.

I hear the door slide and I slightly turn to see Nkosi walking towards me. I face back at moon then I feel the warmth of his presence on my back. He wraps his arms around me and presses my back on his bare chest

"I hate seeing you like this"

"There's not much we can do about it" I say

lowly and I'm not just referring to my mood

"We will do whatever you want to do and it will be okay"

"It will be okay? Nkosi, can you honestly tell me that if I wake up tomorrow and go to the cops and Liyana ends up behind bars and everything we fear might happen actually happens then you'll still be able to look at me?" I ask and when he goes quiet I turn and look at him

" Tell me, Nkosiyabo. Will we still be okay? " I press on

" Mkami, I'm not going to go back on my word"

"But you're not answering me, it's not about your commitment or loyalty to me. I don't doubt that, not now that you've told me everything. You know things won't be the same, you might not want to admit it now but should it happen then you know that things will go bad and I know it too"

"What are you saying then?" He asks and I sigh again. There's really no time to mop around

I move away from his arms and walk around aimlessly then I stop and look at him

"I'm saying we need a plan. This money laundering thing is a huge risk for the company. Refilwe knowing makes it worse"

"I'm going to have to talk to her"

"No, you can't do that" I say a little loudly

"She's been blackmailing Liyana and there's no telling what more she's willing to do. More of a reason to call her in this morning"

"No, more of a reason not to. Listen, Refilwe has been dangling Liyana's secret on her face getting her to dance to her tune. Now imagine if she knows that you now know, we both know you can't just decide to fire her, she will definitely fight back and it will lead us to the same point that we are trying to avoid by all means. The second Refilwe learns that you know, she would have hit the jackpot with you and best believe that she will will be out there making crazy demands knowing very well that

you'd do just about anything to keep all of this under wraps and Liyana out of jail. "I reason with him

Refilwe will use his knowledge of this to her advantage. That's a fact.

" So I need to deal with the bigger problem first "

" Yes, deal with the main problem because Refilwe is only part of the problem. You solve Miguel, then everything else will follow" I tell him "While keeping in mind that Refilwe and Mduduzi are now a thing, There's no telling what goes on with their pillow talk"

"He might already know"

"He might, or she might be keeping this information to herself. Either way, it's best to stay prepared for those two"

"You're right" he says and I nod

"I am"

"I don't know how you're able to do it, but thank you... I know you deserve your justice, you deserve to see everyone responsible for the theft held accountable, regardless of my ties to them"

"We can't always go with what we want. We are in a mess, Nkosi and me going to the police with this will only make matters worse. We can't

have that" I say to him but I'm saying it to myself too

It hurts knowing that she's literally getting away with this, it digs me on the inside and makes me very angry. I'm here worrying about everyone and everything, couldn't she have shown me a bit of compassion as well?

Nkosi has me in a hug and I hold on to him. I'm feeling so many things at the same time but I know that if we are going to make it out of this then I need to think with a clear head and mind, not with my emotions. Everything, including the company itself, depends on this.

"Ngiyabonga Makhosa, for your support" he kisses my forehead and I remain quiet. I have no words, I'm exhausted and I just want this

period in our lives to reach an end.

NKOSIYABO

I lead Khanyisa back to bed, judging by how she looks, she needs the rest.

When she falls asleep I remain awake , my troubles won't let me rest and I know I need to work on something fast if I'm going to save the Liyana and the company

I wish she had come to me earlier, We could have worked out something instead of letting things go this far but now is not the time to dwell on wishful thinking. I need a plan because if the authorities catch on to what Liyana has been doing then we are done for, the company

will be ruined and I don't even want to talk about her fate

I decide to take an early shower and get ready while Khanyisa sleeps. I don't know when we moved to her being a deep sleeper and needing to sleep in but if it gives her rest then that's exactly what she should do

There's nothing as defeating as knowing that I failed her. The problem came from my side of the family and now she's having to make sacrifices for me. That feeling is the worst because I know that it comes at the expense of her getting justice served, something she deserves.

I get dressed and move to my study then I call Lwazi on his secured number, Chances are he

will not pick up but it's worth a try

"Bhut'omdala" [Big brother] he says when he picks up

"Uyaphila?" [Are you well?]

"Lowo mbuzo kumele ubhekiswe kuwe njengoba ungifonela ekuseni kangaka. Kwenzenjani?" [That question must be directed to you seeing you're calling me so early in the morning, what's wrong?]

"How much time do you have?"

"We can talk until I have to hang up" He says and I lean back on my chair and start talking.

The rest of the day is a busy one and having to act like I'm still clueless in front of Refilwe irks me. However, I know Khanyisa is right, finding out that I know about Liyana's illegal dealings will only be an advantage to Refilwe so I put on my usual face and attend to my duties

I asked both my siblings to meet with me at my house in the evening and by the time I get home, they are both there and the tension is on a high. I updated Bangizwe earlier on and just like me and Lwazi, he wants this solved soon.

"I'll dish up" Khanyisa says getting up when she sees me and I throw my suit jacket on the

couch and set down my briefcase

She later returns and serves everyone, Liyana included. We all sit and eat in silence and but she struggles with her own plate

"Aren't you eating?" I ask

"I'm not that hungry, I had a snack while cooking"

"But you must eat something more than a snack"

"I will" she gets up with her plate "Excuse me"
She walks away and I get up same time too, the little bit of appetite that I had is gone

I leave Bangizwe and Liyana then I follow her to the kitchen. When I get there she's boiling water in the kettle while eating a carrot

She takes one look at me then speaks "I'm okay, I'm just not that hungry"

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, I'm making tea now" she holds up the vanilla chai teabag box

"Tea and a carrot?"

"Yes" She says and takes another bite off the carrot.

I wait for her to finish then we join the others again.

"Sisi, uright?" Bangizwe asks Khanyisa and she nods

"Alright, the reason we are all here tonight. We need a plan to disarm Miguel. That's the only way we can even begin to solve this" I say when we are both seated

"I agree, with him still in the picture, everything remains at risk. We can't have you continuing to clean his cash via the company " Bangizwe adds

"But I can't just stop now, he won't let me"

"Then we force his hand, we get him to drop this hold he has over you" I tell her

"Bhuti, I'm not trying to be a pessimist but there's no way Miguel will sit and listen to me or anyone of us try to convince him to let me go, He's not a reasonable man"

"From what you've told us about him I think we all know that there's one way to deal with a man like Miguel. We need to cripple him from the inside, get enough leverage to strip his power off you" I say

"So we need an inside guy? But it's highly unlikely that his own people will betray him or that he will welcome someone from the outside

that easily" Bangizwe says

"I don't think we need to find anyone" Liyana says and we all look at her

"Usho ukuthini?" [What do you mean?] Bangizwe asks

"I mean, we don't have to risk and get someone on the outside for this. You already have someone on the inside, Me"

"Liyana, Liyana... Ungakwenzi lokho [Don't do that]"

"It's our best chance, He already knows me and won't suspect me. Getting a new person is risky,

trying to buy one of his own people is a clear suicide attempt. I'm the safest option, I know what to look for and getting into his house won't be a hassle, he's already expecting me tomorrow evening"

"For what?" I ask her

"Feedback on his money" she says "So you see? I'm the best chance we have to stopping this"

"I agree, she's already in and at least with her we can trust that we won't get backstabbed." I say, I don't like any of this but we can't just sit and do nothing while waiting for the bomb to drop

We all reach an agreement that Liyana will start

gathering as much information and evidence as she can so we can have something on him, that's a start but then Bangizwe and I look at each other knowing the full plan, the one the both of us aren't discussing openly

Earlier when speaking with Lwazi, He shared the same sentiment as me. Liyana will never be rid of or free of Miguel unless if he's gone for good. We need to get rid of him, permanently so... And that is where the second part of the plan comes in

We know we can't just go on there guns blazing, we need a way to lure him out, to make him think we want to negotiate Liyana's freedom but that's not it. Together with my brothers, we are working out a plan to permanently get rid of Miguel. Not only are we keeping Liyana in the

dark so as to avoid further complications, this is the first secret that I'm having to keep from my wife and I already feel horrible for it. But I also know that she isn't trying to hear that her husband is plotting with his brothers to kill a man.

LIYANA

We wrap up and agree that any little thing that I get my hands on will be reported to my brothers. The way they are coming through for me is overwhelming and I know I don't deserve their mercy, especially bhut'Nkosi, After everything I've done to Khanyisa, I wouldn't have been surprised if he had decided to cut me off but here he is, willing to help me out

Bangizwe and I get ready to leave and I take it

as an opportunity to speak to Khanyisa. Earlier when Bhut'Nkosi told me she wasn't going to the cops, I couldn't believe it either and I know I can't just leave without saying anything

"Can we talk" I say to her and she stops to look at me

"Yes?"

"He told me that you won't be going to the cops... Thank you.. I know you didn't do it for me-"

"You're right, I did it for Nkosi, your parents and other brothers. I did it for the people that love and care for you because I love and care for them and can't bare to see them mourning a

loved one, especially your mother, she wouldn't survive it. I also did it for the company, this would trigger a chain of events that would leave Nkosi deep in a whole with no way out. Costing him the company just after your father stepped down, it wouldn't be fair on him. "

" You're right... But I want you to know that I'm still thankful for what you're doing. I appreciate it... And maybe when all of this is over we can...
"I leave the sentence hanging

" No, we can't. Liyana, I'm very sorry for what you've had to suffer at the hands of that animal. It's not right and nobody deserves to go through such hell but I also don't deserve what you put me through, I don't deserve the pain you've caused me over and over again. I don't see us ever reconciling because if I'm being honest, I

really want nothing to do with you, I just want to get through this period and then we can all move on with our lives" She says with teary eyes and I just nod, I've burned my bridge with her, and right now, I see that there's no way of rebuilding it, I've destroyed every little part of it.

The following morning I get to work and head straight to my office, I'm trying to stay away from Refilwe but I know she will come find me, she always does

And unfortunately for me, she chooses to come find me in the morning

"Chomi [Friend] " She says with a smile while entering my office "You've been scarce my

friend"

"I've been busy"

"With what?"

"Work, what else?" I cannot hide that her presence annoys me and she feeds off on it

" I don't know, you're a very busy girl Liyana, one can't keep up with you. Maybe you were reporting to your gangster boyfriend"

I have no strength to correct her and tell her Miguel isn't my boyfriend. She always does this.

"What do you want, Refilwe?"

"Hawu Chomi, I thought we were good, what's with the hostility?"

"I want to get started with my work" I sigh

"Okay, What did Nkosi bae want the other day?"

"You know what he wanted, he figured out that I'm the one who stole Khanyisa's book" I try not to snap

"What? How?" she fakes her shock but has a sinister smirk on her face

"You know how, isn't it you forced me to be the one who communicates with this Kedirile chick,

you had me leave my trail for it to point back at me when things went south and they did!"

"Bathong Liyana, it was nothing personal and you know this. I mean, how would I explain to him why I stole her book. I needed to protect myself, I'm not trying to have Nkosi write me off, I can only hope that you did the right thing"

"If by doing the right thing you mean taking the fall for it all they yes, I took the full blame" I say and the wide smile on her face taunts me

"How did you explain it?"

"I told him I still don't trust her, that's why I did it so she could leave him"

"Whooo! The drama! Tell me more, how did he take it? How is she taking it?"

"My brother is close to cutting me off Refilwe! Don't you get it? I hurt his wife"

"It's not such a big deal, When we are sisters on law I'll help repair your relation, don't worry man"

"Sisters in law? You're dating Mduduzi angithi?"

"I am, either way, whether I end up with Nkosi or Mdu, I'll still be your sister in law and I'll look out for you. Now you can get back to work bestiie! Thanks for taking one for the team"

"We are not a team!"

"Oh but we are, you're already in it babes, own it" she walks out of my office leaving me to my rage. Maybe jail for murder wouldn't be so bad.

The rest of my day goes shitty and when it's time to get to Miguel's house my mood worsens. I always dread these meetings but there's not much I can do about it, at least now I have more reason to find myself in his house, that should be encouraging enough

I arrive there and the guards ask no questions, this man leaves on a fortress and the armed men surrounding the yard this evening are an indication that he's got visitors, probably his associates. Just the thought of it makes my stomach turn, there's nothing terrifying more

than being stuck in a room with more men like Miguel, it's always hard to breathe around them especially when they start undressing me with their eyes and he just sits there parading me like I'm one of his strippers at his clubs

The guard gets the door for me and I'm led straight to where the noise is

"Darling! You're here" Miguel says getting up from his chair and comes to give me a side hug and a kiss on the cheek "Behave" He whispers with a smile

I straighten up and look at the thugs in expensive suits. They all sit here, drinking and chatting like they aren't secretly planning to take each other out. It's crazy to watch, really

"Gentlemen, you remember Liyana, my golden girl" Miguel says keeping his hand on my back
"Greet, sweetheart" he says to me

"Good evening"

They all greet back while staring at me intensely, I recognize a few faces. Alexander, the Sicilian mob boss, Andre, the one from Congo. Bushang, Mzansi's own thug in a suit and also the one who can't keep his hands to himself. The others are familiar faces but I don't know their names

"Come sit, you must have had a long day"
Bushang says patting the empty space next to him

I stand there until Miguel speaks "Go on"

I drag my feet and slowly sit, the way this man is looking at me repulses me

"How was your day?" he asks leaning in too close for comfort

"It was fine"

He pours a drink for me from the same glass he was drinking from then gives it to me "Have a drink"

"I'm fine... Thanks" I say but he keeps the glass there

"Don't be rude to my guests, sweetheart" Miguel says with much warning in his words

I take the glass and hold on to it

"You can drink, It isn't laced with anything, I drank in it"

What the hell does he think is disgusting me right now?

I glance at Miguel and I know I shouldn't be testing him so I drink up, the liquid sends a burning sensation on my chest and leaves a bitter taste on my tongue, not my choice of drink, but well...

Bushang is still looking at me and I figure he's waiting for a "Thank you" so I say just that,

earning a smile

"You shouldn't be working this hard, it's not good for you. If you were my woman, I'd make sure you never set foot at a nine to five" he says resting his hand on my thigh when he starts caressing me and wanting to go under my skirt, I roughly push it away and get up

"Don't touch me!" I get up and before I can say anything else, Miguel is up too

"Please excuse us" he says then glares at me then walks away

I've gone and done it, and I'm about to pay.

I consider leaving, but I know there will be repercussions. I might as well face the music right now

I grab my handbag and follow him to one of his rooms. Immediately when I step in, I feel the familiar harsh sting make contact with my cheek, making me lose balance a little, before I can respond, he hits me again, this time sending me straight to collide with table in the room

I avoid looking up, incase he's not done, and I silently start crying with my weave covering the side of my face

"How many times?" he asks with a cold, low voice "How many times must I remind you to behave, Liyana? Must I always be forced to

remind you?" he asks and I remain quiet in the same position

"I asked you a fucking question, and you look at me when I'm talking to you"

I look up at him and he looks nothing like a man who just hit me moments ago. He's always been like this, calm and composed yet brutal, even when he kills, his anger never shows, it's almost like he's just taking part in a sporting activity

I know better than to try and defend myself so I go for the safer option

"I'm sorry, it won't happen again" I manage to say

"It better not, Now fix your face and stay here. I'll come find you when they are gone" he says then walks closer to me and kisses the side of my mouth "all you have to do is be a good girl, that's all. It's really not that hard." he whispers calmly then wipes some of my tears with his thumbs then he walks away.

CHAPTER 35

KHANYISA

"Khuluma MaKhosa, uthi kwenzenjani?"

I bite my lower lip and lower my gaze as he steps closer to me

"Whatever it is, it's best if you say it now ngoba uyazi sizoxabana uma ufuna ukuqala ungifihlele izinto [You know we will fight if you want to start keeping things from me] he says firmly

" I'm pregnant "I blurt out looking up at him

" Phinda" [Repeat] he says after a very long moment

"I'm pregnant, Nkosiyabo"

"Futhi" [again] he says with much excitement

"Hayi Nkosi, you heard me" now he has me blushing

"Khuluma mkami uthi ngikwenzeni?" [say it, my wife, what are you saying I've done to you?] the smile on his face is unmatched, if happiness was a person, it would be my husband right now and here I am feeling all shy from his question, yho Nkosi will be the end of me and he's not backing down, he wants me to say it

" Ungimithisile" [you got me pregnant] I mumble

"Huh?"

"Ha.a Nkosi" How did we move from being serious to being playful?

"Suka madoda, Mdlalose, Nyanda wephahla, angidlali phela mina futhi angigeji. Ngishay' itarget yami ngqo, ngisho ne birth control

angiy'boni, Kanti ngingubani mina?" [I don't play and I don't miss. I hit my target straight not even birth control has anything on me]

he praises his baby making skills while lifting me in the air, I don't know what kind of reaction I was expecting but this has got to be the best one, I don't think I've seen uNkosi this happy before

When he sets me down again I'm all smiles, his joy is rubbing off on me

"Ngiyabonga sthandwa sami, this isn't so much of a shitty year after all" he says happily

"Aren't you freaking out?" I ask him

"Why? Bekumnandi ngenkathi simenza mos? noma usukhohliwe?" [It was nice when we made him/her, or have you forgotten?] he presses his soft lips against mine

"Cha, it's just, sasivumelene ukuthi silinde [We had agreed to wait] but..."

"But clearly our baby couldn't wait to join us, no timing could ever be wrong for this gift" he says so calmly

"You think we will cope?"

"I know we will, I trust us, we've got this, Makhosa. You and I, together" he looks at me and tilts my chin up so our eyes can fully meet
"don't overthink it. At some point this was going

to happen, right?"

"Right"

"I take it you flunked with taking your pills daily"
he says teasingly

"I may have forgotten a couple of times, I
should change the method after this one"

"Kanti you're going to continue with that?"

"Yes hawu, I cannot be falling pregnant again
immediately after giving birth"

"You know" He walks me backwards until the
back of my knees hit the bed and I fall on it with

him propping himself up with one elbow so his full weight doesn't fall on me "If I could get you pregnant again right now that's exactly what I'd do" he says then starts leaving traces of his lips on my face in a form of kisses making me giggle

He stops and looks at me "Do you want this? To be a mom?"

"I do, I just freaked out for a moment"

"You don't need to, I've got you. I've got you and our baby" he smiles again, I can almost see the images running through his mind, I'd be lying if I said his excitement wasn't contagious

"We've got this"

"We do, You've made me the happiest man alive, how I wish you could see the full depth of my joy right now sthandwa sami"

"I do see your joy"

"I think I'll show you just how happy I am" he says looking down on me and because not only am I weak to his touch but he's words too, I try to press my thighs together to at least relieve some of the pressure that I'm already feeling

He kisses me passionately again, sliding one hand under my blouse. I moan into his mouth when he squeezes my breast through my bra. I start pooling between my legs at his mere touch, this is exactly how we got to this point

Nkosi pulls off my blouse and pants, then he kisses the valley of my breasts, one place he seems to love the most. I feel his hands on thighs before he tugs at my thong and I raise my hips so he can pull it off instead of ripping it. He reaches up and takes my bra off leaving me stark naked underneath him

He then gets off the bed and takes off his own clothes then he pulls me to the edge of the bed. He starts leaving kisses on my skin, taking his sweet time and giving it so much attentiveness. His lips linger longer on my stomach and I may not see the look on his face but I know for sure that it's reflecting nothing but joy and spreads my legs keeping my knees up. When he buries his face between my legs I shut my eyes and grip onto the comforter. He gives his all like all he always does, using his tongue to drive me to

a whole other dimension. I try to move but he holds me in place, giving a soul piercing orgasms

Before I can fully recover, I sit up, not giving him a chance to get on top of me

"I want to try something" I tell him and he gets exactly what I'm talking about

"You don't have to" He says uncertainly

"But I want to... Only if you're comfortable ofcourse"

"I do, I just don't want you to feel like I'm expecting it from you, I pleasure you because I

want to and it gives me pleasure as well"

"And now I want to pleasure you, Mr." I get off the bed and walk around him. Then I kneel in front of him

NKOSIYABO

I watch as khanyisa takes me in her hand, her touch is so soft and tender but it makes my hard shaft bob around her hold, the image of having her on her knees, naked and looking up at me is so erotic and turns me on even more than I already was. I love to refer to my as as beautiful or gorgeous but right now, at this moment, she's fucking erotic and I love it

When I feel her tongue on my tip I clench my

jaw and watch her. With how I'm feeling I might just explode right about now but I don't want that so I shut my eyes trying to think of something else

"Look at me" She says and I obey, she's clearly loving being in control. She uses her tongue to caresses me a couple of times before taking me in her mouth

"Fuck" I utter

I never imagined it would feel this good to be inside her mouth and when she starts leading me in and out of her while sucking and using her hand as well I feel myself tense up even more. I have my hand at the back of her head, wanting to see how much of me she can take and man it feels so good I could have her like

this all the time if I could. I love how she takes me in, I love the feel of her tongue and how she moans sending those vibrations through

She sucks harder and when I feel myself get close I stop her, pull her up, throw her on the bed and get between her legs and slam into her

"mhh" I groan when I feel her ealls clench around me "Bese kuthiwa ngingakumithisi kodwa umnandi kanje? Njani?" [then it's said I shouldn't impregnate you but you're this tasty? How?] I ask and watch her face as she blushes, I love doing this to her and I love her reaction

"You can't be shy now, baby. Not when you just went on your knees for me and certainly not when you're already carrying a part of me in you" I kiss her then making love to her, I move

gently but I hit her spot hard just how she wants it. I have her screaming out my name and clan names over and over until both our bodies finally give in then I have her in my arms and she starts to fall asleep. I have one palm of my hand on her stomach as her words replay in my head, I don't know how it's possible to feel this much joy, or to love someone this much, as much as I love my wife. To think I was ready to give up on this feeling, but being the light that she is, she set me straight same time and as she lies asleep right here, I know know for a fact that I loved her the very first time that I laid my eyes on her, I knew right then that she was the one, that she was my one.

I also get comfortable on the bed but just before I can fall asleep, a text comes in from Liyana

"He's back."

I read it again then reply "Plan is in motion" I send to both her and Bangizwe, this will mean different things to the both of them but bottom line is, Miguel's days are officially numbered.

The sooner we deal with this bastard, the better for everyone involved.

***Clap hands for your admin 😊 she's doing the things with constant updates. Let's try 300 shares of this chapter for another one tomorrow ❤️ ❤️

CHAPTER 34

KHANYISA

"Carrots again?" He asks with a scrawny look in his face

"My favorite, they are crunchy" I speak after swallowing

"Lately they are, are you sure you're okay?"

"Carrots are not a cause for concern" I tell him
"if anything, they are healthy"

"Alright wena rabbit ka Nkosi, chew on" he chuckles moving around the kitchen

"Mxm, I made them for your lunch"

"Ithi uyadlala" [Say you're joking] he looks at me but I keep a straight face and shake my head

"Makhosa, ngeke phela, hawu, not all of us are into rabbit food" he reaches for his lunch bag and quickly inspects it, I keep keep my laughter locked in when he opens his lunch box and relief hits him

"I got you good" I say still laughing at him and he tries not to smile

"You almost got me, almost" he says

"Yeah, yeah"

I get up to wash my tea cup then I dry my hand

and fix his tie and I keep my hands on him longer than needed "Any word on Miguel?"

"He's still not back, This waiting is frustrating me"

"I get you... And how is Liyana?" I ask and he raises his brow, I know, I'm surprising myself too. Not that anything had changed, I still want to keep my distance but that doesn't mean I don't want her to be okay, One can imagine just how much this Miguel man has harmed her

"She's okay..."

"Don't sound too surprised, I'm not that heartless, I do want her to be okay" I say and he wraps his arms around me

"I know that, and I love you for that" He leans in and kisses me slowly as he moves his hands around my silk gown then he squeezes my bums

"Don't do that" I accidentally moan out

"Do what?" He does it again

"That" I say and he chuckles lowly then keeps his hands right there but evidently, I'm not the only one affected by his actions, he just played himself

I get an idea and pull away a little to run my hand over his crotch area, he sucks in deep breath then looks at me

"Uzoyimela lento oyiqalayo, MaKhosa?" [Will you stand for what you're starting?] he asks with a low, low tone

"Kodwa uwena oqalile" [But you're the one who started it] I say innocently and catch him smiling "You'll be late, I'll see you later" I completely pull away from him and he doesn't protest

"You're still meeting with Caroline?" he asks

"Yeap, we going to my parents place. I'll also need you to make time to go fit your clothes incase there's alterations needed"

"Okay, just let me know when" he grabs his

bags and pecks my lips "Enjoy your day" he says before walking out

Later on the day I gey ready to go to my parents house. They both get home after three in the afternoon so I'm not really pressed for time so I take my time cooking supper and getting ready, I don't want to have to stand long in this kitchen later when I get back

I can't get over the billboards still, whenever I think about it, a smile graces my face and happy memories fill me. Nkosi might have just made my year, in the midst of this storm that we are in. He reached out and created a happy memory for me, How can I not fall deeper in love with this man each time I think about him?

I take a bath and the hot water does a number

on me because I become lazy to get out the bathtub, eventually I do and I get dressed so I can leave, I'm hoping to be back home by seven the latest

When I arrive, my sister is stepping out with my mother

"Se ku yiwa kwin?" [Where are you going now?]

"La shopping complex, wa va tiva mhana wena mus" [The shopping complex, you know your mom] Sesi Caro whines

"Ahi fambi" [Let's go] Mom says to me

"Papa vakwin?" [Where's dad?]

"Va fane vari ndleleni seni" [He must be on his way now]

"Ah then I'll wait for him, N'wina fambani [You guys go] "

"Na rivala ku u n'wana papa, sala ke [I forget that you're daddy's girl, remain here then] My mom says trying to act sad but I don't buy it, I'm not about to que from shop to shop, I don't have the energy for that, sesi Caro must just take one for the team

"I'm just a bit tired"

"Oh, I see" mom eyes me from head to toe, her eyes linger on my body for a moment
"Khanyisa"

"Ma"

"Hmm, I'll bring you something for this tiredness of yours" she says thoughtfully then turns to walk away.

I get in the house after they are gone and I leave the door from the inside then I remove the key so my dad can unlock when he gets here

I go to my room and the moment I see my bed, I decide that I'll nap and dad will wake me up when he arrives

I feel someone tap my feet, forcing me to open my eyes and I'm expecting to see my dad but instead it's sesi Caro

"You're back?" I ask sitting up, yes it's a habit that a lot of us have to ask the obvious, of course she's back

"Yeap" She seats on my bed and looks at me, and I mean carefully look at me

"Papa isn't back?"

"He's back, he says he found you sleeping and decided not to wake you"

"Oh... Okay"

"Ukahle?" [Are you okay?]

"Yah, why?"

"Hmm, I'm just noticing sometime"

"What thing now?"

"You're forever tired"

"Not forever"

"The last time you were in my house you were,

and now we get back and find you sleeping, this laziness man, hai"

"I've always been the lazy one between the two of us, nothing new there"

"Butttt" She says eyeing me again

"Hayi sesi Caroline, what now?"

"I think... You are with child" She says sounding like Lagertha from Vikings while lightly poking my stomach

"Stop it, I am not with child"

"How do you know? Are you still a virgin?" She

asks and my eyes go wide "Ha! I didn't think so"

"I'm on birth control"

"What kind?"

"Pills"

The second I say this, my sister busts out laughing

"Wena? You couldn't even finish a seven day course antibiotic. How have you been religiously taking these pills?" She asks and I'm about to answer... But I have no answer, because I haven't exactly been following the strict instructions, some days I'd forget... Like

recently too... Oh Lord

" You think? "I whisper

" He scored, yes, you are with child" She repeats
"But just to be sure, we bought you these" she
gives me a clicks plastic when I open there's
two home pregnancy tests inside

"You and who?"

"Mama, remember she said she would bring you
something for your tiredness" She reminds me

"How?"

"I don't know, but one look at you was

apparently enough. Will you take them now?"

"No, later... When I get home"

"Alright, be sure to let me know if I'm about to become an aunt" she says and I just look at her, there's a million things running through my head right now, how the hell have I been this careless? I literally asked Nkosi to wait a year, and now this?

"I'm also thinking that we don't get them anything for their anniversary. I mean you're about to give them the greatest gift, one that money can't buy" she smiles widely

"Not now" I say with a serious face and she stops joking

"You're freaking out" She says reaching for my hand

"I am..." I'm hardly able to say the words

"flip, I'm sorry... Vona, it's not a bad thing... I mean, you guys do want kids right?"

"We do...we just weren't planning for it now" I tell her, there's just so much going on... "I mean, it's not that I don't want to be a mother, am I sounding like I don't want to be? Because that's not the case, it's just that we haven't been married that long and I don't know how he's going to take it, hell, I don't even know how I'm taking it and... And.. "

"Okay, stop and breathe" Sesi Caro calms me
"Look, we don't even know if you are pregnant or not, It could be anything. So I think when you get home, take the tests and if they come back positive then tell Nkosi asap, don't try to work it out on your own, he needs to know and then you'll take it from there, okay? "

" Okay" I nod, letting her words sink in

"Now let's go and speak to this old couple, your dad is insisting on buying a cow"

"But we told them not to buy anything mus"

"And I reminded him, but he wants to contribute somehow"

"Is it worth arguing with him?"

"Nop, he's already paid for it" she says getting up and I follow her out to the living room to go discuss the party but my mind is no longer there

I couldn't leave my parents house fast enough, wanting to get home and take the tests before Nkosi returns and when I find that his csr isn't there when I get home I rush to our room to take the tests

I follow the steps on each one, set them down on the floor then I wash my hands and wait. It's a five minute wait and so I pace around the bathroom aimlessly until the time is up I pick

them up from the floor

They both reflect the same thing.

I'm pregnant.

It takes a moment to sink in... I'm pregnant, we are having a baby

Oh Lord.

"Khanyisa?" I hear Nkosi call out he's probably looking for me

I discard of the tests, wash my hands again then I take a deep breath and walk out

"There you are" He says when he sees me

"Hey"

"How was your day?"

"Uh... Fine, okay"

He stops what he's doing and looks at me

"What is it?"

I stand there looking at him, the words are at the tip of my tongue but having to say them...

"Khanyisa, what is it?"

"There's something I need to tell you"

CHAPTER 37

LIYANA

I wait a little bit longer to make sure that Miguel is really asleep. The last thing I need is him catching me before I even make it out of the bedroom

I put my dress back on, grab my sling bag then I tiptoe out of his room making sure that I open and close the door as quietly as I can

The house is dark but I can still see my way

around it and luckily for me, there aren't guards patrolling in the hallway so I easily slip into his office

With my heart beating fast, I switch on the lamp lights and grab my cellphone from the couch then I rush over to Miguel's desk and sit on his leather cold chair

I dial Fana while opening his laptop and taking the tiny usb that he gave me

"Sister" Fana says after a single ring

"I've got the laptop in front of me" I whisper

"Alright sister, just switch it on and insert thr

usb, I'll do the rest from this side"

I follow his instructions and tell him when it's done

"How long will it take?"

"Just give me a sec to access" he says and I hear the sound of a keyboard clicking on the other end "I'm in, it's a lot of files sister, is there anything in particular or you want everything?"

"Everything, Fana, take everything"

"Are you sure? It might take long"

I look at the door, knowing that he can walk in

here any second and find me in here... But I've already risked it and to be honest, I'm already dead on the inside, might as well take him to hell with me because losing everything will kill him, that's for sure. One thing a mob boss can't afford to have happen to him is to be left exposed and broke and that's exactly what I want to do to Miguel

"Everything" I repeat

I want to clean Miguel out, I want to ruin him just how he has ruined me, I want him to see his precious empire and legacy collapse right in front of him. Everything, every single thing that he's ever done to me, he's going to feel it, maybe not in the exact same way but I'm going to crush him until there's nothing left of him, I want to strip him off everything, his money, his

power, his image. I want it all gone.

I want him to feel helpless.

"Okay sister, you're just going to have to be patient with me"

"Do what you have to do, I'll stay on the line and you keep listening to my end too. Should he find me in here, I want you to alert my brothers and tell them not to bother coming for me, I'll probably be dead before they can even locate me" I say feeling emotional, but if it is death that I must come face to face with, then so be it, I'm tired.

NKOSIYABO

Bangizwe and I pace around the house all night. We can't even text to check on her, all we can do is wait.

I decide to call Fana and it alerts me that he's on another call

"Leave him, he needs to be focused"

"I just want to know if he's in, I need some sort of indication of what's going on. This waiting isn't doing it for me"

"I know, but that's all we can do until Liyana gives us the green light. Try to distract yourself, Have you checked on Khanyi?"

I dial her number and she answers on the second ring

"Hey"

"Mami, how far?" I ask and she asks the guy driving her

"He says we are an hour away"

"Alright that's better. Kodwa wena uright?"

"Ng'right, wena?"

"I'm okay"

"You don't sound okay"

"I'm okay, I'll be okay..."

There's a pause on the line then she speaks up
"Maybe I shouldn't have left"

"No, this is what's good for you and the baby"
The moment I say baby, Bangizwe turns to look
at me and I remember that I hadn't told anyone
yet

"But now that I'm far I'm more worried"

"Try not to. I'll be fine and as soon as this is
done I'll come get you"

"You sure you'll be okay?"

"Yes, call me when you arrive"

"I will" she says and I hang up

"Baby?" Bangizwe asks like he was on cue

"Yes, we found out barely days ago"

"You've been busy huh? Clearly productive too"
he teases

"yah man, I've been working hard" I say and we
both chuckle

"Congratulations bhuti, siyakubongela, wena no sisi"

"Ngiyabonga bafo"

Before we can say anything else a call comes through and it's Fana

"Speak"

"We are good to go"

"Perfect, as soon as Liyana is safely in her apartment, I'll let you know to implement phase two"

"Sure bozza, uSister is a brave one hey" he says

sounding relieved but I will not be relieved until she's out of that hell hole.

"We are one step away from being done with this mess" Bangizwe says thoughtfully

LIYANA

"Done"

The sound of Fana's voice has never given me so much relief as much as it is right now

I quickly hang up, delete my last dialed number and then I put everything away as it was then I tuck the usb safely in my bag and switch off the

lights

I then tiptoe back to the bedroom, he's still sleeping and I release a deep breath before placing the bag on the floor next to my sleeping side then I get on the bed

He stirs a little "Where did you go?"he asks with a sleepy voice

" I went to get my phone in your office" I say incase someone saw me go in or out of his office

"What do you need your phone for so early?"

"My alarm, I have to get up early"

"But it's Saturday, what's the rush?"

"I have a thing with my brothers" I tell him
feeling tired of the questions

"Surely your brothers will understand that you're
a grown woman, They can wait" He puts his arm
around me and pulls me closer to his chest

"You and I could be so great if you just stopped
always trying to run from me, darling" the kiss
he plants on my back runs shivers down my
spine

"I'm not trying to run... Maybe we can have
breakfast together before I leave?" I try to butter
him up

"That's more like it, angel. Now let's go back to sleep"

NKOSIYABO

Once we get word from Liyana that she's back at her apartment we gear up for the last stage

I don't want to put Fana in the firing line so I have him operating from a location that can't be traced. I have him send a message to miguel, with proof that he's been compromised and it doesn't take long Miguel to respond

Fana has set his location to bounce around all over the place. One moment he's in the Eastern Cape, the next he's in Limpopo, then he's in the Free state, this is to further fuck with Miguel,

not knowing where the threat is coming from but most importantly, to make sure that Fana can't be located, for his own safety and for this to work

When Fana demands a meeting, he's very eager to respond and comply then he tells him that he will send him a location and that he will know if he's not coming alone, should he make the mistake of bringing backup then we will start bankrupting him. To show the seriousness of this, I have Fana clean one of his accounts and leave it at a zero balance. I can only imagine how infuriating this is to him seeing he's used to being a big boss, but I know money is the least of his problems right now, knowing someone has access to how he runs his shady deals is what's really messing with his head

Bangizwe and I head to the secured location. We've swapped our suits and ties for track pants and sneakers and our daily laptops for guns. Did I ever think I'd find myself in a position like this once again? No, but again, just as I did it with Lwazi years back when he got a target on his back, I'm going to do it with Bangizwe right now and it is basically for the same reason, the safety of our family, we need to free Liyana from this animal

We get settled in the abandoned building and then wait for Fana to send the location to him, this is it, there's no going back, even if we wanted to. We are at a point where it's either Miguel or our entire family and I'm not about to put them at risk. If he gets away now, then we

are screwed, that's for sure. We only have one go at this so it better work, for everyone's sake.

"He was supposed to be here by now" Bangizwe says checking his watch for the umpteenth time

"It's been two hours already"

He's late.

"Call Liyana" I tell him and he dials her number

"Voicemail"

I take out my own phone to call her while he


calls her guard, I'm also sent to her voicemail

"Bafo, lomjita aka phendul'phone" [he's not answering]

What the hell is happening now

"Keep trying him" I tell him and he has the same outcome. Liyana and her bodyguard are both unreachable.

Where the hell is she?

***If this chapter has 400 shares (none to the kuli writes stories group) just before 21:00 tonight then I'll post chapter 38  . Only if its before 21:00 tonight.

CHAPTER 36.

NKOSIYABO

"Do you think it will work? Your plan to get Liyana off Miguel's hook?"

"It has to"

"What if it doesn't? This man has killed before just to supposedly teach her a lesson of what would happen if she tried leaving"

I leave what I'm doing and put my hands on her tensed shoulders, I hate how we've quickly moved from the news of our baby and back to the constant worrying, this should be a happy

time for us but this is enough proof that we will never have peace until Miguel has been taken care of, which is why I have to do what I have to do

"Konke kuzohamba kahle [Everything will work out] try not to stress about it, okay?"

"It's hard not to worry about it, Nkosi. I can't just pretend like this problem doesn't exist, on top of it you'll be meeting with him, what if-"

"No, don't go there. Nothing is going to happen to me. Besides, I won't be alone, Bangizwe will be there too"

"I wish that made me feel better"

"Everything will be fine. I promise" I kiss her forehead

"Okay" she sighs looking away

I fully understand where she's coming from. From what I've learned about Miguel, he's a resourceful and ruthless man. There's no limit to what he would do just to cause Liyana pain or teach her a lesson if I'm to use his own words but we can't back out now. However, I'm realising just how much of a big risk this is, when the day comes, I can't just leave Khanyisa in the house alone, I need a plan for her as well

"How about you go on a short vacation?" I suggest

"Short vacation? Seriously Mdlalose, in the midst of this storm, you want me to go away?"

"It will do you good, sthandwa sami. I'm trying to limit things that will be stressful factors to you right now and I think its better if you go somewhere for a while until this is cleared, look at you now, you're stressed and I don't want to risk there being complications with our baby because of this"

The other thing is that I don't want to have to face her just after taking a man's life. This is hypocritical of me seeing that I despise secrets, but this is one secret I'm going to have to take to attempt to take to the grave with me.

"I guess you're right, I could do with some time away"

"Maybe you could go to KZN? I know Ma misses you a lot"

"I miss her too" she says and I see that she's warming up to the idea so I press on

"I'll get a driver for you this evening, I should be home by the time he gets here"

"Why is it suddenly sounding like you're trying to get rid of me?" she cocks up her eyebrow

"That's not what I'm trying to do mami, It's just that we are pressed for time and I want to finish this as soon as possible. Now that Miguel is back it means Liyana will have to collect information on him soon and anytime from then

we have to carry the plan through "

" Alright, I'll start packing as soon as you're gone"

"I'll see you in a few hours, Ngiyakuthanda Khanyisa" I kiss her forehead again then her lips

"I love you too"

I get to work and immediately meet with Bangizwe, I find him waiting for me in my office

"Usukhulumile no Liyana?" [Have you spoken to Liyana?]

"Yah, Miguel called her, she's going over there this evening"

"Alright, and she has everything she needs?"

"Yes, Fana prepped her as well, kodwa bafo angiyizwa kahle lento yokuthi she has to put herself at risk like this"

"Ngiyakuzwa, I also don't feel good about her being the one to do this because she might get caught but we don't have much of a choice here, only she can get the info we need in one go, from there on she will be rid of him, for good"

"You're right, I just worry about her. What this animal will do to her if he catches her" he says

angrily

There's a single knock on the door then it opens.
Liyana walks in

"Morning" she says

"How are you?" I ask her

"I'm okay..." she says but I'm not convinced,
maybe Bangizwe is right, she shouldn't be the
one to do this.

"Khanyisa is going home this evening, maybe
you should go with her" I suggest and she
immediately shakes her head to disagree

"You know I can't do that, bhuti"

"I think it's better if you do"

"I think so too" Bangizwe supports me

"And when will you get a person to snoop? It will take long and this person still has to figure out where to look, it will drag on forever and I want to be done with this"

"But it's risky for you"

"Just as it's risky for the two of you. Look, I appreciate that you're doing this for me but the truth is I got us here, I did this and it's unfair of me to run home and let you clean my mess for

me. I have to be here to see it through, I need the closure to"

"Okay, but then it means I need to put someone outside your apartment. In case things go south" I tell her

"I can work with that" She nods "Ngiyabonga, Kunina nobabili lokhu eningenzela khona kusho lukhulu kimina futhi ngiyaxolisa ukuthi nginifake kulolubishi" [Thank you, both of you. What you're doing for me means so much to me, and I'm sorry for dragging you into this mess]

"Ungudadewethu omncane [You're our little sister], we will never let you suffer alone. I do wish you had come to us earlier but what's done is done, now we just need to look forward" I say and she looks close to tears but she blinks

them away, this makes me think of how much she's had to suffer at the hands of that mob boss. How much has she kept quiet about?

There's another knock on the door, then Mdu enters. He looks at all of us with curiosity then he smiles a bit

"Are we having a family meeting?" He asks jokingly but we are all too tense to humor him

"Not really, Liyana and I got here together by coincidence" Bangizwe answers him

"Well, it's a good thing that you're all here, I need to speak to you all"

"Oh, about?" I ask

"Us, everything. It feels like since uMa dropped the bomb, you guys have been distancing yourself from me" he says then looks at me "I get that with you it could have to do with uKhanyisa, but to this day I swear, had I known that she's your wife I wouldn't have made a move on her and I'm sorry for deceiving you when I came to your house"

"I have nothing against you. I do wish you had been honest with me from the beginning" I tell him

"But you've forgiven her angithi?" he asks

"I have"

"Then what about me? Don't I atleast deserve some benefit of the doubt?"

"Maybe if you didn't jump straight to his ex"
Bangizwe tells him

"I didn't know she's off limits"

"She's not, Refilwe is free to date whoever she wants, so are you" I say glancing at Bangizwe, we can't exactly disclose to Mdu why Refilwe isn't liked in this family

"Guys look, you're my siblings, even before finding out that I'm your father's son we've always been tight like that. I just wish we could not let this get between us. I'm not plotting

anything against you, You're my blood and I know that I'm nothing without family. It feels like you've all just decided to turn your backs on me, you're the only family I have this side and ekhaya things are still tense, I'd really appreciate to have someone by my side"

He says this with so much sadness. He's right, we've all been distancing ourselves but it's not because he turned out to be our brother, it's because of the woman he's with. She can't be trusted, that and the fact that his mom has made it clear that she wants him leading. There's just a lot going on right now

"You're right, we've all been going our own ways but that doesn't mean we don't acknowledge you as our brother, you know you can come to us whenever you need something"

"Not just when I need something, but knowing that I have my brothers and my sister, that's all I'm asking for, to not be excluded"

"We hear you, and we apologise for making you feel like an outcast. We will do better, right?" I look at the others

"Right, we are sorry" They say

"Okay, so we are good?"

"Yes we are" I say

"Even with Refilwe? I kind of really like her... And maybe she might be the one to tame me, I

wouldn't want there to be any tension, knowing she's your ex and all"

"Ungakhathazeki mfowethu, sengidlulile lapho [Don't worry, brother] I've moved passed that and if she makes you happy then that's all that matters"

"Okay, so we good?" he asks again

"We are good, bafo. We haven't been kind to you and we will fix that" Bangizwe says

"Maybe we can all hang sometimes? Just to get rid of this negative energy"

"Sure, we could all have a weekend away

sometime later on, after my parents inlaw anniversary" I say and he agrees

"Alright, I'll see you guys around" he says then turns to leave

"What was that about?" Liyana whisper asks when he's gone

"He needed to get stuff off his chest, and he's right we need to stop isolating him"

"But can we trust him?" Bangizwe asks

"That will be determined by time. At the end of the day uMduduzi is our big brother. We need to atleast have some sort of relationship with him,

that and the fact that he will be easier to read when kept close. I'm not saying let your guard down, I'm simply saying start treating him the family that he is, he does deserve that much"

"Okay, we will do so. Kodwa le weekend away shandis, with Refilwe, Liyana and Khanyisa. Are you sure?? Heee sizobona! [we shall see]"
Bangizwe laughs out loud

"Can we deal with one problem at a time" Liyana reprimands and he straightens up

"You're seeing him tonight?" I ask her

"Yes, I'll try and get to his laptop then we will be good to go"

"Fana will be waiting for your call, Good luck"

"Thanks, I'll need it. And if I don't make it back alive then atleast it will be one less problematic sibling to deal with" she chuckles nervously

"Ungadlali kanjalo, [Don't play like that] it's not funny" I tell her

"Sorry, I'll see you guys when I see you" She says then walks out too

"Are you ready?" I ask Bangizwe

"Let's finish with this mother fucker"

LIYANA

I've been to Miguel's house so many times that I know each corner of it with my eyes closed but tonight is a little different. It feels different, knowing what I'm going to do there makes me nervous. I'm even questioning if I will be able to pull it off but I know that I need to, I have to get this right and not get caught or I would have put everyone in the firing line again.

Miguel enjoys torturing people so if he catches me, no doubt my family will suffer first and I will lose some of them before he kills me. I need to get this right

I got strict instructions from him on what to wear tonight, so I know that it's going to be one of those nights. I always dread them and a couple of times I've tried to get myself out of it

but it's unlikely that I succeed

It's these kind of nights that remind me that Nhlakanipho delivered me to Miguel as a sacrificial lamb and now he owns me. He owns me in every possible way... But it will be over soon

Atleast I hope so.

I put on the little black dress that he ordered me to put on, with the red underwear he bought me. Yes, he also takes pride in dressing me up however he wants, when he wants

I work on my make up and on the outside I look very pretty, too pretty for my dark soul.

I think about the risk my brothers are taking and I know that I can't afford to disappoint them again. Besides, it's just another night of being Miguel's slave, nothing new there. I've done this countless times... But it still hurts like the very first night.

I get in my car and drive over to his place, chances are we are going to go out first then he will bring me back to his house. I get to his office and wait since he is still on his phone. I deliberately leave my phone on his office couch so I have an excuse for later if I'm caught in here.

"Aren't you a sight for sore eyes" he takes my hand and kisses it then he brings me to his chest when he's done with his call "You smell good too, it's intoxicating sweetheart" he runs

his hands on my body and it has me feeling like I can just throw up

"Are we going somewhere?" I ask him wanting to get done with this night

"Yes, my club. I haven't been there in a while"

"The strip club?"

"Yes, maybe you'll get on the pole for me?" He asks then chuckles when I don't respond

We get going and when we get there he's given the five star treatment he always gets, being the boss. He summons a dancer and I have to sit there and watch her give him a lap dance,

again, this isn't new and I wish he would end the night with one of them since they are always so eager to but it never happens, he never takes them home

We get served drinks and I wish I could drink until I'm numb so this night goes easy on me but I know I can't get drunk and fall asleep, not tonight. I need to be very sober for this.

When he asks, I have one cocktail then I tell him I'm okay, thankfully he doesn't push. He loves it when I'm sober, he loves seeing me shattered when he's done with me, it adds on to this ego of his and let's him know I haven't forgotten that he's in charge of me, which means he's in charge of my body too and there's not a damn thing I can do about it

He later drives us back to his house and straight to his bedroom. It smells of him and honestly, it's repulsing. Maybe if it were any other man, maybe if he wasn't doing it to further oppress, degrade and break me, just maybe...

But that's not my reality, it hasn't been for two years and as much as I'd like to convince myself that I'm strong and I can take it. Each time Miguel has his way with me I'm left broken, he keeps taking something from me, he never stops taking

"What's on your mind?" he asks and I could kick myself for making him aware that I'm absent minded

"My life" that part is true, I'm thinking about how fucked my life is

"What about it, princess?" he asks like he really cares to know. I know better.

"Nothing" I say and look away

He harshly grabs my jaw and makes me look at him "Since when do you lie to me?"

"I'm just thinking about how life would be if I had never gotten mixed up with Nhlakanipho"

"That good for nothing boy? Well at least he had something good to give me. You angel, are one of my most prized possession. I guess I should be thankful to him for giving you to me"

"You speak like I'm not human, like I'm just some possession that can be passed around. I'm a person, Miguel" I feel myself get angry

"What's with the emotions now? You know why you're here and I've been fairly kind to you, haven't I? Don't spoil the mood. I've missed you" he pecks my lips then moves to the bed and sits with his legs spread

He first undresses me with his eyes first then he swallows hard and looks me in the eyes then he speaks

"Strip."

CHAPTER 39

KHANYISA

"Awazi wena, during that period, you'd never catch me without lemons. They were the tastiest"

"Lemons? Hayi Ma, even my carrots are better" I say and she laughs

"Khona uqinisile ngane yami, I also don't know what I was thinking at that time but I can tell you this, they were delicious"

"So ubaba would always get them for you?"

"Kuphi? [Where?] we spent most my pregnancy period apart with him being in Joburg and me here at home with his mother, Maybe the fact that I was used to the sour taste of lemons is

what made me survive her sour treatment towards me" she laughs but you can see the sadness in her eyes, there's no woman who wishes to not get along with her mother in law and when I look at the relationship that I have with Ma, I'm very grateful that we have this easy going relationship going on, or else I'd never want to find myself here.

"And now that you've mentioned cravings, I want my carrots. I'll be right back" I dash to the kitchen to get my new found fix then I peel and wash them before returning to the sitting room

This pregnancy is literally all Ma talks about when its just the two of us. I didn't even need to tell her. Just like my mother, one good look at me was enough for her to conclude that something is up

I've been to see a doctor this side because I was curious to know how far along I am and I'm currently on week eight. It's still very early days and Ma agrees that it's best to not spread the news just as yet. Her exact words were "Abantu bazozibonela ngawabo amehlo" [People will see for themselves, with their own eyes] and I agree, I'm from a household where pregnancy isn't something you announce, the baby will announce itself as it grows.

The last few days here have been refreshing, at first it was stressful, not knowing what would happen with Miguel but once Nkosi called to tell me he wouldn't be a problem anymore I relaxed. However, when I tried asking further question as to how they got him to agree he was quick to give a very brief explanation and not want to talk about it, there's something off and I can't

shake the feeling, I guess I'll ask him when I see him, whenever that will be...

I still don't know when he's going to drive home but I'm not complaining, besides missing him, I'm quite comfortable here. There's no way I wasn't going to feel at home with Ma around, especially now because she's taken it upon herself to "Pamper" me seeing she might not be seeing me for most part of my pregnancy so she's been saying this is her opportunity before Nkosi comes to get me

I asked how the situation was between her and Mam'Nozizwe and she said things were still tense seeing her husband had made good on his word and sent her home, from there her family came and apologise on her behalf, another family meeting was held and apparently

she started the fireworks there as well asking how bab'Mandla really expected her to be a "return soldier" at her age and that she no longer has a bedroom in her father's house then she threatened to live outside the gate because she had nowhere else to go. Apparently, it was a whole nyovadam with meeting after meeting until he felt obliged to let her come back for the sake of their other kids.

One thing that gives Ma peace is that she no longer comes to the house to do as she pleases, she has since kept her distance and Ma says that's just about the only good thing that came out of this messed up situation. Otherwise, everything else is still upside down, but the senior brothers are trying their best to mend their relationship, it might never get back to what it was before this revelation but at least they still acknowledge that they are family and

that they don't want their kids caught up in this
so they need to iron out this mess

We sit in the living room and share the bowl of
carrots while watching reality shows on TLC
just as we've been doing for the past days. It's
ten o'clock in the morning and we are already
done with the house chores so we can lazy
around all we want

"Buka manje, [look now] I'm also starting to
enjoy carrots as a snack" she says munching on
one

"You have to admit, they are better than
lemons" I laugh and she tries not to

"Oho, that was your husband's doing. Everyone

would even joke that I'd give birth to ingane emuncu [bitter child]

" Aww but Nkosi is anything but bitter, he's actually very sweet"

"That he is, but only a handful of people know that. All his other cousins, especially the young ones fear him because he's strict and takes no nonsense"

I can imagine how the young ones feel intimidated, Nkosi is that kind of big brother but I also know that there's very little he wouldn't do for his family.

"Sanibonaa" a voice booms all the way from the kitchen and when we turn we see him walk in

to where we are seated, my joy skyrockets
same time when I see him

"Hawu awusasho ukuthi usendleleni" [You don't
say that you're on your way]

"Bengithi nginishaye ngesurprise" [I thought I'd
surprise you] he throws himself on the space
next to me on the two sitter couch then he
kisses my cheek making me blush in front of Ma

"Nkosi" I say wanting to remind him that we are
in front of his mother and she laughs softly

"Weee, I can say it's already clear what you guys
get up too" She says making things worse

"Hawu Ma" I say and she laughs harder

"Ngiyadlala, Nkosi, yekela ukwenza ingane yami ibe namahloni" [I'm kidding. Nkosi, stop making my child shy]

"So I'm making you shy?" He kisses my cheek again then chuckles

"Where are your bags?" I ask wanting to move from this

"In the car, we are not staying"

"Haibo, usanda kufika kodwa usufuna ukuhamba" You just got here but you already want to leave?]

"Hhayi manje, [Not now], after my power nap"
He says stretching

"But still, today?"

"Yebo sis'Tholakele, Ngize la ngizolanda
umkami" [Yes sister Tholakele, I came here to
fetch my wife] he teases her

"Ubani usisi wakho, [Whose your sister?] I'll
smack you right into a coma" she warns and he
laughs

"Ngiyadlala Ma, Ngizokwenza iskhathi
sokuzovakasha, okwamanje nje ngizolanda
uKhanyisa" [I'm joking ma, I'll make time to
come and visit, for now I'm just here to get

Khanyisa]

"Alright ke, it means we will see you when we come for the party" She says and he gets up

"That works out. Ake ngithathe

[Let me take] ipower nap. You'll get ready so long" He says then walks out

Nkosi's power nap is four hours long and then he spends another two with his dad before going to see his uncle, when he returns, his mood is a bit off and it's clear that it has to do with his aunt, unfortunately, there's no avoiding her for as long as she still lives with his uncle, one way or another, she's still very much part

of the family and somehow everyone just has to make a way to cope with her.

We only leave the house at six in the evening. We stop by a filling station to buy some cold water and snacks and then we hit the road and as usual, he let's me have my way with the radio

I might not be that good with directions but I begin to realise that this isn't the way home when the boards start reading Ladysmith

"I thought we were going home"

"Eventually, for now there's this nice place I'd like us to see"

I like this.

"What kind of place is it?"

"A private game reserve"

"Hmmm, tell me more" I say smiling from ear to ear and he chuckles lowly

"They have a wide bathtub"

"I love it already!" I exclaim happily making Nkosi smile

The rest of the drive is filled with nothing but excitement. When we get there it's already past dinner time so he checks in and then we go to

our luxury suite. It has this gorgeous panoramic view of our natural surroundings, the lounge area is spacious and so is the bedroom with its wall to wall glass window adding on to this elegant look they have going on.

He wasn't lying about the bathtub either. It's a large stone bath and also has a sliding door so you can get the outdoorsy feel of it if you want while still having your privacy ofcourse. Leading outside there's a veranda with an outdoor setting, we could just sit here and watch the view

"Do you like it?" He asks coming from behind me and wrapping his arms around me, resting the palms of his hands on my stomach

"I love it, so you kind of lied to uMa?" I ask him

teasingly, to think he told her we were going home

" I knew I had to be convincing. And seeing how you get shy around her, I definitely did well by bringing us here. Cabanga nje, Umuntu bese engincisha ukudla okungokwami ngoba umamezala usendlini eyodwa nathi" [Just imagine, a person then denying me food that's rightfully mine just because her mother in law is in the same house as us?] Just imagine, ngeke"

"Kodwa Nkosiyabo, bengingeke ngikwenze lokho" [But Nkosiyabo, I wouldn't do that]

"I wasn't about to take that risk, or kanjani wena bunny? Daddy has to make sure that he eats"

"Bunny?"

"Sizothini? With your love for carrots?"

"Mxm, just say you want them too, I'm not stingy"

He moves his hands to my hips then lowers his lips to my ear and says lowly "Ngifuna wena, mfazi wami." he drags his hands up to massage my breasts but I quickly stop him because we are a little sensitive over there right now

"Do they hurt?" He asks pausing and I nod
"Ngiyaxolisa, Sthandwa sami [I'm sorry, my love] the other parts I can still touch, right?" he spins me so I'm facing him and he lowers his hands to touch my bums. I can't even explain what

Nkosiyabo's touch does to me, but he knows

"Yes, you can"

"Alright ke makaBunny, woza uzongiphakela, Ngiyafa indlala" [Alright, Bunny's mom. Come dish up for me, I'm starving]

He has me walking backwards into the bedroom and I hold on to his arms. His eyes are deeply focused on mine, making me concerned that he's not paying attention to our steps

"Nkosi, if I fall-"

"You won't, I won't let you" he says seriously "I'll never let you fall, Makhosa" the seriousness in

his to e has me thinking this is more than just
me tripping from walking backwards

"I know you won't" I tell him seriously too "I
know you've got us"

"Always" he says before laying me on the bed,
stripping off my clothes and having me phakela
him in so many positions all over the suit
throughout the night, he sure was starving.

I'm an admin that listens to her people 😁

CHAPTER 38

LIYANA

The inside of the building is dark and the moon

only illuminates a certain portion of it but from where I'm seated, I can see the streetlights at a distance from where I am

The smell isn't pleasant at all and I'd swear I saw and heard a couple of rats in here, they better stay away from my feet, I hate rats.

I lean against the wall on the little corner that I'm crouched on, I'm about a floor higher and so even with the darkness, I can see when a person enters through the door, so I wait anxiously for him to make his appearance. My heart is thumping furiously against my chest, I better not pass out.

Someone is not getting out of here alive tonight, who it will be, remains to be seen

I brace myself when I hear movement towards the door and then it opens, he walks in, alone and then he walks to the middle

"Liyana!" he furiously yells my name, he's livid.

Good.

"Miguel" I answer calmly, contrasting his mood

"You little bitch, show yourself"

"I will"

"Right now"

"And if I say no?" I ask

One thing that's driving him crazy is that he can't see me and the echo in the room whenever I speak makes it almost impossible to locate me in the building. He thrives on being in control, that's the first thing I'm going to strip him off tonight

"You little-"

"There's really no insult left that you can use to offend me, Miguel. You've overused them all and you don't exactly have time to make up a new one"

"You think you're smart, don't you? Intruding?"

Stealing important intel? Stealing my money!
I'm going to kill you, you little slut! I'm going to
end you and everyone in your family"

His threat against my family makes my heart
skip a beat, I know for a fact that Miguel has to
die tonight or we will

"I've never heard of a dead man who kills" I tell
him

"So that's it? You lured me here to kill me?" he
laughs loudly "I'd like to see you try baby"

"You underestimate me, Miguel. That's your
problem"

"If you're so brave then show yourself, let me see you, face me!"

"I will, be patient"

I'm not dumb, Miguel could easily overpower me within a second if I stand in front of him right now, I need to weaken him before facing him

"So this was it? Your plan? Hold me hostage by stealing from me? And then what?"

"The initial plan was to negotiate my freedom for what we have on you, but there's been a slight change of plans"

"What slight change, and who the hell is we?"

"You ask too many questions. Bottom line is, negotiating my freedom won't be enough seeing I should have never lost it in the first place, you took it by force, you took me by force! And now you're about to lose yours"

I know my brothers want to negotiate with him but that's not going to work, there's only one way to get done with Miguel and that's to kill him, I couldn't ever ask that of them, I can't have them have blood on their hands because of me, they've already done so much and I can't drag them further into this hole I've gotten into.

I need to end this. His blood must be on my hands.

"You're dead, Liyana! Do you get that! You're fucking dead! All I have to do is make one phone call-"

"A phone call you will not be making, One wrong move from you and everything about your business will be sent to Andre. I'm sure he'd love to get his hands on what makes the great Miguel and we both know that you'll be ruined if that happens"

"You little bitch" his voice is filled with so much disbelief, he can't believe it, I don't think I've ever felt so happy to see someone in so much distress, he might try to hide it but I know for a fact he's losing his mind right now

"Take a seat, there's a steel chair on your right"

"You don't get to tell me what to do"

"Take a seat, Miguel"

"You'll have to make me, so why don't you come here and make me, sweetheart"

"Oh I'll make you, alright" I point my gun to his knee and pull the first shot. He doesn't hear it because I'm using a silencer but he sure does feel it

I've never shot anyone before and I thought I'd fail but the anger that's boiling inside me right now is far too greater than my shaky hands, it's like everything he's ever done to me has been put up on a slide show in my head and it's on

full blast, the noise in my head is too much

"You littl-"

"Little bitch, yes I know" I say with a whiney tone
"Now take the damn seat! I'm calling the
fucking shots right now!"

He groans as he limps towards the chair and
sits

" There's cuffs there, cuff yourself to the railing
next to you" I continue giving orders

" You're crazy"

"Yes, I am, and you know I am because you

made me this way. Now cuff yourself, Miguel or I'll be forced to deliver another shot"

He reluctantly cuffs himself and once I'm sure that he has no way of escaping and attacking me, I get ready to face him

"One last thing, with your free hand, toss you phone on the ground" I say and he does it without complaining this time

Only then do I get up and walk to where he is

"There she is, my golden girl" He smiles proudly

"Are you proud of what you've made? Did I do good?" I ask him

"You didn't disappoint, I always knew that deep down, there laid this Liyana, It's just a pity it took this long for her to surface"

"It sure is a pity, it would have spared me a lot of your torment"

"But my torment is what made you, baby, wouldn't you say?" he smirks "If it weren't for me, you wouldn't know just how much you can take and how much you're capable of"

"You're one sick bastard"

"And you're a little bitch, I'm going to enjoy making you suffer when all of this is over"

"Who says you're walking out of here alive?"

"You wouldn't, you might feel a little pumped up right now but we both know that you don't have the guts, if you had any guts you would have done this a long time ago. You would have freed yourself from me two years ago but you're nothing but a weak, helpless little girl with a dream and I promise you, darling, once I'm out of this chair, I'm going to teach you the finest lesson about betraying and stealing from me. I thought you would have learned something from that useless boyfriend of yours but clearly you didn't. I'm telling you right now, sweetheart, I'll make what has been happening for the past two years seem like just a warm up you little-"

I whip him with the pistol on my hand and in the

process I strain my arm, that's how hard I hit him, and it takes both of us by surprise but I quickly mask mine up

" Your days of abusing me are over, this is where it ends, Miguel! This is it!! You've had your fun. Instead of dealing with Nhlakanipho, you chose to torture me instead! What did I ever have to do with your dealings? I didn't even know you and whatever he stole from you, he definitely didn't share with me! Why couldn't you punish him? Why did it have to be me?! "

I can't stop my tears from falling, all these years I've been suffering, I've been living in hell for something I didn't do. My only fault was trusting Nhlakanipho. I never took part in his shady dealings and if anything, I tried to help him out of sticky situations and live an honest life and

what did he do? He delivered me straight to the hell that is Miguel and he never looked back.

"You were the offering, darling. It really wasn't anything more. He wronged me and he offered you to me as a token of peace. That's all"

"A whole human being as an offering, You're sick! Both of you and he's lucky he's already dead or he would be right here with you right now"

"So what now? You kill me?" he chuckles but it's strained, the wound on his leg is dealing with him

"Yes." I say giving him a blank stare

"You don't have the balls for that"

"I do have the anger and motivation though, I just have to think of your abuse and the threat that you hold against my family, that's enough for me to end you"

If anyone is going to have Miguel's blood on their hands, it's going to be me. I'm going to end the bastard

"You're weak! That's what you are and I'll deal with you appropriately. You think I've been hard on you? Wait until I serve you to all my associates, starting with Bushang. By the time I'm done with you, you will be begging me to go ahead and kill you but I won't, I'll destroy you until you have zero strength then I'll - "

He doesn't get to finish because I pump all eleven remaining bullets in the cartridge on his chest. I don't stop shooting until there's absolutely nothing left in the gun and even then, I'm not satisfied

I walk to his now limp body and I look down at him, tears streaming down my cheeks and my heart beating like it'll stop any second now

"I'll meet you in hell."

NKOSIYABO

We got hold of Fana and he tracked her car to another abandoned building so we rushed there. We quickly get off the car and run towards the

building

"What the hell is Liyana thinking?" Bangizwe asks when we see her car parked next to another that we assume to belong to Miguel

"Angazi, whatever it is, it's crazy"

We stop by the door when we hear the loudest cry erupt and fill our ears, it pierces right through my heart because I know its her. That's when we bust inside expecting the worst

"Liyana!" I call out rushing to where she's standing. She has a gun on her hand and there's a dead man on the chair, Miguel.

"Liyana" Bangizwe says softly, when he takes a step closer she takes one back. She looks at the gun then at us, she is completely deranged and her eyes are wide open as she continues staring at the dead man

Whatever is going on in her head needs to be stopped right now

"It's over now, it's done, okay?" I tell her getting closer to her. I don't know if that gun is still loaded and I'm not about to risk it, we are not about to lose her.

like she's reading my mind, she drops it to the floor and starts sobbing, it's almost like she's just realised what she's done.

For the second time in a short space of time. I witness Liyana have another breakdown, and like the last time, I'm here to catch her trembling body before it hits the ground

She cries uncontrollably in my arms and the best I can do is repeatedly tell her that it's over, it's done. She finished him.

She's free. Or at least I hope she is.

Bangizwe calls for the cleaners that Lwazi had put us in contact with and we wait there until they arrive and wipe out everything from the scene. They take Miguel with and I tell them to burn him

No body. No proof.

When it's all done, We take Liyana back to my house and Bangizwe goes over to her place to get her clean clothes. She drugged the guard and went on this alone. This could have ended badly, she could have died but I know now is not the time to be scolding her, she's been through hell and she made it out alive, that's all that matters right now, she's alive.

Two days pass since Miguel's death and I've had to convince her to take at least a week or two off work. She's currently staying with Bangizwe because of the tension there is with Khanyisa. Like I expressed before, I'm between a rock and a hard place, Even though I know Khanyisa would never object to me helping my sister, I also don't want to put her in a position

where she's forced to deal with Liyana, that wouldn't be fair on her and we needed to get Liyana settled somewhere, there was no way we were going to let her stay alone in her apartment, not when she has family.

I get to the office on Tuesday morning and the first thing I do is summom Refilwe to my office.

It's time to end this, for good.

She waltzes in my office looking all confident
"You asked for me?"

"Shut the door and take a seat"

She does as told then sits on a chair looking at

me confidently with a seductive smile "What's this about?"

"It ends, today"

"What ends?"

"Whatever hold you think you have on Liyana. The blackmailing, it stops right now"

She can't hide her shocked expression, she wasn't expecting this

"How... How do you..."

"I just do. Now, you're going to stop blackmailing her. Whatever information you

think you have on her isn't going to work anymore, she told me everything and I'm telling you now, drop it"

"Whatever information I think I have? Your sister has been in the money laundering business for years and she's been using this company to do it" she hisses

"Ngikuzwa ngawe lokho"

"You can't be serious, Nkosiyabo!"

"But I am, You have gone out of your way to make the life of a fellow employee in this company a living hell based on unfounded accusations, I will not have that kind of behavior continue on my watch"

"Unfounded? What the hell are you talking about!
I have proof! I can expose her if I want"

"Proof that you could have fabricated yourself?
Whose to say you didn't make all of this up?"

"We can have an audit then"

"We can do that, not a problem at all. But take
this into consideration, when none of the stuff
you're talking about shows up then you and I
are going to have a problem and I will not let
this slide, the best thing that will ever happen to
you is you leaving this company with just a bad
record"

"You know what she did, you're just covering for

her. You're willing to risk your family company over this? Are you sure you want to do that?"

"Again, I have no time for unfounded accusations. Miss Mdlalose has not been doing any of the things you are accusing her of and she does not appreciate you running her name through the mud like this. I'm very sure there is also a policy that protects employees from fellow abusive and conniving employees like yourself and should she choose to take it up with HR then you will have to answer up" I look at her and she purses her lips

I get up and walk to where she's seated, I make her stand up then I stand very close to her

"Now, on a very, very personal level. You have fucked with my family for too long and it's

enough now. You drop the shit you think you have on my sister and you stop trying to mess with my wife. I cannot speak for Mduduzi, he's made his choice. But hear me, Refilwe, you have no power here, none at all and if you want to make this any more difficult than it already is then be my guest but be rest assured, there's no proof of any misconduct in this company. It's just unfortunate that I can't simply fire you, however I'd advice you to tread very carefully because you're already one foot out the door. Now leave my office. "

" When did you become this cold and ruthless? "

" I warned you not to push me. This is what you get. You wanted ruthless right? Ruthless you get then. My family is off limits. "

She looks at me angrily "How did you do it?"
how did you cover Liyana's mess"

"There wasn't a mess to begin with, I'm more interested in how you managed to make all of this up"

"Bathong! So you're going to make this my doing?"

"Aren't you the one whose been blackmailing her kanti?"

"Why did she agree to it then?"

"Is this you admitting to backmail? The same that led to my wife's book being stolen?"

She thinks about it for a moment, she's in a corner.

"I can't believe you" she says then turns to walk out of my office, she bumps into Bangizwe

"Haibo, watch where you're going dammit" he tells her but she just keeps walking

"I take it you told her the good news" He smirks looking at the door once again

"I did"

"Serves her and her witchy tendencies right, Although it would've been better if she just left

the company altogether"

"In time, we will work something out. How are the books and accounts looking?"

"Squeaky clean like it never happened. Tshelamina, uLwazi ubathathaphi bonke lababantu? [Tell me, where does Lwazi get all these people?]" he asks

"Nami angazi [I also don't know], Friends of friends maybe"

"Me, you and him could easily double up in the life of crime if this business thing doesn't work out, you see?" he says jokingly

"Udakiwe manje" I tell him and he lets out a laugh making me laugh too.

It's done.

CHAPTER 40

KHANYISA

I wake up alone on the large bed. The sliding door is open but the curtains were kept close, but I can still feel the morning fresh breeze against my exposed skin as I lay there. I wonder where Nkosi went but I lay for a few more minutes in the position that I'm in which is me laying on the bed on my chest with legs spread. I was worn out last night, I still am but I don't want to miss the opportunity of exploring this amazing place, I didn't even ask for how long

we will be here and I know that he can't be away from the office for that long.

I finally decide to get up and search in my suitcase for something to wear. I first find a clean set of underwear, then I continue searching. I never packed any of my shorts because I was visiting my inlaws so my choices range between dresses and skirts

He walks in while I'm still deciding on what to wear and he comes to peck my lips "Good morning" Then he lowers himself to peck my stomach as well

"Morning"

"Ulale kahle?" [Did you sleep well?]

"mmh, wena? "

"Nami ngilale kahle, I missed sleeping next to you"

"I missed that too" I smile looking back at my suitcase

"Struggling to decide?" he asks

"Yeap"

He reaches in his suitcase and takes out a clean t-shirt

"Put this on until we have to go out, that's if we are going to go out" he says with a suggestive tone and I feel myself get hot again, how is it possible to have so much of a person but still desire them this intensely?

I take the t-shirt from him and slide it on my body. I love that its loose and I can still get some air in but I mostly love that it smells like him

"I might just steal this"

"I don't mind, I actually love this look on you" he reminds me of that time he told me that he loves the look of a "Well fucked wife" on me, I bite my lower lip at the thought of this and his smirk tells me he quickly caught on

He turns me around so I'm facing the bed and his hands disappear under his t-shirt, landing on his favorite place "I'd love nothing than to bend you over on this bed and eat you all day, but first, you and bunny have to be fed" He says with his turned on hoarse voice and I shut my eyes and suck in as much breath as I can

When I've calmed myself, I pack away the suitcases and make the bed, I know the cleaning crew will obviously have to come and clean but I'd like them to find the place a little decent

"I arranged for breakfast to be brought to us" he says as we walk to the lounge area. At around that time, there's a knock on the door and he goes to open

It's breakfast being delivered and the guy tries to step in with the room service trolley but Nkosi stops him by the door while I get comfortable on the couch and place a cushion on my thighs to cover up.

"Stop trying to see beyond this point, Uzongicasula [you will annoy me]" I look up when I hear Nkosi coldly scold the guy

He mumbles an apology but Nkosi doesn't respond to it, he's clearly annoyed and can't wait for him to be gone

"Do you want me to wheel it in further?" The guy asks

"I'll take it from here" Nkosi tells him and he leaves

When he turns he lowly clicks his tongue in annoyance

"Don't be mad, he's just a kid and I think he got the message"

"He better have, they said private game reserve, right?" He says, still annoyed

I pat the empty spot next to me so he can sit there and when he does I cuddle on his side

"Ungathukutheli phela baba kabunny" [don't be mad, bunny's dad]

He can't fight his smile when I call him this and I'm glad to see him relaxing again

"What's for breakfast?" I ask and he brings the trolley closer

"Ngebhadi, abanawo amaCarrot" [Unfortunately they don't have carrots] I hear the mockery tone as if I had asked for carrots this morning so I decide to make him sweat a little even though I'm not really looking for carrots right now

"Ngebhadi that's what I want" I say it with a straight face

He's all fun and games until he looks at me

"You're serious?"

"Yes, maybe go ask in their kitchen or find a shop nearby that sells them

" Haibo Makhosa, you really want me to go on a carrot hunt? " he almost sounds mortified

I can't risk talking because I know I'll just bust out laughing so I settle for a shrug

" Mkami..." He starts to plead "There's got to be something else that you crave except for those things. 24/7? Hayi it can't be normal, there's got to be something else"

"My other cravings are very expensive,

Mdlalose "I warn

" How about this, let's have this breakfast while you tell me about them" he reveals the English breakfast in front of us, with almost everything fried, I'm super glad morning sickness has not decided to force a relationship with me

" Alright, I can do that"

"So, what else do you crave?"

"Hmmm" I think about it while taking a bite off my toasted bread "A coupe, a matte coupe to be specific" I say and I expect him to go all "You're out of your mind" but he doesn't instead he asks me to describe the interior and I do just that then I laugh it off, nobody has ever craved a

new car, especially when the one they have is hardly a year old

We ease into the morning and when I ask how long we can stay here he says he can squeeze in an extra day and that makes me happy, one more day in this gorgeous and peaceful place.

The plan was to go exploring after breakfast but Nkosi has other plans, he picks me up and has me straddling him on the couch. He pulls me a lot closer to his groin and I grind on him while he reaches and kisses my neck. His hand goes between my legs then he pushes my thong aside and when I feel his fingers on me I hold in steady to his arms, feeling the intrusion of his fingers and he drives them in and out of me. I bury my face on his neck. He wraps one arm around me to keep me from moving then he

quickens his pace, never have I had such a quick orgasm. I feel my knees go weak when I come undone on top of him

He then gets up with me still on him and he walks us to the bedroom, he throws me on it a little roughly. Strips me off the t-shirt and undies then he commands me to go on all fours on the bed then he kneels behind me. He smacks my legs telling me to spread them further apart, he puts his hands on both sides of my waist then I feel him enter me slowly until he's fully buried in me, he pulls out then I hear him say "Breathe, sthandwa sam"

I don't know why he's telling me to breathe but I do, I take a deep breath and in that instant, he slams hard into me, knocking the air of my lungs straight. Nkosi doesn't hold back and has

me under his full control. I fail to stay on all fours and slide on the bed and he slides with me, somehow supporting himself so I don't feel his full weight on me.

"Oh my gosh!" I cry out when my legs start to tremble and he goes even harder, before I can register what's happening, he hits it one more time and it rains from between my legs. I've never had this happen to me and I have no words to describe the feeling. Nkosi follows then he collapses next to me on the bed, I'm wet, I'm drained and I have no will power to move, I feel myself drift off to sleep right there.

I wake up in the afternoon, alone again but this time Nkosi is outside on a phone call. I decide

to run myself a bath so we can at least see a bit of this place. I can't let it all go to waste.

I leave the sliding door slightly open knowing no one can come around this side through it then I soak myself in there. The only thing missing is a glass of red wine, I'm sure going to miss it for these coming months. I lay back on it and shut my eyes until I feel eyes on me. I open my eyes to find Nkosi leaning against the wall while looking at me thoughtfully

"Is it a pretty sight?" I ask with a smile

"A perfect one"

"It feels perfect" I sigh feeling so relaxed "Is everything okay at work?" I ask remembering

the long phone call

"Yes, we've just got a new client and I'm supposed to meet with him when I go back, otherwise everything is okay"

"You know, You never really told me exactly how you handled the Miguel and Refilwe mess" I ask and see him tense up

"Miguel won't be a problem anymore" He says and I get that feeling again, the way he says it, there's just something there

"Is he still alive?" I ask the question that's been on my mind all this time, there's no way that a mob boss will just bend over and abide by someone else's rules, if that's the case then he's

definitely planning a come back and we are all on the firing line

" Khanyisa... "

"Just tell me, Nkosi... Honesty at all times, remember?"

He comes to sit by the edge of the tub and he touches my exposed knee "If I told you that I had planned to kill him... Where would that put us? What would you think of me?" his eyes are everywhere except for where mine are

"Will you look at me?" I ask and he does

"I wouldn't think any less of you. This man, he

terrorised Liyana for years, yes me and her aren't on great terms right now and she did hurt me, a lot. But I know just how much the family means to you and that there's nothing you wouldn't do for all of us... If I'm being honest, it is a scary thought and I don't want to have to imagine you in that position, but I know that some situations are beyond us, and you would have done what you had to do to keep us safe"

"He wasn't going to stop" He says

"I thought so too... But I had hope that the plan would work"

"I guess it did work"

"Nkosi... Did you do it? Did you kill Miguel?" I

whisper the question

"If I did, would you still recognize me as your husband? Would I be risking losing you? Would you be scared of me?"

"I will still recognize you as my husband and no, I'm not going anywhere and I have no reason to be scared of the very same man who wants to protect me, but we need to be honest with each other. I believe that's the only way we can ever overcome whatever hurdle is thrown at us"

He looks at me like he can't believe how calm I'm responding to this, it's taking me by surprise too. Killing someone isn't just nothing, but, I'm here convincing myself that if he did, it's because it had to be done. That man already killed two people just because he could, whose

to say what he would have done to the rest of us in the midst of his rage?

"I didn't do it. I had planned to but I didn't get to kill him, but he is dead"

"Who did it then?"

"What I'm going to tell you cannot be repeated, this is the last time we are speaking of it, for good" He says and I nod

"Liyana killed him. We got someone to get rid of his bidy and she anonymously sent his shady dealings to another mob boss just to make sure that no one from his camp ever rises again. Someone was arranged to come balance the company finances and fix the situation and I

warned Refilwe to stop with her blackmail or the supposed lies would be pointed at her if she persisted. MaKhosa, In the past few days, I have been an accomplice to murder and fraud and everything else in between. I'm not proud of it but I know that if I was to be faced with the same situation all over again there's not a damn thing I wouldn't do to protect my family and our company. I need you to know that, I don't know if that will change the image that you have of me but this is what it is, Mkami, this is me being completely honest with you. "

" Can you hand me the towel, please "I ask and he gets it for me

I get out the bathtub and dry myself then I wrap another one around my body while he stands there looking at m

I then get closer to him, stand on my toes and peck his lips

" It's over now, maybe not over over because Refilwe is still working with you but you've avoided possible deaths and the risk of having the company collapse. In my eyes, You're still the Nkosi that I married and I don't love you any less. We are okay"

"You mean that?"

"I do, for better or worse, right?"

"Right" he hugs me tight and I feel him relax.

I get dressed and we explore the place just as planned, we take a walk, visit the wine cellar, chill by the bar then we go back to our suit and get in the pool as the sun sets, I'm in my underwear and he's in his shorts. I would have brought my swimwear had I known about this quick short left but it's no biggy, Nkosi and I have gone too far for me to be worried about parading in the pool with my thong on instead of one of my high waist bikinis, however, the outfit attracts Nkosi's hands all over me and soon has me pinned against the pool as he makes love to me in the water.

Later when we get settled in bed, I lay in his arms and I think about what he told me earlier. I might not know what the future holds for us, especially since these crazy things keep happening in our lives but I have no doubt that I want to be by his side, I want to make good on

my vows and I don't want to hold back. I took a huge leap and married this man, barely knowing who he was but something about him felt right, I did not feel the need to "study" him for months or years because it felt like our souls had known each other way before we met in physical form, it felt like our fates had been long decided and intertwined and it was just a matter of us getting together when the time was right. The proof of this? We both have not seen the couple whose wedding we met at since the wedding because they weren't really close friends, we did not really have to attend but something pushed both of us to go and we did, there must have been a reason. I do not regret taking that risk, I don't regret saying yes to being his wife and I doubt that I ever will because I know he loves me and I love him too.

CHAPTER 41

KHANYISA

We check out at nine o'clock the next morning. I'm happy with this stop and I also feel glad that Nkosi thought of it. Now it's time to get back to reality, my parents anniversary is only days away now so that's what's going to be grabbing most of my attention

Nkosi drives us home and we stop twice along the way to fill up on fuel, have lunch and buy more snacks. When we get home it's late in the afternoon, he tells me he will order in and I go straight for my nap.

The next morning he goes back to the office and I see the day as a chance to go get my nails done before weekend. I know around tomorrow, sesi Caro and I will be very busy and I might not

have time to visit the salon

I text with Cheryl she's the one picking me up this time and then we head to our usual nail spot. When we are done we find a restaurant nearby and we order lunch

Looking at our drinks menu, we both put away the wine lists without a second glance, something quite unusual of the both of us seeing we both love wine and have it whenever eat out. When we do this, we look each other in the eye, the words are just at the tip of my tongue as we both smile shyly at each other

"What?" We both say to each other at the same time

"Nothing" we say again then bust out laughing

"Okay, this is ridiculous. Cheryl, is there something you want to share?" I give her a knowing look and she returns it

"Khanyi, is there something you'd like to share?" she repeats my question

We sit there laughing like two nutcases and I'm sure to people around us, we do appear to have lost our marbles

"Oh my gosh!" She says and I bite my lips and shake my head

" Okay, let's say it at the same time, no shouting

though, we are in public" I look around us then
back at her

"Okay" She agrees "Ready?"

"On the count of three" I say then we start

"One, two...three. I'm pregnant" we both say to
each other just as the waiter returns to our table

We both look at him and the look on his face is
priceless, making us both laugh again, clearly
someone out there is drinking and we are the
ones getting intoxicated on their behalf

" Uhh... Congratulations?" He says with a
nervous smile

"Thank you" we say again, at the same time

"Okay this is weird, we need to stop speaking at the same time" I say to Cheryl

"Agreed" She says and the waiter clears his throat to get our attention

" Have you two mummies to be decided what you'll be having? "

I order a pulled pork wrap and Cheryl goes with cheesy prawns and garlic bread then we both order mocktails

" Oh my gosh! Kay I can't believe it!!" She

squeals excitedly

" Me neither, you know what this means?our babies will grow up together"

"Yes!" OMG, imagine all the fun things we will get to do together, this is amazing! " she sings it out

" This is so crazy, us, pregnant at the same time, I swear this friendship was meant to be" I gush over our baby news

"It really was, I love you, mommy"

"I love you too, mommy"

"Okay, now I need your help, I haven't told Nick yet and I wanted to make it a big reveal of some sorts"

"Cheryl! You told me before you told your husband?"

"Because I need you to help me plan something fun, how did you tell Nkosi?"

I laugh at this and at the memory itself "I just did"

"Huh?"

"He got home just after I had gotten the results, I obviously got nervous when I went out the

bathroom to face him but like always, he was able to read me and tell that something was up so he asked and I said it" I shrug

"Maybe I should just tell Nick too?"

"No, you want to make this special, right?"

"I do, maybe a dinner then I surprise him with the test on the plate?"

"Ew no, friend, that's gross. Imagine being served a pee coated test on a plate, no, just no"

"You're right, that's disgusting"

"Maybe a game night? Have a couple of games

that ends up with him finding out, a scavenger hunt of some sort even"

"You're amazing! Have I told you I love you?"

"You have" I smile at her

Our food arrives and when the plates are laid out in front of us we look at each others with disgusted expressions

"Are you sure you're going to eat that?" I ask

"Kay, that cannot be your lunch" She says then we look up at each other again

"The two of you are going to have it hard, very

hard." the waiter says trying not to laugh then he leaves us to our problems.

We finish with the lunch then walk around a little while I help Cheryl shop for her surprise. She receives a call from Nick and when it takes long I excuse myself, mouthing that she should call me when she's done and she nods

I walk around aimlessly until I spot a gallery, it must be new because they weren't here before. My curiosity and memory of my gallery gig days lead me into it. I do not miss having to be on my feet for the longest hours and having to be on the road very late at night after an exhibition but I do miss the vibe, it was chilled and sophisticated, the way people connect with paintings is truly amazing and one can only

wonder what was going on in the mind of the artist as they made the beautiful masterpiece

"Azande. M" A male voice says from behind

"Huh?"

"The artist, her name is Azande Maphumulo"

"Oh yes, I see her signature on it" I tell him

"You do?" He gives me a surprised look

"Yes, if you check between those lines by the wall next to her hair, there's a little star with a cursive A on it" I look at the painting of the woman surrounded by flames again then I point

to where the artist's signature is

"You're familiar with art?" He asks

"Yes, I use to work at a gallery.

I'd also assist during exhibitions"

"You did?"

I look at him then cross my arms over my chest giving him a scolding look "Look at you, judging a book by it's cover"

"I'm sorry, you don't look like you'd work as an assistant"

"Why is that?" I ask and he quickly shakes his head

"I'm sorry, that was rude"

"It was"

"I'm very sorry, Mrs..." He trails off looking at my wedding ring

"Mdlalose" I finish off for him

"Mrs. Mdlalose, you're right, I judged you from the minute you stepped in and I should know better."

"You should, you could also be chasing away a

potential client, I don't think the artists you work with will appreciate that"

"You're right, that was a douche move" he scratches the back of his head

"Yes, it was" I start walking again

"But please know that you are very welcome here, be it to view or to buy. We appreciate all the support that we can get and please don't let the art work suffer because of my ignorance" He pleads very apologetically

"Oh no, the art doesn't deserve that. And it's fine, I'm cool" I get a call from Cheryl then I tell her I'm on my way "I'll be off now"

He walks with me towards the door then grabs an exhibition card by his table "You should come to our exhibition next month, bring your husband and friends too, it'll be fun and there will be free drinks" he says with a soft chuckle

I take the card from him and quickly scan it for the date

"We are also available on Facebook and Instagram, the follow and like would be appreciated" He adds

"I'll see if I can make it, it looks interesting"

"For a former gallery worker it definitely will be interesting"

"Alright then, I'll see"

"Enjoy your day Mrs. Mdlalose, and once again, I apologize for my stupid behavior"

"It's okay..."

"Ntsika... Ntsika Radebe" he finishes for me with a colgate smile and I nod then get on my way after putting the card in my handbag, maybe we could make it a date night.

NKOSIYABO

When I get to the office I feel the heat of missing work. There's a lot to do and very little time but I don't regret it, I loved every moment

that Khanyisa and I spent together, I wish I could have added an extra day but that would have been too much of a stretch

She never asks for these things. She ever complains about my busy schedule either and if I'm not careful I might just fall into the routine of not making time for her, I don't want it to get to that point so I'm going to have to squeeze these getaways in my schedule as often as I can because her happiness is mine and after seeing how happy she was with me at the game reserve, I feel so much lighter and happier too. Her mood has rubbed off on me. It's that and the mind blowing sex that we had that's got me in this energized mood, who would have thought that making love to my wife would be so therapeutic? It's the effect that she has on me. She's got me hooked on her so much and I love introducing her to these adventures, like

the pool sex that we had, I love that she's having her firsts with me and I want her to enjoy all of them, so I'll keep making these getaway memorable.

I'm pulled out of my gutter thoughts by the knock on the door

"Mr. M, Miss Mazibuko is here" Lindiwe says stepping in from the door

"Mr. Mazibuko" I correct her, Mr. Mazibuko is our new client that we sell car parts to, he was referred by another client and I'm supposed to be meeting with him today

"Well then, he's a drop dead gorgeous woman" she laughs lowly and I give her a blank stare

"Sorry sir, but I can assure you, it's Miss. Mazibuko, maybe he went through a transition, but the lady outside said she's a Miss Mazibuko, so it will be very important for you to use the correct pronouns, you don't want to be labeled-"

"Lindiwe, I get it. Let her in" I stop her rambling

"Yes, sir" she says walking out and a moment later there's a single knock on the door opens. She walks in with her stilettos clicking from her movements and it feels like I've just seen a ghost. I have to do a double take just to make sure, it's her.

"Nobuhle?"

"Sawubona, Dikane"

***The end? Not yet, my darlings   

CHAPTER 43

KHANYISA

"Maha tlele? Nale mintini ya vanhu mi endla sweswi ka Khanyisa?" [You're still sleeping? Is this what you also do in other people's household?]

Aunt Florah's unnecessarily loud voice chases away every bit of sleepy bone in me and I sit up on the bed, Sesi Caro gets up too and she looks more pissed off than me

I check the time, it's four o'clock in the morning.

Four o'clock!! Who does this?

"Hahani, hitaku hi hubutela yini?" [aunt, why would we be waking up early?] sesi Caro asks

"Milo rivala ku namuntlha ku humelela yini? Hi fane hi sungula ku tirha, mapoto yata tselekiwa hi mani loko maha n'wina maha tlele?" [Have you forgotten what today is? We have to start working, whose going to stary cooking when you guys are still sleeping?]

" Kuna vanhu va catering-" [There's catering people-]

" Se va fane va fika va kuma minga se endla nchumu? Tshikani ku loloha mi pfuka lan, hayi man!" [So they must things as they are? Stop

being lazy and wake up] she says then walks out, probably to go pounce on someone else

" I knew I should have slept in my own house" I say easing back onto my pillow

"Me too, I forget how she can get" sesi Caro says "Let me get up"

"Buy me some time, I'm coming"

"Alright, I'll tell her you're making the bed"

When she steps outside I reach for my phone from the nightstand and text Nkosi, I don't want to call incase he's still asleep, he left here very late last night

"You up?" I quickly type and before I can put my phone away a response comes through

"How can I still be sleeping my wife's side of the bed is cold and empty" He's probably complaining but I can't help but smile, I love how Nkosi always makes me feel wanted, I never have to wonder when it comes to him

"I miss you too" I send a smiley face

"Are you and bunny good?"

"We are" Another smile creeps up on me, how we've gotten used to calling our baby bunny makes me think this name will stick even after birth

"That's good, so why are you up at this time?"

"Aunt Florah" that's all I need to say and he sends a bunch of laughing emojis. He's only seen her twice, but he knows, he just knows

"So you'll keep Cheryl and Nick company today, right? I don't want them feeling out of place"

"Nangu umuntu ufuna ukungenza ngikhulume isiNgesi overtime, kahle MaKhosa" [you want to make me speak English overtime]

"Ngiyacela [please] , baba kabunny. Plus you know they are nice people"

"Yah Nick is nice, his wife on the other hand!
She can't stop talking"

"Come on, My friend is just bubbly that's all"

"Okay ke, you don't have to further convince me.
I'll keep them company"

We continue chatting for a while until I get up.
After making the bed, I wait for the bathroom
que because there's a lot of us in the house
today. Most of our family from Limpopo arrived
yesterday and some slept here while others left
with my brother inlaw.

After freshening up I go outside. I know that
Singi, the decor and catering lady will be here
any time now and they prefer to find things

untouched, something my aunt doesn't get so I just stick to sweeping the yard, that should keep her out of my hair

***"

Time passes and one can feel it in the air that today is a big day. The mood is on a high and I can't wait for everything to come together. The moment Singi and her crew arrive, they get busy, sesi Caro and I offer to help them but sbe insists that that they've got this, she let's us know the hey younger sister will be in charge orf the catering part of it while sbe sets up in the tent

My cousins and I keep busy by serving breakfast and running little errands around the yard. Bunu isn't visible yet but I still have on a lose dress so as to not draw attention to myself,

I also feel glad that I didn't choose a tight fitting dress for the occasion. I'm not trying to make a huge announcement and the last thing I want ka to steal my parents light, today is about them.

As the day progresses, we get ready for the day. After getting dressed we get our makeup done and it's at around that time when my parents inlaw arrive. And they immediately blend with my parents, it's an amazing sight to see. Nkosi arrives shortly with Bangizwe and Nandi, then Cheryl and her husband.

Just as Nkosi and I are welcoming and ushering in guests, Mduduzi pulls up. The invite was extended to him too, and to Liyana but I know she will not pitch, I just didn't want to be the hostile one

He gets out the car and then he goes to get the other side of the car to open the door then Refilwe steps out

"I completely forgot about his plus one" I whisper to Nkosi without looking at him

"If there was ever a time where I wish for Mdu to get up to his skirt chasing ways again instead of being committed, it would be right now" he says lowly

We are both looking ahead at them but holding our own conversation

"Does he know we are having a baby?"

"No, I don't trust him enough to share such personal news with yet, especially knowing that he might tell the witch he calls his girlfriend"

"It looks serious"

"Maybe it is"

"Maybe they will get married"

"And we will all be fucked" he says and I can't stop the laughter, it's not funny but the way he just said it... I couldn't stop myself

"Sanibonani" Mduduzi greets when he gets to us

"Hey, ni right?" I respond

"Yah, we good. You guys?"

"We are also good" I say then turn to Refilwe, I can't find anything to say to her so I shift my eyes back to Mduduzi whose conversing with Nkosi. We show them where to go but they opt to stand with us a little longer, that's until Mduduzi asks to have a word with Nkosi and I'm left with Refilwe

"Have you heard?" She says sneakily as soon as they are far

"Heard what?"

"Nkosi's ex is back in town and she's doing business with us"

"Oh, Yeah I heard" I find myself wondering how she knows Nobuhle, but then again, If Nkosi was about to marry this woman, he definitely did not keep her a secret even at his workplace

"That woman is everything, I tell you. She's so beautiful, she exudes so much confidence. Like, you can't be in a room with her and not take note"

"Sounds like she's got a fan in you" I comment already feeling where this is going

"She and Nkosi were this power couple. They complimented each other so perfectly, and the

way he loved her, oh gosh. No one could ever match up to that, Even I never thought I stood a chance after a woman like her"

"Mmh"

"It just comes to show, men like Nkosi love independent women, the kind that do something with their lives and have a place to go to every morning. It only made sense why he went for her and then me, I mean. Nobuhle and I are our own people, we are independent "

" And conniving with devil like tendencies. Yeap, you're right, you're so alike"

"No need to be rude-"

"Don't you start with me, I don't want you here. The only reason I'm tolerating you is because you are with Mduduzi. Beyond that, you repulse me and I'm not going to stand here and listen to you talk about her and yourself as if you're in some kind of higher league than I am because you are not. We are not friends, don't ever think you can get too familiar with me. " I leave her standing there

More guests arrive and soon its very packed, Nkosi settles with his siblings and Cheryl plus her husband while I walk around with sesi Caro

" U kahle?" [Are you okay?] she asks

" Ya"I nod, but honestly I'm not. Maybe Refilwe's words did get to me a little more than I'd like to admit

" You look tense "

" I'm okay" I tell her

We all get settled in the tent. We opted for round tables so the Mdlalose's occupy an entire table alongside Cheryl and Nick. Nkosi reserved a chair for me next to him and when I sit he has his arm around me

The MC, whose one of my cousins, welcomes everyone and then the Reverend starts the program by sharing the word of God. It's the same Reverend who officiated our wedding so it feels good to see him again, and I also feel ashamed because I haven't set foot at church since the wedding, even after saying I would but

in my defense, It's because I moved from Meadowlands, if I was still around I would have made a plan.

We listen to him preach the word about love and I gave in a couple of his bible verse quotes. He is very good at what he does and has people in the tent engaged to his teachings. When his done, the speeches start. Sesu Caro and I decided to let the elders speak first before we do and then our parents would be the last to speak so we listen throughout the speeches, some long, some funny, some cringe worthy but none the less, the speakers have the audience laughing out loud

When it's our turn we stand and the same time and take turns speaking about the love we have both seen from our parents. If I'm to be honest,

they are the reason I believe in love. Being raised in a household where you aren't put in the middle of your parents quarrels has made me see that although challenges will arise, when two people stand by what they have both chosen, their house will not go up in flames, instead they will do whatever it takes to shield their family, and then they can quarrel later in their private space, that's what I saw from my parents. We would obviously pick up on their bad moods from time to time but they tried their level best to never unleash their anger or frustration towards each other in front of us. They always sorted it silently and one day we would wake up and they would be all happy again. That's what I want.

When it's their turn to speak, my dad does most of the talking and mom keeps it short.

Singi and her people start serving. It feels good to not have to run around and just relax while someone else takes care of everything. But that doesn't stop aunt Florah from keeping an eye on things

Once everyone has been served, most people move out of the tent to chill while drinking their cold bevs, how I wish I could get one, just one.

Nkosi must see the look on my face because he whispers

"Don't even think about it"

"I wasn't going to" I say then get up to go find myself a soft drink. We hired a mobile fridge so I get in, get myself a two litre coldrink then get

out

"Nkata mina" [My wife]

Only one person used to call me this and when I look back, he's standing there with his usual smug smile and a can of beer in his hand

"Aaron"

"Kunjhan Nkatanga? Mara wena awuni khomi kahle ka, u tsandeka no ni rhumela invite?" [How are you, my wife? But you don't treat me right, you couldn't even send me an invite "

" Ani nsati wa wena, Aaron. [I'm not your wife] and even without that invite, you came anyway"

"I would have appreciated one from you though"

I don't have the energy for this, In the very few times that I've seen him after the break up he has always done this, acting like I'm still his. He comes closer and wants to hug me but I step back

"Not even a hug?" he asks with a frown

"No"

"I heard you got married"

"Okay"

"And you didn't invite me"

"We aren't friends"

"But still..."

I decide I'm done with him so I continue walking.
But he grabs my hand

"Aaron, don't start with me" I warn

"But how many times must I say it? I made a
mistake"

"And I didn't. I made a sober minded decision
and if you know what's good for you you'll get
your hand off me" I pull my hand and walk but

Aaron being Aaron, he continues being a nuisance, tailing behind me until we are joined by Nkosi

"Ndoda, wanamathela umkami njengengane elahlekile, Yini inkinga yakho?" [Man, you're sticking to my wife like a lost child, what's your problem?]

"Khanyisa" Aaron ignores him

"Eita, ngikhuluma nawe" [I'm talking to you]
Nkosi says stepping closer to him but I put my hand on his arm

"You need to leave" I say to Aaron feeling nervous, the last thing I need is to have him start unnecessary drama

" But-"

" But nothing, leave. You're embarrassing yourself here and all of this is very unnecessary, just leave" I try not to yell, with the way Nkosi is looking at him, I can only rely on the hope that Nkosi will maintain his cool and not get his hands on him

Aaron gets the message and walks away and we go back to our chairs. Nkosi's mood is already sour and I know I can't ask a lot of things here in front of everyone else. I could just kick Aaron right now.

CHAPTER 42

***Bonus chapter sponsored by Sphiwe ***

NKOSIYABO

"Nobuhle?"

"Sawubona, Dikane"

She stands there and doesn't move. Her hands are tightly clutching onto her handbag yet she has the calmest face on, once my tongue gets over the shock, it decides to be useful again

"Mazibuko?"

"Maiden surname..."

"So the one you told me before..."

"It belongs to my then husband" she says and I can't believe it, She went and introduced herself to me as Nobuhle Zwane, she shamelessly used her husband's surname and chose not to mention that she was actually a married woman.

As though reading my mind, she apologizes "Ngiyaxolisa Nkosiyabo, that's one period of my life that I am not proud of. It's very shameful for me, I'm still waiting for the day where I can be able to think about it and not feel shame wash over me"

I choose not to entertain her

"Why are you here?"

"I'm here on behalf of my father-"

"Which one?" I can't stop the snarky question.

"My real father" she says lowly as though it pains her to say the words

This is the same woman who went and paid a bunch of people to act as her parents, uncles and aunts when I was about to send my delegates to go negotiate for her hand in marriage. And now she's standing here telling me about her real father

" Mbuso Mazibuko"

"Yes..."

"Does he know?"

"No, or he wouldn't have allowed me to oversee this working relationship..."

"You got married" She says looking at my wedding band "Whose the lucky woman?"

"I see you're still hiding your ring" I ignore her question

"No, we divorced"

"Oh"

"Yes, after what happened with us... Knowing I had fallen in love with you, I could not stay in the marriage for any longer than I already had. I just wish I had done it way before... I messed up"

I have a choice, I could either start grilling her right now and open up old wounds or I could just stick to what she's here for. I don't know when she got back in the country and I don't care to know, I just wish I had know before signing on the dotted line. Would I have let a good business opportunity pass me by? It's quite clear where the scales are tipping at, I want nothing to do with this woman.

"Let's get started, Shall we?" I decide to focus on what she's here for. At this point, I have to

put aside everything and think like the responsible CEO that I am, I can always let Bangizwe be the one who directly communicates with her after this because believe me, the less I see of Nobuble, the better for my sanity.

"I'll be standing in for my father for the duration of our contract"

"I got that part"

She covers a little but then straightens up "Uhm, yeah... I'm just here to go through the rest of the paperwork and to make sure everything is set. I believe we've already sent through our first order" She says and that's how the meeting officially starts

Throughout the meeting, I remain as professional as I can be while counting down to the minutes until she's out of here and when she's done I get up and ready to lead her out of my office

"I'll transfer all your paperwork to Bangizwe, if you have any queries or anything to discuss you will give him a call, I'll have him call you first."

"So I won't be working with you?"

"No"

"If it were my father would you be tossing him to your little brother?" She asks sounding hurt, the nerve of this woman

"You are not your father, stop trying to make a fuss about this. Bangizwe is just as competent or I wouldn't let him handle your account"

"I have no doubt that he's competent-"

"Then it's settled"

"Nkosiyabo, don't you think it's better to just clear the air right now so we can have a good working relationship?"

"Is there anything you'd like to clear up?"

"Yes... I just want to apologize, again. Look, I'm sorry for deceiving you, I should have been

honest with you from the beginning and now because of my lies-" she stops and takes a deep breath "ngiyaxolisa Nkosi"

"Uqedile?" [Are you done] I ask and she nods then I get the door "Bangizwe will be in touch"

She bows her head and walks out then I shut the door behind her. What the hell just happened?

KHANYISA

If there's one thing I've learned from Nkosi, it's too be attentive. I notice his off mood from the second I lay eyes on him, he's tense.

I decide that I'll let him settle in first before asking about his day so I focus on supper first, When he returns from putting him suit jacket and I see him attempting to appear to be in a good mood. I serve supper and after eating I do the dishes the go to find him in the lounge area. He's aimlessly surfing through the channels, one after another, but he's mind is not here

I sit next to him and only then does he come back to, I get comfortable laying against his chest and he puts his arm around my chest

"Mdlalose"

"Hmm?"

"What happened today?"

He goes quiet and for a moment I think he won't want to talk about it but then he starts talking

"Remember when I told you that I had used Fana's services before? "

"To investigate the woman you were in a relationship with... Yes"

"Her name is Nobuhle. It was three years ago, We had been together for close to two years. Our relationship progressed and I asked her to be my wife"

I won't lie and say it doesn't sting to hear him talk about asking another woman to be his wife. Yes, it was way before me and it's nothing that I

have to worry about but I think it's human nature to feel this sting because I don't want to imagine anyone in the position that I am in right now but I get that this isn't about me and I'd rather he talks to me than completely shut down, that will do more damage

"What happened?"

"She said yes, we set the date and we both arranged everything on our side. I had my delegates come all the way to Joburg for this and she gathered her uncle and aunts, or so I thought. I always thought she was hiding something from me, a couple of times she would act off, I wouldn't be able to reach her whenever she went away and that was quite often. Of course she made up some story about running some business for her father in

Swaziland and that's why she had to be in between countries but she assured me that things would get better after we got married. One evening, she asked me to get her painkillers in her handbag, she had just gotten back from Swaziland and she looked disturbed, she blamed it on the traveling and like an unsuspecting idiot, I chose to believe her, so I searched in her bag and that's when I found the wedding ring "

" What did she say about it? "

" I didn't ask her about it right then, I knew she would cook up some story so I contacted Fana and he delivered. He got everything, all proof, pictures included. Only then I confronted her, she couldn't deny it. Not with everything out in the open"

"I'm very sorry you had to go through that"

"It's okay, I've come this far."

"But it couldn't have been easy, days away from getting married?"

"It wasn't. But I had to man up and face my family, tell them everything was off. It was a hard period of my life, one that I do not like thinking about"

"I understand, What happened to you wasn't just nothing" my heart breaks for him. I'm getting a clearer picture of why he was holding back at first. Having to be heartbroken, not even privately so but in front of your entire family,

having to be covered in that shame even when you weren't the one responsible for it. It couldn't have been easy for him

"But I moved through it. I stopped thinking about it... Until she showed up in my office today"

"What did she want?" It comes out a little harsher than intended

"She's the new client. Well her father is but she's his representative."

"Yho..." I'm speechless and he chuckles and my reaction

"Yeah, I felt like that too"

"So you're gonna be working with her?"

"No, Bangizwe will. I want nothing to do with her" he says bitterly and I look at him

Ofcourse I'm happy that he's deciding from get go that he will not be the one to interact with her but right now as I look at him, I can't help but wonder if he ever did get over what she did to him. Did he heal or did he ignore it and force to move on with his life

"Love"

"Yes?"

"Did you ever speak to anyone about what happened, about how you were feeling?"

"A shrink? Haibo MaKhosa, I'm not the first person to be deceived like this, it's not really an unusual thing"

"It doesn't have to be a shrink. Maybe Lwazi or Bangizwe" I don't push it and say his parents, Nkosiyabo would never.

He shifts uncomfortably "I learned to live with it."

"But you were left heartbroken and humiliated. It's one thing for the relationship to not work out but it's another to find out such truths just days

away from the lobola negotiations"

I remember when I found out that Aaron, my ex had gone and paid lobola for someone else on a weekend where I thought he was just out with the boys. I was shattered and hey! I cried, I cried a lot in my sisters arms, day and night, with endless questions. I'm not saying Nkosi should now break down and cry, I know that's not in his nature, no matter how bad things can get. But just to express himself and not have to carry this anger with him when he was the victim in all of this

"MaKhosa, I moved from it. I got over the humiliation and everything else and I carried on and then I made one bad decision before making my best one and now I'm happy" he kisses my shoulder

"Are you really calling Refilwe a bad decision?" I can't help but laugh

"Wrong turn would be the best description for her." He says making me laugh harder

"But seriously though Nkosi, You can't just bottle these things up, one day they will blow up on the worst possible way"

"I'm not bottling anything up, Sure I was shocked to see her but who wouldn't be? The woman took me for a ride. But I'm over it, I've got you now, right?"

"Of course you do, I'm yours"

"And you wouldn't take me for a ride" he says
but it sounds more like a question

"I would never. I love you and you're my best
decision too"

"Good, can we go to bed now?"

"Yea, sure" I say then get up

He's trying to act cool but I can't help but feel
like Nobuhle's return stirred something up in
Nkosi, something he's been avoiding and soon
we are both going to have to come face to face
with it.

CHAPTER 45

KHANYISA

I lead the way to his office, if he wants to stick around and speak to Bangizwe then he will find me in there. Just this morning, I was making internal excuses for why Nkosi would have a woman's perfume on him, he's never given me any reason to not trust him but knowing it belongs to his ex? The same ex he almost married? What were they even doing, were they hugging? Or even worse...

He walks in, clearly oblivious to the whole thing. He walks to his table and sets up his laptop, ready to get started with work until he sees that I'm still standing and looking at him

"What?"

"Why do you smell like her?" I ask as calmly as I can be

"Huh?"

"Nobuhle, You have her perfume all over you"

He thinks about it for a moment "Oh, she sprayed perfume in the elevator earlier, Some of it must have gotten on my suit"

" Oh, she just started spraying perfume in there?"

"It's rude, I know and I told her but clearly the

damage was already done" he looks at his clothes then he has an irritated look on his face as though we are reaching the same realization

Nobuhle did this on purpose, she wanted Nkosi to come home smelling like another woman. She might not have banked on us meeting because there's no way she could have known that I'd be coming here but when she saw the opportunity to mess with me she did just that, she made sure I smell her. She knew I'd recognize the smell, hence the too close for comfort proximity

"Maybe I should have a word with her" Nkosi says

"No, don't. That's exactly what she's looking for, a reaction"

"But she's trying to cause unnecessary fights, you could have gone and thought that I was up to no good and now we would be fighting over a stupid perfume"

"But we are not. Yes it pissed me off but I trust you, I have no reason not to" the way that I trust Nkosi scares me sometimes, we live in a world trust has become an out of reach thing but he's made me feel that I can trust him, Lord knows it would crash me if he ever got with another woman behind my back, that would hurt more than me finding out Aaron got married behind my back, this pain would be unbearable because I've dived into this wholeheartedly and forgot to leave room for disappointment

"I'd never cross you like that, Makhosa. Not

when I know what the pain is like. The thought that Nobuhle tried to instill such thoughts in you pisses me off"

"But that doesn't mean you have to act on it. Look, right now, Nobuhle is expecting this, she's expecting any kind of confrontation and she badly wants it because that will serve as a confirmation that her little trick succeeded. I refuse to give her that satisfaction"

"So we let it slide?"

"Yes, she's the foolish one. Let's not entertain her crazy or we will all look like we've lost it"

We don't get to discuss this further because his phone rings and I get comfortable on the couch

then I start reading my book. Nobuhle pissed me off, I won't lie. It's annoying really, all I'd like is to enjoy some peace, some freaking peace and she's here wanting to stir trouble. I know not being asked anything will eat at her because she will wonder how things are between Nkosi and I. If it's not Refilwe it's her, I'm sick of this, I'm sick of people trying me but I know that a rise is what she's looking for, she would love to see me lose control and go off at her so I'm going to do the opposite and not give her the time of the day.

Later when Nkosi is done with his day we go home, I'm not in the mood to cook so we pass by a Nandos drive through and when we get home we both head straight to the bedroom. I want to get off these clothes and put on a dress and he wants to change too

I first kick off my white heels then I take off my blouse, that's when he stands behind me and has his hands on my belly while kissing my neck. I know what he wants and his touch makes me want it too but then I inhale the stupid perfume that refuses to die down. I immediately pry his hands off me and move away

"You still smell like her, you need to wash it off" I tell him, I think I despise this smell a lot more now that I know who it belongs to, Call it jealousy or madness, I can't stand it.

"Okay, come get it off me" he says unbuttoning his shirt

"Huh?"

"You want the smell gone, come wash it off me then, Thando Iwami" he speaks seductively while eyeing me, the smirk on his face makes me melt

"Get the water running" I tell him

Nkosi and I hardly shower together because apparently, The temperature I prefer is too hot for him but on the rare occasions that we have showered together, not even the hot water had anything on the heat he was putting on my body

I strip off everything and join him in the shower. He hands me the loofah and shower gel, he's serious about me washing it off him. Months ago shyness would have already killed me but

not now, you can't be married to Nkosiyabo and remain the same shy woman, it's impossible

I take them from him, squeeze the shower gel on the loofah then I start gently rubbing it on his chest, he does not take his eyes off me as I honor his request. I move the loofah on his arms and his perfect abs then lower, all while making slow movements. He sucks in breath when I start stroking him with the slippery loofah and his clenches his jaw at the feeling

"Are you washing me up or turning me on?" he asks with a hoarse voice, I bite my lower lip when I see his erection

"Both" I answer sweetly

He drops the loofah from my hand and presses our naked bodies together and starts kissing me. I'm wet in all senses and I want him as in now, he turns me around and has me facing the glass door, I balance my hands on it when he spreads my legs apart and pulls bends me a little. He has one hand in my hip and he positions himself at my entrance, teasing me for a moment until I'm close to begging him to just do it

I gasp when I feel him rip through me in one go, he steadily holds on to my hips and starts ramming into me from behind and he keeps delivering the hard and deep strokes making me weak to my knees

"Uyazi ngiyakuthanda [You know I love you] , right?"

"I know"

"And that you're the only woman for me, I don't want anyone else"

"Yes" I moan out loud, saying yes to what he's doing to me and what's he's saying to me

"Ngiyakuthanda MaKhosa, and I'd never do anything to risk losing you, Thando lwami"

"Nami ngiyakuthanda Nyanda. Kakhulu futhi" [I love you too, a lot]

He turns me around, has my back against the glass then he legs my leg around him and he

enters me again and this time he goes harder until we both give in and he spills in me. He rests his forehead on mine then mumbles "You're mine" before we make our way out the shower

More weeks pass and it's the night of the exhibition. Nkosi has a meeting out of town and I'm starting to doubt that he's going to make it

At exactly six in the evening I take a bath and get ready, just incase his on his way home then we will not be delayed if I'm already dressed

I have on my black off shoulder bodycon dress that definitely shows off Bunny then I do my

make up and put a weave on. I'm still on my flip flops as I walk around the room packing my handbag and that's when my phone rings

"MaKhosa wami"

"You're not gonna make it..."I just know from the sound of his voice

" Ngiyaxolisa [I'm sorry] mkami, this is taking longer than I thought"he explains

I feel my mood deflate, I was looking forward to this evening with him

"It's okay"

"No, it's not but I promise I'll make it up to you"

"Okay" I say not knowing what else to say,
sulking over the phone won't change the fact
that he's not on his way

"Maybe invite Cheryl?"

"It's short notice, I'll go alone"

"Are you sure, we can always attend another
one"

"it's okay, I'll be fine"

He hesitates for a while then speaks up "I'll see
you when I get home"

"Alright, see you then" I say then hang up

I'm already dressed and ready to go, I've been looking forward to this and changing into pajamas because Nkosi is no longer coming with doesn't sit well with me.

"I guess it's just us two, you ready to have some fun?" I rub my belly then laugh at the fact that I'm talking to Bunny, Nkosi's ways have surely rubbed off on me

I grab my red heels that will match my red lipstick then I head out. I drive to the venue and I arrive after the opening and everyone is already walking around admiring the artwork

I quickly spot Ntsika and he offers his colgate smile while walking towards me "Mrs. Mdlalose, I'm glad you could make it"

"Hey, I'm glad too. I haven't been to any of these in a while"

"I do hope you'll enjoy yourself, I'm a little swamped so I'll be scarce"

"Where's your assistant?"

"He dropped me at the very last minute, I'm running a one man show" he says nervously but trying to sound confident

Just then, he's called in different directions and

has no idea who to attend to first

"Go on, I'll help you"

"Oh no, I couldn't expect that from you"

"It's all good, now go before the hot shots lose their patience and meave with their fat wallets" I press on and he looks at me briefly before walking to one direction and I take the other

And that's how the night goes, I find myself talking and explaining art to Ntsika's guests and he focuses on the sales. By the time we hit 9:30 p.m, I'm done and the last person is leaving

"What an evening!" I say stretching my feet

while on the couch

"A successful evening, thanks to you. I don't know how I would have managed without your help"

He gets up and returns with a box of pizza and two bottles of juice "A little snack before you head home"

"I thought I saw a pizza guy earlier"

"I was starving, the starters weren't enough and I couldn't stomach any food earlier"

"Well I won't say no to food" I say then start digging in

"I thought your husband would be coming with you"

"He wanted to but got held up at work"

"Oh okay, well atleast I was safe tonight, The last time I thought he was going to punch me with how he was starring at me"

"My husband isn't like that" I say defensively

"Did you see how he looked at me? But I don't blame him, I do the same with my wife"

"Wife? You're married"

"I am" he says proudly "I'm married to the most amazing, kind hearted and gorgeous woman"

"Ncoww look at you, the man is smitten"

"I am" he laughs while blushing

"What's her name?"

"Masingita, I'm not sure if you're familiar with Singi events"

"Wait, Singi? She's your wife?"

"Yeap"

"Wow! Small world, she did the decor and catering for my parents anniversary"

"Her most recent work, she told me about it, it really is a small world hey. And now she's busy with a wedding in Rustenburg, hence she couldn't be here today"

We chat a bit more and he tells me about his wife, I know her from the work she does only and the way he talks about her is that of a man who truly adores his wife. Once he starts he doesn't stop and I enjoy hearing about their love story, it's a cute one. We eat and talk until I decide it's time to go, I hate driving at night, even if it's short distance

"Please text when you arrive, even if it's a two words notice. Just to know you got home safe"

"What, you think I might get lost?" I joke but he doesn't laugh

"My wife once got hijacked while driving at night, I'd offer to drive behind you but I get that I might be crossing a line and borderline creepy so please, even if it's on Instagram or my Facebook page, it's cool"

"Okay, I'll do that" I tell him

"See you around, Mrs. Mdlalose"

"Sure thing" I say then get going

NKOSIYABO

I get home quite late, I could have booked a hotel room or guest house but I prefer sleeping at home so I drove.

I thought the long drive would help me get rid of these thoughts I've been having. I was left unsettled when Khanyisa insisted on going to the exhibition alone, as much as I hate to admit it, I don't like the fact that she spent the evening with that Ntsika guy. It's not that I don't trust her, because I do... I'm just... I'm unsettled, if that's even a way of explaining it

I hate that I'm here again, I hate that I'm having these thoughts because Khanyisa has done absolutely nothing wrong. I'm the one with issues and the last thing I want is for her to suffer because of my past. I hate that I'm at a

point where I have to think about whether or not she turned it into a date with him

Why am I even thinking like this...

I take off my shoes, pants and shirt then I get ready to go to sleep but this little nagging voice in my head starts screaming at me when I see her cellphone. I know I'm not prohibited when it comes to her phone and neither is she with mine but I've never felt the need to go through it... Until now.

I carefully take it and unlock it, I don't even need to go far because she left it on her messenger and the last text she sent was to Radebe
Artworks

"Home safe" is the one she sent

"Alright, thanks again for tonight" he responded

I glance at her, then I put her phone down and walk out of our bedroom, knowing that my exhaustion just left me, I will not be getting any sleep tonight.

CHAPTER 44

KHANYISA

Weeks pass and the Aaron disaster is long forgotten. After the whole disaster, he had the nerve to inbox me on Facebook with his new account because I had blocked him back then. He was asking for a meet up. I didn't bother responding to the text, Aaron is not worth my

time and I'm not trying to entertain it so I blocked the new account as well. I need peace, I deserve peace.

We also haven't spoken about Nobuhle since Nkosi told me about her return. I tried bringing it up one time and he completely shut me down, telling me that he doesn't want to talk about her or what happened because it's all in the past now. From that day, I haven't seen him in an off mood.

We have a doctor's visit today, I told him I don't mind going alone because I know he's busy at work but he insisted on coming with. I stretch my feet on the bed and watch him get ready. Out of nowhere, Refilwe's words come back to me and I get lost on my own thoughts until Nkosi speaks loudly

"MaKhosa"

"Huh?"

"Ucabangani kangaka?" [What are you thinking about so much?]

I almost say it's nothing but I remember how much he hates that, but now I also can't tell him what's really on my mind, I don't even know how I'd explain it

"Do you ever wish we got ready for work together sometimes?" It's dumb and it doesn't make sense but I had nothing else

"What?"

"Do you sometimes wish you weren't married to a housewife"

"I don't, where's that coming from?"

"Just a thought"

"Tell that thought to leave you alone, I don't mind you not working. That's what we both wanted from the get go, remember?"

"I do, but we also both wanted an arrangement and look at us now"

"We've progressed and stopped depriving our

hearts, is that a bad thing?"

"It's not, would me getting a job be a bad thing?"
I ask defensively, I don't know why I'm suddenly
getting heated

"Do you want to get a job?" He stops fiddling
with his tie and it's suddenly tense. Things have
quickly escalated and I could have avoided all
this by saying "Nothing"

"That's not the point"

"Yes it is, I promised to always make sure you're
well taken of. Whatever you want or need, I'll
make sure you get it. That's my job as your
husband"

"And you're doing it so great"

"So what's the problem? Are you feeling oppressed somehow?"

"No"

"Then what is it, Khanyisa?" he's running out of patience

"It's nothing, it's just a thought" honestly, I'm very happy with my life. I never even thought of working until I allowed Refilwe's words to take a dig at me, I don't even know why I listened to her that because she obviously wanted to set me off and I fell right into that trap and now I'm here not even making sense to myself

Nkosi is looking at me as if he's trying to see exactly what's going on in my head. I expect him to finish up and leave but he stops everything and comes to sit next to me

This time, he speaks very calmly "Khuluma mkami, uthi kwenzenjani?" [speak my wife, what's the matter?]

I sigh "Refilwe said a few things that got to me at the party and they just popped up now..."

"Kodwa nawe Makhosa, uRefilwe? Of all people? You chose to listen to her?"

"I know, it wasn't a wise thing to do" I say, acknowledging my moment of idiocy

He reaches for my hand and squeezes it affectionately "Look, people do what makes them happy, well some of the time that's the case. But I don't want to focus on other people right now, I want to direct this to us. You and I made a decision with regard to how we want to live this life, No one was forced into it or coerced but we both agreed of our own free will. Personally, I love knowing that I'm taking care of you, in my eyes, that fact does not reduce you to nothing or a worthlessness. I don't see you as less of a person or woman. Thando lwami, you've literally provided the emotional strength that has carried us through the past trials, you've given me strength, you've supported me and stood by my side even when I felt like I was just going through the motions. Could a worthless person be capable of such? "

I shake my head

" I'm going to ask you again, Do you want to start working? "

" I really don't "I don't even miss a heartbeat. I do not wish to have a nine to five, I have no absolute desire to and it might come across as strange that I'm young yet I've decided that housewifing, if that's even a word, is what I want to do. I love it here and the more I think about it, the more I realise that my worries have more to do with him working with Nobuhle, Refilwe just fueled up already existing insecurities but I'm so glad she doesn't know that

"Alright ke Mrs. Mdlalose, Let me quickly dash to the office then I'll come get you"

"Or I could meet you at the doctor's office"

"No, Let me come get you then we will go together"

"Then you'll drop me off afterwards?"

"Or you can come with me and wait until I finish my day, I'd love to spend the day with you"

"I'd love that too" I smile and he pecks my lips then finishes up and leaves

Shuu, Insecurities will lead you to making wrong decisions. I love knowing that I have more than enough time to write and do what I love and yes, I love the spending part too, knowing that I'm

taken care of.

NKOSIYABO

I'm a little late but I don't mind, I don't have any meeting lined up for early in the morning and there was no way I was going to leave and let Khanyisa drown in her own thoughts. I'm glad we sorted this before it became a big deal, I'd hate for us to fight over something that could be easily resolved with a simple conversation

I also needed to be sure that not working is still something she prefers and not something she feels forced into. I want her to be happy and although initially I wanted a stay at home wife, if Khanyisa were to change her mind right now there's no doubt that I'd be the one to get her that job, I've quickly come to realise that her

happiness is mine too. On the other side, I don't mind at all that she's not one of those corporate women, I love that I get to work and she gets to spend, there's just something about being a man whose able to provide for his wife, not having to share expenses with her but making sure that she never lacks anything, it motivates me to work even harder, especially now that our family is growing. It has nothing to do with oppressing her but everything do do with how I wish to take care of my family.

I get started with my day feeling eager for the hours to pass so I can go get Khanyisa our second doctors visit. The day goes by too slow for my liking and when it's time to leave I don't waste anytime. I leave my office and head straight to the elevators

"Do you have a minute?" Refilwe asks rushing towards me

"I don't" I answer honestly

"It's about the team building thing"

"That's still weeks away"

"I know but we need to find a place, remember it's a weekend away thing so we need to find a place early"

"And I'm sure that's something you're capable of handling" I wait impatiently for the elevator to open. Back when I was COO I'd find a way to duck these kind of events but nkw there's no

way around it. How to you encourage team spirit while avoiding your own team?

"Alright, I'll look for something then run it past you before making final arrangement"

"Alright, just be sure to get enough rooms for everyone" I say and it finally opens, unfortunately it's not empty, there's Nobuhle in it

"Hey" she says with a smile when she sees me

"Hi"

"Leaving already?"

"Yes"

"Oh... I see. I forgot some files in my apartment, going to get them then I'll come back" she says awkwardly

"Alright" I don't bother making small talk.

She starts searching in her handbag and then she takes out her perfume and sprays it a couple of times quickly before looking at me

"I'm so sorry, I hope you don't mind"

"It's very rude to spray perfumes in such small spaces, with other people inside"

"I know, I'm sorry it's a bad habit" she says and we come to a stop.

I don't say another word and as soon as I get in my car and hit the road, she's long forgotten.

KHANYISA

I can't stop staring at my baby bump on the mirror, I'm not that big yet and because I'm wearing a loose blouse it's not obvious, currently I've pulled the blouse up so I can see nature's wonderful work. I'm left in awe each time and knowing that there's a baby in there makes all these weird cravings, mood swings and fatigue worth it. He or she is worth it

I'm still admiring my cute bump when the door

opens and Nkosi walks in he catches me in the act and a wide smiles quickly spreads on his face

"She's growing" he says still smiling

"She?"

"yintombikayise le [She's her father's daughter] " he says proudly bringing his palm to my bump, the strong sweet smell coming from him hits my nostrils unexpectedly and I look at him while he's focused on the bump

Why does Nkosi have a woman's perfume all over him?

After this morning's almost showdown, I decide not to make a big deal out of it. He works with women too and it could really not be a big thing. I stop my train of thoughts before it goes off the rails

We leave and make it to our appointment on time. I go through my normal check up and then we go over to the ultrasound room. I lay on the bed with my blouse pulled up then she applies the gel and starts moving the wand around

"There she is" Nkosi says looking at the screen. The doctor smiles at him

"We can't quite determine the gender yet"

"I just know it" he tells her and she doesn't

argue, clearly she's used to dealing with first time parents. I just hope he will not be disappointed should it turn out to be a boy. I just want a healthy baby, whatever the gender, I'm happy

We finish with the check up and we get a date for the next one which is four weeks from now. When it's all done, I ask that we pass by woolworths because there's a couple of things I want to buy

Nkosi follows me around the food isles with a trolley while I do my quick last minute shopping, Of course I don't leave out my carrots and he laughs when he sees me pick pack

When we are all done we go over to line up for the tills, it's a little packed and I'm already

cranky from being hungry

"Mrs. Mdlalose" Someone says and when I turn, the guys from the gallery is standing there with his own basket

"Ntsika, Hi" Thank goodness I remember his name or this would be awkward

"How are you?" he asks darting his eyes between Nkosi and I

"I'm good and you?"

"I'm also good"

"this is my husband, Nkosiyabo" I say looking at

Nkosi whose keeping a straight face

"Hey, it's nice to meet you bra"

"Sure" Nkosi answers, instantly killing whatever nice mood there was

"Uh, I'll get going, I have a couple more things to get. Will we be seeing you at the exhibition?"
Ntsika asks

"I hadn't decided"

"Oh, okay. Well I hope to see the both of you, I'll go back to my shopping now" He says
retreating

"Bye" I offer him a tight smile

We get to the tills and Nkosi pays for the stuff then we leave the shop, this entire time, he's quiet

When we get to the car, I get in and sit while he packs the shopping bags at the back then comes around the car and gets in

"So, Ntsika... Is he a friend?" he asks and the way he says his name is with much distaste

"No, We only met once at his gallery"

"Oh, so much that he's this freindly with you"

"He doesn't even know my first name" I say feeling the tension rise. No, today just isn't it.

"And the exhibition?"

"I forgot to mention it, But I was hoping we could have a date night type of thing. I'd really love to go" I make my puppy eyes at him and I see him trying to fight off a smile

"We will go, I wouldn't want Ntsika thinking he's got an opportunity to be all over you" he says and he's not even joking

"Come on, Nkosiyabo" I sigh and lean back on my seat, I hardly even know this Ntsika guy

"I'm just saying" He says starting the car

We don't talk on the way to his workplace but when he reaches for my hand I let him hold it. A couple of soft squeezes later, I feel okay and he looks calm too

When we get there it's a little busy with people walking around. We spot Bangizwe standing with a woman and when she looks at us, I feel him stiffen

It's her.

She immediately turns and walks to us with Bangizwe following behind, he doesn't look pleased at all, As for Nkosi. He has settled for an emotionless look as he keeps his hand on

my back

Looking at her, she sure is the mother of beauty. Everything about the way Refilwe described her is true, she's gorgeous and she has this "Notice me" aura around her. She looks at Nkosi and smiles and her eyes meet mine, she maintains the smile

"You must be the lucky woman, it's a pleasure to finally meet you" She says standing a bit too close for my comfort then she stretches her hand "I'm Nobuhle "

" Khanyisa "It's my turn to be cold

" And we are done here, I'll be in touch

"Bangizwe tells her

" Of course, thanks again "she says then looks at me again" It was nice meeting you Khanyisa, maybe I'll see you again another time" she steps closer with a smile still carved on her lips

I don't say anything because I'm too pissed to be speaking right now because why the hell is this woman's scent all over Nkosi?

CHAPTER 47

KHANYISA

Later in the evening Bangizwe leaves to go prepare for his engagement and Lwazi sticks around. Luckily he understands that I will not be good company but I tell him to feel at home then I show him around the kitchen before

heading back to bed after supper.

I feel drained and I just want to sleep, if I weren't pregnant, I know I wouldn't sleep a wink but now that I am, I know that no doubt, I'll be forced to fall asleep and that's exactly what I need, to sleep and forget that Nkosiyabo has been tracking me, he's been suspecting me of something I would never even dream of doing to him. That feeling is too much to bare because I've put my all into the success of this marriage, I want us to work but I will not start trying to prove myself to him, I've done nothing to have to be put in that position

I scroll on social media before I start yawning, As angry as I am, I wish he would call me but by the time he decides to call I no longer feel like talking to him , he left at the worst time so he

can go enjoy his weekend I'll be fine. My mood went from wanting to hear from him to not even wanting to hear his voice. He ends up texting to tell me that he arrived safe, I don't respond, just knowing that he's safe is fine. I put my phone away and comfort myself to sleep, I'll face everything tomorrow morning.

The next day I get up quite early and end up in the kitchen eating carrots dipped in crunchy peanut butter while looking at Nandi's pictures from last night. She sent me loads of them and I must say, Bangizwe outdid himself, he went all out for his wife to be, it's beautiful and I'm so happy for the both of them

"Morning" Lwazi says joining me. It's still early and I didn't make breakfast and I don't have the

energy to make breakfast. He will think I'm such a bad host

"Morning"

"Uke wakhuluma nendoda yakho?" [Have you spoken to your man?]

"Nop"

"He says he tried calling you"

"I saw" I say, focusing my attention on my snack. I'm still feeling like Nkosiyabo can go screw himself, how would he like it if I threw a fit because his ex is with him on this team building thing, yes she's with Mdu now but still, she's his

ex.

"How are you feeling now?" Lwazi asks. He also has this gaze thing where it's almost like he's silently telling you not to lie to him, just like his brother. He's a lot like his brother, only he's the casual version meanwhile Nkosi is the corporate version, Bangizwe is somewhere in between and he's the one who hardly takes things seriously unless they are extremely serious and demand his attention

"I'm okay" I mumble looking down, me and him only just formally met yesterday and I don't want to overwhelm him with my marital issues

"I know better than to interfere in my brother's marital issues and believe that I will not stand here and try to plead Nkosi's case because I

believe he should be man enough to do that without anyone's help. However, please don't feel the need to pretend with me, I'm not here to judge you, especially since I have no idea what sparked whatever fight is going on between the two of you"

"So you'd listen to me bash your brother?" I ask and he looks surprised then he chuckles

" If it helps you feel better" he shrugs moving around the kitchen to make himself a cup of coffee

I sigh then look down at the peanut butter jar with the carrot sticking out

"Nkosiyabo is unfair" I blurt out, I wasn't

meaning to speak about it but well, here we are
and my chest is full and he has two ears

"He is..." he says and it feels like he's opened up
the gate to my ranting

"Yes, he is. That whole office reeks of nothing
but his exes but do you see me acting up? No,
because I trust him but he doesn't trust me, he
went and hired Fana to track me, can you
believe it? My own husband had me tracked like
I'm some unruly child" I still can't believe it

"That's extreme"

"All because of Nobuhle, I'm not her and I never
will be. I've also been hurt, but I'm not taking it
out on him. I understand that my past has

absolutely nothing to do with him"

"And that's very mature of you"

"But him... He just had to... He had to and then he just leaves like nothing in the world is wrong"

"That must have really hurt"

When he says this, I stop blabbing and look at him

"Is this your attempt to try and stay neutral?"

"Yes" he laughs "Nkosi is in the wrong, you're very right but like I said, I know better than to get involved. Only the two of you can fix this"

"You're right, I'm sorry for dumping this on you"

"It's no problem, do you feel better?"

"A little"

"That's good. You shouldn't be stressing, it's not good for you and my niece or nephew"

I want to tell him that I'm not stressed but I'm hurt, Nkosi's actions hurt, but I don't want to continue dumping this on him. The poor guy just got here

"You're right, what would you like for breakfast?"

"Whatever you're making is fine, I'm not fussy"
he says and sips on his black coffee

I decide to distract myself by getting to know my brother inlaw, I ask him about his line of work and he's only glad to tell me about it until he's not. It's like he's reminded of something and then his whole mood just changed but he quickly masked it, I wonder if that thing is the reason he's uncertain about how long he's staying but I know better than to push

Bangizwe and Nandi arrive later on and it's all sunshine and roses. They are both on cloud nine as they walk in the house and the mood changes

"Congratulations!" I say hugging Nandi then I move to Bangizwe

"Thank you" She says with a wide smile then she shows me her ring

"This deserves a serious celebration" I tell her

"It really does, maybe that girls vacation we always planned on going to" she says and I'm given an idea

"Why don't we do it?" I ask her

"Go on a trip?"

"Yeap, we could find a nice place and relax and celebrate your engagement" I suggest hoping she will say yes, I want to go away and get

some fresh air and if she can't come with me then I'm definitely going alone

"That sounds like a plan, when do we leave?"
Nandi asks all excitedly

"Whoah... Are you sure about this?" Bangizwe asks

"Yeah, why not?"

"Nothing... It's just... With things between you and Nkosi"

"More of a reason to go, I think some time away will do you some good" Lwazi says and Bangizwe looks at him

"I agree" I say

"I agree too" Nandi chips in

"Perfect! we leave tomorrow"

"Come, we have a lot of planning and packing to do" she says leading the way out of the kitchen

When we get outside I realise that I left my phone back in so I go back to get it but I stop when I hear the brothers talking

"Are you sure encouraging her to go away is the best thing to do?" Bangizwe asks his brother

"uNkosiyabo udinga ukuvulwa ikhanda leli, he needs a wake up call, maybe coming back to find that his wife isn't here will get his head working straight again not this nonsense that he's doing"

"He's gonna lose his shit"

"Let him, then maybe he will feel the frustration that uKhanyisa is feeling right now. Then he's going to start thinking like her husband. You know what he did was wrong and this is us putting him back in line, and when he calls do not say anything to him"

"And if he's still tracking her?"

"I doubt it, let him come home to this surprise,

that should set him straight"

"So much for not getting involved"

"I'm still not getting involved. He's a man, he should sort his own marriage. I'm just giving him a necessary push before he wakes up one day and realises that he's lost her for good"

NKOSIYABO

"Nkosi yabo Mdlalose, tell me you didn't"

These words and the look of disappointment on her face keeps replaying. I lost it and in the heat of the moment I made a decision to put work

first and I've been regretting it since I got here.

Yes, there was no way I could have pulled out of this but I could have delayed my drive by an hour or two, but now the damage is done and all that's left is regret

I didn't get to sleep last night. I kept thinking about everything I've done to this point. There's not a time where Khanyisa has shown doubt in me, she always gives me a chance to speak and knowing that I didn't afford her the same chance is part of what's eating me up. I hurt her, with my words and actions and no matter how much I wish I could have a redo, I know I can't

We are now here because of my insecurities, I screwed up. I saw that text and my brain went off the rails and I started imagining scenarios

that I know deep down Khanyisa would never take part in. I allowed my past to cloud my judgment and in the heat of the moment, I was filled with the doubt and broken trust that she had nothing to do with. The person who caused this is out there, probably living her best life and I'm here being held captive by what she did and in the process, I hurt my wife.

I thought I had it under control, I was fine, I didn't need to talk about it because I'm not the first man to have gone through this. People go through betrayal, lies and humiliation all the damn time and I was no exception so I kept it moving. I didn't need to keep talking about the pain that Nobuhle caused me because it was done, talking about it wouldn't change the fact that she single handedly bulldozed me in every possible way

I was the guy who had been played up to the very end. I was the idiot, the fool that fell for her lies and when I picked myself up again I swore to never make myself that vulnerable again. But then Khanyisa stepped into my life, for a man who had been wounded and humiliated in front of his entire family, I took a leap and had the very same uncles I had called off years ago and told them that I needed them to go represent me yet again. They were doubtful, some even voiced out their concerns but this time I was doing things my way, I had complete control over the situation

Until I didn't.

Then I allowed myself to feel this, and this feeling comes with vulnerability. I lost it when I saw the text nanad I was taken aback. Could I

have done things differently? Yes, I know I could have but I've gone and made a mess

As a result, I don't even feel this team building thing going on, I've managed to mask my true emotions and be a team player but each time I call my wife and it just rings it takes a serious dig at my heart and I'm reminded of how much I hurt her, how much I disappointed her.

I need to fix this.

Later in the evening we all gather outside to have supper, I'm planning to retire to my room early, I know everyone else will be staying up till late drinking but I just can't wait for tomorrow so I can leave and go fix the mess I've made.

I sit with Mdu and I take part in the conversation that he started just so he doesn't notice anything off, I don't want anyone back home getting in my business, my brothers knowing is more than enough but I trust them to not tell anyone else. We end up talking about Bangizwe's engagement, at least that's a happy topic

"Look who I bumped into!" Refilwe says and we both look behind us, I feel my insides turn with irritation

"Hey" Nobuhle says

"There's space next to Nkosi" Refilwe says, snuggling up to Mdu

Nobuhle takes the chair next to mine and pushes it closer

" Are you good? " she ask

" Yeah"

"I didn't know we invited clients too" Mdu raises his eyebrow at me as if I'm the one who invited her

"Oh no, I'm not here with you guys. I took a solo trip"

"And you had no idea that we would be here?"
His tone is accusatory, it's definitely mirroring mine

"Hau baby, what's with the interrogation. This is pure coincidence, this place isn't strictly reserved for us"

"Pure coincidence... Hayi, asazi [We don't know] he says taking the last sip of his beer

We sit there with Nobuhle and Refilwe chatting happily while Mdu and I quietly drink. I've noticed that he looks a bit irritated with Refilwe but I'm too caught up in my own thoughts to entertain it

After a while, with everyone now scattered all over, Refilwe pulls Mdu away too, leaving me with Nobuhle

"You don't look like you want to be here" She says and I don't answer her

"Do you want to talk about it?" she asks

"I don't want to talk" I tell her

"I know that look, you're stressed. Remember when we would spend all night talking whenever one of us had something going on, those nights meant so much to me, and you always knew what to say... It was always-"

"Nobuhle" I interrupt her walk down memory lane

"Yes?"

"Fuck off" I tell her then get up and walk away.
Leaving her by herself.

CHAPTER 46

KHANYISA

Waking up from deep slumber, I wake up to Nkosi's empty side of the bed then I hear the shower running. I wonder what time he got home last night.

I reach for my phone to check the time, I didn't even wait up for Ntsika's response. I fell asleep almost immediately after confirming that I'm home. I put my phone away and reach for my gown then I go to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. Nkosi must have just

gotten in the shower because he's not out for a while

Only when I'm done with breakfast does he join me in the kitchen

"Good morning" He comes around the island and kisses my cheek before sitting

"Good morning, what time did you get home?"

"It was very late, maybe after 11 p.m"

"I must have been long gone by then"

"You were, how was the exhibition? I'm sorry I couldn't make it"

"It's okay. I had a great time" I put his plate in front of him and a mug of coffee then he thanks me

"You did?" he raises his eyebrow " I was worried about you being alone"

"I wasn't alone, there were other people there"

"And Ntsika"

"Yeap, his assistant dropped him last minute so I offered to help seeing I have background on exhibitions. So I wasn't bored at all"

"So he made you work?"he asks

" I offered, the poor guy was stranded"

"Oh, I see"

"Can you believe he's married to Singi? The events lady we hired for mom and dad's anniversary"

"Really? Small world"

"Small world indeed"

We finish up and I pack his luch then he kisses me goodbye and leaves. I tidy up the kitchen, even though the crew is coming in today, I still feel the need for my kitchen to look presentable

when they arrive

When they arrive I let them do their business while I do mine then Cheryl comes over for a lazy day. We spend the day in the in the pool, relaxing and gushing over our babies, it's what I call the perfect lazy day

NKOSIYABO

"Haibo, ngikhuluma ngedwa?" [Am I speaking to myself?]

"Huh?"

"What got on your mood so early in the morning?" Bangizwe asks and I quickly brush

him off

"Nothing, what were you saying?"

"I was saying, is there a way I can get out of this team building thing?"

"Why?"

"It clashes with my plans, I had already planned something for friday night with uNandi and I don't want to have to postpone "

"No can do" I mess with him, keeping a straight face knowing he's about to pull out all his cards

"You owe me" he starts

"For what?"

"For taking your witchy ex off your hands, she disgusts me but I'm here sucking it up all for you, do you see how much I love you, big brother?"

"She's our client, you're just doing what's expected of you"

"But I didn't have to, I could have let her remain with you and possibly cause problems in your marriage but I came through for you, you should be thanking me"

When he mentions troubles in my marriage my mood goes sour again and he notices

"And then? What's up?"

"Nothing"

"Nothing? You don't look like it's nothing. What's up? Are you guys fighting?"

"No"

"Then?"

"Bangizwe, phuma ezindabeni zami" [Stay out of my business]

"Yah! Something is definitely up, phela wena I

know you, when you become defensive and irritable like this, there's definitely something cooking, what did you do to Khanyisa?"

"Why must I be the one to have done something?"

"I know my sister inlaw, she's the sweetest, it must be you. It's definitely you"

I just look at him, not wanting to talk about it and I know it's going to take a little more annoyance from him until he stops pestering me

"If I give you a pass on the team building will you stop annoying me?"

"For now, yes"

"Okay, you've got it"

"Awesome. I knew I could count on you bafo"

"What are these plans that you've made anyway?"

"I'm going to ask her to marry me"

"Next time lead with such important information, kanti unjani wena?" I reprimand him but we're both smiling

"Ay man, I'm just busy with the planning"

"Kanti hadn't you already agreed that it has to be this year, so she already knows that it's happening"

"She does but I know uNandi. She's into these romantic gestures so I want to make this memorable for her, I want to make this night special , I even have an engagement ring ready"
he speaks happily, I'm glad he's finally crawling out of his hiding place

"So this is it? Through thick and thin"

"Yeap, this is it. Come what may, I love my woman and I'm prepared to face whatever comes as long as she's by my side. She also deserves to be happy and not have me drag

because of the fear of the unknown"

"Yiqiniso lelo [That's true] I'm glad you finally reached a decision"

"It was always there, I always knew I want to marry her, it's just that now it's only two months away and then we will plan the big celebration for November, which brings me to the other thing"

"What thing"

"I want to ask that you be a part of my delegates to represent me kwaKhumalo"

"Ngishaye ngeSpeech phela, ask me nicely" I

tease him

"Uyabona manje [You see now] must I sweet talk you and Nandi at the same time?"

"Ngiyadlala [I'm kidding] I'd be honored to be a part of your delegates but don't even think I'll try to negotiate a lower amount for you, Nandi is worth it all since you made her wait for so many years"

"You're right, she does" he says "Now back to you-"

"Go back to work" I quickly cut him off, I'm not going to discuss that I snooped on my wife's phone and found a suggestive text, I don't want to even think Khanyisa would cross me like that,

I don't even want to imagine it because it'll set me off but whatever is happening with this Ntsika guy, it needs to stop.

KHANYISA

Weeks fly by and today Nkosi is leaving for the team building weekend. I know they opted for a safari lodge with a lot of outdoor activities so I pack his bag according to the theme, no suits and ties. This is social and so he needs to ditch the CEO look for something more laid back

He doesn't ask a lot of questions as I pack. We've reached a stage where he trusts my outfit matching skills and believes that I'll always make sure he always look presentable

and handsome.

The past weeks, Bunny has grown and when we went for the 16th week check up we still couldn't determine the gender so maybe with our next visit we will know. Heartburn has decided to make itself known and felt in my life, I can't eat anything without downing a glass of milk afterwards, I tried Gaviscon but I hate the taste it leaves so I have to go with milk even though it's not as effective

Early in the morning, when Nkosi went to the office to double check on something I finished packing his bag and then met with Cheryl so we could go shopping. She saw that I'm following Radebe Artworks on Facebook, viewed their works and then decided she wanted a couple for her house and that's how we end up at the

gallery.

Cheryl ends up buying two paintings and I take one that I've instantly fallen in love with. I don't have much time so after that we head back home and when I get there, Nkosi is already back and his mood has changed

"Hey, I stepped out for a bit"

"How is Ntsika?" He asks with that annoyed or angry look and I want to ask how he knows but figure it's from the painting I'm holding

"What's wrong?" I ask instead of answering him, the mood is really off

"Oh I don't know, maybe it's that my wife is busy with another man"

"What? What are you talking about?"

"This Ntsika guy, wasn't it you who said you aren't friends?"

"It was. I only went there to help Cheryl buy a painting and ended up getting one myself" I place it carefully on the couch

"I'm guessing you have an explanation for the exhibition night too"

"Explanation for what, Nkosiyabo?" the way he's so heated right now...

"Don't play dumb with me, Makhosa"

"Nkosiyabo, what-"

"The text, him thanking you for the night, what exactly is it that you got up to?" his voice is calm as always but the accusatory tone is on full display and I can't believe it, Nkosiyabo seriously thinks I'd betray him like that

"What exactly are you accusing me of?"

"khanyisa" he says then stops

"No, please say it, I mean you're already thinking it so why not voice it out? You went through my

texts and instead of asking me about it you went for weeks pretending like everything was okay only for you to blow up now?"

"What did you want me to do? You're texting a man that you're home safe and his thanking you for the night, how the hell do you think that sounds?"

"It sounds like he's thanking me for helping him, I told you that I helped him with the guests and that was it. He asked me to let him know when I was home because it was late at night, that's it" My voice gets pitchy out of frustration

"You're not his damn concern"

"But he's the reason I had to stay till late, it was

pure decency, nothing more. What exactly do you take me for Nkosiyabo? I'm not Nobuhle!"

"I never said you were!"

"But right now you're treating me like I've followed in her footsteps, next thing you'll have Fana investigating my movements-" I stop when I see the look on his face

I can't believe it

"Nkosiyabo Mdlalose, tell me you didn't "

He doesn't need to say the words, the answer is written all over his face

"Fana had been tracking me? At your request? Is that how you knew where I was?" part of me is wishing that he denies it because this is too much, I cannot imagine Nkosi hiring a PI to track my movements... I just can't

"Nkosi!"

"What was I supposed to do-"

"What were you supposed to do?? What were you supposed to do!? You were supposed to talk to me! Instead of calling Fana you were supposed to come to me! Or is it that you don't trust me to the extent where you believe I'll start telling you lies too?"

"Honey, I'm home!" Bangizwe's voice booms in

the room before Nkosi can say anything else, the way I'm so angry and hurt I have to swallow a couple of times to push this knot that's starting to choke me back down, he enters the room with a wide smile but it quickly disappears when he sees us, our faces must be saying it all

We then realise he's not alone, behind him is another look alike of the Mdlalose brothers. He's in a pair of jeans, t-shirt and combat boots and has neatly styled half head locs and a drop fade cut on the sides

"Sanibonani" he says, also walking in the commotion between Nkosi and I

"Lwazi, ufike nini?" [When did you arrive?] Nkosi asks

"Earlier today"

"He wanted to surprise you... But clearly we arrived at the wrong time, uMa nobaba bayaxabana" [Mom and dad are arguing]
Bangizwe nudges and whispers playfully to Lwazi but we all hear him

"Zwe, now really isn't the time" Lwazi tells him lowly then clears his throat

"What's wrong now?" Bangizwe asks us both

"Nothing" Nkosi responds and I glance at him, nothing my foot

"Bhut'Lwazi, are you well?" I decide I'm done talking to Nkosiyabo, for now, he must just go to his trip

"Ngiyaphila sisi, wena unjani?" [I'm well, sister, what about you]

"Nami ngiyaphila" [I'm also well]

"You don't look like you're well, you look like you're ready to kill your husband" Bangizwe says

"Bangizwe" Lwazi says with a warning tone and Bangizwe shrugs

"Ngizwa kuthiwa you're going on a team

building thing?" Lwazi asks his brother whose standing in all stiffness, have you ever wanted to scream at someone but couldn't because there was an audience? That's how I'm feeling, I want to express myself but I can't because his brothers are here and caught us by surprise

"Yah, Sengizohamba manje [I'm about to leave] for how long are you here?"

"A few weeks, maybe months..."

Nkosi gives him a questioning look

"We will talk when you get back" Lwazi adds

"Ngabe konke kuhamba kahle?" [Is everything

going well?] Nkosi asks

"Yahh... We will talk bhut'omdala"

Hey! It's tension left, right and centre but mine and his takes the cup

"Manje vele uzoshiya kunje? [so you're gonna leave things like this?] You guys are not going to talk it out?" Bangizwe asks

"Kodwa wena awulaleli yaz" [You don't listen]
Lwazi tells him

Nkosi excuses himself and I'm left with the brothers

"Sisi, you guys do know that you're our deputy parents angithi? You're our next of kin, we worry when we see things like this" Bangizwe says and he's not even trying to be funny

I still ignore him "Please feel comfortable. You're welcome here, would you like anything to drink?"

"uBangizwe will go and make coffee for me" Lwazi says looking at his brother

"Mina?" Bangizwe asks

"Ukhona omunye uBangizwe kulomuzi?" [Is there another Bangizwe in this house?] Lwazi asks with the same intimidating tone that Nkosi and their father have, its a family thing, I see

"Hamba" [Go] he looks him dead in the eyes and Bangizwe leaves the room

Nkosi emerges with his suitcase "I'll be off now. Lwazi, I'll see you when I get back"

"Sure, travel safe"

He nods then looks at me, I look away feeling a ping on my chest. He looks at me for a moment then walks out

I'm hurt, I'm really hurt because instead of coming to me, he chose to treat me like an untrustworthy person. I always give him a chance to explain his side, I always listen and what does he do? He rushes to have Fana track me. This nonsense hurts marn!

The one time where the fight is between us and he has to leave, so now I need to carry this until he returns? Ya neh!

I sit on the opposite couch to where he's seated and my hand naturally rests on my bump

"I'm sorry I pitched at the most inconvenient time" Lwazi finally speaks

"It's okay, you couldn't have known" the more I try to speak, the more I feel myself choke up
"Will you excuse me for a moment"

"Yeah, sure and if you need anything then Bangizwe and I are around, that's if you don't mind us staying"

"You're more than welcome to stay" I force my voice

I get up and walk away, when I get to our bedroom I close the door and lean against it then I settle on the floor, only then do I let out a soft cry.

***And the other Mdlalose sibling has entered the chat 😁

CHAPTER 49

KHANYISA

"Thando lwami, ngiyazi ungidinelwe kodwa ngicela uphendule ucingo lwakho" [My love, I

know you're mad at me but please answer your phone]

That was the last text I received from Nkosi yesterday in the evening and it's now morning

"You're checking your phone again" Nandi says, placing an omelet on my plate

"Just checking my messages"

"Admit it, you miss your man and now that your anger has subsided the feeling of missing him is worse"

"That's not true"

"Do you have an urge to call him?" She asks with a knowing smile

"No"

Nandi laughs at this "I'll ask you again in a few hours"

Hours? I'm close to caving in, woman.

I don't answer her, instead I focus my attention on the breakfast she served me before we start with our activities for the day

Nandi gets a call from Bangizwe and then he says something that makes her glance at me and mouth that she's coming as she leaves the

kitchen. I clean up after eating then I go to take a bath. My heart is heavy, it's crazy how much I'm missing my husband. What he did does hurt, a lot, especially since I know that he's making me pay for another woman's sins but that doesn't stop my heart and body from missing him, yes, I miss being under him. It feels like it's been forever, part of me is even tempted to cut this trip short and go home to see if he's come to his senses but the other part wants to wait it out and see. Besides, I convinced Nandi to come here with me, it would be unfair to cut our trip short because I've become needy.

"Babes, I'm done. We can get going now" She peaks through the door with an excited smile

Instead of going with the usual game drive and all, we are going on our own drive and exploring

different places so we hit the road early. Our first stop is the Graskop gorge lift, we also take a walk in the forest. Nandi does the zip line and big swing which I have to sit out, joys of being pregnant. I do however take dozens of pics while she has her fun and when she's done we visit the craft center for some souvenirs

From there we keep it moving and before we know it the sun starts setting. Throughout the day, Nandi kept getting calls from her man, which isn't unusual but the way she kept it low or at a distance is what made me curious

"Is everything okay?" I ask her as I watch her prepare supper back at our place

"Yeah..."

Her response is not the one

"Nandi..."

"Hmm?"

"What is it?"

She smiles before answering "Nothing really, it's just Zwe and his needy ways, he's always wanting to talk to me, forgetting that I'm on holiday"

"Yeah but you're not on holiday from your relationship" I tease her making her laugh

"I know, just like you aren't on holiday from your marriage... Do you miss him yet?" she asks for the third time today and I no longer have the will to deny

"I do, so much"

"Ha! I knew it, there's no way you could keep it up" she says loudly

"Yeah yeah, whatever! I'll blame it on the baby"

"Ha.a Bunny has nothing to do with this. You just miss your husband and that's that, regardless of what he did"

"I mean it's only natural that I do" I shrug

"Of course it is, the way you guys love each other, I'm sure he's going crazy out of his mind right now"

"Is it crazy that I wish he would show up? I mean it's definitely something Nkosi would do but now I think he sees that he went too far and will shy away from coming here" I remember the time he fetched me at my sister's house, Yes I was upset and all but later I was glad he came.

"I wouldn't put it past Nkosiyabo to show up, you know how that man is crazy about you"

"You think?"

Before she can answer, her phone rings and she shows me her screen, it's him "Should I answer?" She asks with a teasing smile

"Yeah... Sure" I try to play it cool. I also know he's probably calling her because he's not sure that I'll answer his calls

They they keep their greeting brief and then Nandi stretches out her hand for me to take the phone

"Hi" I clear my throat and Nandi wiggles her eyebrows playfully

"Mfazi wami, uyaphila?" [My woman, are you well?]

"Ngiyaphila, wena?" [I'm well, you?]

"Ngiyakukhumbula MaKhosa" [I'm missing you]

"Nami ngiyakukhumbula" [I'm missing you too]

Nandi sticks her tongue out when I say this and I roll my eyes at her, I'm not going to lie or play games, I miss him. I move away so we can have some privacy in my room.

"Thando lwami. I shouldn't have done everything that I did, I shouldn't have pretended that everything was fine when it wasn't for me, I also should have never hired Fana to spy on you. That was very wrong and unfair of me"

"It was... All you had to do was ask me about that text, I would have explained to you the same way you explain when I need clarification and reassurance" I'm not yelling at him, I'm speaking calmly because I don't want my emotions to rise, I just need him to see how wrong this was

"You're right. I had every opportunity to ask you because you've never ever made me feel that there's certain parts of your life that are off limits. I chose to go about it the wrong way, letting my previous experience lead the way which is very unfair not only to you but to our marriage as well. Ngiyaxolisa mkami [I'm sorry my wife] I'm sorry for not being the man you agreed to marry, for taking the coward's way out and leaving instead of standing for what I had done. I'm sorry for hurting you the way that I did, thando lwami"

"I will never be her, Nkosi. I fully understand the amount of pain that she inflicted on you but that doesn't mean that because I'm in your life I'll do the same. I don't desire to be with anyone else, I don't want anyone else except you... I thought you knew that"

"I do, believe me I do. I know you're not her and that I should stop channeling my anger from what she did towards you"

"And you also know that you need help? That you need to talk about this or sometime in the future we might be back where we are right now?"

"I know, and I'm willing to seek help. I'm not

going to downplay it or shove it at the back of my head anymore. I don't ever want to find myself unleashing on you the way that I did"

"I love you, Nkosiyabo... And if you're willing to deal with your past then that will definitely do us good but most importantly it will do you good, that's what matters the most to me, knowing that you're not pushing back on those thoughts and feelings. Knowing that when you look at me, you don't find yourself questioning whether or not I'm being faithful and loyal to you "

" I know that my love, I will do what I have to do in order to be the best version of myself, in order to be the kind of man you deserve"

"I wish you were here right now" I whisper when these emotions start flooding on my chest, I

wish I could be in his arms right now

"You do?" he asks

"of course I do, I've been miserable, I miss you and now I'm feeling a little emotional so don't be shocked when the waterworks start" I chuckle

"Maybe you need some fresh air, outside..."

"Maybe I do" I sigh

" Why don't you go? We can continue talking until Nandi demands her phone back

"Okay, let me get my shoes first. What are you

up to?" I ask slipping on my slippers

"I'm just standing"

"Just standing?"

"Yeap, I'm with Bangizwe and he's being a nuisance"

"Sawubona sisi! Ngicela umxolele shame, angase afe ngenxa yobuhlungu benhliziyo. [Hi sis, please forgive him or he might die from heartbreak] if you could see him now, he's just moments away from having a breakdown"

"Bangizwe, voetsek" Nkosi says with an annoyed tone and Bangizwe and I laugh

"Sisi he has learned his lesson!" Bangizwe adds while laughing

I step outside, it's already dark but with the lights on, I see very clearly.

"You're going outside?" Nkosi asks

"Yeap, I am"

"You know, if I were with you right now, I'd hold you so tight in my arms and kiss those soft lips of yours endlessly" he says just as I get the door and walk out

"Wee, Usexolelwe manje [He's been forgiven

now] and he's being all lovey dovey, asbonge
sisi"

When I turn, I can't believe believe my eyes and
if I were still mad at him then the smile on my
face would betray me right now because the joy
of seeing my husband parked outside is far too
great

"You're here" I say on the phone and it feels like
I can't reach to where he is fast enough

"I am" He says and I see Bangizwe wave, I wave
back

I hang up and walk a little bit faster until I'm
standing in front of him

"Thank God this worked, I was starting to fear that we would have to drive back without me seeing my woman" Bangizwe says with much relief "I'll see you guys inside" he reaches in the car for his bag and I give him Nandi's phone

"Come closer" Nkosi says when it's just us the, he has his arms around me and then he looks down at my face "I'm very sorry, I promise it will never happen again, ever" He says seriously, maintaining strong eye contact

"I forgive you"

He smiles and his eyes roam all on my lips "And now I kiss those soft lips endlessly" he smirks then dips his head lower and captures my lips, giving me a heart racing and panty dampening kiss. After a while he pulls back, has me against

the car then he kisses me again, long and hard and his hands squeezing my bums making my need for him intensify. I don't know how much time we spend making out but when we finally stop we are both on a high and he looks like he wants to take me right here, against this car

"Are you hungry?" I ask

"I'm starving"

"Let's go get you fed" I lead the way

The disappointed look on his face when I lead him to the dining area and fix him a plate is priceless. I know what I did, and I know it won't go unpunished so I might as well enjoy messing with him for as long as I can because soon, I'll

have to answer for my sins

I see him texting then my phone beeps

"This isn't the kind of starving I was referring to, Mrs. Mdlalose"

"You should have been more specific, Mr. Mdlalose"

"Okay, I want to fuck you. Is that specific enough?"

"It is, but unfortunately you're not entirely off the hook yet so, No"

"No?"

"No."

"Mkami..."

"I want you to remember this, the next time you decide to walk out on me while we are having a fight. Eat your food before it gets cold"

"Look at them, busy texting like teenagers. Let us know if we are invading your space"

Bangizwe says

"Technically, the two of you are the ones that gatecrashed our holiday" I tell him

"What could I do? Do you know what it's like

watching a big, strong man like Nkosi sulk?"

"I wasn't sulking, don't you even start"

"You weren't? You were close to tears, admit it. The thought of Khanyisa leaving you almost sent you to the ER" he says and Nkosi shakes his head knowing he's not winning this

"Stop messing with my husband, hawu"

"The wife has spoken" Bangizwe says pulling the invincible zip over his lips

We sit until late then we go to our bedrooms. Nkosi is still hard and when he strips I have to pull my self control strings even tighter when I

see the bulge in his boxers. He gets comfortable on the bed and pulls me against his chest with his hand caressing me from the silk fabric of my pajama shorts

"Uyangincisha ngempela mkami?" [Are you really depriving me, my wife?] he groans

"Goodnight" I whisper and turn the on the other side

He kisses my shoulder and gets comfortable with his arm around me. Sometime on the middle of the night we are woken up from moans and groaning coming from the other room, these thin walls. We both ignore it but it gets louder until she's literally screaming Bangizwe's name

"Oh for fucks' sakes" Nkosi grumbles.

CHAPTER 48

KHANYISA

Packing for a last minute trip is exhausting, but it's even more exciting. There's just this thrill that comes with "On the spot" decision making and right now as I pack my clothes and get ready to leave for a couple of days, I feel it rush through me.

I found a spot for Nandi and I in Mpumalanga and once checking if she is okay with it, I secured a suite with two bedrooms, lounge, dining area and of course my favourite, a private pool. Because it's all rushed, we couldn't

find a place that has catering as part of the package so we are going to have to make a stop and buy groceries for the duration of our stay, something Nandi is thrilled about because she loves cooking and so she has promised to prepare the both of us the best meals

I'm still not taking Nkosi's calls. He tried talking to me through Lwazi's phone but I didn't take it. He cannot act wild in front of me and then want to talk things out over the phone, no, I refuse, he must face me the same way he did before leaving

"Khanyi, are you finished up?" I hear Nandi calling out from outside my room

"Almost done"

"Okay, breakfast is ready, hurry before it gets cold"

"Okay, thanks sweets" I respond and zip my suitcase then I drag it out with me

I leave it in the lounge and proceed to the kitchen where everyone is at

"Zwe, you'll clean up when you guys are done, right?" She asks and he gives her a look

"haibo, what's the rush? It's still early" he asks and Nandi looks at me, I specifically asked that we leave early for one simple reason. I don't want Nkosi to find me here, The thing is I'm between moods. Last night I was emotional and

missing him, this morning I'm back to feeling like he can still go screw himself. So that's that.

The brothers catch on to the reason for our early departure and they share a sneaky smile

"Sisi, Ubumtshelile umyeni wakho ukuthi uyaphi?" [Had you told your husband where you're going?]

"No, if Nkosiyabo has questions then he can direct them to Fana" I say sincerely, they are not at fault here, their brother is

Lwazi tries hard not to laugh at my statement but he fails dismally, Bangizwe just straight out laughs then says "Angifisi ukuba lapha uma efika" [I don't wish to be here when he arrives]

"Ngizomlinda mina" [I'll wait for him] Lwazi says, it's refreshing to see how much Lwazi is similar to Nkosi in terms of never cowering and being all boss like

"Well, we will see you guys in a couple of days. Enjoy" I say taking my plate to the sink at the same time as Nandi

She goes to hug and kiss him goodbye then we roll our suitcases out after snapping a selfie together

"Here's to a fun trip!" Nandi yells

" I'm here for it" I get my traveling mood on

NKOSIYABO

I'm up and ready to go before everyone else wakes up. The purpose of this weekend has been concluded and so there won't be any need for me to still be around when they all wake up, I want to be out of here as soon as I can

I've stopped calling Khanyisa, I need to speak to her in person, at this point, I'll do whatever it takes to make us okay again. I pull my suitcase out and go to check out then I walk to where the cars are parked, just my bad luck, I meet with Nobuhle again

"You're leaving early too?"

"Don't start with the small talk, I believe I told you to leave me alone yesterday"

"Your exact words were fuck off"

"I remember"

"That kind of hurt, Nkosiyabo" she says casting her eyes down, is this woman serious

"How is that my problem? You let Refilwe fill your head with nonsense and you stupidly followed her lead. I don't see what any of that has to do with me, if you have complaints then go voice them out to her" I tell her

"I came here to see if there was anyway we could talk. Nkosi... all I need is a chance ..."

"A chance to what? What exactly is it that you want from me? Tell me so I can clearly tell you no because you didn't understand the first time"

"I was prepared to leave him, you know... After you, I realised that I couldn't continue living a lie, I just couldn't and then I finally get the courage to face you but you still won't give me a chance... I thought-"

"You thought you could make your problems mine, it doesn't work like that. You decide how you want to live your life, Angingeni ndawo mina. Whatever it is that you think you came back for,

I want no part in it and this friendship thing you have going on with Refilwe will not bare any fruits. I don't want you, Nobuhle. Stop it with these cheap and desperate tactics" I don't wait for her response, I have bigger things to worry about, I have a wife I need to make things right with

KHANYISA

We arrive, check in then go ahead and get settled in our bedrooms. It's in the afternoon and the sun is showing off leaving us all hot and exhausted from the drive. We change into our bikinis. With bunny on full display, I'm glad it's just Nandi and I here. She goes into the kitchen then returns a moment later to find me in the pool then I move over to the wall and sit on the concrete surface leaving my feet dipped

in

"A cocktail for me and a mocktail for you" She says handing me a class

"Thank you"

"You're welcome" She also dips her feet in

"This is a lovely place"

"Yeah it is, the peace and quietness is really worth it" I sigh

" But you know you can't hide out here forever angithi? "

" I'm not hiding... But I know what you're saying "

" And you also know that the second he gets home and finds you gone he will be on his way here"

"He better not" I say and she gives me a look

" You know deep down you'd love it if he did" she smiles sneakily

"I do miss him" I admit "but I don't want to give in easily. Nkosiyabo needs to realise that he's in the wrong and if I'm too quick to be understanding then he will not learn a thing, he will think this is one of those things that can be easily swept under the rug and be forgotten but

it's not like that, his lack of trust in me really hurt me and him having Fana track me just adds to that pain"

"I get you, you might already be starting to forgive him but he needs to grovel in order to learn something from this"

"He does, If I'm trusting him then the least he can do is to trust me too. The man is working with his ex, and his other ex is his client. Imagine if I let my insecurities feed on me. There would be no peace in our marriage"

"That's true, you have every reason to be insecure, not that I believe Nkosi would cheat on you, especially with that Refilwe chick but you're choosing to trust him. That should count for something"

"Exactly! But you know what, I don't want to talk about him or what he did, this trip is for me and bunny to relax"

"Bunny?"

"That's what we call our baby" I say sheepishly

"Ncaww, Aren't you guys the cutest. I can't wait for you to make up and I'm so happy that you're entering this stage in your lives"

"It seems like good things are on the way, the baby, your wedding" she blushes when I mention her wedding

"I'm excited and scared of what's to come. But for now I just want to focus on the excitement and the joy, does that make me dumb?"

"No, you deserve to be happy and this is your time. Everything else can take a back seat"

"These Mdlalose men will be the end of us, they know just how to love us right and now here I am, excited to marry a future polygamist. But you know what, You're right, cheers to the good times" she holds up her glass and I click mine with hers

"To good times"

NKOSIYABO

I get home and I don't bother getting my luggage, I can always come back for it later, for now I just need to see Khanyisa

When I walk in, the house is quiet at first until I walk further into the house and I hear the TV playing. I find Lwazi sitting there and his attention is focused on his phone

"Hey"

"Bhuti, you're back" He says looking up

"Yah, you good?"

" I am, wena? "

" I'm okay, Ake ngiyobona uKhanyisa [Let me go see Khanyisa] " I assume she's in our room

" Akekho [She's not here] " he says, stopping me in my tracks

" Huh? "

" She left"

"She what?"

"She left" he repeats, calmly

I reach for my phone in my pocket and dial her number but the damn phone rings unanswered

"What do you mean she left?" the panic that hits me is unexplainable, did I really push her that far

"I mean she packed her bags and left" he still sounds very calm and casual like he's not talking about my wife leaving me

"Lwazi"

"What? You proved that you don't trust her, you sent someone to spy on her and when she found out you let your anger control you to the point that you left her here feeling miserable and heart broken from your actions, your pregnant wife Bhuti"

He's right, I messed up and I left at the worst time. I allowed myself to lose control and now we are here

"Uqinisile [You're right] I hurt her then I left her, I can't begin to imagine how she felt. I didn't act like a good husband" Knowing that I'm the source of Khanyisa's pain eats at me, It's that kind of guilt that can't be relieved by anything because I'm the one person she should never have to worry about getting hurt by, I should be her safe place and I abandoned her at the worst time

"I want you to focus on that feeling, the one you're having right now, the fear of having lost your wife, the thought of her walking out on you because of your actions. Then think of how she felt when you left her in that state. I'm no

relationship expert, nor am I married, thank God for that because I don't think I know how to relationship anymore " he stops and chuckles " but I'm your little brother and I know you can do a lot better than this, Especially because you know how much she loves you. She went on a trip with Nandi, She said you can direct all your questions to Fana. Good luck, you're going to need it"

He pats my tense shoulder and has a smirk on his face

"Why the hell didn't you give a full explanation at first?"

"Because I wanted you to feel what it would be like if she ever left you....and you know I'll take any chance I can get to make you sweat, you

should see yourself right now, usenkingeni
[You're in trouble] and you know it" he laughs
then walks away

She's not gone gone. One day, Lwazi will be
listed under my cause of death.

****three or less chapters left 

CHAPTER 50

NKOSIYABO

Between being hard throughout the night while
sleeping next to my wife and the noise those
two kept making, I'm not sure which one has
me on a sour mood more.

Khanyisa is still sleeping when I get up to go get myself a glass of water. Knowing it's not just the two of us I get dressed and only then I step outside the room. I find Nandi in the kitchen making breakfast

"Morning"

"Oh hey, you good?"

"I'm good thanks, you?"

"I'm great, breakfast is almost ready. Is Khanyisa still sleeping too?" she asks taking the plates out

"Yah, but I'll take hers to the room"

"Alright, let me get a tray for you"

"Thank you, for being here for her when I wasn't"
I say to her, I really am grateful

"it's only a pleasure. I'd say that's what family
does but I'm not officially part of the family yet"
She jokes

"I'd say eight years qualifies you to be family.
But jokes aside, I'm glad Khanyisa has someone
to lean on from my side, Her relationship with
Liyana is non existent as you know, so it feels
good knowing she has you"

"Do you think they will ever fix things?"

"At this point, only time will tell. I know uKhanyisa isn't one to hold grudges but I believe Liyana should be the one to approach her, I can't do that on her behalf"

"I hear you, it will mean more if the effort is from Liyana herself" she says and I agree. I do wish for my wife and sister to make things right between them and I'm wise enough to know that pushing things is not the way to go

"Here you go, for the both of you" sbe says handing me a large tray with one big plate and a jug of juice plus two glasses

"Thank you"

I walk back and when I enter I find her sitting on the bed on a phonecall, I place the tray on the table and strip off my clothes again, making her eyes wander around my chest

She ends her call almost immediately

"Good morning"

"Good morning" she lightly brushes her belly
"You made breakfast?"

"Nandi did, I'm just delivering it"

"She's been spoiling me so much" she says

I get on the bed and we share the food on the

plate. My hand stays on her belly and occasionally on her thigh throughout breakfast. She keeps tensing up but I don't act on it. With how I've been missing her, I think it's best we have this reunion in the comfort of our own home.

When we are done she takes a bath, packs up then we meet the others outside. They are making out on the couch and I clear my throat to get their attention. Bangizwe keeps Nandi on his lap and gives me a sneaky smile

"How are we traveling?" Nandi asks "The same way we came?"

"No, I'm going with my wife" I quickly answer. Besides wanting to spend these hours with Khanyisa, I'm in no mood for my brother, coming here with him was hell on its own, I will

not survive a trip back with him

Khanyisa gives him her car keys "Take care of my car" she warns

"I definitely will, but I wouldn't be too concerned about this one if I were you" he says and I quickly shoot him a glare, if I knew he was going to run his mouth I wouldn't have told him about the surprise I've got for her. Luckily she takes it as one of his endless blabbing moments and doesn't ask much

I load everything of ours in the car while they check out then we hit the road. I'm still very much starving but one thing that gives me satisfaction is that she also is and to make things worse, I can't keep my hand to myself so I let it roam freely on her bare thigh, when I

drag it higher she stops me

"Nkosi"

"Hmm?"

"Focus on the road"

"I am"

"I mean, fully focus on the road, stop trying to turn me on"

"I'm quite confident that I can do both, and are you sure that I'm just trying?"

"Mxm" She looks away and I can't help but laugh

"Don't get mad thando lwami. You started this, so stand for it"

The rest of the ride consists of short conversations, her taking naps and loud Tsonga music. All the way until we get home. Lwazi drove to KZN with Liyana to see our parents so when we get home there's no one. I have a few emails to respond to so I do that while Khanyisa goes off to our bedroom to wash off the heat of the day. While she's still busy I pull off my shirt and take off my shoes then I relax on the bed.

I'm more than happy that she forgave me and I meant what I said when I told her I'd seek help. I've never thought of seeing someone to talk

about a bad breakup but now I realise that if it's going to affect our marriage then it's something I need to address. I don't want to build on these insecurities and trust issues and then project them on to my wife when she's done absolutely nothing to deserve that. She's given me a chance to redeem myself and I don't want to make it a habit, after all it said that a true apology shows itself through changed behavior, for her and for us, I'm willing to do whatever it takes.

I watch her as she steps out of the bathroom with the towel covering her body. The baby bump pulls it up at the front so it's become shorter and her thighs are on full display. I feel myself stir up again. She can't deprive me twice, can she?

"MaKhosa"

"Yebo?"

"Woza" [Come]

She walks to the side of the bed and looks at me

I sit up and beckon for her to come straddle me, she doesn't protest. When she's on top, I carefully flip us so I'm hovering on top of her, she's soaking wet and I want nothing more than to be deep inside her so I take off the rest of my clothes and peel the towel off her then I have her legs spread.

"Uyabona mfazi wami, lento yakho yokungincisha [You see, my wife. This thing of you depriving me] tends to come with its own consequences, because now you have to tell me exactly how you just went ahead and let your husband starve" I slam into her, going all the way in

" Ah, Nkosi"

"Ngiyabuza mkami " I pull out and back in

"I wanted to punish you a little"

"tshela mina, ukudla kukabani lokhu?" [tell me, whose food is this?]

"Yours" she moans out as I push inside her again, hard

"Say that again, I want it to be engraved in your brain"

"Nkosi... It's yours, all yours "

"Pho kungani ungincisha uma ngithi ngilambile?" [So why do you deprive me when I say I'm hungry?]

She can't answer and the pleasure that's coming from her walls clenching around me is too high, she close and I feel it, so I slow down, earning a complaint groan from her and I can't help but smirk

"Kuzomele uziphendulele wena mfazi kaNkosiyabo" [You're going to have to answer for yourself, Nkosiyabo's woman]

I up my pace again, giving it to her exactly how I know she loves it until I feel her tighten around me again, this time I don't mess with her, I let her reach her high. But that doesn't mean I'm done with her. Last night when she was sleeping in peace I had to self service myself in the bathroom, she's not getting off the hook that easily so I have both her legs spread and on my arms then I drill all the way into her again before she even gets over her first orgasm. I fuck her mercilessly, having her scream my name over and over and disbelief fills her face when a second and stronger orgasm washes over her, leaving her legs shaking while I empty myself inside her

"You're gonna need to find other ways to punish me instead of letting me starve, not when you know just how much I enjoy being in you. Find other ways, right?" I say, still inside her

"I'll try" She laughs and I kiss her again, hard. I don't and when she feels me harden again she moans

"Will you ever get off me?" She asks with a lazy smile

"Maybe tomorrow, tonight you have things to account for"

KHANYISA

Today we have our doctors appointment again and just as always, Nkosi has insisted on coming to get me and then we get to spend the rest of the day together in his office.

I wasn't so sure about it after he told me about Refilwe and Nobuhle's dumb plan back at the team building weekend but I realise I shouldn't be in a position where I can't even visit my own husband because of them. I don't care much for Nobuhle but I know that for as long as Refilwe is tied to Mduduzi I can never be rid of her, so I won't hide or pretend to like her. She should just know to stay clear of me

We get to the doctor's office and get done with the regular check up and then it's time for the

big reveal. The way Nkosi had been so positive that we are having a girl, I find myself growing nervous of the outcome, I don't want him getting sad over gender, and even though he had said it's not a big deal, I still see the way he refers to our baby as "Ntombikayise"

I get comfortable on the bed and watch as she starts with the ultrasound, checking the heartbeat and the development of our baby first before then she moves the wand around a little

"Are you ready?" She turns to us with a smile

"We are" we both answer, excitement laced all over our words

"You're having a baby girl" She announces

"I said it, uNtombikayise lo" Nkosi says with so much joy

"Congratulations" She says still smiling at the both of us and we thank her

We walk out with smiles plastered on our faces and when we get in the car he first plants kisses on my belly before starting the car

"You got your guess right"

"It wasn't a guess, I just felt it" He says proudly

"Oh yeah?"

"Yes, you don't believe me? alright then, the next one will be a boy"

"The next one? I haven't even given birth to the first"

"And when you have and you've fully recovered, I'm pumping another one in"

"What? No way, not happening. I have no plans to always be pregnant."

"Uyazi kodwa ukuthi ushisa kanjani uma unje?"
[Do you know how hot you are when you're like this?] he says with a low and suggestive tone and I laugh

"Now it makes sense why you're always between my legs" he smiles widely

"Ngingathini, Uma umnandi, umnandi and wena mkami, umnandi" [What can I say,if you're tasty you're tasty and you my wife are tasty]

I have no come back from that statement so I just look away making him chuckles "MaKhosa, I literally knocked you up, there's no way you can still be shy around me. Your days of hiding in the bathroom are over" he reminds me and I laugh feeling silly again

"Can you really blame me? I was still a virgin. The first instinct was to hide"

"From your own man, Yah neh, things we see in

these marriages"

"Oh shut it, I wasn't that bad"

"You weren't bad at all, you were my innocent wife"he brings my hand up to kiss it" I love you"

"I love you too"

We get to the office and instead of walking to his, he leads me to the storage area

"Remember your expensive craving?"

"What craving?"

"The one you told me about when I came to get you back home"

"The coupe?" I stop and look at him

"The coupe" he repeats after me

"You didn't" I whisper

"I did" He whispers too

"Nkosi" I smack him lightly

"Follow me

I walk with him hand in hand until we get to

the covered car" Go ahead" he says to one of the guys there and he starts unveiling it

"Oh my gosh!! Nkosiyabo!"

I go around the car, probably causing the biggest scene then I walk back to him and hug him "Thank you for this... I mean, didn't think.. Oh my gosh"

"You love it?"

"I do, thank you so much"

"You're more than welcome my love, why don't we take it for a spin" He holds the keys.

Later in the evening we use the new car to go home, we park outside and he stands leaning against it and me against him. He has his arms around me, resting his hands on my baby bump

"You made it possible" he whispers

"I made what possible?"

"This... This life, this home, this man. You made it possible, Khanyisa. I didn't think a happy life was on the cards for me anymore but you made it possible my love. You dissolved this fear I had for falling for someone again and you embraced me in the warmest way, I don't ever want to imagine my life without you because you've

become the center of it. You and bunny. I love you both so much"

"We love you too, daddy" I smile and snuggle up on his chest

"Promise to stay with me? Make good on our vows, until death?"

"You're not getting rid of me that easily, Mr. Mdlalose. Not even death can do us part"

"Forever it is"

"Forever"

CHAPTER 51

SEVEN MONTHS LATER

NKOSIYABO

"I'm bored"

"Just a few more minutes sthandwa sami, I'm almost done"

"That's what you said a while ago"

"I know, baby. Just a few more minutes then I'm all yours"

"Fine, you'll find me watching episode 6"

"MaKhosa,you wouldn't"

"If you're not done within the next fifteen minutes then I will" She turns and leaves

With Khanyisa due any day now. I've been at home a lot more often but that means I've had to bring work home. It's convenient because I get to see her whenever and make sure she's okay.

In the past months, Khanyisa has become very irritable, it's the smallest things that piss her off and I've been on the firing line quite a number of times. The worst she's ever done when I've supposedly pissed her off is to go quiet on me. We will literally be in the same house and when she sees me approaching she will face the other way. I cannot wait for our daughter to

arrive so I can have my wife back because this isn't working, I never know when I'll say or do something that will annoy her.

I focus on my work on an attempt to take a break in fifteen minutes before she starts playing the episode, another thing we've grown to do together. I never used to be a series guy but Khanyisa has pulled me in her mystery and thriller series addiction and now we watch them together, hence the threat, she knows I want to watch it with her.

Mdu, Bangizwe and Liyana have been holding the front at the office and making sure everything runs smoothly while I pop in now and again. I never thought I'd say this, but I'm beginning to feel like I can at the very least, try to start trusting Mdu again. He's going through

his own crap with Refilwe and he's opened up to me about his struggles of having to please both her and his mom, the man is tired and the women in his life couldn't care less, Mamncane is still hell bent on having it all go to him while Refilwe is being her usual annoying and conniving self, what we both ever saw in her remains a mystery.

I've also been seeing a therapist, it wasn't an easy step to take. Having to talk to a stranger about what I feel is very unusual but I've opened up to the idea and I haven't regretted it since. Khanyisa and I are in a happy place, she's very much supportive and that keeps me going to these sessions. That and the fact that I'm trying to motivate Lwazi with his own sessions. He finally told us the real reason why he wasn't sure about the duration of his stay.

A lot went wrong in the mission they were in, him and his troop had been held captive at some point and a lot of them lost their lives in the process. Although they were able to get rid of the threat, a lot of damage had already been done and his superiors ordered him to stand down, with a recommendation to see a therapist, it's not even a recommendation because being cleared and declared mentally fit to return to work by the therapist is the only way he could ever set foot in the field again, he's working on it.

I have a few emails to respond to before taking my break and as soon as I'm done I rush to the lounge. Khanyisa looks up at me and smiles warmly, I guess I'm still in her good books, now if I can keep it up for the rest of the day.

She has her legs stretched out on the couch and I move them so I can sit then place them on my lap

"I was actually going to ask that you come with frozen yogurt from the freezer" She says lowly

"Coming right up" I know better than to complain, this is the smallest price I have to pay compared to her growing an entire human being inside her.

When I get back we watch the episode together and by the end of it, she's sleepy

"Maybe you should go take a nap" I suggest

"I won't be able to sleep, she's being a busy body"

"Maybe she's excited about meeting her parents"

"I can't wait" She puts her hand over her now very big baby bump

"I want us to talk about KZN" I start. Mom suggested that Khanyisa come stay with her for the first three months after giving birth, seeing this is our first baby and we are obviously clueless. I'm happy that she wants to be actively involved, she's my mother and I appreciate it but three months? Three months without my family? Three months in this house alone? Hayi, it can't happen.

"Go ahead, complain" She says knowingly

"I don't think three months is going to work, MaKhosa. How will my daughter get to know me then?"

"You will visit"

"Still, I won't be able to drive there every weekend. And wena no Ma can't really expect me to be this far from you and bunny for that long. I need my family with me"

"What do you suggest then?"

"I suggest... That you take as many notes as

you can in the first month then you come back"
I say, hoping she will agree, I mean we can
make this work.

She laughs at my suggestion "Will you be the
one to tell Ma?"

"No, you will"

"Haibo Mdlalose, why me?"

"Because she loves you a lot, she will
understand you"

"You're her son, she obviously loves you and no,
I will not be the one to tell her"

"But you'll support me, right?"

"You know I will. I also don't think I can survive that long"

"Good."

We continue having a lazy day which also leads to ordered supper. Khanyisa hardly eats and she can't seem to get settled in one place. She's always getting up and walking around the house, going outside because apparently it's too hot in the house. By 10 p.m she's tossing and turning in bed, not even that big stuffy pillow is useful at this point

"Are you okay?" I ask and she nods

"Yeah, I just need to get comfortable so I can sleep"

"What can I do to help?"

"Nothing really, Don't stress, I'll be fine"

"You sure?"

"Yeah, get some sleep"

She turns again and faces the other side and somehow I drift off to sleep.

Some time in the middle of the night I wake up and find that she's not in bed. I look around and find out bathroom door slightly opened so I get off the bed and walk there. She's soaking herself in the bathtub with her eyes closed

"Mami" I say to get her attention

"Hey, why are you up?"

"It's hard to get good sleep when you are restless. Why are you bathing at one o'clock in the morning?"

"I thought the water would help" she sighs

"Maybe we need to go to the hospital"

"I'm not in pain"

"But you're not okay either, Makhosa"

"You just said it is one in the morning, I don't think we have an emergency. Maybe later on during Godly hours we can visit the doctor"

"And until then?"

"I keep trying to find comfort" she says and attempt to get up from the bubble bath.

I immediately reach for her and help her out
"Don't look so worried, Nkosiyabo. I'm okay"

"I'll believe that when the doctor confirms it" I
tell her, I'm not taking any chances

"Please pass me the towel"

I do as she asks and she dries herself then
covers her body. Just as she's about to put on
her slippers we both hear a popping sound. It's
feint but because there's no other noise
surrounding us we hear it clearly.

Khanyisa looks down at her feet "Okay, now it is
an emergency" She looks back at me with a
weak smile

"It's time"

"It's time"

"We've got this"

"We do. Now, I need to lotion up and get dressed. Can you get the hospital bag in the time being?"

She looks calm, too calm, so much that it worries me that I'm the one whose internally freaking out.

I do as she asks while she gets dressed then I slowly help her down the stairs all the way to the garage. She still looks calm, just moments

when she will groan a little and take slow deep breaths

We get to the hospital and get checked into our own private room. We've been preparing for this day but now that it's here, I can't help but be nervous. This is it. It's finally happening.

The nurse checks on Khanyisa and makes sure she's as comfortable as can be then I sit on the couch next to her. All sleep left me the second she told me it was time, and now it's just a matter of waiting.

Hours pass and before we know it, it's 8 o'clock in the morning. Things have taken the wildest

turn, her contractions aren't so far apart anymore and my wife has resorted to not talking to me. She literally does not want to talk to anyone, including her own sister. The only time she's answered the phone was when our mothers called but beyond that, everyone else will have to wait. Me on the other hand? I feel helpless but at the same time I can't stop the pride that fills my chest whenever I look at her. I can't begin to imagine the physical pain and strain that she's taking right now and knowing that she's going through all of this for our daughter makes me fall even deeper in love with her. I didn't think it was possible to love anyone way beyond what you already feel for them but being in this room with her takes me to a whole other level that I could have never imagined to exist. I love this woman.

"Mkami"

"Nkosiyabo, don't mkami me. We did this together yet I'm the only one suffering right now" she says angrily

I sit on the edge of her bed and take her hand in mine "Uyazi ukuthi ngiyakuthanda, right?" [You know that I love you]

"You better love me, there's no way you're deciding that you don't after I've had to feel all this alone" she threatens and I have to fight the urge to laugh

"And if I could, I would relieve you of all this, I swear. You wouldn't feel a thing. But nature doesn't allow it my love. You have to do this, for us"

"This is the first and last"

"Kodwa MaKhosa-" I stop when she glares at me "I guess this is something we can discuss when emotions aren't high" I kiss her hand

She squeezes my hand tightly and shuts her eyes when another one hits her

"You're doing good, sthandwa sami. This will all be over soon and we will have our baby with us"

I get a call from Bangizwe and I move to the side

"Yah?"

"I'm very disappointed in you, Angifuni ukungasho"

"Mxm, what's your problem now?"

"Why am I hearing from uMa that my niece is on her way? "

"It's been hectic man, I was going to call you later"

"I'm just pulling your leg, hows it going?" he asks and I look at Khanyisa, she's covered her face with both hands

"Bafo, I'll call you" I hang up before he can say

anything else then I put my phone on silent.
Everyone is just going to have to get in line.

It's only at eleven o'clock when the doctor
confirms that it's time

I get in position next to her while the doctor
gets ready with a two nurses each standing on
opposite sides

"Alright Mrs. Mdlalose. It's time, when I tell you
to push, give it your all okay"

"Okay" she nods

The room is filled with Khanyisa's cries while
we encourage her to keep going. It feel like

forever until the soft tiny cries fill the room. It has to be one of the best sounds I've ever heard in my entire life

Khanyisa slumps back on the bed while the doctor checks our baby and then the nurses attend to her... It is done, our baby is here.

It's a while before it's just the three of us in the room. I stand by her and peck her forehead "You did good, sthandwa sami. I'm beyond proud of you"

"She's perfect" She says holding our little bunny. She fits so perfectly in her arms and I decide to capture the moment

"She is, and she's ours."

"Come sit with us" She moves a bit to the side and I fit myself on the available space, putting one arm above her head and my other hand on our baby whose peacefully sleeping in her mother's arms

I look at the both of them and I know I must have done something right in life to have these two wonderful souls be in my life. I'm taken back to the first time I saw Khanyisa, how I didn't think twice before asking her out to dinner and then asking her to be my wife, barely even knowing her, my heart knew right then that she was mine and I just had to have her. And now that I have her, I intend on keeping her because I don't think I can go on living life without her by my side

"Thank you my love" I kiss the side of her face

"You don't have to thank me"

"I want to. You turned me into a husband, and now you've made me a father. You keep giving me the greatest gifts thando lwami, on top of that, you love and respect me, How can I not be grateful?"

"Now you're gonna make me emotional" she chuckles softly but startles the baby then she rocks her back to sleep

"You know I'm not that good with words, my actions speak for me but right now, I just want to try and put it in words too. You've been amazing to me and I cannot wait to go through

forever with you, I'm never letting you go, you're both stuck with me"

"I want to be stuck with you for life, and I don't think bunny has much of a choice"

"She doesn't" I smile down at our baby girl again
"You know, we can't call her bunny forever"

"Can't we though?" she jokes

"She will hate us if that name sticks, although I have a feeling Bangizwe will make sure it does"

"He definitely will" She laughs again

"So we go with the three names" I say

"We do"

We decided on her names two months ago and we loved all three. This baby is a pure representation of our love so Khanyisa wanted something along those lines, and I wanted to name her after her mother, not only that but because I believe that just like her mother, she's bringing light into my life, leading me into my next phase in life and the last name would be because she's her father's daughter, my very first. So we reached the decision...

Thandolwethu Khanyisile Ntombikayise
Mdlalose.

I'm not sure if we can fit all three onto her birth

certificate but those are our daughter's names and we love all three of them.

It is in this room, on this bed where I'm laying next to my wife and watching over our little Thando as she sleeps, where I feel how full my heart is of warmth and love and a strong need to always protect and lead my family. It is in this room, with just the three of us, where I feel a strong sense of pride and my reason to be the best version of myself had just heightened.

Khanyisa and Thandolwethu are mine to love, mine to protect and definetly mine to keep.

***** THE END *****