

## Insert 56

“Ucolo (sorry) ma I don’t know what happened.” I knew I wasn’t pronouncing it properly because I couldn’t click to save my life. She would just have to be strong because I knew her deepest darkest secret. A secret so massive it could tear this whole family apart.

I saw KK’s shoes before I looked up. I guess he had also come to investigate the noise. He crouched down next to me and put his arm around me. His scent just calmed my wild beating heart. People had been lying to him his whole life and he was such a caring guy. I knew what meant the world to him would be his dad recognising him for a job well done. Why would he though if KK wasn’t even his son? It was such a big secret and I needed to tell him. Secrets tore people apart because it always came out in the end.

“Are you ok sweetheart?” he asked softly. I couldn’t look at him because I knew that if I did, I would burst into tears. He didn’t deserve what they were doing to him. I nodded answering his question. He helped me up and I picked the tray up with all the broken pieces I had picked up and went to throw them in the bin.

“Come here,” he said taking me into his arms. Now he was really going to make me cry. I took deep breaths to try and keep my tears at bay.

“Khulekani! Can you not do that right now? The Mbatha’s are in the other room!” his mom said holding herself on the waist.

“And so? The Mbathas have nothing to do with me ma. You guys know where I stand regarding that.” He still held onto my waist and his mom kept glancing at the open doorway to make sure that Fezokuhle didn’t come by this way.

“Kodwa (but) Khulekani! You make everything so difficult! Did you see how beautiful she is and so respectful too,” his mom said taking out the plates.

“I’m sure she’ll make a great Makoti omncane (a second wife),” KK said as his phone rang. “I have to take this,” he kissed me on the cheek and went outside.

KK’s mom sighed out loud.

“Since you’re so determined to force yourself into my family the least you can do is help me set the table.” She said throwing the place mats at me. Ok then quite childish for a woman older than my mother. I walked through to the dining room and started setting the table. When I went back to the kitchen to get the cutlery Fezokuhle was there.

“Woo muhle kanjani ubhuti Khulekani (KK is so hot)! Phela u sisi (you know sister) Amahle used to send me pictures but he looks so much better in real life.” So I guess that’s why Amahle was so dedicated to taking pictures at their Sunday lunches. The whole kitchen thing was awkward. She turned her attention to me.

“Hi I’m Fezokuhle but everyone calls me Fezo. And you are?” she asked looking pointedly at me. I was at a disadvantage because I’m not very tall and she’s wearing heels. So she was literally looking down on me.

“Lerato,” I said colder than I would’ve liked.

“Nice to meet you Lerato. Are you the help?” I could’ve slapped her silly. All I needed to do was just yank that weave of hers to bring her to my level.

“Actually...”

“Lerato here’s the cutlery,” KK’s mom cut me off. I breathed out and took the cutlery from her hands.

“Yho ma you must teach i girl yakho ama (your maid some) manners.” Amahle burst out laughing. I was literally seeing red as I set the table. She came into the dining room with some casserole dish and placed it in the centre and walked towards me. She stood so close to me that I literally had to look up to stare into her eyes and I wasn’t prepared to look away.

“Girl you better calm the fuck down. I’m going to be the new Mrs Khumalo here very soon and best believe I can make your life a living hell. So you better respect me as your new madam.” I couldn’t believe this girl! She was right about being Mrs Khumalo for Khaya because turns out KK wasn’t even a Khumalo. I pushed her hard and she lost balance and almost fell because I don’t think she expected that from me but held on to the side table in there and I walked out of the dining

room to get another serving dish. When KK came back into the kitchen she went to him and held her hand out for KK to take it. He put his hands in his pockets. I could've kissed him. **Lerato 1 – Fezokuhle 0**

“Umm bhuti do you mind showing me your family home?” KK looked at her with his most disinterested face.

“I'm sure uMa would love to show you around. This house is her pride and joy. I just need to discuss something no baba (with dad). Excuse me ladies,” he said looking briefly at me and left. I just stood there trying not to smile but inside I was doing summersaults and burpees anything with ridiculous physical movement. I wished we were on a playground and I could stick my tongue out at her.

Amahle went to call the men to the table and they all went into the dining room. Fezokuhle had excused herself to the loo because I think she was embarrassed by KK turning her down.

“Should I fix the bowl to wash the hands?” I asked KK's mom when she came back from placing something in the dining room. She looked surprised that I had asked and nodded taking out a bowl for me to use. I poured warm water in the bowl and took one of the nearby dry dishcloths and went to the dining room. As always I started with Mr Khumalo and followed a certain order. When I got to KK he was busy smiling at me. This guy though! Fezokuhle came in and decided to sit next to KK.

“Can I also wash my hands?” she said with all the attitude in the world. I smiled sweetly at her and knelt down for her to wash her hands. She pretended to lose her balance and tipped the whole bowl of water onto me.

“Oh dear! I'm so clumsy these days!” I couldn't believe her. How dare she! **Lerato 1 – Fezokuhle 1**. I had to give her that one. I didn't see that coming.

“Oh my goodness Lerato are you ok?” KK said getting up to check what was up. My whole top was soaked through and you could actually see my bra. How embarrassing. KK's mom came in during the whole commotion and you could see her secretly smile. Mxm had they planned this?

“Nxese (sorry) Lerato. I think I have a blouse that might fit you,” she said taking me away with her arm around me. Blouse? Do I look like someone who would wear a blouse? Like I don’t do blouses what the hell. Luckily KK had the tendency of giving me his keys when we were together for me to keep so I went to my bag and went to get my light jersey I had in the car. I heard them say grace as I walked back into the house and went to the bathroom to change. It was a light white jersey with small buttons all the way down. I tucked it into my skirt and retied the belt around my waist. Thank goodness the belt was leather so I just had to wipe the excess water off. I put my top in a plastic bag and put it in my bag.

“Why aren’t we eating?” I heard Fezokuhle ask as I walked into the dining room.

“It’s polite to have everyone at the table before we start eating,” KK answered tightly. I think Fezokuhle was irritating him too. Because the table was a rectangular 10 seater table there was a chair open between Khaya and Mrs Mbatha and another one between KK’s mom and KK. The older men were sitting on either side at the heads of the table. So I opted to go sit next to KK.

“Sorry to keep everyone waiting,” I said as I helped myself to the green salad and a piece of chicken. I really wasn’t hungry. Everybody started eating while Khaya was pouring wine for everyone. I declined a glass and stuck with the water. I needed to have all my wits about me here.

“So Khulekani I hear your dad say you’re quite the businessman,” Mr Mbatha said looking at KK.

“I’m doing alright for myself,” he said mr forever humble.

“It means you work hard. It’s always good to have a hard working man as umkhwenyana (a son-in-law).” I saw him stiffen slightly but it was hardly noticeable except I was attuned to him so I picked it up.

“Oh baba let’s not embarrass uBhuti,” Fezo said placing her hand on his. I wanted to stab her in her eye with my drumstick. How dare she! KK removed his hand and took a sip of his wine and looked at me briefly with a ghost of a smile on his lips.

“So how long has Lerato been working for you guys? I’m glad to be joining such a considerate family that eats with the help at the same table. Aren’t they nice mama?” Fezo asked looking at me. Eish this girl just kept embarrassing herself endlessly. A number of people cleared their throat including KK’s father. KK tightened his finger on his fork and I continued slicing the tomato as my main focal point.

“Actually...”KK said through clenched teeth but was interrupted by his mom.

“So Fezo sizwa bathi uqedile e (we hear that you are done with) nursing school,” his mom tried to save the day.

“Yes finally but there aren’t many jobs in KZN especially in the private sector. I feel like I’ve done my time in the trenches. That’s why I reached out to Baba Khumalo to see whether I won’t have some success here. Education is so important these days you know. I can imagine how many people would love to get an education even at a college. What about you Lerato did you finish matric?” Why did she keep bringing the conversation back to me. I wasn’t going to give her the satisfaction.

“I’m actually a Bachelor of Accounting Science honours graduate from Wits University,” I said and took a sip of my water. I was being a bit presumptuous because I hadn’t even received my results yet but I thought God would forgive me for that white lie. She choked on whatever she was eating and started coughing uncontrollably. KK continued cutting his roast beef as if this girl wasn’t going into a choking fit next to him until her dad got up and hit her on the back while KK’s mom all the way from the other side brought her a glass of water. Somersault vibes were happening on the inside. **Lerato 2 – Fezokuhle 1.**

“So sorry about that I think I swallowed too quickly there.” she cleared her throat.

“I’ve contacted a few people but I will know in the next few days whether there are vacancies in the private hospitals,” KK’s dad said trying to bring the subject back to her.

“Ngiyabonga baba (thank you sir). So Lerato why do you work here if you have a degree?” she just couldn’t let this go. How much bigger did she want to dig her hole. More throat clearing and uncomfortable shifting all around.

“I don’t work here. I’m a guest here just like you,” I said as calmly as I could muster. I saw her eyes go as big as the side plates on the table with bread on.

“Before you ask anymore questions Fezokuhle. Lerato came here with me as my guest? She has never been nor will she ever be anyone’s maid here or anywhere else– not with her qualifications,” KK finally spoke up and took a sip of his wine looking around the table. I could see KK’s mom wanted to creep under the table and hide. **Lerato 3 – Fezokuhle 1**

“Kusho ukuthini lokhu Mtungwa (what does this mean)?” Mr Mbatha asked enraged.

“Ngiyazi ukuthi besenze isivumelwano kodwa nawe uyabona ukuthi uKhulekani usehole umuntu azohlekisana naye (I know we had an agreement but you can also see for yourself that KK already has someone). Ngexa ya lokho sithathe isinqumo sokuthi u Fezokuhle uzo shada no Khaya njengo mfazi we sibili (As a result we’ve made a decision that Fezo will marry Khaya and become the second wife).” KK’s dad said very calmly and KK looked just as surprised as I was feeling. Fezokuhle dropped her knife and fork on the table and stood up while Amahle burst into tears across from us.

“What? I am not going into a polygamous relationship! Baba uthe ngizoshada uBhuti Khulekani (you said I would marry KK)! You said I was meant to be Mrs Khumalo.” She started crying. How dramatic this whole thing was. Khaya was trying to comfort Amahle on the side, KK’s mom was staring off into space while Fezo’s parents were trying to calm their daughter down. I just continued eating. In fact I took the bread roll on the side plate next to me and started buttering it and was suddenly quite hungry. I really wasn’t going to feel bad about this. I didn’t create this situation and she also could’ve been nicer about the whole thing. I felt KK’s hand on my thigh giving me a reassuring squeeze before he removed it. How much I loved this man.

“Fezokuhle Mbatha hlala phansi (sit down)!” her dad shouted at her. She sat down again wiping her eyes with the serviette.

“Ngiyaxolisa ukuthi uFezokuhle ngathi ukhohliwe ukuthi umuntu uziphatha kanjani emzini ya bantu (I apologise for Fezo’s very bad behaviour in your home). Ngiyakuzwa (I hear you) Mtungwa. Ngicabanga ukuthi kuyofanele sixoxe nga lo daba nje nga madoda sikwazi ukuqhubeka ngendlela efanele (I think we’ll have to discuss this matter as men and determine a way forward).” KK’s dad got up and motioned for the the guys to follow him out. It was just the women left at the table with an eerie silence. I didn’t even know where to look. Amahle got up and walked towards our side of the table. She stood next to me and pointed at me.

“You did this! This is all your fault sfebe ndini (you slut). Nawe Sfebe se nurse angeke uyithole indoda yami uyangizwa ukuthi ngithini (Even you nurse slut you won’t get my man do you hear what I’m saying)?” she said shouting pointing at Fezo as well. She looked slightly deranged which made me nervous. I had seen crazy and I knew how crazy worked.

KK’s mom got up and ushered her out of the dining room. I stood up and started clearing the table. There was a lot of uneaten food. I took a number of trips trying to clear the table then I spotted a dish washer so I rinsed the plates and glasses and put them in there. I looked for containers in the cupboards and put all the uneaten food in containers and placed it in the fridge. KK came in as I was wiping the counters down. I don’t know where everybody else had disappeared to. He put his arms around me and held me tightly to him.

“It’s over sweetheart. Khaya is going to have to marry Fezokuhle. It was his fault to begin with.” That was like music to my ears.

I turned around in his arms and pulled him down for a kiss. I didn’t care who walked in. KK was mine and he had proven it to me time and again. I still carried his mom’s secret and I just needed to understand the full story before I shared this with him. I hope it didn’t blow up in my face.

“Let’s go home. I feel emotionally drained from all the drama,” I said to him quietly. Just then we heard footsteps and it was KK’s father.

“Lerato, Khulekani can I see you guys?” he asked poking his head into the kitchen. KK took my hand and we walked back to the lounge. The Mbatha’s were gone and I don’t know where Khaya and Amahle were.

“Lerato I just wanted to apologise for all this drama. You were a guest in our home and Fezokuhle shouldn’t have treated you like that. I see now what KK sees in you. You are very humble and very well brought up. Since you came into this house this afternoon you’ve been very respectful and helpful to get stuff done. I’m proud of my son for choosing a woman like you,” he said looking at me then at KK. KK was looking down but he whipped his head up and his eyes were shining with unshed tears.

“Khulekani you impressed me more today than you ever have making those millions of yours. I’m impressed by your conviction and the fight in you to fight for what you want. I’ve never been more proud to call you my son.” His dad stood up and opened his arms for KK to hug him. KK looked at him almost like he couldn’t believe what his dad was saying. He got up and father and son embraced. I only realised I was crying when KK’s mom handed me a tissue. How could I not cry when I sat there knowing the truth that would destroy the relationship blossoming here. How do I make that decision?



## Insert 57

We left Sandhurst around 5 in the evening and we were on our way back to KK's place. He was the happiest I'd ever seen him. I think his dad's pride and approval must've lifted a huge burden from his shoulders. He kept looking at me, smiling, kissing my hand and all that. A part of me was ecstatic for him because I knew how much all this meant to him but another part was haunted by what I knew. How do I even burst his bubble when he is so happy about the whole thing? How do I rationalise for him everything that has happened to him as a young boy looking for his dad's approval? The secret was weighing heavily on me that I couldn't even feel relief at sort-of being accepted into the family. KK's mom was quiet most of the time we were there and I think Amahle and Khaya also went home after the polygamy decision. Amahle was vicious so as horrible as Fezokuhle had been to me I felt sorry for her.

My phone rang on the way to KK's place and it was Noni calling.

"Hi friend what's up?" I answered.

"Mngani unjani (My friend how are you)? Thanks so much for giving Odirile my numbers. Mina ngi grand ngi sharp ngi top (I'm good)!" she said laughing on the other end. With everything that's happened this weekend I even forgot about the whole Noni and Odi thing.

"Serious? Did he call you?"

"Yebo! He called Friday night and we agreed to meet for breakfast on Saturday. It was amazing. I think we sat there chatting until the breakfast menu closed and they started serving lunch. He is so interesting and so funny! Yho mngani (friend) where have you been hiding him?" Noni sounded so excited and so smitten by the whole thing. I hope Odi wasn't taking her for a ride because it would make things really awkward if it didn't work out.

"I'm glad you had a good time with him. Just be careful my friend nhe because I've never really been involved in Odi's love life so I'm not sure how he treats

women etc.” I just had to warn her so she doesn’t think just because he’s my brother I’ve endorsed his ‘good man’ status.

“Ag I know mngani I will use my discretion. Kodwa u sure wena ukuthi ku right (but are you sure it’s ok) if it comes to it that I date your brother? I’m your friend so I don’t want it to be awkward...”she sounded anxious. Did she feel like they were already at that level? Clearly they clicked on some deep level then.

“It’s fine my friend. Just guard your heart nhe and even though he is my brother you know gore monna ase ngwana wa ko geno (a man is not your sibling) so eyes wide open is all I’m saying.” KK eyed me suspiciously when I said that. It was true though I don’t know why he was making it like I’m saying something dodge.

“I know mngani I’ll be careful. I just wanted to clear it with you first. Let me go I have a script I need to read through for an audition tomorrow.” She was quite busy now booking shows and I was happy for her because it was quite slow in the beginning. She had saved up and was almost ready to move out of Portia’s especially with the baby coming Portia needed the extra bedroom for a nursery.

“Sure friend. Good luck tomorrow. We’ll chat soon.” We said our goodbyes and I hung up.

“So a man isn’t your sibling? What does that mean?” he said as I got off the phone.

“Exactly what it says. He can promise you the world today and tomorrow he’s gone.”

“I hope that’s not what you think about me sweetheart?” he asked a smile tugging his lips.

“Hmm KK I can’t confirm a human being hey. I trust you though but you’re definitely not my sibling because the things we do would be illegal otherwise.” he burst out laughing.

“True story. So any chance of you spending the night with me? I’m very reluctant to take you home later because I want to do sibling gillegal things to you,” he said with a puppy dog look on his face. He was so silly sometimes!

“I’m now a working woman baby. What will I wear to work tomorrow?” Why didn’t I have the foresight to bring work clothes?

“That’s why you need to leave some of your stuff at my place so that even during the week or whatever you’re not worrying about what you’ll wear to work.” This guy how much clothing did he think I have? I couldn’t possibly separate my wardrobe.

“I don’t think I have that much in my closet to split between two places.”

“Then we’ll just have to buy more won’t we?” KK was crazy he was definitely not buying me clothes.

“That doesn’t make sense baby. I can’t have two sets of wardrobes!”

“You’re worrying about the whole money thing again aren’t you? You’re my woman baby why can’t I spoil you with a shopping spree or a trip to some exotic location?”

“Shopping spree no I can buy my own stuff but I won’t say no to exotic locations. That sounds amazing!” I drew the line at him buying me stuff but I definitely could use a break to a place far far away. The drama I’ve had this year some people don’t even experience in their lifetime.

“Do you have a passport?”

“Why are you asking me that? I can see you plotting and planning…”he just smiled at me.

“Well do you?”

“Umm no I don’t. I’ve never needed one before but I can go to home affairs next weekend to sort it out because I guess I need one now right?” What was he planning?

“I don’t know. It’s good to have one anyway.” I punched him on his arm. Mxm this guy.

“Can we go to my place then? I can get a change of clothes and my car so I can get to work tomorrow?” I asked turning to look at him in my car seat.

“Yes to the change of clothes, no to the car. We’ll drive together. People know about us anyway so it’ll force you to wait for me after work. Besides I want to spend this time with you because I have to go to London on Thursday and only coming back Sunday night.”

“That sucks! I hate it when you travel,” I said pouting.

“I’ve been deferring most trips to my Execs but I have to go to this one. They asked for me specifically.” That was true because he hadn’t been travelling much since we got back together.

“I know KK I’m sorry I’m being a baby about it...”

“It’s fine no worries I know you want me close all the time. Let’s go get your stuff so we can get home and I can get lost in your exquisite body.” The tell-tale signs of arousal began. This man and his words and my body. Woo shame I can’t!

I sent my mom a message to tell her I’m on my way. There was an open house with the estate agent at home in the morning and I hope it was done now. The fact that strangers were milling about in my bedroom gave me weird feelings but my mom was adamant about wanting to sell the place.

**Mama I’m on my way home. Is it fine if I spend the next few days at KK’s? He’s going to London for a while so just want to spend some time with him before he leaves.**

I wanted to surprise KK and tell him I’d be there until Thursday but was planning to only tell him the next evening.

**Mom: No problem ngwana ka. I’m actually leaving home now for dinner with Mark. I guess I’ll go to his place as well. I don’t want to be alone in that house.**

**Me: Oh so I’ll miss you then. Let’s do something this weekend just you and me if you not busy. I feel like we haven’t spent time together in a while.**

**Mom: No problem we'll set something up. Look after yourself Lerato. I hope you guys are being safe nhe?** Really mom! She had to be on that tip right about now.

“My mom’s not home but I told her I’ll be spending the night at your place. Don’t you think I should take my car? What if something comes up and you can’t bring me home tomorrow?” I asked him because of my own plans that he wasn’t aware of.

“What could possibly happen? We’ll make a plan then if we need to. You actually reminded me because I still need to get another car in place of the one I took away.” Oh yes! I had even forgotten that he took his G wagon away because of the memories of Lesego attached to it. I should’ve seen then already that this man loved me.

“You know the G wagon is actually one of my favourite cars. Besides I think I’ve overcome the whole Lesego thing now. Can you not get one again?” I asked smiling at him.

“Are you sure sweetheart? I don’t want to bring hurtful memories to you but it’s also one of my favourite cars.”

“So get it again. Akere (then) we’ll make new memories together and do road trips and stuff. Can’t wait now!”

“We definitely need to do something for the festive holidays. You’ve completed my life Lerato do you know that? I don’t even know how my life functioned before you.” Aww KK says the most sweetest things.

When we got home he waited for me outside because he was still super uncomfortable about coming into my home. As modern as he was with most things he was still quite traditional with others. I packed my stuff quickly and hoped I wasn’t forgetting something.

“Such a big bag? Are you moving in?” He asked helping me put the bag in the boot.

“Hao baby akere (you know) I need options!” He shook his head as if he just couldn’t wrap his head around the female psyche. We drove to his place and as we approached the gate a familiar figure stood there.

“Is that Fezokuhle?” KK asked moving closer to the windscreen. He stopped to the side and got out of the car. I wasn’t about to stay in the car for that confrontation so I also got out. She immediately spotted us and started walking towards us. WTF? What was she doing here?

“Fezokuhle? And then?” KK asked looking quizzically at her.

“Bhuti I’m sorry to show up like this. My parents dropped me off at Bhuti Khaya’s place but Amahle kicked me out the moment my parents left and Ubhuti Khaya went out somewhere. I have no where else to go.” Like Amahle was on another level of crazy. Why didn’t she go to KK’s parents’ place? Why come here?

“So how did you know where I live?” KK asked looking at her angrily.

“Amahle and I used to talk quite a lot when I was still in KZN and she sort of gave me the low down on who you are and where you stay and stuff. Angazi ukuthi ngiyephi bhuti angazi muntu lana eGoli (I have no where else to go and I don’t know anyone here in Joburg)...” I rolled my eyes at her fake innocent look. You could’ve gone to the hotel bitch! For all I know she could’ve conspired with Amahle to come here and entice KK into things. Like how much more drama must my life have especially on a Sunday evening? I was so glad that KK actually asked me to sleep over tonight otherwise this would’ve been happening without me being here.

“Get in the car. We can discuss this when we get to the house,” KK said pointing at the car. We all walked to the car and I got a smug satisfaction of her squeezing at the back because it was a 3 door car. When we got to KK’s place he parked outside and didn’t get into the garage so we entered the house from the main entrance. Fezokuhle was oohing and aahing about how nice the place was and I was rolling my eyes at her comments. KK lead her to the lounge and offered her some water. Always Mr Hospitable. Fezokuhle’s eyes were as big as dinner plates taking everything in. She better not be plotting and planning in that head of hers. I was not even going to sit with her. KK walked upstairs and I followed him.

“And then baby? What’s the plan here?” I asked him as I closed the door to his bedroom.

“I need to call Khaya and find out why this is my problem again,” KK said as he dialled. It turns out both Khaya and Amahle’s phones were off. This whole thing smelled very fishy to me.

“So what’s going to happen now KK?” he sat down on the bed and had his hands around his head.

“Angazi (I don’t know) Lerato. I think she’ll have to sleep here then we’ll sort it out in the morning.” What? Is he being for real right now? He must be joking.

“I don’t think I heard you properly. Ore arobale fa (you saying she must sleep here)?” I was incredulous.

“What else must I do? Put her out on the street? We are still humans and that comes with some level of Ubuntu (humanity).” Is he preaching to me about Ubuntu really?

“Can’t she go to your parents’ house or a hotel or something? I’m very uncomfortable with her sleeping here.”

“I need to speak to Khaya first before I bring my parents into this. Besides my dad and I have just mended our years long rift I don’t want to bother him with this now. Khaya and I need to sort it out.” Wow am I in some alternate universe? I can’t even pull a tantrum and leave because that’s exactly what she would want.

“So the fact that I find it uncomfortable means nothing to you right now?” I was getting angry and I was getting frustrated.

“Your discomfort is noted but what else can I do? We’ll have to do best with the situation that we find ourselves in. I wasn’t raised to ignore people when they need help. Fezokuhle needs help right now and she came to me so I have to help her.”

“So are you saying I was raised that way?”

“What are you talking about? None of this is about you Lerato. I can’t even think right now because nawe u busy uyangibalisela (talking non-stop). Do you want me to take you home then?” Hao Khulekani Khuzwayo Khumalo! My insecurities that are always bubbling just under the surface exploded and my irrational self came out to play.

“Oh is that what you want? So you can be left here with your Fezokuhle Zulu girl that your family approves of? You want to get to know her better without me here to interfere? Tell me KK ke tla tsamaya he (I will leave then)!” I was shouting now and tears of frustration welling.

“What the hell Lerato! Nothing could be further from the truth and you know it. I don’t think you are thinking clearly now so I’m going to go downstairs and fix a light supper for us. I won’t stand here and listen to you say things that you won’t be able to take back.” He stormed out of the bedroom and banged the door. Great going so we are now fighting with freaking Fezokuhle in the house. Why me mara? How must the three of us chill like we’re the best of friends when I know how much Fezokuhle wants my man. This was a very big ask that KK was making of me here. I didn’t know what to do. Just then an sms came in from an unsaved number.

**Game. Set. Match. Bitch.**

It must be Fezokuhle who sent this. Where did she even get my number from? Oh it’s on...



## Insert 58

That girl just didn't understand who I was and all the crap I've dealt with this year. That timid afraid girl was gone and I've BEEN fighting for KK and I wasn't going to stop now. I decided to get comfortable because it seemed like it was going to be a long night like today hasn't been tedious enough as it is. I changed my 'makoti outfit' that I wore to KK's parents and went searching for one of KK's T-shirts to wear with my bum shorts. Not that you could see the shorts because the T-shirt came mid-thigh. I went to the bathroom and realised my face looked kind of tired so I did my whole face wash routine for the evening and felt super refreshed after that. I was going to miss my Sunday night viewing to deal with all this drama.

I walked down the stairs and heard her grating laughter filter through the air. I took a deep breath and put my unaffected face on. KK was standing by the stove stirring something which looked like pasta and miss thang had the audacity to sit at my favourite spot in the kitchen! She noticed me first as I walked in and gave me a dirty look when she realised what I was wearing. I walked up to KK and hugged him on his waist from the back and laid my head on his back.

"So what are we eating baby?" I asked squeezing him tightly. He turned and had a smile on his face when he looked at me. His eyes then traveled down my body and I noticed a flare of desire in his eyes. He took me back in his arms and kissed me. Was KK onto my game and he was helping me along? As always I got lost in his kiss and forgot for a second that Fezokubi was in the room until she cleared her throat. Yep she is Fezokubi in my life nothing is kuhle (beautiful) here. I went to the fridge and took out a bottle of wine I hadn't finished last night and stood on my toes to get the wine glasses from the cupboard.

"Get me a glass too sweetheart please? Fezokuhle would you like a glass?" I heard her agree and I just wanted to hurl the glass at her. I poured us each a glass of wine and got up and sat on the kitchen counter so the T-shirt rode up and was almost right at the top of my thighs. KK kept looking at me and smiling and Kubi looked like she'd swallowed a whole lemon.

"The food will be ready in a short while. Sweetheart please set the table?" he came to me and stood between my legs. I loved this man of mine.

“If I really have to...”I said kissing him on the lips.

“Pretty please? I’ll thank you later.” KK though. I guess we were over our little tiff from the bedroom. I got off the counter and walked towards the dining room.

“Fezokuhle come help sisi. Nothing is for mahala (free) here at the Khuzwayo Hotel.”I didn’t care what KK thought about my comment. I wasn’t going to play nice at all. She followed me to the dining room. She must be really tired with those heels she’s been sporting the whole day.

“What are you doing here Fezokuhle?”I asked her the minute we were out of KK’s view. She smiled at me snidely and folded her arms.

“I came to Joburg to marry the man in that kitchen. Amahle agrees with me and I don’t want to marry her old man! So you can’t succeed Lerato because it’s 2 against 1. Game on!” she said looking smug.

“I don’t know what fantasy world you live in KZN girl but KK is mine and has always been. You are like that meal that gets ordered in a restaurant and the waiter is walking around each and every table asking ‘did you order this’ and everybody doesn’t want it and it ends up going to back to the kitchen to be thrown in the bin. You might have Amahle in your corner but I have KK in mine and that’s the one that matters most.” KK walked in and I took the placemats out.

“Hawu the table is still not done?”he asked looking at the both of us.

“Eish sorry baby we got caught up getting to know each other better.” We eventually sat down to the most awkward meal I’ve had and that’s saying something because the lunch this afternoon was number 1 until now.

“Fezokuhle I need to be at work by 8 tomorrow morning. Please make sure you’re ready by 06:30 so I can take you back to Khaya’s.”

“Yebo (ok) bhuti. Ngiyaxolisa (sorry) to inconvenience you like this on a Sunday evening.” I couldn’t help my eyes rolling and took a gulp of my wine.

“It is quite an imposition but it’s late and there’s nothing that can be done about it tonight. Lerato will show you to one of the guest rooms.” He really was making me the madam of the house. She nodded timidly.

“Oh and another thing...you disrespected uMakhumalo at the lunch this afternoon. I expect you to apologise.” I loved him when he was protecting me and putting people in their place.

“Sorry bhuti uMakhumalo? I don’t recall disrespecting your mom but if I did it unawares I am very sorry. Today has just been quite overwhelming you know being in a new city away from family...” She managed to insult me and try and get some sympathy.

“I’m not talking about my mom Fezokuhle and you know this. Lerato is as good as a Khumalo according to me and you disrespected my woman. Apologise.” KK looked so serious all of a sudden. The warmth that traveled down my spine at those words was comforting. He was declaring that he wanted to make me his wife one day.

“Kodwa (but) bhuti...”

“Apologise right now or get the fuck out of my house!” he shouted. Wow that was hot! Take me now KK!

“Umm...Lerato...I’m sorry about this afternoon...” I could tell she didn’t mean it but nje nna I was happy gore (that) KK dealt with her skinny ass. I got up and started clearing the plates.

“Sweetheart, I need to work on some stuff I’ll be in my study for a while,”he said getting up and leaving both of us there.

“Let me put these in the dishwasher then I will show you to the room you’ll be using...”

“Shame ucabanga ukuthi uwinile nhe (you think you’ve won). Asikakaqedi sisi kusazoshuba lana (we not done yet it’s about to get lit up in here).”she got up and went back to the lounge. Whatever bitch!

After I was done clearing up the kitchen I asked her to follow me to the room. I showed her the room furthest to the main bedroom.

“There’s towels in there and a TV that works so I guess it’s good night to you. Don’t let the bed bugs bite,” I said as I closed the door and left her there. I don’t even know what she was planning to wear because she didn’t bring any bags nothing. Oh well not my problem.

I went to get another bottle of wine and knew I was going to hate myself tomorrow with the hangover at work but I needed a drink. I hope this life of mine wasn’t making me an alcoholic. Just the thought of work was also just adding to my stresses because Amanda was probably also waiting to tell me how this man wasn’t mine but hers. All these girls were going to drive me up the wall. I went to the cinema room and checked whether Date My Family was on Catch Up already but it wasn’t yet. Sigh. I searched for a movie to get lost in but after a while it got boring and I needed KK. I was feeling all kinds of vulnerable so I went searching for him in his study. I heard him talking he must be on the phone.

“You’re giving me excuses Steve. Why hasn’t Vermeulen signed on the dotted line yet?” he must be talking about some or other deal.

“No Steve this is taking too long...you know what you need to do...based on the files...yes...pay the wife a visit...maybe he’ll be agreeable to our terms after that...otherwise we’ll have to deal with him and soon...it’s taking too long and I don’t want to expose myself longer than necessary...I have Lerato now and she can’t be in any danger...I know it complicates things but I love her...ok...bye.” I was getting good at this eavesdropping thing. I’d forgotten that KK ordered people’s killings for his business. He just hasn’t been vocal about that part of his life with me which suited me just fine. I just never realised that my life could be in danger by virtue of his business dealings. If all these girls knew the burdens of being KK’s woman they wouldn’t be so quick to want it. I was surprised at myself that this whole killing thing wasn’t freaking me out more. I walked into his study and he was reading through a file which he promptly closed.

“Hey sweetheart. Is Fezokuhle sleeping?” I walked to him and stood between his legs as he moved back with his chair to accommodate me.

“I don’t know baby and I don’t particularly care...”I sighed.

“Lerato remember what we spoke about regarding your tantrums?” he looked at me straight in the eyes. I thought we had reconciled.

“I’m sorry baby. I’m working on my insecurities it’s just hard when there’s girls throwing themselves at you every 5 seconds...”I looked down. He came close to me and lifted my chin.

“It makes me angry Lerato because I’ve never given you a reason to doubt my feelings for you. I bend over backwards to make sure you know exactly how much I love you. That I would choose you over and over but it frustrates me because it’s as if you don’t see it. What more must I do?” the tears came then.

“I’m sorry KK but I really am working on it. I just love you too much and feel like you’re too good to me that it will all just come tumbling down...I need you to be patient with me in this process.”

“You have to trust in us and my love for you baby. I know you’ve gone through shit loads and I know I also need to be patient with you it just gets frustrating for me at times. I’m sorry about that. I love you sweetheart and will fight for you all day everyday but you also need to be fighting. If a house has a solid foundation it doesn’t matter how hard it rains that house will remain standing. We need to be solid because the rains will come from different directions all the time.” What he was saying was true and I knew it. In my mind I knew it but my heart was taking its sweet time catching up. I needed to have confidence in our relationship and KK’s love for me and hope to God that KK doesn’t let me down. If he did I wouldn’t be able to pull myself through that one.

“I know baby I’m sorry. Can you hold me now please?” I asked him whispering. He came close and hugged me to him while he was still sitting on the chair. He placed his head on my breasts because he was still quite tall even seated.

“I love you Lerato and I say that seriously. It’s not just words for me.”he said squeezing me to him.

“I love you too Mtungwa. Now I remember being promised illegal things and thank yous for setting the table and all...”I said lifting his head and lowering my head to kiss him. I was tired of the deep conversations. Today had been deep conversations from the morning. I needed to just let go and forget for a while.

As he got into the kiss I pushed his chair back and took the T-shirt off and I wasn't wearing my bra underneath. He sat there looking at me with hunger in his eyes. I slowly took my shorts off as well and heard his sharp inhale as he realised I wasn't wearing panties either. He came close to me and kissed me on my pubic bone.

“I can't believe you've been walking around this whole time with no underwear on. Naughty, naughty girl,”he whispered as he plunged his finger inside me and I moaned from the quick way he did it. “Always wet and ready for me huh sweetheart?”he said circling my clit as I opened my legs wider.

“KK...I need you inside me now...please...” he got up from the chair and kissed me hard I didn't even have time to breathe. I unbuckled his belt as he was unbuttoning his shirt. It was all hurried and uncoordinated movements. As soon as I unbuckled his belt he unzipped his pants and took them off together with his boxers.

“Turn around and hold on real tight to the desk...”he said harshly to me. As I turned he spanked my ass and pushed my back down so I was lying flat on the desk with my breasts pressed on the wood.

When he entered me I couldn't help the moan that came out my mouth. He always felt so snug inside me you'd think my body would be used to his girth by now. He took me hard and he took me fast with a side serving of an ass spank or two. It was just what I needed not the sweet gentle lovemaking but this was fucking good and proper. I needed the outlet after all the pent up emotions from today and I think KK needed it too. I don't think he had ever given it to me like this before. We came hard together with him groaning my name as he rained open mouth kisses on my back.

“That was insane!”I said as he pulled out of me and grabbed tissues nearby to wipe his stuff off of me.

He turned me around and pulled me to him and hugged me.

“You sure I wasn’t too rough?” he asked searching my eyes.

“No baby it was just what I needed. I think you needed it too.” I kissed him and Mr Bulge was ready to play again. Recovery time up in here was crazy! He pulled me onto him as he sat in the chair and I rode both of us to an explosive orgasm. I was feeling really sleepy after that and my body was shutting down.

“Sweetheart, let’s go to bed. Tomorrow is going to be a long day with the Fezokuhle drama to add to it.”he sighed.

“Yep and I have to face everyone since I’m now sleeping with the boss.” We got up and I just put only his T-shirt back on and he wore his boxers and pants without the shirt. We walked through the house as quietly as we could because I didn’t want Fezokubi to spot my KK half naked. We had made it to the bedroom when we heard a scream coming from the room she was in.

“Do you think she’s having a bad dream?”As KK asked she screamed again. Both KK and I rushed to her bedroom and when we got in and switched the light on. She was standing butt naked on the bed letting it all hang for everyone to see. I’m about to yank that weave of her head and feed it to her in strands until all of it has disappeared into that vile mouth of hers.

I took the throw at the foot of the bed, got up on the bed and wrapped it around her exposed parts. KK turned his back the minute he realised that she was in her birthday suit.

“What’s going on? Why are you screaming like a mad woman so late at night?”he asked still looking the opposite direction.

“You can turn now she’s decent...”She gave me a smug smile and dropped the throw just as KK turned.

“The fuck...Fezokuhle can you be decent please!”he turned away again.

“Ngiyaxolisa (sorry) bhuti I felt something crawl up my leg. I think it was a spider or something and I have a phobia for crawling things my hands must still be

shaking.” Fezokubi was trying my patience. If she said ‘bhuti’ one more time I would get Steve to come kidnap her and put her in a ‘bhuti’ of a car and dispose of her!

When KK turned around for the second time he was livid.

“That’s it! You are going to a fucking hotel! I don’t need this right now. I’m going to call an Uber and when I come back you better be decently dressed because believe me when I say there’s nothing that you have that could possibly get me hard!” he stormed out.

I laughed out loud I couldn’t help it. She had such ridiculous attempts to try and win KK over I mean really.

“Game. Set. Match. Bitch.”I said and turned walking away.

Gosh how I love this man.



## Insert 59

I woke up to KK's kisses all over my face. Really this guy! I tried to reach out to him with my eyes still closed and the angles of where he should be were all wrong. When I opened my eyes he was smiling at me, kneeling on the side of my bed.

"Morning sweetheart time to get up," he said kissing me on my forehead.

"What time is it? You look like you've been up for a while." I sat up on the bed stretching.

"I woke up at 4:30 so I could go to the gym. It's 6:15 now. We have to get ready for work," he said taking my exposed nipple into his mouth and shooting sensations throughout my body.

"Not if you start things out of the blue baby. Why didn't you wake me? We could've gone together," I asked yawning.

He got up from the carpet and sat next to me on the bed.

"Thought you needed the rest after the late night last night and when I woke up you were dead to the world. I don't even think a bomb going off could've woken you. Besides isn't your gym membership specific to the one close to your place?" KK and his descriptions!

"No baby I have the national membership so I can go to any gym. Next time wake me so I can also get some exercise and endorphins," I said getting out of the bed. My muscles were quite tight thanks to KK's shenanigans with my body.

"I thought I exercised you enough last night." He spanked my bum as I walked towards the bathroom in my birthday suit. The fact that I was walking around naked made me think of Kubi. That girl made my night with all her futile stunts.

KK was quite angry and she kept apologising over and over. She even tried to do the crying thing but KK wasn't having it. I wonder whether she called her partner in crime to report that Operation Thata Indoda ka Lerato (take Lerato's man) didn't work. When would all these women just back the fuck away?

“KK are you going to shower with me?” I shouted from the bathroom.

“We’ll be late if we do that because then I’ll have to have you for breakfast in there first and you know I’m not a 1 minute man,” he said coming into the bathroom all self confidence and sexiness in his workout gear.

“Such an ego Mr K. Ok fair enough let me get ready then. Will you shower in the other room?” He hugged me tightly to him and kissed me. Would I ever get enough of this man?

“Yes let me grab a quick shower.” He took his stuff and left the bathroom.

While taking a shower I thought about the possible drama waiting for me at work today. I wasn’t looking forward to the whispers and looks. My life just had drama for days!

I was done in a few minutes without the KK distraction and got ready for the special day ahead. I decided to wear a pant suit today because they always made me feel powerful and invincible. KK walked in as I was drying off looking delicious with a towel around his waist.

“I can’t wait for the business to close for the end of the year so we can spend some quality time together somewhere,” he said coming behind me to hold me.

“Me too baby but please don’t start anything with me now because then we’ll be really late which is the last thing I need seeing as everyone probably knows now that we’re dating.”

“You stress too much sweetheart. In fact I think just to make a statement we should even coordinate our outfits for the day. I see you’re wearing a grey suit with a blue shirt so I’ll do the same.” KK was crazy.

“Ha a (No) baby please. There’s already going to be too much attention. Wear something completely different please. In fact a purple suit with a green shirt and gold shoes will do.” He burst out laughing.

“I love you sweetheart but I will not be looking like a clown at work even for you. I’m a CEO of a thriving company people need to take me seriously hawu.” Gosh KK! If people actually knew how laid back their CEO was.

“You’re my CEO of a thriving company.” I kissed him as I walked passed him to get my clothes. He smiled at me and continued getting ready.

When we were eventually done he was wearing a dark maroon suit, white shirt, black tie and shoes. He looked yummy as always.

“Look at you Mr CEO. Looking good baby.” I pulled him close to me and kissed him. I didn’t have to bend my neck too much because I was already wearing my heels.

“Let’s grab breakfast quick and be on our way,” he said taking my hand.

“You couldn’t possibly have made breakfast but I smell eggs and stuff?” I looked at him questioningly as we walked down the stairs.

“I’m good but not that good. Ma Rose is here and she made it.” Ma Rose?

When we got downstairs there was an older woman moving about in the kitchen clearing dishes.

“Morning Ma. Ninjani (how are you)?” KK greeted her. She turned and smiled at him.

“Ngiyaphila ngane yami (I’m ok my child). Ukudla kulungile (the food is ready). Sawubona sisi (hello mam),” she said greeting me.

“Ma Rose lona uLerato intombi yami (this is Lerato my woman).” KK introduced us as he took a seat at the kitchen table.

“Sawubona ma (hello ma). Kelebogela go goitse (pleasure to meet you).” I extended my hand. I said the last part in my language I had no idea how to say that in Zulu.

“Nami futhi ntombi (the pleasure is mine). Kwakuhle ukuzwa ukuthi uKhulekani uthole umuntu azohlekisana naye (it’s good to hear that KK’s found himself a companion). Enjoy breakfast.” She smiled and left.

I sat next to KK and he was already eating cereal. Ma Rose had a proper breakfast set out with toast and everything.

“I’m glad I don’t live here full time because I would gain weight like crazy,” I said dishing up the eggs and bacon. KK laughed.

“Ah you know sweetheart I’d keep you fit.” He winked at me. This guy though!

“So baby what’s the story exactly with you and me at work. I thought about it while in the shower that people don’t know we have a history so if I rock up today and you and I are suddenly dating after only a week at KI I’m going to look like a slut of note. Let’s rather say we’re exploring the relationship atleast for another week or two.” I risked a glance at him. He didn’t seem happy about my suggestion and sighed.

“Ok sweetheart I guess it makes sense what you’re saying. All I’m saying is that our year end function is on the 25th of this month and by then I don’t want there to be a doubt who my date will be for the evening.”

“That’s fine. Thanks baby I’m just trying to manage public relations here.” I bumped him with my shoulder.

“Manage away sweetheart but I’m impatient to just get to the point where everyone knows and I can kiss you in the canteen if the desire strikes me.” KK was on some other level so he would want to kiss me in the canteen?

“In the canteen baby?” I raised my eyebrows looking at him.

“Yes sweetheart if you hadn’t realised ‘touch’ is my love language. I’m very affectionate with people I love and you happen to be at the top of that list.” He kissed me on the lips. He must’ve attended a course to charm women somewhere.

We got onto the road to work around 07:30 which was fine because officially I had to be at work by 08:30. KK was listening to his talk radio things while I was busy checking my social media sites. Just then I got a message from Portia.

**Friend I think I'm in labour because I'm spotting. Jimmy is packing my bag and then we going to hospital. I'm so scared.**

**Me: Don't be scared friend it's going to be ok. I'll speak to Jimmy to get an update. Can't wait to meet my god child. Will pray for you. Mcwaa!**

“Portia thinks she is in labour. She's going to the hospital.”

“Oh hope it goes well for her. Will keep her in my prayers.” He is so sweet this man of mine. I smiled while looking at him. When we stopped at some robot he looked at me.

“What is it sweetheart?”

“Thanks for that. For saying you'll pray for her. It makes me love you even more than I do if that's even possible.” He took my hand in his.

“For a moment there thought you were going to say you don't believe I pray. Phela (You know) I prayed for you to come back to me when you were in hospital.”

“I know my mom told me although she never really told me what you were saying in your prayer and I can't remember. Care to share?” I squeezed his hand. He gave me that dimple smile of his.

“That sweetheart is between me, God and apparently your mom.” My mom wouldn't tell me either.

We got to work at about 08:10 and KK insisted I go through the basement lift with him. He gave me a very warm, tight hug and passionate kiss goodbye. When I walked out of his office Noah was already at his desk.

“Hey girl did you have a good weekend?” He asked typing away on his keyboard not the least bit surprised that I was coming out of KK's office.

“It was a good one and yours?” I asked stopping by his desk. Good was the understatement of the year when it came to a description of my weekend.

“Too short but don’t tell Mr K I said that,” I laughed with him. KK came and stood by the door.

“Miss Molemi please refrain from distracting my staff at work including me,” He said acting all serious and I laughed out loud. Just then the lift pinged and Amanda stepped out wearing a dress that was bordering on obscene. How unprofessional.

“Oh um morning gents. Lerato,” she greeted me coolly. Shame I wasn’t even about her life right now.

“Mr K, Noah have an awesome day. Amanda.” I turned and went to press the lift to go to my floor.

“You too sweetheart.” KK though I wasn’t sure whether he forgot himself or he just wasn’t giving a damn about Amanda being there. That made me smile as I walked into the lift and flicked my fingers to say goodbye. Morning already made.

When I got to my floor I got curious looks from everyone and Yolisa was especially icy this morning. We had the client presentation on Wednesday so we were still based in the damn meeting room. I was grateful for that today though because then people wouldn’t be staring at me the whole time. Walking through the floor I could literally hear the hushed whispers. I found Zama already there but John and Yolisa were still at their desks.

“Whoo girl how are you?” She greeted the minute I came in.

“I’m good Zee how are you?”

“Mina ngi (I’m) right. So how was the weekend?” she asked leaning forward on the desk.

“It was good and yours?” I smiled at her.

“No no girl hawu why are you not volunteering information here? So did KK take care of you like he promised,” she smiled. Oh if she only knew exactly how KK took care of me.

“Ya he dropped me off at home safely.” I smiled at her.

“Lerato hawu! Did you guys kiss ke (atleast)?” She wasn’t going to let this go so I had to give her something.

“There might have been that kind of activity maybe.” She clapped her hands.

“I told you he was into you! You are officially the most popular and unpopular girl in the building at this moment! Give me a high five,” she said raising her hand so I high-fived her. Yolisa came in then.

“And the high-fiving in here? Are you congratulating your friend for slutting herself to the boss Zama?” I rolled my eyes because I couldn’t believe she took it there so quickly and so early in the morning.

“You’re only mad because she succeeded in doing something with the boss in a week when you’ve been here a year and dololo (zero) interest from him. He didn’t even know your name on Friday. Additionally I wonder how he would feel about these allegations you are making against him and my friend. Maybe you can ask him Lerato?” I loved how Zama just stood up for me shame. I was just going to ignore Yolisa because I have no energy for people like her. She clicked her tongue and screamed at John from the door to come through so we could start with the work.

Thank goodness we worked until lunch without much incident. I assumed the drama was going to start now during lunch time. I saw I had a text from Jimmy giving me an update that Portia definitely was in labour and the contractions had started. Shame my friend I couldn’t even imagine.

Zama and I went to the canteen and just like in the movie it got super silent as we walked in with all eyes on us.

“I feel like I’m walking with a celeb,” Zama whispered.

“What nonsense Zee.” We queued for the food orders and the noise resumed. People here were so dramatic. When the silence came again I realised its source KK had decided to come to the canteen. Really? He greeted people as he walked right towards us.

“Ladies how are we doing?” He asked standing next to us in the queue.

“Hi Mr K we are doing great how are you?” Zee beamed at him. I felt like I was doing some live theatre show.

“I’m also well Zama. Would you ladies like to join me for lunch in my office?” He asked with that smile of his staring straight at me. What was he playing at?

“Lerato would we like to join Mr K for lunch in his office?” Zama asked me practically jumping up and down with excitement.

“Yes sure. Thanks Mr K.” I said finally looking at him directly. He looked like he was worried about me then I understood why he did this.

“Great. Shall we?” He asked motioning with his arms for us to lead the way. I squared my shoulders and did my most confident walk out of that canteen.

When we got to the 25th floor Noah was just putting 3 brown bags of food on the coffee table in KK’s office.

“I ordered some burgers hope that’s ok?” He said as we sat down and he took them out of the bag.

“Yep thanks Mr K. I just need to wash my hands will be back now now,” Zama responded. I think I was just still trying to figure out what’s going on and she was trying to give us some space. Once she left I turned to KK.

“And then? The dramatic fetching me at the canteen for lunch? KK!”

“I figured it would be awkward for you so thought I’d rescue you from it.”



“I think you’ve made it worse KK. You could’ve just texted me then I would’ve come up here instead of the dramatic entrance at the canteen.” I was getting angry because I didn’t understand why KK had to make this harder than it is.

“I was just trying to help and if you had come up here instead of going to the canteen first they would’ve thought you’re a coward hiding away somewhere.” Gosh! This was such an impossible situation.

“You can’t keep saving me all the time KK. At some point I need to stand up for myself and handle things my own way. You fetching me at the canteen has done more damage than good! It’s my second week here and already there’s drama associated with my name. This is the first step in my career KK allow me to manage this please? I thought we spoke about this in the morning...” I let out a breath. Gosh that rant took it out of me.

Zama came back in before KK could respond but I think he was a bit hurt by my comments. This whole thing was just so frustrating for me though because he just kept making things worse instead of better. How was I going to work here when there’s drama like this? Can I have one drama free zone in my life?

KK handed us the burgers with some fizzy drinks and we ate in relative silence with Zama filling it in with her chatter. KK kept giving me intense looks there and I just didn’t enjoy the whole lunch thing. I felt suffocated by KK and all the drama that came with him. I really thought I was too young for all this.

“Thanks Mr K that was very nice,” Zama said getting up. KK smiled but it didn’t reach his eyes.

“Only a pleasure Zama. I actually have a conference call I need to be getting ready for. Thanks ladies,” he also got up and went to his desk. I guess he was effectively dismissing us.

“Thank you for the lunch,” I said as I walked out not even looking at him. I felt the pin-pricks of tears behind my eyes and thought I honestly can’t breakdown now, not in front of Zama.

“Lerato u (are you) right?” Just as she asked my traitorous tear escaped. She took my hand and pulled me to the bathroom on the 25th floor. At least I knew it was private up here because KK was the only one on this floor. The bathrooms weren’t your normal public toilets. They were very posh and opulent with a small seating area. Once we sat down the tears just came all at once.

“Kwenzenjani (what’s wrong)? Did you and Mr K have a fight?” She asked rubbing my back.

“I’m just overwhelmed Zee this is such an impossible situation! I don’t want to be that girl at the office surrounded by drama and he doesn’t get it. It’s easy for him because he’s established himself already I’m just starting out.” I kept wiping the tears coming out and blew my nose.

“Get yourself together girl. Mr K was probably trying to save you from the stares and talks at the canteen. I don’t know him well but he doesn’t strike me as a guy who just does things without thinking about the consequences. He likes you Lerato one of the hottest bachelors in the country likes you. This should be a happy time for you and besides you can’t look like you’ve been crying after having lunch with our hot boss. Sula lezo inyembezi (wipe those tears) then we can get back to work with our heads held high. Imagine how irritated Yolisa will be,” she smiled at me. Shame Zama was really becoming a good friend.

“You’re right thanks Zama,” I got up and she gave me a hug. I went to the mirror and rinsed my eyes with water and didn’t look too worse for wear. I just wanted this day to be over now.

When we got to the meeting room Yolisa was already there.

“Are we slacking on work now? Lunch ends at 14:00. I’ll have to report this to Vusi.” The levels that this girl was prepared to go to were insane.

“It’s 14:05 Yolisa geez and you are not our manager!” I shouted at her. She seemed surprised by my outburst.

“Oh just because you had lunch with Mr K today now you think you run this company? Well I’ve got news for you what’s inside your panties can’t run the

company sisi (sister) and besides next month you'll be old news. Your pussy isn't gold plated so he'll get tired of you soon enough. So enjoy being flavour of the month because that's what Mr K does." What crap was she talking now and she was screaming these things to me.

"You and I are both employees here and I think we should get on with what we get paid to do," I said quietly.

"Now you want to tell me what to do when you're busy sleeping your way to the top!" She screamed at me and Vusi came in then.

"What's going on here! Yolisa why are you shouting like a mad woman! I could hear you from my office!" Suddenly she had nothing to say.

"Uhm Vusi I'm sorry about the shouting. We were just having a difference of opinion," I said trying to salvage the situation.

"Don't protect her Lerato I heard what she said to you. I need both of you in my office now!" He walked out and we followed behind him. Zama gave me an apologetic look as I walked out. People were whispering and looking at us as we were summoned to Vusi's office. Oh this life of mine I just can't!

When we got into his office he asked me to close the door then we sat down across the table from him.

"Yolisa what's going on? Do you know how unprofessional it is to be shouting like that at another colleague? What happened?" Vusi asked looking at her.

"Zama and Lerato came in late from lunch and when I raised it with them Lerato said I wasn't their manager." It sounded so silly.

"Well are you their manager?" She looked surprised by the question like she was expecting him to jump on me for being late.

"I'm not but we have work to do and they were late!"

"Yoli it's now 14:15 so how late were they exactly? Lerato what time did you come back from lunch?" He asked looking at me.

“We got to the meeting room at 14:05. Sorry about that Vusi both Zama and I will make it up this afternoon...”

“There’s no need for that. We don’t work in a factory here I mean really! So Yoli where does Mr Khuzwayo and Lerato’s body parts fit into the lateness?” Vusi asked turning the attention back to her.

“Uhm...well...Lerato is sleeping with Mr K.” Wow really! She is just going to throw it out there like that? Vusi cleared his throat uncomfortably.

“Did you see them sleeping together?” Vusi asked calmly.

“Uhm...well...no...but they left together on Friday after the drinks and had lunch together today...so...everybody’s talking about it...”you could see she felt a bit stupid now.

“Yoli you know our ethical code of conduct right? We are an ethical company that treats our colleagues with respect at all times despite having differences. Firstly you’ve breached that code of conduct because you insulted not only one of our new employees but our CEO as well. Secondly are you aware that Lerato can lodge a grievance against you in HR? What she does with her personal time and who she chooses to spend that time with has absolutely nothing to do with you. I will have to report this to HR and hope that Mr K will not take further steps which could result in a Disciplinary Hearing and possible dismissal. I’ll be removing you from mentoring the graduates and I’m quite sure John can handle it from here. Lerato would you like to lodge a grievance?” He asked looking at me.

“No I won’t be lodging a grievance I just want to continue with my work,” I said quietly.

“Ok fair enough I do think Yoli owes you an apology though so Yolisa do you have anything you want to say to Lerato?”

“Sorry...” she said quietly. I know she didn’t mean it but I didn’t actually care. This had been a work day from hell. Vusi told us we could go and when we left his office I just needed a moment so I went to the bathroom and locked myself in the stall and just sat there.

Why couldn't I just have a normal life and not attract all this drama. It just felt like I was always living in some parallel universe while everyone lived in the normal world. Why did I have to fall for KK to begin with and apply to work here as well. This wasn't going to work and I needed to speak to KK now. So I got up and took the lift to the 25th floor.

"Hi Noah is KK on a con-call?" I asked him as I got to his desk.

"Not yet. They moved it to 15:00 so he's just busy with some contracts he has to sign. You can go in."

I walked into his office and he looked up surprised to see me. I closed the door behind me.

"Sweetheart? What's up? You don't look ok," he got up and walked towards me.

"Wait please KK don't touch me." I sat down on the couch and he sat opposite me.

"What's going on?" The concern was evident on his face.

"I can't do this..." the tears came then and wouldn't stop

## Insert 60

KK stood there in silence while I sobbed my heart out. I just felt so defeated so tired of fighting all the time for everything. I was breaking down because I felt I had been strong for so long. I had been insulted an insane number of times in my pursuit for happiness and love. I just couldn't be strong anymore. I couldn't pretend any longer that all these hurtful insults and opinions people had of me didn't cut deep. That I didn't have gaping slash wounds in my heart from the constant metaphorical beatings I had received this year.

“Noah reschedule my meetings for the rest of the day. Let Vusi know that Lerato is with me and tell him to ask Zama to pack her stuff and bring it up here to you. I don't want to be disturbed at all. Thanks.”

I felt his arms come around me and he took me on his lap and held me which made me cry even more. He just held me and didn't say anything and I tried to pull as much strength as I could from him. It must've been about 30 minutes later when I eventually stopped and just had the hiccups of crying too much. He kissed my forehead and turned my face so he could look into my eyes.

“What's wrong sweetheart? What can't you do?” He asked softly, quietly. I took a deep shaky breath.

“I'm overwhelmed KK. The abuse I've suffered in just this past month is just insane.”

“I know sweetheart and I've contributed to that with my family drama and all that. I'm sorry Lerato. What triggered these feelings today? What happened?” Should I even tell him the truth? I don't know what he'll do to Yolisa when he finds out. The fact that I had literally told him to stay out of it and let me handle it and yet here I was rushing to him. I was a bag of contradictions and I didn't know how KK put up with me.

“Well...uhm...Yolisa and I had a fallout this afternoon. Zama and I got back to the meeting room just a few minutes after 2pm and Yolisa was saying she was going to tell Vusi about it. That I thought I could run this company with my gold-plated pussy because I was sleeping my way to the top. I'm paraphrasing here because I

don't remember it word for word. Oh and something about me being flavour of the month..." I went on to explain what happened in Vusi's office. KK got progressively stiff as I relayed the story. When I lifted my eyes to look at him he was livid.

"Who is this fucking Yolisa girl?" He asked through clenched teeth.

"On Friday she was with Amanda at the drinks...I never wanted to cause trouble for anyone KK."

"So when you came in here and said you can't do this? What did you mean?" He looked at me intensely. Here it goes...

"KK you know I love you. In fact I don't think I've ever loved anyone the way I love you. You mean everything to me..." the waterworks started again. Gosh I had to stop this crying nonsense.

"Are you breaking up with me?" He said it so softly I hardly heard him. What? Why would he think I'm breaking up with him?

"No KK! I'm not breaking up with you but...I think I need to resign so our relationship can have a chance of making it. It's not healthy to be doing the relationship and work thing together. People are whispering and pointing at me behind my back having an opinion of me sleeping my way to the top. I thought I was prepared for that and I was ready to withstand the drama but I think I've stood up against so many things today it reached boiling point. My achievements will never be mine and it will always be because you're my man. I love you baby but my career is also important and I don't want to resent you in the end..." the tears were back with a vengeance.

"I don't understand why people just can't mind their own businesses. Speaking as your CEO and putting my emotions aside you have the best chance at having a successful career when you use KI as your launch pad. The program you're in is the most sought after in the country. If you leave here and go somewhere else you'll be doing yourself a huge disservice. Not that you won't be successful but you have the best chance here Lerato." I knew what he meant because that's the reason why I applied here in the first place.

“I don’t want to go but I don’t think I have a choice...”

“There’s always a choice sweetheart. I know you wanted to handle this on your own but I feel like I need to intervene now. We can’t have people doing whatever they want because this is not their business it’s mine. You’re a top talent that can add significant value to this business and people that chase that kind of value away from my business will deal with me. I think I need to call a town hall and address this once and for all. As for this Yolisa girl she must start looking for another job.”  
KK though wanting to call a staff meeting for the whole building over me?

“No baby people are people hey they will do whatever they want. You can’t tell people not to have an opinion and discuss things when it’s the culture you’ve cultivated here. Either way you’ve always been a very private person about your personal life and I don’t want you to now start sharing your love life with your staff. It’s like posting stuff on social media then people feel like they own you and your relationship.” He exhaled.

“I know you’re right but I don’t like to see you hurting like this sweetheart. I think people are just talking about it now because it’s something new. Give it until the end of this year and see how you feel afterwards. If the situation hasn’t improved then I will personally find you a great job elsewhere. In any case they think that you’ll be here today gone tomorrow which isn’t going to happen. They’ll have to get used to it when they see that you’re my favourite flavour from here on out. No variety for me. I don’t even know what Yolisa was referring to with flavour of the month comment because I’ve never even looked in the direction of anyone here at work. Don’t take what people say to heart Lerato because you’ll go crazy.” He kissed me on the lips and I returned the kiss. I loved this man so much with all the drama that came with him. He was right though I needed to focus on us and not let what people say get to me.

“Let me go speak to Vusi then we go home sweetheart. I’ve asked Zama to bring your stuff upstairs I don’t know if she’s done it yet though. Are you feeling better?” He asked hugging me.

“I am actually thanks. I think it was just an amalgamation of all the drama from the past few weeks that exploded today. I’m sorry you have to move things around and I’m like bunking work now.”



“You’re dating the boss it must come with some perks.”

“Baby...can I tell Zama the truth about us? She’s been such a trooper defending me at each turn despite her not knowing all the facts.” I looked at him and he smiled.

“Sure I don’t mind. I’ve been wanting to tell everyone anyway. If you trust her and you’re comfortable doing it then go ahead. I’ll actually call her when I get downstairs to come up for a few minutes.”

“Thanks baby. Please don’t fire Yolisa? You’ll get negative publicity for an unfair dismissal over an intern fight. I think it will also make me less popular with everyone and people will walk on egg shells around me afraid to lose their jobs if they even look in my direction.”

“You’ve got a point but she’s getting a written warning and I will tell Vusi to keep a close eye on her. One mistake and she’s out. I should hire you as my Public Relations Officer you very good at strategising about it. I’ll send Zama up.” He left and closed his office door. I sat back down and took a deep breath. I was an emotional wreck and needed to schedule an appointment with my psychologist soon maybe Friday after work. There were a lot of things that happened just this weekend that can drive anyone crazy.

Zama came in with my bags and phone a few minutes later.

“Hey girl are you ok? You went into Vusi’s office and you never came back. What happened?” She came and sat next to me on the couch.

“I’m ok my friend. Vusi put Yolisa in her place and asked me if I want to lodge a grievance but I said no. John is going to be our only mentor going forward I’m happy about that at least.”

“Oh ya I think she was crying in the loo and came back with very red eyes to take her stuff from the meeting room. I actually thought maybe she’s fired or something. And wena (you) how did you end up here?”

“Well...I got a bit emotional and needed to speak to KK. I actually wanted to resign but he talked me back to my senses...”

“I don’t get it. Why would you come and talk to him about it? I get he likes you but surely you guys aren’t dating already...” she looked confused. I cleared my throat.

“Actually...we’ve been dating for a few months. We met outside this interview process when I forgot one of my shopping bags in a restaurant. When I came here for an interview we were both surprised that we were in this situation. We tried hard to fight it but couldn’t. I love him Zee and he loves me. He’s made me so happy. My concern in the beginning was the transparency and objectivity of the interview process but KK wasn’t involved in the selection process. So I don’t want you to think I’m here because I slept with him,” I said looking at her apprehensively.

“Wait a minute Lerato...I’m on the sleeping together thing. I know you got the job on merit girl your solution was great. You’re super intelligent I have no doubt why you are here. How exciting about you and Mr K or KK as you call him! Hmm that’s so sexy! I could tell those vibes were there. I’m happy for you girl!” She said clapping her hands. Zama was crazy though. I actually laughed for the first time that day.

“Thanks Zee. I consider you my friend that’s why I wanted you to know.” She smiled at that and gave me a hug. KK came in just then.

“Ukhalisa intombi yami lapho (are you making my woman cry there) Zama?” he asked as he walked in.

“Whoo ngeke (never) Mr K. I’m just celebrating the good news I heard. All I can say is une stayela phela umgani wami uyababa (you have taste you know my friend is hot)!” Zama said laughing and we joined in.

“Of course I’ve got taste Miss Mkhize was that ever in question? Are you ready to go sweetheart?” KK asked looking at me.

“Oh you done for the day?” Zama asked looking at me.

“Yes but I’ll be back tomorrow to deal with all the shade I’ll be getting.”

“Don’t worry my friend we’re in this together. Thanks for trusting me and I won’t tell anyone about this,” she said hugging me.

“Thanks for being there today. It was a rough day but you made it better.” She waved goodbye as she left.

I went to KK and hugged him tightly.

“I love you Mtungwa. I’m sorry about my childish behaviour today. I think it just got too much for me. Thanks for your patience and your support. You mean everything to me baby.” He smiled at me and kissed me.

“I love you too sweetheart. We will both grow from this. Remember the house I spoke about the other day? These are all the rains coming at us. Let’s go home. I want to take you out for dinner before I drop you off.” Oh ya in the midst of the drama I forgot to tell him about staying over.

“Actually...I asked my mom if I could stay over until Wednesday night then I’ll go home Thursday after work.” His face lit up with joy.

“Really sweetheart? You just made my week! Thanks for this it’s now become a celebratory dinner. I’m taking you to one of my favourite restaurants. Let’s go.” He took my hand and we went to the car. This day was a rollercoaster ride for me but I was glad it was coming to an end.

On our drive back to KK’s place he kept staring at the rear view mirror and getting visibly tense as the journey wore on. He was quite animated and talkative when we left work but got progressively silent.

“KK what’s wrong? You seem tense,” I asked looking at him.

“Sweetheart please dial Steve’s number for me?” he said sounding worried. So I took his phone and he gave me the code to unlock it and I called Steve. His phone rang in the speakers in the car because he was connected to Bluetooth.

“Boss...”he answered. He actually sounded young. I was expecting a manly deep voice.

“Steve I think I’m being followed. They are being clever about it because they’ve changed cars along the way but every time I’ve turned there’s been a car following the same pattern.” What? KK thought we were being followed? That sounded really intense and dangerous.

“Can you send me your location boss then I can track on satellite to see what’s happening. I’ll run on the number plates within a 2km radius from you. They probably using fake plates.”

“Ok I’ll send it to you now. Please invoke the security protocol at my estate. Sharp.” I kept looking back trying to see what he was seeing but all I could see were just normal cars with people going about their business.

“Don’t be scared sweetheart. I’ve taken numerous advanced driving courses and I will drive us to safety if I need to. Unfortunately we won’t be able to go to a restaurant until I can figure out what’s going on. I’ll make something for us at home.”he said taking my hand in his and kissing it.

“You seem very calm about this. Is it something that happens often?”

“I’m busy with a very big deal now and the guy is reluctant to sell. He might be the one retaliating right now I don’t know. I’ve gathered many enemies over time. I just don’t want to speculate until Steve has all the facts. I’m sorry sweetheart you really didn’t need this after the day you’ve had.” Wow this shit just got real. When we got to his place we got in and he immediately locked all the doors as we got inside. I looked at him moving about checking all windows and outside. You could see he was used to this and had done it before.

“Baby are our lives in danger?” I asked him as he came back to the kitchen where I was still rooted to the spot.

“No sweetheart. I’ll protect you with my life if I have to but there’s security guards roaming about in the yard but they are inconspicuous so you won’t even know they are there. Steve’s on his way so we can figure out who is tailing me. Come here

give me a hug.” I went willingly and he held me tightly telling me not to worry. I think his alternate lives were now intersecting but it was more complicated now because he had me to worry about. I hoped he knew what he was doing. I definitely didn’t want to die now. They say a cat has nine lives and I’d already cheated death once with Lesego sending me to hospital. I hoped I was more like the cat and had eight more as a minimum.

## Insert 61

“So what do you feel like eating? I should get dinner started before Steve comes through,” KK asked me as he poured me a glass of wine.

“Anything is fine baby. Whatever is quickest. I just need to call Jimmy and check on Portia. He hasn’t sent me an update since early morning.” I was so involved in my own drama today that for a moment I forgot all about Portia and her major job of bringing life to this earth. I called Jimmy and the phone rang non-stop with no answer. I sent him a message and hoped everything was fine.

“Any news?” KK asked moving about in the kitchen.

“Um no he’s not picking up. I hope everything is fine though.”

“We’ll assume no news is good news. Maybe the guy passed out. I’ve seen that in movies where guys pass out in the delivery room.” I couldn’t picture Jimmy passing out because of childbirth, he was so hardcore looking.

“Do you think you’d pass out if I was giving birth?” I asked him taking a sip of my wine. He turned from the stove and came and stood between my legs.

“Are you thinking of having my babies sweetheart?” He asked kissing me.

“Hao KK it’s a hypothetical question and there’ll be no talk about babies now maybe much much later.”

“I know it’s just wishful thinking at this point. You need to be stable in your career first before you start doing maternity leave things. Besides by the time we are ready to have little Khumalo’s running around I want you to already have your business up and running so you can be flexible when it comes to the kids.” How thoughtful of him. Was it even possible that a guy like this exists in this life? I’m glad it didn’t turn into some deep argument about me and my Mirena. I shook my head to get rid of the memory recall that was encroaching in my mind. I hugged KK to me.

“Thanks baby. I’m glad we are on the same page.”

“We are baby but bear in mind we can’t wait too long because I’m already 32 I don’t want to be a grandpa dad to my kids. I also hope the marriage part isn’t also coming much much later right?” he said looking at me with a shy smile. What was he saying?

“What do you mean?”

“Hawu Lerato. I’ve made my intentions clear with you from the start angithi (right). You know I want to marry you right?” Was this his round about way of proposing? My heart rate accelerated.

“Yes you’ve mentioned it before but...are you proposing?” I asked him biting my lower lip. As much as I loved him I wasn’t ready for marriage. Not now. He laughed then.

“Don’t look so scared sweetheart. No I’m not proposing but you know I will eventually right? I hope that’s not even in question. Let me check the meat before I burn it.” He kissed me on the lips and went to the oven. So KK really was serious about this forever thing and that made me really happy. I don’t even know why I doubted it because he’s been saying that he is in this for the long haul. You just don’t find guys that are actually serious about that. Some will promise you the stars and the moon and then leave you to marry someone else that they just dated for a few months.

The kitchen smelled good and I realised I was actually hungry because I didn’t eat much during lunch. He was grilling chicken and we were going to have it with a green salad and sautéed carrots and baby marrows. He didn’t seem too phased about whoever was following him so that put me at ease too. I went and set the table for two in the dining room while he was dishing up the food. When we sat down to eat I realised it was actually much better than being at a restaurant because it was just the two of us with his jazz music in the background. I guess jazz was an acquired taste because I wasn’t minding it so much anymore. My phone rang and it was Jimmy.

“Hi Jimmy. Is Portia ok?” I asked answering on the first ring.

“Sho Lerato. Ya o sharp (yes he’s fine) she just gave birth now to our beautiful baby girl Reneilwe. She had complications with the natural birth so they had to do a C-section but they are both fine,” he sounded really tired and tears of relief just flowed down my cheeks. KK was looking at me puzzled gesturing with his hands to ask what’s going on.

“That’s great Jimmy. Congratulations! Please send all my love to both of them and send me pics when you can. I will try and speak to her tomorrow if I can. Thanks for letting me know I’ll tell the divas.” We said our goodbyes and I was busy wiping my eyes.

“What happened? Is everything ok?” KK asked when I finished the call.

“Yep everything is fine. They had to do a c-section but mom and baby are doing well.”

“So why were you crying then?” he looked at me like I was crazy.

“Hao baby tears of joy. I’m so happy for her. It’s like the culmination of all the drama she had and now to have brought a life into this world. It’s such a miracle.” I said sniffing. KK shook his head.

“You’re a crier nhe? You cry when you’re happy, sad, angry, frustrated even when you’re coming. I never know if I’ve done a good thing or not.” he was starting with his silliness now.

“Don’t start baby. I’m just so happy for her and I’m glad she kept the baby because she’s received so many blessing from having her. The food is delicious as always.” I smiled at him.

“Like it was going to be anything but...” KK and his arrogance sometimes.

“Maybe I should cook tomorrow.” He actually choked on his food and started coughing. Really? Did he doubt my cooking abilities to that extent? I would show him tomorrow hao this guy.

“Wow KK really? You’re even like trying to kill yourself before you taste it?” I asked him looking at him.



“You honestly don’t have to baby because I don’t mind cooking.” Yho this man! He wasn’t even pretending that he was keen to taste my cooking.

“Benefit of the doubt KK I might just surprise you.”

“I appreciate you for many of your talents sweetheart and believe me when I say many. I mean you even have a gold-plated pussy apparently,” he burst out laughing. I threw a carrot at him.

“Wa bhora (you’re boring) shame! You won’t get my gold-plated pussy tonight then we’ll see who’ll have the last laugh.” How did Yolisa even think of something like that. Some people were very creative with their insults.

“As if you could stay away sweetheart. Steve is here so I’ll be in the study with him for a while,” he said getting up.

“Ok no problem. I’ll clear up here and do some work since I bunked today. You know our presentation is on Wednesday so just putting the final touches on it.” I said also getting up.

“I know you ladies will do great but Vusi will be there with you guys. Can I get a kiss to tide me over while I figure out who is making my car a twitter handle and following it.” Gosh KK he made me laugh with that one. I came to his side of the table and we kissed briefly. I could actually live like this, with him everyday.

After I was done packing the dishes into the washer I decided to go work upstairs in KK’s bedroom. I could watch TV from there and catch up on work. I changed into my PJ shorts and a tank top and I had taken our left over wine with upstairs. Before I started working I called my mom and checked whether she was ok and she was with Mark so she sounded happy. I’m glad she had actually found someone that she could spend her time with because it would be so lonely to be on your own in that humongous house. I also texted the divas and told them the good news about Portia and baby Riri.

After all that procrastination I finally started working. We had to update our projections because Vusi had finally supplied us with the correct client data that we needed to use. Because of the confidential nature of the numbers they couldn’t

share the actual numbers with us while we were still in the interview process. So I had to update all the graphs to make sure it aligned with the client. Our biggest challenge was the costing which we had to share with Vusi tomorrow regarding what the proposed rates for the client would be. I knew costing theoretically but the reality was a bit of a challenge.

I lost track of time and realised it was 22:30 when KK came into the room and was surprised to find me still working.

“I thought you’d be sleeping by now. You had such an emotionally stressful day,” he said taking his T-shirt off and that served as the distraction I needed. I quickly saved my document and placed the laptop on the side table.

“I didn’t realise it was that late. How did the meeting with Steve go?” he exhaled and came and sat next to me.

“Not good at all. There is definitely someone who’s put out surveillance on me. What Steve managed to gather is that the service has been outsourced and he currently can’t trace it back to the person who requested it. So I don’t know anymore than I did when I noticed it this afternoon. We’ll just have to beef up security until I can figure it out. I’m just worried that I won’t be here for about 4 days and how you’ll be kept safe in my absence.” He looked at me worriedly.

“Maybe they don’t know about me and because you’re not here they’ll just wait for you to come back.”

“Believe me sweetheart, they know. Steve says I’ve been under surveillance for a while now but it wasn’t as evident as it is now. It means who ever is doing this has formalised a plan on how to deal with me. I’m vulnerable now because I have something to lose which is you.” I felt a chill go down my spine. So this person was probably planning to do to me what KK said Steve must do to that Vermeulen guy’s wife. I couldn’t even ask whether it might be related because I was eavesdropping that day.

“So what does this mean exactly? Am I going to have bodyguards now?” I felt like a gangster’s girlfriend now.

“Nothing as obvious as that but this thing made me realise I need to teach you to use a gun and tomorrow night Steve’s booked you for an advance driving course. In my absence you’ll be driving my car because it’s definitely safer than yours.” What? I think this was more serious than KK was letting on. I had to learn how to use a gun?

“I just started driving the other day and now I have to do advanced driving? And how do I explain me driving your Merc to my mom? Can’t I just use my own car and your bodyguards will just follow me?” I was getting scared now.

“No sweetheart. The security protocol includes 5 other cars that we’ll be using as decoys. They look exactly like my car with fake number plates that match mine. The estate is secured so when we come out every morning they won’t know which one actually has me inside. It will force them to spread their resources too thinly and hopefully we’ll be able to isolate one of them and bring them in for questioning. You’ll have to ask your mom to stay here for the rest of the week because then I’ll know you’re safe. I’m sorry sweetheart but your safety is my number 1 responsibility.” He was busy rubbing his head with his one hand. I felt like I was in some 007 movie or something with decoy cars and guns and advanced driving!’

“Umm...ok I’ll speak to my mom tomorrow. I’ll have to come up with a convincing story because she’ll flip if I tell her the truth. Is my family safe though? If they can’t get to me won’t they target them? What about your family?” I felt the panic rising in my throat. He squeezed my hand.

“Steve’s already assigned some people to watch over your mom, brother and dad but I don’t think they are in immediate danger. My parents have guards anyway so I’m not worried about them. I’m hoping to wrap this up by Thursday night before I leave for London. I will do everything in my power to make sure that no harm comes to any of you.” I placed my head on his shoulder and he put his arm around me. I sure knew how to pick them.

“I want to take a quick shower before bed. Do you want to join me?” he asked getting up and walking towards the bathroom. That question seemed to hold a promise of something else so I was right behind him going to the bathroom.

He had already started the shower when I got there and was taking off his shorts and underwear all in one go. I didn't need an invitation to take off my PJ's off so I did the same. We both got into the shower and it was warm and steamy in there. He had a really big shower with a gloriously big shower head.

He came closer to me and took my mouth in one of his passionate kisses. I melted against him and held him tightly to me. My head was tilted all the way back because I was barefoot and he was so tall this man of mine. He had his one hand on my face controlling the angles that he was kissing me with and his other hand was firmly on my ass kneading. His hand slipped down my tummy and cupped me, his fingers circling my clitoris and sending a delicious sensation right through my centre.

"Ohh, yes, that's...mmm..." I moaned into his mouth. I closed my eyes and dropped my head on his chest as he continued with his talented fingers. I curled my hands around his neck so I could balance myself and open myself wider to his exploring fingers and he kissed me again. He started talking against my lips between kisses, "I love you baby and I'll never let anything happen to you. I would give my life first before I let you come to harm..." His fingers were still working wonders inside me.

"hmm...I love you too baby...I want to be with you forever..."

"Me too sweetheart. I love how you feel on my fingers, you're so fucken ready for me. I'm going to make you come so fucking hard." he slipped two fingers inside me.

"Oh yes," I moaned, "it's so...oh, don't stop."

"Does it feel good sweetheart? It feels so good to me. This is mine...okay?"

"It's all yours KK..." I was feeling so hot in that shower and the steam was just adding to the mood inside.

"I want it to be mine forever sweetheart," he whispered biting my lower lip slightly.

“Mmm...KK I’m so close...talk to me baby...”

“You want me to make you come sweetheart?”

“hmm...yes please KK...then I want you inside me after that...”

“I’ll do whatever you want Lerato. I can’t fucking wait to slip inside you and feel how wet you are from what I’m doing to you now...” KK’s fingers began to twist as he drew them out and sunk them back in deep making sure they glided right against that hidden spot. He laid his thumb gently over my clit and worked it while continuing with the rhythm inside me. “I’m going to slide myself right inside you...I’m so fucking hard and ready for you sweetheart...”

“Yes! Yes baby...” I moaned my breath mingling with his. Suddenly he pressed down with his thumb and pushed his fingers as deep as they would go inside me and that sent ripples through me. I dug my nails into his neck as the sensations washed through me.

“Say you’re mine Lerato,” he whispered.

“I’m yours KK! I’m yours baby! Fuck, every single day I’m yours...oh my god.” KK lifted me up and I wrapped my legs around him. It was difficult to keep them there because we were both wet from the water. He placed me against the wall so he could balance us and I felt him between my legs. Just the feel of his tip so close to me was causing my internal muscles to contract already. He pushed in swiftly in one move, forcing his way in deeper and deeper.

“Fuck sweetheart you’re so wet.” He pulled back, the feel of his dick moving inside me hard as rock. He slammed back into me and I cried out from the intensity. “you’re so fucking tight...” his words got louder and louder as he slammed into me over and over again. I tried to use the wall as leverage to push myself against him forcing him deeper inside me and the second orgasm ripped through me. I cried out as my toes curled and I grabbed the back of his neck hard.

“Fuck sweetheart!” KK shouted as he exploded inside me. It was so hot with the combined moaning, grunting and panting in the heat of the shower. KK rested his forehead against mine and had his eyes closed breathing heavily.

“I’m sorry that I’m putting your life in danger like this. I promise I’m going to fix this.” I just held him tightly to me and he eventually lowered me onto the floor. We had been in the water so long that our toes and fingers looked like prunes. I wondered whether the guards outside heard us because we were pretty loud. Gosh! I even forgot about them.

After we washed up quickly I just put lotion on my body and got into the covers. KK looked at his phone with a frown.

“I have so many missed calls from Khaya. Something must be wrong.” He dialled his number.

“Bafo? Yini (what)? Ngimgcine izolo mangimbizela I taxi ukuthi aye e (Last I saw her she was in a taxi on her way to) hotel. Nizamile uku founa (did you try to call her)? Angazi bafo kuyofanele niye emaphoyiseni (I don’t know brother. You’ll have to go to the cops). Ungazise ukuthi kwenzekani (keep me updated). Sharp.” He got into the covers next to me.

“What’s wrong baby?”

“My brother says Fezokuhle is missing. I’ll ask Steve to look into it.” The drama never stops. I was proud of myself that she actually hadn’t crossed my mind once. I hope Fezokubi wasn’t pulling stunts. I was going to kill her if this was some plot.

\*\*\*\*\*

**The blog just got to over 10 000 visitors! Thank you so much for reading my work and telling others about it I really appreciate it. I will definitely be posting an insert a day just to celebrate!!!**

## Insert 62

“Where’s Ma Rose today?” I asked KK as he prepared some cereal for us. I was kind of looking forward to the full breakfast we had yesterday there was no Ma Rose in sight.

“She only comes once a week. I asked her to come yesterday because you were here and I was going to the gym so I wouldn’t have had time to make breakfast. Little did I know that you’d be here for longer than that.” He always thought ahead and made things happen. Maybe that’s how he’s managed to be so successful in his life. Well besides killing people that is.

“So what do you usually do then in the mornings?” I asked him drinking some coffee I brewed. I had to do something in this kitchen. I felt so useless with KK around taking care of me and making me food all the time.

“I grab something at the canteen at work. Clearly you aren’t ready to have breakfast dates there as yet.” I felt bad that I was messing with his morning routine. On top of that he couldn’t even go to gym because of all the drama with the spies.

“Askies baby. Some day soon it will be fine,” I said to him taking my bowl of cereal.

“Ahh you think I mind any of this? Waking up with you in my arms beats any eggs and bacon I can get from the canteen,” he said as he kissed me on the forehead. KK always knew how to make me feel at ease. He was just so attentive and sensitive to my emotions. I just hoped that I was doing the same for him or at least on a learning curve to do better.

“You’re so good to me baby.”

“I don’t know about that. Your life might be in danger so I’m not sure how good I am to you now...Steve is on his way so we can leave. Some cars arrived last night and the last one just got here.” I exhaled. I even forgot about the whole thing because KK had that thing about him that made me focus only on him and us. I needed to remember that when I was at work and people were dealing with me from all angles.

“You said not to be worried so I’m not. I think the only thing stressing me is when you’re not here. It’s such a big house and I’ll be here all alone.” I thought about that while getting ready this morning. I’m not used to this house so every sound is going to make me very jumpy.

“I thought you’d invite a friend to come over to keep you company?”

“In the midst of the danger baby! Who would agree?”

“Hao angithi (obviously) you’re not going to tell them sweetheart. You guys could have a weekend long pyjama party.” KK though took things so simple.

“Boss...” Steve walked in and walked to us.

“Sho Steve let me introduce you. This is Lerato. Lerato this is Steve.” When I turned around and looked at him I don’t know what I was expecting but definitely not this. Steve was probably about KK’s age because he looked way younger than I thought he was. He was quite a hot, yellow bone something. He had a scar on his right cheek but it added to his look instead of ruining it. He was wearing all black from head to toe and had one arm full of tattoo’s it looked like he was wearing them as a sleeve. He had a short mo-hawk cut.

“First Lady nice to finally meet you,” he said nodding his head towards me. First Lady really? He sounded well educated. In my head he was supposed to be a club bouncer looking guy but he was well built without being bulky.

“Hi Steve a pleasure to meet you too. I’ve heard lots about you.” He smiled slightly.

“Is it all set?” KK asked as he motioned for Steve to follow him. I assume they were going to discuss the finer details in his study because I wasn’t supposed to know everything for my own safety apparently. I finished my cereal and went upstairs to get my stuff. I thought back to my conversation with KK who would I invite here without raising suspicion and who wouldn’t ask a lot of questions? Noni wasn’t mobile so Friday would be a problem for her to move about and KG told me she was going home this week. My results were also coming out this Friday. Argh! Yet another thing to stress about.



“Sweetheart are you ready to go?” KK found me chilling by the lounge waiting for them. I nodded and he carried my stuff to the car. My heart was beating so fast because I didn’t know what was going to happen. In my mind I was imagining a drive-by shooting like you see in those American gangster movies. I felt panic rising to strangle my air circulation and I did my breathing exercises to calm myself down.

We got into the car and Steve followed us in a black Mercedes Benz C63S. I guess he also liked “the best or nothing”. KK must be paying him really well because I knew that kind of car didn’t come cheap.

“So...” I said trying to distract myself from the panic. There were four cars exactly like KK’s in front of us with guys that might’ve looked like KK from afar. I guess he had stunt doubles. All four cars had a female companion wearing black as well like I was. KK asked me not to wear bright colours today so our decoys could be the same. He was also wearing a black suit. So much for not being that colour coordinated couple.

“So what sweetheart?” KK asked getting out of the estate.

“You didn’t tell me Steve was so young! I thought he was some old guy working for you,” I said to him pointing towards the back because Steve was behind us somewhere. KK kept looking at the rear view mirror and changing lanes every five seconds.

“You never asked besides you should never make assumptions because it might compromise your position.” What he said was true. I figured I’d leave him to concentrate on the road so I don’t distract him with my frivolous questions especially when it sounds like he’s in a lecturing mood. He was trying to get us to work alive. Steve called him and he answered on bluetooth.

“Sho...”

“Boss there’s a blue 3 series that’s followed us all the way from the estate. I’m almost certain it’s one of them. The others have reported that they have more than 2 vehicles trailing them. I will follow this beamer guy once you get to work and

isolate him. I already have my team ready at your offices.” How many people did Steve have in his team?

“Ok sharp. You better catch that bastard and you better make him sing like a canary.”

“Sho boss,” Steve said and hung up. I felt like I was in some deep mafia movie. One day I might just write a book about this special life of mine. I wonder whether it would even sell? Who would be interested in my random life anyway? I checked my phone to keep myself busy and Portia had sent a few pics of the baby to the group. Baby Riri was adorable!

**KG: Aww Porsche I want one.** Mxm KG was crazy she didn't even have a man.

**Portia: remember that when I ask you to babysit one of these days. Childbirth is not for sissies hey. I'm in so much pain from the stitches.**

**Me: askies friend ofole (get better) shame. Are you breastfeeding?**

**Portia: trying to but I don't have milk. The nurses say I must just leave her to suck on my breasts although nothing is coming out so it can stimulate the milk. I feel like I'm abusing this child.**

**KG: patience my friend. I heard gore drinking Stoney helps and I think something to do with beer.** Where did she even hear that?

**Me: yho! Stoney and beer? No Porsche I'll ask my mom what's the best thing for that maybe she knows. Don't listen to KG she doesn't have a child.**

**KG: Nna le wena ratshwana mos (you and I are the same though).**

**Portia: I forgot how crazy you guys are. Where's Noni?**

**KG: akere (you know) Noni is receiving some medical attention from Dr Odirile Molemi.** I rolled my eyes. I honestly didn't want to think about my brother like that. I sighed out loud.

“Yini (what is it)?” KK asked placing his hand on my bare thigh because the dress had ridden up. His hand was so warm.

“Ag nothing. KG is just talking about Noni and Odi getting it on. I don’t want to think about my brother like that.” KK laughed.

“I doubt he’s thinking about you and all the naughty things you make me do night in and out draining all my energy. You’re a strict master and you’ve made poor helpless me your sex slave.”

“What? Nna (me) the master? Please KK as if.” I laughed this guy was crazy. We eventually got to the basement parking and as we got out I was super relieved. I’m still alive and ready to fight the bitches up in this building. I think I still had adrenaline coursing through me. I did air punches in my head.

When we got to his office he kissed me goodbye but not after kneading my ass like it was dough. Now my dress was slightly wrinkled. This guy! I waved hello to Noah because he was on the phone as I made my way to the lift.

When I got to our floor people turned to look at me and I actually didn’t give a damn. They can all go and die. I was feeling very grateful for being alive today. As I passed them and they were staring at me I would wave at them with a smile and walk on. I needed a soundtrack for this scene. Yolisa was nowhere in sight. Maybe she wasn’t here yet. I found Zama already in the meeting room. What time did she get here every morning and I asked her as much.

“I shower at gym then come straight here. I can’t sleep this week anyway because I’m stressing about the results. Phela kunini ngitshela abantu indaba zabo if ku yi fail i embarrassment engaka (I’ve been telling people shit so if I fail it’s going to be an embarrassment of note)! Yho ngeke mngani (I can’t afford that friend)!” Zama was so dramatic.

“Hao ke bo mang bao (who are these people)?”

“Angithi bengi defender wena (I was busy defending you). Mangizwa nje umuntu athi ‘Lerato’ mangidlula ngivele ngimthele nga ma salad (If I heard anyone mention Lerato I would be all over them immediately). Mind you I’m sure baningi

abo Lerato la ku le (there's a lot of Leratos in this) building." I went to her and hugged her although she was sitting down.

"You make it better Zee thank you."

"Let's get cracking girl. We have a meeting with Vusi at 10. Angazi uJohn naye ukuthi uphi (I don't even know where John is). We still have to update the graphs and review that costing we did initially." I sat down and pulled out my laptop.

"I updated all the financial data last night and tweaked the costing a little bit. I'll e-mail it to you now then we can finalise."

I heard Vusi come into the office around 09:30 as he was greeting everyone on the floor. I asked to speak to him in his office. I realised Yolisa was not at work today I hope KK didn't change his mind and fire her after all.

"You wanted to see me?" Vusi said as he sat down.

"Yes Vusi firstly I wanted to apologise for not coming back to work yesterday afternoon. I was pretty shaken up and just needed some time to collect myself. I did catch up on the work at home though. I also just wanted to reassure you that I remain committed to doing this job to the best of my ability and I will prove to you that you didn't make a bad decision picking me to be part of your team and this program. Lastly my personal life shouldn't spill over into my professional life and I apologise for that as well." He sat there smiling at me.

"Quite a mouthful Miss Molemi but all points noted. I wasn't expecting an apology because you were victimised yesterday but I guess it shows the kind of person you are. I don't regret anything pertaining to you and Zama you ladies are one of the best recruits we've had in a while. So we sitting soon to go through the numbers right?" I liked Vusi he was such an objective and fair manager.

"Yep at 10. See you then. Thanks for your time," I said as I got up and left the office.

When we eventually sat with him with the numbers he was very happy with them we just needed to make some changes to the costing. There were somethings we

had forgotten to add. John was off sick apparently so we were flying solo today. When we were done with Vusi, Zama quickly went to the loo so I checked my phone and had a message from KK.

**I'm having flashbacks from last night and it's getting very hard to concentrate on this proposal I'm reviewing.**

**Me: why are you taking me back there. I'm squirming in my seat now thanks to you.**

**KK: it's only fair then both of us are uncomfortable. I love your squirming especially on top of me.**

**Me: and I love that filthy mouth of yours especially on my gold plated...** I smiled as Zama walked in.

“Bese (and then)? Who is charming you there on the phone? Is it Mr K?” she asked sitting down and I nodded shyly. I took one last look on my phone and burst out laughing.

**KK: I've always wanted to have gold teeth. Maybe I should take a bite tonight.**

KK was so silly.

“Ya nhe nami ngidinga umuntu ozongihlekisa so (I also need someone to make me laugh like this)!”

“All in good time Zee. Your man is out there waiting for you. It'll come unexpectedly though just like KK came into my life. Don't rush it.”

“Easy for you to say. Nami ngifuna uku tweeter ukuthi #uvukileumalambane (I also want to tweet about #finallygotsome)! Phela kulambekile (I'm really hungry) girl.” I burst out laughing again. Zama was on another level of craziness. This wasn't turning out to be a bad day after all. I hoped that it would stay this way. Both KK and I were still alive so that had to count for something.

“So what are you doing this weekend?” I asked her suddenly a thought brewing in my head.

“Depends. If I’ve passed well I will be drunk from celebrating. If I haven’t then I’ll be drunk from wallowing. Why?”

“Do you want to get drunk together either way? KK’s going to London Thursday night and he’s asked me to stay at his place because he’s expecting some delivery sometime during the weekend. Could use some company...” I had to spin a lie here because he didn’t even have a dog I could use as a decoy. You see how I’m catching on the KK and Steve lingo. She squealed putting her hands together.

“Would love to! I can’t believe I’ll be spending some time in the big boss’s house! At least now I have something to look forward to regardless of the damn results.” I shook my head. Zama was too much energy for me.

“We going to be fine Zee you’ll see.”

“Here’s to hoping...” her stressing was starting to stress me out. Just then I received a message from KK.

**Steve caught the beamer guy so I’m going to them. I shouldn’t be long and will be back by the end of the day. Love you.**

I hoped that guy told them what they wanted to know so this whole thing could be over. I wasn’t cut out for this gangster-type life I was in right now.

## Insert 63

“So is Mr K whisking us away to his office for lunch again?” Zama asked as we walked down to the canteen at lunch time.

“Nope. He’s not even in the building at this moment.”

“So you mean we are dining like commoners today,” she said pouting. Zama was insane really.

The whispers and the looks were there but I wasn’t bothered to even pay attention to them. I needed to focus on KK and myself because like he said entertaining all the randomness isn’t going to be valuable in my life. After we got our food we went and sat at the furthest corner so we could eat in peace without getting indigestion from the negative vibes.

“So do I bring my stuff on Friday for our weekend fun?” She asked as we dug into the food.

“No Zee you’re coming Thursday after work. We’ll come to work together on Friday. KK said I could drive his car that’s going to be fun!” I was being sarcastic. I had to show some interest so that Zama doesn’t let on that there’s a bigger reason here.

“Ya nhe the people here will just have to be strong. If you could see the looks I’m seeing behind you. Abantu ba nomona mani (people have jealousy issues!)” she said pointing her fork at me.

“Oh well. I’ve decided not to give a... they can all go jump.”

“So tell me is KK as good as he looks like he is in bed,” she asked lowering her voice conspiratorially. This girl did she really think I was that girl? No details though just one liners.

“I don’t kiss and tell but let’s just say he knows his way around the feminine form,” I said as my lower muscles clenched from memory. I missed him now and couldn’t wait to get home and get reacquainted with him.

“I knew you weren’t going to tell me anything worthwhile wena (you) and your secretive nature.” What did she expect though? KK was still our boss at the end of the day.

“We’ll see how you are when you finally get saved from your drought. How long has it been anyway?” She rolled her eyes.

“It feels like my whole 22 years! Probably about a year or so. I broke up with my boyfriend last year so somewhere there.” What? That was a very long time poor Zama shame.

“Wow friend you must have a whole spider village living in there now,” I teased her. She laughed out loud.

“Usathi (You’re talking about a) spider. I think my hymen has grown back on it’s been so long. Once I eventually sleep with someone he’s going to think I’m a virgin. I can’t do the one night stand thing so I’ve just had to be strong hey.” She sighed. Ya she was in a drought of note.

“You also don’t want to get sick hey. One of my ex boyfriends is actually HIV positive.” I said thinking back to Mtho. I hope he was ok and taking care of himself. All my exes had drama for days.

After lunch we went back to work and the day passed without much drama before I realised people were going home. KK hadn’t contacted me since the last message I got. I wondered whether they were still busy. Once Zama left I figured I’d call him and find out what’s up because it was already 5pm.

“Hello First Lady,” Steve answered his phone. Hao where was he and what was he doing that he couldn’t answer the phone?

“Hi Steve was just wondering whether KK will be coming back anytime soon?” It was awkward to speak to Steve on the phone.

“He’s a bit tied up at the moment but he should be there by 6 so just hang ten and don’t go outside.” He said and hung up. Rude much?



Gosh I better go up to his office apartment and wait for him there. I packed up my stuff and made my way to the lift. The lift pinged open and Amanda was in there also going up. I got in, ignored her and realised she had '25' pressed. So was she planning to catch KK before he left for the day or what? So I pressed the number just to emphasise the point and the lift doors closed.

"G is the button for the ground floor," she said but I didn't even acknowledge her and looked at my phone. Within seconds she was in front of me covering my phone screen. Really?

"You think just because you're screwing the boss you're all that? I've also been there, done that. He'll get tired of you soon enough then you'll be left out to dry." She whispered through gritted teeth. I was so tired of all these women claiming ownership of a man that didn't belong to them. If I was still that insecure girl that comment would've broken me but not today. Today I was happy to be alive and super secure in my relationship with KK so I was pulling a Mbeté on her straight.

I snatched my phone from her filthy hand as the lift doors opened. Noah was still at the desk typing away. I got out first, waved at Noah and walked towards KK's office.

"Hi Noah is KK in? Wanted to run something past him," I heard Amanda say.

"If you had asked nicely I would've told you that he's not here and saved you the trip." I said as I closed the door and shut them out. I really wasn't interested in anything she had to say at this point. I was feeling quite satisfied with myself.

I got into his office and went and sat on the couch and took off my shoes. What a long day! Tomorrow we had the presentation with the client at 10 in the morning. I wondered how the security things were going to work but guess that was KK's problem to worry about. I decided to call my mom and tell her about the whole weekend thing. She was a bit reluctant at first because she said she was concerned that I was spending too much time with KK and then had to throw in the 'safe sex' talk as the icing on the cake. Gosh!

My phone rang as I finished the call with my mom and it was a private number. "Hello...hello?" I said. There was just silence and what sounded like heavy breathing on the other side.

"Hello who is this?" I started getting agitated now because I didn't know whether Lesego was stalking me again or what.

"...h...hhelp...help...me," it sounded like Fezokubi but could it be? The line went dead after that. Hao and then? Has she really just called me and asked for help? I didn't know whether KK was still busy so I decided to wait for him to get here. The call had really unnerved me. Was her life in danger or what? Where was she?

A few minutes later I was standing by KK's ceiling to floor windows looking at the scenery of the traffic stuck on the N1 when I felt someone put their arms around me. I screamed and pushed my elbow into the person behind me.

"Shh sweetheart it's just me," he said kissing my cheek. I sagged against him because I was busy wriggling trying to get free.

"Oh thank god!" I turned around and hugged him.

"What's wrong? What has you so freaked out?" He asked soothing me with his scent. I looked at him.

"I think Fezokubi is in trouble," I said breaking away from him to fetch my phone. He looked at me puzzled.

"Fezokubi?" Oh shit! I was so used to calling her that in my head I forgot to fix the name for public consumption.

"Umm I meant Fezokuhle. She called me and sounded in distress." When KK understood what I meant he laughed out loud.

"Fezokubi? Oh my word Lerato how did you even come up with that?" He asked tears coming out of his eyes. KK was focusing on the wrong thing here!

"KK Fezo could be in trouble!" Eventually he calmed down sufficiently to think straight.

“Sorry sweetheart but that just made my day. I asked Steve to look into this Fezo disappearance and I’ll tell him about the phone call. I think it’s suspicious that she would call you when she is in danger instead of calling the police or her own parents. Did she memorise your numbers in the short time that she was here? I told Steve something is off about this whole Fezo is missing thing.” I guess he had a point because I definitely wouldn’t call someone I met just recently and I evidently despised.

“So you think we should just ignore it? She was asking me to help her on the call.” I asked him sitting down on the couch. He poured himself a single of whisky and joined me on the couch. He drank it all in one go. I only realised as he lifted his glass that his knuckles were bloodied.

“Baby what happened to your hands?” I knelt in front of him and for the first time realised how untidy he looked. His shirt was unbuttoned at the top, his sleeves rolled up and he had some splatters of blood on his white shirt.

“I’m ok sweetheart don’t worry. I’ll just put some ice on it when I get home. That idiot guy wouldn’t say a thing can you believe it? Steve used all torture methods he knows but the guy wouldn’t budge. So we letting him starve for a few days and see whether that makes him change his mind. The body can’t handle 3 days of no water so on day 2 we’ll visit him and see if he’s persuaded then.” Wow. So it meant this thing wasn’t over by a long shot.

“That’s so disappointing baby. I was hoping this would be over by the time you left,” I sighed.

“I know and I wish I could reschedule but they specifically asked for me and me not going will close possible business opportunities for a very long time. We’ve been working on this for a whole year now. I’ve asked Steve to be at the house with you so that if anything happens he is close by.” How awkward was that going to be having Steve around. He seemed to sense my concern.

“Don’t worry sweetheart you’ll hardly know he is there. I just need to know that you’ll be safe in my absence and I trust Steve with my own life. I know he’ll take good care of you.”

“I guess I’ll definitely be safer if he is there. I’m just going to miss you that’s all. Let’s get home so I can put some ice on that hand for you,” I said as I got up from the carpet.

“We first need to go to the advanced driving then we can go home. I’m not leaving anything to chance sweetheart. You’ll also be able to get some practice driving my car before Friday.”

I completely forgot about that. After such a long day then I still have to advance drive. Oh my gosh. If all these girls knew how complicated life is being with KK they wouldn’t want it so much.

“If we really, really have to...” He pulled me on his lap and I put my arm around his neck.

“I’m sorry it’s such a mission to be in a relationship with me but like I said before I’m going to fix this. Okay?” He said looking into my eyes as if he had read my mind earlier on.

“It’s the rains right? So our house will still stand. Let’s get it over with so we can go home.” He smiled at me.

“I like that so you recognise my home as yours.” He kissed me then and it was definitely like coming home. I had missed him today although we were together this morning. Before it got heated he stopped and I was still yearning for more. I thought of Zama then and couldn’t even imagine it.

We eventually got to Zwartkops Racecourse with Steve’s car because KK said they couldn’t use the decoy thing again. This was an exhausting thing to keep the unknown enemy guessing the whole time. Steve was driving KK’s car but he was going to take a longer route to get there so they can suss out whether we were still being followed.

When we got there all the AMG cars for all the classes were there from the A class to the GTS I actually started getting excited when I saw all those cars. When we got off I rushed to the parked cars and KK followed me smiling.

“I’m in Mercedes Benz heaven!” I said moving from one to the other.

“I’m glad you’re excited by it now because you weren’t too keen earlier on,” he came and put his arm around me. He changed his bloody shirt in the office apartment and wore a clean one. Some guy came and greeted us and introduced himself as Charles.

“I hear you’re the lucky lady that gets to ride one of our powerful machines?” He said looking at me. I nodded. “Ok awesome. KK mentioned to me that we have to do a crash course because this course is actually a full day activity but we going to give you the shortened version for now. You can then come back at a later stage and do the full one. Is that ok?”

“Yep sounds good to me.” I smiled at him.

“Great. We going to try and equip you with practical defensive driving tactics as well as the ability to make critical driving decisions in dangerous situations. We’ll look briefly at collision avoidance, skid control techniques and some breaking, steering and acceleration skills. Should we get started?”

“Let’s do it. Can’t wait.”

“KK asked that we use the E class so once we’ve done the crash course maybe you can drive the GTS around just to get a feel for the car. Let me get the keys then we can get started.” Oh wow! This was absolutely awesome.

“Thanks baby. This is incredible.” I hugged him.

“I’m glad you’re so excited sweetheart. Please just focus ok? Remember why we are here and why we’re doing this.” There he goes again Mr Lecture but I knew he was right. I just wanted to forget just for a second and enjoy this moment.

“I know baby I promise I’ll be super focused.” I kissed him as Charles lead me to the car. It felt weird to be in a car that looks like KK’s and I’m in the driver’s seat instead of the other side.

When we started I was a little bit nervous and anxious because Charles was saying we were going to reach speeds of 210 km/h! I’ve never driven that fast ever. The

highest I've done was probably like 110 so this was definitely not in my comfort zone. There were a number of turns on the track but Charles guided me through it and about half way I started enjoying myself because I was even getting used to the automatic car. It was so stress relieving to just press on that accelerator and feel the car respond to each and every command I gave it. I didn't have an addictive personality but I could definitely get addicted to this adrenaline rushing through my body. We did about 5 laps where he was teaching something different in each lap then the last lap I had to put it all together.

When I eventually parked the car I was nervous that I wasn't going to enjoy being back in my Mazda. KK was waiting for us there. I opened the car door and ran straight into his arms. He picked me up and twirled me around. I think it was my most carefree moment in a very long time. It just felt like a moment carved out of the crazy world we were part of and dedicated to just me and my man. He was laughing and I was screaming giving him kisses on his face.

"That was amazing baby. Oh my god! We coming back next weekend nhe then I can do the full day thing?" I said as I calmed down.

"Sure sweetheart I don't see why not. Thanks Charles. Looks like you've converted another person to a speed junkie." KK shook hands with him and Charles walked inside. It was already dark outside and it was around 8 in the evening.

"Wow that was an experience and a half but now I'm starving," I said as I felt my stomach grumble. I definitely didn't want to cook anymore. I hoped KK and I had a lot of time and I would get to cook for him one day. He took my hand and walked me towards the building.

"I'm glad you said that because I've organised for us to have supper here."

"Oh do they have a restaurant here?" I asked following him. I had changed into flats for the whole driving thing so I wasn't about to go back to the heels.

KK led us into the building and it looked like a showroom you would have at a car dealership then we went around one of the cars and there laid out on the floor was a blanket with those Asian small tables that you sit cross legged by and plates

covered in those silver dishes with wine and candles all around. The lights were dimmed so it created this very cosy ambiance. Oh my KK. I always knew he was thoughtful and considerate but never would've pegged him for a romantic as well.

"Aww baby this is beautiful!" I gave him a kiss.

"Thought you could use a break from the dramatic life we lead. Come let's sit." We sat across each other and he poured me some wine. It was red not my favourite but this one was delicious and accompanied the food beautifully. We actually connected and chatted like the world's troubles weren't waiting for us as soon as we walked out the door.

"Thanks for this baby. I really really appreciate it. I love you so much," I said taking his hand across the table. He squeezed my hand.

"I love you too sweetheart. More than you'll ever know." He kissed it. Just then his phone rang, he looked at the screen and answered it.

"Steve...what...Are you sure...Shit...Ok thanks." He hung up and looked stressed all of a sudden. Guess the moment was over back to the real life.

"What's wrong?" I asked looking at him.

"They found a dead body in a dumpster in Hillbrow and it might be Fezokuhle." Huh? Fezo was dead? I just spoke to her a few hours ago! I didn't like her but she was a person and she was dead. To make it worse she called me for help. My vision blurred as the tears started coming. Fezokuhle was dead and I could've tried harder to save her. Did that make me a bad person?

## Insert 64

We were on our way to KK's parents' house. After he heard from Steve he called his brother then his dad and they all agreed that we needed to have a meeting at their house. It was already 10 in the evening. This day had taken a turn for the worst.

“Sanibonani (hello everyone),” KK said as he walked into the lounge holding my hand. Khaya, Amahle and the parents were already seated there. I also greeted and they responded.

“How did this happen Khaya? That girl's safety was entrusted in your hands!” Mr Khumalo said calmly but you could see that he was trying to suppress his anger.

“Angazi baba (I don't know dad). Fezo got to our house and we settled her in one of the bedrooms. I left to meet with the restaurant manager. When I got back Amahle said that she wasn't happy to stay and insisted on going to Khulekani's house.”

“Wait stop right there. I found Fezo at my estate and she said Amahle kicked her out the minute bafo left,” KK corrected. Everybody looked at Amahle and she started squirming in her seat.

“Amahle? Why are there conflicting stories regarding how Fezo left your home?” KK's dad asked calmly.

“Hmm...well Fezo was desperate to leave our house and kept saying that she belonged with KK so I got her a taxi to take her there. I never heard from her again until KK called later that morning and said that he had taken her to a hotel.” She was the picture of innocence but I knew she was more involved than she let on. KK's dad should his head.

“So nawe (even you) Khulekani why did you kick her out and take her to a hotel? And if you didn't want her there why did you not call us and she would've come to stay here with us?” It was like a match where all eyes were following the ball. Whoever was being asked questions everyone would look at them. KK cleared his throat.



“Uhhh Fezo wasn’t the easiest house guest to have. She even pretended to have felt something on her foot while sleeping and screamed out loud. When I went in to investigate she was naked on top of the bed. I felt like she was trying to seduce me or something and I felt disrespected in my own house. I know she got to the hotel safely because she checked in and the footage shows this. She also checked out the next morning but then I don’t know what happened thereafter.” He exhaled. I could tell that he blamed himself for her death just as much as I did.

“Do you realise that we’ve managed to kill both of Mbatha’s daughters! How can we ever make this right? There’s nothing in the world that can. I have the difficult task of calling them and telling them about this. How will I even explain it when I don’t understand it myself?” I was looking down I didn’t even know how this was going to be resolved.

“Uhhh baba I’ve asked some private investigators to look into it. Can you please give me 24 hours for them to investigate and maybe by tomorrow night we can have some concrete information regarding what happened?” KK asked. Amahle’s head whipped up and our eyes met because I had been looking at her the whole time. She stared straight into my eyes and smiled slightly. That further reinforced my theory that she might have had something to do with this and was hoping that it would be left to cops to find out what happened. We all knew they weren’t particularly thorough.

“Kulungile ndodana (ok my son). Ngizozwa ngawe kusasa (I’ll hear from you tomorrow). It’s very late I think we should all get some sleep. Tomorrow is going to be a long day.”

KK was quiet on our way home and I just let him be. This was a very difficult situation. When we got home he said he needed to speak to Steve about the whole Fezo thing so he disappeared into the study. I wondered whether Steve ever slept because KK contacted him at all sorts of hours. I headed upstairs and decided to take a bath. I put some gospel music on my phone because the mood was definitely somber and poured some bubbles in the bath. I got in and just soaked for a while. I was more and more convinced that Amahle had something to do with this but could I share my suspicion with KK without having any evidence? I didn’t want it to seem like I was accusing his family of killing people. I had to think about this one carefully.

After I was done I put on my PJ's and decided to go check in the room that she was supposed to be sleeping in. Although Ma Rose had cleaned it up I'm sure if she found something she wouldn't throw it away. I opened the wardrobes and the side table drawers but nothing was out of the ordinary. I checked under the bed but it was dark so I couldn't really see anything. I moved the bed and something rattled. I went to the KK's room to get my phone so I could use the light from it and when I checked again there was a phone under the bed. I wrapped my hand in a towel and managed to tap it until I could reach for it. I put it in the towel because I didn't want my prints anywhere near that phone. I walked down to the study and found KK just sitting there staring into space with a glass of whisky in his hand.

"Baby? Why you sitting here all alone? I'm here you know that right?" I put the phone down and pushed his chair back so I could sit on top of him. He put his one arm around me.

"I feel responsible Lerato. Did it matter that she called you for help? Why didn't I just take it seriously! I thought it was all a ploy and I lost the plot. I should have called my parents and taken her there myself. Damn it!" He placed the glass on the table and banged it. I hugged him to me.

"You couldn't have known baby. This is not your fault. Whoever killed her is responsible for this. Don't bear a burden that's not yours." I whispered to him. He held me tightly to him. My poor man I didn't even know how I was going to ease his worry and his pain regarding this whole thing.

"Let's go to bed baby. Whatever needs to be done you can do tomorrow." I stood up and stretched my hand for him to take it. I would tell him about the phone I found tomorrow. I didn't want to burden him further we would just discuss it tomorrow. I had a client meeting and I was going to be so exhausted at that meeting because it was already after midnight.

When we got to our room I helped him undress and he just stood there letting me do it for him. I wanted to do this for him because he had done so much for me and I had a feeling there was more to his somber mood than the whole Fezo thing. I wondered what Steve told him. He got into the covers and I also took off my PJ's and he held me to him.

“I love you so much Lerato. I don’t even want to imagine what I would do if anything happened to you. Life is so fickle, so fragile,” he tightened his hold. I looked up at him because I was half lying on top of him.

“Nothing is going to happen baby. I don’t think God would give me the love of my heart and then take either one of us away. Your love for me is the calm within this shit storm we’re in.” He exhaled loudly

“I need you sweetheart...” he didn’t have to ask twice. We came together in an explosive kiss that tasted like whisky but it was delicious tasting it from his mouth. KK made love to me like it was the last time he would ever do it. It was so beautiful tears rolled out my eyes even before I reached that peak.

“I love you...” I said to him as we settled down to sleep and he kissed my forehead.

I made sure I woke up early so I could make him breakfast. It was so hard to wake up though because I was still so tired but love wasn’t about you but the one you loved so I forced myself out of bed. Whether he would eat the breakfast was another thing but figured if he didn’t then at least I knew it would give him something to tease me about and get his mind off the drama. Since I had a client meeting I wore a skirt suit. KK said he wasn’t going to be in the office today so he would drop me off and come pick me up after work. He seemed better today and I hoped that my presence helped. By the time he was done getting ready and came downstairs I was almost done. He was wearing jeans today. He always looked super hot in jeans. I kept the breakfast really simple: eggs, grilled bacon and tomato, baked beans and toast.

“Smells promising in here,” he said giving me a kiss on the cheek. I had an apron on because the last thing I needed were oil splatters on my shirt.

“Sit down baby so you can eat the best breakfast you’ve ever had ever!” He laughed as I put the plate in front of him.

“And what makes it the best I’ve ever had?” He quirked his eyebrow. I came close to him and kissed him on the mouth.

“Because it was made with all the love in my heart and because it was made by me.”

“You’re the best I’ve ever had. Here’s to hoping it’s edible,” he said tucking into the food. I sat next to him and jabbed him with my elbow.

“Even if it tastes like Handy Andy you’re going to finish it.” He laughed at that.

“It’s quite nice surprisingly. Thanks sweetheart I can taste the love in this crispy bacon.” Mxm this guy. He was mocking me but I was also eating it and I knew it really tasted nice.

KK dropped me off at work in some Toyota. They kept being innovative about how we were going to move about. I asked KK about the whole client meeting being offsite. He said he discussed it with Vusi and suggested the meeting be at the KI offices and the client agreed. They were going to get a tour of the office so they could see ‘where the magic happened’. I would’ve bought that too if I was the customer. He kissed me goodbye and I went into the building.

“So do you have a thing for older men or are they your blessers? First you have our boss wrapped around your finger and now some other guy is dropping you off in a Toyota nogal (even)!” Amanda and I arrived at the same time. I wasn’t in the mood for her today at all so I just chose to ignore her which I knew made her super angry. While she was waiting for the lift I braved the stairs to the 5th floor. I really wasn’t in the mood for her then I caught the lift from then. I needed the exercise because my clothes were getting a tad bit tight. I needed to go back to gym.

As usual Zama was already there when I got there looking stunning in navy and baby blue.

“Look at you ready to slay the corporate world!” I said giving her a high-five. That briefly reminded me of Tumi but I squashed that. Why think about people who didn’t think about you?

“Uyazi, uyazi kanti uba igama lami (you know, you know. What’s my name)?” She said standing up and doing a twirl for me.

“We knocking this out the park friend and signing our very first customer akere (right)?” She nodded. Vusi walked in just then.

“There are my leading ladies today. Are you ready?” he asked looking back and forth between us.

“As will ever be. We won’t embarrass you uzobona (you’ll see),” Zama responded.

“I have high expectations. We’ll be having the meeting in the Exec boardroom on the 25th floor since we’re trying to make an impression and all. Do you mind going up there and setting it up? I’ve already sent IT up with the tablets,” he winked at us and left.

“I guess we better get our sexy asses upstairs. Is bae there?” Zama though!

“Nope he’s not in the office today.” When we walked out with our stuff I saw that Yolisa was back. Guess she wasn’t fired after all. She gave me a lethal look that could’ve melted a less confident woman but as for me well...

When we got upstairs we got to work making sure the handouts were loaded correctly on the tablets. We made sure that the tea and coffee were setup with sandwiches and biscuits. Zama hooked up her laptop to the projector and we did a run through of the presentation once more and we were ready and raring to go. There were about 30 minutes left until the client would get here so we decided to have some coffee while chatting to Noah. He was less busy with KK not being there and a bit more free to chat.

“Doesn’t it get lonely up here all on your own?” Zama asked him. He laughed.

“I’m not alone. I have Mr K here. We chat quite a lot actually throughout the day. He’s not as formal when people aren’t around but I’m sure Mrs K knows that too,” he said pointing at me with his painted nails. Gosh Noah!

“Really? Mrs K? We not married yet,” I said looking down. Zama clapped her hands.

“Oh...you said ‘yet’ does that mean it might be on the cards?” Zama asked wiggling her eyebrows at me. I fell right into that one.

“Who knows Zee? But we aren’t married now that’s what I meant so no Mrs K talk here.” The lift pinged and Vusi came out with 6 people and I figured we were getting this show on the road. We met them by the lift and introduced ourselves then went into the boardroom. Vusi had already briefed us that we would be running the show completely and he would just chip in if he felt like we were forgetting something. This was the reason I wanted to join KC because I was a graduate but I was pitching to an actual customer a week and half into my employment. What company did that for its graduates?

“Good morning I’m Zama Mkhize and this is my colleague Lerato Molemi. We will get started shortly maybe in the mean time you could help yourselves to something to eat and coffee or tea provided just outside the boardroom.” She gestured with her arm and some went outside while others stayed inside.

Vusi had told us that we should split up and personally meet the client representatives because that personal touch was what set KC apart from our competitors. There were 2 ladies and a guy left inside so I tackled them while Zama worked her magic outside. We were such a phenomenal team I hoped she would move with me when I start Khuzwayo Productions. Oh snap that name just came to me now. I needed to share it with KK. I actually needed to get cracking on my business plan.

Eventually we started the presentation and knocked it out the park. It seemed like the key decision maker was a difficult nut to crack and he kept asking us questions throughout the presentation. Once we were done fielding the last bit of questions he threw the last question on us.

“Thank you ladies riveting presentation and very green too with the handouts on the tablets. So what happens now? Do I keep the tablet so I can refer to your handouts before we make our decision?” He thought he had us cornered. Zama and I silently communicated and I decided to take that one.

“Not at all Mr Graham. We’ve already e-mailed the handout and presentation to you so you can have the chance to review it. Here at Khuzwayo Consulting we are trying to do our bit to reduce our carbon footprint. Any other questions?” I looked around making eye contact with all of them and they shook their heads for no.

We all walked them out and thanked them for coming. Once Vusi was in the lift with them and it closed Zama and I hugged and jumped on the spot.

“How awesome was that!” Zama said doing a little dance.

“Pretty awesome. Vusi didn’t need to save us not even once!” I was so relieved it was over because the first one was always the hardest.

“We should go out for drinks after work and celebrate,” she said excitedly. There went that excitement.

“We can celebrate Friday together with our great results because we can’t slay presentations like that and not make the required average.” She laughed.

“Yep you’re right girl. We kick serious ass!” She said as we high-fived.

“Let’s go pack up everything.” We walked to the boardroom to clear up and Vusi walked in.

“You ladies were on fire today. Client is almost sold they just have another presentation to attend tomorrow. You presented like you were seasoned candidates. I asked Noah to record the whole session on the cameras I will be sharing this at our next Exec meeting. You guys make a great team.” Vusi was beaming with pride.

“Thank you Vusi we glad all the hard work paid off,” I said smiling.

“I’ll definitely be handing over a number of proposals we are busy with over to my dream girls.” Dreamgirls really Vusi?

“Thanks so much. Looking forward to the next challenge.” Zama said and Vusi left us to finish packing up.

*“We’re your Dreamgirls, boys!”*

*We’ll make you happy.*

*Yeah*

*We're your Dreamgirls, boys!*

*We'll always care.*

*We're your Dreamgirls*

*Dreamgirls will never leave you!*

*No, no*

*And all you have to do is dream, baby,*

*We'll be there!*" Zama started singing. I laughed out loud she was crazy! She had such a beautiful voice though and I told her as much.

"Why aren't you auditioning for Idols or something?" I asked her.

"Like my parents would let me. My dad is busy building his political career and doesn't want his only daughter on some reality show. I must do the responsible thing." Gosh her parents sounded like mine. I promised myself that I wouldn't be that kind of parent who would choose my child's career. When we got downstairs to the offices everybody clapped and cheered as we walked in with the exception of Yolisa of course. No surprises there. I didn't know what to do with myself. I hated attention of any kind.

"Well done once again ladies. Since your results are coming out Friday I think take the day off then hopefully we'll see you Monday," Vusi said in front of everyone. This was awesome because it meant I could drown my sorrows of KK leaving and not worry about a hangover at work.

"Oh wow thanks Vusi. We definitely coming back Monday!" Zama said putting her arm on my shoulders. This girl though. We went back to the training room and I was glad that tomorrow we weren't going to be working from here again. Zama went outside onto the balcony to call her mom so I decided to call KK.

"Sweetheart," he answered. That made me smile.



“Hi baby. Presentation went really well. The client seemed happy and Vusi is ecstatic,” I said excitedly to him.

“Of course it did! I already saw Vusi’s feedback on the whatsapp group. He is beside himself with excitement. Congrats sweetheart we should go out and celebrate tonight.” He sounded like he was smiling.

“Can we do that? Is the danger over?” This was good if it was over I didn’t want a dark cloud hanging over me on the weekend. I heard him exhale.

“Unfortunately not but I refuse to let this bastard run our lives whoever he is!” Eish this situation was a bit special.

“Ok baby we’ll chat later about it. I miss you. I think when you’re not in the building it just feels empty here...” I was in such a good mood I wished I could share this moment with him.

“I miss you too love but I’ll see you around 4. Let me go. Well done on the presentation. So proud to call you my woman.” Aww he is so sweet.

“Ok baby. See you soon.” I texted my mom and told her about the presentation going well.

I saw texts from the divas and Portia was being discharged today but she was going home to Limpopo so we would only get to see her and the baby after three months. What a long time that would be. At least she was breaking some of the rules and sending us pics of Baby Riri. Her milk supply was also flowing now so she wouldn’t have to employ KG’s dodgy tactics. We spent the rest of the day clearing out the meeting room because we would be sitting at our appointed workstations tomorrow. It turned out my desk was right opposite Yolisa and I just couldn’t deal so I asked to swop with Zama and she agreed.

At 16:30 I packed up as everyone else was and made my daily trek to the 25th floor. I waved at Noah as I passed because he was constantly on the phone. He shared with us earlier on how he spent most of the day screening calls from people who want to speak to KK, from journalists, politicians to obsessive women. I didn’t want that job. I walked into KK’s office and found him sitting on the couch

reading something from his ipad. It was such a pleasant surprise because I didn't know he'd be there that I threw myself at him.

“Oof...easy love you'll break my bones,” he said laughing.

“Is that your way of telling me I'm getting big?” I asked hitting him with a cushion from the couch. He laughed out loud.

“Uyagula wena (you're crazy). Where did that come from?”

“You've never complained about me breaking your bones so...”

“Did you see though how you jumped on me?” KK though!

“I was happy to see you and I can feel Mr Bulge is happy as well.” He looked at me with a smile on his face.

“Mr Bulge? You've got names for days hiding in that pretty head of yours nhe?” He said kissing me, “Khumalo as I call him is definitely very happy to see you. You look ravishing in your power suit and the view of your legs does things to me.” He kissed my neck.

“Are you going to do things to me? Lee is what I call my pussy and she would very much love to have a meeting with Khumalo right this moment...” we kissed and one thing lead to another. Hmm let's just say if I was gold plated down there KK would have gold teeth, lips, fingers and of course Khumalo. Hmm Mntungwa, Mbulaz'omnyama, Nina bakaBhej' eseNgome, Nin' enadl'umuntu nimyenga ngendaba, Nin' enadl' izimf'ezimbili ikhambi laphuma lilinye, Lobengula kaMzilikazi (clan names). Thank you google....uKK be kadla mina kamnandi (KK tapped that good)...

## Insert 65

“We need to get ready if we’re going to make the dinner reservation,” KK said softly as he rubbed my naked back with his fingers. I sighed because I was so comfortable where I was I didn’t want to move. We had these quiet moments that I wished would last longer but rarely did.

“Do we have to? I think we are fine right here,” I said lifting my head to look at him. We were lying on his office apartment bed because we couldn’t chill for extended periods in his office naked.

“It’s our last night together before I leave tomorrow and you kicked some serious ass today at the presentation so we have to celebrate.” I knew he was right but I was enjoying the quietness of the moment. It felt like we were cocooned in some faraway place where all the drama couldn’t touch us. That thought was unfortunately disturbed by KK’s ringing phone. There goes the quiet moment. He looked at it and sat up.

“It’s Steve I have to take it. He might have information about Fezo.” He took the call. Shit! I forgot to tell him about the cellphone because all the answers might be on that phone. I wondered how we was going to react when I told him because it wasn’t an intentional thing. I was more worried about him at the time than the phone. I would have to tell him the minute he gets off the phone.

I got up and started putting my clothes back on and I think subconsciously I was arming myself for what was to come. I didn’t know how we was going to take the omission. I went into the bathroom and rinsed my face and realised KK gave me a hickey! Really! Again? Why didn’t I even feel him doing it? Smack bam on my neck where everyone would be able to see it. Was he stamping ownership on me because he knew he was leaving tomorrow. This guy! That apprehension I felt earlier melted to be replaced by indignation.

When he walked into the bathroom wearing his bottoms but still topless I just threw him a look. He came and held me from the back and kissed my neck. I felt some weakness in my knees but I wasn’t going to give into his web of sneaky seduction.

“Hawu manje (and then)?” I threw him my dirtiest look as we stared at each other on the mirror.

“You gave me a hickey KK! You know I detest those things!” He chuckled.

“You’re being dramatic sweetheart. What’s the big deal anyway?” Was he seriously asking me that? He hugged me tightly.

“The big deal is that I’ll be walking around the office tomorrow with a hickey and people will definitely put two and two together!” He shrugged his shoulder.

“Who cares? I thought we were past the ‘I care what people think about me’ stage. I wasn’t aware you’re still hiding us like some dirty secret. What is it exactly? Are you ashamed of me or something?” He let go of me and turned me around to look at him. How did we get to that destination this quickly?

“Huh? You think I’m ashamed of you? How absurd!” Why would he even think of such a thing.

“Is it? You’re constantly trying to hide our relationship here at work and it seems you care more about what people will say or think than about my feelings.” Wow KK was also a drama king. Were we like fighting right now? I exhaled loudly.

“Baby I don’t want to fight. Of course I care about your feelings but what does that have to do with a hickey? I don’t understand your fixation with them.” I threw my hands up in frustration. He looked at me and smiled that dimple smile of his. He knew what that did to me. Mxm this guy!

“I like looking at you marked with evidence of my mind-blowing loving,” he came closer and started kissing my neck, then my jaw and my cheek. I shook my head.

“You’re trying to distract me KK. You know gore ke a gorata akere (that I love you right)? You don’t need to mark me or at least not where it’s visible for everyone! I’m going home soon and my mom will see this. Gape (and) she’s been preaching daily to me about safe sex.” KK burst out laughing.

“Are you telling her that you forgot what that means now?” He was so silly.

“Didn’t you say we have to get going?” I asked him walking out of the bathroom. It’s amazing how he just managed to turn the whole conversation around and now we aren’t talking about his sneaky hickeys that he was planting everywhere. He didn’t know me shame I was going to put concealer on that mark of his.

“Oh yes. Steve also says he’s not making headway trying to piece the puzzle of Fezo’s death together. He says there’s too many inconsistencies.” Before I forget again I had to tell him about the phone. I sat down on the bed watching him put his shirt on.

“Baby...I have to tell you something...” I bit my lower lip. He paused and looked at me.

“What is it sweetheart?”

“Well...last night when I found you in the study, I wanted to tell you about my discovery...” I took a deep breath. He looked worried now and came and sat next to me and took my hand in his.

“Are you pregnant? Is that what the safe sex intro discussion in the bathroom was about?” Pregnant? What? I laughed at that.

“No baby you and your over active imagination! I’m definitely not pregnant.” He looked puzzled.

“So why have I never heard you say you’re on your periods?” Wow really? We were definitely going off on a tangent now and I wasn’t in the mood for that discussion right now.

“Rest assured that I’ve taken the necessary precautions baby. Anyway focus KK it’s not about that. I found a phone...” He was looking at me like I had grown another head.

“A phone? Whose phone? Where?” I rolled my eyes. If he would just let me finish.

“Ok so something didn’t sit right with me with the whole Fezo thing so I thought I’d check out the room she was sleeping in and see if I could find some clues. I found a phone under the bed and I was bringing it to you then you looked so

depressed my focus became you and I completely forgot about the phone. I should've given it to you so you guys can check it out." I stole a look at him to see whether he was going to explode.

"Lerato kodwa (though)! You should've told me but it's fine I think I will have to call Steve so we can meet at the house. We'll have to postpone the dinner sweetheart because our answers may lie in that phone. If something is important for me to know please don't withhold it sweetheart. I detest that more than you hating hickeys on your neck." He looked at me with a hint of frustration but I was glad I wasn't getting the full blown KK lecture exclusive.

"Sorry baby. My first priority will always be you and your wellbeing."

"It's fine love. Since we are clearing the air, any other information you've been withholding from me?" My heart skipped a beat at that question. Did I tell him about his paternity or not? That was pertinent information he definitely needed to know but now I had kept quiet so long how was I even going to start explaining that one? Besides it wasn't the right time with the Fezo drama. I shook my head for no then he got up.

"We better get going I will call Steve on the way. I'll ask him to grab something for us to eat on his way." I hope that lie wasn't going to catch up with me at some point.

\*\*\*\*\*

Steve got to the house at the same time as us and KK immediately went in hunt of the phone. It wasn't a type of phone that we had so Steve had to go back to his place because he apparently had all types of chargers at his house. We had the takeaway supper and as we ate I realised after all this drama I really needed to go to gym. All this food was adding up on my body that even KK working it wasn't helping. Wasn't it a myth anyway in African families that when you're happy you gain weight? I think that's what was happening to me.

"Baby do you think I'm gaining weight?" I asked him as I got up to take the plates to the kitchen. He shook his head.

“There’s no way that I can answer that and not come out bruised so angizingeni (I’m not getting involved).”

“Hao KK you know sometimes silence says the loudest words,” I said pointing a finger at him.

“You see what I mean? Even when I don’t say anything I’m in trouble. I think you are beautiful and sexy and that’s all I see when I look at you. I’m going to go pack while waiting for Steve to come back. I hope that phone can shed some light because I still need to call my dad. Do you know how good it felt last night for me to suggest he waits for the investigation and he actually listened to me? I’ve never experienced something like that before and I don’t want to let him down,” he said as he walked upstairs. The secret I held was going to break him when it eventually came out. Sigh.

After I cleared the kitchen I decided to go take a shower. It had been a really long but very fruitful day for me. KK decided to join me then the shower took longer than necessary because he rubbed me everywhere to make sure I was squeaky clean.

Timing was perfect because Steve was already downstairs so he went to the study and I decided to finish packing his stuff because he had laid it out in the dressing room. I wasn’t planning on going downstairs so I just had one of his T-shirts on. My dad called which I found odd.

“Papa what’s wrong?” I answered worried. My dad hardly ever called me anymore.

“Hao Rato nothing’s wrong. How are you?” Uhmm ok.

“I’m ok papa no stress. I did my first presentation today and it went really well. How are you?”

“I’m ok. Glad to hear that it’s going well at work. Uhmm we having a little get together for my birthday and thought maybe you and Odi would want to come? It’s next weekend...” he sounded so hopeful but so uncomfortable doing it. I guess this was his way of trying to mend the rift.

“Aketse (I don’t know) papa I will check whether Odi is available and what I’m doing then. Can I let you know next week?” I doubt Odi was going to agree to go and I don’t know if I would be able to go on my own and face Sour Simphiwe.

“Ok no problem. I will hear from you. Have a good night.” We said goodbye and I sighed loudly. I missed my dad so much but we were so distant now I didn’t even know how we were going to come back from this.

I settled into bed and decided to read on my iPad while I waited for KK to finish with Steve. I must’ve dozed off because next thing I knew KK was getting into bed.

“Sorry I woke you love go back to sleep,” he said taking me in his arms.

“Did you find anything on the phone?” I asked turning to face him.

“Do you want to talk about it now? Aren’t you sleepy?” he asked. I sat up in bed.

“Well I’m awake now so might as well. Did the phone help?” I hoped he would also start suspecting Amahle because she definitely had something to do with it. I just couldn’t put my finger on it.

“I’m defeated and so is my family. The phone has added to the questions instead of answering any of them. Look at this,” he handed me the phone.

**Fezo: I got here safely sisi. Bhuti isn’t very happy with me.**

**Amahle: Don’t worry just do as we planned. It will work out.**

**Fezo: Ok sisi thanks for your help. Bhuti has such a beautiful big house! I’m going to love being the madam here.** Madam in whose house? Shame Kubi was very ambitious. It made me angry just reading these things. Thank goodness I was here that night.

**Amahle: And you’re going to be the madam there you’ll see. Mxm as if!**

**Fezo: It didn’t work! He’s kicking me out! I don’t like doing this Amahle. What will my parents think? I’m going to tell him the truth.**



**Amahle: Don't you dare Fezo! Trust me when I say KK and you will be married soon.**

**Amahle: Fezo? Why aren't you answering your calls?**

**Amahle: KK says you went to the hotel but you've already checked out. Where are you? Call me when you get this.**

**Amahle: Fezo I'm getting worried now...call me.** This was starting to sound like a script. I wondered whether KK thought the same. It made Amahle the saint of note.

I looked at KK puzzled.

“And then? This feels like a script or is it just me? What did Amahle say? Did you ask her?”

“She admitted to the plan to get Fezo here but otherwise she says she doesn't know what happened to her once she checked out of the hotel. I've asked my dad to hold off on calling the Mbatha's. There's more to this and it doesn't make sense that Fezo called you asking for help when her phone was here. Where did she get your numbers from?” My thoughts exactly but I wasn't going to raise the flag.

“And what about the body? Has it been identified?”

“The face was bruised beyond recognition. Steve managed to get the pathologist at the state mortuary to get a DNA sample. We waiting for the resultsbut I haven't shared that information with my family yet.”

“But how did you guys get the news that it's her and she is dead?” I was now on some CSI episode.

“Anonymous tip off which Steve is following up on. Steve and I don't believe the breadcrumbs that have been neatly laid out for us to follow are real. It's just so frustrating that there's so much going on and I have to leave the country tomorrow.”he sighed pulling me to him.

“I know baby I’m going to miss you so much. At least Zama’s coming tomorrow and we’re not working Friday so we’ll have a house party for two here.” I said smiling at him.

“I’m glad you won’t be alone. Thanks for finishing up the packing love I really appreciate it. Now since when do we sleep with clothes in this bed?”he asked taking the T-shirt I was wearing off. I was going to miss him when he was gone so I needed to have as much of him as I could before then. There were so many unsolved mysteries up in the air at the moment and he wouldn’t even be here to solve them. I just hoped nothing dramatic happened in his absence. Sigh.

## Insert 66

I woke up with a somber mood because KK wasn't going to be here tonight. I was so used to him having been with him for a week. We actually had some sort of routine going and my clothes were even sharing space in his clothes. I looked at the time and realised it was still early because KK was still sleeping wrapped around me as per usual. I turned to face him and just looked at this handsome man of mine. He seemed so relaxed and worry-free. He had such a busy and complicated life and I felt like he never really had anyone take care of him. I vowed there and then that the person to do that would be me. I loved him and he made me so happy and made me feel so loved and cherished. I touched his face and he stirred and opened his eyes.

"Morning love," he said his voice rough from sleep and I smiled at him and held him tightly to me. I realised these days my pet names were evolving from sweetheart to love and I loved it.

"I'm going to miss you," I whispered my head on his chest. He squeezed me to him.

"It's only a few days sweetheart I'm not leaving for a month or something."

"I know but there's so much going on with threats and the uncertainty of what happened to Fezo. Shit my results come out tomorrow!" I sat up and then I felt my stress literally tripling. KK sat up and put his arm around me.

"I know you knocked it out the park love don't know why you're stressing like this." He kissed me on the cheek. I breathed out loudly.

"But what if I didn't?" I said softly voicing my fears that I had kept to myself since that final paper.

"Come lie back down with me so I can hold you properly," he said as he pulled me down towards his chest.

"I'm just feeling slightly depressed today," I sighed.

“Will an orgasm help?” he asked his hand already caressing my ass. My body came alive with that question and his touch.

“Hmm might do the trick I’m not sure...” I kissed him and he did more than kiss me back.

When we came down from the pleasurable high I felt a little bit better but it made me emotional that he wouldn’t be here tonight. As he held me afterwards I felt that tingling sensation of tears at the back of my eyelids then went full blown crying. I was already emotional from the sex session so it just made it worse.

“Sweetheart? Are you ok? Kwenzenjani (what’s wrong)?” He asked looking at me.

“Don’t mind me...just a bit emotional this morning...” I was sniffing in between those words.

“I hate it when you cry Lerato. Please love don’t do this. I’ll be back before you know it and you’ll spend some time with your friend and you can even finish all my alcohol.” He squeezed me tightly. That got me laughing a bit.

“Then you’ll find me dead from alcohol poisoning.”

“There’s worst ways to go. Come let’s get ready. I’m not going into the office but I’ll drop you off as per usual.” He got out of bed and went to the bathroom. I guess this day was now underway no matter how much I wished I could just stay here and spend the day with him.

KK made us a quick breakfast and we sat down to eat quickly. Steve was also becoming a permanent fixture in our morning routine.

“Boss...First Lady...” he greeted as he came in wearing his all black ensembles.

“Hi Steve are you well?” I asked him. I hardly said two words to him because he always looked so serious.

“Good. Boss can we talk?” he said gesturing towards the direction of the study. He was also a bit rude I always thought. KK followed him to the study and I went

upstairs to get my stuff. My phone beeped signalling a message coming in but when I looked it was from an unknown number.

### **Miss Lee glad to make your acquaintance yet again**

Shit! Lesego found my new number! How did he even do it? He knows the conditions of the restraining order but he hasn't signed it off and I know he's made damn sure that it can't be traced back to him. Like I freaking need to be dealing with my psycho ex who just won't leave me alone. I'd have to tell KK about this and I really wasn't looking forward to it.

We took another random car to work today and I wondered when all this would end.

"Uhhh...baby?" I started apprehensively.

"Yes love what's up?" he asked squeezing my thigh. He liked putting his hand on my thigh when he drives.

"I got an anonymous sms but I know it was Lesego that sent it." I looked at him and saw him tense next to me.

"Let me see it!" he said through gritted teeth while his jaw was doing its angry clenching exercises. I handed him the phone and he swore after reading it.

"Lomfana (this boy) is really trying my patience! Please can I get rid of him once and for all?" he looked at me briefly. KK though.

"No baby you can't go around killing people just because they are irritating you. I can deal with the messages just as long as he doesn't physically come anywhere near me."

"I don't want him to contact you either. Block that number."

"It won't help. He will just get another number to badger me with. Maybe I should try talking to him so he can identify himself then we'll know it's him."

“Fuck no! I don’t want you speaking in any way shape or form to that psycho piece of shit!” Gees sorry it was just a suggestion!

The rest of the way was pretty tense with KK not saying anything. I don’t know why he was mad at me all of a sudden. I was trying to be open and not keep things from him.

“Bye sweetheart we’ll chat later,” he said as I got off and he kissed me. Some people were also arriving and looked at us. Oh well I just didn’t care anymore.

When I got into the office as per usual Zama was already there.

“Hey girl. How are you?” I greeted her.

“I haven’t been sleeping Lerato. i stress nje sodwa (I’m stressed for days) tomorrow is around corner.”

“I know right. I had my own freak out this morning. We must just focus on the day and not let it get to us. We can’t change the outcome anyway.” Her phone beeped and she smiled.

“Zama? What’s happening?” I asked her when she didn’t say anything.

“Ag nothing my dad just deposited money into my account that’s all.” She was typing on her phone as she said that. Ok she was acting a bit weird and the weirdness didn’t stop for the rest of the day. She kept looking at her phone and texting with someone back and forth. Maybe she found a guy and just wasn’t ready to share the news yet.

Vusi gave us three proposals to work on which were due one month after the other. It would definitely keep us busy for a while. The looks and whispers were definitely dying down which was good for me even when we went to the canteen at lunch time. I guess things were looking up on the work front.

“Zama you’ve been a ball of excitement all day. What’s going on?” I asked her as we sat at our usual spot.

“Hawu I told you! I’m thinking of all the shoes I’m going to buy with the money.” Her explanation wasn’t proportional to her excitement.

“You get money all the time Zama in fact you shop more than I do. Spill the beans friend...” I looked at her with my arms folded.

“I can’t! I’m bursting to tell you but I can’t. Sorry friend. Oh my gosh is that a hickey?” she lowered her voice to a whisper. Clearly the concealer didn’t work as perfectly as I thought.

“KK is obsessed with them at times,” I said rolling my eyes and covering my face with my hands. Zama burst out laughing.

“Kusho ukuthi ngendlela umnandi ngakho uKK ufuna noku kudla (you must taste so nice that KK wants to eat you) like literally.” She was clapping her hands laughing. This girl though! Just then I got a message from KK.

**Hey my beautiful woman. Please send me your ID number?** What did he want with my ID number? I guess he had forgiven me for the whole Lesego thing now.

**Me: why?**

**KK: I promise I’m not going to clone your identity and open store accounts.** KK was silly. So I sent it to him and went back to Zama’s excited chatter.

After lunch we decided to migrate to the dreaded meeting room again to start strategising about the different proposals and how we were going to tackle them. The expectation was very high now and so we had to maintain the standard. Zama was coming to KK’s place with me today and I wasn’t sure how that was going to work with security things. When Zama stepped out I decided to call KK.

“Sweetheart...”

“Hi baby just a quick one, wanted to know how it’s going to work this afternoon with Zama coming home with me? What time is your flight anyway?”

“I think Zama should leave her car at work then she can drive with us. Take her to the basement parking then I’ll fetch you guys there. My flight is at 9 this evening. I’m in a meeting with the Director General will chat later. I love you.” Director General for what?

“I love you too bye.” Something weird was going on today for sure just couldn’t put my finger on it.

After work we went to park Zama’s car in the basement and chilled in her car waiting for KK.

“Shame Mr K really loves you hey,” she said randomly. Ok?

“I love him too hey. He’s made me so happy!” I was really going to miss him. A car came and parked next to us and I got out of the car when I realised it was Steve and not KK that was there.

“Steve where’s KK?” I asked him as he opened the boot of his car waiting for Zama’s bag.

“He’s held up in Pretoria he said he will see you at home. Bring the bags so we can go.” He was always so abrupt. I gestured for Zama to get out of the car and went to the boot to get our laptops and Zama’s bag. I gave them to Steve and he put it in the car.

“Who is this mngani (friend)? And here you were saying you don’t have an inventory. He is delicious,” she whispered as she went into the back. I went to the front smiling and then we left. At least Steve listened to Metro and not KK’s talk radio stuff. When we got to the house Zama was impressed by the house and I showed her to the room that she would be sleeping in but not Fezo’s room. I asked her if she wanted something to drink and she wanted Vodka so we went downstairs so she could pick. I was planning for us to watch movies in the cinema room and drown my sorrows of KK leaving. I settled on gin and we grabbed some snacks and got comfortable.

“Lerato ubani u brother (who is the guy)? Uvutha amalangabe umlilo straight(he is so hot)!” I laughed at that.



“He works with KK.” I was so distracted I didn’t even introduce them.

“Kuphi (where)? At K I?” Eish how did I explain how Steve worked.

“Umm no in other ventures that KK is busy with.”

“Is he taken?” I actually never asked but I knew he wasn’t married because he didn’t have a wedding band on.

“I’m not sure hey. So many questions Zee.” I made a note to find out though.

“Lerato you know my drought situation angithi (right)?” I laughed out loud. We decided to watch some Rom Com and it was getting late with no KK in sight. I really couldn’t focus on the movie because I was starting to get worried about him. I left Zama engrossed in the movie and went searching for Steve. I found him outside smoking.

“First lady...”

“Steve any idea where KK is? He’s not answering my texts or calls. I’m getting worried now,” I said looking at him.

“He’ll be here soon. Excuse me,” he said and walked away. Really this guy!

I sat on the outdoor sofa and dialed his number again.

“Sweetheart...”

“Where are you baby? Am I going to spend anytime with you before you go?” I asked exasperated.

“Of course you are love.” I heard him on the phone and behind me. I got up and threw myself at him.

“Where have you been. You’re plane leaves in 3 hours KK! I haven’t really seen you today.” I was hitting his chest with my fists. He took both my hands in his and pulled me close to him.

“Well you’ll get to see me tonight, tomorrow and the day after that. Oh and the day after that one,” he whispered close to my mouth. I moved back and looked at him puzzled.

“What do you mean baby? You’re not going anymore?” He was looking at me with a stupid grin on his face.

“KK? What’s going on kgante (actually)?” I asked looking at him. He came close to me and kissed me taking my breath away. I melted into him and released my hands from his to wrap my arms around his neck.

“There’s been a change of plans my love...My meeting has been moved to San Francisco in the US. I don’t have a choice but to follow them to where they are...so I’ll be going to the US instead of Europe.”

“Ok so you still leaving?” I got excited there for a bit but now my excitement deflated.

“I am and you are coming with me,” he said giving me his full blown dimple smile. What was he on about?

“KK I don’t have a passport and don’t you need a visa to go to the US? Zama’s here either way. Did you disappear today and go smoke somewhere?” He just looked at me smiling. He sat down and motioned for me to sit on his lap.

“Sweetheart I got you an emergency passport that’s why I was at the DG’s office in Pretoria and he called someone he knows at the embassy and got you your travel visa. Thank goodness we ask for ID photos with your applications at KI so you’ll need to replace those ones. Zama has her passport because she organised for it to be delivered to Noah so he could send it to the Embassy for a visa.” It hadn’t yet sunk in what he was saying.

“So you’re telling me that in a few hours we are all flying to the US? I haven’t packed! Isn’t it winter there now? I don’t have clothes here my stuff’s at home. Oh my gosh I have to call my mom and tell her I’ll be out of the country...” I was babbling and KK was just laughing.

“I spoke to your mom early this morning and asked her permission she said it was fine. You can buy clothes there because we won’t be there long. At least we taking a private jet so no airport drama vibes. Did I do good my love?” he asked kissing my jaw.

“You did great baby. I can’t believe I’m going to the states!” I was ecstatically happy and I kissed him all over his face. How did I get so lucky. I got up and ran screaming into the cinema room.

“Zama we going to San Francisco!” I screamed as I went in.

She jumped off the sofa and screamed with me.

“Oh finally! Do you know how hard it was to keep this from you? New adventures with my friend can’t wait!” Oh so that was the message she got. KK must’ve texted her. I went in search of KK and found him in his study. I smiled as I walked towards him.

“What have I done to deserve you? I can’t believe I’ll be with you this weekend.”

“You seemed so depressed that I thought I had to do something to remove that sad look in your eyes. I hate seeing you unhappy. Besides with both of us out of the country I don’t have to worry about your safety and people trying to stalk you and hurt you.” I could bet my KC salary that Lesego’s sms had something to do with it. KK had a possessive nature that wasn’t obvious but still very much there. The hickeys and him making me change my numbers was part of that. I still liked how considerate he was and always wanted to ensure that I’m ok.

“I love how considerate you are. I love how you always put my needs before yours. I love you baby so so much.” His face was blurry now because I was about to bawl my eyes out.

“I love you Lerato with all my heart. My mission in life is for you to be happy all the time and only crying when I’m making you feel absolutely incredible. I’m looking forward to our mini vacation although I’ll be working some of the time. I also hope it’s a first of many holidays together.” That literally made my week.

Even if the results came out tomorrow and they were bad, I knew that KK and I would still be ok. I'd never been out of the country so this was going to be a wonderful experience. Hopefully Steve would also lighten up a bit on the trip. I don't think he liked me very much.

## Insert 67

When we got to Lanseria airport and were shown to the jet I couldn't contain my excitement. This jet was definitely bigger than the one we took to PE. We didn't have a lot of luggage because we took mostly cosmetics and casuals. KK said we could get the rest of the stuff there. He was holding my hand the entire time as we walked on the tarmac to get to the jet. They even had a red carpet rolled out by the stairs I really felt like a celebrity. Some air hostess was there welcoming us into the jet.

When we entered to the left some space was cordoned off with a closed door and a mounted TV and to the right were 2 rows of 4 chairs in each row which were side by side like in a normal plane but looked much bigger and more comfortable. There was a passage in the middle which lead to another covered area with a passage on the side. KK explained that there were two bedrooms to the back of the plane that we could use if we got tired of sitting or reclining on the chairs.

Steve had not breathed a word the whole time to the airport. Zama had tried to engage him in conversation because they were sitting at the back on our way here but with his one word answers even she gave up trying to make conversation. KK and I sat on the front row of the plane and I sat in the aisle seat so that Zama and I could chat. Steve chose the row behind us and had his ear phones on. Clearly he wasn't a chatty guy but we were going to be in each other's space for a whole 25 hours.

There was someone who came in with our bags and disappeared in the vicinity of the bedrooms I assume. We were offered some champagne by the air hostess while Steve and KK had whiskey. I had my iPad fully charged and would probably read a bit before I slept.

“Mngani (friend) I don't fly well hey. Take off and landing really stresses me out kodwa ngoba ku ne liquid courage phakathi maybe ngizoba right (but maybe because of the alcohol I'll be ok),” she said settling in to the seat and buckling her seat belt.

“Let’s hope the liquid courage will help my friend,” I said also buckling myself in. After this glass of really good champagne I wanted Gin though so I can continue with my drink of choice.

When we were settled in, the pilots came to introduce themselves with the air hostesses and got ready for take off. KK took my hand in his and kissed it. I smiled at him and he smiled back and winked. I mouthed ‘I love you’ to him and he mouthed it back.

The jet started moving on the runway and I noticed Zama getting more and more tense as the jet moved. The minute it started picking up speed Zama had a death grip on her seat. I noticed Steve moving from behind the seat and came and sat next to Zama although he technically shouldn’t be doing that now. He took Zama’s hand in his and she held on to him as the plane took off. She had her eyes closed and she was literally turned towards Steve holding on to his hand for dear life. I had a newfound respect for him that he could set aside his indifference to help my friend. Once the plane was safely in the air, Steve moved back to his seat but not before I noticed Zama say thank you to him. He just nodded and moved back. What was the deal with this guy?

“So how’s the champagne love?” KK asked smiling at me.

“Divine! Everything is awesome. I’ve never done it in the air are you going to indulge me?” I asked dropping my voice to a whisper. His eyes twinkled with mischief.

“If you’re a good girl I may just reward you but you’ve also been a bad girl not telling me about the phone you found immediately so I may have to punish you for that. So it depends on how I feel later on whether this will be just pleasure or pleasurable punishment,” he whispered and kissed me in the corner of my mouth. My insides clenched at the promise and challenge and I smiled at him. I think he was indirectly telling me that he preferred to pleasurably punish me and I couldn’t wait for whatever he had dreamed up for me.

“I’m going to sit with Zama for a while nhe? She looks a bit lonely,” I said to him rubbing his jaw.

“Sure. I’m going to work for a bit and catch up on e-mails.” I stood up and went to sit next to Zama. They served us supper because we hadn’t really had supper at the house with the flurry of packing and everything. We had very creamy butternut soup for a starter and some chicken dish for main course and I declined dessert. All I wanted now was to drink and come up with a way to misbehave on the plane.

I asked the hostess for Gin and tonic. Zama and I were chatting away while KK was on his laptop and drinking his whiskey as well. I have no idea what Steve was up to he just wasn’t in the mood for any of us. Zama was on that Vodka tip since we came back from work. So as the time progressed we were getting rowdier and rowdier until Zama had an idea of us putting music on and dancing. I seconded that idea because I was tipsy now and that sounded like a good idea. There was a docking station in the jet so Zama put on some house music and we got up and started dancing. We were laughing and doing funny dance moves. After a while we switched from house to hip hop and started moving sensually in the crowded space.

I moved towards KK who was still busy with his laptop and took the laptop and put it on the seat next to him. I pulled him up and he stood and I turned so my back was to his front and we started dancing. I then realised I’d never actually danced with him because we’ve never been to like a club or something. He had some moves on him though and had his arm around my waist and he was also kissing me on my neck as we were moving around the space. I think he was also a bit tipsy because he had been knocking back the whiskeys. We forgot all about Zama and Steve and it was just me and him. I turned so I could face him and we danced really close bordering on inappropriate for public consumption. He was actually singing along to some of the lyrics which never ceased to surprise me because he was Mr Jazz all the time.

“Let’s go to bed,” he whispered in my ear as yet another song came on. I nodded and took his hand in mine. He stopped to pick up his laptop and I couldn’t see Zama anywhere. Figured I’d see her tomorrow she was probably in the loo or something. It was just after midnight South African time when I checked the watch in the bedroom. It wasn’t a very big room just enough for a bed and an arm chair in the corner. As soon as KK closed the door I got on top of the bed and started stripping my clothes off until I was left in my underwear.

“Come and get me Mr K,” I said softly licking my lips then biting my lower lip. He took off his clothes slowly his eyes never leaving mine. You could still hear the music playing in the bedroom but it was fainter and provided the perfect backdrop for us. He took everything off and I noticed with great satisfaction that Khumalo was already ready and waiting to play.

“Come here love,” he said softly already stroking himself while looking straight into my eyes. That did things to me I couldn’t even begin to describe. I crawled on the bed until I stood in front of him on my knees and we were face to face. He took my hand and replaced his hand on Khumalo with mine. He then cupped me and moved my underwear to the side and penetrated me with his finger. I gasped from the unexpected urgency in his hand.

“Kiss me,” he whispered and the moment our lips touched we both groaned our satisfaction. I loved being with him like this and feeling the passion, hunger and yearning in his kisses. He moved my body so I was lying flat on my back with my legs up and I had to relinquish my hold on Khumalo for that to happen. He lowered my lace panties and pulled me towards him as he knelt on the carpet by the foot of the bed.

“Take your bra off sweetheart,” his voice was growly and super sexy. I did as instructed as he ran his fingers up and down my inner thighs never quite reaching where I wanted him to touch. My legs were bent on either side of his shoulders and he was blowing air directly onto my clit. The sensation was torturous but not nearly the kind of friction I wanted.

“Baby...please...”I begged him lifting my head so I could catch his eye. He chuckled slightly then he opened me up like a budding flower and I felt the flat of his tongue running from the bottom all the way to the top.

“Yes...yes baby...hmmm...please don’t stop,” I moaned breathlessly as my hips bucked and jerked against his mouth. He brought his fingers into play and I was lost in a world of pleasure and sensation willing my body to catch the wave that I felt building inside me. He shoved his arms under my ass and pulled me right up to him and it was a mixture of tongue, teeth and fingers I lost track. When the pleasure wave arrived I couldn’t help the scream that tore from my mouth as he rode out my orgasm with me.



“Do you want to feel me inside you love...do you want me to fuck you?” he murmured the words to me and I was turned on all over again. I nodded staring into his chocolate brown eyes. He gave a slight smile as he loomed above me and I felt him go in very slowly inch by inch. I could feel all of him, the ridge of his circumcision, the veins on the side of Khumalo. He was giving me open mouth kisses as he bottomed out inside me.

“Fuck I can’t get over how good you feel...”he said through clenched teeth as he remained still inside me. His hand was on my breast rolling my nipple between his forefinger and thumb creating mini-shocks through my system. When he started to move he did it like we had all the time in the world.

“Harder...baby...”I whispered turning my head to whisper in his ear as I bit his lobe gently.

“No sweetherart...we’re taking it...nice...and...slow...” Was this his form of punishment? He kept going in but only with the tip and then retreating. Really?

“Harder...faster baby...please...” I pleaded and he was having none of that.

“Nice...slow...soft...fuck you feel so good...” Coherent speech had left me completely. He was alternating his movements between pinching my nipples and rolling them creating different sensations within my body. He then took my legs and put them on top of his shoulders and bracketed my legs with his arms so they could open wider. I felt completely exposed and it allowed for much deeper penetration. He gave it to me hard and fast the way I was begging over and over again. My hands were clenched on the bed cover and I couldn’t help the intermittent moans escaping my throat. The orgasm hit me like a hurricane and just went on and on and on.

“Ahh...fuck...you’re clenching me so good love...fuck!” he grinded into me and it felt so freaking good, so deep, so rough. My mouth opened slowly, my head gliding back and his lips and tongue were on my throat. His hands went to my hips, yanking me up to take him deeper.

“Yes baby...” I whispered as I felt him go rigid above me and he came on a groan.

“Fuck! One day that pussy of yours is going to kill me,” he said spanking my ass. My legs were stiff from his actions and I pushed him with my thighs so he could let my legs down. After we were cleaned up I snuggled to his side under the covers.

“Do you think Steve and Zama heard us?” I asked him and he laughed.

“They are adults just like us and we are in a relationship after all so if they did well...” I knew that was his way of saying he didn’t care.

“So what’s the plan when we get there? How does your itinerary look like?” I needed to know so I could plan my days around his schedule.

“We’ll first have a stop over in France so the jet can refuel. We can’t really leave the jet because you guys don’t have visas. So we’ll hang ten in the plane. We’ll be landing in san Fran on Friday morning west coast time and I have a meeting with the guys midday on Friday. Depending on whether that goes well or not I will meet the CEO on Saturday for a breakfast meeting. After that I’m all yours until we come back.” He kissed my forehead.

“I thought you are always mine.” I joked looking up at him.

“Always and forever you know that.” He squeezed me to him and went on to show me two more times how I was his always and forever.

\*\*\*\*\*

I got woken up by KK telling me we needed to freshen up and get some breakfast. When I opened the window cover I realised it was indeed daylight and we were still hovering over the clouds. It was quite a beautiful sight.

The freshening up literally involved brushing our teeth and washing our face. Thank goodness I brought my intimate wipes with because I don’t even want to imagine how I would be feeling with all the action from last night. When I went to wash my face in the tiny ensuite bathroom I realised that KK had struck again with several of them on my collarbone. Really? How did he even do this without me

feeling anything? It looked like I was bitten by an insect who happened to be this naughty man of mine.

When we walked into the area with the chairs Steve was sleeping on one of the seats and had reclined it all the way back and covered with a blanket. At least he didn't snore. I guess Zama was also sleeping in the other room and she wasn't up yet. I went to check on her and found her awake chilling in the bed with the covers all the way up to her chin.

"Good morning sunshine," I greeted as I came in.

"Hey..." she didn't look or sound her cheery self. I sat next to her on the bed.

"What's wrong?" she tensed when I sat down.

"Ag I don't know it's probably because it's results day so a bit stressed." She sighed. I put my hand on her back to reassure her and the duvet cover slipped. I realised she wasn't wearing a top underneath.

"Zee are you naked under there? You must be very comfortable in your body to just do that on some unknown jet when anyone could walk in?" I said smiling at her. I guess she was confident because she was at the gym every single morning. I couldn't have slept like that if KK wasn't with me. She cleared her throat and looked uncomfortable. I finally took stock of the room and realised her clothing was thrown haphazardly all over the room like she was in a hurry to take it off. When my eyes eventually landed back to her with a question therein, hers were shiny with unshed tears.

"Zee what's going on?" she took a deep breath and gave me the shock of my life.

"I had the most mind blowing sex with Steve..." and she burst into tears. Wow! This I didn't see coming.

## Insert 68

I let Zama cry her heart out while I comforted her. I got up on the bed and held her to me and the fact that she was naked under the covers wasn't awkward at all right. I wondered what happened to make her cry like this. I knew she didn't do casual hook ups but had Steve specifically mentioned that it was a once off. I guess she would tell me when she was ready. Eventually she calmed down and only had hiccups from crying.

"Let's get you freshened up so we can get some breakfast. Food always makes everything better," I suggested squeezing her to me. I figured I wouldn't ask specific questions and she would volunteer the information because I didn't want her to start crying again.

"Ok let me do that. Thank god for intimate wipes!"

"Let me go that side then you can come when you're ready nhe?" I asked getting up from the bed. I didn't want to watch her getting ready in all her naked glory. I gave her a reassuring smile and left her to get ready.

When I got to the other side Steve was awake having coffee with KK.

"I hate flying because there's nothing to do for so many hours," I heard Steve say as I sat down next to KK.

"Morning Steve," I greeted quite frostily. How could he just sit here sipping on coffee talking about nothing to do after what he'd done? My friend was busy crying in there and he was plain chilling. Mxm!

"Where's Zama? Is she still sleeping?" KK asked pouring me a cup of coffee.

"She's freshening up so she'll be here in a few," I said casting a glance at Steve. He didn't even look affected. I think I was already getting cabin fever because what do you even do in such a small space for so many hours. KK was reading what looked like the news on his tablet while Steve stared out the window. He must've been deep in thought because there was absolutely nothing to see out the window except a cloudless sky as far as the eye could see. Zama eventually made an appearance.

“Morning everyone,” she said cheerfully. Her ability to bounce back from how she was when I left her was impressive and I was very proud of her. She looked hot with her knee length denim shorts and a loose flowing crop top. She had defined abs for days thanks to her gym sessions all the time. I really needed to get back to gym. When she sat down she winked at me and smiled. I guess she was trying to get Steve’s attention with that outfit. He barely acknowledged her when she greeted but I could see he wasn’t as laid back as he was earlier on.

“Morning Zama, did you sleep well?” KK asked signalling the hostess to bring breakfast.

“Ag as well as one can sleep on a plane. The turbulence kept me awake for most of the time and I didn’t even do anything mildly entertaining to while away the time so I was left feeling quite unsatisfied about the night,” Zama said casting a glance at Steve who promptly sat up and cleared his throat. I wanted to laugh but doing so would’ve given it away. I don’t know whether Zama could handle whatever game she was supposedly playing with Steve.

Breakfast was served and I realised how hungry I actually was. KK must’ve burnt all the calories I had from supper.

“Don’t you ladies want to put some music on? Otherwise I can play some of my music...” KK asked getting up. I really wasn’t in the mood for jazz on a 26 hour flight. I got up quickly as well.

“No baby it’s fine we’ll play something. Zama hand me your phone please?” I stretched my hand out to her.

“Hawu what’s wrong with my music?” KK asked giving me that dimple smile.

“No baby we are too high up in the air to listen to Jimmy Dlodlu or something like that.” he cracked up laughing.

“I’m glad I’ve taught you something sweetheart. I didn’t even know that you knew any jazz artists.”

“That’s what you get Lee ukuthandana na ma khehla (when you date old men). As for me I prefer my men young.” Zama was firing shots at Steve left, right and centre.

“Oho Zama awazi ukuthi abafana (don’t you know that boys) are sprinters thina okhehla (and us older men) we pace ourselves and understand it’s a marathon not a 100m race or ngiqamba amanga (am I lying) Steve?” Gosh KK though why was he bringing Steve into this.

“Ahh you know these little girls can’t handle a real man when they’ve got one. They want a boy to control so they can practise their independence on him.” I guess Steve gave as good as he got. Zama whipped her head around and glared at Steve.

“Usho ukuthini (what do you mean) Steve? Why can’t real men be open about how they feel and admit that little girls make them feel good? That little girls qualify to be more than a roll in the hay!” Zama shouted at him. This went pear shaped really quickly.

KK looked at Zama and Steve puzzled then looked at me with a clear question in his eyes. I just shrugged my shoulders and got busy going through Zama’s playlists to get something appropriate to play. Meanwhile Zama and Steve were glaring at each other. This flight time just doubled with all the tension here. I ended up playing some random South African hip hop playlist she had because then I figured that music wouldn’t make it awkward.

“Zama can I speak to you in private please?” Steve asked through gritted teeth. Zama got up and modeled her way to her designated bedroom with Steve following behind her. Once the door closed KK turned in his seat and looked at me.

“And then? Did I miss something?” KK asked.

I looked behind me at the passage way leading to the rooms and turned my voice down to a whisper.

“Steve and Zama slept together last night.” If our eyes could pop out like in cartoons I would’ve picked up KK’s from the carpet.

“Say what? Steve? You’ve got to be kidding me.” He was shaking his head in disbelief.

“Why is it such a shock? Is he married or attached or something?” I was getting concerned now that Zama didn’t know what she was letting herself into.

“No it’s none of that. I just know he’s not a one night stand kind of guy because he has a 3 year old daughter that he’s responsible for so he’s very sensitive about the women he invites to his life. Since then he is pretty selective about who he sleeps with. I don’t ever recall meeting any girl he was dating since the baby mama drama.” What? Steve was a dad? Who would’ve thought? So he was also like Zee with one night stand vibes. It was interesting then that they ended up in this predicament.

“So what do we do now? Did you see the way they were screaming at each other? Maybe I should go check on them because Steve kills people for a living,” I said getting up. KK touched my arm and gently pushed me back down.

“Ungazingeni (don’t get involved) Lerato. They are both adults and can figure it out and they need to do it.” I guess KK was right but I was just worried about this whole situation.

“I guess you’re right. I’m just worried about Zee she hasn’t been in a relationship or slept with anyone in over a year. I hope she hasn’t fallen for him because he doesn’t seem like a nice guy. He’s always so grumpy and distant.” I said sighing.

“Steve’s been through a lot. It’s stuff that you wouldn’t even begin to imagine. I know he doesn’t mean to come off like that but he just can’t help it.” Yho KK was defending him at every turn.

“Ok baby enough about Steve and Zama like you said they are adult enough to handle their business. In other news you promised to punish me last night and I don’t think you did,” I said biting my lower lip and looking at him shyly. He started laughing.

“Oh so you didn’t see our sessions as punishment?” He asked looking pointedly at me. Eish le nna ka phapha (I’m so forward sometimes).

“Well my understanding of punishment means there needs to be a hint of pain nyana or something.” I stole a quick glance at his face and he was smiling.

“So what did you want me to do to you exactly? Spank you with my hand or use a belt or maybe a paddle? Restrain you? Blindfold you so you wouldn’t see what I was going to do with you? Maybe use nipple clamps or put a gag on you?” His voice was a gentle caress on my body and my skin broke out in goosebumps because he was running his fingers lightly up and down my arm. It sounded like he had thought about this before or had even done it before.

“Something like that,” I said softly swallowing hard. He came close to me and kissed me on my neck. I hoped I knew what I was getting myself into here.

“Punishment doesn’t have to hurt. I could bring you right to the edge of a climax over and over again and not make you come...that’s the most pleasurable punishment for me because then I can test your limits...get you very close to breaking point...” he kissed me hard and I moaned into the kiss. He dragged me across the seat and I ended up sitting sideways on his lap with my feet on the chair I had just vacated. He ran his fingers up my leg to my thigh and I was wearing a shirt dress so he could go all the way if he wanted but it seemed like he was hell bent in torturing me.

“Baby...someone could walk in here any minute...” I said between his heated kisses. I felt him hard, hot and ready beneath my ass.

“Doesn’t that make it...that much...more fun?” He responded nudging my legs open. Oh my gosh were we going to have an indecent session in literally a public area?

“Steve and Zama could be back any minute,” I said panting from the emotions building inside me. Just then we heard what sounded like a moan coming from the rooms.

“I don’t think they’ll be coming out anytime soon by the sounds of that but I’d like you to come for me sweetheart...would you like that? Do you want me to slide my fingers inside you love...do you want it as much I want to do it...” he was



whispering these words in my ear as I felt his hand travel to my inner thighs and I involuntarily opened wider for him.

“Yes...baby...please.” He was taking his sweet time while I was writhing with frustration on his lap.

“Easy love...Don’t I always give you exactly what you need?” He was killing me right now. He pulled my panties to the side and went straight for my clit. I moaned as I held onto his neck with my one hand on his chest under his shirt. He was so warm, solid and strong. I started moving against his hand when he penetrated me with two fingers and kept his thumb on my clit.

“You’re so wet for me sweetheart...so beautiful...are you imagining my dick in your tightness...” he asked kissing my jaw, my neck, biting my ear. He started moving faster and faster and at that moment I didn’t even care who walked in. My one leg was now on top of the back of the seat while the other was on the floor and my dress had ridden up to my waist. I closed my eyes as I felt the wave building and building and when I felt the contractions starting KK withdrew his fingers.

“What the hell KK?” I asked looking at him with frustration churning through me.

“That’s for not defending me when Zama called me an old man...that’s your punishment.” He kissed me on the lips and unceremoniously dumped me back to my chair. Wow KK really? He then licked his fingers clean and went back to his tablet. It didn’t help that Zama chose that moment to let the whole damn plane know how awesome her orgasm was. Fucking great. I needed a drink so I called the hostess and asked for Gin and ginger ale. Might as well drink since KK was being special.

After about an hour Zama and Steve came out of the room and Zama was quite subdued now and smiling. Steve was his usual unapproachable self. I was reading some novel on my tablet and KK was also drinking a glass of wine.

“Do you want something to drink Zee? You must be thirsty after all that screaming,” I asked teasing her. She smiled at me.

“Yes please Vodka and cranberry juice with lots of ice. I’m quite parched,” she said sitting across the aisle from me. Funny enough Steve went and sat next to her. This was a 180 degree turn. He ordered whiskey on the rocks. I guess he could chill for a bit because he wasn’t really on duty while we were in the air.

“Zee what time are your results available from?” I asked her as my heart beat faster thinking of the results.

“Why are you bursting my bubble now girl? I think they said midday. Thanks girl the stress is back full force!” She was so dramatic at times.

“I’m sure you ladies did exceptionally well. I don’t even know why you are stressing.” KK said taking a sip of his wine. I wasn’t talking to him though because I was still sulking about the denied pleasure. Mxm.

“Phela uzosixosha (you know you’ll fire us) if we haven’t done well so the pressure is on Mr K.” KK burst out laughing and even Steve, yes Steve cracked a tiny smile. I got bored reading and KK was still typing away. He was always working but I guess you needed to if you were the CEO of a thriving company. When I looked at my couple of the moment Zama had fallen asleep on Steve’s shoulder with her hands around his arm. I wonder what was going on with those two and I wasn’t going to get involved.

I must’ve also fallen asleep because before I knew it KK was waking me up to buckle my seat belt as we were landing in France for the refueling. He mentioned that we could go have lunch inside at the airport because it was going to take about 3 hours before we took off again. Because of the impromptu trip it would’ve been nice to actually see France for a little bit but no visa no entry.

Once we had touched down Zama and I both went to change into jeans and light jerseys. Although it was summer in France it wasn’t that hot. We took pictures outside the jet and even inside the airport. It was beautiful because with the architecture it looked like you were in a massive tunnel. All brand names you could think of were all around. There were perfume stalls for days not to mention the Prada store. The bags looked absolutely divine and I didn’t realise that I had actually walked into the shop until KK spoke behind me.

“Do you want one?” He was standing right behind me pointing at the bags. I turned and looked at him.

“No ways this is too expensive!” He smiled at me.

“It won’t bankrupt me I promise.” This guy.

“No KK it’s fine. You’re already going to be buying us warm clothes when we get to San Fran. I was just admiring them. Come let’s get something to eat I’m starving,” I took his hand in mine and pulled him out of the shop. We finally settled on a restaurant and had the most delicious lunch. I guess the French definitely knew how to cook. We walked past some macaroon stall and Zama and I bought quite a few to bring back on the plane with us.

When we got back into the plane we were all quite relaxed and continued with our drinking. What else were we going to do anyway. Steve was back on his laptop until he spoke up.

“Boss...you have to see this,” he said handing his tablet to KK. KK looked at the screen and a worried look came across his features as he handed the tablet back.

“What is it?” I spoke softly looking at him. He sighed loudly.

“The DNA results are back and the body found in Hilbrow isn’t Fezokuhle. That means Fezo is out there somewhere and the bigger question becomes why would she fake her death and where is she hiding.” I had a feeling the whole thing was too convenient. Amahle must be in on this with Fezo. What were they trying to achieve. Reality had just crept into the bubble we had created while in the air.

## Insert 69

When the jet took off for our final destination we had about 12 hours to kill until we would touch down in San Fran. Zama and I changed into comfortable tracksuits for the last part of the journey. KK and Steve had closed themselves off in our designated bedroom after the seat belt sign was off probably discussing the whole Fezo thing. Up here in the air and many kilometres away from home, it didn't worry me all that much. Zama didn't know everything so they couldn't openly discuss it in front of her. We continued with our drinking because what else can we do to pass the time?

“So my friend uvukile umalambane (you finally got laid),” I said taking a sip of the drink. She smiled at me and burst out laughing.

“Yho mngani uvuke wadla kodwa akakasuthi. Sengibone ukuthi indlala iyohlala ikhona ukudla kumnandi kanje (you best believe I did but definitely up for repeat performances)!” We both burst out laughing. I'm glad she was back in her happy place.

“So what's going on exactly? Why were you so emotional earlier on?” I asked lowering my voice so they wouldn't be able to hear us if they came back. She looked at her glass then and went quiet.

“Well...I don't know exactly...” huh? What did that mean?

“So you guys are just having fun on the trip?” I knew she wasn't that girl.

“I don't know Lee! Steve is very...complex and I'm still trying to figure him out. He's been pushing me away then he wants me. I'm just trying to keep my head above water with all his mixed signals.” I would hate to be in her position right now.

“What does he say though?” I was a stickler for specifics because I hated vagueness.

“Well...when we got to KK's place that Thursday I literally bumped into him in the corridor downstairs because he was coming out of the study. He held my arms to steady me and we had a moment where he looked into my eyes and whispered

‘beautiful’ before he let me go and left. It was said so softly I might have thought I imagined it except I saw his lips move with the word.” Wow who would’ve thought Steve had vulnerable moments?

“Then on our way to the airport he kept stealing glances at me and when I would look at him he would look away. That’s when I tried to engage him in conversation but then he was giving me one word answers so I gave up. I don’t like chasing after guys. After you guys decided to literally start dry humping in front of us I went to the loo to freshen up and found you guys gone. Nani anisuthi ke (you guys are always doing it)!” I laughed at that.

“You’re a fine one to talk Miss Mkhize,” I said waving my finger at her.

“Okay yes you’re right but I was on the Kalahari dessert! Anyway so when I got back from the loo Steve was busy with his phone and had his earphones on so I continued drinking and dancing before I knew it I felt his warm body behind me and he put his arm around my waist and brought me against him. He then whispered a question in my ear about me liking to dance or something then we started having our own x-rated dancing there. I was so turned on and I felt he was too and so I held his hand and we went to the room and well the rest is history...” she took a sip of her drink.

“Aowa Zama the rest is not history. Why were you crying in the morning then?” She shook her head at me.

“Yho bengingazi ukuthi uthanda izindaba kangaka (I didn’t know you were so nosy)! So after we had sex like a number of times I lost count after a while he told me it was all a mistake and he couldn’t do this. Something about him being a danger to society and to himself and that he wouldn’t touch me again. I literally tried to keep him in the room by blocking his way but he just picked me up and put me on the bed then he left me there.” Wow all this drama was happening while KK and I slept probably.

“So what happened when you guys disappeared for the second time?”

“Yho I feel like I’m on Carte Blanche! Uhm he apologised for his behaviour the night before and said he was attracted to me but he shouldn’t be because he had a

lot to think about blah blah. The fact that he admitted his attraction that's all I heard so I kissed him. At first he seemed shocked and determined to not give in but when I started rubbing against him I felt his arms tighten around me and knew I had won. We've decided to just go with it."

"I'm just worried you'll get hurt Zee. You seem to have feelings for this guy and I'm not sure where Steve's head is at." This whole Steve thing was just complicated.

"Don't worry my friend I'm a big girl I can handle big daddy." She said winking at me. I really hoped she knew what she was doing. Zama and I decided to take ourselves out of the results misery and just search for our results. I took my ipad and went to the varsity website and put in my student number but I gave the tablet to Zama so she could submit for me and tell me the good or bad news.

"Are you ready mngani (friend) I'm pressing now..." she looked at me then pressed the button. I closed my eyes and could hear my heartbeat in my ears. Oh gosh please let it be ok! I just heard Zama screaming her lungs out. I opened my eyes and she had the screen right in front of me. The screen was blurry until it came into focus and I saw 80's floating around.

"Uyishayile mngani (you passed well my friend)!" She stood up and waited for me to get up so she could hug me. Tears of relief flowed down my cheeks as I was shaking from the adrenalin.

"Oh my god...oh my god..." that's all I could say over and over again.

"You are super intelligent my friend! So proud of you! Come let's check mine. I'm so nervous I feel like I'm going to pee on myself," she said handing me the tablet and sitting down again. She rattled off the university's website and student number. When I clicked on submit I realised she had also passed cum laude with a roaring 85% average. I did the screaming on her behalf this time. She looked at me apprehensively.

"85% my friend. Eighty-fucking-five percent average!" She looked at me like she didn't believe me then grabbed the tablet from me. When she saw her results she also screamed that's when Steve and KK rushed to us.

“What’s going on here?” KK asked looking between the two of us. Steve had his gun out already. Really Steve was that necessary? I ran to KK and jumped on him and atleast he caught me.

“I passed! I passed really well! I passed so well you can’t fire me from KC!” I was kissing him all over his face.

“That’s fantastic sweetheart. I knew in the morning already that you ladies did extremely well,” he held me tighter. It took a moment for it to register then I looked at him puzzled.

“What do you mean you knew?” He cleared his throat.

“Well...the varsity sends us the results before they are published so we can prepare exit contracts if needs be.” So I did what I did best and started punching him on his shoulder.

“Why...did...you...let us stress...when you...could’ve taken us...out...of our misery,” I said between punches. He was just laughing at me. This guy though!

“I didn’t want to take away that experience from you guys,” he said lowering me on the floor.

“Congrats ladies,” Steve said as he put his gun on the back of his pants. Zama looked traumatised by the whole gun thing so she was still rooted to the spot. She needed to get used to all this if she was going to be in Steve’s life. He probably had corpses buried in his backyard.

KK asked for a bottle of champagne and we all toasted to our great achievement. I couldn’t wait to call my mom when we landed and share the good news with her. We then decided to play a game of 30 seconds to while away the time. We made it girls vs. boys so we didn’t have the awkwardness of the couple that we weren’t sure were actually coupling. Needless to say the boys beat us dismally because I think they knew each other way better than Zama and I did. KK would just say one word and Steve would get the word. Really? I was definitely dethroned from my reigning queen status.

We eventually had supper which was divine and I was so buzzed from drinking all day I asked KK for us to go to bed early. He then made sure I didn't sleep immediately and only slept a few hours later thanks to his voracious appetite. I wasn't complaining though.

\*\*\*\*\*

We landed in San Fran at 09:00 their time and went through customs which was a bit daunting. The officers as they called them weren't even smiling and asked us the reason for our visit and all that. We even had to take off our shoes and everything to go through the scanner.

There was a driver waiting for us when we got to the other side and you could feel the chill in the air but it wasn't that bad. KK explained that winters in California weren't as brutal as New York or Washington with snow only in certain areas like Lake Tahoe. He said that like I knew where that would be. The car took us to an apartment he had rented for the weekend. It was a 3 bedroom place because I don't think any of us would've anticipated the Steve And Zama combo. I guess the decision was left to them. The apartments were in the city close to the Pier. We could see the Bay Bridge from our balcony which KK said lead to Oakland one of the 'townships' in San Fran. He had to get ready for his meeting. I called my mom and shared the news of my results with her. She was super excited for me and said we would celebrate when I was back.

We were quite tired but it wouldn't be in our best interests to sleep. KK suggested we do some sight seeing and so we took off to the pier with Steve keeping us company. He was quite pleasant this time around agreeing to taking thousands of pictures that we wanted. We also went shopping for some warm clothes thanks to KK's credit card.

**KK: done with the meeting went well. Where are you guys?**

**Me: we were about to order lunch at the Cheesecake Factory.**

This place had all different types of cheesecakes you couldn't even imagine. In South Africa we were used to the normal cheesecake with a strawberry something at the top but here there were chocolate, red velvet and nut varieties. I was really



looking forward to dessert. I also couldn't wait for KK to get here because Steve and Zama had gotten progressively touchy feely as the day got on. We ordered drinks and I told the new couple that KK was on his way.

"Are you guys from England?" Someone from the next table asked us. The American accent was sometimes difficult for me to understand but I caught on quickly.

"Not at all mam. We are from South Africa. Do you know where that is?" I asked her smiling.

"Oh Nelson Mandela! Have you met him?" She asked super excited. Really?

"No I haven't. Have you met Barack Obama mam?" I had been asked this question so many times I was tired of it. Did they think we lived in a village with 5 huts and one of them belonged to Mandela?

"Uhm of course not he's all the way in Washington. Ohh I see what you mean! I've just never met anyone from Africa!" She turned back to her table. Zama laughed out loud.

"Uzihluphelani kodwa (why do you even bother) Lerato?" She asked.

"My mom taught me to be polite Zee." I took a sip of my drink. Thank goodness Gin was universal because that was my drink of choice and both Zama and I were 21 and over so we could drink. KK finally arrived and greeted me with a kiss. He looked dapper in his tailored suit and tie.

"Hey love did you miss me?" He asked smiling at me.

"You know I did especially because ne ke tshwere kerese mo (I was feeling left out)." I pouted for added effect. He kissed my pout away.

"Hawu Zama no (and) Steve why are you doing that to my lady?" He asked signaling for the waitress so he could order a drink. He had his arm on the back of the couch we were sitting on and I snuggled close to him. It was weird to be in a place where you couldn't even see black people. There were white people all over the place.

“How did the meeting go?” I asked him quietly.

“It went pretty well. They actually want me to meet the main guy tonight instead of tomorrow. I can then conclude all this tonight and we can go sight seeing together in Sat before we fly back so we can be back Sun night in SA because we lose a day going back.”

“So you’ll be out tonight?” My spirits fell. A few more hours with the lovey dovey couple in front of me.

“We all going to be out. Jean Paul is hosting a party in one of his properties in Pacific Heights. He’s extended the invitation to all of you. So we have to find some hot evening dresses for you ladies to wear.” What? I was going to a house party of some sorts in San Fran.

“My friend we going to an upmarket party in San Fran!” I said to Zama to get her out of whatever her and Steve were whispering to each other.

“Bring it on mngani (friend)! I’m glad I brought my make up kit. We bringing that African Butter to this party!” She said giving me a high five. KK and Steve just shook their heads. The food was divine and I didn’t even have space for the cheesecake so we took it takeaway for later except here they called it takeout. KK had organised for us to meet some designer at our place who had gowns in our sizes. I felt like I was back in Matric.

Zama chose a backless red dress that came up mid thigh and she looked stunning. I went with a more conservative black asymmetrical dress that was short in the front and slightly longer at the back. The dress was an off shoulder. We went to shower and got ready. Zama did my make up and her own and styled her weave. Thank goodness for my short hair. Once we were ready we left the main bedroom to join the men in the lounge. They whistled as we walked in and I must admit we looked quite hot.

“Looking good ladies,” KK said as he stood up to kiss me on the cheek.

“Thanks baby. You also look hot.” He was wearing one of his suits and so was Steve. No points for guessing what colour Steve’s suit was.

We left for the party in one of the rented cars. KK held my hand the entire time to the venue.

“When we get there stick close to my side sweetheart. This is an unfamiliar environment we walking into.”

“Of course baby. We’ll do whatever it takes to close the deal. Akere (either way) you keep telling me gore (that) we are doing all this to secure our future.” That comment made him smile and kissed me on the cheek.

“I better be the one who takes off that dress tonight,” he whispered holding me close.

We eventually got to the place and I was expecting to see it pumping like other house parties I had been to but I guess not. It looked like we were going to some award ceremony with a red carpet and everything by the driveway. There were even flashing cameras and I assumed the paparazzi were also out in full force. KK took my hand as we got out of the car and we walked up to the stairs. No one knew who we were so we didn’t garner too much attention which was ok with me. There was some bulky guy at the door who checked our names on some list then we went in. The house looked small for it to be on one of the most expensive suburbs in San Fran. When we got in it looked like a condor and so there wasn’t much space but there were stairs going up. We were offered drinks on arrival which KK turned down on our behalf.

“Only drink what we’ve opened ourselves,” he whispered in my ear. We were shown up the stairs to a balcony that had different clusters of couches. The place looked bigger up here than it did downstairs.

“Good evening KK. Mademoiselle,” the guy greeted us and kissed my hand then did the same with Zama. KK stiffened next to me.

“Hands off Alberto,” KK said stiffly.

“I no mean no offense. It’s just greeting KK. Come in JP is waiting,” he said as he motioned for us to follow him. Alberto was kind of hot with blonde hair and blue eyes and quite tall. We were lead to the most secluded spot where a very

unattractive fat white man was sitting with two skinny looking girls on either side of him.

“JP how are you?” KK greeted as we sat down.

“KK good to meet you finally. Who are these African queens you have with you?” He asked gesturing for both Zama and I to give him our hands. I looked at KK to see what we had to do here and he nodded slightly so I took JP’s clammy hand. He took first Zama’s hand and kissed it then took mine and not only kissed it but licked it for that split second. Ewww! I pulled my hand away protocol be damned. When I sat down next to KK I wiped my hand on my dress and he noticed and gave me a questioning look. I just smiled at him and looked around. We were literally the only black women at this party. This was so weird.

Zama sat next to me with Steve on the other side. KK ordered a bottle of wine and asked for it not to be opened when they brought it.

“What matter KK you no trust me?” JP asked looking at KK suspiciously.

“No not all JP in Africa we like to open our own bottles that’s all,” KK responded smoothly. I was taking notes learning from the master here once I had Khuzwayo Productions up and running I needed to have the poker face KK had on right now. When they brought the bottle Steve opened it and poured for the 3 of us but he just drank water. I guess he was on duty tonight.

“So JP you’ve made me come around the world to meet with you. Will I be getting a stake of Paul Holdings?” They started talking business and Zama and I chatting quietly with each other in vernacular so they wouldn’t hear what we were saying. Eventually JP said we must join him in his dining room for dinner. We moved to another room and JP had his ladies accompanying him. We sat down to some delicious food and all I thought was I need to get back to gym all this indulgence wasn’t good. I was in my own world enjoying the food when I felt tension radiating from him and I looked up. He had his fists clenched and he was getting ready to get up. Steve looked like he was going to reach for his gun.

“Excuse me JP? What did you just say?” KK asked through clenched teeth his jaw working overtime. JP looked him dead in the eyes.

“The deal is yours KK on condition that I get a night with your slut that’s been hanging onto you this whole night. I’ve never fucked a black girl from Africa,” JP said eyeing me like I was a piece of Rib-eye steak. KK got up and flipped the table over and plates and glasses went flying and breaking everywhere. Some guys I hadn’t even seen came out from nowhere and had guns trained on us while both KK and Steve had their guns out in fact Steve had two guns out. Snap! Shit just got real in freaking San Francisco. Even in the states there was drama.

## Insert 70

There was a standoff between KK, Steve and JP's men. They were definitely outnumbered because there were 10 men standing around us with guns pointed.

“You can take your deal and shove it up you fat white ass. This is my woman not some slut you can do whatever you want with and you definitely will not be touching even a fingernail on her body!” KK was livid and shouting pointing a gun at JP's face who was still calmly sitting on the chair like there wasn't chaos all around him.

“You come to my house and insult me KK? I thought business meant lot to you,” he said calmly his chubby finger tapping on his double chin.

“She means more and you will not get your sweaty paws on her!”

“But all JP want is just a taste KK. Why you selfish with such beauty?” JP stood up and faced KK head on.

KK put me behind him and I noticed that Zama was also behind Steve.

“You know I can end all your lives right now and no one would be the wiser.” JP threatened and KK's hand tightened around the gun. JP took a step closer to us and KK moved back still shielding me.

“JP I'm warning you! I have no issues ending your life right now. Take another step and I will shoot,” KK said through gritted teeth. One of JP's men cocked his gun.

“Let's see who go down first shall we?” JP whispered menacingly. Steve and KK also cocked their guns. I tightened my hands on KK's waist because I felt like I was going to throw up right there and then from all the nerves.

One of JP's men looked like he was getting ready to shoot because his finger was on the trigger but before he could Steve shot his hand. He screamed in agony and the gun fell to the floor then Steve shot him on both knees and the guy fell down. I hadn't even realised Steve had fired a shot because their guns all had that silencing thing added so the sound was quite soft. Before I knew what was happening KK

shoved me to the floor and told me to take cover so I crawled under the server where the food was and Zama and I were both huddled under it. I should've probably covered my eyes but I couldn't stop watching what was happening because I wanted KK safe.

Steve and KK had their backs to each other each rotating and covering each other's back. JP had also whipped out his gun and pointed straight at KK but they couldn't see him because he was off to the side and if I shouted at KK he was probably going to be distracted. So I nudged Zama who had her head down and pointed at JP and whispered that I was going to distract him. She shook her head tears in her eyes. I couldn't sit there and watch my man die! I had to swallow my fear and do something.

I started crawling on the floor figuring I was safer on the floor than standing because the bullets were flying high. People kept falling to the ground because I think more men were coming in. I spotted one of those expensive blue and white porcelain vases and picked it up. The closer I got to JP the faster my heart was beating. He had his back towards me so he couldn't see me advancing. If he turned around now I was definitely going to be shot point black with a very slim chance of surviving. I moved as softly and slowly as I could. Once I was a few feet from him I stood up and hit him with the vase on the back of his head just as he pulled the trigger and he fell to the floor. I saw KK wince and realised the bullet had grazed his left arm then he looked in the direction the bullet had come and saw me standing there. If I hadn't hit JP, KK would probably have had a bullet through his chest. I was trembling standing there thinking I must've killed JP because he wasn't moving and had blood trickling from his head. I've killed a man!

"Lerato get the fuck down!" He shouted moving towards me. JP's men stopped shooting when they realised that their boss was down and the direction that KK was looking at. I sat huddled right there close to JP's unmoving body. My teeth couldn't stop chattering and I was rocking back and forth with my arms around my knees and my head resting on top.

"I don't want to kill your boss but I will if you don't put your guns on the floor right now!" KK shouted crouched next to me and pointing a gun at JP. I guess he wasn't dead then. Thank god for that! The guys dropped the guns on the floor and

Steve walked towards the guns and pushed them further away from the guys with his feet while pointing a gun at them.

“On the floor. Now!” Steve shouted that’s when I realised he had also been shot on his shoulder. How could so many things happen in a matter of minutes? All the guys lay on the floor with their hands flat. Some guys were dead and I must’ve counted 6 men dead in that room. How had KK and Steve killed so many guys when it was just the two of them? Alberto got up then KK and Steve both had their guns trained on him.

“KK all this was unnecessary no? Let’s forget about this and you guys be on your way? I will speak to JP and see if we can come to amicable solution. What say you?” He said with his arms up.

“I’m no longer interested in doing any kind of business with JP.” He took my hand in his, we got up and walked towards the door with Steve holding Zama. KK stopped at the door.

“If anything happens to us Alberto while we are here or on our way home, your drug smuggling cartel in SA will be blown wide open and I will personally see to it that you and JP no longer qualify to live on this earth. Understood?” He asked waving his gun at Alberto. He just nodded his head without saying a thing.

When we walked out it was as if no one else was aware that stuff had gone down upstairs. Girls were drinking and partying the night away. What a weird place this was. The car was already there waiting so we climbed in and immediately I told KK to take his jacket off so I could see his wound. It wasn’t too bad but needed to be cleaned and bandaged. I remembered seeing a first aid kit in the apartment.

I asked Steve how he was and he said the bullet also grazed him and didn’t penetrate the skin. He kept looking at Zama who was very quiet. She was shaken up by all that had happened and was shaking in the car. Steve then offered her his jacket and she declined. She needed to toughen up if she wanted to be part of this world. Was it weird that I was proud of my man for standing up for me? I knew how much this deal meant to him, I mean he flew across the world to make this happen. The fact that he would turn it down in my honour made me want to do all sorts of things to him. He held me close all the way back to the apartment and I



could tell he was trying to calm down because he was breathing heavily. I had my arm across his stomach holding him tightly.

“I love you,” he whispered and kissed me on my forehead.

“I love you too baby. Very much.”

When we got to the apartment KK went outside to chat with Steve while he was smoking on the balcony and Zama and I were in the lounge as I was getting the bandages ready.

“Lee...are KK and Steve gangsters?” I exhaled loudly and looked at her. Wow Zama really?

“No they aren’t gangsters Zee. Why would you ask that?” I knew where it came from but I wanted her to say it.

“The guns, the shooting and mention of drugs and all that. My dad would kill me if I got involved with a gangster!” She was getting hysterical.

“Calm down Zama! KK is an honourable business man and his business Khuzwayo Investments is a legit business. Steve makes sure that it stays that way. You’re going to have to get used to the guns and shady people if you want to be part of Steve’s life. It’s his job. I’ve accepted that these things are part of KK’s life but I know he would never do anything to put my life in danger. His business is everything to him and I know he won’t jeopardise that by doing illegal stuff. On this trip you’ve been exposed to some things that we don’t expect you to repeat to someone else. KK is very private about his life and he will not hesitate to remove any threats that come about. Do you understand what I’m saying to you?” I really sounded like the gangster’s girlfriend threatening my friend but she needed to understand that this was not a fairytale.

“How do you do it? How do you remain so unaffected?” She asked me wrapping her arms around herself. I don’t think I was unaffected I was compartmentalising at this point and I haven’t confronted the reality yet. I knew the bravado would be gone pretty soon. I was still high on adrenaline right now.

“I’ve been through hell and back and I don’t think there’s anything that surprises me anymore. Either way KK has made me the happiest I’ve ever been and no man is perfect Zee they all come with their little flaws that we need to accept. Love comes with sacrifice and I love KK with my whole heart. I will do whatever it takes to protect him and our relationship.” KK cleared his throat and I realised they had come back into the apartment which means he heard everything I said. There was a glint of pride in his eyes then he came and sat next to me and took my hand in his.

“Zama I’m sorry that you had to witness that. Our lives aren’t that dramatic I promise. If you and Steve are going to try having a relationship you need to be comfortable with these situations because they sometimes happen. In fact Steve gets most of it because he’s my Head of Security. He will talk you through whatever questions you have but I would rather you don’t share any of this with anyone.” There was a hard edge to his voice and I guess there was a veiled threat in those words. She nodded quietly.

“I think I’m going to turn in. It’s been a long day,” she said quietly as she got up. Steve got up to go with her and she put her hand up.

“No Steve. I’d...I’d like to be alone please?” She said looking at him briefly and went to her designated room. I wondered what was going through her mind right now. I figured I’d speak to her tomorrow morning and find out where her head was at. Steve looked slightly disappointed but also bid us good night and went to sleep. I snuggled to KK on the couch with my feet under me.

“Did you mean what you said sweetheart? About protecting our relationship and me?” He seemed so vulnerable asking that question like he couldn’t believe what I said.

“You’re my ride or die baby. Didn’t you say we were in this for the long haul?” I looked at him a question in my eyes. His answer was a searing kiss that sent wake up signals to the rest of my body and I moaned into his mouth.

“What you did tonight though sweetheart never again. You could’ve been killed!” He clenched his hands into fists.

“JP would’ve shot you baby and you could’ve been killed! I couldn’t stand that I had to do something...” the tears came then and wouldn’t stop. KK put me on his lap and held me to him. He kept saying how sorry he was that he put me through that over and over again. I started shivering like Zama had done earlier because I think the adrenaline was finally leaving my body.

“Let’s go to bed sweetheart,” he whispered as I got up from his lap.

“Yes we’ll go now but first I need to clean your wound and bandage it. Come sit here on the stool.” I couldn’t believe how badly this night turned out and how much more worse it could’ve been. I hope Zama was going to be ok and wouldn’t be super affected by this whole thing.

\*\*\*\*\*

Breakfast the next morning in the apartment was a somber affair with Zama back to her subdued mood. I needed to speak to her and find out where her head was at. Today we were going to KK’s friend in Napa Valley and would leave from there to the airport. KK promised we could tour a few wine farms while there so I could order whatever wine I liked to be delivered back in SA. Steve kept eyeing Zama who wasn’t even eating but playing with her food.

“Did you sleep well Zama?” Steve asked tentatively. Her eyes whipped up and she looked at each of us before her eyes returned back to her plate.

“How could I? I kept hearing gun shots in my ears and had nightmares of people dropping dead right in front of me...” KK cleared his throat. Zama was being a tad dramatic but I stopped myself from rolling my eyes. Maybe I was just being hard on her because of my own experiences.

“MaGcwabe (clan name) ngiyaxolisa kakhulu ngalokhu okwenzekile izolo (I’m really sorry about what happened last night). I didn’t mean to put any of your lives in danger and thought it was going to be a civilised business dinner. I’m sure you’ve come to realise how much Lerato means to me and I was not going to let that fat pig even think of touching her. She’s mine and mine alone.” I smiled at that. I loved how he loved me my KK.

“I get it don’t worry about it. I just need to process it all and I’ll be fine,” she said softly.

“Whatever questions you have you can ask me Zama. I’ll try to answer as best as I can,” Steve said and put his hand on hers. She didn’t pull away this time but turned her hand so they were holding hands. I saw a different side to Steve since Zama’s been around. He seemed to genuinely care about her. I guess she was on her way to processing the whole thing.

“I’m also sorry Zee if I came off a bit harsh as well,” I said to her and she nodded.

“Sorry guys I’ve just never seen such. I’ve lead quite a sheltered life and to find myself right in the middle of an action movie was just too much to handle. I’ll be fine though and I won’t tell anyone about this I promise.”she gave us all a slight smile.

“I’m glad we’ve discussed this and we can all move on from it. I have new found respect for you Lerato. You saved my friend’s life last night. Thank you,”Steve said putting his fist out for a fist bump. Wow really? This I was not expecting.

“She put her life in danger Steve don’t be fist bumping each other here!” KK though.

“But she saved your life boss or is your ego slightly bruised that your woman came to your rescue?” Steve asked chuckling and KK just shook his head.

“Ya mngani (friend) you’re brave hey. You just have this inner strength and calm in stressful situations. When I grow up I want to be like you,”Zama said giving me a genuine smile that I hadn’t seen in a while.

“Well let’s get on the road we have almost two hour drive to get to Napa,”KK said getting up. The guys went to the room and took our bags to go load them in the car while we checked that we had taken everything.

“Zama I’m really sorry about yesterday hey. I didn’t mean to sound like some bitch towards you and sort of threatening you and everything,”I said as soon as we were alone.

“It’s fine my friend I get it. Besides if Steve and I are going to make a go at this then you need to give me lessons girl. You’re proper gangster like that!”she said hugging me. I was glad we were back to our happy place.

The drive to Napa Valley was pleasant enough. KK was driving and sitting with Steve in the front while I sat with Zama at the back. I thought I’d catch some sleep for a bit because I also hardly slept last night I kept waking up with nightmares of KK dying. I really needed to set up an appointment with my therapist when I got back. I ended up not getting any sleep because the drive there was so beautiful.

We went through the golden Gate Bridge and it was so surreal to be on the bridge that I had seen in so many movies. San Fran was really a beautiful city. The closer we got to Napa then we started seeing the rolling hills of vineyards. It looked like the pictures I’d seen of Stellenbosch, very green, neat tidy rows of grapevines. When we got to KK’s friend’s place he was already outside waiting for us. He had lots of land which had neatly planted rows and rows of grapevines.

“Hey KK long time hey,” his friend greeted when we got out of the car and they did the guy hug thing.

“Yep Tom it’s been a minute. I’d like you to meet Lerato,”KK said taking my hand and pulling me towards Tom.

“Hi Tom lovely to meet you. I’ve been raving about the wine KK gets from you,”I said giving him a handshake.

“The pleasure is all mine Lee-ray-do.”Oh oh this was going to be a long day.

“Please call me Lee. This is my friend Zee,”I introduced Zama who also shook his hand. I figured I should keep the names easy so they don’t butcher them.

“Welcome all of you. Please come in. Steve how are you doing?” Tom asked as we walked into the home. He had a very beautiful home with that rustic farm house feel to it. We walked into a cosy lounge that had a fire going and sat down. Just then some woman walked in and came to greet KK.

“How are you? I haven’t seen you in ages!” KK got up and hugged her. I didn’t like her purely because she felt like she had free reign to be in my man’s arms.

“I’m good Nic how are you? This is Lee my woman,” KK said introducing us.

“Oh wow you finally got caught huh. Hi Lee I’m Nicole but everyone calls me Nic. Oh and look what the cat dragged in?”she said focusing all her attention on Steve as she motioned for him to get up.

“Hey Nic long time.”Steve said giving her a hug. She seemed to hold on just a tad longer than was necessary. I saw Zama sit up and get up.

“Hi Nic. Zee here Steve’s girlfriend.”Oh snap Zama has just claimed Steve. Nic’s face fell and she looked quizzically at Steve. He didn’t confirm or deny it.

“Girlfriend? I wasn’t aware...”Tom cleared his throat. Something was going on here. Did Nic and Steve have a pre-existing relationship? I was glad that someone other than me was having girl drama.

“Nic please bring us a bottle of wine. We’ve prepared a light meal for you guys before we go on the tour,”Tom said trying to break the awkwardness. Steve looked really uncomfortable as he sat back down.

“Could I please use the loo?”I asked Tom and he directed me to where it was. Zee got up and went with me. As soon as we closed the door Zee was already talking.

“Ubani lo mlungu ke manje (Who’s the white chick)?” I liked that she was showing signs of jealousy because it meant she was already invested.

“I don’t know Zee right now I know as much as you do. and wena (what about you) Steve’s girlfriend?”I asked smiling at her. She just waved it off.

“Umbonile mngani ulambile usisi (You saw for yourself that girl is hungry) and ngeke adle kwami (she’s not eating at my house)!” I laughed.

“Hao I thought you guys were still figuring it out...”

“I’ve figured it out so Steve must just get in line.”she folded her arms and leaned against the basin. I guess she was ready to fight for him. That’s what dangerous situations did with people, it brought them together. I was looking forward to see this Zee and Steve story unfold.

## Insert 71

We were on board the jet on our way back to SA and what a dramatic weekend it had been. I also think all four of us had been fundamentally changed by the experience and even the vibe in the jet as we were going back was different. Steve and Zama were seated next to each other holding hands even. I had seen the hand holding trend emerge as we were wine farm hopping tasting all different types of wine. Zama stayed very close to Steve the whole time and he didn't seem to be complaining. I think Nic's presence fueled Zama's determination to make sure she got the memo that Steve was off limits.

KK kept saying we needed to taste and spit not swallow but we weren't going to waste good wine! So Zee and I were five past tipsy but it just felt absolutely awesome. KK was back working on his tablet because he had to respond to emails yet again. No rest for the wicked I suppose but he promised after supper he'd be all mine so in the meantime we just played some music, some slow jams this time because we were all feeling mellow.

"Mngani (friend) thanks for the invite hey. It really has been awesome minus the bullets flying yesterday," she cracked up. Eish ya nhe the wine was deep in the system now.

"Zee you can't joke like that about these things hey. You need to be careful." I had to just make sure she understood.

"Unga wari mngani ngiyakwazi lokho (don't worry my friend I know that). Angithi ngikhuluma nawe (I'm just talking to you though). Siyabangena Monday shame siphasile sinjalo (we'll see them at the office on Monday with our great results)" Zama thought. Steve was just smiling there next to her. I had seen more of Steve's teeth since Thursday than ever. Zama and I continued with the wine trip and drank some of Tom's wines. KK and Steve were on their usual whiskey tip. The jet started moving and Zama got progressively quiet and tenser as the jet prepared for take off. She was literally squeezing Steve's arm like she was drawing life out of it with her eyes closed.

"Zee, look at me," Steve said and Zee reluctantly opened her eyes.



“Focus on me babe. Kiss me.” Zama didn’t have to be asked twice. Within seconds they were lip locking next to us and that’s when it got awkward watching them like I was a voyeur or something. My man was still busy typing away so I just continued singing along to some song and drinking my wine. KK must have noticed the activity on the other side of the aisle because he gave me a quizzical look.

“Steve is distracting Zee from take off,” I whispered to him and he smiled and baby kissed me on the lips and went back to his e-mails. Sigh! The jet eventually stabilised up in the air and Steve and Zee decided to get out of each other’s mouths.

“Yho! I’m flying with you everywhere!” Zama said fanning herself.

“Are you ok there my friend?” I asked her smiling.

“I’m good mngani. Can we take our seatbelts off now?” When I nodded she took off her seatbelt and helped Steve take his off and they disappeared into the bedroom. Ok then might as well get stuck into a book.

One of the air hostesses came and asked if she could serve supper now and KK agreed. I guess we needed to go pry the new couple from each other’s arms. So I got up and went to knock on the door.

“Zee, Steve supper will be served soon. You guys coming out?” I screamed through the door.

“Siyeza mngani (coming friend),” Zee responded. I went back to the seat and KK finally put his tablet away and kissed me on the lips.

“You good?” He asked taking my hand in his and I nodded. The two air hostesses brought the food out and it smelled divine. Zama and Steve eventually came through with Zee looking like she’d been thoroughly dealt with and a constant smile on her face. After supper we decided to couple up and play 30 seconds again and KK and I won. Yay I was back on the throne. We decided to play some house music and dance. This time it was that much more fun because KK and Steve

joined us. Zama was busy twerking there for Steve and I didn't even realise she knew how to do that. She had to teach me definitely.

"I think tonight I feel like spanking you sweetheart," KK whispered in my ear and my internal muscles clenched.

"Yes baby I was a bad, bad girl saving your life." I had to put that in there and he smacked my ass right there in front of the other couple but they were in their own world and didn't even notice us.

"Say goodbye love," he said and kissed me on my neck and left. I went to Steve and Zee who were snuggling in one chair.

"Friend I'm going to bed. See you tomorrow morning," I said as I waved. She raised her hand in a high five gesture and when I high fived her I realised she was red on her wrists. Was Steve into bondage? I decided not to dwell and go to my man to receive my well deserved punishment. When I got to the room KK was already undressed and just in his boxers clearly he meant business. I also took off my clothes and was left in my panties.

"Come here love I've got something for you," he said motioning for me to come sit on the bed. Okay what did he have. He got up and pulled a gift bag from somewhere in the room. When I saw the name on the gift bag I gasped.

"KK, what did you do?" I whispered because speaking in my normal voice felt like it would make the scene disappear like a cloud.

"Go on open it," he said smiling at me and sitting next to me. When I opened the gift bag it was the Prada bag that had drawn me to the store at the airport in Paris.

"Oh KK! I told you not to buy it. It's so expensive!" My eyes were shiny with tears.

"It's your passing gift. You did so well sweetheart and I'm fucking proud of you and even prouder that you're mine," he said and kissed me. This man of mine was incredible!

“Thanks baby. I love you so so so much!” I said and kissed him back and the kiss got heated with each passing moment. KK pulled me and put me on his lap and I straddled him. I could feel that Khumalo was raring to go. We hadn’t had sex since we’d been on the jet the last time because last night with the shooting was too emotionally draining.

“KK...please...” I don’t exactly know what I’m asking for but I need something and he better figure it out and give it to me. He stopped kissing me.

“Lie on your stomach,” bossy KK was out to play and I couldn’t wait for whatever he had dreamed up. He positioned my arms, turned my head and shifted my legs until he had me where he wanted me. The anticipation was killing me.

“Spread your legs a little wider sweetheart,” he whispered hovering over me and I did as instructed. I was already wet from imagining all the things that he was going to do to me. The bed shifted underneath me as he got up on the bed and settled between my legs. He pulled my underwear and it tore beneath him. I was used to him tearing my lace panties so I stocked them in bulk now.

He pulled my hips up but not to a point where I was kneeling but I was definitely slightly elevated. My stomach muscles were working over time here trying to balance myself. A moment later I felt the wet heat of his tongue move over my skin and realised he was lying face up under me with his mouth directly below my wet centre. I moaned as he lightly bit the inside of my thigh and moved higher and higher until he had his mouth tightly fastened on my clit. He put his hands on my hips and pushed me down so I was literally sitting on his mouth. His tongue was relentless moving on me over and over again. I clenched my fist on the duvet and tried not to shout my pleasure. I felt the change in pressure on my clit as he dipped his tongue inside me. I could feel the pleasure coiling deep in my belly. Building. Soaring. Pushing me towards that inevitable conclusion. I turned my face so I could scream into the blanket as I came. He held me open with his thumbs prolonging the pleasure wave for me.

When he finally released me and moved beneath me I collapsed on the bed unable to move. He had never tasted me like that and it was different and oh so pleasurable. I caught a glimpse of him as he came to the side of the bed with one of the scarves I’d bought in San Fran for the chilly weather. I didn’t protest when he

pulled my arms and put my hands together, not even when he tied my wrists together with the scarf. It wasn't too tight that I couldn't break away from the ties if I wanted but I definitely didn't want to.

“Get up on your elbows and knees love,” he said with such authority I wasn't even trying to defy him. His palms were hot as he caressed me from my thighs all the way to my opening where he began to lightly stroke me in circular motion. When I started to move against his hand he whispered, “stay still love otherwise I'll have to punish you.” My muscles involuntarily clenched at that threat. I gasped as he pushed two fingers into me and started twisting and stroking inside me. How could I not move when the feelings were so overwhelming? He slowed his movements down and I moved trying to bring the delicious friction back. The sharp sting of a slap on my ass made me cry out but then he rubbed me where he had spanked me and continued stroking inside me.

“Are you going to be good for me sweetheart? I said don't fucking move.” I nodded my skin breaking out in goosebumps from all the sensation.

“Good girl,” he said softly as I felt his finger there in that place that it wouldn't normally be. “Relax sweetheart,” he whispered into my ear. Oh my gosh keeping still was proving very difficult and as he pushed against my anal opening and shoved his fingers deep inside me, my body moved involuntarily and I felt another sharp sting on the other ass cheek. Before I could catch my breath he was pushing inside me hard, fast and deep. I couldn't help the moan that escaped as he gripped my hips hard and pounded into me. Time melted into unidentifiable moments as he rode me to one orgasm after another.

\*\*\*\*\*

We landed in France Sunday morning around 6 and disembarked to have breakfast at the airport. Once we set off again Steve did his Zama distraction again until we were up in the air then Steve and KK sat in the row behind us and I assumed it was to discuss business. Reality was slowly creeping in and I was so reluctant to see our idyllic time end.

“You guys are sleeping over at KK's?” I asked Zama as we settled to watch some random movie.

“Probably but we haven’t really discussed it. Good thing I brought an extra set of work clothes.”

“So you guys dating now?” I asked her. She shrugged her shoulders.

“Who knows? Will see how it goes. It’s easy to be in a relationship when you’re not in your normal space...” I was quite impressed by her realist view of everything.

“Are you going to be ok either way?” I asked.

“I don’t know Lee... I don’t know...I know it’s soon but I really like him and he’s that guy that gives me romance novel orgasms that I’ve always read about...it’s kinda addictive...” she sighed. Shame poor Zama. I hoped they figured it out for their own good. We eventually decided to nap for a bit on the plane and got woken up by the air hostess asking if she could serve lunch. We ate lunch and at least KK and Steve were done with their deep discussion so he came and sat next to me. We all agreed on some series omnibus and watched that until we landed.

Back to Joburg and it’s realities. I sighed as we walked down the stairs. KK took my hand as we walked to the parking and Steve offered to drive. It was already around seven in the evening and tomorrow was work. Groan! I decided to call my mom.

“Hi mama refithile nhe (we’ve arrived safely).”

“Thank the Lord for that. Le tsamaile sentle (was it a good trip)?”

“Yes mom it was good. I will see you tomorrow after work and fill in you in,” I said smiling into the phone.

“Go lokile ngwana ka (no problem my child). I’ve missed you so much.”

“Me too mama. Good night then.”

“Good night ngwana ka (my child). Say hi to Khulekani.” She insisted on calling him by his full name even when I told her she could call him KK. We said our goodbyes and I hung up.

“How’s your mom?” KK asked squeezing my hand.

“She’s good just missing me.”

“I’ll be missing you when you’re gone. You’ve been so present in my life this past week I’m reluctant to see it end.” He sighed. Aww I was going to miss him too but I needed to go back home.

When we got to KK’s place Steve insisted that he wanted to check the place first before we went in. So we all waited outside while he went in with his gun out and everything. I thought it was highly unnecessary for him to do that until he came out of the house looking worried.

“Boss...you should come see this,” Steve said and motioned for KK to come with him.

“Stay here sweetheart,” he said and kissed my forehead.

“What’s going on Lee?” Zee asked me standing close to me. Where did I even begin trying to explain to her the realities of my life. I didn’t know if she was truly in the close circle yet.

“I don’t know Zee. Let’s wait for the guys to come back.” After a few moments I heard KK call out from the house and Zee and I walked into the house through the main entrance. I didn’t expect what was waiting for us when we walked in...KK’s place had been trashed like really badly. I started shaking when I realised that I was supposed to have stayed here with Zama while KK was away. What would’ve happened to us then. KK came to me when he realised me freaking out and held me.

“Who did this,” I whispered tears in my eyes.

“I think it’s the people that have Fezo. It fucking infuriates me that they came into my house and did this shit! Imagine if I hadn’t decided to take you with...we found this note,” he said handing me a piece of paper. He was so angry he was vibrating with it. Zama was rooted to the spot confused about what was going on.

**Stop investigating Fezo’s disappearance or else...**

When would our lives just be normal?

“Steve...Steve...”KK was shouting at the top of his lungs.

“Yes boss,”he came running from somewhere in the house.

“You better find out who did it and find them very quickly. I’m going to remove their skin from their body while they are still alive to feel the pain. Nobody fucks with my home and lives to brag about it. We’ll have to sleep at a hotel tonight sweetheart.” It was amazing how aggressive he was when he spoke to Steve but very gentle when he spoke to me.

“I will find them boss and I hope you still find them alive after I’m done with them. We can all go to my place I’ve got plenty space until all this is cleaned up and dusted for finger prints?”he positioned it as a question.

“You’re sure?”KK asked and Steve nodded. I went upstairs to get my work clothes. Thank goodness only downstairs was trashed but they didn’t go to the bedrooms. When we got to his room KK hugged me to him.

“I’m so glad I took you with love because I could’ve easily come home to find you dead. These people have really gone too far and I will not rest until I have killed all of them.” he had the deadliest look I’d ever seen in his eyes. I felt sorry for whoever was behind this whole thing because they had managed to piss KK off royally.

## Insert 72

We got to work relatively early and KK dropped us off at the basement parking so that Zama could take her car and park it in the normal parking. I gave her my keys and she wiggled her eyebrows at the access that I had. She was crazy that one. I stayed a bit with KK because he wasn't coming into work.

“So I'll see you at knock off time then?” I asked turning in my seat to look at him. He took my hand in his.

“Yes love. I really need to get to the bottom of all this crap so Steve and I will be trying to figure it out. It's dragged on for way too long as it is,” he said frustration evident on his handsome face.

“Please look after yourself baby nhe. Don't be going into dangerous situations without backup,” I said touching his cheek and he smiled.

“Of course sweetheart I'm always careful. I'm just surprised no one's been following us since we got back. Maybe it has to do with the fucking message they left at my house!” I was also tired of this thing and thought maybe I should plant the idea in his head regarding Amahle. I had a feeling she had something to do with this whole thing and I felt like KK wasn't even suspecting her at all.

“Baby...you mentioned a while back that Steve had guys looking into Amahle's movements since the tyre slashing incident, have you not found anything suspicious?” He exhaled out loud.

“To be honest I haven't even followed up on those reports that Steve's been sending regarding her movements. I will look into it though. Why are you asking?” He took my hand from his cheek, kissed it and held it on his lap.

“Well...” here goes nothing, “I think Amahle knows more about Fezo's disappearance than she is letting on...I don't want it to sound like I'm suspicious of your family members or something but the way the whole thing happened all the way to the phone under bed just has that Amahle smell on it.” I was holding my breath because I didn't know whether he would take offence to what I've said. He looked at me for a second and cracked up laughing.



“I wonder how the Amahle smell is. Hmm, it’s worth exploring in any case. Thanks sweetheart will look into it. She was quite against the Fezo thing so there would be a motive to get rid of her but if that’s true, then there’s big problems coming to the Khumalo family because I’m going to kill her.” Hao KK thought.

“Sho baby can you wait with the killing comments. Let’s wait and see what you find out then we’ll take it from there.” He was scaring me the way he kept going on about killing people. For a split second I wondered if he would kill me too if I betrayed him – not that I had any plans to do so but he was very quick to terminate someone.

“No love if it’s her that’s been terrorising us like this she will have to pay for that!”Gosh KK thought.

“Yes baby then you can hand her over to the authorities to deal with her. I don’t want to be visiting you in jail and what will your family say? It’s your brother’s wife KK. We don’t even know yet if she is responsible for anything. Do your investigations then we take it from there.”

“Ok my love don’t worry I’m not going to jail anytime soon if ever. Let me go meet up with Steve. I will see you later.” He smiled at me and kissed me.

“Ok cool. I love you KK and don’t do anything rash please?”he worried me sometime with his hot headedness.

“I love you too sweetheart. Hope you have a day as beautiful as you,”he said and kissed me again. I got out the car and took my stuff then went through the private lift to the office.

“Morning Noah,”I greeted him as I passed by his desk.

“Hey girl. How was San Fransisco? I was running around like a headless chicken on Thursday trying to get everything sorted.” Shame poor Noah.

“It was awesome hey. Sorry about the running around though,”I said biting my lower lip. I felt bad that he was running around because of me.

“Ag don’t worry about it Mr K pays me very well to run around so no stress. Oh congrats on acing your results!”he said getting up to give me a hug.

“Aww thanks Noah. Ya it was quite stressful for me but I’m glad that it’s done and dusted. On to the next one now. Anyway let me get to it.” We said our goodbyes and I went into our floor. When I got there Zama was at her desk but no one else was there which I found very odd.

“Hey Zee where’s everyone? Did Vusi give people the Monday off and they forgot to tell us?”

“Angazi mngani (I don’t know friend) name ngimangele (I’m also surprised) because people’s bags are here...was there a meeting maybe? Let me check my calendar,”she said turning back to her screen to check.

“I don’t have meetings scheduled because I’ve synced my e-mails with my phone,”I responded sitting down.

“Asazi ke (we don’t know then). Let’s get on with our list of projects then. Kodwa ngikhathele (I’m so tired though!)”she said yawning.

“What were you doing while some of us were sleeping?”I asked smiling at her. I knew exactly what she was doing because she screams louder than I do. Steve must also have been in a drought the way they carried on last night when we got to Steve’s place! She laughed covering her face.

“Eish friend we were busy getting on with the agenda of the bedroom hawu!” I laughed at that.

“He’s got such a nice place though although he didn’t give me a tour.” Steve lived in Morningside at a very nice property. The yard looked big although I couldn’t really get a good look because we got there late at night and there was no time in the morning. I wondered whether Steve told Zama that he has a daughter. Was she ready to be a step mom to his child?

“He does hey. It would’ve been nice to sleep with him in the master bedroom but he says he can’t sleep with other people on the same bed?”she sighed.

“Huh? Why not? Kgante (actually) where did you sleep?”

“In one of the guest bedrooms. We got busy there then he left afterwards to go to bed,”she said sadly. Steve had issues for days and I don’t know why Zama was getting herself involved in all his.

“Eish friend are you sure mara gore (though do) you know what you’re doing?”

“I don’t know. I’m taking it as it comes. I don’t think there’ll ever be a guy who doesn’t have his own peculiarities so we can’t keep running all the time. I’m sure even Mr K has his own stuff that you have to deal with...”I couldn’t argue that one she had a point there. Just then John came into the office.

“Morning ladies, Vusi asked me to call you to the boardroom on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor,”he said looking expectantly at us. What was going on?

“Is that where everyone is? We didn’t know there was a meeting otherwise we would’ve met you there,”Zama said as we walked out with him.

“I don’t know what’s going on hey. When we got here we were also asked to go to the boardroom. I came to find you guys because obviously you weren’t here when Vusi came to call us.” Ok this was so weird.

When we got out of the lift and opened the door to the boardroom everybody shouted “Congratulations!” there was a banner suspended on the ceiling with the same word. Zama and I looked at each other confused as Vusi stepped forward with two glasses of champagne. Champagne at 8 in the morning? It was nice times in KK’s company.

“From all of us at KC we just wanted to say Congrats on doing so well and exceeding the minimum average you had to achieve. We are all so very proud and I speak also on behalf of the exco. We’ve organised a little champagne breakfast before we get back to work.” Wow what a nice gesture. Zama and I said our thank you’s and people started dishing up the food. It was a varied menu of croissants, muffins, samosas, cheeses, cold meats etc. They all came individually to congratulate us except Yolisa of course but then again no surprises there. I decided to send a message to KK.

**Me: Hao baby you don't even say that Vusi organised a celebratory breakfast for us...** I noticed he was online, he was always on his phone.

**KK: It wouldn't have been a surprise if I had. You deserve it though. I've also sent the announcement to the whole KI so everybody is aware.**

**Me: Ok thanks baby. Making any progress?**

**KK: I just dropped you off 45 mins ago love. I will keep you updated of any progress. Love you.** He was starting with his lecturing vibes. He was probably busy so I should let him get on with it.

**Me: Love you too...**

After the breakfast we all went back to our desks and back to work. Vusi suggested we work in the dreaded meeting room so we don't distract others with the talking and planning. They should've just assigned us the meeting room as our office because we were constantly there. I guess it's because unlike the other people we were jointly working on accounts as opposed to individual but it was fine that way because then we could chat while we work.

We got sandwiches for lunch because I wasn't in the mood for the canteen and its people busy staring at us and went back to the meeting room. Zama kept looking at her phone the whole time like she was expecting a call or a text.

"Why do you keep looking at your phone? You've been distracted the whole day," I asked her.

"Ag...I guess I was expecting a call or text something from Steve but ke dololo (nothing),"she sighed. Zama was invested in this more than she was letting on.

"Did he say he would call or text?" I asked her because maybe I was being special with my assumptions.

"No he didn't but I thought he would..."

"Eish friend you've fallen hard hey. Just protect your heart because I'm not sure what Steve's deal is either way him and KK are busy today maybe that's why you

haven't heard from him."I was making excuses for Steve just so Zama could feel better because I hated seeing her like this.

"Ya who knows... anyway let's get back to work." Just then my phone rang and it flashed 'Lesego' on the screen. Whatever number he's used to call me with I've saved on my phone even though it's blocked. I didn't block the recent one because I knew he would just get another number. Why was he even calling me? I felt my body break out in a sweat. KK didn't want me talking to him but if I didn't answer he would probably keep calling until I do.

"Hello..."I answered my heart beating in my throat. I heard someone take a deep breath on the other line.

"Miss Lee...I missed that voice of yours..."I had even forgotten how his voice sounded like on the phone.

"What do you want Lesego? I thought the restraining order made it quite clear that you are not to contact me..."my voice was getting slightly wobbly from the emotions churning through me. I was actually scared of him now. He laughed on the phone.

"You mean that shit piece of paper? Tell your billionaire boyfriend to enjoy you while he can but rest assured I'll be coming to get you." Tears trailed down my cheeks and Zama looked at me worried.

"Why won't you leave me alone Lesego? Please just carry on with your life." I was outright crying now. I know I should've tried to remain unaffected because he probably fed on his ability to scare me.

"You belong to me Miss Lee and I know you love me otherwise I would be in jail now." And the line went dead. If I had known things were going to turn out like this I would've laid charges and got him prosecuted. My good Samaritan act was coming back to bite me.

I started shaking while holding the phone with tears streaming down my cheeks. Zama came and put her arms around me.

“Mngani (friend) what’s wrong? Who was it on the phone?” I had never gone into details with Zama regarding the Lesego saga and I definitely wasn’t going to go through it now.

“I...I need to ccall KK,” I said stuttering as I dialled his number. His phone rang unanswered which was odd because he always answered his phone. I wonder what was going on? I sent him a text before I forgot what Lesego said and told him word for word. He was going to go ballistic when he saw it but what else could I do? Zama got me a glass of water and I sufficiently calmed down to try and work for the rest of the day.

It was close to knock off time and I hadn’t heard a word from KK since the morning. I started getting worried that something might have happened. I didn’t know if maybe I should call Steve and ask him but he was also so evasive and abrupt most times when I asked questions. I decided to just wait and I would ask him what was up when he came to get me.

At knock off time Zama said her goodbyes and told me she was going to gym because she hadn’t been in a couple of days. She was dedicated in her gym life. She kept asking me if I’m going to be ok and I nodded. I went upstairs to wait in KK’s office. I noticed Noah was also gone for the day. I guess with KK not around there wasn’t much to do. I needed a glass of wine to calm my nerves so I went to his office apartment and opened a bottle. The lift pinged upon its arrival on the 25<sup>th</sup> floor and Steve came out of the lift instead of KK.

“And then? Where’s KK?” I was rather rude because I didn’t greet him but I was so anxious because he hadn’t even read my message yet.

“KK asked me to fetch you. He’s at the hospital.” Hospital? Oh my goodness what happened to him? I started panicking. Did Lesego do something to KK? Is that why he called me with his veiled threat today?

“What’s wrong Steve? Why is KK in hospital? Is he ok?” how could this day turn out so horribly? I sat down on the bed bracing myself for the bad news.

“Yes KK is fine. His dad was in a car accident and he’s been rushed to the hospital. He’s asked me to fetch you and take you to him.” I felt bad that I was relieved but how could I not be when I thought there was something wrong with KK?

“Ok let’s go then,” I said rushing to take my stuff.

In the car I asked Steve about details of the accident and he said KK’s dad was hit by a truck on the side of the car but the truck fled the scene of the accident. His car was so badly damaged, they had to use the jaws of life to try and get him out of the car. Last he heard from KK he was in a critical condition. Shame my poor KK. I was praying his dad makes it as we were making our way there. Luckily Steve knew back routes so we made it there in record time. I found KK sitting on some benches with his mom and Amahle. He had his arm around his crying mother. When he spotted me he came to me and hugged me tightly. I knew he was very worried and trying to be strong for his mom.

“How is he?” I asked as he held me and he shook his head.

“It’s not looking good. The doctors are busy operating on him now,” he was breathing heavily. When I tried to break the hug so I could see his face, he held on even tighter to me. “Please let me hold you for a little bit longer.” So I let him take whatever strength he needed from me busy rubbing his back. Thank goodness I was still wearing heels from work so I wasn’t that short in comparison to him. Eventually he let me go and took my hand so we could walk to where the ladies were.

“Sanibonani,” I greeted in my broken Zulu and no one responded. Oh well. I couldn’t blame them because they were worried about Mr Khumalo. I sat next to KK on the bench and caught Amahle’s evil eye. She did that undercover smile of hers and wondered why she would be happy at a time like this.

After a few moments the doctor came out.

“Mrs Khumalo, we’re going to need a blood transfusion. The only problem is your husband has O negative blood type which is the rarest blood type and O people can only receive blood from O positives or negatives. Our reserves are running low because we had a massive car pile up that we dealt with this morning. I have put

through a request to the SANBS but failing which the best match maybe from his kids. Do you guys have kids mam?"

"I'm willing to donate. I'm one of his sons Khulekani,"KK said getting up. KK's mom also got up protesting.

"No I don't think that will be necessary KK the doctor said he can get the blood from SANBS,"she said nervously.

"Hawu ma kodwa ngikhona nje (I'm here though mom). They can just check and use my blood if necessary." The doctor nodded agreeing with KK.

"That's true mam. The best chance is from his son as I've said only 1 in 15 people in the world have this blood type and we running low on O blood in the hospital. Come sir so we can check."the doctor motioned for KK to walk with him.

"Wait! My first born son is on his way. Let's rather wait for him."

"Ukuphi uKhaya manje ma (Khaya is not here now mom). I'm here now let's just do it doctor."he said and left with the doctor.

"Shit!"KK's mom swore then the penny dropped. If KK wasn't a match, his paternity could be closer to coming out than KK's mom wanted. As they always say, nothing remains a secret forever.



## Insert 73

“What’s wrong ma?” I asked her playing dumb because I figured as a ‘clueless’ person that’s what I would ask.

“Ndaba yini leyo eyakho (what business is that of yours)?” she asked clicking her tongue. Oh well then at least I tried civility. Amahle was busy giggling there next to her. I honestly couldn’t be bothered because I was more concerned with KK and how the news will affect him when they eventually came out. He was just starting to build a meaningful relationship with his dad and on top of that there were people terrorising us that took Fezo. Once he sees my text about Lesego that’s also going to set him off. Why couldn’t our lives be simpler?

I sat down on the bench a few spaces away from the ladies because I had to call my mom and let her know what’s happening. She answered on first ring.

“Hi mama o kae (how are you)?”

“I’m good Lerato how are you? What time are you coming home?”

“I’m currently at the hospital mama. KK’s dad was involved in a car accident and he is in critical condition. I’m here with KK and his family waiting to hear what’s going on.”

“Oh no that’s not good at all I hope his dad pulls through and recovers. I will put him in my prayers and tell Khulekani to remain strong.” My mom and her insistence to call him by his full name.

“Will do mama so until we know what’s going on I don’t think I’ll be home anytime soon,” I sighed. It had been an emotionally strenuous day for me with Lesego deciding to resurface in my life on top of everything else.

“Ok ngwana ka (my child) I’ll probably see you in the morning then and Lerato you also need to be strong for your man akere ngwana ka (ok my child). I know wena o rata go lla (you like crying a lot),” as she said that I was nodding like she could see me and already my eyes were filling with tears. She knew me so well. I swallowed and said I would remain strong then we hung up.

Khaya arrived in a huff a few moments later firing questions at his mom and wife.

“How’s dad doing? Are they still busy with him? Where’s Khule? Have you heard anything?” he said sitting down next to Amahle.

“Calm down Mtungwa before you also get hospitalised for heart failure,” Amahle said soothingly rubbing his back. I didn’t know she had an affectionate bone in her body.

“I’m just worried about him. Have you heard anything?”

“He’s in surgery at the moment and they needed blood so Khule’s gone to test to see whether he could be a match because apparently your dad has a rare blood type.” Amahle explained calmly. She was quite different when she was with her husband. She must really love him I guess.

“Why would he be testing? I’m an O positive and Khule probably is as well. I mean we’re blood brothers,” he said as if it was the easiest thing in the world. Both Amahle and KK’s mom exchanged looks before they looked down.

“I think I heard somewhere that there can still be different blood types between siblings.” Was Amahle trying to salvage the situation? How noble of her or maybe there was yet another ulterior motive behind that. She was dark that one.

“I know sthandwa (love) but to a certain extent. There’s certain combinations that don’t work at all.” I hoped for KK’s sake that he had the combination that made sense even if he wasn’t Mr Khumalo’s son.

He came out through the double doors with the doctor and we all stood up. I was trying to read his face to see what had occurred but he kept his emotions in check.

“What’s happening doctor?” KK’s mom asked. She was clutching her bag so tight her knuckles were clearly visible.

“We tested Khulekani’s blood and unfortunately he’s not a match. O blood types can only receive blood from O’s. Your son is an AB positive blood type.” I was looking at KK as the doctor was saying this and he was uncharacteristically quiet. I wondered whether he had joined the dots as yet.

“Oh doctor my other son has also arrived and he says he’s got O positive blood. That will work right?”she asked desperately. Doctor looked at Khaya and nodded.

“Yes it should. I will need to confirm first and then we can get cracking. Would you come with me sir?” he asked showing Khaya the door and they disappeared behind the doors. KK came and sat next to me and I immediately took his hand in mine. He looked at me and smiled slightly.

“Are you ok?”I whispered to him.

“I’ve been better. I just hope my dad gets all the help that he needs.”he squeezed my hand.

“You’re just bummed that you couldn’t be the one to save him nhe?”I asked softly looking at him.

“How well you’ve come to know me sweetheart. My mind is struggling with how Khaya and I can have completely different blood types coming from the same parents. I will ask the doctor about it once they’re done with my dad.” He exhaled. He hadn’t joined the dots because it wasn’t even in his realm of possibility that Khaya and him could be half-brothers.

“Atleast he’ll get the blood that he needs don’t stress about the other stuff. My mom sends her love as well I just spoke to her now.” I was trying to get as far away from the blood type topic as I could.

“Oh shit! You’re supposed to go home today right? Should I ask Steve to take you?”

“No baby I’m staying here with you until we hear what’s happening with your dad. We’re a team remember?” He was looking at me with his full dimple smile out and leaned closer so he could kiss me. I leaned in as well and he kissed me on the lips. At that point I didn’t even care about my in-laws because this moment was about me offering him the comfort he needed.

Amahle and KK’s mom got up and left together under the guise of needing to use the loo. I think they went to strategise about how they could cover this whole thing

up but the worms were coming out the woodwork already. Khaya came and back and greeted KK.

“Bafu kunjani (how are you brother). Sawubona (hi) Lerato.” He sat down next to KK.

“Yebo bafu (hi brother).”

“Did you get the camera footage of the accident? Angithi (Since) it happened at that busy intersection?” Khaya asked. I wasn’t even aware that was possible but I guess it was.

“Not yet busy working on it. I don’t understand how a truck can do a hit and run as big as it is and no one even saw anything worth noting.” He shook his head in frustration.

“Sizomthola (we’ll find him) don’t worry. Where are the Mrs Khumalos?”he asked looking around.

“I think they went to the ladies. They should be back soon.” More like went to plan on how to prolong their evil plan.

“And what about the whole Fezo thing Khule? Yazizangilali ngicabanga indaba ya le ngane (I’m not sleeping well thinking about this whole thing) phela (as you know) she was under my care and protection.”

“Nothing yet but I’m sure something will come to light soon,”KK said uncomfortably which made me think he might already have some idea of what was going on. The Khumalo ladies came back and sat down and Amahle was back to being her affectionate self with Khaya.

There was very little conversation going around because I think people were just deep in thought. It’s when things like these happen when you realise how fragile and fleeting life really is. I was catching up on the group texts from the divas. I felt like I hadn’t seen them in ages and really needed to organise something soon even in Portia’s absence. They reminded me of a simpler time in my life when they were

on my case about me dating again. Look how much trouble I've been in because of the dating thing.

After about an hour or so the doctor came out and we all stood again.

“We're done with the surgery. Mr Khumalo had a lot of internal bleeding and he's got a rib fracture which we will have to monitor closely. He also suffered injuries on his right arm and leg because of the impact during collision. Fortunately he doesn't seem to have sustained injuries on his head because the MRI didn't reveal anything. We've repaired what we can but the next 24 hours will be critical. We've moved him to ICU and will monitor him for a period. If you come with me I can show you where he will be moved to. The nurses are busy preparing him for that.”

We walked with him through the double doors and a series of passage ways until we got to the ICU wing. It was cordoned off and there was restricted access. The sister on duty explained that once he was brought in there, only two people could go in at a time. She also said she would give us grace now because he had just been through surgery but the wing was very strict regarding visiting hours.

When he was eventually brought in KK's mom went in with Amahle and they stayed for a while. I could see his mom through the glass doors crying and did they just pray together? After they came out the brothers went in.

“Ufunani lana kodwa (what are you actually doing here)? Ngathi uyakhohlwa ukuthi awuka thathwi ka Khumalo (It seems you've forgotten that the Khumalo's haven't married you).” Gees why was KK's mom lashing out at me all of a sudden. I concluded it was stress and didn't let her words get to me so I sat patiently waiting for KK. I wasn't here for her in any case.

The doctor we had been speaking to the whole time came and went into the room. It looked like he wanted to do final checks on the patient before he retired for the night. When he came out KK and Khaya came out with him.

“Thanks for all you've done doc. It's much appreciated,” Khaya said shaking his hand then he shook KK's hand as well.

“Just doing my job guys. Like I said the next 24 hours will be critical.” He said smiling at them.

“Doc while you are here, do you have a few minutes for me?”KK asked. Uh oh!

“Yep sure anything I can help with?”

“I just wanted to find out how frequent it is that siblings can have different blood types.”KK was like a dog with a bone, he wasn't letting this one go.

“It is quite possible because children can inherit blood types from one of their parents or any variations in between. However there are permutations that work based on the parents' blood types and some that don't.”

“In layman's terms doc please?”KK asked looking at him intently.

“So your dad is O and you are AB. According to permutations you would either be an A, O or B blood type depending on your mom's blood type but nature sometimes baffles science so anything is possible. I have to do my rounds before I knock off. Excuse me,”the doctor cleared his throat, smiled briefly at us and left. I think he had also connected the dots in his mind and he didn't want to be the one to break it to KK.

“Khule stop with this blood type nonsense. Your dad has survived surgery and we must focus on his recovery now,” his mom said but you could see desperation on her face.

“Can we go home ma? Didn't you mention you had food that we can warm up for supper? I suggest we all meet at your house ma and have supper there and keep you company for a bit. What do you think Mtungwa?” Amahle asked looking at Khaya and he nodded. KK also was on board with the idea but I could see him trying to work out the puzzle in his head.

He was very quiet on the way to his parents' house and I thought it best to just leave him so he could sort out whatever he needed to in his head. When we got there we all sat in the TV room while Amahle and his mom went to dish up because they declined my offer to help. We ate on our laps with serving trays and it

was less formal than the last time I was here. The food was divine and I realised how hungry I was. It was around 8 already and I'd had a Chicken Mayo sandwich 7 hours ago. While we were eating KK was busy with his phone.

I think Amahle and KK's mom had come up with a strategy to keep up incessant chatter so there wasn't silence at all while we ate. There were random statements like 'Sekuyashisa lamalanga (it's so hot these days).' Then the response would be 'Thlobo selifikile (Summer is here). I had to stop myself from rolling my eyes.

"Ma what blood type are you?" KK asked suddenly when there was a lull in conversation. His mom stiffened.

"Hawu Khulekani what is your fascination with blood types now? Are you thinking of leaving business and going into medicine?" she asked trying to lighten her reaction.

"Whoo can you imagine uKhulekani se ka ngu dokotela (KK being a doctor)," Amahle laughed too loudly for anyone to consider it genuine. This was really painful to watch.

"Oh u ma is B positive. I remember seeing it on one of her medical files a while back," Khaya responded not understanding the gravity of the situation.

"Impossible," KK whispered tensing up next to me.

"What do the permutations say?" Khaya asked with interest.

"Ma is there something you want to share with us or me specifically?" KK asked focusing all his attention on his mother. His jaw was working overtime clenching and unclenching.

"U...usho...ukuthini (what do you mean) Khule? Ngazini ngamagazi mina (what do I know about these blood type things)?" her voice was shaky at best. KK laughed but it was a dangerous sarcastic laugh.

"According to science ma uMtungwa akuyena ubaba wami (Mr Khumalo is not my dad)!" the penny had definitely dropped and the dots have been joined. His mom burst into tears.

“I’m so sorry mntanami (my child)...you weren’t supposed to find out like this...I...it...umm...oh god!” Amahle went to her and comforted her. Khaya looked stricken by the news.

“Ma what are you saying?” Khaya asked.

“Kkhulekani is...Khulekanni is...is nnot...a Kkhumalo...”and she cried hard after that. KK got up and took his keys from the table.

“Lerato let’s go.” I took my handbag on the carpet and followed him.

“Khule wait. Let’s talk about this and understand what’s happening,”Khaya said coming after us.

“What does it matter? I’m not one of you fully anyway. Who the fuck cares what the fucking background story to that is? Who the fuck cares? No wonder Mtungwa didn’t love me how could he! I’m not his fucking son! I spent my whole life looking for approval looking for fucking love from a fucking stranger! I will never forgive you for this ma. Fuck!” He shouted then turned and walked out but not before I saw a solitary tear travel down his cheek. He wiped it off and got into the car. He was hurting so bad I didn’t even know how I was going to take the pain away. My vision was blurry as well as I tried to control my tears and be strong for him. I had just never seen him so broken and it broke my heart in unimaginable ways.

When I got into the car he had his arms on the steering wheel and his head resting on his arms breathing heavily. I pulled myself together and put my hand on his back. He tensed.

“Baby come sit this side let me drive,” I said to him softly. He sat there for a while until he sat up straight and nodded. We swapped seats and I got into the driver’s side. The first and last time I drove an automatic was when he took me for the advanced driving. It seemed like such a long time ago but I’m sure it would come back to me. He sat with his head on the back rest and his eyes closed. I thought the best thing was for me to just keep quiet and drive to his place. I would call my mom later and explain the situation. There was no way I was leaving him like this on his own. My poor KK.



When we got to his place I was surprised to see everything restored to order as if last night never even happened. He walked straight in and went downstairs. I assumed he was going to the study or something. I decided to take our stuff out the car and make sure it was locked before I went into the house. I finally took my heels off and went to find him. He was in the bar and he had just downed a shot of single malt whiskey.

“KK...do you want to talk about it...I’m here baby,” I said walking close to him and he was pouring himself another shot. Took that one and gave up on the shot glass and just drank it straight from the bottle. That had to burn, there was no way that it was pleasant to drink alcohol like that. I was really way in over my head here. I was at a loss for what I needed to do for him so I stretched out my hand for him to take it and at least he obliged.

So I lead him with his opened bottle of whiskey to the cinema room so we could at least sit down. He looked so hopeless and I could feel my eyes burn with tears that I couldn’t let fall. I sat on one of the couches and patted the space between my legs for him to sit. He sat down lower with the back of his head on my chest and I held him close to me. We sat there in silence while he kept taking swigs of the alcohol. Every once in a while I would tell him how much I loved him but my words of affirmation were met with complete silence.

He turned his head and rested it on one of my arms and when I felt moisture trickle down my arm I knew he was crying. I knew it was probably the most difficult thing to do to cry with no sound coming out. You could’ve held a gun to my head at that point but I couldn’t have prevented my own tears from falling. I held him tighter to me and told him over and over between my own sobs that I loved him and I would always be here for him. Although I knew he appreciated the words the only thing that could’ve made him feel better was if this whole thing never happened and it wasn’t true. My baby was hurting and I couldn’t take the pain away.

## Insert 74

I was woken up by a vibrating phone and realised both KK and I had fallen asleep on the couch. I reached for the phone without waking him because he looked like he had passed out from all that alcohol. The bottle was almost empty and I didn't envy his hangover in the morning. I didn't recognise the number but I answered it.

"Hello," I said clearing my throat.

"Lerato, hi it's Khaya."

"Oh uhm hi," I didn't know whether I could address him with his name because he was older than me and KK's older brother.

"I know it's late and I'm sorry I woke you...I've been trying to call Khule but his phone is just ringing...do you know if he's ok?" He sounded so worried.

"I'm with him and he's sleeping at the moment. I'm not sure where he left his phone though..." I said looking at him sleeping on my chest. He had turned and he was sleeping on his stomach and had his arms wrapped around my waist. I heard Khaya's sigh of relief.

"Oh thank goodness. I thought he was on his own somewhere. Ok I will check on him in the morning."

"Ok no problem. I will tell him you called."

"Thank you Lerato. Thanks so much for being there for him today. He really needed to be with someone tonight." The infamous tears were back.

"I love him so there's no where else I would be at this moment." I sniffed. Gosh I needed to get a grip. We said our goodbyes and I checked the time and it was just after midnight.

I thought I'd call my mom and let her know what's happening so she doesn't get worried.

“Lerato o siame (are you ok)?” I started crying in earnest. “What’s wrong ngwana ka (my child)? Did something happen to Khulekani’s dad?” I was trying to catch my breath so I could say something.

“Mama...KK’s dad went through surgery but he is in ICU but then something else happened...” more crying and sniffing.

“You’re worrying me now Lerato. What happened?”

“KK just found out some devastating news regarding his family and he’s completely shattered. I know I haven’t been home in forever but I can’t leave him when he’s like this mama. When I was in hospital you told me he was there all the time. He needs me.” I heard my mom sigh on the other side.

“It’s fine ngwana ka (my child) retla reng (what can we do). Keep me updated regarding what’s happening. Don’t you need clothes? Did you pack enough?” Oh ya I even forgot about that. I didn’t have work clothes for tomorrow. Crap!

“I haven’t even thought that far mama. I’ll make a plan but I will let you know what’s happening. Thanks mama for being so understanding you have no idea how much this means to me.” My mom was like absolutely awesome.

“I know how much Khulekani loves you and I was with him in hospital when he was worried sick about you so it’s a no brainer for me. Look after yourself and as long as you don’t come home with a bun in the oven Lerato please? I love you nhe.” My mom was so worried about me falling pregnant but that wasn’t happening anytime soon.

“I love you too mama and I promise you I won’t disappoint you.” After I spoke to my mom I realised we can’t spend the night sleeping here I needed to try and get him to the bedroom.

I shook him awake gently and he wouldn’t wake up. I had to be a bit more aggressive with him so I shook him a bit harder and he jerked awake.

“KK...baby...let’s go to bed,” I said as he looked at me with unfocused eyes. He got up and sat on the couch with his head in his hands. I stood up and picked the near empty bottle up and put it on a side table. I took one of his hands in mine.

He stood up with me but he wasn’t steady on his feet. I had to try and steady him on the stairs so we wouldn’t fall to our deaths and he was quite heavy leaning on me. I was huffing and puffing by the time we got to his bedroom. I really needed to do the gym thing like Zama.

He got on the bed and fell asleep again at least it was almost by his side of the bed. I went and got some water from his small fridge and some pain killers and tried to wake him so he could drink. That took another 15 minutes or so before we got that done. I couldn’t let him sleep in his jeans so I took off his sneakers, socks and jeans. He would have to sleep with his T-shirt on because it would be too much drama for me to try and take it off. What a day this had been and I suddenly had an urge to pray so I got on my knees and prayed to God for strength during this difficult time and for KK to heal but most of all to forgive. I took my clothes off which were creased like crazy and got into bed. I put my arm around him and slept.

I heard someone talking in the distance and as I fully came awake I realised it was KK on the phone. I opened my eyes and it felt like there were sand particles stuck to my eyelids.

“...Ok thanks Noah. We’ll keep in touch. Bye.” I heard him exhale loudly and he turned and looked at me. There was a hint of sadness in his eyes that I’d never seen before. It felt like his inner light had dimmed somehow. I sat up on the bed covering my yawn with my hand.

“Morning baby,” I leaned closer and kissed him. He pulled me to him and made me straddle him. He wasn’t wearing his t-shirt anymore so I guess he must’ve taken it off at some point in the night.

“Morning my love.” He held me close to him.

“How’s the hangover?” I asked talking with my head on his shoulder and my arms around his neck.

“Not as bad as it could’ve been. Thanks for taking care of me sweetheart. You have no idea how much it meant to me to have you here yesterday.” I lifted my head to look at him so we were sitting face to face.

“Where else would I be baby. Ride or die right?” I whispered as my emotions threatened to consume me. He responded with a heated kiss that rekindled the sleeping embers of my passion.

“I need you sweetheart...I need you so so much...” he whispered between kisses on my neck. I held on to his strong arms. I knew that statement extended beyond the physical. He was still hurting and I knew it was going to take a lot for him to be ok.

“Take whatever you need...which ever way you need it...” I was panting now as he lowered his head and took one of my nipples in his mouth. I could feel Khumalo hard and ready beneath me although he was still wearing his boxers. Part of me wanted to pull him towards me, push aside our underwear and have him slide all the way up inside me immediately but the other part of me knew that this wasn’t about me so I had to give into whatever he wanted to take from me. I moved closer to him so my breasts touched his naked chest and Khumalo was pressing right there below me. He gave me a slow, languid kiss as our lips brushed gently against each other sending shivers down my spine.

He moved his hands up my body, his palms were on my ribs brushing my skin with his thumbs. I took a deep breath as the sensations washed over me and I couldn’t help but move even closer to him as I felt myself open up under him. I started moving my hips and tightening my arms around his shoulders so he wouldn’t stop kissing me. It took me back to the first time I had ever orgasmed with my underwear on in the cinema room. Eventually I got up on the bed and stood so I could take off my underwear while he was taking off his boxers. His eyes were fixed on my body as I came down and straddled him again. He smiled lightly as I widened my thighs until I could feel the tip of him enter me. I was already wet and willing. I slid down him slowly, feeling him stretch me apart as he filled me.

“Fuck you feel so good,”he said through clenched teeth. I never tired of hearing that from him. He watched me as I began to move on top of him. This was deep exercise for my thighs but since I wasn’t going to gym regularly I guess it was

good. Every now and then I would lower my head to kiss him as he held tightly onto my ass controlling the pace of my movements. He turned me carefully with him still inside me and I ended up laying on my back with him looming above me. He was looking at me with such an expression of love as he moved inside me.

“Don’t ever leave me...”he whispered kissing me gently. There was such vulnerability in that statement that I couldn’t keep my tears at bay and they slid down the corners of my eyes.

“I...I’ll never leave you KK...never...”I said panting between his powerful thrusts. He hooked one hand under my thigh to bring up my knee deepening the sensations and the reach inside me.

“I love you sweetheart...” he kissed me and looked at me as he pushed deeper and deeper into me saying my name over and over again. I felt the tightening in my stomach and toes as the climax tore through me and he groaned his satisfaction too. He laid there holding me tightly to him as we both tried to catch our breath.

I expected rough and maybe slightly angry sex but he gave me the exact opposite.

“I love you baby...” I whispered in his ear. He just held me tighter and didn’t respond. I could tell he was overwhelmed who wouldn’t be? He got up and went to get something for me to clean up with. Just then my alarm went off so I guess it was 6 in the morning already. Wasn’t KK chatting to Noah when I woke up? What time did the poor guy start working?

“KK...I need to get ready for work,” I said sitting up on the bed. He came and sat on my side of the bed.

“Do you mind spending the day with me? I need you with me today...” he looked like a little boy who had lost his favourite toy but I guess it extended beyond that. He had lost a dad he knew his whole life it didn’t get any worse than that. There was a part of me that could relate because my dad was also lost to me although mine was trying to make a come back into our lives. Difference was I knew for sure that he was my dad.

“What will I tell them at work baby? You know I don’t have leave days I started like now now there...” I really wanted to spend the day with him though. I was torn between my duties to the company and the man who owned the company. KK had to come first though. I’d ask Odi to get one of his friends to give me a doctor’s note and it was Tuesday so it wouldn’t be dodgy.

“It’s fine baby I’ll be here. I’ll make a plan,” I said touching his cheek with my hand.

“I could just call Vusi and let him know...”

“No it’s cool let’s not blur lines. I’ll ask my brother to organise a sick note for me. See my ride or die vibes I’m committing fraud now for you.” That comment brought a ghost of a smile to his face.

“I’m willing to kill for you and that’s exactly what I plan to do ku lo mfananyana wakho (this little boy of yours) who won’t leave you alone,” he said as his face hardened. I guess he finally read the text I sent him yesterday.

“Hao baby why ompha yena (why you giving him to me) He’s not mine.” He chuckled slightly at that. I was glad to see some light back in his eyes. I wanted to bring it back fully so that he’d be ok.

“Whose yours then?” He asked staring intently in my eyes.

“You KK are mine.” I kissed him on the lips.

“At least even I belong to someone...” he said it softly that my heart broke again for him. I scooted closer and held him to me.

“Are you going to be ok?” I asked softly. He took a deep breath and exhaled.

“I will be. Things just make sense now you know. I feel like for the first time in my life I know exactly where I stand. Why my childhood was the way it was. I might not know who fathered me but I appreciate Mtungwa for doing it for 32 years despite me being a child born of infidelity. It’s clear my mom cheated on him then she had the audacity to name call!” He was getting angry.

“No baby despite whatever has happened she is still your mother. Maybe you should speak to her and get her side of the story.”

“I can’t stand to see her right now. I’m not ready yet.”

“It’s fine baby I’m sure it will take time for you to work through everything. Your brother called me last night and sounded very worried about you. He said he will call you this morning to check up on you.”

“I’ll give him a call later but right now I just want to be with you.”

“Come back to bed then,” I said smiling at him. As he got into the covers I texted Vusi and told him I wasn’t feeling well and wouldn’t be coming in today. I also let Zama know the same thing just so the story was the same. I could always explain it to her later on. We just sat in bed and cuddled while CNN was playing in the background on the TV because he had to keep track of what’s happening all the time. We then fell asleep again and woke up around 9 and took a quick shower.

“So what do you want to do today?” KK asked me busy making cereal for us. I had given up on the kitchen until I could get lessons from my mom. I was sitting in my favourite spot watching him move about.

“Hao baby it was you that wanted to spend the day with me and I also have to come up with what we are doing?” he smiled at me as he handed me the bowl and sat next to me.

“Thought we’d go have breakfast at this nice place I know in Harties. It’s like little Paris in our own country. They even have a miniature Eiffel tower and everything.”

“That sounds good. I’m down for whatever. What about the whole people following us thing?” I hadn’t seen any evidence of him being worried about that and we were using his normal car now since we got back from the US. He exhaled.

“There hasn’t been any indication that they are still following us but we’ve almost cracked this mystery. Steve just has to check a few things today.”

“That sounds promising. I’m so over all this drama in our lives right now.”



“You and me both. I’m hoping to have this whole thing wrapped up by the end of the week.” All this stuff was just so frustrating. I felt like KK needed to connect with his family though and not close himself off like this.

“I think we should go to the hospital first and check on your dad then we can go have lunch at Harties? What do you think?” I hoped he wouldn’t flip his lid but I knew deep down he still wanted to go and check on his dad. He kept quiet for a bit then responded.

“You’re probably right...Let’s pass by there then we’ll go. I better make sandwiches to go with the cereal otherwise we’ll be dying of hunger by the time lunch time comes,” he said getting up then he came close to me and kissed me. “Thanks love.”

When we got to the hospital Khaya was there with Amahle. It looked like KK’s mom was inside with the dad.

“Bafu ukahle (are you ok brother)?” Khaya asked as we walked towards them.

“Ngizoba right (I’ll be fine). Unjani uba (how’s da)...uMtungwa?” He asked clearing his throat. My heart went out to him that he felt like he couldn’t call Mr Khumalo dad anymore.

“Nurses say the fact that he made it through the night is a good sign. I was so worried about you last night,” Khaya said looking at him.

“I’d rather not talk about this right now Bafu please?” KK said in frustration. I touched his arm lightly.

“Baby I need the loo. I’ll be back now, now.” He nodded briefly and I went in search of the loo.

When I came out of the toilet some nurse approached me.

“Hi mam are you with the Khumalos in the ICU wing?” She asked stopping my walk.

“Uhm yes I am. Can I help you?” I asked puzzled why she would approach me.

“Oh they asked me to come find you and let you know where they went. Please come with me?” She took my hand in hers and we started going through a number of passage ways and she kept walking faster and faster. I started getting a weird feeling about this nurse and when I tried to pull my hand away she held on tighter as we walked through what looked like an empty ward.

“What’s going on here?” I stopped as she tried to pull me even further into the ward. A figure emerged from one of the many curtains in there.

“Miss Lee, we meet again. Didn’t I tell you we would?” Lesego said as he walked towards me. I tried moving but the nurse had her arms firmly around mine and I couldn’t move. When I tried to scream Lesego slapped me across the face and held my jaw tightly in his hand.

“Shut the fuck up!” He said breathing into my face. He brought a cloth close to my face and covered my nose and mouth with it and the world went black.

## Insert 75

I woke up with the mother of all migraines and realised I couldn't move. When I opened my eyes I was in some dark, dingy room with one window high up by the ceiling and realised both my hands and feet were tied with rope and I was lying on a single bed. It all came rushing back to me when I realised that Lesego had kidnapped me. He had actually kidnapped me right under KK's nose! My mouth wasn't covered so I screamed for help over and over until my voice was hoarse from the exertion.

How did I let myself get into this situation? I should've declined that nurse's offer but I thought nothing of it as she lead me to the unknown passages. KK must be freaking out wherever he is like he needed this on top of everything else that was happening. How could I be so stupid, so trusting? The tears came then and wouldn't stop. Lesego was definitely going to kill me now. There's no two ways about it. I regretted my decision whole heartedly. I should've let him go to jail and pay for what he did to me the first time.

After a while I stopped with my pity party because I had to figure out a way to get out of here. Based on the light coming from the window it looked like the sun was about to set. KK must definitely be aware that I'm missing by now. I swung my tied up feet down on the floor and sat up with my hands still tied in front. I tried to move my hands to feel my phone which I had tucked into my jeans because I hadn't wanted to carry my handbag into the hospital. My phone wasn't there which meant it must've fallen somewhere or Lesego took it. I hoped it fell somewhere and close to where I am so they could have some chance of locating me. I couldn't even hear any activity going on outside and figured I must be somewhere in some industrial area and people had gone home for the day.

With nothing else to do but await my fate, I prayed to God that Lesego wouldn't hurt me, that I'd be able to get through to him somehow and that KK would find me still alive. He was going to be so angry at me. I could already hear him tell me how I had no sense of self preservation and he was right. I was too trusting of people and look where it got me. Just then I heard footsteps echoing outside the door and the scraping of the chains being unlocked and the door being opened. Lesego walked in carrying some plastic bags.

“Hey babes, I see you’re awake! You must be hungry,” he said walking towards me and grabbing a chair to sit right in front of me. I eyed the opened door and he followed my eyes.

“No Miss Lee don’t even think it. I would catch you before you even made it across this room. So you must be a good girl and just behave.” He looked at me a warning clearly evident in his eyes. He actually looked more normal than he did the last time he was trying to kill me in my res room.

“Lesego why are you doing this?” I asked him my voice hoarse from the screaming. He looked at me and laughed.

“Isn’t it obvious? I love you Miss Lee and I want us to be together so that’s why I’ve formulated the plan for us to be together.” He said it like it was the most rational thing he’d ever said.

For me to have any chance of getting out of here I had to employ a different tactic. Last time we had a confrontation he perceived me to be fighting with him and that’s why I got hurt. I struggled with that fact in my therapy sessions and I guess life was giving me an opportunity for a do over.

“Lesego you’re a hot and very intelligent guy. You could have a pick of girls in fact some were throwing themselves at you when we were together. Why me Les?” I asked trying to sound as rational as possible.

“It’s simple. None of them have ever come close to making me feel the way you make me feel. Do you know how many women I’ve fucked since we broke up? I’ve even tried the whole medication thing but nothing compares to how sane and normal I feel when I’m with you. Don’t you get it Miss Lee babes? You’re my sanity. Your love is the cure I need to be ok. In your arms is where I’m healthiest in mind, body and spirit...” Lesego was really crazy. I felt like there wasn’t going to be any way out of here. I fought the panic rising inside me and blinked back the tears threatening to fall. I started doing my breathing exercises to calm myself down.

“Mmaybe you should take your medication while you’re with me and then we can see. I mean you’ve never tried that combination right?” I asked him injecting some

normalcy I didn't feel into that statement. Maybe if he took them he would realise what he's done and let me go.

"I flushed them all down the toilet last week. So I guess it's just you and me babes...so I think we should have some dinner and then become reacquainted with each other. How I've dreamed of this day when you would finally be in my arms. I didn't even think it was possible until some woman contacted me...anyway let me close the door." He got up to go close the door and locked it from inside then he put the key in his jean pocket. A woman contacted him? What woman? I had to get him to keep talking. He came back and started taking stuff out of the plastic bags and he had bought KFC. I vowed right there and then that I was never eating KFC ever again. Back to acting...

"So bbabes you were saying something about some woman contacting you?" I prompted and hoped he would continue with his story. He stopped what he was doing, looked at me and smiled. He came towards me and kissed me on the cheek. It took all my strength not to move away. He put his arm around me.

"Oh yes some woman named Enhle or Lihle or something and said she could help me get you back." Oh my god! Could it be Amahle? It couldn't be! How would she have found out about Lesego and his psychotic nature. I couldn't hold the tears back any longer and they traveled down my cheek.

"Shh...don't cry babes this is a joyous time or don't you want to be reunited with me?" His tone changed immediately and I shook my head quickly.

"No...no bbabes I'm jjust sso overwhelmed by what lengths you went to for us to be back together again." I sniffed and he took one of the serviettes and wiped my tears since my hands were still tied.

"Ya it was a real effort hey. This Lihle woman asked me to go trash some house in Hyde Park and leave some random note there. I really enjoyed doing that," he said laughing. Oh my god! Amahle was behind the whole thing. I started shaking realising that Amahle was the mastermind behind the whole thing. She must've organised Fezo's kidnapping just like she organised mine. How could she be so cruel and calculating?

“Are you cold Miss Lee I can feel you shaking? I’ve got blankets in the car. Let me go fetch them since I’ll be spending the night with you.” He got up and left making sure to lock the door behind him. Damn it would I ever get out of here? I needed to distract him as much as possible because he had plans to sleep with me. It would be rape if we even came to that. I felt shivers travel down my spine. I didn’t want to have sex with Lesego at all. After a while he came back but he didn’t lock or close the door and placed one of the blankets around my shoulders.

He finished plating up his chicken pieces and chips and brought the whole plate to me.

“I’m not hungry at the moment. Maybe I’ll eat later?” I said looking at the food suspiciously. I wasn’t about to trust anything he gave me to eat or drink just now it was laced with drugs or something.

“Oh I like that so you just want to get straight to the reunion?” he said smiling at me. My panic was threatening to consume as he put the plate on the floor. A thought came to me to try and get out of here.

“How are we going to reunite if I’m still tied up Les? I can’t even hug you.” I swallowed hard hoping he would take the bait and at least untie my hands. He looked at me silently for a minute then seemed to make that decision in his head. He took out one of those Swiss knife type things and cut the ropes. I had red marks on my wrists from the pressure of the rope and I spent a few seconds just flexing my hands trying to get the blood to flow.

“Are you going to untie my feet babes?” I asked sweetly. I knew that the door was still open and unlocked and I had to fight the urge to look back at it and double check in case he caught on to my game.

“I like how open you are to this whole thing. I knew you still loved me and was just waiting for the right moment to come back to me. I’ll treat you right this time around I promise. I know I don’t have millions like your ex but I’ll make you happy,” he said as he cut the ropes around my ankles. My ex? I had to control the hysterical laughter that was bubbling up inside. Once he was done he pulled me up so I could stand and held me tightly to him. I used to think he had such a great

body but he was skinny compared to KK. It made me miss KK even more. Where was he? Why hadn't he found me yet?

When he eventually let me go I sat down and asked him for some water. As he turned to get it from the plastic bag he had brought I got up quickly and picked up the plate of food on the floor and hit him on the head with it. I guess I didn't use as much force as I needed to because I was hoping it would break on his head and incapacitate him for a little while so I could make a getaway. He turned as he felt the plate falling and breaking on the floor. I didn't wait to see his reaction and I started running to the open door. I kept thinking if only I can get outside then I had a chance because he was definitely going to hurt me now.

"What the fuck Miss Lee!" I heard him shout as he came after me. I ran as fast as I could and realised we were in some warehouse somewhere with rows and rows of metal racks with boxes in the shelves. Where was this place? I couldn't see the exit from where I was because it was already dark so I ran to one of the rows and started slowing my footsteps so that he couldn't pick up the echo of my steps. I could hear his as he stopped running.

"Miss Leeeeeee. Come out, come out wherever you are..." he kept chanting over and over again. I could hear that he was still quite far from me and I was moving backward trying to make out anything in the darkness. I felt like my heartbeat was echoing in the dark space and I was trying to catch my breath. I felt like I was going to faint any minute from nerves. I kept walking back as softly as I could until I got to the end of the row and my back came against the brick wall and realised I was at a dead end. Just then I realised a flash light very close to where I was and I couldn't move anymore and I stood there tears running down my face waiting for my fate. I slid down and ended up sitting on the cold floor crying until Lesego shone the light straight onto my face. I used my arm to shield the bright light from my eyes.

"There you are! You're not getting away from me that easily Miss Lee." He said as he pulled me up and held me to him. "I'm going to tie you to the bed and I'm never untying you. I'll make sure I tie your legs to other side of the bed so that you are nice and open for our reunion. Oh I'm going to enjoy fucking you because this cat and mouse game we just did turned me the fuck on!" Lesego was a sicko of note. I

felt the scream before I heard it come out of my mouth and he covered my mouth with his hand. He took out his Swiss knife and put it on my neck.

“Make one more noise and I will slit your throat right now!” Just then I heard commotion outside which sounded like cars pulling up and doors being banged.

“Lesego Mokoena. Lesego Mokoena please come out of the building. You are surrounded. I will give you 5 minutes to come out otherwise we are coming in...” It sounded like someone speaking on the PA system. He tightened his hand on my mouth and I didn’t want to struggle in case he decides to end my life right there.

“Lerato! Lerato! I’m here sweetheart. I love you!” I heard KK shout through the PA system. There was a sense of relief but this was far from over. Lesego had already moved us to the room that we were in initially and he pushed me onto the bed and locked the room. He then came and sat behind me on the bed and pulled me to him while he put the knife on my throat. He was breathing very hard.

“That bastard is not taking you away from me again! Fuck! How did they even find me?” I was silently praying that I would come out of this unscathed. We could hear the police counting down outside until they got to zero minutes then I heard a huge bang, followed by footsteps echoing in the area. Lesego held me at a death grip. I jumped when I heard a bang on the door of the room we were in.

“Lerato? Lerato? Are you in there?”

“We asked you to remain outside Mr Khuzwayo. Please let the police do their jobs.” I heard one of the guys say.

“Do you even know how to do that! If we find her we all know it would be because of my efforts and not yours! You wanted me to wait 24 hours before you did anything! 24 fucking hours! So don’t tell me shit right now!” KK was shouting.

“KK calm down. Let’s find her first then you can rip the police to shreds,” I heard Steve say outside. So he was also here. I could see the warehouse lights being switched on because the light filtered through the door. The banging on the door continued until I heard gun shots as the door lock was shot at and KK pushed the



door in and came in with Steve huffing and puffing. The minute his eyes adjusted to the darkness he saw us on the bed and started walking towards us.

“You filthy, psycho piece of shit! Let her go.” Steve switched the light on by the door and I could now see everyone clearly. KK was livid and he had a gun in his hand pointing it at Lesego. Lesego started laughing out loud and I saw KK’s grip tighten on the gun.

“You come any closer and I will cut her throat open right in front of you,” Lesego said through gritted teeth as he dug the pointed part of the knife into my neck. I whimpered as the knife pierced my skin and I felt blood trickle down my collar bone. There was a sting of pain from where he had the knife point wedged in my throat. One of the police men came in wearing a bullet proof vest and everything.

“Mr Mokoena I’m detective Marshal. Please let the woman go..” he said calmly walking towards us with his hands in the air. Lesego pulled me with him and stood up with me in front of him and his knife point still wedged in my throat.

“Don’t come closer...I will push this knife even further into her throat...” he shouted wedging it just a bit deeper inside me and I cried out from the pain. The sound came out muffled because Lesego still had his hand covering my mouth. Everything was blurry because I was crying so hard. After that everything happened so fast but in my mind it was all going in slow motion. I noticed Steve cock his gun to the right of us advancing in small steps towards us and KK cocked his gun too. The detective couldn’t see them because he was walking towards us. KK pulled the trigger and Lesego loosened his grip on me when I realised that KK had shot him in the leg. That was a close shot because his leg wasn’t that far from mine. Lesego dropped to his knees screaming in agony. I took that chance to move away from him and I ran straight into KK’s arms. He held me with his one arm and tucked me under his shoulder while he was still pointing the gun at Lesego.

“You will not terrorise Lerato ever again,” he said through gritted teeth.

“KK no don’t do it,” Steve said trying to make his way to KK. The detective was crouching by Lesego trying to see whether he was ok.

“Never again!” KK said and fired another shot. This one landed on Lesego’s shoulder and he passed out on the floor. Steve got to us and took the gun away from KK.

“It’s not worth it man. Focus on Lerato right now. I’ll take care of this.” KK tightened his arm around me and put both his arms around me. For the first time in a while that day I felt like it was going to be ok. I cried and felt like I couldn’t cry any more and he just held me telling me over and over how sorry he was that he couldn’t protect me. I heard the sirens of the ambulance in the background and KK held me at arms length.

“Let me look at you sweetheart. You’re bleeding!” Only then did I remember that Lesego had actually pierced my flesh with his knife. When I touched my neck my fingers were covered with blood. I started getting very light headed and it felt like I was spinning and then the world went dark.

## Insert 76

I was being discharged from hospital today. I was just admitted overnight so they could monitor me. I fainted from the adrenaline leaving my body and from dehydration. I had daily sessions booked with my therapist to deal with everything that had happened. My mom was notified once I was admitted and she had been here the whole time with KK obviously. Zama also came because KK called her and told her I was in hospital although he didn't go into detail about what happened. KK had been with me the whole time and never even left to go change or sleep nothing. He was still wearing yesterday's clothes and it seemed like he didn't want to let me out of his sight in case something else happened.

He was with me now in the private hospital room which he insisted on and we were waiting for the doctor to come sign the discharge papers. The cut that I had on my neck wasn't too deep but it would definitely leave a scar and it was still a bit tender to the touch. I currently had a big square bandage on my neck. I was sitting on the bed wearing my normal clothes already and KK was holding my hand in his sitting on the chair. We hadn't really spoken since he found me because we were constantly surrounded by people: my mom, the nurses and Zama at some point. My mom had gone to check on one of her patients that was going into surgery.

"Sweetheart are you sure you're ok?" KK asked kissing my hand. His care and concern brought tears to my eyes and I nodded.

"I'll be fine baby. I'm so sorry about putting my life in danger and everything," I said looking down. He stood up and came close to me and lifted my chin looking into my eyes. He kissed me softly on the lips and held me to him.

"I don't care about all that. I'm just happy you're here and safe. I just about lost my mind when I realised that you were gone and I had no clue where you were." He held me tightly.

"How did you find me?" I asked staring into his eyes. He took a deep breath and sat next to me on the bed.

“When you left to go to the loo, I went in to see Mntungwa and I was with him for a while. When I came out and you were still not back I started getting worried. I then called your phone and you weren’t answering that’s when I started panicking. Amahle kept saying you’re probably ok and maybe you forgot your phone in the car. I wasn’t sure whether you had taken it so I had to go check in the car. I found your handbag but not your phone,” he said exhaling out loud. I put my arm around him.

“I’m sorry I worried you. I was so stupid!”

“You couldn’t have known my love. I then asked Steve to track your phone and it looked like you were on the move until we located you in some industrial place in the East Rand. I also asked Steve to keep tabs on each of the numbers that that piece of shit was using to contact you. I knew I had found you when the locations were in close proximity. I would’ve been there to save you before the sun even went down but Steve convinced me to involve the cops so that I don’t get in trouble. Trying to convince the cops took half the day! I was so frustrated sweetheart because I knew exactly where you were. I kept imagining the worst case scenarios in my head and I was vying for blood.” He turned and looked at me. “I love you Lerato and I don’t think you understand how much. My life as I know it would cease to exist without you in it.”

“I love you too baby. I knew you were going to find me. I prayed about it while Lesego was being crazy...” I was just so tired of all the drama in my life. When would it come to an end. I hadn’t even told KK that Amahle was responsible for all this. He was going to flip.

“He’s lucky I didn’t kill him because that was my intention. I wanted to see him die in front of my eyes,” he said his jaw working over time. The fact that I was used to KK’s killing talks spoke volumes about how far I’d come. Lesego was also in hospital being treated for his gunshots and of course his mental situation. I’d already decided that I was pressing charges regardless of what anyone said. Either way he had violated his restraining order so he would be going to jail. I didn’t even feel guilty at all. Lesego had made my life a living hell.

My dad walked into the room and for a second I thought I was hallucinating.

“Papa?” I said surprise evident in my tone. KK stood up from the bed next to me.

“Mr Molemi how are you sir?” KK said shaking my dad’s hand.

“Hi there young man. Lerato how are you feeling? Your mom told me you were in hospital. I came as soon as I heard,” he said coming close to me and hugging me. I guess he meant it when he said he wanted to rebuild his relationship with us. It warmed my heart that he was here.

“I’ll be fine papa. At least I didn’t get hurt too badly. Papa this is Khulekani Khuzwayo my boyfriend,” I said making introductions. KK nodded in his direction he looked really uncomfortable.

“Oh I figured as much but I’m glad you have someone looking after you. As for you Khulekani I’m still her father and you better take good care of her otherwise...” he said pointing a finger at KK. Really? He hadn’t been there forever and now he was taking his daddy duties seriously.

“Of course Mr Molemi,” KK responded clearing his throat.

“I’m glad to see you’re ok. I have a meeting in an hour so I need to get back to the office. I will call you later on to check up on you.” He hugged me and said his goodbyes. KK visibly relaxed when he left and I laughed at him.

The doctor eventually came and signed off the discharge papers. He also gave me a sick note booking me off for the rest of the week from work. I called my mom to let her know that I’d been discharged using KK’s phone.

“Ngwana ka (my child) it looks like I’m going to be held up for a while. I need to be on call for my patient that’s going into surgery now. Do you think Khulekani would be able to look after you today? I’ll be home late sorry about this. It’s such rotten timing.” She sounded so stressed by the whole thing.

“It’s fine mama I’ll ask him but it would be easier if I went to his place though because he’s not comfortable ko gae (at home).” KK looked at me quizzically and I just smiled at him.

“Ah ke tla reng (what can I say)? You live there now anyway. How are you feeling?” My mom though!

“I have a constant headache but otherwise I’m okay.” We said our goodbyes.

“My mom is going to be caught up for the rest of the day it seems. Do you mind if we go to your place? I will go home tomorrow.” He gave me his full blown dimple smile.

“You just made my day sweetheart. I don’t mind at all! Do you need to get clothes from your place or you still have enough?”

“I’ve got lots of casuals so it’s fine. I’m going home tomorrow anyway so it’s cool.” As we walked out of the hospital with his hand in mine we bumped into Tumi, Thulani and Katlego. I assumed they were here to check on Lesego. Katlego approached me first.

“Lee I’m so sorry about what happened. We all thought he was getting better. I don’t know what triggered this whole episode!” she said as she hugged me. How many times had I heard that one? I tightened my hold on KK’s hand because I didn’t want him to let me go of my hand.

When Katli stopped hugging me I didn’t even know what to say to her because ‘it’s fine’ was not going to come out of my mouth.

“What matters is that I’m ok and that he gets the help that he needs. Excuse me...” I said as I started walking towards the car park. I didn’t want to start crying in front of them and I had nothing to say to a supposed friend who was quick to judge me when I moved on with my life. Tumi couldn’t even look at me.

“Are you ok my love?” He asked as he opened the car door for me to get in. I came close to him and put my arms around his waist. I just wanted to be close to him and he held me to him for a while.

“Let’s get you home sweetheart. I’ll make you my world famous soup. How does that sound?” KK was a God send in every sense of the word. He kissed my forehead then I got into the car.

When we got to his place we went and sat in the cinema room and I insisted on being on his lap because that's where I felt safest. I needed to tell him what I knew about the whole kidnapping thing but I was nervous about his reaction. I knew how KK was protective of me and once he found out that Amahle had something to do with it I wasn't sure how he would handle it. I needed to tell him though because then maybe poor Fezo could be found. I was only kidnapped for a day and it wasn't pleasant. I could imagine Fezo almost two weeks later how she was feeling. I still didn't like her but she was still a person.

"Baby...I have to tell you something..." I said softly and he tensed beneath me.

"What is it sweetheart? Did that stupid boy touch you inappropriately? I will go to the hospital and break each and every finger he possesses..." KK was deep though.

"No baby you got there in time he didn't do anything like what you thinking. But...he did mention who his accomplice was in this whole thing..." KK turned my head so I could look at him straight on.

"Tell me everything that piece of shit told you." I cleared my throat.

"He said that...that Amahle contacted him and told him where to find me...Lesego is also the one who trashed your place and left the note. He says Amahle told him to do it so he could get information about me. He couldn't clearly remember her name and referred to her as Lihle or Enhle. I just joined the dots after that." KK had visibly tensed as I relayed the story and I knew he was trying to control his anger.

"So are you telling me that Amahle is responsible for all this shit?" I nodded looking down.

"I think she also has something to do with Fezo's appearance. I'm more convinced than ever after hearing Lesego. It seems Lesego didn't know it was your house that he was thrashing. I'm sorry baby I didn't want to tell you this..." I couldn't believe Lesego had been in the house. He definitely would've hurt me if I hadn't gone to the US with KK.

“No love you had to. It seems she’s been too busy for her own good. I’m going to call Steve and tell him to find her and detain her and I will interrogate her accordingly. I’m not surprised in the least she is just as crazy as that stupid ex of yours. The tyre slashing was an example. Maybe Khaya will believe me now,” he said taking his phone out and calling Steve. I heard him tell Steve to make sure that Lesego was guarded in hospital so that nothing happened to him because he said he couldn’t trust that Amahle would make the evidence disappear once she heard that I was rescued.

“How’s your dad doing?” I asked him when he was done.

“He’s getting better each day but there’s still a long road to recovery. There’s just so much happening at the same time!” He said visibly frustrated.

“And your mom...did you guys speak?” I asked him tentatively.

“Not really. I’m not ready for that at the moment. Let me go get the soup started.” Clearly he was dismissing the conversation. I switched on the TV and put on some series I wanted to catch up on. I needed to call Zama and let her know I’m ok but I didn’t know if they ever found my phone. I went upstairs to go ask KK about it. I found him pouring carrots, celery and some other stuff into the pressure cooker.

“Baby...did you guys find my phone?”

“What are you doing up and about? You should be resting...” he said scolding me. I sat down at my favourite spot in the kitchen.

“I wanted to call Zama and also let the divas know what happened.” He went upstairs and came back with a brand new phone and a sim card.

“No sweetheart we couldn’t find it but I got you another phone and did a sim swap. So you can just restore your backup from iCloud and most of your stuff should be there. Now please go downstairs and get in that blanket and rest I’ll be with you now now.” He kissed me on the lips. KK thought of everything.



I went downstairs and snuggled into the blankets. I set my phone up and thank goodness I hadn't lost any of the important stuff. I noticed a text from Tumi sent a few minutes ago.

**Tsala I'm so sorry about what happened. We all had no idea that Lesego was off his meds. I'm glad that you ok and I'm so sorry about judging your life and everything. I miss you my friend. Let's talk when you're ready.**

I didn't respond because what would I say? KK came a while later and sat next to me.

"I have to go meet up with Steve sweetheart and sort out this whole Amahle thing once and for all. Do you need anything?"

"I need to take my meds I can feel my migraine knocking again."

KK made sure I took my pain meds and antibiotics for the cut. My migraines were back probably because of the stressful situation. He tucked me in and kissed me on the forehead.

"Rest sweetheart. I have to go and I called Zama she said she would come by after work. The soup should be ready in about an hour or two but I've set the timer so it will automatically switch off. Call me if you need anything ok?" I nodded already drowsy from the medication.

"Thanks KK. You've always been my knight in shining armour saving me..." I was struggling to keep my eyes open because the medication was very strong.

"For you my love I would make it my full time job. We need to seriously talk about our future when I come back," he said kissing me on the lips. What did he mean by that? I closed my eyes and drifted to a dreamless sleep. I was safe and I hoped that the drama would get less and less as the days progressed. I wondered what serious talk KK wanted to have.

## Insert 77

I was woken up by what sounded like a knock at the front door but the noise was muffled and my phone was ringing incessantly.

“Hello,” I said my voice scratchy from sleep.

“Girl ngisemnyango ngicela uzovula oe (I’m at the door please come and open),” Zama said on the phone. That made me smile as I dragged myself from the couch. When I opened the door she jumped on me and gave me a hug. She was still dressed in her work clothes with heels and everything.

“Are you ok? KK just told me you were in hospital what happened?” She asked as we walked in and I lead her to the cinema room.

“It’s such a long story Zee I will tell you once I’ve woken up from my drugged sleep.” I answered with a yawn. We both sat and I checked the time and realised it was just before 6pm.

“Work has been so boring without you! I’ve been a loner chilling on my own,” she said taking my hands in hers.

“Askies friend eish I’ll be back next week. You’ll have to play nice with the other children,” I smiled at her. Zama was such a ball of energy you couldn’t help being happy in her presence.

“Whoo angeke (I can’t)! Ngizomela wena ubuye (I’ll just wait for you to come back). Anyway you should’ve seen Yolisa’s face when Mr K called me in the open plan and I was very loud speaking to him making sure she heard that I was talking to him. Ungifaka emgangathweni (you give me street cred).” she laughed out loud.

“Would you like something to drink?”

“You know my poison girl and I deserve it. I’m busy working on the proposals on my own there.”

“Askies friend le wena wabona gore ke na le mathata (You can see for yourself that I’ve got problems). Do you mind helping yourself to your poison of choice? You know where the bar is right? Pity I can’t join you since I’m on my meds.” She got up and went to fix herself a drink.

I decided to call KK and check up on him.

“My love...” he answered immediately and that made me smile.

“Hi baby...how’s it going there?” I heard him exhale.

“If you could hear the stuff I’ve heard from Amahle today! I’m shocked to the core and it takes a lot for that to happen.”

“What happened? Did you find Fezo?”

“She’s revealed where she is and Steve is organising her release. I don’t know what I’m going to tell Khaya. It makes me so mad when I know that she put your life in danger! I’m still thinking of how I’m going to make her pay...”

“Don’t do anything rash baby. At least come home and sleep on it.”

“I guess you’re right. We must just come up with a cover story for Amahle not coming home tonight. Did Zama come through?”

“Yes she’s here busy fixing herself a drink.”

“Ok you guys should eat nhe and don’t over exert yourself. I should be home around 8.”

“Ok baby. See you soon. I love you.”

“I love you more...bye.”

Zama came back and sat down next to me.

“So mngani (friend) tell me what happened? How did you end up in hospital? I see the bandage on your neck...” Zama asked taking a sip of her drink. I started right

at the beginning with Lesego's story. By the time I got to yesterday's events I was crying. She was crying with me which made me cry even harder. She put her arm around me and I found comfort in that. I had never told anyone the full story except for my therapist but Zama had that thing about her that made me open up to her.

"Yho mngani (my friend) you've gone through a lot hey. I think that's why God gave you Mr K you know...so you could experience the kind of love that you guys have. You have a rare type of love Lee. KK loves you so openly and so whole heartedly." I hugged her.

"Thanks for being here and being my friend. I've known you for such a short time but you're such an integral part of my life now." She was sniffing as much as I was.

"It was meant to be my friend. I'm not good at the whole friend thing in fact I don't have a lot of friends really. People just don't get me but I feel like you got me from that first day when we were there for interviews. People always think that I'm arrogant or a spoiled brat or whatever because my family has money but it's never been a factor for you and me..." she was crying now which made me cry even more.

"It's ok my friend. I'm glad that you've been here for me and I will be there for you whenever you need me to be." We wiped our tears.

"Ok enough with the waterworks!" she said wiping my cheeks. We were a sad pair to say the least.

"Enough about me. How's you? How's it going with Steve?"

"Ahh mngani (friend) it's going nowhere slowly. The last time I spoke to him was when he said good night to me at his house. I'm not going to chase after him like some love sick puppy and he hasn't called so..." Steve was special though.

"Eish I know him and KK have been working on resolving some stuff that's probably why he hasn't had time..." I didn't know why I was making excuses for him but I just wanted her to feel better.

“Ag whatever. It was fun while it lasted. At least I’m not in a drought anymore right!” She tried to feign nonchalance but I knew she was touched by Steve’s ignorance.

“I’m feeling a bit hungry...KK made soup before he left it should be done by now. Let’s go upstairs and dish up. KK said he’d be home around 8,” I said getting up and felt dizzy so I sat down again.

“Take it easy my friend. Let me go dish up I’ll find the stuff in the kitchen. Rest!” She said getting up and leaving me there. I decided to text the divas and let them know what happened. I felt bad like I was neglecting them these days. Maybe I needed to hook up drinks with them soon. They all expressed their shock and concern and also proposed drinks. I told them we’d do it soon. I heard voices upstairs and assumed KK was back. It sounded like Steve was there as well. I tucked myself into the blanket because I knew KK would scold me if it didn’t look like I was taking care of myself in his absence.

“Lee buka ngithole ba ekhishini (look who I found in the kitchen),” Zama said as she walked in with a steaming bowl of soup followed by KK. He bent down and kissed me on the lips then sat next to me and put his arm around me.

“How are you feeling?” He asked softly as Zama handed me the soup.

“I’m better now that you’re here...” I said taking a spoonful of soup and moaned.

“This is so good...” I took another spoonful. He just smiled at me.

“Did it help that Zama’s here?” he asked and I nodded in response.

“Thanks baby. You think of everything all the time.” Zama came into the room with Steve and handed a bowl to KK. Things were a bit tense on that front. They sat next to each other but with a couch between them silently eating the soup. KK changed the channels to the news and we all watched that. When we were done Zama collected the bowls and took them upstairs.

“I’m going to head out Lee some of us have work tomorrow,” she said when she came back.

“Oh ok thanks for coming through Zee. I really appreciate it,” I said getting up to give her a hug.

“Are you going to be ok to drive?” KK asked.

“Yep I should be fine. Just had one glass of Vodka and juice. I will call you tomorrow Lee,” she said taking her handbag and putting her heels back on.

Steve cleared his throat and stood up as well.

“Let me see you out MaGcwabe...Boss, First lady good night...” Steve said and Zama threw him a dirty look. They left together with KK chuckling next to me.

“What’s so funny baby?” I asked him turning to look at him.

“Steve’s got it bad...”

“Well they must sort out their drama. Go up and lock baby then you can come tell me about what happened with Amahle.”

“I know you’re getting better when you start bossing me around.” He went upstairs and was back a few minutes later.

“Angazi nokuthi ngiyiqale kuphi indaba ka Amahle (I don’t even know where to start regarding this Amahle story).” He said as he sat back and put his arm around me. I snuggled close to him and covered him with my blanket also.

“Start at the beginning baby. What did she say?”

“Amahle has been the mastermind behind everything. Can you believe she’s known about my paternity situation for years now? I can’t even reconcile that in my head. My mom and her have been shaping my life forever. Scheming and plotting behind all our backs. They paid off my girlfriend that I was going to marry because I needed to be available for the whole Fezo thing. So when you came along you put a spanner in the works. The whole tyre slashing thing was meant to scare you away but you stayed with me despite that. You didn’t even take the money bait. So I guess they had to turn it up a notch. That’s when Amahle admitted to doing background checks on you and how she got into contact with

that stupid boy. It seems he was reluctant at first to work with her and had to take some convincing. So she hatched up a plan to get Fezo kidnapped so I could blame you for that I'm not sure why she thought I would. I don't think she's right in the head..." he said exhaling loudly. I couldn't believe Amahle though. She didn't know me from a bar of soap and yet she didn't care whether I was raped or killed by Lesego. I felt the anger building inside me and I let it. I wanted to feel all of it.

"How dare she!" I shouted, "how dare she play with our lives like that! Who the fuck does she think she is? Lesego could've raped me! He could've stabbed me to death. In fact I have scars for days for the shit that guy has done to me and she conspired with him against me?" I was so angry I was crying as I shouted all this.

"Calm down sweetheart. I don't think it's good for you to be so worked up about this," KK said trying to calm me down but I was beyond that. I was seeing red. I wanted her to feel the panic and hopelessness I felt when Lesego had kidnapped me.

"Who does she think she is? Controlling other people's lives! She's not God! I want you to kill her baby! I don't care anymore. Kill her!" I said looking at KK. He looked at me surprised. I felt vengeful like someone had to pay the price for my pain. Maybe because I hadn't worked through the emotions yet with my therapist.

"You don't mean that my love. Calm down," he said putting his arm around me and pulling me close.

"I'm serious KK. I want her to suffer like she wanted me to suffer! Lesego could've raped and killed me!" I shouted. His face changed then when he realised the magnitude of what I'd said.

"Amahle is definitely going to pay for her sins and I'll make sure of it..." KK said through clenched teeth.

"Where are you keeping her? I want to see her. I want to look into her evil eyes and tell her she lost, that she couldn't break me. She couldn't break us..." I had the deep urge to confront her and show her that I won despite her meddling in my life. I was rising above this.

“We keeping her in some hotel with guards...” KK said looking at me.

“In a hotel KK? A hotel! Was I in a hotel when Lesego held me hostage! Take me to her. I want to see her right now!” I was shouting and hysterical at the moment.

“Remember what you said to me earlier? Let’s sleep on it then we’ll go tomorrow. I know you went through a difficult time sweetheart and don’t you worry because I will make her pay for this,” he said holding me tightly to him.

” I’m so tired of people making me a victim KK. What have I ever done to anyone except try to live my life!” I was sobbing openly now.

“My love let me bring your medication and then we can go to bed. You need to rest.” He got up and went upstairs. I didn’t think the way I felt would change after a night’s sleep. Amahle contributed to my feelings of powerlessness and tomorrow I was going to take that power back.

When we got to the bedroom the medication was already working in my system and I was ready to sleep.

“I’m going to shower quick. Do you need anything?” he asked as I took off my clothes to get into bed.

“I just need you baby. Always you... You said we needed to discuss our future?” I said coming close to him and hugging him.

“Hawu kodwa (But) Lerato you’re like half asleep at the moment. We’ll discuss that tomorrow. Let’s deal with this Amahle thing and get it over and done with.” he said kissing me on the lips and lead me to the bed and tucked me in. I was asleep before he even made it to the bathroom. Tomorrow we would make Amahle pay dearly for what she’s done.



## Insert 78

When I woke up KK was still sleeping. He must be really tired because he usually woke up before me. We've both been through a lot in a short space of time so I could imagine how everything has taken its toll on him. My migraines were back in full force and part of my life again. At least the room was dark so I didn't have trouble opening my eyes. KK was facing me with his arm around me. I don't know how he managed to hold me the whole night. I always slept in his arms and woke up in them. He looked so peaceful and worry free when he was sleeping. You could tell his mind wasn't working over time trying to solve the problems of this world mine included. I turned fully to face him and he tightened his arm around me. I put my hand on his face and kissed him on the lips. It was a split second before he responded and sort of came awake. I kissed him again and he kissed me back. When I tried to take it further he stopped.

"No love you're still recovering..." he said his voice a growl from sleep. What? He was going to deny me so early in the morning?

"I need you baby..." I said kissing him again on the lips.

"Let's wait for you to be fully recovered. You just went through a trauma sweetheart," he said sitting up and stretching on a yawn. I rolled my eyes. KK sometimes though why did he always have to think about me and my well-being? I knew all about his iron-will so I knew if he had decided that I needed to recover I just needed to calm down. I got up and went to the loo and when I came back he was on the phone. It sounded like he was speaking to Noah.

I needed to eat so I could take my meds for my killer headache so I wore my pyjama shorts and a tank top, took my phone and left him in the bedroom. Since he denied me the pleasure I desperately craved, I was going to make him eat my food. I needed to be quiet as possible so he didn't hear the pots and pans banging. Knowing him he'll come rushing downstairs and offer to make everything. My mom called while I looked in the fridge for something to make.

"Hi mama," I greeted her smiling.

"Lerato laka (my love) how are you feeling? Orobetse sentle (did you sleep well)?"

“I’m feeling ok I guess. The migraines are dealing with me at the moment and my neck is slightly painful.” I said taking out some smoked salmon from the fridge.

“You need to clean the wound and redress it. You must check if it’s not getting infected. Ask Khulekani to help you. Take your antibiotics as well Lerato.”

“Yes mama I will do that. I’m just making something to eat so I can take the migraine tablets. I’ll be home later today.”

“Ok no problem ngwana ka (my child). I love you nhe? Take care of yourself.” We said our goodbyes.

I decided to make smoked salmon, avo and scrambled eggs on toast. That was definitely not rocket science. I took out everything I needed and let the coffee brew in the meantime. By the time I was frying eggs that’s when I heard KK come downstairs.

“Are you sulking about earlier sweetheart so you want to kill me with your food,” he said holding me on my waist from the back. I just kept quiet and didn’t respond. Mxm. I just focused on the task at hand because the last thing I needed was to burn the eggs and have him laughing at me because of that.

“You know I love you right?”he said kissing me on the other side of my neck that wasn’t injured. I suppressed the shiver that ran down my spine.

“Hmm.”

He chuckled slightly and got the coffee cups out and set up the eating area right by the kitchen. He kept getting calls from work as I was moving about in the kitchen. It was nice to be the boss I guess because you could literally work from anywhere and just delegate the urgent stuff. Couldn’t wait to get there once Khuzwayo Productions was up and running.

I set the plate in front of him and sat down next to him and started eating. I wasn’t sure whether I was giving him the silent treatment or not. I think I was going through Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. I really wasn’t my normal self.

I had an appointment with my therapist tomorrow. This is what Lesego had done to me. Turned me into some therapist dependent someone. I hated it! I felt the anger engulf me and I just didn't know how to deal with all these warring emotions inside me. So I did the only thing I'm really good at that and started crying. KK noticed me wiping a tear off and hung up on whoever he was speaking to. He stood up and came and put his arms around me.

"Sweetheart what's wrong?" I couldn't even say anything so I just cried onto his T-shirt and got it horribly soaked in the process.

"I'm sorry...I don't know what's wrong with me today..." I said between sniffs.

"It's okay love you've gone through a lot these past few days. You just need to take it easy and if you feel like crying then do so and let it out. The food looks good by the way," he said wiping my tears with his T-shirt and kissing me on the forehead. He was probably trying to make me feel better with the food comment.

"Hopefully you won't die from food poisoning..." I said cracking a weak smile.

"I won't because it's made with love right?" he said sitting down again and taking my hand in his. We settled down and had the breakfast which was surprisingly good considering it came from me.

"So we are still going to see Amahle after this right?" I asked packing the dishes away.

"Are you sure you want to do that now? Especially with how vulnerable you're feeling?" KK must not pull his controlling things now.

"I think it will be therapeutic for me to go see her, confront her and deal with the negative emotions her actions invoke in me." It sounded like something my therapist would say. I was that good with the lingo. He sighed and nodded resignedly.

"Ok let's go get ready then. Thanks for the breakfast it was actually quite good," he said taking my hand in his. I let go of his hand when we got to the stairs.

“I’ll race you to the bathroom,” I said taking the stairs in two’s so he wouldn’t catch up with me. Because I caught him by surprise it took a tad long for him to react. When I was almost at the top of the stairs I felt my thigh muscle pull and I shrieked in pain as I went down on my knees at the top of the stairs. KK came and crouched next to me.

“You need to be careful Lerato! What happened?” he asked nudging me to sit flat on the floor.

“I think I pulled my thigh muscle. I’m so unfit. I need to go back to gym.” I said wincing in pain.

“You have no sense of self-preservation...” there he goes again. He picked me up and took me to his bedroom to lay me on the bed.

“Which thigh is it?” he asked gesturing for me to lie on my stomach. I pointed at it. He started kneading it which was painful at first but got progressively better as he continued. The pain eventually subsided and was replaced by a different sensation. Why was he denying me what my body so desperately craved?

“Mmm,” I sighed, “That feels so good. Please do the other one as well...If you don’t mind that is.” I had to employ a different tactic here to get laid. He had actually never massaged my body except for my feet and I knew how magical those massages were. I lifted my head slightly to look at him and he was shaking his head but he did it anyway. I smiled as I laid back down.

He massaged my thigh and even moved down and touched my feet until I moaned with pleasure. I deliberately set my legs further apart as an unspoken invitation. I was already wet because I’ve been wanting him since this morning. His hands had moved to my calves now gliding higher and it was more a caress now and less a massage like initially. His hands moved to my thighs as he continued to caress me with his feather light touch. My skin was breaking out in goosebumps. His hands moved under my pyjama shorts and he started kneading my ass then he got hold of the top of the shorts and pulled them down with my underwear. I was doing somersaults and burpees inside but I lay perfectly still as he moved the material down my legs. I didn’t want him to change his mind.

“How does the massage feel?” he asked.

“Amazing,” I said still with my eyes closed. He moved his hands under my top, up my back and turned me around then he caressed my stomach and moved up to cup my breasts. I stifled the involuntary moan. I arched into his hands and he gave me exactly what I needed, pinching my nipples lightly between his fingers and working them to tight little points. My eyes were open now gently gripping his arms as he was kneeled between my legs. He took my top off.

“I missed you so much when I was in that stupid warehouse tied up to the bed...” I could see that he was affected by my words and I could see the worry resurface in his eyes, in the clench of his jaw.

“We’re together now and you know I’ll do anything you want me to...” If there was ever an invitation...

“Anything?” I asked smiling because we both knew that wasn’t entirely true.

“Tell me what you want,” he said softly looking into my eyes.

“Make me forget everything but you. All I want is you...”

“I’m yours sweetheart. All yours. Only yours.” He came close to my body and lowered his shoulders placing my leg around his neck as he lowered his mouth to me. Before he touched me with his mouth he blew his hot breath onto me. He was so close to me and my body was clenching from the anticipation of having his mouth on me. I was greedy for him.

“All I want to do is love you sweetheart,” he said still breathing onto me.

“Yes...please KK...love me...touch me...” I was desperate for his touch and he was determined to prolong this as much as possible.

“How do you want me to touch you sweetheart?” he asked holding my legs open licking a teasing barely there touch. That minimal touch sent a rush of hotness throughout my entire body. “Like this?” My hands had come up to cup his head to try and push him to me. He removed my hands and laid them on either side of my body.

“Relax sweetheart...” he whispered, “Let KK take care of you. I promise I will give you everything you want.” I let myself relax and be taken on this sensual journey by him. All thoughts evaporated into feeling as KK’s tongue moved on me. He dipped a fluttering lick into me then touched his tongue to my clit in a pressing caress that took me to the edge of all reason. My moan of pleasure erupted unbidden from my mouth.

“You like that sweetheart?” he asked huskily.

“Yes...yes...I like that baby...” I was writhing and panting beneath him. He continued to taste me and lick me as if I was most delicious fruit he had ever had. His licks got deeper and firmer as he nudged me into such a beautiful release of all the tension in my body. I cried out as his tongue stayed right where I needed it to be, sucking and nudging prolonging the pleasure.

“That’s it sweetheart. I want to make you feel really good...” he said.

“Baby come here please?” I said breathlessly pulling him up while holding onto his T-shirt. He bit me lightly on the inside of my thighs before he lifted himself and settled over me but balancing his weight on his arms so he wasn’t crushing me. I could feel exactly how much he wanted me and that set off another round of somersaults in my mind. I wrapped my legs and arms around him to prevent him changing his mind and leaving me now. I kissed him then and he let me for a while until he stopped it. Uh oh.

“Are you sure you want to do this?” he asked his eyes smaller from the desire coursing through him. Always the gentleman my KK.

My hand slid under the waistband of his track pants and boxers and circled his hard length and squeezed him as my other hand pushed his pants down. When he helped me do it I knew that the battle was half won already.

“I need you so much KK. I want to feel you inside me so bad...you said you’d give me whatever I want,” I whispered into his ear biting his lobe and squeezing him more tightly massaging him from root to tip as he hardened even more in my hand. He groaned as I positioned him and pushed the head of his dick inside me.

“Fuck sweetheart...” he said through clenched teeth...”I’m supposed to be taking care of you.”

“You are taking care of me like this baby,” I said on a pant as he bottomed out inside me. God he felt good.

“Fucking hell Lerato. All I’ve ever wanted was to keep you safe...I feel so bad that I couldn’t...I’m so fucking sorry...I love you sweetheart...” he said and when I looked at him his eyes were suspiciously shiny. When a tear trekked down his cheek I couldn’t bear his pain.

I realised he had also been deeply affected by my kidnapping and maybe he needed me more than he let on because of his selflessness. My hands moved down his back to his ass and I pushed him even deeper inside me. I made sure that my entire body was cradling his as tiny spasms were going off inside me. I took his face in my hands and he wouldn’t look at me.

“Look at me KK...” when he did I felt the sting of my own tears, “You couldn’t have known baby and you found me right? I’m here with you and I’m safe.” I whispered breathless from the emotion.

“I can’t lose you sweetheart...I...I thought I’d lost you...” he said softly his voice thick with emotion.

“I’m not going anywhere so you won’t lose me...even if you wanted to...you’re mine KK. I love you too much to ever leave.” My own tears were leaking from the corners of my eyes onto the pillow.

“You’ve made me love like I’ve never loved,” he said thrusting into me with a touch of aggression, “you’ve made me so vulnerable. I can’t fucking live without you...”

I kissed him over and over as he thrust into me and stopped to stare into his eyes although he was blurry from all the tears.

“I love you...” I whispered. He rolled his hips as he plunged into me with excruciating slowness. All I could hear were my moans and his groans. He cupped

my ass and angled me so I could take him deeply inside me. As his movements became frenzied I knew he was close and so was I. He nuzzled his face into my neck, biting me softly and marking me like he loved doing. I didn't even care as he rubbed so skilfully inside me taking me closer and closer to that pleasure wave. I tried to hold on to delay arriving at that peak but he was relentless, he was tireless with his thrusts.

“Hmm...KK I'm coming...come with me baby...please,” I gasped feeling the sensations build up to a roaring crescendo inside.

“I'm with you sweetheart...I'm coming with you,” he gasped against my throat. My orgasm ripped through me and I bit down on his shoulder as I felt him go rigid on top of me and growl his pleasure close to my neck. I held him tightly to me as we came down from our high. He eventually lifted his head and stared deeply into my eyes.

“Marry me...” he said a look of fierce seriousness on his face.



## Insert 79

“What...” I asked dazed. I must not have heard him correctly. He smiled at me as he kissed me on the lips.

“I want you to be mine in every sense of the word. Marry me,” he said softly searching my eyes for answers I wasn’t sure I could give. I could see his apprehension and worry at his question. My heart started beating in my throat.

“Are you sure? I mean...we’ve only been together for like 6 months if that...” I felt panic bubbling up inside me. He sighed as he pulled out of me and sat up on the bed. He pulled me up so I could sit up as well and put his arm around me.

“I love you sweetheart and you know that. I’ve been very honest from the start that I’m in this for the long haul. I want to make it official. For me it doesn’t matter whether we’ve been together for 5 minutes or 5 years. I know what I feel and I know the passage of time won’t change it. Whether I wait or not it makes no difference right if it’s something that I want anyway. I know you’re still young and maybe you feel like you still have your whole life ahead of you...” he was starting to tense up next to me and I didn’t know what to say. This just threw me because it came out of the blue. I know he had always said he was serious about us and wanted to marry me one day but I thought that was in the future and not now. I took a deep breath.

“I love you KK and I hope that’s not in question...If I said yes what would that mean exactly?” he smiled at my question and held me tightly to him.

“What does a yes usually mean sweetheart?”

“As in do I then have to tell my parents about it and then we start planning magadi (lobola – dowry) and stuff?” I knew my mom was going to say I’m still too young to be married and that I’ve known him for a short time and all that.

“We can wait before we announce to anyone but I want to know that you’ll be mine. I don’t want to leave it to chance. I want to take care of you Lerato. In every way I know how. I want to pamper you and pleasure you in the comfort of our home. I want to give you everything you’ve ever wanted and then some. I want to keep you safe and use all my power and money to protect you. I can only do that

fully if you're my wife and you belong to me." He was a man on a mission this morning clearly. I wasn't doubtful of the fact that I wanted to marry him or not. It was just the timing of everything. I took a deep breath.

"Nothing would make me happy than for me to be your wife KK so the answer is obviously and will always be YES." He gave me his full dimple smile and lowered his lips to mine for a searing kiss.

"I'm the happiest man alive right now!"

"But baby can we keep it between the two of us for now? There's so much stuff still up in the air especially regarding your paternity. My parents are modern but I know the traditional things are very close to their hearts so we need to sort out the whole badimo (ancestors) thing first. What your surname is going to be etc." I bit my lower lip as I heard him sigh.

"I know...you're right...for a moment I'd actually forgotten that I'm a bastard child. I will have to speak to my mom and probably wait for my dad to be better and all that before that can happen. Seems like I jumped the gun here a bit with the marriage proposal..."he said looking sad all of a sudden. I didn't mean to remind him of the drama that is his paternity but we had to iron that whole thing out. Once we were married kids were inevitable and what surname would I take on as well? Khumalo?

"You're not a bastard child KK! You're my very handsome...very intelligent...very kind...very protective...soon to be husband," I said between kisses. He responded eagerly to my kisses until we were full on kissing. This guy could drive me crazy with just his lips on mine. He pulled me so I could straddle him and Khumalo was already standing to attention between the two of us.

"I can't wait for you to be my wife. I promise I will take care of you really well. Once we've announced it to everyone then you can go pick out your engagement ring,"he said kissing me and went on to take care of me for the second time that morning. Wasn't he supposed to pick the engagement ring out? Where was the fun in me choosing my own? KK though.

We decided to shower so we could pay a visit to the lovely Amahle. I'm using 'lovely' very loosely here. KK seemed to be in a good mood and held my hand all the way to the hotel where they kept Amahle at overnight. When we got there Steve was there.

"Sho boss, First Lady...we found Fezokuhle and she is currently in a another room here at the hotel getting some much needed sleep. She is very malnourished and the doctor says she is quite dehydrated. She's been hooked up to a drip since last night." I wondered why they didn't take her to the hospital but I guess they didn't want the police getting involved as yet. To think that Amahle could just play with people's lives like this made me angry.

"And how is Amahle? Did you arrange for food this morning?"KK asked as we were standing outside the room in the passage.

"Yep Mary organised it. You can let the guys come out if you want to talk to her in private,"he said referring to Amahle and pointing at the door. Mary was the woman who acted as my stunt double in the days of being followed. So much drama surrounded us all the time.

KK nodded and opened the door. Talk about being held in the lap of luxury. My anger was churning in full force now and I tightened my hand around KK's. He squeezed mine in response probably to tell me to calm down. It was a hotel suite with a sitting room and a bedroom. Two guys were sitting on the couches and they stood up when we came in.

"Sho boss,"one of them said with a very gravelly voice. It sounded like one of those guys that are constantly smoking.

"Sho Skarra. U waar u (where is) Amahle?"KK asked as we sat down.

"Use kamereni (she's in the bedroom) boss," he answered pointing at the closed bedroom door.

"Ok thanks gents do you mind waiting outside?" Both the guys went outside and closed the door. KK turned to me on the couch and took my hands in his.

“Are you sure you’re ok with all of this?” he asked softly. I took a deep breath because I was trying to control my anger.

“Yep I’m fine baby. I just want to talk to her.” He nodded and went to knock on the bedroom door and asked her to come out. When she came out she seemed very subdued and looked defeated even. She didn’t even look at us as she sat on the couch opposite where we were.

“Amahle as you can see I came with Lerato. She asked to come see you after she heard that you were the mastermind behind her kidnapping.” His tone was chilly at best.

“Have you told Khaya what’s going on?” she asked timidly.

“Even now Amahle you are still as selfish as ever! Instead of apologising to Lerato for what you did you are worried about saving your own skin!” KK shouted at her. He looked angrier than I felt. I put my hand on his shoulder.

“Baby do you mind waiting outside? I’d like to speak to Amahle alone...” I felt like he would hinder the process instead of help it with his anger and Amahle’s fear of him. He tensed next to me.

“Are you sure about that Lerato? I don’t want Amahle to kill you in here and I open the door to find you dead.” I guess we couldn’t rely on Amahle to behave. She was so unpredictable.

“Uhhh ok maybe you can wait in the bedroom then?” I suggested. Amahle cleared her throat.

“Really Khule! I’m not going to kill her. You can come check on us every 5 minutes if it makes you feel better,” she said softly. I wasn’t used to her so submissive and calm. KK looked at me searching for my confirmation and I nodded.

“If she so much as points in your direction just scream sweetheart and I’ll come rushing in ok?” he said kissing me on the cheek and getting up. The sound of the

door closing was the only sound left in the room. As I looked at Amahle she wouldn't look at me. She was looking down playing with her hands.

“Why Amahle?” I asked after a moment's silence. I had so many questions I wanted to ask her and I just didn't even know where to start. She lifted her eyes and look me dead straight in the eyes.

“I hate you!” she said the words dripping with poison. I actually flinched as she said it. Wow!

“And what have I ever done to you Amahle?” I was trying to remain as calm as possible but all I could picture was bashing her head over and over with the glass vase that was on the coffee table separating us.

“You came and ruined everything! You've ruined my family! Khule wan't supposed to meet anyone and fall in love. I had this all planned out to make sure that my marriage was secure. Then you came and ruined it all!” She was still stuck on that dumb rationalisation.

“So you put my life in hell to ensure your marriage was secure? What about my life Amahle? What about KK? Do you have any idea the things that Lesego was planning to do to me? He would've raped me probably over and over again and killed me thereafter when he finally realised that I didn't have feelings for him anymore!” My tears were threatening to fall and I wasn't going to give her the satisfaction of her seeing me cry. “How selfish can you be that you arrange for two perfectly innocent lives to suffer so you can secure your doomed marriage!” I was shouting at her now.

“Anagazi vele why angakudlwengulanga akubulala mayeqeda (I actually don't know why he didn't rape you and kill you thereafter,”she said looking away and almost dismissing me as if I were nothing. I stood up and before I knew it I was on top of her with my hands around her neck. I was going to strangle her and watch the life fade from her eyes. I caught her by surprise so she didn't expect what I did and she started struggling to try and dislodge me from her. I had my legs tightened on either side of her body and my thirst for her death was not to be denied.

“How dare you! Who the fuck do you think you are. You don’t deserve to live Amahle. You are evil to the core!” I said through clenched teeth. Her eyes were wide with fear and it gave me some satisfaction that she was scared now. As she was struggling she knocked over the vase on the table and it came crashing down. Before I knew it KK was removing me from her while one of the guards held Amahle down. She was coughing incessantly trying to get as much air into her lungs as she could.

“Lerato! What’s going on here?” KK asked his arms around me.

“Let me go KK. I’m going to kill her! You know what she said to me?” I asked him struggling within his grasp to be free. Amahle started laughing loudly amidst the coughing.

“Even your grasp is weak! You’re a weak woman Lerato. You don’t deserve a man like Khulekani. Intombazana nje ekhulele emakhishini (Little girl raised in the suburbs).”

“That’s enough!” KK bellowed as he pushed me on the couch and slapped Amahle hard on the face. He got close to her and pointed his finger at her as she sat there shocked with her hand on her burning cheek.

“You will NOT disrespect my woman like that ever again Amahle uyangizwa ukuthi ngithini (do you hear me). I thought you’d be remorseful and sorry for what you’ve done instead you are as vile as you’ve ever been!”

“Khaya won’t believe you anyway when you tell him. What evidence is there anyway? It’s my word against yours,” she said folding her arms and looking smug. I smiled at her from the other couch and took my phone out waving it at her.

“Oh but it’s your word Amahle. Everything you’ve said is recorded on here. We won’t have to tell him. He’ll hear it himself.” I stopped the recording and replayed it so she could hear the truth. When she try to lunge at me the guards held her down.

“Nondidwa dini (you bitch). You have no idea how hard I fought for that man and you just want to destroy what we have?”

“Well uKhaya usendleleni uza lana (Khaya is on his way). Ngimfanisele ukuthi wena wenzeni (I’ve given him an overview of your transgressions). Njengo myeni wakho uyena ofanele asho ukuthi senzeni ngawe (as your husband he is the one that will determine your fate),” KK said calmly. That swiftly calmed her down.

“Khule ngiyakucela (I appeal to you) please? Tshela uKhaya abuyele emuva (Tell Khaya not to come here)? Ungayenzi lento Khule ngiyakucela (Don’t this KK please)?”she pleaded crying. Clearly Khaya meant more to her than anything else in this world.

“You made your bed Amahle now you must lie in it. Skarra please fetch Fezo from the other room?” KK instructed sitting down and putting his arm around me. Amahle was quietly crying on the sofa.

When Skarra came back with Fezokuhle I couldn’t believe my eyes. She was a shadow of her former self and had bruising on her skin like she had been abused wherever she was kept. The things that Amahle had done though. That could’ve easily been me if KK hadn’t found me on time.

When Fezo came in and saw KK she started crying and apologising.

“Ngiyaxolisa bhuti (I’m sorry brother). I didn’t know that Amahle’s plan was to get rid of me too otherwise I wouldn’t have disrespected you in your home. When I threatened to come clean about her whole plan to you that’s when she kidnapped me. We met at some coffee shop under the pretext of strategizing how I was going to go back to your house...when I left the restaurant I was accosted and dragged to some place somewhere...she used to come see me and brag about how she was going to kill me if I didn’t serve my purpose...the one time she forgot her phone and I found Lerato’s number and tried to call but I don’t think she could hear me. I’ve been so scared for my life...I thought I was going to die... Amahle was going to kill me...”she burst into tears and covered her face with her hands crying.

“Amahle what is the meaning of this?” Khaya shouted as he walked towards her. We were all so enthralled by Fezo’s story we didn’t even see Khaya come in.

\*\*\*\*\*

**Hello there**

**Sorry the post took so long! Life happens guys you must bear with me please**

**□**

**Can you believe we are sitting at 21 200 visitors! Thanks so much for your support.**

**The Facebook group is Lerato “lee” search for it and come join us on that forum for discussions. It will be an easier way for me to interact with you guys and let you know when the next insert is coming etc.**

**Shout out to ELELWANI RAVELE who sent me an e-mail just to check if I’m ok because of no inserts. I’m ok doll □**

**I’m already typing insert 80 so should be up by Thursday it will be my birthday present to you guys since it’s my birthday on the 29th.**

**Looking forward to chatting...**

**Mamsi**



## Insert 80

“Mtungwa let me explain please?” Amahle pleaded as Khaya came and stood in front of her.

“What could you possibly say Hlehle that could change what I’ve heard since I stood at that door? You kidnapped Fezokuhle? Khule tells me you organised Lerato to get kidnapped as well. I don’t know this person that I’m supposedly married to. Who are you!” Khaya was shouting.

“Bafo (brother) I think we should all calm down so we can sit down and discuss this properly. We need to know what is going to happen now. Fezo might press charges against her because we hadn’t spoken about it as yet even Lerato in actual fact. The guy who conspired with Amahle is currently in hospital with gun shot wounds but he is also an accessory to Lerato’s kidnapping. Sit down so we can discuss this rationally,” KK said appealing to his brother to calm down.

“How can we discuss this rationally kodwa (though) Khule? We are talking about my wife who has supposedly done despicable things!” Khaya sat down and held his head in his hands.

“I just wanted to let you guys know that I have no intention of pressing charges. I was very much a part of this as Amahle was and I think it would just bring unnecessary attention to me. What will my parents think of me? What did you guys tell them when I was missing?” Fezo asked tears welling in her eyes.

“Ngiyabonga MaShandu (thank you Fezo). I would like to apologise for everything that has happened to you because of your association with us. Now I have one less thing to worry about. We just told your parents that you were on a Nurse’s Retreat where there was no cell phone reception. Kodwa Amahle awuchaze ke ukuthi bowenzani kahle kahle (Amahle please explain exactly what were you doing)?” Khaya asked staring straight at Amahle with such anger in his eyes.

It was amazing how you could love someone and in an instant feel the exact opposite. Does that mean it was really real or how does that work? I experienced

the same thing with Lesego. I thought I really loved him but what I feel for KK is that much more stronger.

KK gestured for the guards to leave and close the door behind them. It was then the five of us sitting in the lounge. The tension was so high you could cut it with a knife.

“Yonke into engiyenzile ngiyenziswe ngendaba yothando Mtungwa (I’ve done everything because of love Khaya). Ngiyakuthanda futhi nawe uyakwazi lokho (I love you and you know that). Ngicela singene lapha ekamelweni sikwazi ukukhuluma kahle sisodwa (Can we please go into the bedroom so we can chat privately)?” Amahle asked quietly.

“Private? Private! Ayikho iprivate ozoyithola lana (There’s no private anything here). Uhlukumeze abantu Amahle chaza (you’ve abused people Amahle explain)! I have shit to do and I don’t have the whole day.” Wow. I had never heard Khaya swear.

“Did we not stand in front of God and witnesses and you promised to love me until death? I didn’t take those words lightly Mtungwa. I meant every single word that day and I still do today. How can you turn your back on our marriage Mtungwa? Do you know how hard I fought to keep it going all these years? I have had to suffer with my conscience to keep you!” Amahle had tears in her eyes when she said that.

“Your crocodile tears don’t move me Amahle. I want to know how you could be so cruel? So heartless? I don’t want any part of your love if this is what it makes you do. I want none of it!” It was getting awkward to sit here and listen to the exchange because it felt like it should be a conversation between the two of them.

“Khaya you know my background and where I come from. You took me out of poverty and made me something in life and you just want to ruin that? I didn’t care who I had to kill to make sure it stayed that way. Naye loyo uFikile Mbatha ngamsusa endleleni noma nacabanga ukuthi ama comrade ambulele (Even Fikile Mbatha had to go although you guys thought it was the comrades that killed her). I let nothing stand in my way!” All you could hear were the gasps going around the room. Fezo started crying in earnest for the sister she grew up not knowing. The

same sister who actually brought all of us together. KK placed his hand on her knee for comfort I assume but I threw daggers at him with my eyes and he removed it very quickly. I get that she went through a lot or whatever but I didn't trust her and wouldn't put it past her to milk this situation for everything that it was worth. KK smiled briefly at me.

“Nangu umfazi engilinga (I can't believe this)! I lived for years with the guilt that I was responsible for Fikile's death! Years Amahle. I loved her with my whole being and now you're telling me you were responsible? You were vile even then! How could I not see this? Why did you do it?”

“Fikile stole you from me. I saw you first Khaya and I told her how much I liked you. You obviously never gave me the time of day because I was poor and I didn't have the money that the Mbatha's had to make myself look good. You noticed her and had this whirlwind romance with her Khaya. She used to rub it in my face every single day. UFikile ndini wakho (that Fikile of yours) wasn't a nice person at all. Bekafana nqo nodade wabo u (she was just like her sister) Fezokuhle. After I got her killed I made sure her family would link the murder to you but not enough to prosecute you so you could be free. I knew you would never marry me but I knew you were an honourable man and if I fell pregnant you would be morally bound to marry me. I seduced you and faked a pregnancy so you could marry me even though I knew that I can't have kids...” Amahle looked so calm like she was discussing the weather over a cup of afternoon tea. I don't think she was alright in the head.

“I can't even believe any of the things I'm hearing. So all these years we've spent time and money on fertility doctors and clinics you knew that you couldn't give me children? How cruel are you woman to let a man hope that one day I would have a son to call my own? How dare you deceive and play with my feelings for all these years! So why kidnap Fezokuhle? Why kidnap Lerato? What did they have to do with any of this?” Khaya looked defeated at that.

“Fezokuhle had to go because there wasn't a place for her in the family anymore with Khule busy with Lerato! I had to get rid of Lerato don't you see that? So that Fezo could comfort Khule and they would get together when Lerato was no longer around. It had to be done Khaya. I didn't want to share you with your girlfriend's sister whom I knew would bear you children. Who would I be in that relationship?”

The barren older woman. Never! I was doing it for our family. Why can't you see that?" I think Amahle was crazy. Everything was beginning to unravel and I couldn't imagine the level of hurt and betrayal that Khaya was feeling. Her rationalisation was too warped to be normal.

Khaya stood up and lunged at Amahle holding her by the shoulders and shaking her until her teeth rattled.

"You should rot in jail for all these vile things you've done but that's not even the worst punishment...how could you Amahle?" KK got up and pulled him away from Amahle. She had really been assaulted today. First by KK, then me and now Khaya.

"Bafu this is a lot to take in even for me. I'm sorry that all these things have happened but we need to make a decision. We can't keep her here indefinitely..."KK said looking at his brother who was breathing very loudly from anger. Fezo cleared her throat.

"If I may...I might not be a practising nurse but Amahle is definitely showing signs of mental instability. I think she needs to be assessed because she may need help of a different kind..."she said softly looking down. Like anyone asked for her opinion. I realised that I still didn't like her and I probably never would. Now that she was back and alive I could dislike her without the guilt of her missing.

"You maybe onto something Fezo. No one in their right mind would do all these things without some instability somewhere. Bafu I suggest we book her into a facility for assessment. I know one in a remote part of the country with the necessary security. The choice remains yours though on what should be done,"KK said looking at his brother. Khaya took a deep breath and nodded.

"Yes take her there. Amahle I never want to see you again. You will be hearing from my lawyer because I want a divorce. Our marriage and everything we've built was based on a lie and I want no part of it. I have lived 40 years and I have seen many things but I have never come across such evil from one human being. You might as well have been a witch. You belong in hell!" He said and stormed out. Amahle was crying on the couch but no one was even paying any attention to her.

“I need to call Dr Ross from the facility,” KK said taking his phone into the bedroom to make the call.

“Wow! That was intense! I think maybe we should order some coffee and tea for everyone to calm down while we wait for the doctor?” Fezo asked looking at me.

“I’m good thanks and I doubt KK wants coffee or tea anyway,” I answered looking at her. I couldn’t believe she still made my blood boil.

“Let me go ask him,” she said standing up. This girl was trying my patience. I stood up with her and blocked her path. My height put me at a disadvantage because she was taller than me and I wasn’t wearing my heels but what I lacked in height I made up for in attitude.

“Did I not say to you that KK was ok? Who the fuck do you think you are feeling entitled to question my decision regarding my man? You will step down Fezokuhle if you know what’s good for you...or so help me...” I said through clenched teeth pointing my finger at her. Amahle burst out laughing by the couch. KK came out of the bedroom and found Fezo and I busy with a staring contest.

“All ok here?” he asked moving his eyes from me to Fezo.

“All is ok baby just establishing some ground rules with Fezo here. I think we’ve come to an understanding have we not Fezo?” I asked smiling sweetly at her. She nodded briefly but I could tell she wasn’t happy.

“Well Dr Ross has dispatched people and they are on the way. Apparently they were scheduled to pick up someone not far from here so they should be here in an hour. I’m really sorry that it’s come to this Amahle but I hope you’ll be able to get the help you need,” KK said looking at her by the couch.

“There’s no life for me without Khaya Khule? How am I going to live without him?” the waterworks started again.

“Kodwa Amahle izenzo zakho ezikufikise lana (It’s your own actions that have resulted in all this).” Wow. Clearly KK was not in a comforting mood at this moment.

“Can I go lie down for a bit while we wait? I’m not sorry for what I did and I would do it all over again if it meant me getting the happiness that I had all these years. Khaya was my everything.” Amahle said as she stood up and walked to the bedroom. She closed the door.

“Is it ok for us to leave her alone like that?” I asked KK after she was gone.

“She can’t escape from there. We’re on the 15<sup>th</sup> floor. Let me call the guys to come back in and not make the other guests nervous chilling in the corridor.” KK opened the door and called them in. Mary came in with them carrying medication for Fezo.

“Hi Lerato. Fezo it’s time for your medication again and you need to come lie down and rest.” Fezo rolled her eyes. Clearly she didn’t like Mary much.

“Where’s Steve, Mary?” KK asked taking some water from the bar fridge in the lounge.

“He went downstairs to get permission for the mental facility car to park in the delivery basement so we don’t attract any curious onlookers or even the media. Amahle is Chef Khumalo’s daughter in law and as you know there’s been a lot of media attention with your father who is also in hospital.” I notice KK flinch when she referred to Mr Khumalo as his dad.

“Ok no problem. Do you mind organising lunch for everyone while we wait?” KK asked and sat next to me and couch and took my hand in his. I saw Fezo from the corner of my eye looking at us. This girl better stay in her lane otherwise I was going to be the one pulling an Amahle on her. Mxm.

Steve came bursting through the door just as we heard sirens in the background.

“Hawu Steve what’s going on?” KK asked standing up.

“It’s Amahle...she jumped from the balcony...she is dead.”

Insert 81

***CHEF KHUMALO'S DAUGHTER-IN-LAW FALLS FROM 5 STAR HOTEL BALCONY***

*17 November 2016*

*People walking past the well-known Sandton hotel were surprised by a falling body from the top floor on Thursday afternoon.*

*"I just heard screaming and then saw blood splattering everywhere. I'm still quite traumatised," one of the onlookers said.*

*The body has been identified as 38-year-old Amahle Khumalo who is married to Chef Khaya Khumalo. The Khumalos run a number of highly rated restaurants around the major metros in the country with plans to expand internationally. Chef Khaya Khumalo is the first-born son of Chef Vusumuzi Khumalo who is a judge on the popular Masterchef South Africa.*

*The Khumalo family has been under a dark cloud these past few weeks with Chef Vusumuzi also currently in hospital due to an alleged hit and run car accident.*

*Police are currently investigating whether Mrs Khumalo's fall was a murder or a suicide. The family could not be reached for comment and we were advised that hotel staff are also not available to comment.*

Amahle's funeral was a somber affair attended by close family and friends only. The funeral was done at the Khumalo homestead in KZN with a closed coffin because her face was damaged beyond recognition. Khaya looked stricken by the events as he sat quietly through the funeral proceedings.

I was dog tired because since we got there on the Friday I was up and down serving tea and biscuits to everybody who came to mourn with the family. Since I got there with KK they just assumed I was the one who knew what was going on. KK's mom couldn't attend because she had to stay with Mr Khumalo. I kept making decisions on behalf of the family which I hoped were ok because Khaya and KK were running around trying to organise the funeral at such short notice. At

least the catering was taken care of by one of the family's restaurants in Durban and they brought biscuits daily. By the time the funeral came everyone was just referring to me as 'Makoti' which made Fezokubi bristle. I don't know what her problem was and I still didn't like her so I hardly said anything to her when she arrived and found me there. She kept trying to make decisions with the women that were there and they would look at me for confirmation. Can you imagine at 22 years and I was literally the main woman in the Khumalo household in KK's mom's absence.

I never got to see Amahle's body because KK made sure that Steve takes me home through the back but KK did say that it wasn't a pretty sight. She left a suicide note which she addressed to Khaya but he hasn't shared the contents of that letter with us. He just made a copy of it and gave it to the cops. It must've been something on her mind for a while because she wasn't in the bedroom that long before she jumped which means she wrote it before the meeting. It was probably her plan B if Khaya never forgave her. Clearly she was always a step ahead that's probably why her shenanigans had gone unnoticed for such a long time. There were a few journalists that were hanging around the hospital where Mr Khumalo was trying to get answers and it's been a firm 'no comment' each time.

When I got home that day I told my mom everything that had happened with Amahle and joining the dots for her regarding Lesego and the kidnapping. She was horrified that there were people who would do such a thing to others. She then insisted that I really needed to go and be with KK and support him during this difficult time. We even joked about how I hadn't really been at home for the past two weeks. My mom even joked further to say KK must just marry me since it seems now we are on that vat 'n sit (cohabiting) vibe. If she only knew how close to the truth the marriage thing was. So I then repacked my bag with clean laundry and called KK to tell him I was going to go to his place. As usual he didn't want me to drive and said he would come get me. I stopped complaining about all the little things that he doesn't want me to do because he did say he wants to take care of me.

Currently we were driving back to Jo'burg from the funeral and Khaya was following behind us with Fezokuhle. She seemed to be insinuating herself into Khaya's life all of a sudden. Talk about an opportunist of note! Zama had offered



to come with to the funeral but I told her it wasn't necessary because she was my friend and hadn't even met Amahle anyway. Steve was driving and I was sitting with KK at the back.

"You must be really exhausted hey. You haven't been sleeping well..." I said softly to him.

"Ya it's been a really long couple of days and I'm sure you're also tired love. I'm so proud of all that you did back there. Thank you so much. I'm just glad this is over and done now then we can start focusing on other things. Trying to keep the media at bay about all this has been taxing at the best of times." He exhaled loudly. Shame my poor man.

"Do you think Khaya will be ok though...it's been so much to take in at such a short space of time."

"I'm sure he just needs to process it all then he'll be fine. I see Fezo has been glued to his side. So much for him being old like she was complaining the other time." He gave me a slight smile. That Sunday lunch thing seemed so faraway now.

"Le wena mos (Even you though) you are old," I smiled at him teasing.

"Ungaqali ke (don't start) Mrs KK. Oh by the way next week Friday is our year-end function at work. We going together angithi (right)?" he said kissing me on the cheek. I clean forgot about the function. Work seemed like such a faraway world from where I was now.

"That's what I said so we are and it's black tie right? So I have to find a dress by Friday." I would probably go with Zama after work sometime next week to get something.

"I'm not worried because you always look good whatever you wear love. Even if you wear the dress you wore to the recruitment evening I won't mind." Was he being for real?

"No baby I can't wear a dress I've worn before especially to an evening function."

"I know a couple of designers so I can ask them to do something for you then?"

“No KK I buy my own clothes. It’s bad enough that you had to buy me and Zama clothes when we went to the states. You know how I feel about that whole thing.”

“It’s just money sweetheart, here today and gone tomorrow. Why won’t you let me spoil you though? I’ve never met a woman who I have to force to spend my money like you,” he said some frustration evident on his face. I smiled at him.

“That’s why you marrying me baby. You know I don’t care about your millions,” I said pulling his face towards me for a kiss.

“I love you…” he said staring straight into my eyes.

“I love you too baby.”

Just then KK received a call from his mom saying his dad was awake and asking for both him and Khaya.

“Steve can we please go straight to the hospital when we get to Jo’burg? Is it ok sweetheart or should I drop you off at my place?” KK asked addressing both Steve and myself. Steve responded with a “sho boss” as per usual.

“It’s fine baby. You know where you go I will go. We can rest together later on. Are you ready to be with your mom though?” I asked softly not wanting Steve to overhear our conversation.

“If Mtungwa is awake I need to get the answers sweetheart. If I’m going to make an honest woman out of you I need to know who I am.”

\*\*\*\*\*

KK woke me up when we got to the hospital. I didn’t even realise how tired I was until I decided to close my eyes for a short while. When we got to the hospital we realised that Mr Khumalo had been moved to a normal ward – although a private one and he seemed awake. KK’s mom hugged Khaya as we walked in. KK avoided her altogether.

“Unjani ngane yami kodwa (how are you coping my child)? How did the funeral go? I was so sorry I couldn’t be there,” she said as we sat down on the couches

provided. This was a proper luxury hospital ward. Khaya had asked Steve to take Fezokubi back to his house. If there was ever an indication that you are not family it came with that.

“It went as well as funerals can go I guess. In any case I don’t want to talk about that now. I see uMtungwa uvukile (is awake). How are you feeling?” Khaya asked walking towards his dad’s bed. He was sitting up on the bed and had a bandage wrapped around his head with a cast on the one arm.

“I’ve been better but at least I’m alive,” he said smiling. That’s when I realised that KK hadn’t gone to greet his dad when we came in and he was sitting next to me visibly tense. I reached for his hand and took it in mine for moral support. He probably didn’t know how to act around him now that he knew the truth.

“Khule asibingeleli na (do we not greet)?” his dad asked looking at him. He was speaking quite slowly and you could tell he was still in quite a lot of pain.

“Sawubona (hello) Mtungwa. It’s good to see you’re getting better. You had us all worried,” he said softly.

“Sondela phela sizokhuluma kahle (come closer so we can talk properly),” his dad said gesturing for him to come to the bed. He stood up reluctantly and went and stood on the other side of the bed.

He took both Khaya and KK’s hand in his right and left hand and cleared his throat.

“Madodana ami (my sons) your mom told me about what happened...I’m sure you both have questions?” he asked looking from one to the other. KK’s jaw was clenched so tightly if his teeth were fragile they would’ve broken by now. Just then KK’s mom cleared her throat and stood up.

“I think this is a family matter so Lerato if you don’t mind waiting outside...”she said looking at me. That made sense so I stood up picking my handbag off the floor when KK spoke up.

“Lerato stays otherwise I go with her.”

“I don’t think there’s anything wrong if she stays mkami (my wife). She knows the truth anyway,” KK’s dad said. His mom and I both sat down again. I didn’t even look at her because I’m sure she was throwing daggers at me and now she didn’t even have her partner in crime anymore to plot and conspire with. Coming to think of it I couldn’t believe that she was going to come off scott free after all the things they’ve done!

“Baba (dad) why didn’t you guys tell us? I mean Khule is 32 years old this year. It’s a very long time to keep such a secret...”Khaya asked. I don’t think KK was ready to speak as yet.

“We thought it best that you guys don’t find out because it would’ve changed the dynamics in the house unnecessarily. You are brothers in any case even though I haven’t fathered one of you. In my eyes you are both my sons and I’ve treated you as such.”

“That’s not true Mtungwa...even growing up you always used to pick on me. Khaya could do no wrong in your eyes but everything I did to make you proud of me was always knit-picked to death. I lived my whole life trying to make you see me but you never did. At least now I understand why...” KK said breathing heavily and speaking through clenched teeth. He was probably trying to get his emotions in check. My heart was breaking for him. This was such a difficult situation.

“I understand your anger and your frustration Khule kodwa (but) don’t you see that I was grooming you to be the responsible man you are today? My biggest task as a father was to make sure that all my kids succeed in life. I pushed you harder than I did Khaya because I knew one day I would have to tell you the truth and when that day came I didn’t want the blame of never having taken an effort to get you to be somebody in life. What fueled it even more was your stubbornness. Khaya isn’t as stubborn as you so you also gave me a hard time raising you with your hard-headedness. I have always, always been proud of you Khulekani and I knew that the more unimpressed I seemed, it pushed you even harder to succeed. I love you son and I couldn’t be more proud of what you’ve achieved at 32. Your mom will tell you how I go on and on about you to our friends and some of my colleagues.” That was a surprise. You could see even KK was surprised by that declaration. It

made me happy though because it meant Mr Khumalo raised KK out of love and all that. I had tears in my eyes because I knew how much all this meant to him.

“Thank you Mtungwa for raising me even though I wasn’t yours to begin with. I’m the man I am today because I learnt from a great man like you...I really appreciate your words...” he seemed to be struggling to say what he needed to and I could imagine it was a highly charged emotional situation.

“You might not be of my blood but I was there from the day you were born. You are my son in every sense of the word...”his dad said and his eyes were suspiciously shiny as well. KK and Mr Khumalo embraced briefly as KK’s mom sat crying quietly next to me.

“I’m sorry Khule...I made a mistake when I was younger and although I regret the affair I had I have never regretted having you ngane yami (my child),” she said as she got up to give KK a hug. He didn’t reciprocate the hug and just tensed up again.

“So what happened ma? Who fathered me?” he asked hardness in his eyes.

“uMtungwa was travelling a lot at the time. He was never home and I got tempted by some Tswana guy who promised me the world and convinced me that I should leave my marriage. Meanwhile he was already engaged to another woman. They are still together to this day...I actually tracked them down and they are on their way here. He didn’t know about you. I never told him about my pregnancy...”

“So you couldn’t even wait and find out how I feel about it? So some man is coming here to meet me and you were going to surprise me with it?” KK was still very angry at his mother.

“Let’s calm down son. I think we decided that it’s better everything is out in the open and we just deal with it all at once so we can move on. I asked your mom to contact them. He’s excited to learn that he has another son...”

KK came and sat next to me and I held his hand and squeezed it for moral support. Just then we heard a knock at the door and as KK’s mom told whoever was knocking the door opened. An older man walked in followed by a woman who

looked familiar but I couldn't place her at the moment. She was also looking at me curiously as they greeted everyone and sat down.

“Lerato dumela (hello). Obatla eng mo (what are you doing here)?” the woman asked then the penny dropped. What the...

## Insert 82

“Hawu Lerato where do you know our guests from?” KK’s mom asked and I was so shocked at that point I was speechless. I withdrew inside my head as the stark reality hit me square in the face.

“Oh Lerato used to date our son Lesego...” Mrs Mokoena said quite oblivious that those eight words were tearing me up inside. I felt KK stiffen next to me and he looked at me with the question and obvious answer in his eyes. I heard the incredulous laugh from KK’s mom followed by a clap of her hands.

“Oh is she Lerato Molemi? We are so sorry about all the pain that our son put you through there are no words...” Mr Mokoena said regret and sadness evident in his eyes. This was very awkward for me because what should’ve been about KK and his family was now about me. I cleared my throat as I looked around the room. The Khumalos were looking at me slightly confused, the Mokoena’s had that remorseful look going and KK wouldn’t even look at me but his jaw was doing his favourite exercises.

“Thank you however this meeting isn’t about me and I’m sorry to the Khumalos for changing the focus...If you’ll excuse me I need some air,” I said standing up letting go of KK’s hand and grabbing my handbag for the second time off the floor. I felt my eyes stinging with unshed tears as KK let me go. He didn’t even protest or insist I stay in fact he looked as defeated as I felt.

As soon as I stepped into the corridor I couldn’t help the tears from streaming down my face. I looked around the corridor trying to locate the toilets and thank goodness they were close by. I went in there and got into a cubicle and sat on the toilet. I don’t think my mind had actually reconciled what had happened in there. Lesego and KK were brothers? Out of all the mean jokes the universe could’ve played on me this one I was not waiting for. Not in a million years. How twisted was that? I had dated brothers. I had freaking slept with two guys of the same blood. KK was a Mokoena! I was screaming inside so loud to try to block out all these thoughts going through my head. I had to getaway from here and quickly so I took my phone out and called my mom.

“Lerato laka...” she answered immediately. Just hearing her voice on the phone made me cry even harder.

“Mmama...please c-come fetch me...” I was crying so hard I wasn’t sure she could hear me properly.

“Lerato? O mo kae (where are you). I’m getting my keys and coming now,” she sounded super worried. I told her the hospital and she said she would see me in a little while. I heard her say she would be by the hospital entrance. I wasn’t speaking coherently anymore. Even in his absence Lesego was still ruining my life. How was I going to marry KK now and be who? Mrs Mokoena? I got out of the cubicle and tried to not look like my world has just come crashing down. I rinsed my face with cold water and went to wait for my mom outside. I saw Steve walk up to me.

“First lady...everything ok? Where’s KK?” he asked concern evident in his eyes. My voice was very nasal sounding because of my blocked nose.

“KK’s with his parents still. I’ve called my mom to come fetch me so she’s on the way.” He looked confused by the change of events because we were supposed to go to KK’s place after this.

“Is everything alright?”

“Everything is fine Steve don’t worry about it. Can I actually get my bags from the car?” I asked him gesturing in the direction of the car park. He looked me over once and you could see the questions in his eyes but I wasn’t going to tell him anything. I was under no obligation to do so. I started walking towards the car and he had no choice but to follow me.

“Does KK know your mom’s coming to get you?” Gosh Steve though! Why couldn’t he just let this go?

“Hao Steve am I prisoner here? Why the 21 questions? Give me the keys,” I shouted at him holding out my hand. He reluctantly gave them to me and I turned to open the car. I saw him take his phone out probably to call KK.



Once I was done taking my bag out I locked the car and gave him back the keys. I started walking back to the entrance without a care of whether he was following me or not. Steve waited with me probably to make sure that I'm safe while waiting for my mom.

“Did you call KK? What did he say?” I asked looking at him. He shrugged his shoulders.

“He said to make sure your mom got here and that you were safe,” he said looking outwards towards the car park. My tears threatened again. I know I was being selfish at the moment because he was also dealing with his own things but I was hurt that he would just let me go like that. Didn't he want me anymore? Did he hate me now because he wouldn't be able to have a healthy relationship with his half-brother? I wiped an errant tear from my cheeks and blew my nose.

“Is everything alright?” Steve asked me again.

“I don't want to talk about it Steve. Stop asking me millions of questions!” I kept shouting at him. Poor Steve though. “I'm sorry for shouting. I'm just really emotional right now.”

“It's fine First Lady I can tell you're not ok but whatever it is I know you and KK will sort it out. You've weathered worse storms,” he said putting his hand on my shoulder to comfort me. I shook my head for no. I didn't think we'd be able to weather this particular storm. My mom arrived and parked right in front of us with the hazards flashing.

“Thanks Steve. I've got to go.” I said to him and he helped me put my bags in the car boot. I got in at the back because I wasn't in a chatty mood at all. My mom knew that unspoken rule even when I was younger and still in high school if I'd had a particularly bad day I would sit at the back. She immediately gave me her box of tissues that she kept upfront in the cubbyhole and switched the music to some gospel. Marvin Sapp You are God Alone started playing in the car as we drove off. I sat at the back stared out the window and let my tears fall unchecked. How did we even get here? Why did my life always have to be so complicated? Just then my phone rang and I checked it hoping it was KK but it was Zama

calling. I let it ring because I was in no mood to speak to anyone right now. She sent me a message.

**Mgani (Friend) uSteve says you're not ok. What's wrong? I'm driving to your house nhe I will see you soon. I know you probably don't want me there but you're my friend and it sounds like yu're hurting. Love you mngani.**

That made me cry even more because the person I longed to speak to the most was KK but he was also dealing with his own dramas and he clearly wasn't ready to chat to me as yet.

When we got home my mom suggested a warm bath while she got some food ready. I wasn't really hungry but I agreed to the bath so I could soothe my tired muscles. Once I was done I walked downstairs in my PJ's and found Zama and my mom chatting in the kitchen. They hadn't actually met before but they were chatting away like old friends. Zama stood up and came towards me with a glass of gin and ginger ale already in hand. I gave her a hug thank you as I took my glass and we moved to the TV room.

"Supper will be ready shortly..." my mom called out from the kitchen. I wasn't even hungry. I checked my phone for any messages or missed calls from KK and nothing. Could they still be at it or were they done and he just didn't want to speak to me?

"Where's the gin bottle Zee? I need to take a few shots before I drink the mixed one. I need to numb whatever it is that I'm feeling." Zama came back with a bottle and a shot glass and I had about 5 of them in succession. The gin burnt slightly as it went down my throat but it was a welcome burn. Any other sensation was better than the pain I was feeling right now.

"What's wrong Lee? Did you and KK fight?" Zama asked me as I sat there staring into space. That triggered another round of tears and she put her arm around me and held me as I cried even more. Why was life so unfair though?

"I wish it were something as simple as a fight Zee because then I know I would apologise or he would and we would move on. This is worse than that. It's my

worst nightmare come true. KK is...oh god I can't even say it?" I said taking a huge gulp of my gin and ginger ale. Zama was looking at me all confused.

"What is it Lee? You know whatever it is I won't tell a soul if you don't want me to. Was it something that happened at the funeral?" I had even forgotten that we just came from a funeral.

"No...the funeral went ok...KK is not...he's not a Khumalo..." Zama was looking at me like I have another head slowly popping out of my shoulder.

"Was he adopted or something? But why is that causing a rift between you?"

"He met his biological father today...and...he happens to be Lesego's father as well..." It was ridiculous even as I said it out loud.

"Which Lesego...Your psycho ex Lesego?" As it dawned on her you could see her eyes enlarge like saucers. "Oh my God!" she kept saying over and over again her hands on her mouth.

"Exactly..."I said feeling the alcohol calm settling over me. The alcohol was working my system now and I wasn't freaking out as much anymore.

"So did KK not want to see you again? That would be irrational of him wouldn't it? I mean I know he like shot the guy and everything but he had you kidnapped Lee! It's not your fault that they turned out to be brothers!" Zama said speaking more to herself than to me at this stage.

"It's just brought a lot of old things to the surface for me. I can't help but compare them now and it's driving me insane even as I do it. KK is slightly obsessive and you know this Zee. He doesn't want me to drive anywhere, he's always saying how he wants to take care of me, how he can't live without me...what if he's also obsessed with me..."I ask calmly staring into nothing.

"huh ah my friend. KK loves you and that's why he does those things. He doesn't have a mental disorder like Lesego does..."

"How do I know Zee? Lesego was also perfectly normal then things changed in the blink of an eye. How do I know that I won't push KK over the edge and he'll also

start being weird on me. Thinking about it, I could sense the similarities even in some mannerisms but I just didn't pay attention to it. I mean it was ridiculous to even think it. What if this psychosis thing runs in the family? I can't go through another Lesego episode Zee. It would literally drive me insane!" The hysteria had got me now and I'm shouting and crying again. The alcohol wasn't working as well as I thought it would.

"I don't think it will get to that my friend. I think it's just been a really stressful time for you. I mean you've hardly recovered from the kidnapping and now this is happening. You probably just need to sleep and think rationally about everything."

"KK doesn't even want me anymore...he let me go and didn't even stop me Zee...he probably sees me as this girl who just ruined his life. I don't know what to do..." I'm crying again freaking hell!

"Have you tried to contact him? He's probably also dealing with the emotions of meeting his biological dad and that's emotionally charged as is but then to add the Lesego, you and him triangle on top? I can't imagine he's having the time of his life. Give him time my friend for him to work through everything. I'm sure he'll call when he's worked through it as well." Zama was making a lot of sense but I was hurting. I was torn between wanting KK with me and not.

My mom walked in carrying two plates of food and put them on the table.

"Thanks mama...but I'm not hungry." My mom sat down next to me and put her arm around me.

"I don't know what happened but I know you'll tell me when you're ready. I think you need a tranquilizer so you can sleep for a bit. Things don't look bad after a good night's rest but you need to eat so you can take them. Just eat a quarter at least?" my mom searched my eyes wiping my tears with her fingers. I nodded and took a few bites.

"If you're going to be sleeping, I better get going once we done eating," Zama said also eating her food.

“Please don’t go? Do you mind sleeping over? I need a friend right now.” She smiled at me.

“Of course Lee no problem.” When we were done eating my mom gave me the pills and both Zee and I went upstairs so I could pass out in my bed at least.

I checked my phone and still nothing from KK so I decided to call him before the pills knocked me out.

“Lerato...” he answered on a sigh.

“Hey...” I didn’t know what else to say after that. There was just this awkward silence for the first time ever. In fact I couldn’t remember the last time he used my name outside of work.

“Umm did you get home ok?” he asked after a few seconds.

“Yes I did...are you still at the hospital?” it felt like we were strangers.

“No...I’m at home...”

“Oh ok...” Wow! I shouldn’t have called him. He probably wasn’t ready to talk to me as yet. He cleared his throat on the phone.

“I better go...there’s some stuff I need to take care of...” he said softly.

“Um ok...I love you KK...” I said my voice trembling from unshed tears.

“We’ll chat soon...bye Lerato.” He hung up! He hung up without even an ‘I love you too’. What was the meaning of all this? Just then I got a text from him.

**Can we just cool things for a bit? I need time to work through all this...KK**

It was over. Lesego had managed to ruin the one good thing I had going on. Zama held me as I cried and eventually fell asleep. It was time to move on I guess.

## Insert 83

I can't say I've been looking forward to going to work this whole week but I had no choice. So it was Wednesday and I was en route to work listening to some soothing gospel tunes because I couldn't bear to listen to anything else. I spent every evening crying my eyes out after my session with my therapist and so I had to apply a bit of makeup and concealer each morning to hide my really puffy eyes. KK had not contacted me since he sent me the break up message.

When I eventually spoke to my mom about it she did say that I shouldn't have walked out on him when he needed me the most. I get that but at the same time I also had my own demons that I had to face. I wasn't deliberately being selfish. I also had to work through the fact that the man I loved was related to a guy I truly and honestly despised. I didn't know what this would mean for me and KK and our wedding plans etc. Would I have to face my kidnapper at my wedding? Not that there would be a wedding at this point because KK had broken up with me. It didn't make sense that he was the one who kept saying we should fight for our relationship then he gives up on us. How many times is he going to break up with me when he can't deal with stuff?

We had a status meeting with Vusi regarding all the projects and proposals we were working on. I hadn't been at work for a week but Zama had done her best to keep up to date with the deadlines set by Vusi. When I came back on Monday everybody had been sympathetic to what happened although we just said I was in an accident. I still had the bandage on my neck which I hid with a small scarf tied around my neck.

We all walked into the boardroom and Vusi was already waiting there with KK. My heart skipped a beat as I laid eyes on him. I hadn't seen him since Saturday and I missed him terribly but he said he needed time to work through things so I had to respect that and give him time right? He looked tired though like he wasn't sleeping enough if at all. He'd probably been working himself to a stupor to try to forget about what was going on. They were still engrossed in conversation so he didn't see me come in. I sat at the furthest chair away from him and Zama sat next to me and gave my hand a slight squeeze for reassurance. He then turned around and stopped mid-sentence when he spotted me around the room but recovered quickly and did a general greeting.

“Morning everyone, thanks for meeting with us today. Mr K asked to join the meeting as he has some great news to share with us but we will only do that towards the end of the meeting,” Vusi said as both he and KK sat down. KK looked everywhere but at me and I stared directly at him. So he was going to make as if I don’t exist? I was fuming.

“So we’ll go around the room then you guys can advise what the status of the projects are: Plan phase, Do phase or Ready phase. As you know we’ll only be making these presentations in the new year but there’s a constant inflow of request for proposals, If there is capacity we would obviously be happy to reallocate. Let’s start with you Yolisa?” Vusi said looking at her.

The status update went around the room until they got to Zama and I.

“Dream girls, how’s it going? I know you were short a team member last week?” Vusi asked looking at both of us. I decided to do the status update so KK would be forced to look at me. He was looking at everyone as they spoke.

“We have 5 proposals that we are currently working on. We have 3 that are on the Do phase and should move to Ready quite quickly. We just need to schedule meetings with you Vusi to go through it and check. We’ve already sat with John and he’s happy with them. The other 2 are still on the plan phase and only because the request for proposal closes in March so we thought we should prioritise the urgent ones first.” As I spoke KK was busy typing something on his phone. Gosh! He really couldn’t bring himself to even look at me.

“Ok that sounds good. It seems everyone is on track and has made great progress. I’m always available for any consultation if you get stuck on something. Without further delay Mr K here wanted to share some great news with us. K the floor is yours.” He smiled briefly at Vusi then looked around the room.

“As you all know a few weeks ago we presented to MTech but they still had a number of other proposals that they had to consider. I’m pleased to announce that we’ve been offered the work. The MD called me personally this morning to tell me the good news. Thank you to everyone who worked on that presentation including our graduates Zama and Lerato. It’s because of that kind of talent that KC stays as profitable as it is. As is normal practice those who did the presentation can get a

day off which Zama and Lerato can take tomorrow seeing as Friday is the year-end function. Well done to all of you.” he said clapping his hands and everyone else joined in. Zama and I were so excited we hugged each other. Our very first win and tomorrow was my birthday and I would be at home drowning my sorrows. At least something good was happening in these dark days of my life. When the meeting was adjourned KK left with no acknowledgement for my presence. I was so not going to the year-end function and show up on my own. I didn’t have an outfit anyway.

It pissed me off royally because I felt like he was just being childish about this whole thing. I mean like what the freak? Why was he shutting me out like this? I know I had my faults in this relationship but dammit so did he.

“We knocked it out the park girl! I knew we had taken it!” Zama said excitedly as we exited. I was preoccupied with the KK drama that I didn’t respond. She pulled me aside as the others walked past.

“You guys need to fix this Lee. Did you see how miserable he looked? He kept looking at you everytime you weren’t looking. Uyazi mina nginamehlo wo khozi (I’ve got owl eyes). I think he misses you. One of you will have to swallow your pride.” I knew she was right but he was the one who broke up with me.

“Eish friend. He is so dramatic though.” At lunch time I figured enough was enough. I had to go and fight for this relationship. I had to since he didn’t seem willing.

So I checked with Noah whether he was there and went up the elevator. My heart was in my throat as the lift pinged on the 25<sup>th</sup> floor. I came out and fixed myself before he could see me. I was wearing a black and white pencil dress with red heels. I knew he liked me in dresses and that’s why I’d been wearing dresses the whole week in case we bumped into each other. I could hear him talking but there wasn’t a corresponding voice so I figured he was on the phone. I waved at Noah as I walked past his desk.

I strode in feigning confidence I didn’t even feel. He was sitting on his chair facing the window talking on the phone. I went around his desk and sat on the desk edge. That’s when he noticed that someone was in his office and he swiveled with his



chair and gave me once over. He probably thought it was Noah that had come in to leave some documents for him. His eyes travelled from my face all the way down to my heels whilst listening to whatever the other person was saying. I had my arms folded and I just stared at him. He turned back to staring out the window and continued with his call as if I wasn't there.

The rejection hurt but I stood my ground and waited for him. I still had time because it was just after one and we had an hour for lunch. He spoke for another 15 minutes without acknowledging my presence then he eventually hung up. He got up and went to pour himself a cup of coffee from the coffee machine without even looking at me then came back and sat down. He clicked his laptop and started going through e-mails. Wow really KK.

“So I'm getting the silent treatment now?” I asked my voice trembling from all the emotions churning through me. He kept working on his laptop. “KK? I'm talking to you.” Wow this guy. He turned his head and looked at me with such anger on his handsome face. I actually cringed because I had never had his anger directed towards me like that.

“Now you want to talk?” he said softly.

“What do you mean? I called you on Saturday and you weren't particularly talkative either.” KK was making me angry.

“Why did you have to call me? Were we not together at the hospital? Who chose to leave? Did I ask you to leave?” he asked spitting the words at me. The penny finally dropped. He was angry because I left and with good reason because my mom made me see the error of my ways. I pushed his chair back and sat on his lap. He sat stiffly making sure not to touch me. I put my arms around his neck and forced him to look straight into my eyes. I had missed his calming scent and I put my face on his neck so I could breath him in.

“I love you KK...that will never change. I'm sorry I left you on Saturday. I shouldn't have done it because you needed me there. We should've dealt with this together as a couple. As fucked up as it is I shouldn't have fled the scene. I'm sorry baby,” I said a tear rolling down my cheek. I kissed him then and he was unresponsive for a few seconds before he returned it. I sighed my relief into his

mouth as he enclosed me in his arms. I had missed him so much and I just couldn't get enough of him right now. He tasted like coffee and him.

When we broke apart he had his forehead against mine.

“For the first time in my life I don't know what to do...”he whispered the words to me as if it was some dirty secret he didn't want anyone else to hear. “I have no fucking clue how to handle all this... We did a DNA test on Saturday and it came out positive. That boy's dad is my dad. How fucked up is this whole thing!” he was back to his jaw clenching self. I still had to reconcile this whole thing in my head and I didn't even know what to tell him.

“I don't know what to say to you baby. This whole thing came as shock to me too. I don't even think I've wrapped my head around it yet but despite all that I do know that I love you more than I've ever loved anybody else. I don't want to lose you KK. Please stop breaking up with me when I hurt you because it hurts. Why couldn't you talk to me about me leaving the hospital though?”

“It just felt like you had already given up on us...when you walked out...it spelled the beginning of the end for me. How could you possibly still want me when the same blood that runs through that boy's veins runs through mine? You probably think I'm also a bit crazy or something and that I will become unhinged and hurt you somehow,” he said looking for confirmation in my eyes. When I didn't deny it because well those thoughts crossed my mind, he sighed and looked at me with that 'see what I mean' look.

“I just had a lot to work through because of the revelation. I think my thoughts were just for myself and all the horrible things he had done were running through my mind. I don't know if I'm explaining this right. You know I have issues of my own brought about by Lesego's actions. I left because I didn't want to be the subject of discussion. You needed to get the answers and I didn't think you'd get them with me being there and your mom silently judging me from the corner. Even if I left the room I shouldn't have left the hospital and I'm sorry about that.”

“How do I deal with this though...I hate that boy and I don't think that will change because he is suddenly my brother. I was itching to kill him that day but didn't want to risk putting your life in danger. There was so much pride in Mr Mokoena's

eyes that I turned out to be his son and you know what he said to me? That he was hoping I would be a positive influence on Lesego. Like what the fuck! I don't know whether they joined the dots that you and I are together and how twisted this whole thing is. Angifuni lutho elingi hlanganisa na loya mfana (I want nothing to connect me to that boy)! Even knowing what I know now I would still want him dead. Does that make me a bad person?" I felt bad because he was really conflicted and I wasn't there to help him through it.

"I don't think so baby. I mean he's been a pain in our lives from day one. I do think we all need time to work through all these revelations and the emotions they evoke within us but we need to do it together not apart baby. Why did you break up with me? Do you still want us to be on this ridiculous break of yours? I thought you wanted to marry me..." I asked looking down. He lifted my chin with his finger so I could look at him.

"When you walked out I felt like you were running away. When it gets tough you like leaving. I guess I was protecting my heart by breaking up with you first. I haven't slept a wink since Saturday. I've been torn between calling you and driving to your place to beg for forgiveness. I'm sorry love. I was angry because it felt like you were giving up on us without even a fight."

"Why didn't you talk to me though KK. Wasn't it you that said we should solve our problems together and be constantly fighting for our relationship because no one is going to do it for us? Steve actually said something true that Saturday while I was waiting for my mom to come through. He said you and I have weathered so many storms together. We're unbreakable baby. Not even my psycho ex slash your half-brother should break that..." he shut me up with a searing kiss and I wished I was wearing pants or a free-flowing dress so I could straddle him.

"I'm glad you came today though. I had already resolved that I was going to beg for your forgiveness today after work. Have you checked your phone at all today? I sent you a message during the meeting," he said smiling at me. First smile I had seen in a while. I looked at him quizzically.

"No I've been super busy and you're the only one I chat to during work hours anyway." I took my phone from the table and looked at it.

**You look beautiful Mrs KK. I love you. I'm stupid I know but you make me so angry sometimes...can we have dinner tonight so I can set things right? Yours always and forever...**

I punched him on his shoulder.

“You made me sweat bullets coming into your office meanwhile you also wanted to set things right!”he was laughing now.

“It was unfair of me but I wanted to see whether you would be steadfast or give up. I think a few months ago you would've given up and left because of my silent treatment.” He was right. I had definitely come a long way but why was he testing me though. Mxm.

“Come spend the night at my place please? It's been torture these past few days and I think we need to renew our bond you know,”he said kissing my chin and squeezing my breast gently.

“Will making love help renew it do you think?” I asked breathlessly as he located my pebbled nipple through my dress.

“Mmm-hmm,”he murmured as he kissed me and sent sparks of pleasure firing to all of my nerve centres. God I wanted him but there was no time for that now.

“Then you better make love to me later...” I said whispering into his mouth and I could feel the telling bulge on the side of my thigh.

“I can't fucking wait.”

\*\*\*\*\*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Come join our Lerato “Lee” Facebook group if you haven't already: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1871419696437203/>

Insert 84

When I got downstairs I was feeling much calmer and happier than I had been. Zama noticed it the minute I sat down because we were back in the dreaded meeting room.

“I assume you guys kissed and made up?” she asked smiling at me.

“Yep. I just have to say thank you Zee. You’ve been so supportive these past few days. I don’t know what I would’ve done without you. Thank you so so much,” I said my eyes threatening to mist over with tears but I fought them down because I was so tired of crying. Her actions had touched me though. They said actions spoke louder than words and she had been there for me without me even asking.

“That’s what friends are for Lee. I’m just glad you guys have managed to work it out. You have a good thing going you must always fight for it. Anyone with eyes can see that you guys are crazy about each other.” I don’t know if we were that obvious but I guess it didn’t even matter because KK was determined that we ‘go public’ Friday at the year-end function. I guess in all honesty we’ve been together for like 6 months already although I only started working here 3 weeks ago. Just then I got a message from him.

*KK: I’ve been thinking about your actions on Saturday and I think you really misbehaved. I need to implement corrective measures to ensure this never happens again. Hmm that held delicious promise.*

*Me: Yes I’ve been very very naughty. I think I should be punished for my bad behaviour.* My south clenched as I sent that message. I liked how he was thinking and I couldn’t wait for what he came up with.

*KK: It’s settled then Mrs KK you need to report for detention at my place tonight. I’m looking forward to it in fact I’m hard as rock already. If I could orgasm just from words that would’ve done it.*

I decided to put my phone away and concentrate on work because poor Zama had worked all on her own last week when I wasn't here. The day just seemed to fly past after that and I still needed to call my mom and tell her about my change of plans. I hoped she wouldn't mind too much. Tomorrow was my birthday and I didn't know if KK was going to come to work. If he did then I would go home and maybe spend the day with my mom and brother. Otherwise I would have to see her in the evening. It was my birthday after all I had to see her at some point and spend sometime with her especially because I hadn't really seen her since forever recently.

"So tomorrow you're finally 22! What are you doing since we not even at work. Do you think Mr K engineered it that way?" she asked wiggling her eyebrows at me. Come to think of it the whole day off thing was rather convenient.

"My circumstances just changed so I'm not sure what it means and what I'll be up to tomorrow. I'll check with KK. I still need to buy a dress for the year-end function. Do you have a dress?" I asked her as we both packed our stuff away.

"Ahh mngani (friend) am I even coming? Indaba zabo (these things of) dateless vibes while I'm holding candles with you and Mr K isn't my idea of fun," she sighed.

"Don't you have a guy friend you can bring along? Whatever happened to Steve?" She rolled her eyes.

"Maybe I can ask my personal trainer at the gym because he's quite some eye candy. As for Steve well his 'I want you. I don't want you' is getting tired. I've given up on him until he figures out what he wants. Kodwa nje yena shame uyayenza into yakhe (he knows his sex game) I literally have to go to gym everytime I'm tempted to just call him for a booty-call something." Zama thought.

"So why not just call him up for that and leave him to figure out the rest?"

"Because I like him Lee despite what my brain says. The more orgasms he gives me and believe me when I say there have been quite a number, the harder I fall. Well and the little glimpse I get of the kind of person he is. He's just so closed off

though.” She sighed and I could see she was frustrated by the whole Steve thing but I hoped for her own sake she would figure it out.

“Well you’ll just have to ask the personal trainer guy then. Maybe you and Steve just need time. I know he’s a nice guy because he was so concerned for me on Saturday and the fact that he called you and told you about it shows how considerate he is. Give it time my friend.” I gave her a hug.

“Oh well let me go I have a 6pm class at the gym then hopefully I’ll bump into personal trainer guy and ask him if he can come. So happy that you and KK are ok. We’ll talk tomorrow nhe?” She took her stuff and left.

I took my bags and for the first time this week went upstairs to KK’s office. On Monday and Tuesday I literally cried all the way home after work knowing that he was in the building but I couldn’t even see him. I had a smile on my face in the elevator and someone shouted for me to hold it. It turned out to be Amanda but even she had nothing on my mood. She got in and noticed I had “25” pressed and I guess she was also going there. She threw me a dirty look.

“Still sucking up to the boss I see,” she said disdainfully. I just smiled at her and looked away. I was not going to stoop to her level and ruin my mood. Not when KK had promised me a punishment. Not when I had just gotten back together with him. Amanda had zero priority in my life at this point. When the lift pinged she got out first and went to KK’s office. She made sure to close the door looking at me. I found Noah still there and decided to chat to him for a bit. I didn’t mind waiting in all honesty.

“Hey girl, haven’t seen you in a while. Are you ok? Mr K told me briefly what happened,” Noah asked typing away on his keyboard. I sat down on one of the chairs.

“I’m glad I came out unscathed save for my neck but the wound is healing nicely.”

“Ya nhe glad you’re ok doll. Mina I’m finished. This man of yours is a slave driver especially when he hasn’t been in the office for a while. He’s been cracking the whip the whole day but his mood was quite improved after you left his office. Was there some lunch time loving?” he asked winking his eye. The imagery of KK

cracking the proverbial whip did things to me I didn't want to explore at the moment with Noah sitting across from me.

"You know a lady never kisses and tells Noah." He laughed at that and went back to his typing. I decided to call my mom in the meantime and let her know what's happening.

"Hi mama." I stood up and walked into the boardroom because I didn't want Noah to hear our conversation and leaned onto the desk.

"Lerato you sound better. Was it a better day today?" I could hear there was still concern in her voice.

"Ke bo toka thata (I'm much better) mama. I managed to speak to KK and we talked through what's been been happening...he's asked me to spend the night at his place so we can resolve the rest of the issues. We couldn't do it during the day because we were both at work..." I bit my lower lip waiting for her response.

"I'm glad that you guys are talking again. No problem ngwana ka (my child). What about work clothes and all that?"

"Oh we got the Mtech deal mama so we getting the day off tomorrow as compensation for all the hard work and late nights. I won't be coming into work tomorrow."

"That's wonderful news ngwana ka! I still think you should come and pack a bag. Akere you know gore once you go to KK's you hardly ever come back," she said and I could hear the teasing in her voice. My mom though but I guess she had a point. I was probably going to end up spending the weekend with KK anyway.

"Ok no problem mama. I think I'll have to pass by there and get the bag. I'm just waiting for KK he's in a meeting. Once he's done we'll probably come through or I'll come there on my own and drive to his place. I love you mama. Thanks for being there these past few days and putting up with my miserable self." The tears were threatening again. I was determined not to shed any tears today except for an orgasm or two.



“I’m your mom that’s what I’m there for. I hope you and KK work it out ngwana ka. I can see that he genuinely cares for you and I know how happy you’ve been with him so I’m glad you getting back on track. I will see you later then when you come to get your things.” We said our goodbyes then I sensed that I wasn’t alone in the room. I smelled him before I even turned around to confirm that it was him. He had that slight smile on his face leaning against the glass wall. With his hands in his pockets. He slowly closed the door and continued staring at me.

“I just spoke to my mom and she said it’s cool. I need to go home though and get some clothes...” I said walking towards him and leaning on the boardroom table in front of him.

“That’s fine because then we can leave your car at your mom’s then I’ll drive...” he said his voice barely above a whisper.

“Is Noah still around?” I asked softly as well following his lead.

He looked back at the floor and looked back at me still smiling slightly.

“No he left about 2 minutes ago...it’s just you and me now sweetheart...” he said coming towards me and standing right in front of me. I had to consciously remind myself to breathe.

“You’re so beautiful...” he whispered taking one of his hands out of the of the pocket and running his finger from my cheek, down my jaw to my chin. He lifted my chin and kissed me softly on the lips then stared into my eyes.

“I wonder how wet you are already imagining what I’m going to be doing to you later...” he said kissing my cheek and nibbling on my jaw. My heart rate had spiked up and it was getting really hot in here. “Take your panties off sweetheart, they’ll tell me how wet you are for me. I don’t want to touch you now because I’ll end up ravishing you right here on this boardroom table...” he whispered in my ear biting my ear lobe gently. I realised I was running out of breath when I exhaled.

“You want...want me to take my panties off?” What kinky madness was this? He nodded, moved back and resumed his pose by the glass wall. The wall was frosted

about halfway so you couldn't see through the bottom half of the room. Despite the fact that his hands were in his pocket I could see his bulge but I knew if he didn't want to give it to me now I wasn't going to get it. Mr Iron Control. My mind was running at 100km per hour because my dress was tight and how was I going to take my underwear off in a sexy way without being clumsy about it. I just had to wing it I guess.

I stood up straight from where I was perched and ran my hands down my breasts, tummy and thighs so I could lift my dress on the way up. I lifted my dress inch by inch up my thighs until it was just above my panties and stood there in my heels and my bottom exposed. If someone had to walk in now...He was looking at me with his eyes at half mast with desire and his lower lip between his teeth. God this was making me hot. I ran my hand above my panty to the left and right over and over again and he was following each movement with his eyes. I lowered the panties down, took them off and threw them at him. I noticed with some embarrassment that they were thoroughly soaked.

He caught them with his one hand and brought them to his nose sniffing.

"Hmm I can't wait to be inside you..."he said tucking them in his pocket. I lowered my dress and it felt weird to be naked under my dress.

"It's getting late sweetheart. Let's go get your stuff from your house then your detention can commence..." He must have planned big this time around and I couldn't wait for us to get back to his place.

When I got home I quickly went upstairs to pack a bag while KK was chatting to my mom. When I came downstairs my mom offered us something to eat and I lied and said we had already eaten because I needed to get out of there before I spontaneously combust. KK was just giving me his full dimple smile. We were on our way to his house in no less than 15 minutes after we arrived at home.

"Are you in a hurry for your punishment sweetheart? I'd hardly said hello to your mom and you were already dragging me out." I knew he was teasing me but he was definitely as tense as I was from the anticipation.

“I just want to take my punishment like a good girl. I deserve all of it,” I said breathlessly as he put his hand on my thigh and kept going up.

“Uthanda izinto (you like things) Lerato! Awazi no kuthi ngizokwenzani kodwa (you don’t know what I’m going to do but) you are as eager as ever,” he said laughing and squeezing my thigh slightly then let go. He was hellbent on torturing me clearly.

When we got to his place I was expecting some car action maybe but no such luck. I couldn’t hide the disappointment as he took our bags into the house.

“What do you want to eat for supper?” he asked opening the fridge. Was this guy serious?

“You...” I said coming to hold him on his waist from the back and he chuckled.

“Woman cannot live on dick alone sweetheart...I’ll order some takeaways later then. It’s been a long day I think we need a shower? What do you think?” he asked turning around, taking my hand and leading me upstairs.

“Take off your clothes sweetheart, I’m going to get the shower started,” he said as he walked to the bathroom. I didn’t have to be told twice. I took my scarf off, followed by my dress and threw it somewhere in the room. When he came back he was also naked which I didn’t expect and Khumalo was as ready to play as I was. He took my hand in his and lead me to the bathroom where we were engulfed in the steamy room. When we entered the shower I could feel my heartbeat in my throat from the anticipation. As he came in behind me with my back to his front.

I tried to reach for my shower gel which I kept there for occasions when I slept over and he held my wrists in his.

“Don’t move,” he said his mouth close to my ear as he reached for the shower gel himself. He poured some on my shoulder and used the free hand that he wasn’t holding my wrist with to lather my body up with bubbles. He lightly brushed over my nipples but didn’t linger there and did the same as he travelled south. The

touch was too feather light to be enough. He then alternated hands on my wrist and did the other side. Was he really just washing me?

When he was done rinsing me he placed my palms against the tile.

“I want you like this...”he whispered in my ear as he slid his knee between my legs widening my stance. “Open for me sweetheart.” The command in his voice was undeniable.

“KK...please...”I moaned into the steamy bathroom.

His hands found my breasts, cupping them and working my nipples to aching peaks until he had me panting. I could feel his dick on the crease of my ass as he touched my breasts.

“You will not run away from me ever again...”he said into my ear as his hand travelled down my stomach to my pussy.

“I’m sorry baby...I’ll never do it again,” I panted as he just placed his hand there without doing anything. He was driving me insane with lust.

“You are mine Lerato for always and tonight I’m going to taste you. I’m going to own each part of you just like you own each part of mine,” he said commandingly as he slipped his finger into my folds and rocked his dick against my ass. He kept moving his finger inside me as I moaned and added another one. This man was going to kill me with pleasure. His fingers started circling mercilessly on my clit and I had to lay my head on the tile just for control.

“The beauty of my punishment,”he whispered placing his thumb on my clit and using his finger to penetrate me, “Is that I can bring you to the edge like this. Or I can stop.” He stopped his movements although his fingers were still inside me.

“No...no...baby please...”I pleaded with him. He couldn’t stop now. He couldn’t do that to me.

“You see I know what’s best for you sweetheart because you’re part of me,”he whispered in my ear then he turned me around to face him.

“Why did you...please don’t stop?” I pleaded looking into his eyes. KK kissed me with an overwhelming passion and I heard him groan as I responded with my whole being into that kiss. He lowered me onto the tiled step thing that was built into the shower. I had always wondered why one would need something like that but I guess now I would find out. It wasn’t too high and came to just above my knees when I was standing.

“Because you must learn who you belong to...you must learn to trust my love for you...” he said a determined glint on his handsome face as he stood between my legs. “Show me your pussy. Show me MY pussy.” He nudged my legs further apart. I knew he had seen me there already but why did he want me to display myself like that now?

“KK...”

“Do it sweetheart. I’ll finish what I started but I want to see you do it,” he said biting his lower lip. He smiled as I did what I was told. I lowered my hands to myself, opened my legs a little wider and used my thumbs to open my folds. As I was doing that staring at him he took his dick in his hand and rubbed himself. Fuck he drove me crazy when he did that.

“Good girl...now touch yourself sweetheart,” he said still rubbing his dick up and down. I don’t think I’d ever been as turned on as I was then but for me to touch myself while he was watching directly?

“KK...please...I can’t.” I shook my head for no.

“Don’t make me repeat myself sweetheart. Otherwise I may have to spank you before we even get started. Is that what you want?” he asked hissing the words at me. I moved my finger from holding myself open and moved it inside.

“Ah...” I panted as I felt the pleasure of relieving some of the tension building inside me. I closed my eyes so I could get lost in the sensations of my own making.

“What a good girl...fuck your gorgeous pussy for me sweetheart...I can’t wait to be inside you myself...” he groaned and as I opened my eyes slightly he was looking at me still stroking himself. That sight alone was getting me closer to the edge. KK

moved closer to me and brushed his dick on my cheek. My eyes widened as I saw him towering over me. "Open your mouth sweetheart..."

"Hmm?" I was going to have shower water going into my mouth! He gave me a hard stare forcing my compliance. I licked my lips getting ready to open my mouth as my body moved to the rhythm I had created with my fingers. I used my other hand to touch his dick to bring it to my mouth.

"No touching. Just open your mouth. Just do what I fucking say..." he said through clenched teeth. Geez! As I opened my mouth, he dragged the tip of his dick across my lower lip.

"Stay open just like that sweetheart until I tell you it's ok to have it..." Why was he torturing me like this? He smiled at me as he kept running it across my lip until he inserted it inside my mouth. It was a bit difficult to manoeuvre without holding him so I pulled him into my mouth using my mouth and felt him go down my throat. My gag reflex wasn't too bad and I started licking him on the underside of his dick.

"Fuck that feels good! That's it. Ah..." he groaned as he started moving in my mouth, controlling the pace. I was rubbing myself mercilessly because what we were doing now was pushing me over the edge. Without warning he pulled out of my mouth, lifted me by the waist and sunk inside me. He kissed me passionately as he pushed into me over and over again. I couldn't help the screams tearing from me as he bottomed out inside me over and over again.

"Lerato...oh fuck...this is...so...uh..." KK couldn't even form a sentence the feeling was so intense. And when he tilted his hips to go even deeper inside me my orgasm tore through me like a freight train and I screamed my lungs out. He dipped his head to my nipple as he increased his pace inside me while I still had mini shocks going through my system.

"Oh fuck..." he groaned as he came holding me tightly against him. I was already crying from the intensity of the whole thing. He eased out of me and switched the water off. He then got out of the shower, grabbed a towel and supported my weight as he put it around me. He also had one around his waist. I felt boneless

and couldn't even stand straight. He picked me up and carried me to the bedroom.

"You're fucking amazing," he said kissing my forehead, "I love you."

"I love you too baby," I said staring into his eyes. He laid me gently onto the bed and caressed my leg from the toes all the way up and dipped his finger inside me.

"Hhmm...seems you didn't get enough of me in there. You're soaking wet..." he smiled circling my clit. I opened my legs wider to give him better access as I gave my body up to his ministrations. He rubbed me from my clit all the way down, dipping inside to get some of the moisture and moving all the way back to my puckered hole. He was starting with his things again but a dark part of me enjoyed it and I clenched inside as he repeated the motion a number of times until I was moaning below him.

"Ah sweetheart! You like that don't you?" he whispered as he settled between my thighs. "Now I need you to be deathly quiet love can you do that for me?" His thumb was drawing circles on my clit while his finger was deep inside me. It felt so good I couldn't keep quiet even if I wanted to.

"Ah...KK..." He stopped moving his fingers and slapped me right on my pussy instead. The pain-pleasure sting sent a rush of warmth through my body.

"I said quiet sweetheart...or do you want me to spank you?" he said his words full of warning. My nipples hardened at his suggestion. How did he expect me to keep quiet though. Like it was impossible at this point. He moved down my body and removed the towel around me.

"This is about letting go and trusting me sweetheart. You must be open." I struggled to hear him because he was already hovering around my pussy. I could feel his hot breath just above my pubic bone. KK slid his thumbs up my pussy lips exposing my clit to his hot breath.

"It feels like I've waited forever for this..." he said as my breath quickened from the promise of what was to come. As his tongue brushed over my clit I bit my lip to keep from crying out, my body sizzling with desire. When he inserted a finger

inside me I arched off the bed as I clenched my hands into fists with my nails biting into my palms.

“Fuck you taste fucking fantastic,” he groaned as his talented tongue stroked my quivering flesh. It was the hardest thing to do to try to control the moans from escaping my throat. As he inserted another finger inside me I cupped my breasts and pinched my nipples to distract myself from the pleasure he was giving me. He was merciless with his mouth and fingers and my eyes were tearing up from keeping it all bottled up inside. Oh god he was going to kill me with pleasure struu! As he tightened his hold on my ass and brought me even closer to his mouth I couldn't help the scream that tore through me as my climax hit me.

He immediately stopped got up on top of me and entered me in one swift move. He moved my legs up his waist until my bum was off the bed. I was delirious with ecstasy at this point. I didn't realise he had heard my scream until I felt a hot slap on one of my ass cheeks as he drove into me.

“I told you to be quiet sweetheart...fuck you feel so good...”he groaned as he pushed into me and started slowing his movements down completely. What the hell. I needed him to go faster but he was hell-bent on taking it slow all of a sudden.

“KK...I want...hmm...”

“What do you want sweetheart...” he asked withdrawing almost completely from me “do you want me to talk dirty to you...to tell you how I'm going to fuck your pussy until you scream...tell me what you want...” he said pushing into me inch by inch like we had all the time in the world. My muscles clenched at his words and I knew he felt it when I saw him smile.

“You like that don't you...”

“Please KK... I need you...to..go...faster baby...please...”I pleaded with him touching his chest.

“We've gone fast in the shower. Now I'm going to make love to you properly.” Jesu Krete! I could barely walk after the shower incident. I sucked in a breath as



he withdrew and pushed in inch by delicious inch. He lifted my legs until my ankles were by his neck resting on his broad shoulders. With a deliberate thrust he bottomed out inside me and I gripped the duvet to try to expel some of the energy coursing through me. I needed to hurry this whole thing along I couldn't handle being suspended in this pleasurable plane any longer.

"Mmm...baby...feels so good," I moaned as I moved my hand down my breast and down my stomach. KK watched the movement of my hand knowing exactly where I was headed.

"That's it sweetheart...play with your pussy...fuck that's hot..." he groaned lowering his head to bite one of my nipples. I started rubbing my sensitised clit as he watched my hands and himself going in and out of me.

"Like this baby...mmm," I moaned louder.

"Just like that sweetheart. You're beautiful do you know that? I want you to feel every fucking inch of me," he said turning up the aggression a notch.

"Please...yes baby...harder," I screamed as I felt my orgasm building.

"Fuck you're so tight," he groaned moving faster, "I can't..."

"So close...please...yes...baby...mmm. I mumbled. I couldn't even begin to string sentences together at this point.

"No sweetheart," he said chuckling and withdrawing completely from me. Tears of frustration welled in my eyes.

"What...no baby...don't stop please..." I pleaded with him.

"Hands and knees sweetheart. Right now..." he demanded, his tone commanding and hard.

I turned around and did as I was told. I spread my legs very wide as I lowered my head onto the pillow. I felt the cold air cooling my heated skin.

“Fucking gorgeous,” he said stroking my ass cheeks with his heated hands. He dipped a finger into my pussy and then inserted the tip of his dick inside me while his wet finger circled my puckered flesh. What was he up to now? All thought left as he settled himself fully inside me and still pressed on my ass. As his finger dipped into my hole I stiffened the unusual sensation taking me by surprise.

“Easy sweetheart, relax for me. Feel me...”he groaned pushing into me.

“I don’t think...oh my god...” I cried out loud as he pushed harder into me his finger penetrating me at the same time. KK lowered his chest onto my back and I lowered myself even further submitting myself to his movements. My body felt like it was on fire as I felt the wave coming closer and closer with his finger still lodged in my tight hole. I reached behind me clutching his hip as his strong arm circled my waist pushing me closer to him. My climax tore through me and I screamed my throat raw as I heard KK groan behind me.

“Fuck...” I heard him say before I felt him shoot inside me and stilled on top of me. I was so exhausted I waited for him to pull out of all my orifices and collapsed on my stomach. I couldn’t even lift a finger at this point. He laid next to me and pulled me into his arms. I curled into him wiping my tears as I lay on his naked chest.

“I missed you so much sweetheart and you better know I’m not letting you go.”he lifted my chin so I could look at him. “I don’t mean this in a creepy psycho way. I mean it from the bottom of my heart.” I laughed softly because I had no energy.

“I know baby...crazy doesn’t live here and it better not even come and visit,”I was speaking so slow because I was still trying to gather my strength. He pulled the throw that was on top of the duvet over us.

“Let’s take a nap then we’ll see about food.” He kissed my forehead and I was already halfway to dreamland.

## Insert 85

KK nudged me awake kissing me and it was difficult to come out of the deep sleep I had drifted into. When I opened my eyes I could tell that I needed a bit more sleep than I had.

“No baby, I need more sleep,” I said my voice croaky because he had me screaming most of the night. My body was tired and tender from last night’s antics. KK was a man on a mission last night. When we woke up from our nap, we ordered some food and ate in the bedroom room while he was catching up on some news on TV. Then after that he was all over me like white on rice. I knew he missed me and I missed him too but damn it at some point I felt like I was going to die from too many orgasms. When I said as much to him he told me that we hadn’t slept together since before Amahle died so he had to make up for all those days.

“We need to wake up birthday girl and shower,” he said stroking my cheek staring into my one open eye.

“If you’re going to work then you go shower. You gave me the day off remember? I’m going back to sleep,” I said as I turned around and faced the other way.

“We going to miss our flight if we don’t get ready.” Flight? What flight? I turned with the question in my eyes.

“Flight to where baby? Can’t we just sleep in?”

“No love stop being lazy. Vuka siyogeza (get up so we can get ready).”

“What time is it anyway? It should be a sin to wake up this early.” He laughed at my comment.

“It’s 4:00 our flight leaves at 05:30.” Was he crazy or something?

“You do realise we just slept now like after 2 am and now you want me to get on a flight and everything! Where are we going?”

“It’s a surprise,” he whispered to me before he got up and picked up my reluctant body from the bed. “I already have a bubble bath ready for you. See how I’m taking care of you sweetheart?” he said submerging me into the bath. Could I be any more blessed if I tried?

“Thanks baby. Are you joining me?” I asked laying back as the water was already working on my tired muscles.

“No love if I do that then we’ll never leave. I’m going to take a quick shower nawe (even you) don’t take too long. Happy birthday my love,” he said leaning over and kissing me. Ya nhe when my life was bad it was bad but when it was good, it was freaking fantastic.

I said a little prayer of thanks as I lay there for a minute or so to let the hot water work on my tired body. I wondered where he was taking me so early in the morning but it had to be somewhere local because we still had work the next day. I didn’t even have leave days because I could’ve taken tomorrow off. I don’t even have a dress for the year-end function.

“I don’t hear any movement out there. Are you daydreaming or getting ready?” KK shouted from the shower. How would he hear me anyway with the shower on.

“Of course baby hao!” I decided to stop my wool gathering and get on with this early morning trip that he had organised.

I found him already dressing when I left the bathroom but at least I was feeling slightly more refreshed.

“Come here,” he said opening his arms out to me. I went to him with the towel wrapped around my body. He hugged me tightly to him and kissed me briefly.

“Happy Birthday sweetheart. I hope you enjoy the day I have planned for you.”

“Thanks baby despite you depriving me of sleep. So where are we going?” I asked looking into his eyes. He had that boyish smile this morning with dimple out in full swing.

“You can sleep on the plane if you’re still tired. I’ll wake you.”

“So you’re not going to tell me where we’re going? How must I know how to dress then?” I asked him walking towards my bag to take clothes out.

“Jeans will be fine. Bring a light jersey though in case it gets cold. Wear comfortable shoes,” he said getting on with his own preparation. We got ready in relative silence with him whistling some jazz sounding song. He must be in a really good mood.

When we went downstairs it was 05:00 in the morning. I don’t remember being up, dressed and ready at such an early hour. The sun wasn’t even up yet! We got into his car and drove to the airport and as per usual it was private jet vibes.

“Do you ever use a normal airline?” I asked him as we went up the stairs. This jet was similar to the one we used when we went to PE. He laughed at that.

“Only if I have to which is rarely. I like my own space and I don’t want to be crowded by other people. You’ll see now when you go back to normal airlines you’re not going to enjoy it much either.” We settled down and put our seatbelts on. I turned around so I could face him and he took my hand in his.

“Since you won’t tell me where we are going, can you at least tell me what we’ll be doing?” I asked smiling at him.

“I guess you’ll never stop until I tell you. We are going to Cape Town and you know why?” he asked smiling at me and kissing my hand. Cape Town how exciting. I had never been to Cape Town.

“You tell me baby...why Cape Town?”

“Remember your interview? You mentioned how you wanted to wine farm hop in Cape Town? I thought we’d do that today. We only have a few hours but I figured why not? I’m all about making all your dreams come true...” Wow! I was more touched by the fact that he had remembered our first real conversation from way back then. I unbuckled my seat because we were already in the air and sat on his lap.

“You are my dream come true,” I whispered to him as I kissed him. He returned the kiss with the passion I was used to from him and I felt Khumalo below me wanting to be part of the event. I couldn’t believe how much I loved this guy. KK was a revelation in my life just like the last chapter in the bible, scary but full of promise and everlasting life. He moaned into my mouth.

“Sweetheart don’t get me started. I thought you were tired and would be sleeping,” he whispered into my mouth nipping my lower lip.

“Yep I think I should. I’m actually quite tired. I’ll let you off the hook now but you better give me a birthday orgasm or 3,” I said kissing him on the lips and moving back to my seat. He laughed at that comment.

“So demanding sweetheart. Of course I will deliver do I ever leave you wanting?” he asked giving me his full dimple smile and lowering his head for another kiss.

“Never...” I said breathlessly once he had kissed me senseless. I grabbed a throw from the next seat across the aisle and reclined the chair to sleep a bit. If we were going to be walking around on wine tasting tours I needed all my energy so I could enjoy the experience. KK started working on his iPad and I knew he was working a bit before we touched down.

KK woke me as we landed in the Mother City and I was so excited I couldn’t contain myself. It was still quite early like 07:30 in the morning. As we descended the stairs of the jet KK took my hand in his. I loved how attentive he was and so affectionate with me. He wasn’t afraid to express his emotions with me. There was a car waiting for us and we got in.

“I hope you have plans to feed me baby because I’m hungry,” I said snuggling into him as he put his arm around me.

“All in good time sweetheart but we have to make a pit stop somewhere first.” Clearly he wasn’t planning on telling me where and I wanted to stop being the nagging person today especially on my birthday. I decided to switch my phone on as we sat in comfortable silence listening to Metro FM radio that the driver was playing.

My phone was flooded with messages from the divas on the group, my brother, mom, dad and even Zama. As usual she had a paragraph going for the birthday message:

*Zama: Happy birthday my beautiful, gorgeous friend. I hope the next year is filled with lots of orgasms, love, prosperity and all the good things. I wish only the best for you my friend. I love you lots lots. We'll celebrate tomorrow night at the year-end function. Mcwaa! Zama was crazy though.*

We got to some suburb with beautiful houses close to the beach and parked.

“First stop. Come on sweetheart.” We got out and were greeted by a friendly black woman at the door and ushered to a very elegant sitting room.

“What are we doing here?” I asked KK as we sat down on the luxurious comfy couch. Jus then some gay white man waltzed in with a 3 other women carrying trays. Ok this was weird. When they placed the trays on the coffee table in front of us I realised they were rings. I turned to KK with a question in my eyes?

“Morning Mr K. Glad to have you in my home. I’ve assembled my best work for your fiancé to pick a ring but if nothing is to her fancy I will work with her to design the engagement ring of her dreams...” the guy said sitting down and taking my hand in his for a kiss, “I’m Jean-Pierre. Lovely to meet you.”

“JP please refrain from kissing the Missus? I’m quite possessive of her as it is?” KK said softly but looking at him I could tell he was joking.

“She is lovely Mr K I understand why you are. I will leave you for a few moments to peruse then you’ll let me know what you have chosen.” He left with the same amount of energy that he used when he came in with his entourage of girls. I turned towards KK on the couch.

“And what’s this baby?” I knew what it was but for my own sanity I had to ask.

“This is part 1 of many surprises today. I proposed to you without a ring and thought you’d like to pick one that is to your style and liking. If nothing here grabs your fancy then you can describe your ideal ring and JP will sketch and design it.”

KK was like a God-given gift in my life. I already had tears in my eyes from how sweet this gesture was. I wasn't even expecting a ring until I had spoken to my parents and all that. I didn't say anything because no amount of words could express the feeling I felt now so instead I crouched down on the opulent carpet and started looking at the rings.

I knew I didn't want something ostentatious and big but I also wanted it to be different and not your average ring. I liked rose gold because it was different but I had always been a fan of tanzanite. I thought it was such a beautiful stone. I knew my ring the moment I set eyes on it. It was rose gold, single band with a pointer diamond surrounded by little diamonds and the little diamonds going down the side of the band. It was absolutely breathtaking. KK was sitting quietly watching me go through the rings and as I saw it and looked at him pointing, he smiled.

"It's gorgeous sweetheart but it will never come close to you," he said smiling his dimple smile. He was full on charming me today clearly. I went back to the couch with the ring and gave it to him. He took it in his hand and knelt down on one knee. KK was so silly.

"It feels like the right ring to kneel down with." He took my hand and slipped the ring on my finger. It wasn't sized to my hand obviously but it looked stunning on my hand. Just then JP came in and was clapping.

"I guess you found something you like?" he asked sitting across from us with a smile on his face. I nodded smiling at him.

"Yep my woman has chosen. You know what to do. We need to get going." KK stood up from the floor and took my hand to pull me up. We walked out of the house and back into the waiting car.

"What a nice surprise baby thank you. So can you feed me now? I'm really hungry..." I pouted looking at him.

"Those pouts belong on selfies. Let's take a few pics. I want you to document this day because it's going to be epic." We took a few pics as we moved on to the next venue. I knew how he felt about social media and not that I was a great fan or anything but I liked that he could chill enough for us to take pictures together. We



eventually stopped somewhere in downtown Cape Town and KK looked excited to show me the next stop we were making.

We went into some eclectic looking restaurant for breakfast which was absolutely divine. He insisted on ordering my food and ordered something that had my favourite foods all in one: eggs, avo, salmon, feta and tomatoes. After we were done some woman came to fetch us from our table for the wine tour through Stellenbosch. I couldn't contain my excitement because as much as I had done Napa Valley in San Francisco the whole Stellenbosch wine tour had always been a dream. I couldn't wait.

\*\*\*\*\*

"Wow what a day! Thanks baby." I said as the driver parked the car in what looked like a familiar place around 6 in the evening. It had been an absolutely amazing day in Cape Town and when we landed we went to KK's place to freshen up and get ready for dinner. KK had organised a private tour of small wine farms for us. I had enjoyed it thoroughly and ordered probably half the vineyards we went to because the wines were so good. KK promised that all the wine would get delivered to his place within the week. I had found some really good Chardonnays and some Cabernet Sauvignon's that I wanted to drink over and over. I was slightly tipsy because on the wine tastings instead of spitting I was swallowing. I was not going to waste wine on my birthday.

"I hope you enjoy the dinner baby," KK said as we stepped out of the car.

"Baby can we go to my house after the dinner? I'm sure my mom wants to see me it is my birthday after all," I asked him as he put his arm around me and we walked into the mall. I was a bit dressed up compared to during the day and wearing heels and everything. All black with a touch of silver. It had been such a lovely day and KK was also dressed up looking delicious in black and white.

"I assure you that you'll see your mom before the night is out sweetheart." When we got to our destination which happened to be my favourite restaurant in the world with my favourite steak dish. I smiled as we walked in and it seemed empty. I thought maybe because it's a Thursday that's why it's not that packed. As we turned the corner I was shocked to hear a 'SURPRISE!' being shouted at me.

Everyone was there. How did KK manage to organise all this? I looked at him quizzically and he just smiled at me as everyone sang Happy Birthday to me. I felt the tears threatening but I refused to cry now.

“Happy Birthday sweetheart,” KK whispered as he kissed me on the cheek and unleashed me onto everyone that was there. Zama was the first to come and hug me.

“Mngani (friend) Happy Birthday! Did you get my text? I was itching to tell you about the surprise but I didn’t want to ruin it,” she said me literally bursting with energy.

“I did my friend. Thank you so much for being here.” I hugged her again. I noticed the divas were also here. Even Portia! They all came towards me while Zama was with me and were screaming happy birthday. They all gave me hugs and I introduced them to Zama. We eventually went and sat down at the allocated table and that’s when I noticed KK speaking to both my parents. What could they possibly be talking about? I gave my brother a side hug as I sat down because he was also there attached at the hip to Noni. I guess they were still going strong.

KK must’ve booked the whole place out because it was just my family and friends that were there for that evening. KG sat next to me as she handed me a glass of champagne.

“Chomi I haven’t seen you in a while hey.” I actually missed my crazy divas.

“I know friend my life has been insane. I can’t believe that this is my life. You have no idea how happy I am right now,” I said wiping a stray tear that decided to make its presence known.

“I’m just happy gore (that) you’ve found such a great man to love you through all the drama. I wish you everything of the best you know that right,” she said her eyes also unexpectedly shiny. We hugged briefly as Portia also came to join us.

“Mama ngwana (mother of a child) o batla eng mo (what are you doing here)?” I asked her standing up so I could greet her.

“I couldn’t miss your birthday my friend. I had to be here,” she said as she hugged me.

Eventually we all settled down so we could have the starter. I assumed KK had organised a whole 3 course meal vibe. He came and sat next to me as we settled down for the meal. I was grateful that my parents were getting along and there didn’t seem to be weird vibes between them. I had spoken to both of them briefly before we sat down and they seemed happy and content. Thank goodness Simphiwe wasn’t here because I think it would’ve made things awkward for my mom. KK clinked his whiskey glass with a spoon to quieten everyone down and he stood up. He looked so delicious and I loved him so much

“Thank you all so much for being here to celebrate this special day with Lerato. I know we agreed some of you would say a few words, can we get on with it as starter is being served?” he asked looking around the table set. Portia stood up first.

“My beautiful friend. Happy Birthday. I wish you everything of the best and I also want to thank you for being there for me especially when I found out about the pregnancy. That day when you came and spent the whole day with me, it proved to me what a loving and beautiful soul you are. How you put others’ well being ahead of yourself. I hope your 22<sup>nd</sup> year brings lots of happiness, laughter and love. Here! Here!” she said raising her juice glass. She couldn’t drink because she was still breastfeeding. I was blinking over and over trying to dispel the tears I felt. KG went next followed by Noni then it was crazy Zama who actually managed to make me cry with her words. When my mom stood up I was already crying and the evening got progressively emotional.

KK was by my side the whole evening, occasionally squeezing my thigh under the table and kissing me on my cheek. I didn’t even know where he got the balls to be doing that in front of my parents. After we had finished dessert it was already around 11 at night. KK cleared his throat and stood up.

“Thank you all for being here and spending this special day with Lerato and I. Thank you for all the beautiful words that you spoke. Mr and Mrs Molemi thank you for being here and being so welcoming in terms of this evening. Lerato I’m going to need you to get up,” KK said looking at me seriously. Why was he being so

serious and formal about everything? I stood up and he took my hands in his with everyone watching. My heart was beating in my mouth based on the way that he was looking at me. He looked straight into my eyes as he spoke.

“Lerato ngiyakuthanda (I love you) more than you can ever imagine. The past few years of my life I have amassed great wealth and worked very hard at building my empire and building a name for myself. It was at this very restaurant when I saw you for the first time and little did I know that it would change my life forever. All I have achieved means nothing now without you in it. Some couples don’t even experience a fraction of what we’ve been through in their lifetime and through all those adversities I know our feelings got stronger and more real. I have no doubt in my mind that you are the woman for me and since I can’t bear to let you out of my sight and I can’t breathe when you’re not near me, I figured I better change that...” I was already crying listening to him and when he went down on one knee and took out the very same ring that I picked that morning, I couldn’t help the sob. He took my hand in his just like he had done just that morning in the Cape Town house.

“Lerato Molemi, I love you and nothing is more important to me than your well-being and your happiness. I’m blessed already that you chose to be with me but can we make it a forever type of situation? Will you marry me sweetheart?” This was so unexpected because we’d already had this discussion. I nodded vigorously as he slipped the ring on my finger and it was a perfect fit. It looked absolutely stunning on my hand. He got up and hugged me to him and twirled me around while everyone was clapping.

My parents came to us and my mom gave me a hug. I could tell that she was also crying as my dad shook KK’s hand. This was by far the best birthday gift ever.

## Insert 86

We got to the office around 7 in the morning and went straight up to KK's office from the basement. I was still quite tired from last night's birthday and engagement celebrations. We only got to KK's place after 1 in the morning. I was so tired I fell asleep immediately as I got into bed. Needless to say I didn't get any KK loving that night. I think he was also tired. I hoped we weren't starting to act like an old married couple although we weren't even married yet.

My parents left shortly after the whole engagement thing died down but we stayed a bit longer with my friends and had some drinks to celebrate. KK seemed to get super affectionate after they left because he had his arm around me the whole time and kept kissing me over and over again. Whenever I looked at him I could see my own happiness mirrored on his face. He was so patient with us girls drinking and he spent the night getting to know my brother better and they seemed to be getting along well. When we left the restaurant Odi hugged me goodbye and told me how happy he was for me and that KK seemed like one of the good guys. I was so glad that it seemed like my life had finally turned a corner.

KK put my bags on one of the couches as we walked into his office. I could already hear Noah on the phone chatting away. I wondered what time he started working. He leaned on his desk and pulled me towards him. I put my arm around his neck and stared into his eyes.

"I love you future Mrs KK you know that right," he said to me softly. He was so much more attentive since the engagement became official. He had actually called both my parents and spoke to them on the phone about his intentions and when they met at the restaurant yesterday it was to finalise the whole thing. I couldn't believe my mom kept it from me because she usually was quite open with me regarding most things. I was wearing my beautiful engagement ring and I knew the whispers were going to be back but I wasn't bothered.

"I love you too future hubby," I said my lips already on his. He kissed me then and held me tightly to him. I couldn't believe that this was happening and that KK was actually going to be my husband.

“I’m surprised you wore your ring,” he said taking my hand from his neck and kissing it.

“Why wouldn’t I baby? You asked me to be yours and I agreed. I don’t care about what anyone will say anymore because they aren’t in my life and they don’t know the depth of our combined experiences. I guess now they’ll know that I’m not flavour of the month,” I said smiling at him. Although I wasn’t a person who rubbed stuff in people’s faces I couldn’t wait to see Amanda and Yolisa’s reaction to this.

“Hallelujah! You finally see the light. I’m so glad for that sweetheart. I’ve told my execs about it and well they knew about our relationship anyway. You just made it easy for me too because you’re so hard-working and intelligent all on your own that I know any career progression will be based on your own merit.” No wonder Vusi wasn’t surprised when Yolisa was on some I’m sleeping with KK. There was still some leftover anxiety about this whole thing.

“So I guess I’ll be sitting with you at the exec table tonight?” I couldn’t really say I was looking forward to that. Everyone at that table would be older than me. I still needed to get a dress for tonight. At least we were leaving work at 2pm so I would quickly go to the mall and find something. The function was starting at 6pm at that conference room where the client function was last held.

“Yep and Zama can sit with us as well so you don’t feel awkward. Knowing you, you’re already stressing about being the youngest person there and all that.” I smiled at that. How did he know me so well? I kissed him and reluctantly withdrew from his arms. Since it was a short day we had to get on with the work.

“Let me go downstairs baby,” I said giving him one final kiss as I smoothed out his jacket , “It’s Friday today but you never wear casual at work. Why is that?” He was always in his business suits every single day during the week when he was at work.

“Because I always have meetings so I can’t be taken seriously walking into a meeting with jeans. I’ll see you later then sweetheart. Do you have a dress for tonight?” he asked me holding my left hand in his and twirling my ring around my finger. I think it was just a delay tactic on his side. He didn’t want me to go.

“No I don’t. I’m hoping I’ll go after work today and get something from the mall. I’ll ask Zama to go with me then I can meet you back here to get home?” I saw him shake his head.

“You can go with Zama but please take my car? It’s so much more comfortable and I’m not too sure about Zama’s driving.” Hao this guy but I didn’t want to argue with him.

“Ok baby. If you’re not around please leave the keys with Noah then I’ll get them from him. So this means you trust my driving then,” I smiled at him falling back into his arms. I also didn’t want to go. I couldn’t wait for the company to close for the holidays so I could spend as much time with him as possible. He chuckled at my comment.

“I wouldn’t say that exactly but at least should something happen the car has enough safety features to make sure you’re still alive afterwards...” he said pulling me for another kiss. I resisted the urge to punch him because the imminent kiss was more appealing. Just then we heard Noah shouting outside and the door burst open. KK tightened his hands around my waist so I don’t move so I just turned my head to see what the commotion was about.

“Oh...uhm Mr K...sorry to interrupt...” Amanda stumbled in and you could see her eyes taking stock of the situation: me standing between KK’s legs as he was leaning on the desk, my arms around his neck with his hands on my waist. It was as clear as daylight what she walked into. I squashed an urge to give her a triumphant smile.

“Amanda...why are you budging into my office like a raging bull?” KK asked softly but his tone was laced with a warning. He was looking past me straight at her. She was avoiding eye contact and looking everywhere but at us.

“I just needed you to sign the proposal from last week because we need to submit this morning...” she said uncomfortably.

“So you making your lack of preparation my problem? When did you know about this deadline?” he asked still maintaining his soft-spoken voice.

“Umm...maybe I should come back when you not busy then we can go through it?” she said already stepping back.

“No we’ll discuss it now. Wasn’t it you who barged into my office like you own the damn place?” he asked lifting his eyebrows waiting expectantly for an answer. This was just so awkward for me to witness so I cleared my throat.

“Baby I need to get going...” I said looking at him and he shifted his attention back to me while Amanda was standing awkwardly at the door. I was so used to calling him ‘baby’ I realised I had done it in front of Amanda.

“We not done yet sweetheart,” he said emphasising the endearment and smiling at me. When he turned his attention back to Amanda his face was impassive. He gestured with his hand for Amanda to come forward and took the stack of papers. He placed it on the side and signed it while still holding me and handed it back to her.

“Please give it to Noah on your way out so he can check that the terms were as I agreed? I don’t have time to check it out because I am obviously in the middle of something...”

“Umm...sure ok...sorry Mr K. Thanks,” she said softly, walked out and closed the door.

“Sho baby you were a bit harsh there hey...”

“No love Amanda thinks she owns this place since I took her to work at KI. She is not the queen of Khuzwayo Investments, you are.” He kissed me then and my body just molded into him. I think we were both hungry for each other because last night was zero action. I could feel Khumalo agreeing with me. Once we pulled apart I hugged him one last time and told him I had to go. He let me go with a spank to my ass which had my lower region contracting involuntarily.

“I’ll see you later Mrs KK. I love you uyezwa (ok)?” he said smiling his full dimple smile.



“I love you too my KK,” I said and walked out with a smile on my face. What a great start to the day. I’m sure the whole office knew about Amanda finding us in an embrace. Gossip was rife within the halls of KI. For the first time I actually didn’t care. Who were these people in my life? They didn’t buy me food or pay my bills! They had zero bearing on my happiness and well-being. I waved hello to Noah as he was on the phone. He mouthed ‘sorry’ and I guessed he was apologising for the whole Amanda barging in thing. I gave him a thumbs up and pressed for the lift.

I found Zama already there when I got to the meeting room and today I was glad for it because I needed to tell her what happened with Amanda. I knew she would enjoy it thoroughly.

“Mrs KK, look at you sparkling and I’m not referring to that rock on your finger!” she said as I sat down and started setting up my laptop.

“Life’s good Zee what can I say? You won’t believe what happened in KK’s office right now...” I went on and told her the whole story. She was in tears by the time I finished from laughing.

“Ulayekile (serves her right)! Shame bekacabanga ukuthi umama wethu la kanti u sis Josephine ozosebenza lapha ekhaya (she thought she was the mistress of the household but she’s just the hired help)!” Zama thought. That made me laugh. Just then Vusi walked in.

“Dream girls, are we working in here or...” he asked smiling at us.

“If you’d walked in a minute later you’d find us working we were just catching up,” Zama said clicking on her laptop to prove the point.

“Happy Belated Birthday Lerato and I have it on good authority that Congratulations are also in order?” he said looking at me smiling. Oh gosh! Being with the boss of the company meant to some extent your business would always be out there.

“Thanks Vusi and on both accounts you are right,” I said trying not to blush and showed him my ring.

“It’s beautiful. Congratulations yet again. I just wanted to set up a meeting with you guys for next week before my calendar fills up so we can go through your proposals?” The work day had really and truly began. After that Zama and I focused on what needed to be done since the day was so short. I didn’t even get a chance to look at my phone.

By the time lunch time rolled by I was actually starving so Zama and I went to get some sandwiches from the canteen. Just like my first day here a hush fell over the canteen as we walked in.

“Guess we’ve resumed celebrity status yet again...”Zama whispered in my ear as we queued. I was so over the drama that was KI people honestly. I needed to start working on my business plan to ensure that I would be doing my own thing after this. In fact I needed to start packing lunch so I’m not subjected to such scrutiny. We picked a table outside on the balcony and sat there. Before I had even taken a bite of my sandwich the terrible two decided to join us at our table.

“So you think you have the upper hand just because Mr K reprimanded me in front of you?” Amanda hissed the words to me.

“I think you’re obsessed with Lerato and Amanda. You actually want to be her so you can be the one in Mr K’s arms?” Zama spoke up. Amanda turned her stare onto Zee as Yolisa unleashed that ghetto loud laugh on us. Honestly didn’t they have better things to do.

“Me? Obsessed with a girl who sleeps her way to the top? Don’t think we all don’t see what you’re trying to do here. You’re not the first girl to try and you certainly won’t be the last. I remember distinctly telling you to stay away from Mr K but you insist on defying me...” I couldn’t keep quiet any longer.

“Defying you? Who the fuck are you in my life Amanda? Is it not you sucking up to my man on a daily basis? I am not obliged to obey orders from a graduate intern whose head just got too big for her cheap high heels. You will leave me alone or so help me you will be out of a job so fast you’ll find yourself at the robots on the street begging.” I was livid and I realised that we had attracted some attention because I said that a bit too loud for my liking. Today though she had to know her place.

“Hee this girl! Putting ownership claims on our boss like that! Your confidence girl is remarkable does your pussy have a PHD maybe? Where is all the confidence coming from?” Yolisa said shouting it out and attracting even more attention to us. Amanda laughed out loud clapping her hands. I was tired of people thinking they could just walk all over me. I picked up my cup of coffee I had bought with my sandwich, stood up and poured the contents on top of her head. While she was shrieking from the surprised bath I lowered myself to her level and pulled her to me with her top.

“You better listen to me coloured girl and listen well. I will not tolerate you disrespecting me ever again and I hope you understand what I’m saying. Khulekani Khuzwayo is MINE and that isn’t likely to change for a very long time. So I suggest you behave yourself going forward or so help me I will end your career like a dying candle flame on a windy night. I hope we don’t have to have this conversation again. Zee let’s go,” I said taking my bag. You could see Zama was so surprised but impressed by what I did.

“We didn’t even eat Lee...” she said standing up.

“I’ve suddenly lost my appetite. The cheap perfumes and putrid smell of jealousy is off-putting. Oh and Amanda if you want to be like me all you have to do is ask. I will teach you. As for wena (you) side-kick ya masepa (of shit) you best be staying in your lane. Always having comments about my pussy being gold-plated and now apparently it’s also educated? Le wena (Even you) I can teach you a thing or two if yours doesn’t work the way it should...” I straightened and walked out of there as confident as my feet would carry me not letting the shocked stares get to me. When we got out I pressed the lift and thank goodness it came immediately and pressed ‘25’ with Zama in the lift.

When we got to the floor I went out the lift and exhaled the breath I had been holding. I sunk down sommer there on the carpet and I could see my vision blurring with tears. I hated confrontation with every fibre of my being and I knew this floor would be safe because it was just Noah and KK up here. If anyone saw me breakdown like this I knew I would lose whatever ground I hoped I’d made with those irritating girls. Noah came up to us as Zama was crouched down on the carpet with me.

“What’s wrong?” Noah asked concerned.

“Noah can we get her into the boardroom or something. Someone might come up and see her like this,” Zama said trying to pull me up. My knees felt weak I don’t think I could support myself at this point but I used the last energy I had to get up.

“Mr K isn’t here let’s take her into his office. No one will disturb you there.” I walked to KK’s office in a daze and sat down on the couch. Noah got some water from the fridge and handed it to me.

“Will you guys be fine? I need to go man the phones.” Noah asked concerned.

“We’ll be fine Noah. Please order us some food. We both starving and we definitely not going back to the canteen,” Zama asked him and he nodded and closed the door. Zee sat next to me and hugged me to her and that’s when I sobbed in earnest. I was so tired of the resistance, of people fighting with me over and over. Why couldn’t they just leave me alone?

“I’m so proud of you friend. You put those bitches in their places and with class. I know it’s not in your nature but you did the right thing. They were never going to stop.” I guess she was right but it still didn’t make me feel better. Just then we both looked up as we heard the door close and KK looked at us with surprise. When he saw my tears concern flitted on his face.

“What’s wrong sweetheart?” he said coming towards me. Oh no I hadn’t wanted KK to see me like this because shit was definitely going to hit the fan now...

