



01. PROLOGUE

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

Walking on these streets with hurried steps and trying to stuff myself with breakfast at the same time and by breakfast I mean vetkoeks with fried polony and coffee from MaMkhize on the street corner. Like every morning for the last six months. I walked on these street to the the taxi rank I pass the homeless guy ; still sleeping on the sidewalk and the likes of boMaMkhize setting up their stalls and the annoying ones with flyers all up in your face about safe abortions fly by night colleges and miracle money's like dude you have the info on easy money right at your fingertips why are you sharing it with the world. Well actually if it actually were true; you wouldn't be on the street corner every damn day trying to hustle like the rest of us so ask politely if we can take the flyers Dont stuff them in my face please!

Whew!finally the taxi rank as I get in line with everyone trying to get to work on time I stuff the last of my vetkoek in my mouth and gulp down my now cold coffee.

"Centurion in the red siyaya my people let's hurry up its rush hour o'clock "

The queue marshal announces and people hurriedly get in the taxi before they get left out.

My taxi finally gets announced and I'm off to the menlyn main taxis. I sit in the seat behind the driver like everyday for the last six months like I said it's a routine I have managed to stick to. I have two rules when I'm traveling with a taxi:

**RULE NO 1.** Never sit in the passenger seat I ain't trying to deal with taxi maths hell no especially after work I mean that

time everyone is hungry tired and just wants to get to their place in one piece without a headache from trying to give change of three people on the 200 and an extra 59 for reasons only known to whoever.

RULE NO 2. Never sit at the backseat one thing I hate about backseat is the humps and bumps you're always the one at the receiving end of the drivers bad driving skills so yeah the Backseat is a No from me.

Personally speaking I also hate the front seat because the likes of BabKhumalo can never let a skirt pass them

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I also hate the front seat because the likes of BabKhumalo can never let a skirt pass them they always trying their luck with every girl that sits in the front seat

as if he hasn't left his wife and five children back in the buntus of rural KZN. I plug in my headsets and listen to my music till I reach menlyn. I work in retail so you can imagine how my overall day experience is like dealing with difficult customers and over obsessive managers from 8 to 5 for a salary that only affords one month installment of Polo vivo.

Did I say till I reach menlyn well let's rewind like I said one word BabKhumalo man can't let a girl rest and sit in silence nje. Well this taxi driver in particular is not BabKhumalo guys I'm just saying but one thing for sure he is not old he looks like a typical Zulu guy but definitely young yes maybe older than me but younger than the typical babKhumalo.

"Nkosazana sawubona" did I say typical Zulu yes definitely but ooh mama the voice my sister the voice... I'm swooning.

"Nkosazana?" the voice repeats wait voice...

"Uh!Yeah?"

I facepalm myself in my head like where was I just now? I quickly fix my face so I don't look like I have just been poured with cold water.

"Ngithe Sawubona?" the handsome man yes man taxi driver does not suit him he is the exact replica of Kofi from Queen Sugar. You get the picture right?

"Oh! Sawubona!"

I'm saying this with a straight face so I look disinterested and so that he leaves me alone it always works like magic but blushing on the inside and literally biting the inside of my mouth.

"Unjani Sisi? it's been a while Nje ngi'kubona " Kofi says. In my head I'm like YOU? SEE? ME? in the same sentence? I'm bewildered and right now speechless and you won't believe what I said next...

02.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

"Oh!

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"OOOH!

Okayyyyyy?"

To think I have been taking this taxis for the last six months and I have never seen this fine specimen before am ashamed to be honest. I I don't know what to say even but right now at this moment I'm putting my motto to use 'straight face don't show interest just play it cool girl'.

"Igama ngibizwa u Sibusiso kodwa abangani bam ba mbiza u Sbu kodwa wena Nkosazana ungambiza uSibu' wam"

I am hot its hot in here I'm sweating mind you it's in the middle of winter and one of those days that Pretoria just decide nje that it wants to be ice cold. My cheeks are flaming red and I hope its not a smile that wants to creep up on my face cause it will ruin my whole " not interested " facade I'm trying to put on so I breath in and out without making it



obvious.

"Okay Bhuti Sibusiso mina ngibizwa Thandolwethu Ndlovu and its NOT a pleasure to know you."

I reply back with attitude I don't even know where I got it from but from the scratch in my throat it feels dragged from the pits of Marabastad thats how fake it is.

"Oh nami ngijabuleli uku kwazi MaNdlovu ngiyabona ukuthi izingomo zika Baba ziready uKuya e maqcekeni akwaNdlovu dont you agree Thando ' wami?" He replies with a million dollar smirk that is so fucken sexy on him right now but I feel like wiping it off and let it depreciate like the crypto currency. He absolutely has no right at all to be that good looking and sound good at the same time even when he is being a typical babKhumalo right now. And he definitely has no right

to make me feel the way I'm feeling butterflies in the tummy have always been a myth in my vocabulary and they won't start being a real thing now I solely refuse to accept it.

"As I said bhuti my name is Thandolwethu Ndlovu not Thando wakho so please focus on driving this damn taxi and let me focus on my phone and music."

I reply back in a harsh tone plugging back my headsets into my ear but inside am screaming No don't listen to me. Just talk to me okay! I like your voice and yes sir sent your uncles emaqcekeni a kwa Ndlovu cause I'm definitely ready to be your wife sir.

Putting my straight face on I face out the window but boy oh boy I don't miss the wink he sends me through the rear mirror but I just roll my eyes and look away

because I can't let my street cred be ruined by one Kofi look alike can't let that happen

'ndingu Gabadiya mina I don't fall fast I am not weak' I keep chanting this to myself in my head till I get to menlyn.

I can't afford a distraction or a mishap right now in my life so I need my head in the game not out.

Getting out of the taxi I try to get out as fast as I can because this nigga has just opened up a turmoil in me that I'm trying to close up before it gets to a boiling point. Just as I cross into the mall I'm like finally he gave up.

"Ubenosuku oluhle Nkosazana" he shouts behind me and I pretend like I didn't hear him and just keep walking without turning back.

I finally reach at work Checkers that's is where I work and working the till is not

my favourite thing to do but its better than packing and merchandising shem so I soldier on cause bills need to be paid.

"Sanibonani"

I greet my colleagues and instead of answering they all look surprised like they have seen a ghost I just greeted like isn't that normal human behavior..?

"Ah guys I greeted and you guys are looking at me as if I said I am quitting my job kwenzakalani?"

I look at all of them expecting an answer and they are still just ogling at me and finally Karabo my other colleague that is fast forward and I mean fast like the Gautrain Finally speaks...

"Ah Thando?" Karabo says

"Yeah?"

"I don't know if you have realized if your cheeks are hurting now cause you are smiling girl not a smirk but a full blown smile and never in the last six months that you have been working here have I ever seen you actually smile. Soo mogirl have you won the lotto? cause wow that smile could only be because of some shmoneys girl ". I laugh

"LOL girl what? I wish about the Lotto part but you and I know that I ain't that lucky when it comes to gambling and I am definitely not smiling so please pfh..."

"Wow Modimo ke wo Mogolo yeh ebile wa sega gabotse neh o tsogile ka lehlakori lona lona mogirl. " she continues with a clap of her hands and even the other colleagues nod their heads in agreement with Karabo's statement. I just leave them like that and go to the locker room I don't have anything to explain and I'm

also not obligated to answer any of their questions especially about my personal life.

Oh if I'm smiling it just means that my teeth couldn't keep themselves hidden soo...definitely not my fault but someone with some extra good dose of melanin dipped in honey and coconut oil and a set of pearly white teeth that can get a girl dropping her panties in a second well except me of course but yes he is definitely the real culprit.

Oh boy it's definitely going to be a long day...

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03.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

"Ubenosuku oluhle Nkosazana"

I shout out behind her as she gets into

the mall. She keeps her head straight as if she didn't hear me.

"No worries Nkosazana ndinguSibalukhulu I don't shy away from things I want and when I want something I get it" I say to myself as the last passenger shuts the door and Thandolwam is finally out of side I drive out.

Blasting Mduduzi ft. Big Zulu inhlupheko through the speakers I drive back to town. I have a big smirk on my face as the image of her eyes keep playing within my view I chuckle to myself. I imagine running my hands on her soft caramel skinit complements my dark chocolate tone and looks smooth to the eye and I believe its even more of a delight to touch. . Her dreadlocks make her look like Ndoniyamanzi

"Ngiyinziswa bandla angi'mwemwele hao \*chuckles\*" love can drive you crazy in a





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Msuduka

Inkonekaz'evele ngobusw'emgedeni.'

I chant my clan names and thank my ancestors I even add a whistle in excitement.

\*A Week Ago\*

"Hau hau we bozza unjani? Kwenzakalani Uzile elenkini namhlanje awu sthembe Kante?" one look got him quiet in a jiffy ngiyi Nkabi ansoze ngihamba ngitxinatxina naba sebenzi bam.

" ngila ngoba anikhoni ukwenza umsebenzi wethu umsebenzi that I pay you guys to do so yebo Ntswiza angilithembe" I answered with some authority in my voice

" II..."

"Sanibonani" said a sweet melodious voice I have never heard it anywhere in my life it was like she was greeting me alone.

"YEBO NKOSAZANA " the men greeted back in a choir

I snapped my head in a jiffy to catch the culprit that had the guts to capture my attention but I could not see her face. Seeing her from behind was not enough she had her dreadlocks in a ponytail had her earphones on her everyday routine since the day I saw her figured it's what she actually likes to do to avoid small talk. She was wearing her work uniform with black converse sneakers on her feet. Also one thing that stood out for me was that she was thick actually chubby is the right word some meat for me to grab on. I like my women well fed and not just shackles of bones so it was declared she

was definitely my type and I sworn to make her mine. I vowed on that very moment that I will finally get to make her Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini even if I have to be Taxi driver so be it...

04.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

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.....

"Thandooooooo?" I hear a screeching loud voice calling me and that can only be one person an annoying one at that. 'Karabo' right now I just want to have my lunch in peace not have an interrogation.

I breath in and out and look up she is still approaching me so I quickly take a bite of the sandwich in my hand that was half way to my mouth when she called out. Karabo is your typical Pretoria girl with a 32 inch Brazilian make-up on fleek every single day and today in particular she has a weird color combination on her eyes from my view it looks like the South African flag shem and she has your flat tummy and fat ass kind of body and... drum roll; yes you guessed right a yellow mellow. So she is the ideal type for every nigga that comes into the store whether they are married or not they definitely make sure they leave with her numbers when they get out of this shop.

I feel my insecurities creeping out at the very moment I lay my eyes on her. Actually they creep out every time I see her cause look at me am a size 36 I do have a fat ass but I still have that little fupa that even apple cider and hot water can't defeat I have given up even bothering about it. Heck I love my body and the way I look I am caramel with brown eyes and yes I have good looking legs every Zulu girl can attest to that one but some days you look at girls like the likes of Karabo and you wish at least you were like them too just a little winny tiny bit you know but we comfort ourselves by 'we were all made in God's image '.

"Hi                      Karabo                      unjani?"

I greet her as she sits down next to me she is nibbling on her energy bar in her words " I can't afford to lose this body phela it's my lottery ticket to the good life so if I have to starve myself then do be

it" I continue eating my lunch as she is yet to answer me I'm even surprised she hasn't bombarded me with questions the minute she sat down considering the mischief in her tone when she called out to me.

"Ke fabulous and amazing Lehono nontombi gape tlhe its Friday and monate ke monate ka maphapha mogirl. Ke botxixa wena mogirl wa gabo Big Zulu go jwang?" ah yes I retract my statement she is still Karabo it would have been a miracle honestly if she was not hyper.

"Ngi'right Kaybee I'm just trying to finish my lunch fast before my break ends" I say in a subtle manner and then drink my water.

"So ubuphi bumnandi the one you were just talking about?" I continue trying to prolong the conversation and one thing I'm bad at is to actually keep

conversations flowing is to actually keep conversations flowing I'm antisocial like that.

"Eh dintsha ko Ayepep mkani and I can't wait to clock out shem" she says in excitement.

I chuckle typical Karabo " so what are you wearing? But knowing you I'm sure you have an outfit ready nje" I say trying to make it seem like I'm interested.

"Yey kere I will be slaying you know me mos I'm always up to date with the latest fashion trends" she adds on with a twist of her fingers and flipping her weave.

Checking on the time my lunch is almost over actually its over with five minutes left on my clock I quickly stand up and dust off my clothes for any bread crumbs

"Hai mgani asi hambe lunch is over i

don't want the manager all over my face you and I know that is a nightmare we don't want to face especially his smelly spits"

I say she already knows what I'm talking about and when I say nightmare I mean nightmare its horrible. Our manger Mr Schluk has a I don't know if I should say oral health problems or what but when he speaks he spits and that's a lot of spit just by greeting you imagine in the morning during the briefing meeting whomever sits next to him has to wash their face after the meeting and apply an excessive amount of perfume just to dissolve that horrendous smell. So we make sure we sit at least two seats away from him problem is he talks and walks at the same time so we can't escape him.

"Tjo eish let's hurry then I don't want to have to re do my makeup hai angeke"  
Karabo says hurriedly as we walk back to



the front and takeover on the tills from our colleagues.

Three hours went by and it was finally time to go home. I take my bag and head to the taxi. On the way I call my roommate Enhle she is a student at the Tshwane University of Technology the Arcadia campus.

"Shlobo Unjani?" she says immediately .

"Ngi'right shlobo unjani uphumile eskolweni? I ask as I fiddle with the strap of my bag to keep me occupied.

"Ngiphumile but I'm going out for a movie date would you be fine alone?" she asks .

" Yeah ngizoba right enjoy.I was just calling you not to cook I'm getting pizza."

I answer back in a chirpy tone to hide the

disappointment. I was hoping today we catch up and do meni's and pedi's while munching on pizza and sipping on wine but I guess that went down the drain. And I wanted to vent about a certain someone that has been occupying my thoughts in the last few working hours.

05.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

" Yeah ngizoba right enjoy.I was just calling you not to cook I'm getting pizza."

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I slowly walk towards the taxis with no

interest of going back to a lonely flat. Its Friday people are either going home the villages or going to the groove others like Enhle are going on dates why can't I just have atleast one of the above? If not all of them\*sigh\*.

I sit at my usual seat behind the driver absent-minded I stare out the window at people going in and out of the mall with their loved ones how precious.

"Sawubona Nkosazana "

I am busy scrutinizing the people as they go in and out of the mall \*chuckles\* I hope they don't see that I'm starring too hard. The man being dragged by his daughter in a pink tutu dress has me cracking up realizing I am laughing alone. I quickly turn to see if anyone noticed me or ... I am met with a face of full beard and white teeth starring at me

"I am happy to know you have a beautiful

laughter ThandoWam kodwa I hope I'm the reason behind your happiness Nkosazana " he says still smiling.

I am awestruck actually speechless is the right term I don't know if I should laugh or cry. This man the first ever to actually get me Thandolwethu Ndlovu crushing on a male specie; not that I have crushed on females No I am super straight as a ruler. Thing is; no guy has ever had the potential to captivate me to actually be in a relationship with them reason I have been single my whole life.

Ah well except that one time when I was stupid dumb foolish an idiot in fact all words describing stupid. It was in the 8th grade; puberty stage still settling in and couldn't control it. I dated this guy whom was good in Mathematics. He was what can be considered a nerd so you know we have the mentality that nerds gigs and bookworms are sweet and innocent and

possibly can't hurt a fly right?  
Right did a nigga not perform a  
simultaneous equation on me and half of  
the girls in our class. Turns out when he  
said he was tutoring it was actually  
tutoring but not Mathematics tuitions  
alright.

I was heartbroken I admit but he taught  
me a lesson to stay away from boys till I  
die so you can call me "Sister Thando in  
Christ".

Now this man with brown orbs and  
speckle of gold when he is facing the sun  
and a perfect dentition definitely wants to  
break down the defense I put around my  
heart not fair.

"Uh..Uhm...uh"

He put his finger on my mouth "Shh dont  
bother your pretty self I can see from  
your eyes that you are dumbfounded and  
the gears are clearly turning in that cute

head of yours " he continues sitting  
proper next to me.

I am still just awestruck and yes the  
gears in my head are definitely turning at  
a rather accelerated speed. I gulp down  
saliva to moist my dry throat breathing in  
and out without making it obvious I open  
my mouth but still nothing comes out.  
What in the world is happening to me?  
This man is unbelievable

"Oh before I forget Jabu letha izinto zam"  
he calls out to a guy in the most ugliest t-  
shirt a shade of green I have ever seen. I  
guess he is the Jabu cause he hurriedly  
comes to him and hands him a bouquet  
of yellow tulips.

"Nantsi bozza yam" Jabu says while  
handing him the flowers

"MaNdlovu!  
Gatsheni!

Boya benyathi obusonga busombuluka.  
Wena Thandolwan Sthandwa se ntliziyo  
yam.

This are for you to brighten your mood  
after a long day. I chose yellow cause it  
represents light and sunshine and wena  
Nkosazana you are my sunshine. " he  
says this mini speech handing me the  
flowers.

I just melt my insides are mushy right  
now I am blushing and my cheeks hurt  
from the big smile on my face. Nigga  
definitely knows a girl's weakness just  
call a Zulu girl or boy by clan names; You  
will get rewarded with amadumbe for as  
long as you live lol I'm kidding but yeah  
you get my point

"Ngiyabonga"

My voice comes out as a whisper and I  
am not sure he heard me.

"My pleasure Nkosazana" seems he heard me alright and he does what he does best he winks at me before getting out of the taxi. I sniff the flowers for the hundredth time since he gifted them to me and boy oh boy I'm part of the gone girls worldwide movement.

06.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

"Ngiyabonga"

Her voice comes out as a whisper my heart flatters in appreciation as I stare her sniffing the flowers. Seems the gesture was more pleasant than expected.

"My pleasure Nkosazana" I respond back with a million dollar smile only my mother and siblings know my smile and now Thando is on that list because she is



special and I intend to make her mine.

I bought yellow tulips because they are my mom's favorites actually my mom likes yellow and she says it reminds her of how dad makes her happy and always turns her gloomy days into rays of sunshine by giving her a yellow tulip for everytime she is in a bad mood. She is a spoiled woman that one and I intend to be atleast half the man my dad is to Thando.

I get off the taxi and wink at her as a goodbye. I make my way back into the mall's parking lot and get into my car. I am visiting my older brother Themba. My parents have five kids four boys and one girl "the princess" I am number two. The second oldest and the only bachelor in my father's house. My parents are always asking me where is their daughter-in-law as if they don't have three already. You might be wondering how I'm 32 years old

and still single well I just haven't found the right one till recently of course. My dad will even make fun of me by asking if I can even ask a girl out if not I should ask him to go get me one from the buntus of KZN. In his own words he will say

" Hau Ndodana Lusibalukhulu mele ungitshele ma'uba ulumile unogwaja mhlawumbe asazi thina. Noma ufuna intombazana yase makhaya I'm talking about the ones that wake up at dawn to go fetch water from the river".

I will always respond with" angikho ready Baba. The day I am ready and found the girl my ancestors has shown me kuthi nantsi umfazi wakho umfana wami. I am talking about amadlozi akwa Dlamini Lusibalukhuluabo Jama kaSjadu; I will come to you first Baba."

And he will just chuckle and say" hai I

hear you son" and pat me on the back

I laugh at the memories as I drum my fingers on the steering wheel I am halfway to Mooikloof Heights

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I am halfway to Mooikloof Heights my brother's place. I decide to call him and ask if he needs anything else for the braai besides Ice. He is addicted to ice mom and his wife MaShange are always scolding him for his bad habit of eating ice he doesn't care even when he gets a brain freeze.

"BAFO?" He responds immediately

"Yebo Themba I want to know what else do you need except ice" I get straight to the point before he tells me about things I don't want to know about.

"Ah! Sbu you are not being fair you know

I want ice your sister-in-law decided to ban me from all the fridges and freezers in this house I mean they are mine too don't I have rights?"

"I don't care all I know is that she is right and you are wrong so as I was saying what should I get besides ICE Themba?"

I hear some shuffling from his side before he answers.

"Uh MaShange uSbu is asking what he needs to get besides ice..." I guess he is asking his wife

"Mjele he can get some rolls and beers I think...yeah thats all" MaShange responds in the background

"I believe you heard her with you own ears angithi Ndoda?" he says back to me

.

"Yes Sir and see you in a bit ICE man"

"Hey don't call me th..." I cut the call and laugh

"Nxaa Themba and ICE ulimi & amathe"

07.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

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"Hey don't call me th..." I cut the call and laugh

"Nxaa Themba and ICE ulimi & amathe"

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Exactly an hour later I arrive in Mooikloof Heights the security at the gate already knows me because I'm a regular. So they let me in without a fuss.

I drive through to Themba's house its double storey the most part of it is made in glass pretty classy I tell you plus it's child friendly.

After taking the beers from the car I enter the house without knocking.

"HONEY I'M HOME!" I shout over the loud music.

I make my way to the backyard where I assume Themba is at the braai stand. The kids are playing and running around once they see me they come screaming at me and hug my legs almost toppling me over with the beers hashtag disaster.

"MALUME SBU USPHETELANI?" they speak at the same time with the cutest grins on their faces.

"UH! Guys let go of my legs first and Buhle blow your nose. Then we can talk

about what your Favorite cool uncle got  
you okay?"

They let my legs go and I finally find a  
table to put the beers on...

"Okay we let go now; so what did you get  
for us you promised us candies uncle  
Sbu" the oldest at just five years  
Nkanyiso says without even a ounce of  
breath.

"Yesh Uncle you promised ush candiesh  
Uncle..." the youngest Buhle adds on she  
is three years old and she is the cutest  
she has those puppy eyes of hers on that  
I can't resist.

"ALRIGHT okay and candies you shall get  
my Prince and my Princess... " I half bow

"...but before that where is mom and  
dad?" I ask them

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I ask them and they simultaneously point towards the kitchen.

I crouch down to their level "Okay but you have to keep it a secret don't tell mommy or daddy I gave you candies understood?" I speak pointing my finger at them they immediately zip their lips and throw the key away

"yes top secret all clear" they whisper back after the gesture of throwing the key away.

"Good now high five"

\*twa\*

"Oh Sbu its you Unjani?" MaShange leans for a hug as she greets me.

I hug her back " yes its me and Ngi'right unjani wena kodwa with your 'ice man'? "  
I mock her.



Hits me with the table cloth "hai wena umyeni wam' is not 'Ice Man' he is just being a baby I mean who cries over ice? Hai ubhuti wakho Sbu ingcaki ngempela"

I laugh "you're saying he cried over the ice just because you forbid him from eating it heh I should tell uBaba"

I laugh out more my stomach even hurts.

"Ssh dont say I told you so just say its Nka or something not me. Know what; let me go back to the kitchen before you get me into trouble with your brother" she says looking around for Themba.

"And oh aphi amaRolls wami?" she asks halfway to the kitchen.

"In the car let me go get them Sbali!"  
I continue laughing going outside  
\*chuckle\*

08.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

"And oh aphi amaRolls wami?" she asks halfway to the kitchen.

"In the car let me go get them Sbali!"

I continue laughing going outside  
\*chuckle\*

Getting back into the house I find Themba with a tray of meat I guess he is still going to start with the braai. Plus the twins said they are coming; so chances of me going back to Hatfield are slim we always get sloshed when we are together.

"Unjani Mr Ice Man?" I greet him in a mock tone.

He gives me a stare that if it was possible it can sent me to my early grave. I chuckle and sing-song 'ice man repeatedly.

"Uzobuwela lapho uphuma khona ngo Kwan la!"

Putting my hands in the air in surrender mode" okay I am sorry...ice man

"You better be start the fire even instead of irritating me."

"Well how about I put the beers on ice instead you know \*wink\*Ice Man style.."

"I will beat you.." he lifts his hands and I turn back in a jiffy laughing at him.

"Oh and I heard from izimbuzi sa ze emigwaqweni ukuthi be ukhalela iqhwa when they banned you from all the freezers in the house."

"Who told you give me the name" he persist

"Nope as I said izimbuzi mfowethu"

This conversation is happening around the braai stand as he is chasing ne with a spatula and I keep laughing at him. I am a fan of annoying him and he knows.

"MALUME!"

The loudest tiny voice calls out for me and I know she wants the sweets I promised her. Truth is I don't even have candy on me I didn't even think about it when I came here because their mother already warned me about overfeeding them with candy...so no more candy for the little candy monsters.

"Yes Bubu.."

"Ngifuna ama ca..." I stop her before she finishes the word I shake my head sideways to signal to her that she should keep quiet while I put my finger on her mouth.

"Top secret remember?"

She nods her head "yes top secret uncle."

"Now go and play on the jumping castle with Nka I will call you when its time to eat okay"

"You promise?"

I cross our pinky fingers together "Pinky promise."

"Pinky Promise"

And off she runs off to the jumping castle.

Immediately after that the twins make their entrance as always you only hear the noise first before you can see their actual faces. Trouble is their middle name mom already knows that he gave birth to identical monsters xem. They are identical and come after me Nhlakanipho and Nkazimulo. The ultimate trouble makers of the family but when it comes to business they don't play around. I co-own a construction company with Nhlakanipho and Nkazimulo is a Chartered Accountant by profession.

"Hau hau Sanibonani madoda

## **Sponsored**

the handsome Dlamini brother's are here take out your cameras and start clicking..." Nkazimulo says he is the loudest one of the two and most fast forward actually he is the one always causing the trouble ever since they were kids. Nhlakanipho just tags along because

he is the other half he doesn't have an option.

"Sawubona nawe Nkazimulo unjani we umfana?" Themba greets back Nkazimulo

"You know me am fresh and proper my girl is taking care of me ." He says turning around and even brushing his non existence beard.

"The right word is wife Nka you are married remember not boyfriend and girlfriend."I respond

"Nhlakanipho? Bafo unjani wena entlek how do you cope being a twin with this brute?" I ask Nhlakanipho my business partner and the most calm twins.

"Ngi'right Dlamini unjani wena kodwa" Nhlakanipho responds.

"I am go..."

"Hai hai don't care she is my girl and speaking of girls when are we meeting your girl" Nkazimulo interject me.

"What do you mean my girl..?" I ask looking confused I haven't told anyone about MaNdlovu yet I am still pursuing her so I can't spill now.

"Dont look confused bafo my wife told me that you ordered flowers from her so who is the girl"

"Flowers? girl?" the others ask looking confused too.

"MaMbele! I should have known she has a big mouth. But since your wife told you; did she also mention that the flowers are mom's favorites?"



"Ah No...but that doesn't mean nothing or you want me to call mom to confirm your story?" he asks trying to be a little sneaky basted

"If you wish go ahead"

I say trying to act nonchalant and unbothered. Problem is MaMbele is just like mom they don't have a filter actually they can't keep a secret it seems like they suffer from acid reflux if they don't spill.

"Hau mfowethu you never said anything about a girl?" Themba asks because he is a curious cat just like his brother Nkazimulo.

Heck even Nhlakanipho nods in accordance with Themba's enquiry.

"Well that is because there is nothing to tell she is not mine yet...so can we move onto other things."

"Hmmm" they all mum and we continue with our usual banter and drinking minutes later the meat is ready and MaShange serves us food and the night goes on with the Dlamini brothers drinking and teasing each other.

09.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

Getting into my now empty flat because my roommate decided to desert me for the night. I turn the lights on and head to the kitchen to get my favourite vase. I fill it with water and put my tulips inside and head to my bedroom with them. I discard my shoes by the mini shoe rack I have installed in my room by watching YouTube DIY videos and put the flowers

on the small table beside the window so they can a bit of sunshine. I change into my lounge wear set and head back to the kitchen to warm the pizza. As it's warming up I scroll through my socials and Enhle posted seems like her date is going well. I am happy for her she has been through so much in the last year and I believe happiness looks good on her right now. So I don't bother calling her but I sent a text instead.

"Just got home saw you're enjoying your date night. Happy for you girl and get back safe." \*sent\*

\*bling\*

My pizza is ready and I pour myself a glass of chilled red wine and three slices of pizza and slump on the couch.

I grab my laptop and binge watch on Gossip Girl and a whole lot of series till I dose off.

|||

"Thando...Thando?"

I turn and face the other side

"Pssh Thando..buka" someone shakes me and I groan I hate being woken up especially when I have just fallen asleep.

"Hai mahn Thando wake up man its ten a.m we have to go grocery shopping"

Ten a.m? Nope that's is not right I just went to sleep 30 minutes ago what does she mean? I continue sleeping.

"THANDO... THIEVES!"

I jolt awake and run to grab the broom from the kitchen and stand in attack mode

"Thieves? where are they? I want to thrash them nobody steals from Thando Ndlovu and gets away with it " I look around with the broom in the air ready to attack the thieves

\*laughter\*

"...HAHAHAHA damn I always wanted to do that. Well since you are awake madam as you should there are no thieves here I just wanted to wake you up."

"Huh? No thieves?...\*I look around the house and look back at Enhle she has a huge ass grin on her face\* ...but why di..?

"Well I have been trying to wake you up since and you wouldn't budge its ten a.m and we have to go grocery shopping re-me-m-ber? Gro-ce-ry?" she says toning down and pointing to the empty kitchen cardboard.

"Oh yeah

## **Sponsored**

grocery!.." I scratch my head "you said its ten a.m? Are you sure your watch is working correctly? I am pretty sure I just fell asleep exactly 30 minutes ago not hours ago okay "

She laughs again "well I'm pretty sure you feel like that cause someone decided to finish the whole bottle of wine alone last night how is your head sleeping beauty?"

"Ouch! now that you mention it I feel like my head is splitting into two. No more drinking for me" I hold my head as I sit on the kitchen counter.

"Please help me I know you are the master of hangover remedies" I plead out to her as I rest my head on the counter

"Yes mam one glass of slimy disgusting green hangover remedy coming right up" I hear Enhle says as she starts shuffling through the kitchen units.

"...and keep it quiet please especially that blender."

I plead out again as she makes more noise unnecessary so.

Few minutes later as I'm about to dose off again "Here is your remedy drink up and clean up we have a long day ahead." lifting my head up I find Enhle holding onto her waist with one arm and in the other hand a glass of some green disgusting solution "Hangover remedy" in her words.

"Thanks"

I mumble out and take the glass and gobble it closing my nose. I always drink



it when I'm Hangover and I never want to know the ingredients I mean never.

"Ew it never gets better I feel it gets more disgusting everytime I drink it. But truth be told it always works like magic"

"Yeah I know but be thankful and get your ass up from the chair and go take a shower time is money boo" Enhle pushes me out of the kitchen all the way to the bathroom and closes the door behind me

"you have thirty minutes better make it fast" she says from other side of the door.

"Hhm"

I sigh out loud and open up the shower...

10.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

"you have thirty minutes better make it fast" she says from other side of the door.

"Hhm"

I sigh out loud and open up the shower...

|||

After getting ready I grab my handbag and head back to the kitchen. I am in a pair of blue skinny jeans ankle boots and a knitted black jersey my dreadlocks are down to protect me from the harsh winter breeze.

"I am done girl but I need some coffee before we can leave."

I tell Enhle once I reach the Kitchen and sit on the chair. She has a cup in her hands and busy scrolling through her phone with the widest grin I have ever seen especially on her. And I can bet on my Favourite grandmother in Umlazi that a man is behind that smile.

"ENHLE..?"

"Mmm? ...yeah sure I heard you" she says still looking into her phone.

\*Sigh\*

I get up from the chair and go around the counter to make myself some coffee just the way I like it strong and black. I even grab a slice of cold pizza and nibble on it.

"So I guess your date went well the way you have been smiling with that phone I

bet he even asked for your hand in marriage." I say looking at her and she is still typing...

"Its She not He." I hear her say after a few seconds.

"Huh?"

She puts her phone away and sits on the other chair opposite me. She starts playing with the sleeve of her hoody and that happens only when she is nervous.

"Please don't judge me..." she starts

"I am not judging." I reply quickly.

"Well thank you. Its just that I actually like her and I feel she actually gets the kind of person I am Thando. I have never been this happy you know after what happened last year with..." she continues on.

"Ah ah not past tense things please" I interject " you are happy now in the present so whatever demons from your past should not bother you it wasn't your fault he was just a certified jerk. Sooo what kind of person is she?" I ask getting excited

"Nope not spilling anything before you my dear best friend tell me where you got flowers? Yellow tulips in particular ring a bell?" she asks me getting ten times more excited than I was a minute ago this girl you can never escape her interrogation.

I squim I am ashamed that I even forgot about a certain somebody that got me flowers heck guy is always consuming my thoughts but I forgot about the flowers. Not fair.

"Uh..uhm..I..I..?"

"I..I...what? start spilling girl my ears are wax free and ready to hear some juicy gossip" Enhle says starting to get impatient.

"Well I met someone eish I don't know if it's the other way round because he only told me his first name. And Enhle I hate to admit it but that man is a dream..." I respond

"Wow! Thought I will never live to see this day Thandolwethu Ndlovu is blushing." \*claps hands\* "ismanga ngempela".

"What? \*touch my cheeks\* I am not blushing unamanga"

"Yeah right you can lie to everyone but not me so you said he is a dream where did you meet him when and how?"

"Yesterday morning in the taxi he told me that he has been seeing me for a while and that he wants to sent his uncles emaqcekeni akwaNdlovu..."

\*claps hands and laugh\*

"Not only is he romantic he already proposed marriage shem nigga isn't here to play"

"Yeah...thing is I was rude to him in the morning with my not interested facade that I like putting on and this guy didn't care. He met me after work and gave me the flowers I mean no guy has ever came back after; 'Thando's don't talk to me I'm not interested facade'."

I continue explaining to Enhle and she is just looking at me grinning and awning repeatedly.

\*sigh\*

"You like him don't you? As much as he likes you?" she asks me after her many sighs and awns

After a minute "I think so.."

"You think so or you really really like him?" she persist

"Okay you got me I really really like him."

"That's enough to build a relationship I think or is there any other reason you haven't said yes yet?"

"Well technically speaking he hasn't asked me out yet just made advances that he likes me and secondly he might or might not be a Taxi Driver..."

I say the last bit faster and look away.



"Wow thats a very romantic taxi driver right there please hook me up too..."

"Hey! You already have your own personal person that you don't want to tell me about but its fine." Making puppy eyes..

"You know those don't work on me anyways enough talking let's go its already late."

We take our bags and lock up the flat and off to grocery shopping we go.

11.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

After the braai I slept over because I drank a few beers. I'm a good citizen that abides by the law so I don't drink and drive. Waking up I took a shower and

then left early in the morning before the candy monsters woke up "Buhle and Nka". I wrote a note telling them that I left for an early appointment and plugged it on the fridge.

I drove back to Hatfield I live in a duplex apartment. I will only buy a house once I get married my wife will choose the kind of house she wants. Hence I still live in an apartment in Hatfield because it's closer to my office. I get to my apartment change my clothes and make some coffee to give me the strength to go through the construction papers.

Yes I am a taxi owner not a taxi driver and as I have said I have a construction company with Nhlakanipho that is what takes most of my time away from the taxi business hence I have my right hand man Shibase so it was just fate that last week I had to report to the taxi rank and

oversee the problem that occurred.

After signing all the required contracts I take a nap to rid off the exhaustion from last night before I go out to get some lunch and dinner. I can't cook so most of the time I get takeaways. Some days I eat at any of my brother's houses. So today is one of those days that I'm not in the mood to preheat cold food and eat. Sometimes I miss home just the soul food and the countryside breath of fresh air the city can be exhausting like now when I have to eat pricey food that still leaves you hungry after eating two plates.

I set an alarm for 12:30 and sleep the exhaustion away...

| | |  
"Sibu wam Unjani mfana wami?" the voice of my favorite granny says she is in a white dress with pearl's around her neck her hair in a grey Afro. The sun

directly hitting on the hair making it look like the clouds after it has just rained super dreamy.

"Gogo?" I whisper in surprise.

"Hai man you know I don't like being called Gogo I'm still young mina futhi ngizako faka impama wena" she says with a lace of laughter in her voice.

I let out a laughter "Ngiyaxolisa My Darling."

She is my father's mother she has always told us to never call her Gogo because she doesn't look a day over 40 her words not mine so we will call her My Darling because that's how her husband our grandpa called her. We got accustomed to calling her like that.

"Forget about that ngila ngoba you are wasting time wena mfanawan mele

ushate Kade sikunikile iskhathi  
sokushata. You know the consequences  
that may happen if you don't get an heir  
soon "

"Ukhuluma Ngani manje my Darling?"

"Khuluma noBafana and Makoti"

"Iskhathi mfana wami....iskhathi  
mfanawan..."

"Gogo..." I call out in haste as her voice  
starts to fade away and her image  
becomes blurry.

"GOGO!" I wake up panting and sweaty I  
look around and I'm still in my room its  
exactly five minutes past 12. I thought I  
am way past this dream but I guess it will  
never end. I have never told dad about  
the dreams of uGogo telling me that time  
is running out and I should get married.

I guess time is indeed running out

## **Sponsored**

telling me that time is running out and I should get married.

I guess time is indeed running out she even visits me during the day that has never happened before. I quickly get up from the bed and go wash my face in the bathroom. After I look for my phone and call dad he doesn't pick up I'm sure he is busy with his wife they never get tired of seeing each others faces.

It takes me to voice-mail and I leave a message "Baba its me Sibusiso we need to talk; it's kind of an emergency call me when you get this... actually I'm coming home. "

I drop the call and immediately take out my travel bag and stuff my clothes. I

change out of my sweaty clothes and wear a simple shirt with a pair of jeans and some boots. I take my coat and my keys and hurriedly lock my apartment and get to the parking lot before I change my mind about going. I get into my car and as I'm about to start the car I get a flash image of Thandowam sniffing those flowers yesterday.

I hit the steering wheel in frustration "damn how could I forget about her." I quickly take out my phone in an attempt to call her but realize that I don't even have her numbers.

"Yeah ne Sibusiso Dlamini uyistupunga yazi how could you forget to ask for her numbers?"

I reprimand myself as a slump down in my seat. Repeatedly rubbing my tempels I try to come up with an idea and decide to drive down to the CBD taxi rank I will

find Shibase there or atleast Jabu if he is not in menlyn yet. I decide to call Shibase instead.

"Boss?" he immediately answers the phone within the first two rings.

"Yeah Bafo Unjani?"

"Ngi'right bozza yam what can I do for you today?"

"Are you at the taxi rank? I mean the CBD?"

"Yes bozza zikhipani?"

"I need a favor enklek I'm on my way stay put."

I speed up till I reach Pretoria CBD and park my car behind the taxis in line. I take out a pen and paper from my pad and write ny numbers and a short



message.

"Thandowam MaNdlovu I promised to make you mine and I intend to keep my promises. I am sorry for not getting your numbers sooner but when I come back from home all shall be clear. Here are my numbers 073\*\*\*\*\* call me when you get this letter. Umyeni wakho. Sibu."

I take out my phone and call Shibase again.

\*Dring dring\*

He picks up "Yes Boss."

"I am parked behind the last Siyaya please come quickly I am in a hurry."

"Sure" he drops the call.

A minute later I hear a knock on my window and it's Shibase I unlock the door for him and signal him to get in.

"Hau Bozza whats the favor you wanted?" he asks immediately as he sits down.

"Well you remember that girl thick with dreadlocks? The one that works at Checkers Menlyn?"

"Oh you mean the quiet mamacita I think she takes the taxis everyday mos."

"Yes that one and please forbid from calling her mamacita she is mine. Please give her this when you see her on monday and call me after giving it to her. Don't even take a sneak peak I will know." I say in my bossy voice giving the letter to him.

"Okay Bozza consider your wish my command. I will keep it safe with me"

"You better or else..."

"Yes yes boss I know." He hurriedly gets out of the car and puts the letter in his pocket

"Uhambe kahle boss" he bids me Farewell and I just nod and drive away.

12.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

One thing I like about living in the city is that the shops are near so I don't have to actually go to mall's outside of town just for shopping. We live in the CBD my flat is closer to the taxis I take to work and the shopping complex Sammy Marks. So our grocery shopping is not a hustle plus we work with a budget especially for grocery and clothes because if you don't

do that you might find yourself already overboard and with no rent money. Ultimate recipe for disaster and its not my forte.

The grocery shopping didn't take long because we always curate a list of what we need and whatever is not there in the flat. We went back to the flat to put the groceries and Enhle suggested we go out for a stroll. I mean it's winter we are in the middle of June and the cold front has us by our tits and this girl wants us to go for a stroll? H for hectic I tell you did I tell you she needs help? Yep now I think its the time she got that help I ain't in the mood to go back out in the cold just for a walk.

What I need though is a hot piping cup of strong black coffee like my Kofi look alike that got me flowers; and some muffins in bed with a fleece blanket covering me while watching crime and investigation

documentaries. That is what I need right now not a stroll on the streets of Pretoria in this cold weather.

"Oh come on it will be fun" Enhle drags on

"Nope andizi its cold."

"But...but we were just outside and you didn't have a problem with it."

"Ah ah akufane nawe uyayazi that we went for groceries not a fun walk." I add on

"Please pretty please maybe this time you will get to see taxi driver bae since you were busy looking around just fifteen minutes ago when we passed the taxis"

"What? I was not looking around and I was definitely not looking around for him"

"Hhm if you say so... but please let's go out I promise to make you coffee just the way you like it.."

"Nope not enough how about you do my laundry tomorrow that sounds better right?" I say striking a deal with her if she wants to drag me out into to the cold streets then I should get something in return.

Pretends to think " okay Fine I will do your laundry now...come on."

She drags me by my hand and locks the door behind me.

"So where will our hashtag fun walk start?" I ask as we get out of our apartment complex.

" let's pass chicken licken first then we go to the state theater to watch the street performers and some window shopping."

"Okay."

I just agree because I'm getting my laundry done for free well technically it isn't for free since I'm paying for it now. We keep walking and Enhle is randomly pointing at things and people and I just tag along. As we get out of Chicken Licken and Enhle is stuffing her self with chicken wings we hear a manly voice calling out like the ones of BabKhumalo. But we keep walking since he might be calling out to any of the girls passing by.

"NKOSAZANA?"

The voice sounds closer and louder Enhle and I turn back to see whats happening.

"Thank God." the man says panting heavily and heaving. He is wearing those Brentwood pants abo BabKhumalo likes with a checked jersey and a black leather

jacket with some gold chains around his neck. He gets closer to us and says...

"Sanibonani." he greets us

"Yebo bhuti." we respond back.

He takes out a white piece of paper from his jacket pocket and hands it to me.

"Eh Nkosazana unomzane ungithumile nguwe he had an emergency infact you just missed him he was just here five minutes ago. " he says

"Ah unomzane? Nikhumluma Ngan?"

" oh I mean Sibusiso

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infact you just missed him he was just here five minutes ago. " he says

"Ah unomzane? Nikhumluma Ngan?"



" oh I mean Sibusiso I believe you have met him recently. He asked me to give you this letter and said you should call him he had an emergency and had to go to KZN."

The mere mention of his name had me feeling jittery and getting goosebumps. My heart is rapidly pumping as I take the letter from the man.

"Thank you...?"

"Shibase Nkosazana"

"Ngiyabonga Shibase"

"Okay take care" he bids us goodbye.

Enhle squeals to think she was so quiet you will swear she was not even here. This girl is something else.

"Open it...open it." she says getting impatient as if the letter is directed to her.

"Fine." I say as a I finally open the letter before she takes it away from me she is just seconds from snatching it her eyes have mischief written all over them.

"Thandowam MaNdlovu I promised to make you mine and I intend to keep my promises. I'm sorry for not getting your numbers sooner but when I come back from home all shall be clear.

Here are my numbers 073\*\*\*\*\* call me when you get this letter.

Umyeni wakho.

Sibu."

I chuckle he is a real smooth man who still writes love letters in this day and age its 2021 for God sake but I must admit its really sweet of him. I immediately take out my phone and save the numbers.

"Sooo what does it say?" Enhle asks as I put the phone away.

"Nothing in particular its just his numbers."

I respond it's not that I don't want to tell her but this letter was for my eyes alone and it shall remain so. Its my own private matter. I tuck the letter into my jean pocket.

"Come on let's go we still have some window shopping to do remember?" I say to Enhle who is still ogling at me with her mouth half opened and stuffed with chicken wings.

I drag her by her arm "Let's go and close your mouth please have some table manners."

I reprimand her.

"Oh come on it can't just be numbers only did he profess his undying love to you?" Enhle asks as we cross the traffic lights to the other side of the street The State theater and Sammy Marks.

"Nope I'm not spilling till you also spill the beans about a certain SHE."

" mmh okay fine don't tell me if you don't want." she crosses her arms and bites her lower lip like a toddler

"Okay nawe stay behind and freeze to death remember this was your idea so stop being a baby and let's go."

"Now that you mention it you should actually thank me you know if I hadn't dragged you for the walk you wouldn't have Taxi driver bae' s numbers right?" she says with a glint of mischief in her eyes.

"Well Thank you Enhle now can we go please."I beg her.

"With pleasure." she says and we keep walking till we finally reach Sammy Marks. Madam decided that we should skip right into window shopping than watching the artists at the State Theater.

13.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

After the walk we went back to the flat and cooked dinner just simple pasta and we went to bed. Well Enhle went to bed I think but I stayed up in bed all night procrastinating on calling Kofi I mean Sibusiso. I kept typing messages and canceling them over and over again. I got to admit I was a mess and I hated it. I think it would have been better if he had my numbers not vice versa.

I ended up falling asleep with a half typed  
message and I don't know how but it got  
sent to Sibusiso it read...

"Sawubona its Thando and some man  
called Shibase gave me your numbers  
dont know if they are genuine but if they  
are...."

Did I not hyperventilate when I woke up  
and saw that it went through I tried  
deleting it but I knew there is no way he  
won't find it since its a text message not  
a Whatsapp text where I can delete from  
both sides. I keep walking back and forth  
in frustration

"No no no...please!"

Agh I'm stupid I should have not fallen  
asleep and accidentally rolled on my  
phone and sent that text. How did that  
even happen?

\*why you wanna try me yeah try me...\*

Why is Enhle playing music so early in the morning? Wait music that actually sounds like my ring tone. I perk up and try to find it among the stampede my blankets made on the bed. And by the time I find it it has stopped ringing its actually the very person I have been trying to avoid well not avoid forever but till I can get my head functioning well.

It rings again before I can even regain my composure. I let it ring a few seconds more and then answer it. I put it on my ear and keep quiet.

"MaNdlovu?" he says and I just keep quiet

"MaNdlovu wami I know it's you and thank you for getting back to me even though you didn't do as instructed and to

answer your text this numbers are  
genuine it's really me."

He continues talking alone well to my  
soul cause my voice is stuck in my throat  
and I can't even seem to utter anything  
at all not even a hello.

"Thando wam..."

"Sibu my baby ..." a female voice in the  
background calls out for him and I start  
hyperventilating again and quickly drop  
the phone. I should have known he  
wasn't single.

\*grabbing my dreadlocks from both  
directions \*

"Agh typical Zulu man I should have  
known."

I say feeling frustrated and tears start  
pricking at my eyes but I don't let them



fall. He is not mine infact he was never mine to begin with

## **Sponsored**

infact he was never mine to begin with just a typical taxi driver I met on my way to work and he shall remain a stranger at the back of my brain. But why is my heart saying otherwise No I will not let him consume my thoughts like that. I was fine before he got into my life and I shall be fine even now life goes on .

Oh God his golden brown orbs and that chocolate dark skin of his God can really create but its always this fine species that he creates that are always scams and Heartbreakers its not fair; not fair at all.

"AGHHHH."

I scream into my pillow and just lay in bed to nurse my broken heart. Wait! That Shibase guy said he had an emergency

what if his wife just gave birth and he had to rush and see her and their newborn baby? I quickly sit up and rest my back on the headboard at the thought.

"Yeah I think that's is true if he doesn't call me again it means that woman in the background is definitely his wife."

I keep talking to myself I even feel like a psycho and it's because of that beautiful goddam specimen. I take my phone and stare and it I am waiting for him to call.

"He has to call he definitely has to call." I chant to myself repeatedly moving back and forth with my legs tucked under my arms.

If he doesn't call then its definitely certified that he is a married man typical babKhumalo. I should have known he was part of that clan I just got charmed

by his velvety voice and flowers.

"Wait Flowers yes those stupid yellow tulips I even put them in my favorite vase. Let me go discard them even."

I hurriedly get up from the bed and take the vase with the flowers and head to the kitchen. I stuff them in the dustbin in anger and drain the water down the drain and take a deep breath in and out and go back to my bedroom. I am definitely sleeping in tomorrow is Monday I need all the energy to face the customers and Enhle's and Karabo's million questions.

14.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

I arrived very late in KZN and the exhaustion just wanted me to sleep and not talk. My parents were already asleep

by the time I got home so I went straight to my room. We didn't see each other last night but they had knowledge about me coming. My dad called me back after finding the voice-mail I left for him so they were expecting me. Shibase called me before I even got out of the city to tell me that he found Thando just few minutes after I drove off from him. And he gave her the letter so I am patiently waiting for her call. Chances are that she might even not call because women will always be women.

Few minutes after I have gotten up and refreshed I take my phone and go to the kitchen my mom's favorite place in this house so I know that's the first place to look for her. Plus I'm hungry so that's enough reason to go there first. I stand at the door mom is busy singing her favourite song patapata by Mam Miriam Makeba we grew up listening to her records every Sunday being blasted

around the house and no one could complain not even dad. He just accepted it because that's what his wife loves so whatever Mom loves mom gets. That's how it has always been in this house.

Back to the kitchen mom is busy making soft porridge on the stove she keeps dancing a bit as she is stirring the porridge. She hasn't noticed me yet but the image in front of me is worth a thousand memories so I quickly take out my phone and snap a picture. Messages flood in and one in particular catches my attention  
MaNdlovu.

Its reads "Sawubona its Thando and some man called Shibase gave me your numbers dont know if they are genuine but if they are...."

I know it's her because she is the only Thando in my life second is that she mentioned Shibase. So I am pretty sure

it's really her.

I back out from the kitchen door and go into the family dining hall and immediately call her. It rings the first time and she doesn't pick it up. I try again because second time is always a charm. And the charm works cause she picks it up but she doesn't say anything so I talk...

"MaNdlovu?"

I call out just to be sure it's really her because Catfish people Catfish. She still doesn't say anything. I'm literally just listening to her breath and I picture her sleeping on my chest and the warm soft air from her breathe hitting my skin damn heaven I tell you.

"MaNdlovu wam I know it's you and thank you for getting back to me even though you didn't do as instructed and to

answer your text this numbers are  
genuine it's really me."

I continue talking because even though  
she might not be saying anything I know  
she is definitely listening.

"Thando wam..."

"Sibu my baby?"

My mom's voice cuts me off and I hear  
Thando's breath hitch before I can saying  
anything more; she has already dropped  
her phone. My mom rushes to me  
excitement all over her face and she  
engulfs me in tight hug worse part she is  
short so I have to bend so she can reach  
my face and give me her endless baby  
kisses. Can never get too old for those  
but used to kind of get embarrassing  
when we where in front of our friends in  
high school that time puberty was still  
hitting us hard. Imagine having to go

explain to your crush why your mom still treats you like a baby especially in front of the whole school. Not nice

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not nice at all cause my street cred got ruined because of these kisses but I love my mom regardless.

"Oh my baby unjani togo?"

She asks as she holds me at an arms length and inspecting me probably checking my body weight I have been going to the gym. The lecture that is about to follow after all the pleasantries I can't wait.

"Ngiyaphila Ma ngibuza nina."

"Mina Ngiyaphila mfanawam kodwa Sibulook at yourself why ungadle mtanam?"

The Lecture has definitely begun better



now than never.

"Hau Ma ukhuluma Ngan? Ngi'right mina"  
I say gesturing to my body and even  
turning around to give her a view from all  
angles.

"Nope I disagree your mother has to feed  
you and ngizo kuphakela umphaka  
mawuhamaba awunjele uhamaba nini?"

"Ah come on Ma I just got here but  
uyanxosha so soon." I say in a mocking  
tone.

"Hai suka angikuxoshe but I want to  
prepare a feast for you enough to last  
you a month. Talking of feasts that  
should last a month Kante ushata nini  
wena?"

Ah the marriage question I should have  
known they always go hand in hand with  
the food issue. Mom will always be mom.

Scratching the back of my head " ah well you see Ma that's the reason I came home uphi uBaba?"

I ask getting into the real issue that actually had me driving long hours to be here at this minute.

"I am here who is asking?" a deep manly voice says behind us and we quickly turn around to find Baba standing behind us.

"Baba!" I go for a handshake

"Ndodana Unjani?"

"Ngiyaphila Baba Unjani."

"Nami ngiyaphila if not for the cold weather how is it there in Gauteng?"

"Hai khona kuyabanda kodwa la ekhaya nguzono kabi compared to eGoli."

"Hm! Kuyazwakwala."

"Yebo."

"Let me get the breakfast ready so we can eat first before you get talking cause I can see from your body languages that you can't wait to talk about the so called emergency."

Mom says and heads to the kitchen to get the soft porridge. And me and dad sit down on the dining table. He sits on the head of the table as usual and I seat on his right hand side mom sits on his left hand side always. Mom sets the bowls in front of us and dish up the soft porridge and we dig in.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

After the breakfast dad took me for a stroll around the kraal while mom went back to her kitchen chores of making me fat in less than 48 hours.

"So Ndodana khuluma uthi udliwa yini?" dad asks right away without wasting any time.

"Well Baba there is something bothering me well it has been bothering me for years now and I never told you about it." I start to explain.

"What's really bothering you?" he asks

"uGogo has been visiting me in my dreams and it has been happening for a while now. Recently as in yesterday during my daytime nap she visited me and said I will get all my answers from you and uMa."

"Ukhuluma ngo Gogo wakho uMa wami?"

"Yebo Baba funny thing she still doesn't want to be called uGogo even in her afterlife."

We both laugh.

"Yep that's my mother for you forever young and a free-spirit. Kodwa mawunjele ukhala Ngan uMa kuwe?"

"She said I should get married soon and make an heir or there will be consequences and she mentioned that wena no Ma knows about everything."

"Hhmm consequences...?"

"Yebo Baba."

"Lets go into the house your mother has to be present for whatever you have to

be

told."

We walk back into the house mom is done cleaning the kitchen and she is having a cup of green tea says its what keeps her looking this young. Funny! I know I'm sure she learned the trick from her mother in law they were close. The perfect mother-daughter combo.

"Mfazi?"

"Yebo

Baba"

"Woza zikhulume umfana wakho unezindaba ezinkulu Kabi." dad says to mom and she comes and sit with us on the dining table.

"Yini..Sibu?"

My dad tells her what I told him outside before I answer her she nods her head and immediately her eyes get glossy and

she weeps. I know my mom is a drama Queen but what I don't understand is why she is crying because my grandmother wants me to get married and have an heir before there are consequences.

"Oh Mfanawam ngiyaxolisa I didn't actually believe it at first when uGogo wakho mentioned it to me I thought she was just being her playful self like always."

My mother explains with tears and mucus running down her face. As for me im just a spectator watching everything because I don't understand what is going on. Dad rubs my mom's shoulders as he comforts her

"Calm down Mfazi wami konke kuzolunga."

"When Richard? umfana wami is in danger and his bloodline too."

They keep conversing within themselves forgetting am even here and that am the subject in this whole matter.

"Eh Ma no Baba ngicela ningcasisile kakuhle cause I don't understand anything how is my bloodline in danger?"

My dad straightens up in his chair and my mom wipes her tears.

"Well a long time ago when were still growing up our father ngikhuluma ngo mkhulu wakho. He will tell us about a legend of the Dlamini's forefathers. We used to think that it was just a folktale to entertain us

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but I guess it was not."

He narrates " well the legend said that in every 50 yearsa Dlamini son with a rare



blood type is born into the family and if they fail to produce an heir before a certain age they will die and the family will be in danger and vulnerable to the dark forces."

"Hai mina I still don't understand." I say with a bit of frustration. What does the legend even mean and why am I even at the center of all this things? I wonder

"You don't need to understand what you should know is that you are that Dlamini son with a rare blood type the protector of this family and you need to get married soon so that you can have a baby..."

"But why me?..."

I ask both my parents and they just look shaken and weak.

"We don't know that nobody knows and

you have to actually get married to a girl the ancestors have chosen for you." dad continues and my head is just filled with so much to take in I feel like its even swelling.

"So how would I know if the girl is truly chosen by the ancestors and what if I'm already inlove with someone else what then?" I ask them and they also just shrug until something clicks in moms head and she actually talks.

"Well I remember your grandmother saying that you will just know when you meet her the first time. I don't know how but she said you will just know. "

I smile and finally say "Then I think I have met her already."

They perk up from their seats in suprise and clear happiness in their eyes" YOU HAVE ?" They both ask at the same time.

"Yes I have." I answer with the biggest grin on my face.

Mom even rushes to hug me and I'm glad I actually found her uMaNdlovu wami.

"Oh mtanam I'm happy for you."

My dad pats me on my back and let's out a huge breath he has been holding for while "I am proud of you son and I will hear from you when its time to call the uncles."

"Yebo Baba very soon.." I say.

Very soon indeed MaNdlovu I am coming for you I hope you are ready to be called Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

I stucked to what I said when I said I'm sleeping in the whole of Sunday. Enhle only saw me when she came to get my dirty clothes to wash it was like she knew I wanted to be alone because she didn't bother me by trying to talk to me. I managed to come out of the room later in the evening when hunger was really showing me flames I should have known that I am really the type that doesn't shy away from food. No matter how heartbroken I am I will never starve myself. I ransacked the pots and some rice with chicken stew. I dished up for myself and sat on the kitchen counter I kept humming and looking around as I ate.

"Hmm glad to see you're still alive."

Enhle's voice says in the background I turn to find her standing on the kitchen

door with her arms folded. I just look at her and continue eating my food. She slowly approaches the counter and sits down too.

"Mgani uright?" she asks me.

"Yeah."

I answer but the mere fact that she asked me if I'm alright has me remembering about the very reason my eyes are red and still sting from all the crying I did the whole day. Enhle takes out the flowers I threw away out of the dustbin and puts them on the counter.

"So do you mind explaining why these flowers which you were so happy about are doing in the dustbin instead of your room?"

The tears sting and I can't hold them in anymore especially in front of her

because basically we are each other's  
human diaries.

"He is married."

I say as I stuff another spoon of rice in  
my mouth and just chew with tears and  
mucus mixing. I don't really care right  
now I am hurt and hungry that is what  
matters at this moment.

"And how did you reach that  
conclusion?..."

"Well I accidentally sent him a text and  
he called this morning. And a woman  
called out for him in the background."

"Hhm what did the woman say exactly  
cause judging from the way you look you  
were not happy about whatever was  
heard."

"Yes I was not happy would you be happy

if another woman called someone you loved baby while on the phone with you?" I say as I bang my spoon on the kitchen counter and Enhle jolts in shock.

"Worse part is that he didn't call me again to actually clarify that maybe I heard wrong or something... but it doesn't matter anymore. He was never mine to begin with."

I let the tears flow and I sob Enhle rushes to comfort me and I cry on her chest.

"It's okay mgani he is not the only man in the world I'm sure you would meet someone in no time." she says rubbing my back.

"But I wanted him..." I continue sobbing.

"It's okay friend it will be okay but you need to pull on your big girl panties and go wash up you look disgusting and we

can watch your favourite movie Midnight Sun. How does that sound?"

"Better..." I smile through the tears.

She pushes me out of the kitchen "now go I will make hot chocolate."

I go straight to the bathroom and wash and change into a clean set of pajamas. I didn't even want to look into the mirror because I know I look ugly when I cry I'm an ugly cryer and I know it hasn't changed just because I'm old now. I get back into the lounge and sit with Enhle and we watch whatever movie she has on. It's her way of trying to make me forget about my misery I guess but my heart is still bruised to heal in seconds. I just go along with whatever movie she plays on her laptop. And we finally go to sleep around ten thirty tomorrow is Monday and I have to go to work and she has early classes.



~~~~~  
~~~~~

On my way to work my mood is still gloomy and I don't feel like talking to anyone especially on a Monday morning. I plug in my headsets as I get off the flat and walk to the taxis even MaMkhize's vetkoeks and coffee aren't on the menu today my menu persay. I reach the taxis and like always there is a queue and I join in till I get to my taxi and get in. That beautiful black devil isn't here today I guess he is still in KZN swooning over his newborn baby. Typical Zulu men they are hypocrites that think it's cool cheating on their wives when they get here in eGoli. I sit in my usual seat behind the driver and look out the window to avoid having any conversations with the passengers.

Getting to work my mood was better than last night but I wasn't in the mood to

converse in small talks. Especially with Karabo she can be a nuisance sometimes usually on Mondays because she will want to tell you all about the clubs she went to during the weekend. And how many more blessers she scored I'm talking minister of finance minister of transport minister of housing and minister of food and nutrition. Dont get me wrong sometimes I enjoy her banter but someday like today I ain't in the mood for her fairytales. So I put my poker face on and just greet no small talks today.

"Thandolwethu my love."

My God not today I beg you please not today. I turn around and just put on a tight smile.

"Yes Karabo."

She is now in front of me busy flipping her weave and checking her newly done

nails. I guess she is always like this after getting her nails done constantly checking and playing with them.

"How are you myskat I hope the weekend treated you good because I enjoyed it to the fullest I will tell you all about it at lunch neh girl. Ciao for now. "

She turns around and leaves not that I was still listening to her speakshe lost me at the part where the weekend treated me good. How I wish I was like her no real life problems just trying to catch up with the latest fashion trends and making sure I never do the same nail style twice. Now I have to pretend to be okay because a certain somebody decided to be a married man but still buy me flowers.

"Mxm..."

I carry on with my day and work on the

till until lunch time atleast. The beeping sound of the scanner keeps my head preoccupied instead of thinking a lot.

By the time my lunchtime approaches I am hungry and weak since I didn't have breakfast. My tummy is even grumbling embarrassing I look around to see if anyone heard it and thank God no one did. I help my last customer and I try to do it as quick as possible but this lady has two full trolleys agh! I wish my stomach could grumble again just to notify her of my hunger because by the look of things she is not in a hurry she went back to take what? I don't know.

\*grue...

grue\*

My stomach oh my God that woman better have the money to pay for all this because if her card decides to decline I'm so embarrassing her. The noise in the store dies down and that is very unusual

unless everyone is looking at me because of my empty stomach that is busy singing out for food. I slowly raise my head from the computer and look up\* sigh\* thank God they ain't looking at me but what are they looking at even Karabo is busy fixing her cleavage. I'm sure its definitely a male species and a good looking one at that to have Karabo fixing her non existent boobs like that. I also look towards the entrance because that's where everyone is looking at and behold the Zulu devil is standing right in the middle of the entrance. He seems like he is looking for something or maybe someone and I let out a gasp. He spots me quicker than I could even hide and he let out that drop dead gorgeous pearly white smile of his and I am taken for a minute. But thank God I remember quicker than a bolt of lightning that he is married so I put on my poker face and pretend that I didn't see him.

He walks in slow long strides to my till and everyone is moving with him Karabo though has her mouth wide open flies will definitely find a new home in there. He reach my till and...

"Nkosazana?"

He greets and it feels like the first day we met but I don't say anything but continue the woman's grocery.

"Hi..."

Karabo greets back and I don't even know how she got here so quick but fact is she is here and busy flipping her weave in all directions known to men.

"Hau sisi abakhulume nawe bakhuluma no sisi we dreadlocks."

The woman I'm helping says and all the bystanders laugh out loud. Karabo flips

her weave one last time as she gets back to her till. The people in the background start talking; "Yho vele she likes things"

"Be a eya kae o rata banna ba batho"

"Heh mihlola aboKarabo and their love for attention."

They keep talking but I tune them out and keep scanning.

"Thandowan? Nkosazana kwa Ndlovu ngiyaxolisa although I don't know for what but here is my peace offering. "

He says as he puts bag after bag of food on my till how he even got through security with these only God knows. The smell coming out of the bags has my stomach in knots and I can't hold the hunger for longer. I look at the woman I'm helping and she just let out a nod

telling me I can go. I whisper a thank you to her and quickly stand up dragging this black giant of a man along with all the food. I ain't saying no to free food not going to happen especially in this lifetime. We reach outside and I let his arm go and point my finger at him as all the anger comes out..

"YOU! WHAT DO YOU WA..."

Before I can finish my banter he has his finger on my mouth Signalling me to shut up and he shakes his head.

"Ah ah...not now you have your whole life to shout at me but for now..." he lifts the paper bags with food inside and I take them from him without another word.

"Thank you...can never say no to free food." I say in a whisper.



17.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

I left KZN at dawn before the sun could even rise. I knew that I won't be able to start the morning shift at the taxi rank so I wanted to be available for the evening one in order to talk to Thando. On Saturday I left in a hurry that I even forgot my phone charger hence I couldn't get back to her yesterday. That's the reason I want to meet her as soon as I can because knowing women from the little experience I have with them they have a tendency to reach to conclusions without all the facts. My mother did as she promised she stuffed my car's booth with containers of

food to last me a lifetime. She really wants me fat infact she is always like this with all her kids married or not she feeds us. As soon as I got into the city I called my right hand man Shibase to ask him about his whereabouts so I could head straight to him after freshening up.

\*dring dring..\*

He immediately picks up "Sure boss."

"Yebo Shibase Unjani?"

"Ngiyaphila boss wena kukhamba njani?"

"Ngi'right I am back."

"Hau that is that's good I hope your emergency got solved cause there might be another problem."

"Ukhuluma ngani manje?"

"Your girlfriend didn't look good this morning she seemed upset with the whole world"

"Thanks for telling me I will take care of it  
bye "

"Shap bossa."

We both drop the call and I keep driving. I get to my place in Hatfield and change into my grey sweatpants and sweatshirt with a brown jacket and have some coffee before leaving. I am going to eat breakfast its not Midday yet so I can still have it. I live my car this time around and haul a taxi on the street and go to menlyn. I feel it would be better if I am actually closer to Thando's workplace than at home I already told Nhlakanipho that I'm not coming to work he should only call me if it's important.

I get to menlyn and head to the food

court to grab something to eat and buy Thando lunch I don't know what she likes or what she is allergic to so I get a bit of everything from pizza KFC chicken Pie and even the simplest fried chips and fish. Women love food and I know for sure Thando is the type of woman to not starve herself even if in a bad mood. So I quickly eat my food after the waiter brings them and pay. I go through the food court collecting my orders and people are starrng at me as if they have never seen a man holding so many food packaging typical South Africans and not being able to mind their business.

I find an empty table in the food court and seat to pass time. I reply to some emails and texts from my brothers they still want to know about the girl Nkazimulo was talking about. But knowing them they just want a new topic to gossip about with their wives. You might be wondering why I never talk

about my sister well that one is a trouble maker that likes bringing her bitchy friends for me to date and she can't accept that they aren't my types. She lives in Durban and goes to university there dad didn't want her leaving the province so that's that.

Two hours pass and I finally get up and go to Checkers MaNdlovu might be having her lunch now cause it's normal lunch time for everyone. Reaching the store I go to the security to ask for permission to pass through with the food a white lie won't hurt anyone right. He is a fat man with a potbelly the size of a pregnant woman ready to pop. How did he even get hired? I'm sure if someone gets inside and steal he won't even be able to run after him because his lungs will say "no baba we were not part of the contract so andizi." I reach him and he is snoring this time of the day he definitely gets paid for just being a statue or for

abusing the uniform on him. It's also complaining about being squeezed through that pot belly I wonder if he can even breathe.

"Sawubona Baba."

I greet him and he jolts awake looking around first maybe to see if the manager saw him or something. He picks his nose\*disgusting \* and rubs his eyes and belly at the same time.

"Yes?"

"I was wondering if I could pass through with this I waive the paper bags in front of him."

Shaking his head in disagreement "No Ndodana you can't there are the rules" he points towards a white board written in red on the door.

"Even if I give you one bag?" I give him the KFC paper bag and he lick his lips in desire.

"Nanku it's just that Baba I want to suprise my wife for lunch she left home in a bad mood."

I continue my mini monologue since he is not longer talking to me but starring at the food.

"Okay fine since I know how woman are even my wife can be percified with food."

He finally grabs the KFC paper bag and dig in. Seems like you and your wife are a match made in heaven because you're percified by food too.

"Thank you."

I head into the shop and stand just

before the entrance to locate my Thando like a lion trying to locate its prey. I scan the store from right to left there is a queue on the money counter and a woman is trying to pacify her crying baby. On till one the workers are having a gossip session moving to till two the queue is super long I think they ran from till one because there is no progress. On other tills there are two or more people and one till the customer's card seems to have declined and the cashier is just chewing her gum like it was expensive and she is even chewing for the sake of the extra cents spent.

The following till after the chewing woman there is girl I think she is also a worker here judging by the uniform if not for it I would have mistaken her for those Instagram models calling themselves influencers. On the next till the kid is crying for a chocolate and her mom is



going crazy because she can't calm her down. And right next to that one

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I think she is also a worker here judging by the uniform if not for it I would have mistaken her for those Instagram models calling themselves influencers. On the next till the kid is crying for a chocolate and her mom is going crazy because she can't calm her down. And right next to that one there is a woman with two trolleys and a cashier with a mob of dreadlocks on her head. I move my eyes onto the next till but quickly remember 'dreadlocks' I focus my eyes on her and she snaps her head up possibly due to the feel of my stare and I give her my best smile.

I slowly walk towards her but in long strides she has went back to scanning the woman's products and isn't paying heed to me. I guess she is more than upset

hopefully something a slice of pizza can't fix or maybe more.

"Nkosazana?"

She still doesn't give me attention instead...

"Hi..." the girl with rainbow makeup answers as she strokes her fake hair typical slay queen behavior. I know her type my little sister and her fake friends that always tried to worm their way into mine and my brothers beds.

"Hau sisi abakhulume nawe bakhuluma no sisi we dreadlocks."

The woman with two trolleys say before I can even answer this girl she was busy pushing her non existent chest unto me and it's a shame because I have eyes for only one woman. She flips her hair one more time and click her tongue as she

goes back to her till seems she doesn't like being put in her place. The customers laugh at her and start chanting whatever nonsense to themselves. What I'm here rather is this beautiful woman in front of me and I intend to make my intentions clear. She isn't paying heed to me but I hope the aroma within this paper bags will do the ultimate trick.

"Thandowan? Nkosazana kwa Ndlovu ngiyaxolisa although I don't know for what but here is my peace offering."

I put the paper bags on the till counter she moves a bit in her seat like someone feeling uncomfortable. She has eye contact with the lady and then finally stand up. How she got up from that seat and still managed to drag me out of the store and me getting the paper bags without dropping a single one of them only God knows. Reaching outside she let my hand go and the warmth disappear

how I wish she could hold me again but I know she will rather swallow me alive than touch me let alone listen to me. She is red with anger as she points her finger at me I hate it when people do that but because it's her I will let it slide for now. She looks like a little chihuahua being locked out of the house because it peed on the couch.

"YOU! WHAT DO YOU WA..."

I put my finger on her mouth before she can finish her sentence.

"Ah ah...not now you have your whole life to shout at me but for now..." I lift up the paper bags the second reason I'm here first being her of course. She takes the bags from me and whisper a thank you better than nothing so I will take it.

I watch as she opens the bags and sniff in the aroma of the food. She closes her eyes in appreciation and I am glad I got

one thing right on my list food she is a sucker for food.

"I got a bit of everything since I didn't know what you like and your allergies."

I tell her as she stuff herself with the steak and kidney pie

"Mmmh" She tries to speak while chewing the crumbs from the pie are on her cheeks and clothes . I try to tell her by using my fingers to point out that she has something on her face but she doesn't understand. So I take out a serviet from one of the bags and wipe her face.

"Thank you I didn't realize." She smiles but it turns into a frown as something clicks in her head wish I could actually read her mind right now.

"What's going in that cute head of yours? I would like to know Nkosazana."

I ask with desperation laced in my voice but I try not to show it I am a Zulu man I can't expose my vulnerable side yet.

"What do you want for me aren't your wife and child enough for you that you have to keep running after me?"

I let out a chuckle and smirk at her I have finally found the root of the problem \*sigh\* women will always be women I tell you. She has now stopped eating and just looking at me hopefully waiting for an answer and I intend to answer her

"Okay you asked two questions to answer your first question I want you. As for the second question no they are not enough for me because they don't exist." her mouth hangs in suprise.

"Now please do answer my question what gave you the idea that I am married and

even have a child?"

She folds her arms around her chest and bites her lower lip.

" well you suddenly had an emergency in KZN and to top it off when we were on the call a woman called out for you as her baby and you didn't call me back to confirm my suspicion"

I laugh as I finally recall that mom called out for me when we were still talking on the phone. I guess she was jealous...

"It was my mother and the emergency was to talk to my parents about our future. " I say still laughing

"Don't laugh at me how else would I know it was your mom she even called you Sibu instead of your full name or Sbu. "

"Hhm! Seems you're jealous." I say mockingly

"What? No I'm not besides I don't have a reason to." she looks the other way

I softly turn her face towards me and look into her eyes they are the normal shade of dark brown but it feels like starrng into a deep pool I definitely wouldn't mind drowning in.

" I think it's time I gave you a reason then don't you think?"

Her breath hitches and I smirk we are still looking into each other's eyes and if I could I would wrap this moment in a bubble wrap and store it where no one can access it but us.

"Ho...how?" she stammer

"Well let me reintroduce myself my name



is Sibusiso Dlamini and I want to make you my wife MaNdlovu."

"I..I..."

18.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

Well let me reintroduce myself my name is Sibusiso Dlamini and I want to make you my wife MaNdlovu."

"I..I..."

I'm awestruck shocked surprised and speechless at once. This man really doesn't beat around the bush what I was expecting though was "oh Thando I like

you a lot and I would want to get to know you more do you mind going out with me?" And then he says the date time and place but No not Sibusiso Dlamini idescedent yaka Shaka Zulu.I guess he expects me to settle to being his wife without even taking me out in one date yeah neh I give up I have nothing more to say.

"I..." I try again but still nothing.

"Unga'worry I got you so what do you say MaNdlovu would you like to spent the rest of your life with me?"

He asks but the asking is not about taking me out on a date but to the fucken wedding alter. I guess it's a thing with the Dlamini's because my dad always told me about how he met mom and tried to entice and lure her into his web by constantly asking him out and professing his undying love before he proposed

marriage. Not what I'm experiencing but I guess it goes with the years we are in the twenty first century. He is busy looking at me as if he wants to eat me up instead of the food his golden brown orbs are piercing and my heart is dancing in palpation. I am charmed that I can't deny I'm already planning our wedding and the number of kids we will have seems I also want to get married to this giant black man with the smoothest shade of melanin only a girl could dream of. But I won't say Yes that easy he will have to work just a little bit more.

"I don't know you you're just a mere stranger how do you expect me to get married to you?"

"That's rich considering you are eating this stranger's food quite strange don't you think?"

I fold my arms and bite my lower lip"

Abeg you and I know it's not the same food is life." I stuff myself with a handful of chips.

"Mmh then I deserve a point don't you think? I got you food; the love of your life that is quite smooth if you ask me."

"Bu..but.."

"Shush" he repeat the gesture of putting his finger on my lips.

"Now! MaNdlovu I would like to take you out on a date so I don't have to be a stranger anymore. How about this Friday a place of your choice?"

"Wait what..?"

"You heard me I will call you." he says as he is leaving not even giving me a chance to refuse. Darn it Sibusiso Dlamini why are you doing this to me? It's not fair. I

look at my watch and it seems this man took almost all my lunch time atleast he brought food. I stand up and take my paper bags and return into the store.

\*bling\*

I check my phone and it's a message from the one and only Sibusiso Dlamini.

" have a good day will you and oh do think of me because I am thinking about you MaNdlovu wam."

Pssh yeah right he is full of himself this one and come to think of it he never told me why he didn't call me back. But I will let it slide for now since he asked me out a date I didn't even agree to but seems I will be going whether I like it or not. I tuck my phone back on my pocket without responding and keep walking. I get back to the store and halfway through the entrance Karabo is already in front of

me.

"Karabo?"

"Hmmm must be nice."

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she says as he points toward the bags in my hands and she has her nose high up in the air.

"What must be nice?" I ask trying to act nonchalant because knowing Karabo her ego is bruised because Sbu didn't give her even an ounce of attention she is here to take out her anger on non other than Thandolwethu Ndlovu.

"You know having man like that giving you attention instead of me the forever extravagant Karabo the most beautiful girl in this shop."

He points towards the door as if Sibu will

come back again and she gestures to herself as she turns around while playing with her hair as she says 'forever extravagant Karabo'. Wow didn't know it hurts not being given attention I guess her ego feeds on male attention.

"So what is exactly your point?" I fold my arms as I stand steady.

"I mean you don't deserve him seems he also saw how piggy you are and decided to bribe you with food just to sleep with you."

Oh hell no she didn't just come for my looks because two can play this game. The whole shop now has their attention on us even the manager is watching with red eyes.

"Oh really Miss Universe you are one to speak about how I look what about you with ugly ass skin that you hide under

that cheap make up of yours? And don't forget we all know you slept with the previous manager just to have this job since you don't qualify."

She gasps and so does everyone in the shop she is red with anger looking like a winter tomato the way she is so mad.

"So don't come here and lecture me about sleeping with my own man because he didn't give you his attention. I guess he smelled you from a mile away that you have STIs."

Now it's not just full blown gasps but their mouths are on the floor and they don't seem to want to pick them up. Karabo in particular is super red she seems like someone who ate red chillies and has smoke coming out of her ears. She thinks that just because I always let her get away with her sly comments I will keep quiet. Not today but forgive me God



for what I said but truth is I meant it she crossed all limits of whatever fake friendship we had going on.

"YOU? HOW COULD YOU..?"

I push past her as she is busy blabbering and the bystanders are still wearing shocked expressions on their faces. I even feel relieved that I could stand up for myself I'm just worried about getting a verbal warning.

"YOU'RE GOING TO PAY FOR THIS"

"OH! Fuck you!"

I say as I go through the back to my locker to put my food to think I was about to share with her. She will never see anything from me not even the little favors of standing in for her as she went gallivanting around the mall. Not anymore.

As I am about to go back to my till the manager calls me to his office. Hashtag Verbal warning I am saying verbal because I know that this is my first offense. Anything above that is unfair and I will know he swam in Karabo's "Strydom tunnel"

I follow him and get in behind him the Miss Universe is already seated.

"Close the door behind you will you Miss Ndlovu."

"Yes Sir."

I close the door behind me and take a sit next to Karabo she is looking straight ahead and I won't apologize even if they ask me to.

"So Miss Ndlovu and Miss Malema what seems to be the problem that had you

disturbing my customers during their shopping?"

I just look ahead too and don't answer I was not the one who started the fight so I won't be justifying anything. Karabo is also isn't saying anything and the manager has his eyes out of their sockets waiting for answers which he won't get especially from me.

"Okay since you're not willing to answer me I will just pass my verdict."

He writes something down and I don't know what is it for but we wait.

"Miss Ndlovu since this was your first offense consider this your first verbal warning. I hope whatever happened will be the last time it happened and get back to work. "

I immediately stand up before it changes

to a written warning.

"Thank you sir and rest assured it won't happen again. "

I say while opening the door and get out. I close the door behind me because I don't care about whatever verdict he passes through to Karabo. She is no longer my concern what I'm concerned about rather is my job which I still have and intend to keep. So I get back to what put food on my table and pays for my bills my job.

19.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI

To:MaNdlovu

" have a good day will you and oh do think of me because I am thinking about you MaNdlovu wam."

I press sent as I get out of the mall and

go straight to the taxis I might find one of my drivers there. Luckily I find Jabu with his taxi already full and I get in the front passenger seat.

"Sure Jabulani."

"Yes bozza unjani?"

"Ngi'right wena unjani?"

"Hai mina ngi'grand bozza yam." he says as he drives out of the mall.

"So are you going to the CBD or...?" he asks.

"No just drop me at the office I will come tomorrow at the taxi rank."

"Ah bozza yam not that I'm trying to cross my limits but what has you interested in the taxi businesses these days? you were never hands on before."

he asks while driving and trying to read my face at the same time. I won't get mad at him for not minding his business solely because I'm in a good mood.

"Love." I say with a smirk on my face.

"Ah I don't understand bozza what do you mean love?" he keeps on looking at me and the road at the same time.

"You see you won't understand until you actually meet the love of your life. But to be more clear I met my love in a taxi hence I try to be hands on just to see her."

"Okay I see but were you just a passenger when you met her or the taxi driver." he asks me again this nigga is really a curious cat.

"That you don't need to knowbut know I met her because of you're cousin's

accident if not I would have never seen her."

"Wow at least our misery has led to something good you found a girl and you actually smile I have never seen you smile." We both smile

"And it better not get out of this taxi because you will regret it." I put on my poker face to show him that I'm serious I can't have my workers disrespect me just because I let out a laugh once in their presence.

"Sure bozza I heard you loud and clear." he seems jittery and scared as he nods his head. Glad that was loud and clear.

"Good to know." I respond and look out the window.

\*Few minutes later\*

"Boss we are here." I hear Jabulani call out to me and I quickly snap out from whatever daydream I was in.

"Thank you." I get out and head into my office building Jama ka Sjadu Construction.

The receptionist isn't on the reception desk and I wonder if this has been a norm since I haven't been coming to work. The phone is ringing profusely and I decide to answer it since it seems I pay people for nothing.

"Jama ka Sjadu Construction Sibusiso speaking how can I be of assistance?"

The person on the other side of the line keeps blabbering and I don't catch on to anything being said.

"Sir please calm down and tell me how I may assist you I can't do that if I don't



know what is happening." I try to act calm but angry that I have to answer the calls around here and it seems our clients are not happy. What has Nhlakanipho been doing?

"The construction workers haven't come to the construction site and I want to know why because the building has to be up before its deadline." the man on the other side finally says and I'm disappointed in my team but I will deal with everyone after the call.

"Okay sir we were not aware but thank you for alerting us I will get back to you before the end of business day." I say trying to diffuse and take control of the situation. My family name is at stake here and I intend to get to the bottom of whatever problem we have.

"Thank you and I will wait for your call." He drops the call and I sit down and try

to calm down.

I hear the sound of heels and laughter and lift my head up from the desk. The owner of the heels halts as they spot me I stand up from the chair and tuck my hands in my pockets.

"Sir...I.. mean Mr Dlamini...I..wa..?" she stutters. I lift my arm from the pocket and check the time and it reads 13:42 exactly forty two minutes after lunch. It must be nice people seem to think they are on a paid leave.

"It's 13:42 I don't know what your watch says and I don't care. But I want all the staff in the boardroom in ten minutes." I say and leave her still standing and shaking for what I don't know but I will find out soon.

I head straight to the boardroom and try calling my brother with the way I found

things it doesn't seem like he is around. His phone rings and he doesn't pick up it leads me to a voice-mail and decides to leave him a message.

"Weh Nhlakanipho? I don't know where you are or what you're doing with who but I didn't start a circus here but a business. Call me when you get this you have a lot of explaining to do nxaa." I tuck my phone back into my pocket and continue walking.

As I pass the offices the staff pretends to be busy and serious others are even sweating. I didn't even know that it was possible especially in this cold weather. What I'm concerned about rather is why clients are having complaints when they're not even supposed to in the first place. I find the boardroom empty I sit in my chair at the head of the table and make a call to the receptionist through the telephone in the room.

"Jama ka Sjadu Construction Thembeke speaking how ma....?" I don't let her finish.

"Seems you still value your job I want everyone in here now with progress reports for all this month's project and no excuses." I say in my most scary and authoritative voice.

"Ye..Yes Sir..right away sir." she answers and I drop the call. Within a minute of dropping the call a stampede of people come rushing through the boardroom doors making noise and I hate noise especially in the office.

"If you all still value your jobs you will act like civilized adults and not preschool children. This is an office not the playground. " They all freeze at the sound of my voice and slowly recuperate as they find their seats. I wait for everyone to

settle down before I start talking again. Once they're all settled I start.

"Glad to have your attention ladies and gentlemen. Now let's start with reception why was the front desk left unattended for almost an hour?" I ask looking at no one in particular.

"Sorry sir I didn't realize my lunch was over that's why I wasn't on the desk when you came in." the lady with loud heels says I think her name is Thandeka or something I don't really care what I do care about is making sure my business stays at the top where it belongs.

"So your stomach is too big that you have to take two hours filling it up?" I ask and there are snickers and murmuring I give them one look and they keep silent.

"No sir I'm sorry Mr Dlamini sir it won't happen again." she responds with a

quiver in her voice and I let her be.

"Moving on why did I get a complaint about construction workers being absent at the Tshwane Mall building site?" there is murmuring instead of a clear answer and I hit the table in anger.

"ANSWER ME DAMMIT" they all jolt up as if they were awakened from a deep slumber.

"Mr Dlamini Sir?" a man in an oversized jacket calls out to me with his hand in the air like a grade R learner.

"Yes talk..."

"Well the construction workers contract ended last month and it wasn't renewed Sir." he says looking all nervous and tiny in that jacket of his. I squint my eyes at him shake my head and let out a chuckle.

"And who is responsible for making sure that our company contracts are up to date especially the construction workers ones?"

They look among themselves and other's cough out "HR sir."

"So what does HR have to say for themselves?" I turn my seat to face our HR manager Mondli.

"Well sir I was not aware of any contracts ending last month but I will make sure I fix it immediately sir." he answers acting brave and s\*\*t.

"It better be solved by the end of today I want those workers at the construction site tomorrow and no excuses."

"Yes Sir." Mondli answers and bows a little.

"Anyways meeting adjourned I hope this is the first and last time I have a meeting like this consider this a verbal warning to all of you." I stand up from my seat and leave them behind. They stay murmuring within themselves but I don't turn around damn hypocrites. I should have fired them for ruining my good mood but I know it will be a bad business move and as for my brother he has a QnA session waiting for him.

20.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

After work I went straight home I didn't have the time to chit chat with any of my colleagues about what happened with Karabo. I knew they were curious I could see in the way they kept stealing glances



at me thinking I won't notice. So I made sure that I'm the first person to get to my locker and clock out before they can get to me. They can ask Karabo since she has mouth diarrhea I'm sure she won't let go the opportunity to paint herself as the good girl and I the bad person.

The week went by so fast that I couldn't gather my thoughts about the date. I was a nervous wreck and I couldn't help it even Enhle saw how I drastically changed but she couldn't ask me because of all the exam preparations that were taking most of her time. She just knew that Sibusiso wasn't a married man anymore and that he asked me out. Her response was like "mahn thank God he isn't married because if he was I would have dragged him to court for a divorce so he could marry you. I didn't like how we were in such a state and you weren't even dating yet. Imagine if you're dating and he did something similar you would crush his

taxi's

windows."

And I was just there like "ah I think you're exaggerating the whole thing I just cried not trash up the apartment I ain't weak like that deary and I won't start now because of man." I said.

I also talked about my mini fight with Karabo and girl couldn't stop laughing the whole time everytime we caught a glance of each other during the week she will laugh out loud and call me "My Dragon Lady." As if I was spitting fire during that fight on Monday yeah right. Enhle thought otherwise alright she even said she was glad that whatever friendship I had with Karabo ended because she showed herself that she isn't a true friend. She is the kind of person that always want good things for herself and not others you know the type that likes seeing you in misery and she will come running trying to comfort you. And

immediately something good happens to you they get jealous and talk about how you don't deserve good things in life instead of just saying a simple "Congratulations friend I'm proud of you." It's that simple but I guess it's not part of her Vocabulary I'm also glad we aren't friends. She made sure to avoid me the whole week and I made sure to keep out of her way.

Like I said this Friday came sooner than expected one part of me wished it was still Tuesday so I can get time to prepare myself mentally and emotionally. The other part of me was super excited to a point where I was singing in the shower this morning before work. Enhle was so surprised that she came knocking on the bathroom door

"Mgani u'right?" she asked after clapping her hands in suprise.

"Yeah why...?" I asked confused as to why she would come ask me if I'm alright in the bathroom and not wait for me to come out.

"Are you sure?" she asked again.

"Yes I'm hundred percent sure that I'm fine Enhle."

"Mmm okay I thought maybe something happened last night and I had a duplicate in the shower after hearing the singing you should have seen how I ran to the mirror to see if I wasn't a bit white washed you know." she laughed after saying the part about being white washed.

I also laughed because that's just a bizarre thing to think about she is crazy this girl one more reason I say she needs help.

"And you thought all that just because I was singing in the shower?" I asked still laughing to a point where my stomach was aching.

"Yeah I mean what did you want me to think you never sing in the shower because you say life isn't like in the movies were life is worth singing in the shower." she said and that's exactly what I always preached about because life wasn't really like in the movies for me to sing about in the shower. But I guess now I might just compromise because I'm happy.

"Well yes I did say that but can't I have this moment? it might be the only moment in my life worth being compared to a movie don't you think?".

"I guess you can say that you lost a friend and gained a gorgeous man what

could a girl really want \*sigh\* so romantic." Enhle and exclusive drama are one and two.

"Since you saw that it's me singing please leave I need to get ready for work I can't be late after that stupid verbal warning." I said to her as I tried shoving her out of the bathroom.

"Okay okay I'm leaving.." she said in surrender whist still laughing. I locked the door behind her.

"...Oh and please try not to be awkward and scare my potential brother-in-law away I want to wear a 'Tomi R' original just for your wedding." she said and I just laughed because a wedding is another chapter in the book to even think about before the dating stage.

"Hai suka!" I shouted behind her and I heard her laughing somewhere around

the

apartment.

I managed to get to work on time like always even after the bathroom delay. No one could ruin my mood today even Karabo and her rainbow makeup and the dirty eye she keeps giving me. I'm happy and I shall rejoice in my happiness as the Christian saying goes "this is the day that the Lord has made and we shall be glad and rejoice in it."

I kept checking the time on my watch repeatedly through out the day I was so nervous but also impatient. I couldn't wait for it to be all over and go for my date if it was still on. Well last night when we talked he said it was still on and that I get to choose what we should do and where we should go. So I hope he doesn't bail out because I don't want to transform into Enhle's dragon lady. I already have a victim to spit my fire on and he better not give me that

opportunity especially not today. By the time lunch approached I felt like I have been working for a lifetime and the day was just moving super slow like a snail.

"Miss Ndlovu there is a delivery for you." the security says through the intercom and all the staff have their eyes bulging from their sockets looking at me and wanting to see what delivery I have. Nosy people who can't mind their business pathetic I tell you. I stand up from my seat in the locker room/staff room where I was about to have my lunch and go back to the front of the shop. I go straight to the security at the entrance since he is the one who called out for me.

"Yebo Baba you called out for me." I say once I reach him.

"Oh yes mtanam here is your delivery." he hands me white roses and a brown



paper bag written Nandos.

"Thank you..." I say as I take them from him.

"Uh did you see who brought them

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I say as I take them from him.

"Uh did you see who brought them was it the same guy who came on Monday?" I ask trying to be sure they are from Sibusiso.

"Oh you mean umyeni wakho? No Ntodakazi it wasn't him but he sent those delivery people." he says and it seems like uMr Dlamini lied to this poor man on Friday. I spot another brown paper bag of KFC next to him and it seems like I just found out how he got through the entrance with the food last time.

"Thank you baba once again." I say as I turn back to the staff/locker room.

I sniff my flowers while looking for a card I'm even surprised he got me white flowers this time instead of yellow ones like last Friday. I love the color white because it gives me a sense of peace and serenity so this white roses just gave him an extra point. For a Zulu man he sure is romantic like super romantic because I know my people oh aboBabKhumalo all they care about is the skopo saze taxi rank. I finally find the card after a lifetime of searching and it reads

"MaNdlovu wam!

I hope you have had a splendid week because it's about to end on a high note. I'm sure you're surprised at the choice of the flowers today I saw them and I got reminded of you. So here they are in your possession where they belong.

See you after work.

uSibu wakho."

I'm profusely blushing because Mr man is constantly thinking of me as I have been of him. I sit down and have my lunch in peace because no one is bothering me. After lunch I decide to call him to thank him because he deserves a thank you. He picks the call after three rings seems like he is forever next to his phone this one a girl can never get mad at him for not answering his phone.

"MaNdlovu wam unjani?" he answers and I can feel that sexy smirk of his on the phone he is cocky like that.

"Ngiyaphila Sibu wena unjani?" I say and please don't be surprised at me calling him Sibu it just happened during one of our phone calls during the week. He is a charming man and I got to admit I am charmed.

"Hau kumnandi ukuzwa ilizwi lakho MaNdlovu." he says in that sexy Zulu accent of his that gets me weak on the knees and him calling me MaNdlovu has me dripping and ready to hand him my pride and my soul on a silver platter.

"Hhm\*clears throat\* nami ngijabuleli ukuzwa ilizwi lakho Lusibalukhulu." I say and hide my face with my free hand as if he is here with me and can actually see me.

"Hau Hau MaNdlovu angibonke aboGatsheni bo ungikhomba kude kabi." he says and I feel like we are in our own little bubble.

"Ngijabuleli ukuzwa lokho asithembe ukuthi ngeke ngutxhintxe. I called to say thank you for the food and the flowers I love them." I say with the biggest smile I think I've ever had my cheeks even hurt. In fact every time we talk my cheeks hurt

from all the blushing and laughing he always makes me do.

"Hau MaNdlovu ngeke vele phela wena ukhombwe ngo' boLusibalukhulu ne nhiziyo yami. And I'm glad you love them kodwa Thando wam mawucacise phela uthanda ukuhla ngoba amablome amhlophe? I laugh at him he can act stupid when he wants to.

"Ngizithanda zonke ukuhla no amaflower Sibuyi and by the way white is my favorite color." I say.

"Mmm seems like I guessed right then I will keep that in mind. Mina ke anginayo ifavorite color because I know that is what you are about to ask me." he says chuckling.

"Ah! Ubowazelaphi ukuthi vele I was about to ask you that?"

"I just knew phela ungowami wena kumele ngiyazi imcabango yakho before you can say it out loud." he says and I chuckle too.

"Thata Mr Dlamini..." I laugh at him.

"And good bye I have to get back to work." I say after checking the time.

"Ah ah the right term is see you later good bye makes it feel like a forever thing."

"Okay ke Sibuhle see you later." I blush.

"See you later MaNdlovu." and he drops the call.

I pack up my stuff into my locker together with the flowers because there are thieves around here so I'm not taking that chance. They won't die for just being in there for two hours and get back to

work two hours will be over in no time; I hope.

21.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

"Here." he says handing his wallet to me. I take it and inspect the ID card inside. I check for his drivers license too and it all checks out I hand it back to him.

"So are you satisfied MaNdlovu that I'm not kidnapping you?" he asks after putting the wallet back.

"Not really I would only be satisfied once I see myself sleeping in my own blankets and my own apartment later." I say still with my arms folded on my chest.

"Wait let me take a picture of you and the ID card I want to sent them to my best friend incase I go missing. You know precautionary measures." I take out my phone and click a photo of him he hands me back his ID card and I click a picture of it too I sent them to Enhle and caption "in case I go missing he is the culprit."

"Now we can go." I tuck my phone back in my bag and walk past him. I stop once I see that he is still waiting at the same spot he was in.

"Oh hello Mr are you coming or not time is money." I say. He then shakes his head and let out a chuckle while walking towards me. He holds my hand like



before and we keep walking.

"You truly are a special person MaNdlovu I'm impressed not a lot of people can think of what you just did."

"Well I aim to impress Mr Dlamini Sir." I curtes

"I am surely impressed my lady."

We then fall into one of our comfortable silences after we laughed at our stupid dialogue. He unlocks a black BMW car with keys I didn't notice before. I don't know what model it is because really I don't care as long as it has four wheels and takes me from point A to point B. He opens the passenger door for me and I get in he even hands me the flowers and close the door. He rounds the car and after a few seconds he gets in onto the drivers seat. The seats are comfortable and it's super warm in the car it reminds

me of my favorite fleece blanket. He starts the car and drives out of the mall I keep stealing glances at him as he drives how the veins in his arm protude as he changes the gear and how handsome he looks whilst focused on driving that I could just lick him up like my favorite ice cream blueberry and cheesecake.

"Do you like ice cream?" I ask trying to start a conversation.

He chuckles "not reallywhy?"

"The answer should be yes or no but to answer your question I'm kind of craving it that's why I asked." I say feeling a bit shy because he has his attention on me now and because he is busy smirking. I'm sure that he is even shocked as to how I would think of ice cream in this cold weather.

"That's strange won't you feel cold

afterwards?" he asks a little worried. If I were you nigga I wouldn't be worrying about me getting a cold because for me ice cream is not a seasonal thing but a lifestyle.

"Nope I actually like it more in Winter?" I say popping the p.

"You remind me of my older brother he has a serious addiction towards ice I don't even know how it started but he can't go a day without it. His wife even banned him from the fridge and freezer." he says and let out a small chuckle as he talks about his brother it seems like they are pretty close.

"Wow that's a bit drastic I didn't know you have a brother how is it like having siblings?" I ask because one he looks like a typical first born hence I'm surprised he has a brother and two I want to know what it's like growing up with someone

else rather than your friends.

"It's actually cool because growing up if you make a mistake you can just blame it on someone else and get away with it. By the way I don't just have one brother I have three plus a sister I am the second born. What about you how was it growing up?" He asks me.

I reminisce on my childhood memories playing ball in the backyard with my father as a single parent. My first birthday my first day at school and having career days where my dad will come in his police uniform and flex his muscles and my classmates will run to him and touch him to feel if they are real. I am reminded of how lucky I am that he was the first man to get me flowers and take me on my first date that he disguised as one of our daddy-daughter days when he was free from work. I smile at the memories because he is my best

friend after being my dad the love of my life.

"Thando are you okay?" he asks probably because I got so lost in my memories that I miss home.

"Yes I'm fine sorry I just got lost in my childhood memories." I smile again and he smiles back.

"So do you mind sharing only if you wish to of course."

" My childhood was perfect although unlike you I didn't have siblings I'm the only child of my parents and I was raised by my dad my superhero. " I smile because talking about my dad always puts me in a good mood. I am mad at myself that I always just talk to him on the phone and never have the time to go visit him in Durban.

"You love your dad don't you?" he asks with a full smile this time not a smirk.

"Yes I do a lot even I would die for him if needs be. So are you also close with your dad and siblings?"

"Yes we are super skin tight especially both my dad and brothers as for my sister she is a spoiled brat that one and has a horrible taste when it comes to choosing friends." he says showing a change of mood as he talks about his sister. I think you can say disappointment was written all over his face when he talked about her.

"I'm sure it's just because she is still young and influenced by peers she might surprise you all and change as she gets older." I say to him in a state of comfort.

"I hope so because if she doesn't she might end up like her bitchy friends and

like that girl at your store with rainbow make-up." we both laugh after he makes the statement about Karabo's make-up.

"You mean the forever extravagant Karabo that's what she said to me on Monday after you left. I'm ashamed to even mention this but we actually fought." I say and facepalm myself in shame.

He chuckles and say" really MaNdlovu you don't look like a fighter so did you scratch off her make-up?"

I laugh that my stomach even hurts "well you can say that I even mobbed the floor with her weave you should have seen me I was on fire." I continue laughing as he joins me. We only got to calm down after a few minutes.

"Jokes aside it wasn't a physical fight but a verbal one so no I did not scratch off

her make-up nor mob the floor with her weave ." I say acting all serious and matured.

"So vele what let to the fight?" he asks he likes news this one.

"You." I give a curt answer

" hau hau MaNdlovu njani ngiyenzi mina?" he asks astonished that he even puts his hand on his chest.

"LOL you showed interest in me not her so her ego kind of got bruised because it feeds on male attention." I say without an ounce of regret nor feeling sorry for her.

"Hhm I see. " he steal a glance at me and I keep looking ahead.

Its now that I see we already in Hatfield didn't even realize we talked for that long



to not even see what is happening outside. I'm still in my work clothes so there is no way I'm going on my first date with a gorgeous man like this in my uniform not happening I need to change.

"Can I change my clothes before the actual date please. " I ask him.

"Sure where do you live?" he asks me probably to know which route to take.

"Ah I stay in Arcadia just after the TUT campus you know via church street. " I tell him as we make it through Hatfield.

"Okay sure you will just direct me when we're close."

" Sure. So like I have a question." I turn in my seat to face him so I could actually get a good look at him.

"Ask away MaNdlovu this is safe space to

ask about anything you want." he gives me the go ahead I even stretch my neck and arms to give him a feel of the seriousness of the question but just to add humor.

"LOL should I be scared that you will thrash me if I get the answers wrong?" he asks after letting out a chuckle.

I smile "well maybe..." we look at each a bit longer but I eventually look away and signal with my head that he should focus on the road.

"So my question is why didn't we take a taxi but this car? Did you borrow it to impress me?" I ask while busy tapping my foot on the ground it helps me to not overthink like I did when he went to KZN.

He chuckles then give me one look and look away.

"So...what is your answer?" I ask now feeling nervous that maybe I crossed the safe space he just created between us.

"As I said you shouldn't be scared to ask questions same way I should feel free answering them..." I look at him waiting for him to continue.

"The truth is I have a taxi well actually taxis but I'm not a taxi driver. Secondly I didn't borrow this car to impress you its my own car that I use to and from work." he says and funny enough I'm not mad about him hiding the truth from me that he isn't a taxi driver. I just assumed since I met him driving a taxi that he is a taxi driver I guess it kinds of explain why I've never seen him before that day we met.

"So if you're not a taxi driver as you said what kind of work do you do?" I ask him because I'm trying to get to know the kind of person he is.

"Well I own a construction company with my brother not the ice one but my younger brother who is a twin. " he explains

"Oh please turn right on the next street." I direct him as we approach my place.

"That's super cool so your the ultimate boss in all your fields. Uyi bozza Yama bozza" I mimick the way he talks and lift my shoulders to create an image of broad shoulders. He let's out a laugh and its the most beautiful I've ever heard from a man excluding my dad. He is the kind that laughs with their whole body its actually cute.

"You have a nice laughter you should laugh more." I say as I'm still admiring him and he stops laughing and acts serious like he wasn't showing me all his canines and molars a while ago.

"You have moods like a pregnant woman are you sure you aren't pregnant?" I taunt him while looking him with a side eye I notice he let out a small smile you wouldn't see it if you weren't looking. He still doesn't say anything and we reach my place and ask him to stop and park on the side of the road. I get out of the car and take my flowers and bag.

"Are you sure you will be fine out here?" I ask him the second time since he parked the car. He pretend like he is thinking and finally take his matching suit jacket from the back seat.

"Alright then I will come along since you insisted." he says as he gets out and locks the car.

We walk towards my apartment complex gate and the security has his eyes out in surprise like he has never seen a man

and woman walking together and holding hands. We reach the gate and I greet Mr Man is just observing.

"Sanibonani."

"Yebo Thando Unjani?" the security guard greets back.

"Thando?.." Sibu asks surprise and confusion written on his face guess he does know how to speak when he wants to.

"Yes Sibu everyone actually calls me that here they feel my name is long." I explain but I can see from his face he isn't satisfied. Is he perhaps jealous? I don't know. I take my attention back to the security guard and ask for the visitors registrar and sign this man with a sour face on. If looks could kill the poor security man would have been six feet deep by now.

"Sign here please." I say handing him the pen to sign he takes it with his eyes still staring at the security guard and only looks away from him as he signs.

"Come on." I take his hand and drag him before he hauls threats on the poor guy to stop calling me Thando.

"See you around Thando." the security guard calls behind us Sibu turns back and gives him a stinking eye. I don't know if he noticed because he is smiling but he definitely has a death wish. I just wave my hand at him to signal a goodbye.

We reach my floor still holding hands and in silence. I unlock my apartment and he gets in I follow right behind him and lock the door. It's a practiced norm for us in this flat to always lock the door behind us you can never know when a perpetrator is just around the corner. After locking I

turn around and find him still standing and looking around the flat after his mini inspection he turns his attention back to me.

"So THANDO...nice place you have here." he puts emphasis on Thando.

"Thank you." I say as I head to the kitchen to take out my favorite vase and fill it with water to put the roses. The same vase I discarded those yellow tulips from. He is right on my heels and sits on the kitchen counter when we get into the kitchen.

"Can I get you anything to drink coffee maybe?" I ask him trying to lift off the heavy air around us his mood has been off since meeting the security guard.

"Water is fine." he says looking around the kitchen and inspecting me from head to toe. I can feel his heavy stare on my



back as I fill a glass with water for him. I turn around and he is still looking at me more like observing me.

"Here is your water." I say handing him the glass of water he covers my small hand with the glass in his big and manly one. Tingles run through my hand and arm I feel warm and fuzzy inside as our eyes lock in a trance.

"So Thandowam why am I feeling the way I'm feeling after hearing that cheapskate calling you Thando?" He asks still maintaining eye contact my breathing hitches and my throat feels dry like the Kalahari desert.

"I don't know.." it comes out as a whisper. He still hasn't let my hand go and we are still in a trance.

"I think I know..." he responds

"You do?" I ask

"Yes I do..." he says whilst now brushing his thumb on my hand.

"I think ukuba ngiyakuthanda MaNdlovu wam and when that man called you Thando it felt like I might lose you before I make you mine officially." My breathing is now hitch hiking like I'm climbing mountain Everest not that I have but you get my point. This man is professing his love to me Thandolwethu Ndlovu hai claps hands mihlola mgani I'm telling you.

"So MaNdlovu what I'm saying is ngicela ube intombi yam for now because I intend to marry you." he says then smirks Holy God that sexy smirk will be the death of me I tell you.

"Yebo.." I drop my eyes to our joint hands and break the eye contact. I feel

his fingers under my chin as he lifts my face to look into his eyes again. My heart is pumping Danone and the butterflies in my belly are having a blast dancing to their heart's content.

"Yebo yini MaNdlovu?" he smirks again

"Yebo ngingathanda ukuba intombi yakho and possibly your Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini." I say with a smile without shying away from him this time.

"Ngempela MaNdlovu?" he asks standing up and coming to my side.

"Yebo ngempela Dlamini." I let out giggles as he cups my face with both his hands and kiss me on my forehead. He gives me the tightest hug as if scared that I will run away.

"And oh refrain from feeling jealous when people call me Thando because ndingu

Thando wakho wedwa Lusibalukhulu." he hugs me even tighter.

"Yebo unguThando wam kodwa I will never stop being jealous of you you're mine now and me yours. I think its also time you added wam to Sibú when you call me." he says and we both laugh.

"Kulungile Sibú wam." I say just to stroke his ego.

"Yeah kuyazwakala manje ukuthi ngibizwa ngintombi yam not just a random person." he let's go from the hug but he is still holding my hands.

"So Sibú wam can I go change now? We still have a date to go to remember?" I remind him and he slumps back into his seat.

"Oh come on can't we stay in?I want to cuddle you." he says like those children

constantly crying for toys and sweets in  
the store.

"Nope not happening you asked me on a  
date and we are going on a date today  
itself. So stay put I'm coming back." I say  
heading to my bedroom I hear him  
grumbling in the back but I don't bother  
turning back. I have a date to prepare for  
with my now official man.



22.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

I refreshed and within plus minus thirty minutes I was done I had on black skinny high waist jeans black poloneck black ankle high heel boots and a white knee length fur coat. I kept my dreadlocks loose and wore a white beany on top. I

got back to the kitchen and Sibu was still in the same position I left him but with his phone in hand to keep him preoccupied.

"I hope I wasn't long?" I say as I approach him. He gets up from where he was sitting and meets me halfway. He is inspecting me to a point that I feel self conscious.

"I'm... am I looking okay?" I ask also looking down at my outfit. He takes ahold of both my hands

"You look perfect Thandolwam." he says brushing my cheeks with his thumb and the fireworks start.

"Ngiyabonga." I thank him in a shy low and soft tone.

"Come on let's go." he holds my hand and we move in sync with him in front



and I at the back. He unlocks and lock the door behind us. I'm admiring his back muscles through the jacket as we walk down the stairs. As we pass the security at the gate he pulls me closer to him in a way that he has his arm around my waist. He gives the poor security guy a stinking eye and the security guy just smiles at us. I smile back to avoid making the situation look awkward. I pinch him as we approach the car

"Ouch what was that for?" he asks rubbing on the spot I pinched.

"For being rude the poor guy was even smiling you just had to give him a death stare." I reprimand him.

"Well in my opinion MaNdlovu I wasn't rude I was just marking my territory. He shouldn't be smiling at what doesn't belong to him nxaa" heh claps hands I'm in love with possessive man. I've never

met someone so possessive mahn especially in just an hour of dating.

"Hhmm so you're jealous?" I ask in a mock tone.

"No I'm not jealous I'm just making sure in a more practical way that no other man takes what I like No actually Love. Besides look at me and look at him he can't compete where he can't compare." did I not say he is a cocky man well yes I repeat he is way worse than I imagined and his ego the size of his large gigantic frame.

"Okay Mr can't compete where you don't compare." I say as he opens the passenger door for me. He winks at me and goes to his side I blush while stealing glances at him until he is inside the car.

"So where to Thandolwam? Remember you get to choose the venue." he says as

buckles up and I have tons of ideas in my head plus I've always had an idea for my first date. Don't ask how when I've been single almost my whole life the thing is when you're single you have a lot of time to think about this things and a girl is allowed to dream right.

"Spin city" I say in excitement even jumping a little on my seat.

"Are you sure?" he looks at me in amusement as he asks me.

"Yes I'm sure you said I get to choose and this is my choice. Pretty please." I put my hands together asking and do my puppy eyes that can't even work on Enhle but I hope they work on him. He let's out a a groan and I know I got him.

"Okay fine your wish is my command."  
He says.

"Yey spin city here we come." I lift my hands in the air in excitement as he starts the car and off we go to spin city. I'm a fanatic for spinning cars and the smell of burning tires while they are screeching and the smoke oh heaven I tell you.

After the spin city he took me to a local shisanyama for dinner I'm talking about soul food that actually fills you up and still feel like stuffing yourself more till you suffer from a bloated stomach and indigestion. Not those expensive places where a plate cost R200 and there is something that looks like a piece of meat and some sauce around the plate with no purpose and that grass. Oh help me Lord but greens aren't part of my diet never have been no wonder I have a problem with losing my belly fat. The meat did I mention it well I'm mentioning it again worst part is that it's never fully cooked they even have a fancy term for it

Medium rare steak. Yep that is exactly what its called so miss me with that bullshit of eating raw meat there is a reason behind human revolution Australopithecus ramidus to Homo sapiens. Fire was introduced in the Homo erectus era to cook food so they can be soft to chew and not lose our teeth whilst biting into the meat. I

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so they can be soft to chew and not lose our teeth whilst biting into the meat. I Thandolwethu Ndlovu personally speaking I'm still too young to live with missing front teeth.

I had ordered a bowl of WELL COOKED BEEF STEW with dumplings pay heed to my emphasis on well cooked I don't play when it comes to my teeth. My man yes mine ordered steak and a well cooked one at that with chips some pumpkin and cream spinach on the side. His belly his

choice I guess same applies to me as we were waiting for the food he kept playing with my hair. Note I'm the part of the 'Don't touch my hair movement' by Solange but I guess he can be an exception.

"So MaNdlovu wam..." he starts as he rolls one dreadlock around his finger.

"Yes." I answer as I lean in closer to him.

"I never took you as the type to like spinning cars what led to it? You were screaming my ear off out there." he says as he is still rolling the dreadlock on his finger.

"I first saw it on TV and actually guilt tripped my dad into taking me to one I was just 17 then so you imagine how he looked at me like I bumped my head and even insisted on taking me to the doctor for a scan." I smiled at the memory I was

always a fast learner that thought on her feet I'm my Father's daughter after all.

"So in other words you are a sneaky little demoness that can get even me to do what you want. " he says with a smirk.

"I am your demoness aren't I Mr Dlamini?" we stare into each other's eyes and have a silent conversation he smirks and I smile.

"Hhhmm" someone clears their throat we don't look up instead we keep talking with our eyes.

"Your order m'auti le sistas." We look up and find the waiter standing with our food. We sit up straight from the table and let him put our food down.

"Thank you." I say with a big smile it's food so I have to be in a good mood for the love of my life. I wash my hands and

dig in.

"Mmmh..." I moan with my eyes closed. Jesus this is by far the most delicious beef stew and dumpling combo I've ever tasted. Delicious!

"Hhhmm" Sibü clears his throat and I open my eyes to find him starring at me instead of eating.

"What?" I ask with a handful of food in my hand.

"Don't do that..."

"That what?" I ask again

"The thing you uhm...just did with your uhm... eyes closed. You know the uhm..sound." he tells me.

"Ooh sorry..." I put my other hand on my mouth. "I didn't uhm realize." I



apologize.

"No need to apologize MaNdlovu you can do it but when its only us these little boys were already starring with hungry eyes." he says pointing towards a group of guys at our far right from my observation they weren't even looking here but what do I know.

"I couldn't help it this stew is delicious and when it meets the dumplings my taste buds experience an explosion of flavors that are just out of this world." I say and then stuff myself with another mouthful of stew and dumpling. He is still starring at me with his sexy eyes I playfully let out another moan just to see his reaction and he shifts in his chair as if the chair is uncomfortable like those benches in TUT. These time I'm the one who smirks.

"Are you okay babe? Is the chair

uncomfortable?... should I call that waiter and complain?" I ask holding in my laughter. He clears his throat again.

"No its fine let's eat there is one more thing left before we call it a night. And I intend to make it memorable. " he tells me looking all serious and eager as he digs into his food. I continue eating mine too and even move to his plate sharing is caring so don't look at me like that.

23.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

After dinner he paid the bill and I contributed the tip good food deserves good rewards too. Action-reaction force you know Newtons third law of motion.

He held my hand all the way to the car we were also lucky that the wheels were still intact because trust me Soshanguve is a jungle. You might find your car on top of bricks especially if you aren't friendly to the locals I don't know why they didn't do the same to him because this man doesn't play with showing off his teeth. I've noticed him through out the day how he goes into inkabi(hitman) mode especially when we pass people on the way I always have to salvage the situation with a smile here and there. At the spin city he was even worse he walked with my hand in his had a leather jacket on that he retrieved from his car boot and those military boots. Had a straight face on that made people move out of his way without even a single word He is the perfect example when we talk of Shaka Zulu's descendents. His name is Sibusiso Dlamini My taxi driver lover.

As we are driving back to town he keeps

stealing glances at me and then letting out chuckles. I don't know what is happening in that big head of his but I intend to find out sooner or later. I'm surprised I don't feel tired yet it's probably the adrenaline rush from officially agreeing to date a very gorgeous cocky egoistic man to going on our first date of my choice and having the perfect dinner all in one day; pure bliss I tell you. Plus I'm yet to find out the little something something that he wants to do before we part ways tonight.

"So did you enjoy yourself Thandolwam." he finally asks me after constantly stealing glances at me this whole time.

"Yes it was perfect thank you for taking me out Sibuh." I answer with a big smile on my face.

"I'm glad because I like seeing you happy not like the first day we met." he says

and then chuckles.

I cover my face within my palms "oh shut up!"

"Should I?" he asks mocking me I lift one finger and look at him through the opening between my fingers. He has a huge smirk on his face shows he likes taunting me on purpose.

"Yes please I kind of feel bad a bit." I say with my face still on my hands ashamed to look at him in the eye.

"So why were you rude to me MaNdlovu?" he asks; he is really enjoying this.

"I wasn'tI..I was...I.." I stutter failing to provide the right way to put it. I lift my hands off my face and look out of the window.

"Hmmm you were what then Nkosazana?" he asks I can't depict the tone in his voice and I don't know what to think at this moment so I blurt out the first thing that comes to mind.

"It was a defense mechanism." I quickly say and look ahead.

"Okay." he curtly says.

"Okay?" I ask in disbelief because he taunted me for an answer and now his ultimate response is just "Okay" unbelievable.

"Yes its okay MaNdlovu I understand." he glances at me for a second and concentrate back on driving. I'm busy cracking my skull trying to find an answer that is not there it seems I still have a long way to fully figure him out.

| | |  
We finally reach my apartment after a

while of comfortable silence with the radio playing in the background on the low. It dawns on me as he parks the car that the night is almost over it has been a long day. He gets out of the car first and then comes around to my side to open for me. He lends me his hand and I get out with his help he locks the car and we walk hand in hand with each other without a word. Our body heat gets shared evenly between us that I just feel warm and fuzzy for just being next to him I'm sure when he leaves my hand I will feel cold like I'm in the north pole.

We get to my flat and he takes out my keys from his jacket and unlocks the door I didn't even realize he still had them with him. The lights are off meaning Enhle hasn't come home yet if she was home the whole place will be lit she is scared of the dark. Hence I know she isn't around I run my hand on the wall till I feel the socket and switch on the lights.

Sibusiso closes the door and locks it like I did in the afternoon. Turning away from the door he walks towards me in slow calculated steps mind you I'm still standing by the wall the room gets smaller and fuzzy as he gets close. He lifts one arm and put it on the wall behind me and the other he pulls me closer to him until there is no space for me to move in between. My breathing hitches at the contact I can feel his breath hitting me a bit above my forehead since he is taller and goosebumps just erupt as he moves his nose along the side of my face. He is so warm that I want nothing more than to cuddle with him right now but I guess he has a better idea.

"Would you like some coffee?" I blurt out because I don't know what else to say he has been so quiet and he is so close to me like we are glued on together by gorilla glue. He doesn't even seem to pay heed to my words.



He finally reaches the side of my neck just below my ear and just breathe while he rubs his nose on the spot. I close my eyes to soak in the moment as I also wrap my hands around him. He squeezes me tighter and I feel warmer no actually I'm feeling hot the temperature feels like a 1000°C Blast furnace vibes. He kisses and sucks on the same spot the neck area and I let out a moan. He lifts his face from my neck and moves along to my jawline my heart is pumping rapidly as he leaves a kiss here and there but never on my lips. I hate it here because he is torturing me and its not fair can he kiss me already God!. My eyes are still closed because I need to salvage the moment I feel his breath directly on my face and I gulp down saliva to wet my throat. It feels dry as if I've never tasted a drop of water in my life

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I feel his breath directly on my face and I gulp down saliva to wet my throat. It feels dry as if I've never tasted a drop of water in my life he kisses me on the side of my mouth and my breath hitches again. I'm like yes finally I'm getting kissed tonight but nothing happens I open my eyes and find him starring at me with a huge smirk on his face. We stare into each other's eyes I have many questions running through my mind but he looks like he is just inspecting my face and the expressions I make.

"Wha..what was that?" I ask him as I gulp down and he is still just smirking at me.

"What was what Thandolwam?" he answers my question with another question.

"You know what...the thing you just did to me. " I say trying to be a bit cheeky.

"What did I exactly do to you MaNdlovu?" he says acting like he has no actual idea of what I'm talking about.

"You stopped you were about to...you know what." I say feeling shy and he isn't helping the situation with his nonchalant behavior.

"No I don't please explain it to me MaNdlovu." he brings his face closer to the side of my face and speak into my ear. He is frustrating me right now because clearly he is playing with my emotions.

"Agh you...you're impossible." I punch his chest with my little girly fists. And he let out a full blown laugh the ones I rarely get to hear and I'm just starring at him in disbelief.

"I'm sorry MaNdlovu but this is payback

for what you did at the Shisanyama." he says and moves away from me taking his body heat along.

"What? What did I do?" I stomp my feet on the ground and fold my arms like a stubborn two year old. He folds his arms too and we do a starring competition.

"That doesn't scare me MaNdlovu but remember this moment everytime you do that to me in public." he says still starring into my eyes.

"Bu..but I didn't do anything Sibu." I also remain adamant he wants to be stubborn so let it be two can play this game.

"Alright." he says

"Alright." I follow suite he unfold his arms and gives me a kiss on my cheek and heads to the door.

"Bu..but that isn't fair." I say out to him as he unlocks the door.

"All isn't fair in love and war Thandolwam." I just stare at him as he opens the door and gets out.

" Oh and please lock the door will you I want my wife in one piece when I come to see her tomorrow." he closes the door behind him and I'm left awestruck I can't believe he denied me a kiss just because I moaned in public. It's not fair I quickly lock the door and head back to my room to call Enhle I hope she is safe we haven't talked since morning. It rings and she doesn't pick up I call again and she picks up after the second ring.

"Weh Mfazi ukuphi?" I ask before she can even talk. She let's out a chuckle

"Ngi'sfubeni mfaziwhy are you calling me late aren't you supposed to be sleeping

on a broad chest right now?" she asks me and this time I'm the one who chuckles.

"Hai mfazi its still early and besides he just left." I tell her.

"Hau mfazi in love there is no its still early or too late. Look at me already cuddled up with my boo thang and it hasn't even been a month." she tells me but it's all about the kind of person you are. On my side I'm shy but when I'm in the moment I become someone else especially when I'm with Sibuhle but I guess we will go with the flow no rush.

"I hear you besides I'm mad at him."  
Enhle laughs

"Hau Thando so soon I thought maybe you would wait atleast a week to be mad at him."

"Well he denied me our first date kiss

because I moaned in public" I say and Enhle is dying with laughter on the other end whilst I'm mad on my side agh damn you Sibusiso Dlamini.

"Let me guess you were eating?" dammit she knows me.

"Yeah" I answer in shame because I know it's true.

"I always told you to stop your habit look now you were left hanging hot and bothered." she tells me but I can't help it it just happens naturally when I eat good food.

"I couldn't help it." I say in my own defense.

"Babe come back to bed.." a daunting voice says in the background.

"Oh and that's my queue got to go" Enhle

says

"Okay bye and please be safe." I bid her good bye

"Yes mom I will and bye." she drops the call and I'm engulfed by the silence of my room. I pat my pillow.

"Guess it's just you and me buddy." I play some classic music on my Bluetooth speaker and doze off.

24.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.



" Oh and please lock the door will you I want my wife in one piece when I come to see her tomorrow." I tell her as I close the door behind me I wait a moment till I hear the door make a click sound making sure she locked. I can't have her sleeping with the door unlocked especially tonight since she is alone. Once I'm sure she locked I leave her apartment complex and head straight to my car. That little security guard who was busy giving my girl I like you eyes isn't here there is another one. They probably work according to shifts and it's a good thing in a way she doesn't get to see Thandolwam a lot. He was busy calling my girlfriend's name like their best friends busy with "Nyando Nyando nyi" Hi on whose woman? Ungazo dlala la mxm fucken shit.

I get in my car and drive away listening to the radio. It's late at night so the music playing is love songs I'm talking

classics from Celine Dion Mary J Blige those niggas that call themselves boys II men and many more artists with their different versions of love. I think back to Thando's face when I was teasing her she looked like she wanted to kiss me so bad. Heck I wanted to kiss her too but I had to get my payback one way or the other she might be mad at me now but I will make up for it. I love it when she gets her food orgasms but it shouldn't be in public especially in a space of hungry sex deprived men that are forever drunk. Who knows what they could attempt to do to her in their drunken state.

Getting to my apartment I'm exhausted and sleepy I just take off my clothes and lay in bed with only my boxers on. I sent a text message to MaNdlovu if she isn't sleeping yet she might see it but if she is she will wake up to it .

"Ulale kahle MaNdlovu wam I hope to find

you in one piece tomorrow." I click send.

I finally fall asleep thinking of Thando and her cute eyes her chubby cheeks that I like rubbing mine against and the feel of her skin in my hands. It always feels smooth and soft like it's been lotioned and soaked in cocoa butter and coconut milk. Her laughter is the best when she giggles like I tickled her and she laughs out clutching to her stomach my heart always flutters in joy that she is actually mine now.

Like Thandolwam is mine to keep cherish and to hold all the days of my life and I intend to keep her happy she is a rare gem worth being cherished. I've told my parents that I think I met the one but I never said her name my mom even threatened me with the table cloth but I never spit but I think now that we're official I might actually make the long awaited call.

"Sibu wam?" my granny calls out to me this time when I open my eyes we are in the Dlamini's homestead next to the kraal. I'm surprised because when we grew up we learned that women never go near or into the kraal.

"Hau My Darling kwenzakalani? Why are you next to the kraal?" I ask as I approach her she is looking ahead towards something or someone in the kraal and not me. From a distance I can see a silhouette figure in black clothes and animal skin on its shoulders.

"Woza man ngiyakubiza uyeke ukubuza imibuzo eminingi." she reprimands me as she takes hold of my hand they are a bit rough probably because of old age "don't tell her I said she is old" but they have a motherly feel to it. I stand next to her and look forward too towards the cattle in the kraal and the silhouette that is now

clear and close in my eyes. It's my grandfather uDlamini umkhulu he still has his full beard but it has gotten grey with age with a receding hairline in place. Whenever we used to look at the family photos and saw pictures of Umkhulu when he was my age I always felt like I'm starring in the mirror and now it feels like dejavu looking at my older self except it isn't me but my grandfather. He comes to us but still remain on the other side of the kraal his eyes are exactly like mine golden brown and piercing. My grandmother is already blushing just by being in close proximity with him.

"Mkami" he refers to uGogo and winks granny's cheeks are even beetroot red from all the blushing if that is even possible. I also now know where I get my charm from heck I didn't even know it was possible to actually look like someone and act like them too nature is crazy.

"Mfana wam unjani?" he asks me after flirting with his wife for a second I felt like an intruder.

"Ngiyaphila mkhulu unjani?" I respond.

"Hai uyampona ngisale fresh My Darling is still taking good care of me even in the afterlife." he says again with another wink to ugogo and she blushes again.

"Hai mahn tell the child what you called him for and leave me alone." my granny says after she giggles didn't even know she can do that the power of the Dlamini men fear it.

"Yebo Mkami." she agrees with granny and then start looking serious. He turns his full attention to me.

"Do you know why igama lakho ubizwa uSibusiso?" he asks me.

"Ah because it was the name I was given at birth..." I say not sure what is the right answer to the question. I mean I'm called Sibusiso because my parents named me that name same way you are named Thabo and you grow up being called Thabo.

"Yes that is another way of putting it but the main reason is because you are a gift of our ancestors and forefathers. You're existence alone is proof of God and our forefathers never-ending blessings. You are a blessing iSibusiso kuthina abo Lusibalukhulu." he explains and my head is swelling I mean I'm not the first born why is this all on me.

"Ah mkhulu ngiyakuzwa mauthi ngiSibusiso nguwe and the entire family and clan. Kodwa what I don't understand is how was Themba not the chosen one since his the first born or abantwana ba

babMkhulu Solomon?" I ask still confused first my dad is not the oldest son from my grandparents and I'm also not the first born of my parents. How come I'm the chosen one.

"Lokho imsebenzi yama Dlozi akwa Dlamini and can't be questioned." he says but it still doesn't answer my question in any way.

"And being the chosen one the ancestors will bless you with your better half. I believe you have met her haven't you?" they both look at me and I blush and look down.

"Ungabe namahloni mfana wam it was time you met her and we already know what will happen in your life beforehand." my grandmother says.

"And umnakekele asifune ukubona akhala ngenca yakho..I believe you have seen



that she is calm but fiesty she only attacks back when provoked." my grandfather adds on I'm glad they know about Thando and one thing for sure I know she is the one.

"Oh and I'm sure you have seen she is almost like you stubborn and hot-headed. Don't expect her to be a 'Yes Sir No Sir' wife." my grandmother says and I know I've already seen her and she is absolutely perfect in my eyes.

"Yebo and vele I don't expect her to actually agree with everything I say our relationship should be a partnership where we build each other from the ground up." I say to both of them and they nod in pride. My grandmother takes off her pearl necklace and hands it to me.

"Here give this to her on your wedding day it's a sign that she is the chosen one." my grandmother says and it clicks

that my grandfather is just like me in all aspects he was also the chosen one.

"That means you two are..."

"Yes." They say in unison before I can finish my sentence and we laugh. After seconds of laughing I realize now that I'm laughing alone.

My grandparents aren't nowhere in sight and the kraal has disappeared. I'm back in my apartment in my own bed They say in unison before I can finish my sentence and we laugh. After seconds of laughing I realize now that I'm laughing alone.

My grandparents aren't nowhere in sight and the kraal has disappeared. I'm back in my apartment in my own bed the time reads 01:30 on my clock it's crazy cause the dream felt real even the necklace seemed real. I lie back in my bed but I feel something cold next to my pillow I

use my hand to get a feel of what it is in the dark and come out with something like a string of beads. I switch on my side lamp and find out its actually a string of beads alright but on clear view it's my grandmother's pearl necklace. I chuckle to myself at how surreal everything feels I feel creeped out to be honest so I just tuck it back under my pillow and sleep. I will deal with everything tomorrow when my head is all clear and not foggy.

| | |

Waking up on Saturday morning the sun rays were already seeping through my apartment window. One thing about winter is that you will sleep in just because it's dark outside but the clock will be narrating a different story. I woke up at about past eight and it was still cold the sunlight in my apartment didn't even do justice to the cold weather. I got up and went to freshen up and changed into warm black tracksuits coming back into the bedroom I made the bed and I was

fluffing out my pillows when something fell. I knelt down and retrieved it from under the bed it was a white pearl necklace. One glance at it everything came flooding my head at once my grandparents being the chosen one and Thandolwam.

"The dream." I said to myself

"Bu...but how did this get here?" I asked myself confused about the necklace because one thing for sure it belongs to my grandmother and she did give it to me but in the dream not live.

"This is some serious voodoo shit I tell you.." I kept talking to myself looking around my apartment for any open windows or a a break in and there was nothing. I sat down back down on my bed and tried to put the pieces together. My grandmother gave me the necklace and then we laughed about something after

that they just disappeared. I think I woke up at one time after the dream but my mind is kind of foggy and blurred with no clear image of how this necklace got on my bed. I put the necklace in my safe and left my apartment the only thing I wanted was to see Thandolwam.

I'm now parked outside her apartment I bought some McDonald's on the way here and I hope her roommate isn't back yet because I want to cuddle with my woman without any third-party involved. I get out of the car and go inside the security at the gate is the "Nyando Nyi" one but I won't let him ruin my mood. I greet him in a subtle manner and sign in I leave to Thandolwam's flat without a thank you just my deadly stare. I know if I said something and tried to threaten him to stay away from Thandolwam she will eventually find out and be upset with me. So I'm letting him off the hook not that I want to but because I'm compelled to.

I knock on her door and she takes time to open up I knock again just to show its not a hoax.

"Okay okay ngizwile Stop banging the door." she says from the inside glad she actually heard me.

"Where did you lose your keys these time?" she asks as she opens the door I guess she thinks I'm her roommate. She halts opening the door halfway after realizing its not who she thought it was.

"Oh its you?" she drops her shoulders in what seems to be a disappointment written all over her but I don't pay heed to her.

"Yes its me now may I come in please?" I smile at her and she just folds her arms and looks at me straight in the eye.

"No?Yes?... I guess yes it is." I then push myself inside greet her with a kiss on her cheek and leave her at the door. She is just looking at me and not saying anything I know she is cracking that cute skull of hers for answers.

"I brought some peace offering.? I lift the McDonald's paper bags to show her and move to put them on the kitchen counter.I turn back and she is still just standing at the door I approach her in slow but long strides and in no time I'm in front of her. We maintain eye contact and brush the side of my face along her chubby cheeks. I do this while closing the door and locking it in the background after locking it I hold unto her waist. I hug her and breathe along her neckline then ear

"Sawucoma muntuwam" I whisper in her ear she finally grips on my arm while her breathing is uneven and loud like a

generator. I kiss her on the forehead as I step away from her hold I hold her hand and lead her towards the kitchen. I help her seat on the kitchen counter chair and I stand in between her legs. I go through the paper bags and retrieve some chips I take out the ketchup too in case she is a fan.

But I decide to ask waving the sachet in the air "ketchup or no ketchup?" She points towards the ketchup to say she wants it I tear the chips packaged in the middle and pour the ketchup on the side. I dip a chip in the ketchup and I feed her she opens her mouth and accepts the food. We continue eating well more like me feeding her whilst standing in between her legs and also having a bite without any exchange of words. After eating I pack up the food packaging and throw it in the bin she is just looking at me without even a single word. I go back to her and lift her up from the chair and



carry her to the couch I sit both of us down and pull the fluffy fleece blanket over us. She snuggles into my neck and her breath hits my skin it's warm but I still get goosebumps.

"Now that you are full and comfortable Thandolwam asikhulume." I say to her whilst playing with her dreadlocks I keep massaging her scalp and kissing her forehead. She snuggles closer to my chest as if I will run away even if given the chance to I won't.

"Hau Thandolwethu I didn't come all the way here to speak alone khuluma phela ukhala ngani?" I ask getting impatient and annoyed.

"Only my parents get to call me Thandolwethu ngiku Thandolwam to you." she answers in a cheeky tone can't even believe me saying her full name is what she only heard since I got here.

"Oh Kante uyakhona ukukhuluma?" I try looking at her in the eye but she has her face in the crevice of my neck. She also doesn't lift her face so I can't see her.

"Yebo" she answers.

"Okay ngijabuleli ukuzwa lokho so mawunjele why did you greet me with a sour face when I got here?" I ask her. I feel her take a deep breath in and out and then lift her head from the side of my neck. She looks me in the eye

"I don't like what you did to me last night." oh so madam doesn't like being teased but she did it to me without even batting an eyelash.

"What did I do to you last night Thandolwam?" I ask her testing the waters whether she will actually say the actual reason behind her broody mood or

not.

"You know what... stop trying to make me say it." she says hiding her face on my chest.

"But how would I make up for my mistake if I don't know what it is Thandolwam?" I brush off the dreadlocks covering her face and I push them behind her ear. I stroke my thumb along her neck line and she shivers.

"YOU DENIED ME OUR FIRST DATE KISS AND I WANT IT. THAT'S WHY I'M MAD SIBU." she says out loud with her head off my chest and looking me straight in the eye after whatever high she was on she snuggles back into her previous position. I love how her eyes were full of fire when she demanded that she wants it it's the sexiest thing ever.

"So you are mad at me because of a

denied kiss right?" I ask her lifting her face from my chest with my fingers. I stare into her eyes and she stares back grandpa was right she is feisty and full of fire in her soul.

"Yes."

"And you want it?"

"Yes."

"So can I kiss you now?"

"Yes." it comes out as a whisper and I lower my face towards hers she repositions herself so I don't have to bend my neck a lot. Our lips meet hers are soft and warm she pulls my face closer toward her with her soft little hands. And magic the fireworks and butterflies in the belly explode as our lips move in sync they fit into each other like they've finally found their long awaited

home after a long journey. She moans into our mouths and I let out a groan we both come up for breath and maintain eye contact.

"WOW!." we both say at the same time and then let out laughter together as one.

25.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU

After all the excitement of our first kiss died down we snuggled on the couch and eventually fell asleep. Sibu's chest is now my most favourite place to be I think I'm officially spoiled to the par. Sleeping alone in my bed without a snuggle buddy will be the most dreaded moments of my life. Only if we were married already I would be sleep on his chest every night and waking up to his golden brown piercing orbs that are my ultimate my weakness first being his voice . I remember when we first met and he

greeted me with just a mere "sawubona Nkosazana" my heart skipped a beat at the sound of his velvety voice and my life has never been the same again. It feels like we've known each for a lifetime heck if we had other life's before this life then we've probably met then and we were even married if not soul mates. Its crazy how I just fit into his arms and how he fits in my heart like the way fingers fit into each other. I'm a lucky girl and I intend to make him the luckiest guy on the world for having me in his life.

I was mad last night after he teased me forgetting I also did the same thing in public. I made him feel hot and bothered just for my own pleasure and he paid me back with the same sentiments. The thing is food is my weakness actually good food is my weakness probably even one of my guilty pleasures hence I always experience food orgasm when I eat the best cooked dishes. I'm trying to tone it

down because sooner or later I will be someone's wife and I will moan in front of the whole family hashtag embarrassing.

"HONEY I'M HOME HOPE YOU DIDN'T EXPERIENCE ANY NIGHTMARES ALO...NE..." Enhle shouts as she gets in the flat she speaks whilst walking straight to the seating room and she halts in her steps when she finds me and Sibucuddled on the couch. We woke up due to the noise but didn't move from our position snuggling is the best thing ever invented but I don't know by whom God and his human creation will debate on that one.

Enhle tries retracting her steps back and head to a different direction.

"I..I'm sorry friend didn't realize you're alone" she puts emphasis on alone as she is still walking backwards in embarrassment.

"No mgani ku'right..." I say

"And I was just leaving." Sibú says before I finish whatever I wanted to say.

"You were?" both Enhle and I ask in surprise looking at him.

"Yes I think..." he looks at us like a deer caught in headlights. I pinch him after realizing he just wants to leave because Enhle is here.

"Ouch" he whisperer so that Enhle doesn't hear him. My friend has been standing next to the door after this man said he is leaving. I take the opportunities to introduce them to each other.

"Anyways Sibú meet Enhle my roommate slash best friend slash sister from another mother. And Enhle meet Sibú my



boyfriend but you can call him Sibusiso thank you." I flip my dreadlocks to the back in a sassy way after marking my territory; well it isn't actually marking it just being clear that only I can call him Sibuh inclusive of his mother of course.

"Nice to meet you Enhle/roommate/bestie/sister from another mother." Sibuh says looking at Enhle with a smirk and offering his hand for a handshake. My dear best friend smirks back and wipes her hands at the side of her pants before shaking his hand.

"Oh its a pleasure to meet you Thando'Sibuh I mean Sibusiso \*she gives me an eye \*/taxi driver bae/potential brother-in-law." she gives me a wink and Sibuh looks at me wanting to laugh but he keeps it in.

"And by the way you too owe me a gift.. " she says now seated on the other side of

the couch legs crossed and looking at us.

"Gift? For what?" Sibü asks her.

"Oh you know if I hadn't insisted that day to go out for a stroll you wouldn't have each other's numbers maybe you wouldn't even be cuddling." she says trying to raise a non-existent point. I fold my arms and look at her.

"For your information I would have still got the letter be it on that very Saturday's or on Monday when I go to work." I also say raising my point Sibü is just looking between us smirking at the free unlimited uncensored entertainment.

"Hhm you're saying that now but we both know that that man might have lost the letter whilst drinking and hooking up with the mama's from Bloed Street." agh she thinks she is clever this one but I don't think that's possible even thinking about

those girls getting hold of the letter and calling Sibü just pretending to be me gives me heartburn.

"Bu..but.." I try to talk again.

"Well actually Enhle has a point you see Shibase can be quite forgetful especially in the presence of skirts. " Sibü says supporting Enhle and I gasp in shock at how he could switch sides. He is lying through his teeth because if Shibase was forgetful he wouldn't be his right-hand man. But I don't shake him from his high pedestal already seen through his act probably trying to win Enhle over.

"Now thats what I'm talking about ..."  
Enhle claps her hands on excitement. she stands up from her seat and go to Sibü and demand a fist bump " Chaisa Sbalı." she says to him and he bumps back.

"Sure Sbalı so what kind of gift would you

want?." Sibú responds back and asks for the so called wanted gift.

"I will leave that to your girl she knows what I want. " she says while standing up from the couch and rubbing her hands together.

"Now let me live you two lovebirds alone and go do some studying." she salutes and walks away to the confinement of her bedroom. Sibú turns back to me laughing

"Ha ha ha uyahleka what are you laughing at?" I ask with my arms folded pretending to be mad.

"What? Don't be jealous Thando your friend is quite cool." he says with a smirk I take the throw pillow and thrash him with it.

"It's Thandolwam to you and the only person you should be calling cool is me

your girlfriend."I continue beating him with the pillow but he manages to hold me and throw it away. He flips me over on the couch and gets on top I have my legs around his waist and breathing heavily from all the pillow thrashing I did to him. I'm trying to move out of his hold but I can't and he is just starring at me without even moving a muscle but I still can't get out. Is he made out of steel or what?he is super strong probably the reason he managed to carry me from the kitchen till here. But at the rate he is feeding me I'm not sure he would still be able to carryme.

"Thandolwam!"

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I'm not sure he would still be able to carryme.

"Thandolwam!" his velvety deep voice stops me from all the movements and I

stand still its like he is a magnet that just pulls me to him.

"Yes?" I answer still breathing heavily like I've been running the two oceans marathon.

"Ngiyakuthanda yezwa." and my heart just skips beats randomly I'm starstruck in his love his eyes pull me in and I don't know how and why but tears flow to the side of my cheeks. I only realize when he wipes them with his thumb and kisses my eyes then my nose he skips my lips and goes to my chin then cheeks. He lifts his face and look at me in the eye.

"Mawunjele ukhalelani MaNdlovu?" he asks I also don't know why I'm crying the tears are just flowing at their own will.

"Angazi the tears are just coming out I didn't summon them." I tell him pretending to be a bit brave. He smirks

and then shake his head.

"You are truly a special case MaNdlovu."

"Well I am your special case aren't I?" I flirt back.

"That you are definitely. " he lowers his body unto mine and I intensify the grip of my legs on his waist. We share a deep kiss that leaves me seeing stars and still wanting more. So I pull him back to me and kiss him like my life depends on it.

"I have to go " Sibú says in between kisses and I hug him tighter I don't want him to leave yet. He stands up from the couch with great difficulty whilst I'm still attached to him. He walks to the door with me still in his arms and I open for him.

"I don't want you to go yet can't you cuddle me some more?" I bring out my

puppy eyes and protude my lower lip like a child wanting an adult's phone just to play games.

"No I can't Thandolwam I have to go we will talk on the phone okay." he says

"Okay and if I don't hear from you in two hours what should I assume?" I ask him thing is I don't want him to go but I also can't keep him Hostage.

"You should assume nothing MaNdlovu I already know you like climbing to conclusions so don't even go there." he reprimanded me some more but he and I know that overthinking every situation is in my blood. I mean I was raised by a cop so almost every situation in my house was treated like a police case.

"Okay ke Sibu I won't overthink nor reach to conclusions." I say and he gives me a tight hug and leaves. I lock the door



behind him and retreat to Enhle's room.

"So how was your sleepover Miss ngilele esfubeni?" I ask in a tease tone once I get to her room. She has her nose in her phone and busy blushing and she said and I quote "let me live you two love birds and go do some studying." So I'm surprised studying is actually a new synonym for sexting. I move further inside the room and and snatch the phone from her.

"Hey I'm still using that..." she tries taking it but she can't reach cause I have it raised up in the air. Her height is also a disadvantage she is short and petite so you can imagine her jumping up and down down looking like a smaller version of Peter the rabbit.

"Since when does studying and texting have the same meaning?" I ask her still holding the phone in the air and she is

still jumping up and down trying to retrieve it.

"They don't I was just telling her that I arrived home safe nothing more." she justifies her actions.

"Oh really?"

"Yes really now give it back. " she demands

"I will give it back only on one condition." I tell her.

"What is it?" she asks with her arms folded and tapping her left foot in the ground.

"You have to tell me all about your princess charming and I mean everything." I lay down my proposal to her and she seems skeptical but eventually agrees.

"Okay fine I will tell you. I don't even know where to start..." she says.

"Well start from the beginning deary its always easier explaining from the start." I tell her as we are now both seated on the bed facing each other with our legs crossed.

"Well we actually met on campus at the library. She came..." my phone rings disturbing her midway through her story.

"Sorry let me take this first" I tell her and she nods telling me to go ahead.

"Hello." I answer the phone

"Hello mam I'm calling from Mediclinic Medforum hospital to inform you that Mr Sibusiso Dlamini has been involved in a car accidents. You were the last person on his call log that he called please come

to the hospital as soon as you can." everything felt hazy and blurred I managed to hear hospital Sibusiso and accident and the tears just flowed without any hesitation.

"Mam..can you hear me?" the person on the other line says.

"Ye...yes I will be there as soon as possible." I respond standing up from the bed in rush and Enhle just gets up with me but has confusion written all over her face. I drop the call and run to my room to find some shoes Enhle is still behind me she doesn't ask anything but I'm glad she is here with me

"Uber.. request an uber to mediclinic medforum" I tell her as I slip into the first pair of shoes I come across they are morning sleepers and I don't even care about how I look at this moment. I just

want to see him that's all.

"The uber is here mgani let's go." Enhle informs me and off to the hospital we go.

26.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

I left Thandolwam's place so I could have time to catch up on work after what happened on Monday at the office I've been hands on again. I talked to Nkanyiso about the ruckus at the office and why workers weren't doing their job his excuse was that he had another big project he was handling and he thought everyone had the Tshwane building handled. I love all my businesses because I put all my hard work and sweat into them I'm trying to build a legacy for my children and I can't afford having it sink

down the mud. Especially not now when I have a met my chosen one and the future mother of my children I intend to provide for her as her man and the protector/provider of our family.

I was driving at normal speed from her place when I was approaching the traffic lights next to SunArcadia. I don't know how or what happened but a truck I assume was turning to the left turned right into my car. I couldn't swerve the car in time even if I had the time to turn I couldn't because of the heavy traffic. All I could make out was the heavy crash and screeching noise from the collision and the last pictures I couldn't make were of my family and Thandolwam at our wedding. A wedding that now seems like a distant and never to be experienced memory as I let heavy eyelids close after battling to keep them open. The sirens of the paramedics and the screams of the nearby bystanders calling out for help felt

like they were a mile away and my body completely shut down complete darkness overcoming my being.

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The paramedics came immediately on the scene and helped Sibusiso the truck hit his car on the left hand side and the injuries were crucial. He was declared to be in critical condition and immediately admitted to the Mediclinic Hospital. Upon arrival at the hospital the staff rushed him to ER and the paramedics took what was recovered to the hospital receptionist. Luckily his phone was not severely damaged and he had his identification with him making it easier to call his next of kin. He had no next of kin listed so they called the last person he talked to in his call log. Thandolwam was at the top of the list and her being the most called contact on the list the hospital called her.

Thandolwethu and Enhle reached the hospital within five minutes after the call informing her of Sibusiso's accident. She had tears and mucus running down her face her dreadlocks pointing in all directions known to man. Her head swelling with unanswered questions she also couldn't bear. All Enhle could do was to comfort her with her presence because she couldn't calm down. She came running into the hospital the fear of tripping and falling on her face clearly lounging at the back of her head.

"WHERE IS HE?...PLEASE TELL ME HE IS FINE PLEASE .." she comes through shouting at the entrance just asking anyone in doctors or nurses uniform. For those looking on from the outside they would swear on their ancestors graves that she looked like a patient that ran away from a mental asylum.

"PLEASE ANYONE TELL ME...WHERE HE



IS? I NEED HIM PLEASE.." she keeps asking and just saying to anyone passing through the hospital waiting room and reception area.

"PLEASE..." she kneels down in the middle of the waiting room with everyone confused as to who is the he she is asking about. Others just pass by not minding and caring as to why there is a woman in the middle of the hospital crying. They are probably used to her kind of acts by now through the many families that come crying on a daily for their family members admitted.

"Its okay mgani stand up and seat on the chair." Enhle comfort her and tries to lift her up to help her to the nearest chair. She doesn't put up a fight and gets up with Enhle's help from the floor to the nearest chair. She slumps into the chair looking exhausted and with no idea of what's happening around her

" wait here I will go ask the receptionist about Sibusiso okay?" Enhle informs her and she is just starrng into nothing in particular she is confused and lost. She keeps whispering "ngifuna Sibu wam ngifuna Sibu wam."

Enhle hurriedly goes to the receptionist desk

"Sawubona Sisi I need help finding information about an accident patient." Enhle gets straight to the point and still constantly looks back to check if Thandolwethu is still put.

"Hello mam." the receptionist greets back.

"Yes hello the accident patient please hus name is Sibusiso I believe he just got admitted." she says to the receptionist looking impatient and worried.

"Oh yes two patients from a car accident have just been admitted and I believe one is Sibusiso as you said. Are you the lady I talked to on the phone a while ago?" the receptionist says going through the hospital records probably checking Sibusiso on their records.

"Yes the one I'm looking for is Sibusiso and no you didn't talk to me you talked to my friend she is over there..." she points at Thandolwethu in the waiting area and she has tears flowing down her cheeks.

"She hasn't been okay since you called do you perhaps know in what condition is Sibusiso in?" Enhle asks the receptionist and she looks at her computer screen again.

"His condition was said to be critical when he was rushed to the emergency room As for now I don't have any information

you will have to wait for the doctor." Enhle nods in understanding without saying anything and still look back at Thandolwethu.

"Oh and this was retrieved from the accident scene I believe your friend might have to hold on to her husband's things." the receptionist says

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handing Enhle a zip transparent bag. She takes it from her and gesture a thank you with just a nod of her head and goes back to Thandolwethu.

"Hey..." she says to Thandolwethu

"Hi" she says back to her looking defeated and weak.

"Well um the receptionist gave me this she said they belong to Sibusiso." she says handing her the zip bag.

"How is he? I mean did she tell you at least?" Thandolwethu asks with her voice low and emotional.

"Well she just said they declared his condition to be critical upon arrival but knows nothing as of now. We have to wait for the doctor. " Enhle explains in her best way possible without making the situation more tense than it is already.

"Okay. And thank you for being here with me I can never thank you enough." Thandolwethu says to Enhle holding her hands into hers. Enhle side hugs her and says "always mgani I'm forever there for you."

"Thank you. " she says once more as she wipes fresh tears from her eyes. They don't seem to be stopping her sweater is even soaked.

Enhle spots the phone in the zip bag "hey we should inform his family I think they will also know what to do don't you think?" she suggests to Thandolwethu and she just nods her head because she knows as much as she is dating him she is in no position to take decisions regarding his health nor life.

"May you please call them I don't think I'm strong enough to break the news to them. I know he has his brothers in the city try them. " she also says and gives the suggestion of calling his brothers.

"Okay." Enhle agrees and takes out Sibusiso's phone

"What are his brother's names?" she asks while going through his contact list.

"There is Themba the oldest one and I think the twins are Nka..something I kind I forgot. " she says to Enhle trying to

remember the twins names but she can't as her thoughts are on Sibusiso and whatever condition he is in.

"Its okay I found Themba's contacts he will probably inform the others after we inform him." Enhle says rubbing her shoulders in comfort. She makes the call in her other hand it rings a few times before Themba answered.

"Hello Bafo Unjani?" Themba answer the phone in excitement and happy to actually here from his brother since he hasn't heard from him in a weak since he left for KZN.

"Uhm hello this is not your brother..." Enhle says to Themba in a calm manner but also nervous to have to be the one to inform him of his brother's misfortune. She feels scared but she knows she has to help her friend who is still seated on the waiting room chair and clutching to

Themba's zip bag.

"Uh I can hear that now but why do you have my brother's phone with you and not with him?" he asks confused as to what this woman could possibly be doing with Sibusiso's phone because knowing him he doesn't just lent his phone to anyone without a reason.

"Well uhm...I don't know how to say this... you see I'm calling on Thando's behalf since she is in no condition to speak we got a call from the hospital to inform.. " Enhle starts explaining the best way possible she could actually come up with.

"Thando's behalf? And hospital? enklek sisi khuluma uzwakale uthi kwenzakalani ngomfowethi?" Themba asks Enhle calmly and not wanting to reach conclusions without hearing the full story.



"Well yes sorry. Thando is Sbu's girlfriend and my best friend. The hospital called her to inform her about Sibusiso's admission. He was involved in a car accident just approximately an hour ago. We are at the hospital as we speak and I believe you have to be here as his brother." Enhle let's out a deep breath after telling Themba everything she felt relieved that at least now his family knows.

"Uhm okay which hospital is he in?" Themba asks gathering his car keys and a jacket. He is doing everything in a hurry and MaShange is holding a prayer in the background.

"Mediclinic Medforum in town." Enhle says

"Okay I will be there." Themba informs Enhle and then drops the phone.

"He said he is coming." Enhle tells Thandolwethu.

"Thank you mgani" she thanks her for the millionth time while hugging her.

"As I said stop thanking me you're my sister and you need me as much as I need you." she hugs her back and repeatedly rubs her back to calm down.

They sit put in the waiting room for the doctors report about Sibusiso's condition and the arrival of Themba.

27.

NARRATIVE.

They sit put in the waiting room for the doctors report about Sibusiso's condition and the arrival of Themba.

Thando absorbs the serene atmosphere of the hospital the smell of medicine and sanitizer. The ongoing havoc of people being admitted to the ER she thinks to herself as to how her life got to this state so soon. She imagines her father back to 25 years when she was born but never got to meet her mother. Not meeting her mom isn't what hurts her though what hurts her is that she finally realizes how her dad felt like seating in that hospital waiting room for his wife and baby but only walked out the hospital doors with a chubby new born baby girl that would never get her mother's love. She imagines the pain her father went through after realizing he would have to carry on with life but without the love of his life. The tears prick at her eyes as a sharp pain hits on her chest and she clutches on the very spot. She has so many questions to God she is questioning him why he would finally give her a chance at happiness and also snatch it

from her in a space of less than 48 hours.

"Dear God I know I'm a sinner and I'm not perfect never have been but I've never asked you for anything. All I've been grateful for was the life you have given me and having a shelter to hide my head and food to eat. Never have I asked for the impossible but today God I come to you as not just a sinner but as your child. As a daughter asking her father for a favor and probably blessings. Please save Sibuwam that's all I ask for and I probably won't ever have to kneel down to you and ask for anything else as long as I have him. Amen." she prays to herself but not for herself but her love.

After her prayer a tall buffed man comes running into the hospital he has a full beard like Sibusiso but his head is bald. He heads straight to the receptionist with long fast strides breathing like a bull at the sight of the color red.

"Sibusiso Dlamini where is he?" he asks the frightened receptionist with his deep voice the receptionist has her eyes bulged out at how he approached the desk like he was Hercules going into war. Thando and Enhle perk up at the sound of hearing Sibusiso's name they turn their heads to the reception area and spot a hulk lookalike with a bald head. They both gulp down saliva at the same time feeling nervous to even approach him Enhle even comes to the conclusion that he sounds way different from the phone.

"I...um..." she shutters.

"I said where is my brother?" he asks again a bit calm and breathing normally.

"He is still in the ER sir you will have to wait for the doctor for an update." the poor reception says even sweating regardless of the cool air from the air

conditioner.

Enhle and Thando approach the reception desk walking at the same pace looking nervous and even rubbing their non-sweaty palms on their thighs.

"Where is the damn doctor then?" He asks and the receptionist gulps with no answer to give. She is clueless and this man seems persistent to get an answer. Thando and Enhle stand behind him nervous and scared and both scared to say the first word.

"Hmmm..." Enhle clears her throat and Themba turns around to face them. He scans them from head to toe and then back to their faces he raises his eyebrow and waits for them to speak.

"I'm...I'm sorry to disturb but I'm Enhle I believe I'm the one who called you. This is Thando." Enhle speaks still nervous but

a bit brave as compared to Thando.

"Oh I see I'm Themba Sibusiso's older brother " he introduces himself and goes for a handshake they both greet him but Thando still doesn't say a word.

"Um as I said over the phone Thando is dating Sibusiso that's how the hospital managed to inform her first of the accident." Enhle starts explaining trying to clear the awkwardness caused by her friend that isn't saying anything. Themba also doesn't say anything to her just gives her one look and face the receptionist again.

"Sir as I've said

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just gives her one look and face the receptionist again.

"Sir as I've said you will have to wait for

the doctor." the receptionist says before Themba can question her further. Just seconds after talking the doctor responsible for Sibusiso appears in the waiting room with a board.

"Sibusiso Dlamini's family?" he calls out and Themba immediately stands before him with Thando right behind him.

"Yes doctor how is my brother?" Themba asks feeling impatient and worried he hasn't informed the family yet because he wanted to know full details before informing them.

"Yes how is Sibusiso? please tell me he is fine please." Thando finally speaks with tears running down her face Themba is even shocked she can talk for a minute he thought maybe she is mute or something. He is also surprised that his brother allowed her to call him Sibusiso ever since they were young Sibusiso only permitted



their late grandmother and mother to call him Sibusiso. Everybody else had to call him by his full name or just Sbu Themba realizes that his brother is actually in love. He chuckles to himself because he can't wait to tell the whole family about Sibusiso being called Sibusiso by anyone other than their mother.

"Hello Sir and Miss..." the doctor greets scanning the both of them at one glance then looks back to the chart in his hands.

"Ndlovu Miss Ndlovu please tell me how is Sibusiso?" Thando says to the doctor and ask him again.

"Well Mr Dlamini is in a stable condition he is in an induced coma. Fortunately his head wasn't hurt just a few scratches here and there. However he has a few broken ribs and we will need to operate him." the doctor explains to them and Thando has tears gushing out at the

mention of operation she learned from her dad that her mother died because she gave birth to her through C-section and she never woke up.

She is scared that even Sibbu will face the same fate as her mother if she goes through with the operation.

"No...no..no there has to be another way." she refuses even shaking her head she backs away from the doctor trying to sit down but almost falls down as her knees give in. Themba quickly acts on reflex and catches her before hitting the ground. Enhle also runs to her aid and they both help her sit down.

"I'm sorry but there is no other way for him to heal faster we need to put his ribs back in place and the only way to do that is if we operate in him." the doctor tries to explain to her so she can understand that there is no other choice. She makes up images in her head of what could

haves despite not having any memories of her mother her head creates clips of her mother struggling to breath after giving birth to heras the doctors finish closing her up. The face quickly changes to Sibusiso and he is also struggling to breath calling out her name.

"NO..Sibu no...don't...leave... me...." she says with shortness of breath Themba and Enhle try to shake her and yell at her to keep her eyes opened.

"Thando?...please don't do this to me Thando vuka mahn." Enhle shakes her in panic and even slap her Themba is still trying to keep her eyes open.

"She is having a panic attack...Nurse get the stretcher and prepare a tranquilizer She is having a panic attack." the doctor barks out orders to the nurses.

"Give her room please." He kneels in

front of her and checks her pulse he takes his stethoscope from around his neck to also check her heart rate and breathing.

The nurses hurries up and immediately come with a stretcher and rush her to the Emergency room. Enhle finally takes the role of crying from her best friend she can't believe that something like this happened. What will she even tell Mr Ndlovu when he calls and doesn't find Thando. Themba rubs her back in comfort feeling frustrated that now not only is his brother fighting for his life but also his love.

28.

NARRATIVE.

The nurses and doctors at Thando's aid are all in a rush to help her. It seems her

pulse has gotten weak so they have to rush to the Emergency room to stabilize her and get more oxygen. For Thando she is at a state of rest with no pain in her chest that feels like the end of her she is consumed in the world of darkness with no real idea of the real world. No dark thoughts that can trigger her mental state. The doctors are trying by all means to wake her up the monitor shows that her heart has stopped but they are trying to revive it. They have never seen a situation like hers that the heart stopped due to a panic attack yes its normal for panic attack to be associated with heart attack but the atmosphere in the room feels sombre as they try to bring her back to life.

"Buka Mntanam uthando lwakho liyakudinga no Baba wakho" a voice says to her but her brain being unresponsive she also can't say anything to the voice. She feels like she is floating and in

another universe where she doesn't have to lose people she loves anymore.

"Buka mtanam akukabi yisikhathi sakho" as the voice says for the last time there is a spark in her brain and she gasps for air as her heart starts to beat again. The doctors are glad to have her back to the land of the living they were scared as to what they are supposed to tell her family in the waiting room.

"Breath in and out mam" the doctor says to her as she records her breathing pulse and heart rate. She does as instructed but confused to be waking up in a white room with blue sheets around her. She tries to gather her thoughts as to how she got here all she remembers was that she was in the hospital's waiting room and the doctor telling her Sibusiso needs to undergo a surgery. She pulls the oxygen mask off while the doctor tries to tell her she can't take it off.

"Mam you can't do that just stay put."  
the doctor tries to stop her

"Wait Sibusiso? Ukuphi Sibusiso?" she  
asks no one in particular.

She pulls the the drip needle out too and  
tries to stand up from the bed. The  
nurses rush to put her back in bed and  
instruct her to take a deep breath in and  
out. She manages to calm down and get  
her breathing back to normal.

"Please just tell me Sibusiso is okay." she  
says to the nurses with tears sliding down  
her face the nurses look at each other  
because they don't know who is Sibusiso.  
But one answers just to get her to  
cooperate and calm down.

"Sibusiso is fine mam just try to rest we  
will let your family know that you are  
awake." the nurse tells her in hopes of

Thando calming down so that her heart can go back to its normal beating rate. She lays back on the pillow and just nods to what the nurse tells her.

Themba and Enhle have been in the waiting room for over an hour now. Sibusiso was rushed for the operation as Themba gave his consent as much to Thando's refusal he knew he can't deny his brother the chance to heal. A nurse comes out and ask for Thandolwethu's family.

"Thandolwethu Ndlo..?" the nurse calls out to no one in particular since the waiting room is filled with families of patients.

"Here...I mean we are here." Enhle quickly responds before the nurse could finish her statement and walks towards her.



"How is Thando? Is she fine? Is she awake?" She bombarded the nurse with questions without even giving her a chance to calm down. She is asking all this in one breath without a break in between

"Relax and let her speak please." Themba comes to the nurses rescue and tries to calm Enhle down. She takes a deep breath and whispers out to the nurse "I'm sorry its just that I'm worried sick here."

"It's okay it happens." the nurse nods in understanding and continues to look at the file in her hands.

"Uhm Thandolwethu suffered a panic attack and her heart had stopped I think it was God's mercy that she woke up we almost lost her.." she starts explaining

"And how is she? Can we see her now?" Enhle blubbers out again.

"Relax mam she is okay now and the doctor was with her they said I should inform you that she is awake and that you can come see her." she says with a smile to both Enhle and Themba and they sigh with relief.

"Thank you so much." Enhle says to the nurse with relief and happiness written all over her face.

"Please take us to her." Themba tells the nurse and she nods in accord. She leads them to Thando's ward without any words shared. They get in and find her facing the window Enhle hurriedly goes to her as she can't hold herself.

"OMG thank God you're okay."

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thank God you're okay." she hugs her with the biggest smile on her face despite

Thando being attached to the machines around her bed.

"You scared me so much I thought I lost you." she says seating on the sit available next to the bed Themba is just standing by the door looking towards the two friends with a smirk on her face and relief that her brother's love is out of danger only him awaits. They will hear about his condition only after the operation. Thando divert her attention from the window to the two people in her room. She looks at them scrutinizing them from head to toe like she'd never seen them.

"I'm sorry but do I know you?" she asks confused making the other two confused too.

"WHAT? what do you mean by "do I know you " I am your best friend and he is Themba your man's brother." she explains to her even shaking her in the

process hoping the words coming out of her mouth are understood.

"I am sorry but I don't know you guys if you would excuse me please. " she says and looks back to the very window she was starring at.

"We bandla did you hit your head or something because last I checked you just had a panic attack you didn't fall and hit your head." Enhle blubbers in frustration even checking Thando's head for a bump or an indication that he might have fallen. Themba at the door is also confused and decides to call out to the nurse in the passageway.

"Excuse me mam uhm the patient in the emergency room 101 did she get the right prescription or hit her head in any way?" she asks worried and confused as to how he will tell his brother that the woman she plans to marry has lost her

memory.

"Not that I know of sir I just know that she had a panic attack and then later woke up." the nurse tells him and continues with her duty.

"But how is it possible she lost her memory from just a panic attack?" he asks himself and heads back to the room Enhle is now on her feet and walking up and down in the room. Thando is moving her eyes with her as she moves too.

"Not possible the doctor has to have some answers to all of this because someone might get sued today." Enhle whispers to herself still moving around.

"Ha ha ha ha ha OMG I definitely got you there." Thando laughs out loud and Enhle immediately snaps her head to her disbelief all over her face.

"Wait what?" She asks her friend shocked that she actually played a prank like that on her.

"I could never forget my best friend Enhle even if I tried." she says to her friend accompanied by an eye roll.

"Ugh you! I was worried sick and you do this to me. I'm mad so don't talk to me until further notice." she sulks and folds her arms tapping her left foot on the floor.

"MaNdlovu Unjani usithusile ngempela if something happened to you be ngizothini ngomfowethu?" Themba asks Thando with worry laced in his voice but still deep and powerful.

"Ngi'right bhuti and I'm sorry to have got you too worried. Where is Sibusiso he is fine right?" Thando asks now worried and the sign of happiness completely erased

from her face.

"Yes he is fine MaNdlovu he still resting."  
Themba says trying to ease her up.

"Can I see him please I need to see him..." she begs tears already pricking her eyes Enhle tries to calm her down and Themba's head is swelling with thoughts as to how he can tell her something closer to the truth without revealing the surgery part.

"Uhm I will go find the doctor and ask if we can see him now. Okay?" he says to her and she nods her head. Themba turns out of the room to allegedly look for Sibusiso's doctor.

29.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

Waking up everything felt surreal like how I actually panicked because the doctor said Sibusiso needs to undergo surgery. I've never had a panic attack before hell I've never seen my mother just her photos that my dad saved so I can grow up atleast knowing how she once looked like. It hurts more when reality kicks in that I was close to death than I've realized I want to ask God why he wants to take away people I love from me but I can't. I was taught to never question his decisions his existence and his will with our lives just like Job. So I just persevere on the white walls in these room calmed me more than the nurses and doctors could as I said before the color white is my serenity and it brings me peace hence it's my favorite.

The doctor asked me if this was a normal thing for me to have a panic attack and I said No it's actually my first time and the trigger was so subtle that I could have



never thought it would happen to me. He suggested therapy but God knows I don't need therapy I just need Sibusiso alive and taunting me with that sexy smirk of his. I stared out towards the window in my room only the sky could be seen and a random pot plant on the window. It was green and short I couldn't make out if it was fake or real from where I was on the hospital bed. I kept my attention on it so I could gather my thoughts and probably stop thinking too much about the situation that has befallen us. I hear the door creak as someone opens it but I don't dare look it's probably the nurses and I'm actually tired of seeing their faces. The person jumps in my bed and gives me a tight squeezed hug I guess it isn't the nurse then probably my best friend Enhle. I'm relieved to have her here with me but I still don't turn to look at her

"OMG thank God you're okay." she says

with the biggest smile on her face and continues blubbering

"You scared me so much I thought I lost you." she says again seated on the chair besides me. I look away from the plant at the window and look at her she is with Sibusiso's brother Themba I think. I look at them like I've never seen them in my life acting confused and shocked I ask "I'm sorry but do I know you?"

They look at me in confusion heck Enhle even reaches out for my head and acts like she is checking my temperature. They also exchange looks in confusion and worry I can't tell you how much I'm trying not to laugh right now this moment right here needs to be captured like a movie.

"WHAT? what do you mean by "do I know you? " I am your best friend and he is Themba your man's brother." Enhle

explains to me shaking me in hopes that maybe my brain could go back to its original condition. Oh Enhle how can I explain it to you that I'm pretending. I'm sorry but looking at you blubbering is the best comedy relief a girl could ever ask for after coming back from the dead. Still trying to keep my laughter in I compose my face and look serious and lost.

"I am sorry but I don't know you guys if you would excuse me please." I say in a subtle manner and look back to the window. I'm doing this because Enhle always pranks me heck to a point where you'd swear she actually had a serious accident. So its pay back time although it might not be the right time but I'm enjoying seeing her squirm in frustration.

"We bandla did you hit your head or something because last I checked you just had a panic attack you didn't fall and hit your head." she checks my head

maybe looking for a bump or something from the corner of my eye I see Themba getting out of the room. Enhle is busy pacing up and down the room making me dizzy I don't tell her to stop and she continues till Themba gets back.

"Not possible the doctor has to have some answers to all of this because someone might get sued today." she says in a whisper but I can hear her Themba is standing at the door also confused and it looks like the gears in his head are turning at an overdrive. He hasn't said anything till now and Enhle is still pacing up and down. I can't keep the laughter in anymore and definitely have kept up my act for so long so I just let loose and laugh out.

Ha ha ha ha ha OMG I definitely got you there." I laugh out loud and Enhle immediately snaps her head to me in disbelief all over her face.

"Wait what?" She asks looking at me shocked that I actually played a prank like that on her. The look on her face seems like she has already squished the air out of me and buried me six feet under the ground.

"I could never forget my best friend Enhle even if I tried." I say to her wiping the tears in my eyes accompanied by an eye roll.

"Ugh you! I was worried sick and you do this to me. I'm mad so don't to talk me until further notice." she sulks and folds her arms tapping her left foot on the floor. I just look at her and not say anything Sibusiso is yet to give her a gift she is not getting anything out of me. Be it money or a gift nothing shall be given for her demands.

"MaNdlovu Unjani usisabisile ngempela if

something happened to you be ngizothini ngomfowethu?" Themba finally talks and asks me clearly worried more about his brother and I'm not complaining Enhle is enough to worry about me.

"Ngi'right bhuti and I'm sorry to have got you too worried. Where is Sibusiso he is fine right?" I ask him because reality has set in that the only reason I came to the hospital was because of Sibusiso. I really hope he is fine because I don't think I will get to live if he leaves me

"Yes he is fine MaNdlovu he still resting." Themba tells me.

"Can I see him please I need to see him..." I beg tears already pricking my eyes I'm a cry baby I know i just can't help it. Enhle is trying to calm me down and the thought of not speaking to me clearly out of the window. I guess the until further notice has come sooner than

expected.

"Uhm I will go find the doctor and ask if we can see him now. Okay?" he says to me and I just nod my head because I've clearly ran out of things to say. Themba turns out of the room to go do whatever God knows and I just want to see Sibusiso nothing more and nothing less.

After a couple of minutes he comes back into the room with a man in a white coat behind him guess his the doctor. The doctor approaches me and takes out his stethoscope.

"How are you Miss Ndlovu?" the doctor asks me whilst checking for God knows what on the machines surrounding me.

"I'm fine."

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whist checking for God knows what on the machines surrounding me.

"I'm fine." I answer to him and say nothing more.

"That's good. Please take a deep breath for me" he tells me and I'm reminded of those Facebook boyfriends that their girlfriends constantly complain about them being greedy and instead of giving them money for their cravings they'll rather say "eat something baby for my sake." as if they should eat the air and get bloated. But I comply to the doctor's demand anyway and breath in and out as instructed.

"Well everything is fine I will get the discharge papers and please take the medication I prescribed." he says and turns to leave the room I just nodded my head because I don't want to come off as a difficult patient. I know I won't take the



damn medicine because I'm not sick but don't tell Enhle she will make sure to lock me up till I actually take the damn pills.

"Can I see Sibü now?" I ask his brother and he nods his head. Enhle helps me get down from the bed heck I didn't realize that they took off my clothes and dressed me up in this hideous hospital curtain. I actually don't get the concept behind the design of this things I wonder what they even call them. Like why is the back open are they desperate to see people's butts when they go to the bathroom or what? Enhle retrieves my clothes from the mini closet in the room and helps me get dressed. Themba has long left the room immediately he agreed for me to see Sibü.

After getting dressed a nurse comes in with what I believe to be discharge papers and I sign them. We get out of the room and find Themba waiting in the

passageway talking on the phone. We let him finish talking and then approach him.

"Sorry to keep you waiting we can go now " I say in the most humble way I can actually master.

"Its okay MaNdlovu. This way please." he leads the way to Sibusiso's room.

"Uhm not that I'm trying to pry or anything but have you informed the whole family?" I ask playing with my fingers and looking down.

"Yes I did MaNdlovu and they will be here tomorrow." he tells me and we get to a ward written coma at the door. My heart starts beating rapidly scared of what I might find behind the door. I'm more scared of what condition he might be in my palms are sweating and the edge to see him is now slowing down. I become hesitantbecause I don't think I will handle

seeing him more hurt than I've imagined.

"Uhm I will wait for you guys out here."  
Enhle says I'm sure she is trying to give us privacy but God knows I need her. But I don't persuade her to come because it will be so selfish of me considering her past.

"Okay. And thank you for being here mgani" I hug her she is the best thing that has ever happened to me and I'm always grateful for her.

Themba opens the door and I follow behind him we pass doors on both sides and the environment isn't calming me in any way the smell of medication this side is so strong I could puke. A nurse greets us halfway with masks and those hospital ropes but the doctors version with long sleeves and some gloves. We get into them and she leads us to Sibusiso's exact room from just the glass in the door all I

can make up is the many machines surrounding him before I can see him. We get inside and I could have refused and said the person lying in that bed isn't my Sibu if not for his beard and skin tone. His face is a bit swollen and there is a cast on his right arm I approach the bed already crying but I try to be strong for him. I take ahold of his free hand and it isn't warm like usual it's cold and I try to warm him up by rubbing it I between my hands.

Themba is just looking at his brother pain all over his face and I can't blame him. He is unrecognizable to a point where we are both speechless. I lay my head on the bed slightly closer to his chest without hurting him. Themba stands beside him in the other side of the bed and chants their clan names.

"Lusibalukhulu

Malandela ngokulandela izinkomo

Zamadoda

Jama kaSjadu Nkomo zidla ekhaya ngoba  
zeswele abelusi  
Mdlovu Magaduzela Magwenyane Nkosi  
Mzizi Mdineka Nyanya Msuduka  
Inkonekaz'evele ngobusw'emgedeni.  
USamkethe esinembay'emaLangeni  
UMswazi kaSobhuza  
Sgwinya mkhonto notho Iwaso  
Wena owaFodo ka Nombewu  
kaNomagaga  
Wena wase Dlebe  
Mfolozi emnyama inkethabaweli Nyanya  
Mabonel'empunzini Mlangeni  
wena ka Miso(Misizwe)  
Mgoqo ovimbe'sangweni nansi impi izwe  
lafa ngathi na??  
Ngonyama."

After that we leave the room at this point  
we're helpless only he can decide to wake  
up or continue sleeping. I feel like a  
failure because there is nothing I can  
actually do to wake him up it's all so  
bizarre like I'm having an out of body

experience. I'm mad because no words could come out of my mouth when needed and now a thousand thoughts of what I could have said are running in my mind. We get back to where Enhle is and find her sitting down and looking jumpy and restless. I quickly go sit next to her and give her a side hug while rubbing her back.

"Hey its fine it will be fine let's go" I help her stand up Themba isn't saying anything but I know he is curious so we just get out of the coma section of the hospital and go to the main waiting room.

"I think you guys should go home you have been here since everything happened. You must be tired you all need some rest." Themba says to us as we reach the waiting room and I know there is no use arguing about staying here since Sibusiso isn't awake. And frankly speaking I'm exhausted from all the

crying having a panic attack and also getting admitted. Its time we went home for a rest even Enhle is already feeling restless so I just bow my head in agreement.

"Yeah actually you're right we should go home and rest we will come back tomorrow. Let me request an uber." I say to him taking out my phone to request for an Uber.

"Hey don't do that I will take you guys home it's no big deal besides it's already late for you guys to ride a stranger's car. Well I might be one but I think my situation is different you know..." he blabbers on his last sentence and I let him be I look at Enhle for approval and she nods her head.

"Okay you can take us home and thank you. " he leads the way out to the exit and we follow suit. Tomorrow will be

another long day the family is coming and I wish we would be meeting on different circumstances but I guess not.

30.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

When we got back from the hospital last night we took changes using the bathroom. After getting in comfortable clothes I quickly made noodles just to balance our intestines we haven't had a proper meal and also we can't eat anything heavy when we're about to go to sleep. Enhle finished whatever she was doing in her bedroom and we ate in silence. We were both exhausted mentally and physically that we had no strength of spitting out any words. After eating we just left the dishes in the kitchen sink and departed to our respective room.



I got in bed but I couldn't even sleep. I felt restless the stress and events from throughout the day came back. I couldn't even understand how a perfect day of cuddling on the couch and finally getting our first kiss went on to be the worst day of my life. Sibusiso had an accident but I can't even decipher how it happened because he is a good driver. On top of that I experienced a panic attack something that has never happened to me heck I don't even have any memory of my mother to actually react like that after hearing the word surgery. I used to think people were lying when they said the mind can be your greatest enemy and turn against you. It did to me what I could have never imagined in all my years of living it created a picture in my head that was close to the truth but yet also so far apart.

I took out my phone to read one of my favorite novels 'I fell in love with a blind

man' I have read this book over and over again but I still can't get over it. I was mad at the last chapter when they died in their way to their honeymoon leaving behind infant twins. After a few chapters my eyes finally gave in and I fell asleep.

We are dancing laughing and finally cuddled on the couch due to exhaustion. Sibusiso is never one to actually laugh this long its actually a dream to see him like this carefree and happy. I snuggle into him also in a full blown laughter because he is my happy place. But he doesn't feel warm like always instead he feels so cold and hard like a lock of wood. I remove my hands from his midsection and they come out sticky I open my eyes to actually see why he is so cold and sticky and my hands are covered in blood. Looking back to his face there is no life in them just lifeless orbs starring into nothingness.

"Aaaaaaaaaah" I let out a scream Looking around there is no sign of Sibusiso or his lifeless body. I check my hands and they are just covered in sweat infact my whole body is covered in sweat. The door to the room opens and Enhle comes in running.

"Thando yini? Why are you screaming?"she asks and the tears just go in a flowing spree. I'm a mess shaking and still looking for Sibusiso in my room I'm scared that he might actually be gone.

"Hey it was probably a nightmare it will be fine" she is cuddled next to me trying to soothe me in comfort. I just continue crying because there is no easy way of explaining what I just experienced.

I cried as Enhle comforted me till we both eventually fell asleep in my bed. As the rays of sunshine seeped into the apartment my eyes stinged. I turned my

head away and found Enhle in my bed I was shocked but I let her be. She Probably had a bad dream and ran to sleep with me she used to do it after what she went through last year. So I get up from the bed without waking her up and go freshen up and make myself a cup of coffee. I also decide to prepare breakfast whilst she is still asleep she always gets a huge appetite in the morning. Some toasted bread fried eggs bacon and an attempt of making Vienna while trying to duck the fryng oil like I'm ducking bullets during world War II breakfast is finally prepared and ready to be gobbled on.

As I set up the table Enhle comes stumbling into the kitchen still rubbing her eyes off sleep.

" morning sleepy head." I greet her as she sits down and attempt to grab some bacon I slap her hand away.

"Hey what was that for? You know their amazing smell is what woke me up and called me out here to come eat them." she blubbers rubbing her hand and then going back to rubbing her eyes.

"Really? \*she nods her head.\* then their smell should have told you to make a trip to the bathroom first before coming to them." I reprimand her.

"Okay fine....and you better not finish the food on your own." she says and I just smile and shake my head.

"I wish I could but I can't because I prepared this for you." I tell her as she makes her way to the bathroom. She turns her head back halfway through the bathroom door.

"For me? Is it my birthday or what?" she asks peaking her head out towards me.

"No silly you slept with me in my bed and I know when that happens your hunger gets 10× worse." I tell her and this time her whole body emerges from the bathroom with a toothbrush in her mouth.

"Yes I slept in your bed but it wasn't for me this time it was for you..." she tells me whilst brushing her teeth this girl is disgusting agh.

"WHAT? For me? Why?" I ask because I'm surprised I don't remember anything last night that might have made her to sleep with me. She rushes back inside probably to spit the toothpaste.

"Yes you don't you remember that you had a bad dream last night?" she asks after coming out again with no toothbrush nor toothpaste in place guess she is done brushing her teeth. But I still

don't understand when she says I had a bad dream last night I don't remember anything.

"No!" I shake my head letting her know I don't remember anything.

"Oh well its probably not a big deal my grandmother once said that if you dream about something and then forget it the next morning it isn't real. So can I have my breakfast now?" she says nonchalantly and sits down already filling her plate with food. I just nod my head but feeling like I'm in trance I can't understand anything nor remember what happened last night all I remember was reading a book before I finally fell asleep. Nothing more and nothing less I also have breakfast but my thoughts on the alleged dream I had what did I actually dream about?

After breakfast we cleaned up the flat

before we can actually go to the hospital. I was skeptical about going but I didn't show it I just hated going to see him in that state it kills me inside. We freshened up and changed into warm clothes the hospital waiting room is a bit cold considering I wasn't probably dressed yesterday. We requested an uber and it dropped us at the hospital we went in through the entrance and just headed straight to where Themba was sitting. He looked like he didn't get a goodnight sleep I forgot to give him Sibusiso's keys last night so he can sleep there. We approach him and he has a Styrofoam cup in his hands probably a dose of caffeine in there just to keep awake.

"Sawubona" we greet him

"Sanibonani ninjani?" he greets back but you can see he needs to sleep.

" siyaphila kodwa you on the other hand



looks like your about to drop to the floor in exhaustion." I say to him as I sit down next to him. Enhle sits down next to me not even paying attention to our conversation but busy with her phone.

" Yeah eish I didn't sleep at all but there is some good news." he says this time trying to look cheerful and not someone without proper sleep.

"Good news?" I perk up in my sit ready to hear what good news are there.

"Yes I couldn't call you because I don't have your numbers..." he explains

"Forget about that and tell me the good news. Is it Sibusiso?" I'm now feeling eager and impatient to hear what he has to say.

"Well actually yes its Sibusiso he woke up from the coma doctors said it was a miracle because no one has ever woken

up from a coma in less than 24 hours time." he continues and I can't help it as the tears fall out the only difference with these ones is that they are tears of happiness not Sorrow.

"Oh Thank you God." I raise my hands in the air in praise and thanks to the Almighty.

"He is now in ICU

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probably will be there till he gets discharged." he says and then yawns. I take out the zip bag from my bag and hand it to him.

"Here these are Sibusiso's belongings the hospital gave them to us yesterday that's how we managed to call you using his phone. There are also his house keys in there I think you should go and rest we will call you when there is an update." I

tell him although he seems hesitant he also doesn't have a choice because he needs to sleep. So he takes the bag and stands up he staggers a bit but eventually finds balance.

"Ah I think an uber will do we don't want to be back here again. I would request one for you but I don't know his address." I say and look down after saying I don't know Sibu's address we never got that chance.

"It's OK I will tell you." he says and I take out my phone and request the uber as per the address he gives me. I tell him the number plate and the driver's name then he leaves. We sit in the waiting room waiting for visiting hours so I can go in and see Sibu.

Thirty minutes pass since we've been waiting according to the hospital its now visiting hours slot for Midday 11:00-

13:00. I pick up the flowers that I managed to quickly run to the store and buy. They are sunflowers and yellow because its the first color of flowers he bought me although they aren't tulips. Sunflowers are believed to brighten someone's mood mainly for their color and that they resonate the sun. They bring sunshine after a stormy day hence I bought them for him so that his hope of fully healing is nourished and doesn't give up. I walk the hospital corridors with the flower bouquet in my hands like a woman about to be married to the ultimate man of her dreams. The sweaty hands the thumping heart that seems to not want to adjust to a proper rhythm the big smile on my face that even the sight of my enemy can't wipe it off and the deep breaths so I don't pass out from a mixture of excitement and nervousness. I reach his door its even written on the outside "Sibusiso Dlamini" private hospital shandis I guess. In public hospitals you

would never get the pleasure of sleeping in your own room and own bed comfortably without worrying about being kicked off the bed because new patients need it more than you do like you're any less of a patient.

I take a deep breath and sniff the sunflowers too after I feel like my heart isn't beating out of my chest I turn the door knob and open. At this point my legs feel heavy for some unknown reason it's like they can't carry their own body the nerves have certainly settled in from the small opening in the door I can only make out a couch on the side of the wall. I gather the strength to fully open the door and push myself in; he still has a lot of machines surrounding him with cables in and out of his body. His face is barely visible because of the oxygen mask I push myself towards his bed in slow heavy strides but I finally reach the side of his bed. I sit on the provided chair

before I can fall down with the way my legs are shaking I couldn't carry myself up for any more second. I put the flowers on the side table facing the window the light illuminates the flowers and they are just beautiful to watch I even take out my phone and click a picture.

"Hhm hhm." I hear the sounds and I almost drop my phone because the silence in this room when I got in you wouldn't think of any noise or sound any time soon.

With my heart beating out of my chest I put my phone back in my pocket and look at Sibusiso on the bed he has his eyes open and trying to move.

"Hey..hey..calm down uzozilimaza." I tell him as I get ahold of his hand and try to call him down. His hands aren't cold today and that warms my heart but they're also not warm either like I'm used

to. He squeezes my hands with his fingers guess that is the only way he can communicate for now.

"Ungithusile yazi how could you even think of leaving me Sibuzi? I ask him and the rainworks have started again I was hurt heck I am hurt. My heart is heavy because he is still in hospital and he can't even give me one sexy smirk of his. He squeezes my hands again and tries to shake his head sideways but there is little to no movement at all. I wipe my tears and also shake my head too "dont you dare even try to move you will hurt yourself." I reprimand him some more.

"Oh I got you sunflowers..." I say raising the flowers up to his view.

"I hope they give you some sunshine and hope." he tries to nod his head but I shake my head no before he can even think about it and instead he squeezes

my hand like he's been doing.

"And Themba left thirty minutes ago I gave him your apartment keys because he was exhausted he was here the whole night so I persuaded him to leave. And oh apparently your family is coming today to see you. " I keep blabbering to keep him engaged in a conversation instead of just starring into each other's eyes. I was about to tell him about the panic attack but I figured it will set him back and I need him to heal so I can get to take him out on a date too.

He tries smiling with his eyes and its the most beautiful thing to witness my dad used to tell me that mom had the most beautiful smile because she smiled even with her eyes. I guess even Sibusiso can smile with his eyes in this case crucial times call for crucial ways to get things done.



"Oh I almost forgot I brought my favourite book with me I can read it for you if you would like." he squeezes my hand to tell me he would like to and I tuck my hand in the bag to retrieve the book and my reading glasses.

"The book is titled Poetic Rhythm by Tokisho M so it's solely poems." I tell him as I page through the book to my favorite piece. I finally find it it's called Remember me and I start reading it allowed to him

"Imagine me  
lying lifeless and skinny  
with just shackles of bones left.  
Imagine me in my casket  
bronzed and shiny  
but my skin ashy and dry.

Imagine me with my lips cracked  
And my flesh stone cold being lowered  
down the six feet tomb by the  
undertakers.

Imagine me as they finally fill my grave  
with soil

while my mother weeps with tears and  
mucus running down her cheeks  
and the Pastor finally chants "ashes to  
ashes soil to soil and bones to bones."  
Imagine me six feet deep and never to  
return...

But but please remember me;  
as the bubbly soul with  
enough flesh on my bones  
to make out those love handles you loved  
so much.

Remember me with my hearty laughter  
and giggles that always  
turned your gloomy days  
into rays of sunshine and happiness.

Remember me by my horrible singing  
voice that was always screeching when I  
sang you your favorite song but you still  
loved it regardless.

Even though you tried to cover your ears every damn time.

Remember me my love as your best friend that always cuddled you to sleep and put my other leg over yours and got tangled up into the sheets till the morning sunrise.

Remember me as Joy not Sorrow and Sadness but Happiness and Contentment."

After reading it I look at him and he still has his eyes open he was constantly giving me hand squeezes as I read him this piece I guess it touched him and liked it as much as I liked it.

"Did you like it?" I ask him just to be sure I'm not boring him most people I've met don't like reading and poetry is close to non-existent in the list of things they like. But I hope Siby likes it because books were my boyfriend before he came along

hopefully he squeezes himself into being part of my interests. After squeezing my hand to say he liked it my lips break out into a smile and continues to page through the book reading him more pieces. He eventually falls asleep and as much as I try to keep my eyes open and my yawning to a minimum I fall asleep too still holding onto his hand.

31.

"Hau Themba didn't tell us there will be someone in here mos." voice one says.

"Well forget about Themba ubhuti wakho me akhuluma icqiniso mabe athi unentombi kakade. " voice two says.

"Whatever!." voice one says.

"Hhm so ubafo ma'be athenga izimbali be athengela intombazana ngempela let me take a video for evidence he should

explain when he wakes up" voice three says.

"Hai mahn wena Nkazimulo uzokhula nini ngempela? Uyadina yazi" voice four says in a reprimanding but softer tone.

I'm woken up by the noises inside the room I lift my head up from Sibusiso's bed and the noises die down. As I'm stretching my arms to the air my left arm feels constrained and heavy I look down and find that I'm still holding onto Sibusiso's hand. I smile and try to free myself from his hold but he actually holds me tighter this man he acts like a big baby sometimes. I hear giggles but I don't mind them I look out the window and it shows that the sun is setting I didn't even realize that I've been sleeping for that long.

"Uhm Sibuh it's late I have to go" I tell him and there are gasps in the room.

"She's even allowed to call him Sibuhem really wonders shall cease" the voice three I heard says I just thought my head was playing tricks on me. I thought I was hallucinating when I heard the voices but I guess I wasn't. I turn my head towards the other part of the room and there is an older man and woman standing by the door few feet from Sibuhiso's bed. The woman is short with a big afro on her head and smiling she even has dimples. The man is tall and dark like Sibuhiso and Themba but he looks more like Themba than Sibuhiso. On the couch I saw earlier when I got in here is a girl probably few years younger than me typing furiously on her phone. She has the same hair that I've seen Karabo with and her nails are super long I wonder how she wipes her ass with those I figure out that she might be "the princess".

On the same couch there is another guy also on his phone but he isn't intensely invested into it like Princess over there. Next to that guy on the armrest of the couch there is a duplicate of him this one also has a phone lifted up taking a video or a picture I don't know the flesh sold him out. I guess this are the notorious Dlamini twins Themba is nowhere in sight and the nerves come out to play I'm just awestruck and don't know what to say. If only Themba was here atleast I know him even though I've known him for few hours but it would have been better to have a familiar face. I can't believe that I'm actually meeting Sibusiso's family in the hospital not after my lobola ceremony or atleast during a family gathering where he will introduce me officially. But No he decided to get involved in a car accident and leave me in the most awkward situations to fend for myself.

I'm so confused as to what I should do I

look at them then look back at Sibusiso and our joined hands and back at them again then the hands. I try to free myself from his grip but its so strong for someone who is in hospital and in ICU.

"Sawubona mntanam." the beautiful short woman greets me I think she is the mother. She just has this motherly aura around her the one that makes you pour out all your fears and darkest secrets and let you cry out to your hearts content without her judging you. And just give you the tightest and warmest hug ever invented by mothers.

"I..I.. uhm..Sawubona Ma and everyone else." nerves!damn them can they just disappear for a moment atleast.I have never stuttered in front of elders but as much as Sibusiso's mother has a warm motherly aura the man next to her can make you piss your pants from just one look. He is this tall dark man with broad



shoulders and chest as I said the older replica of Themba. He looks like he was made out of dark strong clay that has been annealed in a furnace instead of just a normal fire with firewood and then quenched in cold water from the Antarctic.

The princess let's out a chuckle in the corner guess she likes seeing me in misery.

Speaking of Themba he decides to show himself after I almost just embarrassed myself in front of his whole family. I let out a breath I didn't even realize I was holding just seeing him walk in. He halts in his steps as he comes face to face with me standing next to Sibusiso's bed and his whole family surrounding us.

"Uhm Eish.." he scratches his head in embarrassment and after finally soaking in the awkward energy in the room.

"Uhm Baba noMa and everyone else

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meet Thandolwethu Ndlovu intombi ya bafo." he introduces me and I don't know how to act so I just bow my head to avoid looking them in the eye and seeing their reactions. There are murmurs filling up the room and I try by all means to keep my tears at bay Sibusiso's condition has made me super sensitive I was never one to shed tears regularly like these.

"Ngijabuleli uku'kwazi mntanam I'm this idiot mother." she says trying to slap Themba on his head and its funny because she is short and Themba is super tall. She gives him one look and Themba can't help it but bend so his own mother can slap him.

"Nice to meet you MaNdlovu I knew you existed when this idiot bought you

flowers from my wife and still pretended they were mom's. I mean who would buy flowers here in Pretoria for someone in KZN. Anyways I'm the most handsome brother but unfortunately taken Nkazimulo the boy with the sauce..." he blabbers and greets me with just a wave of his hand the phone still in his hands recording.

"...And this is my duplicate copy Nkanyiso don't mind him he can be mute sometimes I don't know how he even managed to woo his wife to marry him." he is stepping on his toes as he introduces him and I can't help but chuckle at his sense of humor he is definitely the troublesome twin.

"Hi!" Nkanyiso waves his hand in greeting without even raising his head from the phone he kinds of use it as a protective shield to not engage in conversations with others. So I don't bother trying to

talk to him a second of silence befalls us and we just standing as we were.

"Hau and then Madame? Greet the poor girl you found her in here not the other way." their mother calls out to the Princess on the couch and she just groans in response.

"Heh ngiyalingwa ngempela we ntombazane angikuzwanga khuluma phela." she says this approaching the couch she looks like a little fireball about to rain some flames upon her. She quickly stands up from the couch and says "Hi my name is Princess and nice to meet you." I actually thought princess was just their way of describing her not her actual name. She even talks with the private school accent definitely a princess living up to its name.

"Good" the mother says even moving them from the couch so she can sit down.

In all this interactions Sibusiso's father hasn't said a single word and I don't know if that is a good thing or a bad thing. All I know is that at the sound of his voice I will embarrass myself further by peeing on myself. So before he can even think of saying anything I have to get out of here.

"Uhm it was nice meeting all of you kodwa kufanele ngihambe sekwephuze kakhulu." I quickly pack up the book I was reading and my reading glasses. Sibusiso's loosened his grip a while ago and I managed to free my hand then I hang my bag on my shoulder and quickly move to the door. The problem now is that Sibusiso's father is standing in the way of the door and I have no plan in motion as to how I will get out through him.

"Hai mahn Patrick woza uzohlala phansi

its bad manners to stand at the door." Sibusiso's mother says to her scary husband and surprisingly he actually moves. The power this woman has ngiyayisaba. I look at her and she gives me a wink and a smile.

"Thank you." I murmur and she just nods I quickly get out of the room without any other word and to avoid prolonging my stay for any longer. Walking back on this hospital corridors I walked few hours ago my heart is beating out of my chest. I am walking in hurried steps so I can get out of here sooner than later I still can't believe that I met Sibu's family in a hospital at that. The nerves haven't left me yet I'm even shaking due to shock I find a chair and slump into it to catch a break and get my breathing to normal. After I have calmed down I take out my phone to request an uber to my place if it was still early I would have walked but its late now and I'm not about to feed myself

to the wolfs of this city. It says its two minutes away and I stand up from the chair and get out of the hospital to the front entrance. I sent Enhle a text "You will never believe what happened. Anyways I'm on the way." I press sent and get into the car. Looking back at the hospital I shake my head still in bewilderment of what happened it fades from my sight as we drive off.

32.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

As the uber stops at the gate my phone rings I take it out of my pocket and find out its Enhle calling. Seems like girl got my message I get out of the car after paying and also try to answer Enhle's call she can get a bit impatient sometimes so I just answer it.

"We mfazi I'm downstairs wait for me to get inside the house first before you ask me questions." I tell her before she can say anything else.

"Mxm oho waste of airtime I could have saved it to buy data yazi." she sulks and I don't even pay heed to her I never said she must call perks of liking gossip.

"And I remember saying I'm on my way not please call me." I say even pointing out my tongue to her as if she is in front of me.

"Sanibonani." I greet the security guards and they wave back in greetings.

"Bu..but." Enhle says on the other side and I drop the call she has airtime to waste this one.

I reach my flat in just two minutes and before I could take my keys out the door



in front of me is pulled open. Guess who? Yes yours truly Enhle hai as I said gossip monger she likes news this one.

"So tell me what happened that I shouldn't believe?" she asks me immediately with one hand on her waist and the other on the door handle. Tapping his left foot on the ground like a Yoruba mother you can never win with those nigerian mothers. I slump down my shoulders and let out a sigh.

"Enhle atleast let me come in first and sit down maybe even eat something before you bombard me with any questions" I reply in a tired tone just being in hospital is draining on its own regardless of whether you're the patient or visitor. Plus I got to meet the Dlamini entourage whom I wasn't even ready to meet despite Themba mentioning they will come today. So you can guess how I'm feeling right now embarrassed and tired I

didn't even check if I was drooling after I woke up the way I was so nervous and in a trance.

"Okay fine you win for now." she says moving from the doorway so I can get in she closes and locks the door behind me. I head straight to the kitchen for a glass of water to hydrate Enhle is at my feet with the way she is eager to hear all that I'm about to say I hope she hasn't forgotten what she studied so far because she has an exam tomorrow. I gulp down the glass of water before I choke on it the look Enhle is giving me its unexplainable really so let me keep shut.

I decide to make her sweat a bit so I just take my handbag and head to my room.

"I need to change my clothes and take a nap." I tell her not giving it away that I'm just pranking her again the look she is giving me if she could I would be buried

by

now.

"There is no nap being taken here and definitely no changing of clothes you have news to spill so start talking girly." she snatches the bag from me before I can reach my bedroom door she throws it on the couch and the next thing she holds onto is my arm. She drags me to the very same couch she threw my bag on and makes me sit down like a child getting reprimanded. I comply because who has the nerve to say no to Enhle she can be a little demoness when provoked. She sits down too pulling the fleece to her waist and then faces me.

"So start mfazi what is the unbelievable news of the century?" she asks me again I finally lost count of how many times she nagged me to spill the beans about what happened today. I also adjust the way I'm sitting so I can be a bit comfortable I start biting my nails and Enhle gives me a

raised eyebrow. I let out a sigh

"Okay fine I will tell you nawe uthanda izindaba yazi..." I give into her demands she has her ears flared out ready to take in whatever will come out of my mouth.

"Well I met Sibusiso's family..."

"Wow thata girl already meeting the in-laws." she interrupts me before I can finish the whole story.

"I thought you said you wanted to know what happened kodwa you're disturbing me. I think its time for me to have that nap don't you think so?" I pretend to pick up my bag and standing up from the couch.

"No..no don't you dare and I'm sorry I will keep shut." she says quickly even putting her finger on her lips.

"Anyways as I was saying I met Sibusiso's family and I'm not just talking about the brothers I'm talking both parents brothers and the little sister." I continue narrating the earlier events of the afternoon.

"So the whole Dlamini gang was present?" I nod my head \* tjo hectic." Enhle asks Cleary shocked.

"Well except for the wives and kids but yeah they were all there and I can't tell you how embarrassing it was enough for me." I tell her hiding my face in my palms and shaking my head.

"Well chaza phela I'm listening." Enhle says even tucking on the throw pillow on her thighs she clearly is enjoying the story of my embarrassment.

"Well I kinda of fell asleep after Sibusiso went to sleep neh then jiki jiki there are voices

in the room and I'm just there in my dreamland thinking it's probably just my wild imagination. But I still wake up anyways bare in mind I slept holding hands with my man and after waking up I see ukuthi ilanga lihambile phela. So I'm like let me take my hand back so I can get out here but Mr Man decides to tighten his grip on our hold. Now there are giggles mgani and they ain't coming from me so I turn around and cwaka the room is full to the brim that I can't even breathe..." I'm narrating the events that happened to the best of my capabilities.

"Heh yimovie le continue phela im listening." she claps her hands once and looks at me to continue.

"First people that come into my view are the parents the mother is yellow boned chubby and short with the most gorgeous black afro most girls could only dream of. She has this gorgeous smile revealing her

dimples now moving my eyes to the mountain next to her I find out its not actually a mountain but a man. Enhle I'm talking about a scary man one look from that man will have you apologizing for shit you never did. You remember Themba right?" I ask her.

"Yes I do you remember the way were so scared to approach him yesterday at the hospital?" she says to me

" yep you hit the bulls eye chommie imagine Themba a bit darker more taller and more muscles but older." I tell her and leave her to imagine and from that little shiver she gives out I guess she got the picture.

"Scary..." she says to me.

"Now imagine that Scary men you're still imagining just starring at you

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**I guess she got the picture.**

**"Scary..." she says to me.**

**"Now imagine that Scary men you're still imagining just starring at you no words exchanged just a scary stare like those guys that guard the fidelity with their AK-47s." I tell her and she shivers again and shakes her head probably trying to get rid of the image in her head.**

**" I'm embarrassed to say I was five to to actually piss on my pants if I didn't get out of that room at the time I actually got out. Worst part was that Themba was no where in sight he came after a few minutes when his mother decided to break the silence and politely greet me. I got to thank her because if she hadn't greeted me first I would have just stared at them like a kid caught**



**stealing cookies from the cookie jar. That's how tongue tied I was the other twin brother was even recording the whole thing and God help me I hope its gets deleted before he can even think of backing it up." I continue narrating and Enhle is howling from laughter I guess my misery is a laughing joke. She even has tears coming out of her eyes from all the laughing she's doing and I don't find it funny. So I stand up from the couch and...**

**"Wait...wait where are you going? You're not done with the story though." she says in between laughs you'd swear she wasn't scared a minute ago when I told him about Sibu's father. Guess it's more funnier cause she wasn't the one found sleeping besides their son in the hospital at that.**

**"Oh I figured you know that the story is over since you're laughing. I guess you see me as a comedy relief don't you?" I sarcastically say to her and head to my room she follows me but I'm quick enough to enter my room and close the door behind me before she can get inside. She bangs at the door**

**"Thando please open Hau I didn't mean to laugh it's just that I imagined you peeing on yourself that's why I laughed." she says banging the door again as much as she tries to keep it in the laughter keeps bubbling up. I take off my shoes and coat and sit on my bed while she talks her nonsense.**

**"Oh well continue using your imagination you might know the whole story. And stop banging on my door I want to call ubaba wami." I**

**tell her while I ransack my coat for my phone I find it and dial my father's numbers before I can press call Enhle strikes again...**

**"Ncese mgani for ukukuhleka it won't happen again." she shouts from the other side.**

**"Apology not accepted now leave my door alone before you break it." I say turning back to my phone I wait a moment to hear if she will say anything but she doesn't. Maybe she left so I call dad and he answers after the first ring**

**"Hau hau mtanam Thandolwethu bo Unjani?" he answers immediately I don't know if its surprise or excitement that I hear in his tone but he acts like I never call him every damn time we talk this old man**

**drama king ngempela.**

**"Yebo Baba ngiyaphila unjani?" I respond after a giggle.**

**"Hai cha Ngi'right kodwa hai angeke bo I have a daughter kodwa I never see her in this house ngiyethemba ukuthi eGoli akamgwinyi." did I not say drama king yep definitely I mean I was just home last month and it hasn't even been more than three weeks kodwa ke ubabNdlovu ngo BabNdlovu ngempela.**

**" hau baba une haba kodwa intombi yakho ikhulile manje asiyo yona ingani." I try justifying my actions but I know they will enter one ear and come out the other ear.**

**"Hai suka there is no such there is no child ever too old for his/her parents. And wena Thandolwethu Ndlovu**

**usemcane kakhulu and ngikukhumbula yazi." he finally tell me he misses me I miss him too kodwa going home now isn't even an option I have. I have work on the other hand and Sibuy on the other.**

**"Thando khuluma phela angikhulume ngedwa lapha " my dad says from the other side if the line I must have been lost in thoughts.**

**"Oh sorry baba nami ngiyakukhumbula kodwa you know I have a job I can't come home now." he sighs on the other side and I also let out a sigh. Being away from him was hard at first but for him I think its worse because he is old and alone although not that old but I get that he is lonely.**

**"Kuwazwakala mtanam but please make time I will even book you a**

**flight if need be." \*claps hands\* my dad has always been against me taking a flight but now all of a sudden he is even willing to pay for it just because he wants me home.**

**"Heh this is new Baba u'right? I hope its not what I'm thinking." I say to him getting scared that maybe he is sick or dying from a serious illness.**

**"Suka I'm still strong as an Ox angiyi ndawo but I have to tell you something and you have to be home for that okay." he tells me in his tone the nervous one that he used when I had my first period and he was busy explaining the birds and the bees to me. It was funny that I always remind him of how he was even sweating nje trying to end the conversation as fast as he can. He is truly the best his best way of explaining to me to stay from boys**

**was him saying if I come in contact with a boy I will suffer from a severe rash and bleed nonstop. He said this when I was still in grade 3 imagine the trauma I went through when some of the boys in my class will come near me I will run so fast like I was being chased by a dog because I didn't want to get a rash or bleed. Now I can't even tell him about Sibule because instead of me flying to Durban he will be the one flying here and even gather the whole police force to come help him find Sibule. I don't even want to imagine the chaos of it all.**

**"Okay dad I heard you but I will come the weekend after month end. Is that fine?"**

**"Yeah I can live with that. Ubalelise u Enhle lapho." he says.**

**"Ngizomtshela ulale kahle baba."**

**"Ulale kahle mtanam." he drops the call first like he is the one that called. And if he calls and I drop the call first he will call me again and tell me about calling me with his airtime not the other way round.**

**After the call I go to the bathroom to wash away the hospital stench on my clothes and body I change into a warmer set of pajamas and go to the kitchen. Enhle isn't in the kitchen but there is a piece of paper on the kitchen counter.**

**"Please forgive for laughing at you but I'm still waiting for the whole story.**

**To make up for my apology I prepared for you you're favourite pasta. You can smile now you know I know you want to." I smile she is**



**crazy this one. I find a pen and scribble at the back of the paper.**

**"You're forgiven and thank you for the pasta." I scribble and head to the microwave to get my food. I haven't eaten since breakfast so my stomach is truly complaining. I stuff myself with the pasta but I wish the weekend wasn't over yet tomorrow is Monday yet again. God help me after eating I wash my bowl and head to my bedroom I need the rest this weekend has been hell and I never want to experience it again.**

**33.**

**THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.**

I don't know how or when everything changed but I have gotten into a new routine different from seven months ago. I would like to believe Sibusiso is the biggest factor that actually influenced the

new routine I have managed to stick to right now. It has been a full four weeks of Sibusiso being in hospital and he is finally getting discharged. I spent the last month like a programmed robot get up in the morning and go to work after work the taxi would drop me off at the hospital where I will spent atleast one hour or more. After the hospital visit I go straight to my apartment have a chit chat session with Enhle if there is any over dinner then sleep. No extra mural activities were inserted in there it was a strict routine without even squeezing in a walk or an ice cream date with Enhle. That's how hectic my life has been I still haven't told Sibu and Dad about the panic attack but I guess it might come out in a conversation this weekend with dad you never know. Sibusiso will be discharged whilst I'm still at work so I wont get to see him today. After a month of seeing him everyday in hospital I won't get a chance to see him when he gets discharged because I'm

going home after work.

I'm just thankful to God and his ancestors that he is better now his ribs have healed and he can laugh without hurting himself or clutching to his midsection when he walks. All that is left is the cast in his arm which will be taken off a week from now that's what the doctor said so I guess he knows best. Speaking of doctors there was a female doctor before well actually a physiotherapist I didn't and still don't like her because she was always trying to flirt with my man like you don't take advances on another woman's man. Every time I saw her I felt like dragging her with her fake tits and throwing her into the ocean to drown. And don't tell me about her stupid accent that she claims she has it because she studied in the UK like since when does just a mere four years make a person gain new accent nonsense. This other day when I was visiting Sibiu just like all the other

days after work I find her in the room busy touching my man in the name of I'm inspecting him for any hidden injuries that the other doctor has missed. Like you're a fucken physiotherapist not a General Doctor that knows all illnesses and diseases in the medical field.

\*Two weeks back\*

It's a Monday and the weather feels like a minus degrees Celsius outside work on the other hand the customers just keep rolling into the store like they're being transported inside via a conveyer belt. In my head I'm thinking how does one get out of bed in this weather to do their groceries especially on a Monday in the middle of the month. Gauteng people are a special breed of their own and I don't wish to get infected with whatever virus they have I love the comfort of my blankets in my bed drinking hot coffee or hot chocolate. If I didn't have a job or

having to work in order to pay bills I will forever be in the comfort of my room with novels surrounding me and no plans of going out. Now as I was saying it's cold that I have extra layers compared to normal underneath my work uniform. The day went through in a haze and I just wanted it to end so that I can go sleep even thinking of not passing by the hospital because I'm freezing.

After work I went straight to the taxis and sat in the middle since someone had the spot I like the most behind the driver. but I soldiered on consoling myself by saying its just a sit no big deal but the fact that this day has been long cold and frustrating my mood just went straight to below zero like the damn weather. I decided there and then that I need my bed more than Siby needs me especially today. The taxi left Menlyn after getting full and I can't say what happened along the way but as the taxi got into Francis

baard street I saw myself getting off at the hospital. My brain has already programmed itself that I should stop here before I could go to my flat.

With my headsets in my ears listening to music I walk into the hospital I greet the few people that I've gotten to converse with once or twice in the last two weeks of my constant visits. I greet the receptionist too and just go straight to the ICU section of the hospital where Sibusiso is admitted I pass the many doors with other patients in them in the corridor and finally reach his room. Before I can get in I hear a voice from inside the room and it's not male definitely my gender.

"How does that feel?" I stop at the door and listen

"What about here does it feel better?" she asks again hau ugirl is asking a patient in

ICU how they feel someone who can't even speak because of the tubes going in and out of his mouth. I finally get inside but I don't just budge in like an angry bull I'm super calm like still water. I walk in slowly the girl is by Sibusiso bed busy touching him like a masseuse and last I checked this hospital does not offer body massage services. She has his free hand in her hands making him touch her fake silicon boobs I'm livid but I don't disturb her yet.

"Do you like that? It's good for your stress levels to go down." she tells him busy touching him and still making him touch her breast. I always heard about men also experiencing sexual harassment but this is next level insane. This girl has bipolar you can't tell me nothing I take out my phone from my bag without making noise. I don't want to make my presence obvious I go to camera switch to video and press record. Sibusiso sees

me but I shake my head so that he doesn't alert her I make sure Sibusiso's face isn't shown in the video. After I'm satisfied with what I gathered I make my presence known.

"Hum hum" I clear my throat to get her attention. She quickly lets go of Sibusiso's arm like a baby let's go a kettle when she finds out it's hot. She turns around and looks at me then looks back at Sibusiso pretending to inspect his injured arm and write something in the file she has. This girl just ignored me or what because no one mizes me like that and get away with it.

"Eh excuse me madam you should also write that you are a sexual harassment offender." I tell her with my bitchy poker face on I've already strangled the air out of her lungs and hit her in the bathroom for her coworkers to find later after I'm gone. She is now sweating and shaking



after I make her realize that I saw what she did.

"I...I.. I'm not sure if your blind or what but I was just my doing my job." she stutters at first but seems to get courage to talk proper trying to put up a little bit of an attitude heck she even rolled her eyes at me. Me Thandolwethu Ndlovu MaGatsheni I am really being tested shame.

"Mmmh so the hospital has masseuse services nowadays that gives the staff permission to harass their patients?" I ask her taking a jab at her job and I know it will get to her. Her ears and nose flare up and I know I got my mission accomplished. She breaths in and out and I'm just folding my arms looking at her. Sibusiso is just a bystander and he can't say anything even if he could I wouldn't let him this bitch touched him unnecessarily.

"No for your kind information I'm a physiotherapist and I was trying to check if his nerve tissue is damaged beyond repair or what..." she says now facing me clearly mad like colored people mad her face is so red out of anger and to be honest I don't care. She decided to harass the wrong person today and I will make sure she pays for it.

"From my knowledge your focus should be on bones and joints not his nerves awuyona ineurosurgan ke wena sisi. And weren't you appointed to check his arm? Since that's what's broken not his abs nor your fake boobs ke sisi. " her anger at this point is at a 100 she is super red with anger and has smoke coming out of her ears like she ate chilies.

"And amabele wakho akuwona ama stress balls nor should you subject your sexual desires on amaPatient." I tell her

and the shaking and sweating returns. She gulps down what I assume is the last of her dignity hanging on a thin worn out thread.

"You...you..you don't have proof I didn't do anything." she stutters but fear written all over his face. I look at her straight in the eye.

"Is it? That's what you think but if you don't hand in your resignation immediately you get out of here sisi. You will face my wrath and that means losing your license." I threaten her and she doesn't seem to believe me and honestly I don't care if she believes me or not. I walk slowly towards her I read her name tag and it's written Jansen well I mean bitch doctor Jansen. Definitely a colored bitch I saw the red ears at first but had my doubts because of her British accent. Sis really is trying to run away from her roots but she don't understand that the

roots don't die by just cutting the branches you have to dig out the tree/uproot it from the ground for it to die.

"Tsi tsi tsi...Doctor Jansen... you don't know me but please continue..." I point her towards the door and she stomps out of the room angry and I'm glad she should learn to set boundaries and live up to the oath she took. No one harasses my family or loved ones and get away with it

"Vele hamba uyeke ukunyonyobela amadoda abantu. Have some self respect nyoctor." I say after her and she doesn't turn back she just bangs the door on her way out.

"Physiotherapist my foot. Busy massaging my man did I say I can't massage him myself. Ungijwayela kabi." I keep on ranting as I sit next to Sibusiso

he is just looking at me like I'm crazy. I'm crazy because of him he is busy letting that girl with stock sweet fingers touch him.

"Nawe Sibusiso hai why did you have to get involved in an accident now I have to deal with all this people surrounding you like flies surrounding amasimba." I say to him getting ahold of his arm the same one that bitch used to touch her fake breasts. I quickly go to the sanitizer dispenser and take a sanitizer towel and wipe him. We don't want her germs spreading all over his body.

"I'm sorry you had to go through that. And to think I wasn't coming today because I'm tired I can't seem to imagine what that bitch could have tried to do to you. But don't worry about her uzoboshwa and I will make sure of it." he squeezes my hand and I'm glad we're on the same page people are psychos out

here and chances are she's been doing this to other patients that were in more critical conditions compared to Sibu and couldn't call for help like him too. I sat with him for an hour then finally left to my flat after I went to the hospital's director to lay a complaint against that girl.

So you can imagine how the situation has been I'm just glad we managed to get through that hurdle. Her medical license ended up being revoked and got arrested because more evidence came up from other patients of hers. Woman can be perpetrators of sexual harassment abuse and even worse molestation but society isn't ready to talk about that. They say a man is strong and if he experiences something like this he is never given an ear or in worst cases they never speak out because they will be deemed weak. And it's actually bullshit imagine if it happens to your boy child and you tell

them to keep quiet what then? They grow up with the trauma and the after effects are that when they're older and can defend themselves they decide to pay back the revenge of wounds that were inflicted on when they were still kids. The brain never forgets it might reboot for a few months or years but truth is it will remember no matter how hard you want to suffer from selective memory loss.

At work I was fidgeting in impatience I just wanted the day to be over already so that I can go home. Sibusiso will be staying at Themba's house until he gets better and can take care of himself. His parents and little sister had to go back to KZN earlier because she had classes to attend and the homestead needed its owners. As the taxi is heading to town I stare at the scenery that on a normal day I never give even a single glance. I pass the Jacaranda trees leafless dull and grey the main reason Pretoria is called

Jacaranda city they are everywhere and more beautiful in summer. The buildings high short and others just in the middle their only similarity is the grey color just like the Jacaranda trees. On a normal day in the past four weeks I wouldn't hesitate to tell you about how they resonate my mood but today its different. My mood is on a hundred that I can even moonwalk to the airport but pity I can't moonwalk. My heart is finally at peace and I'm happy that I won't get to see the hospital corridors anymore and drink their horrible coffee. I'm happy that when I get back from home I will get to see Sibu in a different light more stronger and healthier. The taxi finally reaches town and I get off and walk to my flat I don't pay heed to the people on the streets today I just walk by like all the other people in the city without greeting.

I reach my flat in five minutes time I get inside and head to my room. Enhle isn't



here yet but she said she will be here to sent me off. I've already packed my luggage last night so that I don't do everything in a hurry and forget my essentials. I quickly go to the bathroom and take a quick shower I change into more warmer clothes than my uniform. Enhle comes in as I'm moving my luggage to the sitting room

"Leaving without saying goodbye?" a deeper voice says instead of Enhle's usual soft and monotone one. I lift up my head shocked and scared that I'm experiencing a break in for the first time ever in my life. I find Sibusiso right in the middle of my sitting room looking way better than he has ever looked in the last four weeks. He's casted arm the first noticeable thing on him looking way better than he has ever looked in the last four weeks. He's casted arm the first noticeable thing on him he has on grey sweat pants and a long sleeved sweat shirt with a coat over

his

shoulders.

"You? What are you doing here?...I mean shouldn't you be at home resting?" I ask him still shocked as to how he came here and why he isn't in bed taking rest. I maneuver through the sitting room and get to him.

"And you shouldn't be standing for long woza." I guide him to seat on the couch after I reprimand him he gives me a smirk and I just shake my head. Glad to see he hasn't changed still cocky as ever.

"I'm right where I'm supposed to be MaNdlovu." he answers me after we have sat down. I'm busy fussing over him trying to make him comfortable by putting some throw pillows around him for support. One thing about Sibusiso he doesn't have timing he just says whatever comes to him at that time and doesn't really care about consequences.

"Stop being a charmer now and how did you even get in? I'm 100% sure I locked the door on my way in." I ask him again because I know he doesn't have the keys to the flat.

"Oh well you know a man has to have a plan especially when it comes to his woman." he says pride and cockyness spewing out of him. You'd swear he didn't just get discharged the way he is talking a lot of nonsense.

"Okay ke Mr a man has to have a plan. Mawunjele Unjani?"

"Ngi'right MaNdlovu wena Unjani?"

"Ngi'right Sibuy ngisendleleni yokuhamba ngisayo bona ubaba ekhaya. I already told you this yesterday." I say to him because I know he might say I didn't tell him before.

"You did?" see you can never win with this one.

"Yebo Sibuh ngishilo ukuthi ngyahamba olwesihlano and that is today. Wena uzwile kanjani?" I'm looking him in the eyes as I ask him for incase he tries to come up with a lie to defend himself. He also looks at me straight in the eyes and then smirks he takes ahold of my hand and boy am I glad his hands are warm like before. The tingles and electric current go through my arm to the rest of my body I'm all warm and giddy and I can't help but let out a smile.

"Yini?" he asks looking all over my face

"Nothing." I shake my head and drop my eyes and look at our joined hands.

"Anyway mina ngizele ikiss yam lana MaNdlovu. Maunshaye ka ye one." he

says and I'm blushing profusely feeling shy I still don't look back up.

"I'm waiting MaNdlovu or ufun'shiwa ipanoyi?" damn him I even forgot that I have a flight to catch because of him busy demanding kisses from me. I jolt from the couch and give him a quick peck in his cheek and try to leave. But I can't because nigga has my hand in his the grip is so strong it reminds me of that day I met his parents. I turn back to him look at our hands then look at his face I raise my eyebrow in question.

"Hai Kuya cacisa ukuthi awufuni kuhamba MaNdlovu." he says nonchalantly and even let's out a whistle looking around the room..

"WHAT?" I shout and he just gives me one look that gets me quiet before I can continue with my little rant. He gets up from the couch and stand head to head

with me uh I mean head to chest. He is so tall that I always feel like a little chihuahua next to a bulldog. I gulp down at the sight of his broad chest for someone who has been in hospital for weeks he is still really buff.

"So you were saying?" he asks me raising my chin so I get to look at him in the eyes.

"I...I.." I stutter my brain is blank of words. His eyes have me hypnotized to a point where I can't even see or hear any movement or noise around us at this point.

"That wasn't a proper kiss MaNdlovu." he says to me and I gulp down again

"It wasn't?" I ask him my voice so low like a whisper I bet I didn't even hear myself speak.

"Yes it wasn't Thandolwam kodwa Unga'worry ngisokubonisa endlela eright yakucabuza umuntu wakho." I gulp down again I'm sure at this point I've run out of saliva to gulp down my mouth feels so dry.

"You will?" this time I sound like Banzi from isiThembiso hoarse raspy and slow.

"Yes I will." he says with his deep velvety voice and I'm weak to my knees. He has me locked with just his one arm and it feels like I'm a piece of paper with no weight whatsoever. In no time he has me in a lip lock my insides are mushy and the butterflies in my tummy are having a field play with no director to tell them what to do. He is kissing me like a thirsty man after walking through the desert with no drop of water and once he gets to the first well he drinks from it until his thirst is quenched. I come up for air and my head is spinning I feel like I'm seeing

stars and almost lose my footing as my knees are wobbly and weak.

"Manje ukahamba Nkosazana angfuni ubabawakho a thumele amaredberets just to look for you." he says to me and I can't help but laugh this man is really crazy but I love him like that.

"Hau manje you're the one sending me away after you got what you wanted?" I ask him because all along he didn't want me to go until I gave him a kiss and now he is already talking about my dad sending a search party if I don't leave right away.

"Hau MaNdlovu don't act like you didn't want what I wanted too you didn't even want to let go.." he says to me with a smirk and I can't help but just stare at him in awe I'm speechless.

"You..you.. agh!" I throw a tantrum as I



gather my bags and head to the door.

"Oh finally you're done I was freezing out here." Enhle says as I open the door I find her outside I guess I now know how he got in.

"You?.. agh you know what ngiyahamba." I say to Enhle as it dawns on me that he let him in she is a traitor this one. I attempt to pass through her but she blocks the way.

"You can't leave without giving me my hug." she says and immediately has her arms around me in what feels like a choke slam instead of a hug.

"Okay...okay." I say tapping her to say ngizilwe and I have to go time isn't on my side.

"Now you can go." she tells me after letting me go.

"Whew Good and bye I still have to request an uber and if I miss my flight you two will have to explain to ubaba ukuthi why I didn't arrive at the appropriate time." I say to the both of them they exchange looks and Sibuy comes hurriedly to my side whilst Enhle takes my luggage from me.

"Now that you've mentioned it we will take you to the airport." Enhle says to me I look at her then Sibuy then back to her again.

"Is it? With what your bicycle? That's if you even have one. Ugazodlala ngami wena." I try to take back the luggage from her but she pulls it back behind her.

"Well yes I don't have a bicycle Thando and so do you but someone does have a car." he points to Sibuy with her eyes she has to be kidding me there is no way he

is driving and I won't let him. I will even take the damn car keys to KZN with me if needs be.

"He is not driving and that's because I'm saying so don't make me mad Enhle nawe Sibuh." I tell them both and get out of the apartment.

"And please lock the door on your way out and bring the luggage downstairs since you guys want to act like my butlers." I tell them

"Damn you're sexy when you're mad MaNdlovu." Sibuh says in the background but I don't turn back I continue walking down the staircase. I get to the last stair and look for my phone so I can request an uber my handbag isn't with me and so is my phone. I look up the stairs and Enhle and Sibuh are coming Sibuh has my handbag the one I've been looking for that has my phone in it.

"Agh! How did he even get ahold of that because I had it around my shoulders?" I ask myself I let out a huge sigh and fold my arms tapping my left foot on the ground as I wait for them to reach to where I'm standing. They finally get to where I am but instead of giving me my bags like their supposed to; they pass me and head to a car in the parking lot that I hadn't noticed before. I huff in anger and just follow them arguing with them has become pointless and I just don't want to miss my flight at this point. Sibusiso opens the backdoor for me I sigh looking at him then get in Enhle is already in the passenger sit. Turns out Themba is driving not Sibusiso because I would have sent him back to that hospital bed if he tried in the slightest bit to get into the driver's sit.

"Sawubona Themba." I greet him I don't want to seem rude.

"Sawubona MaNdlovu unjani?"

"Ngiyaphila unjani?"

"Hai nami ngiyaphila. I'm sure kade ukhumbule ekhaya." he says to me the other spectators keep on spectating and I hope they do that till I reach the airport.

"Yeah uBaba also can't go a whole month let alone two without seeing me so ngiyombona." I say to him and I can feel Sibusiso's stare at the side of my face but I don't give him the satisfaction of looking back at him.

"That's good kumele sinike abazali bethu isikhathi basase khona emhlabeni."

"Yeah uright ngalokho abazali are the most important people in the universe we should cherish them whilst we still can."

"Yebo MaNdlovu mawubuya usiphatele amadumbe." he tells me and we laugh Enhle let's out a gimmick laugh whilst Sibu just chuckles and continue starring at me.

"Ngizawenza iplan." I tell him and that's just how the conversation ends. For the rest of the journey to O.R Tambo International Airport we just get engulfed into the music playing on the radio no one says a word and I'm glad. Sibusiso takes my hand into his along the way and I don't object I just don't give him the attention he's craving right now I'll just assume he isn't here but at home resting.

"We are here." Themba finally says when he parks the car for me to get out. They all get out of the car and help me with my luggage. Sibusiso is still holding unto my hand and I let him be.

"Well this is it I guess I will see you all on

Sunday evening or Monday morning it depends." Enhle quickly engulfs me in a hug without warning.

"Travel safe and ukhombela ubaba ngisombona after exams." she tells me and I just nod she moves to where Themba is standing at a distance from me and Sibusiso.

"Yazi you're sulking like a baby...are you a baby?" I tease him and he sulks more I even pinch his cheeks "ncooh my baby."

He removes my hands from his cheeks looking around for anyone looking at us "hai man Thandolwam ngiyi Ndoda yomzulu mina don't do me like that." he says in a hard tone and I raise my hands in surrender wanting to laugh but I keep it in.

"Okay my Zulu man is it because uyidescedent yaka Shaka that instead of

being at home resting ula ubhekani nami emehlweni?" I ask him.

"Yebo phela ngiyinzizwa mina I don't cry over small wounds. And mhlawumbe abakutselanga kodwa thina amadoda amaZulu izintombi zethu sizithanda kufa." he says with a smirk brushing my dreadlocks.

"Hhm I'm glad to hear that Dlamini and since ungitshele I hope mangibuya asizo cabana." I tell him even pointing my finger at him I know he hates it but today I have the upper hand here.

"Asoze MaNdlovu uthandwa ngim'."

"Uthandwa ngim." he gives me a tight hug with his one working arm I sink into his hold. Backing away from the hug I take ahold of my luggage and get inside the airport. I don't dare turn back because I will be back; a weekend isn't a



month so I keep on moving. My dad won't spare me if I don't get on that plane and I'm not one to disobey my dad. So like a good girl that I am I keep on walking Durban here I come.

34.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

As the pilot finally announces on the intercom that we'll be landing soon the nerves start. My heart starts pulsating I'm sweating and I even feel nauseous something I didn't even feel when the plane took off. It finally dawns on me that I'm just seconds from seeing my dad that isn't what's worrying me though. I'm getting worried and nervous in hearing whatever news he has to tell me that even compelled him to book me a flight to come home. The plane finally lands

and I take deep breaths after unbuckling my belt and standing up. I carry my handbag and retrieve my luggage at the checkout point. I maneuver through the many people going in and out of King Shaka International Airport and finally reach outside I'm trying to find dad with my eyes before calling him.

"Thandolwethu.." a voice calls out for me within the crowd from the parking lots my dad emerged. In his favorite country look jeans military boots and a military jacket you will swear that this man isn't in his late 50s. I guess it's all the training he does on a daily his head is bald which is a first and his graying stump is left unshaved. I guess he managed to find me before I could he always mocked me about my weak eyesight so I'm not even bothered that I couldn't see him among the many people especially when his clothes camouflage.

"Baba!" I run to him in excitement all the nervousness of just minutes ago long forgotten. I sink into his broad arms and he engulfs me in just like when I was still a kid and he will say that he is protecting me from the big bad wolf of the west. I sniff in his scent and my whole body relaxes home in my father's arms. We separate from the hug and he takes my luggage.

"Ngiyathemba konke kuhamba kahle baba." I start a conversation as we head to our car the only car my father has ever bought that I know it's one of those four by four bakkies loved by the boers. He said its a great liability for when he has errands to run and by errands he means when our extended family keeps sending him out to fetch unnecessary things during family gatherings. He never complained so I guess I shouldn't but a liter of petrol could go a long way I'm not insinuating anything I'm just saying.

"Yebo konke kuhamba kahle mtanam kuhamaba njani eGoli?" he asks me as he puts my luggage in the backseat and we get in the front.

"Hai eGoli kuhamba kahle Baba konke kuright kodwa kuyabanda nje." I tell him as I buckle on he backs out of the Airport the radio is on that radio station that plays maskandi music all day everyday. You'd swear that just because dad is modern in so many ways even his choice of music could be modern but no. He dies there by maskandi music he doesn't even listen to other genres he used to tell me that mom liked the old RnB and soul music and he will rather listen to chickens than RnB. That's how stubborn he is when it comes to his love for maskandi.

"Mmm kuyazwakala anything interesting happening in your life I should know about maybe.." I smile and think back to

Sibusiso Dlamini the only interesting thing or rather person in my life right now. I never could have imagined that a normal day of me just taking a taxi to work like always would lead me to meeting the love of my life. I have learned from someone that in things concerning love and relationships there is no too soon or too late. Hence I'm saying I believe he is the love of my life.

"Uhm nothing yet what about you? I'm sure there is something interesting happening with you. That could be the only reason you booked a flight for me straight to Durban." I say to my dad and he just clears his throat and keeps driving. I turn my body and face him so I can get a good view.

"Well I'm listening babakaThando..." I tease him.

"So eager to find out aren't you?" he asks

"Yes yes and yes." I say whilst constantly nodding my head in eagerness. He gives me one look and then concentrate on the road again.

"Then have patience MaNdlovu patience sanalwan." he says

"Fine" I sulk and sink in my seat with my arms folded.

We finally reach home the townhouses side of Durban the lawn appears to be freshly cut and the house looks the same way it did a month ago. Just a normal face brick house with a green roof I grew up here and everytime I come back home it always feels like I've been gone forever. Dad parks the car in the driveway and we both get out he gets my luggage from the back seat and I'm already on my way to the front door. Before I can even get inside considering

the fact that dad has the house keys; the front door is abruptly opened and out comes a woman. She has a broad smile on her face with a table cloth in her hands clearly showing she was in the kitchen and that she is familiar with the house.

"Nibuyile..." she says looking at my dad I look at her and then back at my dad who is now scratching his head.

"Surprise!" he says dragging my luggage to the porch where I'm standing with the unknown woman in the middle of the door. I am surprised alright didn't even know my dad is back in the dating game not that I'm sure yet but oh boy if he is then I'm glad.

"Oh please come inside ukuhla ku'ready." the woman says directing us into our own home it feels like a movie. Dad gets in behind the lady and I follow suit closing

the door behind me. The decor in the house is still the same thank goodness. I know I said its okay for dad to date but that doesn't mean I will be fine with another woman tempering with my home like that she already infiltrated the kitchen; thats enough. I drag myself to my room where I'm also glad everything is still in place as I left it a month ago. Dad already put my bag inside so I ransack it for fresh clothes and go take a bath. Taking a bath is a luxury I get to have when I'm here at home back in Pretoria I take a shower because

1. It's the only option I have.
2. My work schedule doesn't allow me to take long baths and because yes its the only option I have.

After my bath I wear my leggings and a thin sweater eThekwini is the home of summer its cold for one second and in a click of a finger it's boiling outside with



40% chance of rain. I take out my phone and text Enhle that I've arrived and then call Mr Man.

"MaNdlovu?" he answers immediately I did say before that this man makes sure I never have a reason to complain about him not picking up the phone. He makes sure he picks it up on time all the damn time.

"Lusubalokhulu unjani?" I greet back with his clan name I know it gets him soft especially when he was up there in anger he climbs down that ladder in the speed of light.

"Ngiyaphila MaNdlovu uhambe njani?" he asks me his voice is a bit coarse probably due to sleep I don't know.

"Ngihambe kahle Dlamini ngiyethemba ukuthi akangubusa?" I ask worried that I woke him up from a nap or something.

"No ngulungile MaNdlovu even if you call me while in an important meeting I'll always answer so ubuthongo amantsi amancane." he tells me and I can't help but blush such a sweet man.

"Ngijabuleli ukwazi lokho usele njani? I hope you're not giving MaShange trouble when you have to take your medication because I will fly back just to set you right." I tell him in a reprimanding tone and he let's out a chuckle sure thinks his health is a joke.

"Relax MaNdlovu wam I'm a good boy I know if I don't get better I will face your wrath." he says.

"Good you better behave..." I tell him

"Thandolwethu!" my dad calls out for me from somewhere around the house.

"I guess you have to go." Sibü says to me

"Yes I have to go but we will talk later and I love you." I say the 'I love you' in a softer tone.

"Angzwanka utheni MaNdlovu?" he asks me clearly trying to get me into trouble this one. He heard me loud and clear the first time I won't repeat myself.

"Ungizwile bye bye."

"Wai..." I drop the call before he can continue throwing his tantrums. I get up from the bed and head back to where my dad is. There is a ping on my phone before I can reach dad and it's a text from Sibü.

"Dont think you're off the hook yet.I love you too" the text reads and I just smile and shake my head I don't text back. I go into the dining room and dad and the

woman are sitting down engaged in a conversation

"So have you told her yet MandlaNkosi?" the woman asks dad she even refers to him in his first name; never thought i could see the day.

"No not yet you know she has to settle in first." dad answers her they are speaking in hushed tones probably so that I don't hear them but I guess my hearing frequency can be compared to that of dogs then. They haven't noticed me yet and I intend to stay invisible till I decide otherwise. I know it's bad manners to eavesdrop on adults conversations but...

"You have to tell her after dinner I'm leaving maybe then you will get the courage."

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she says to him and dad looks surprised that she said she is leaving.

"You are?" surprise written all over his face

"Yes I am." she says while dishing food into his plate.

"Bu..but I thought you're staying the night." my dad says in a pleading tone oh well daddy guess you're stuck with me today.

"Not anymore you have to spend more time with your daughter plus I think you need to be alone when you tell her." I wonder what dad has to tell me but we will hear from the horse's mouth in due time.

I make my presence known by clearing my throat and acting like I just got to the scene when I've actually been here right

from the beginning. I take a sit on the table opposite the woman.

"Sawubona Ma I didn't really get a chance to greet you." I say to her and she smiles she has really white teeth I'm jealous. My dad on the other hand has his left hand under the table a sign that he is a nervous wreck. I've known this man for all 26 years of my life and he hasn't even changed one bit except the grey hair.

"Sawubona mtanam and ungakhatale I guess nami I made the situation awkward by coming out before you settled in." she says looking at me then at my dad probably for the same reason I'm also looking at him. To make formal introductions you'd swear that he isn't the best police officer in the whole of Durban the way he is nervous.

"Baba u'right?" I call out to him as his forehead is even sweating.

"Huh?... uhm uh yeah ngi'right sorry I was lost for a minute there." he stutters looking around he wipes his forehead.

"Ubo lahlekile kuphi Mandla?" the woman asks.

"Uh no where in particular." a pause in silence follows suit and we are just facing dad who has his attention on his plate.

"I..I sorry eh Thandolwethu mtanam lo u Gladys and Gladys lo umtanam Thandolwethu." he says everything in one breath and then gulps down his glass of water all in one go.

"Okay...nice to meet you MaGladys." I say to woman who now I can put a name to her face.

"Nami ngijabuleli uku kwazi mtanam." she says with a smile too.

"Uhm now that is out of the way let's eat." my dad says and we just do as he says we eat.

After dinner the woman I mean MaGladys left. Dad walked her out I guess she doesn't stay far because dad didn't mention anything about driving her home. I quickly do the dishes whilst dad is still out. I hum a non existent song while wiping and packing the dishes away dad comes back as I'm wiping the kitchen counter and table.

"Hmhm" he clears his throat to make his presence known clearly. I guess he thought I didn't hear him come in since I was humming. I turn around to face him and smile he is busy fidgeting with his fingers something I do when I'm nervous not him. But I guess times have changed drastically to a point where my dad the great constable Ndlovu is nervous.



"She is nice where did you get her?and I thought you said you don't need help around the house. " I say to him mentioning MaGladys being a housekeeper on purpose because I know she isn't no housekeeper calls their boss by their first name.

"Uhm.. n..ice? ..Who?..." my dad stutters he is still just standing in the middle of the kitchen and I have my back rested on the kitchen counter.

"Baba uright? ngikhuluma ngo MaGladys I'm saying she is nice. When did you hire her?" I ask him.

"Oh Gladys she...she is not a housekeeper." he answers me clearly still nervous and I'm enjoying this because never in a million yearshave I ever thought I'll see my dad without the tough exterior he always has on.

"Uhm! I'm confused uthe asiyena umsebenzi wa se Khaya kodwa usiphehele idinner. And I'm sure she has done more than cooking." I say and dad starts walking up and down the kitchen even sweating. He halts in his steps then drags me to sit down he also sits down in the opposite chair so we're facing each other.

"Uhm that's why I called you to come home ngoshesha. uGladys masengishilo asiyena umsebenzi wase khaya kodwa intombi Yami." he says everything in one breath so that he doesn't get to repeat himself I guess. I have my mouth wide open you know I knew from their actions that they were clearly dating. But getting my dad admit to my face that yes he is involved with another woman is shell-shocking.

"Ini?" I ask abruptly getting up from the

chair I know I'm dramatic like that. Acting as if angijoli nami when I know I also have to spill eventually. But this isn't about me its about my father who is in his late fifties but is dating.

"Ini yani? mina no Gladys siyathandana and I'm not forcing you to accept her but atleast respect our relationship. I'm an old man Thandolwethu I live alone and you should know it gets lonely in this house alone and eventually sooner or later I was going to get a companion. And in this case that companion is Gladys..." he continues talking he shut me up at the 'ini yani?' and I knew dad was back not the nervous rack he was minutes ago.

"And ngiyazi Kuba in that big head of yours you're thinking about your mother. Nami ngiyamukhumbula kodwa ngeke abuye and siyazi mina nawe that ngeke athande ukuthi ngibe miserable ubomu bam bonke. She will want me to move on

and besides nawe you will eventually get married soon so do you want me to be alone till my death bed." damn it he got me at the part where I will eventually get married. Even though I don't know my mother physically and never experienced her love I guess from all the stories dad told me about her when I was growing up. She was a carefree person and definitely wouldn't allow dad to wallow in misery because of her passing. It has been twenty six full years so I guess he has mourned enough and accepted fate.

"Kodwa Baba are you ready to love another woman who isn't umama." I ask him just to get to hear what he has to say and make it appear as if I don't support him dating another woman.

"Thandolwethu Ndlovu I didn't date all this years because I was taking care of you besides everyone trying to shove woman down my throat to marry so you

could have a mother. I didn't because you already had a mother and I didn't want to be those men that neglect their kids when they fall in love with another woman. And now that you're grown I have taken the decision to move on and bring another woman in our lives because I know you're responsible enough now." tears are pricking at my eyes but I don't let them fall dad always told me that I'm a princess and princesses don't cry nor let their sobs heard. So I quickly wipe away what is yet to be a river stream of tears.

"So are you planning to marry her?" I ask after making sure my voice is normal and not hoarse. He let's out a loud laughter and looks at me shaking his head.

"Ca Thandolwethu ngimdala kabi for ukushata the only time this house will host a wedding will be yours not mine. I'm already married to your mother so I can't get married to another woman." he

says and I'm confused why would he want to be involved with MaGladys and even tell me about her if he has no intention of getting married to her.

"Ah Baba so why did you tell me about MaGladys if you're not going to get married to her? I'm sure she also wants to get married don't you think so?" I ask voicing out my thoughts. I mean every woman gets into a relationship with the goal of getting married not just for fun.

"Unga'worry mtanam uGladys doesn't want to get married too she is a divorcee and we both agreed that we will stay together without the stress of being a married couple. And besides its time for you kids to get married our time has come and surpassed." he says to me and gets up from his chair he holds onto my shoulder and gives me a forehead kiss I know that means the conversation is over.

" ulale kahle Baba."

"Ulale kahle mtanam ngisakubona ekseni." he rubs the spot on my shoulder he's been holding onto and leaves to his bedroom. I also follow suit to my bedroom after switching off the lights.

35.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

Life is too short and there is no guarantee that you will live over a hundred years. I have learned that the hard way being in an accident was an eye opener that instead life shouldn't be bearable but enjoyable. That we should just stop existing but live our lives like there isn't tomorrow I'm not saying I'm going to start being reckless I'm just saying that I'm

going to start doing things I've always loved to do but was skeptical about doing them. Even with my one casted arm I'm ready to take on the world again because I was in a battle of life and death for almost a month and I don't wish that upon anyone not even my greatest enemy. Thinking back to weeks ago when I finally woke up from coma which lasted 24 hours according to what everyone said. I felt and still feel blessed my grandparents woke me up in that hospital I don't even understand how they were there. My grandfather just put his hand on my chest while my grandmother chanted " buka mtanam buka!"

I guess my body and soul complied because I woke up my eyes were open but my body was still weak I still couldn't speak with that stupid tube in my mouth. For weeks I spent not being able to talk to my loved ones but just look at their sombre faces always hesitating to ask the



doctors when I will get better. Thandolwam was by my side everyday on this hospital bed I even knew her hospital visiting hours that I even made sure I adjust my sleeping patterns regardless of the doctors advice. I wanted to see her everytime she got through that door although I never got to see her leave but it was always the ultimate highlight of my day when she walked in through that door and told me tale after tale of what happened at work and from the books she likes to read. Although today is an exception she won't be able to see me on the day of my discharge how I wish the situation was different. She will still be at work when I get out of this hospital halls and then head to KZN before seeing me. Well actually before I could see her I want to see her because I miss her just seeing her and squeezing her hand from a hospital bed isn't enough. I want to hug her in my embrace and never want to let go; I want to kiss her with the stars and

moon looking down at us and sprinkle our love with their sparkling dust. So that our love continues to shine and sparkle for many years to come. I want to love her with no limitations as to how I should be expressing my love to her even if I have to act like a love struck puppy then so be it being a Zulu man can wait in the queue.

When Themba came to pick me up from the hospital it felt like I was a prisoner finally regaining my freedom. The ugly uniform that doesn't make sense already tossed to the side like used garbage. Now embodied in my favourite pair of track pants and sweat shirt I was eager to leave the hospital corridors and its horrible memories behind. Locked and bind in a bolt where no one could ever get the code to unlock not even in a million years. I had kept looking out the door everytime I heard a voice or footsteps in the corridor hoping maybe

Thando changed her mind and came to the hospital instead of going to work. Or Themba finally walking in through that door earlier than anticipated saying "its time to go home mfowethu." At this point my patience had run thin and my casted arm felt so itchy; I couldn't even scratch it. I think that's what frustrated me more than not seeing Thando on the most important day of my life in the last 4 weeks.

I was finally getting discharged from hospital after getting involved in that unfortunate accident weeks ago once that loud bang happened and there was loud screeching in my ears everything went blank. I was still with no sore pain on my body regardless of how badly injured I was. Everything was just steady with this gentle breeze that would occasionally pass by and sweet melodies of what seemed to be my grandmother's singing. The only problem is I couldn't see but

just feel and hear there were voices around me of people singing and reciting the Dlamini clan names. With the beat of the drums following suit to their chants and praises I could feel I was next to fire because of the burning on the side of my body. Something was poured into my mouth it was surely liquid and bitter tasting rough patched but motherly hands touched me on my chest.

Although they were soft but the kind of icy fire that penetrated through my skin to the very soul of my heart could never be explained.

"Dlamini Lusubalokhulu phephisa Moya uvuke sanalwam." a voice of what sounded like my grandmother said to me after the hand touched me.

My chest rose and a whole lot of air filled my lungs my eyelids fluttered in opening. As I opened my eyes I got

blinded by the brightness in the room I was in I blinked rapidly to adjust to the light. Looking around first thing I wanted was to get up but got restricted by the pain in my abdomen and arm and the many pipes attached to me. That's when I realized I was in the hospital the irritating beeping around me didn't help either. I felt handicapped and kept against my own free will but I guess the accident wasn't a dream but a real life event that I was part of. The image keeps playing in my head like it just happened yesterday though I try by all means to push it to the back of my head.

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By the time Themba walked in through my hospital room's door the excitement of going home has long been deflated and I was just tired and yawning repeatedly.

"Sawubona bafo."

I just looked at him and picked my bag

without a word said. He promised he will come immediately after the doctor discharges me but look at him catwalking in here in the afternoon. It has been two hours and thirty minutes since I've been discharged and God knows I'm furious that's it's only now that I'm getting out of this hell hole.

"Hao bafo and then?" he asks me acting surprised as if he isn't late. Time is money and money is precious although in this case the time is more precious. There are plus minus 50% chances that Thando has already gotten back from work and already preparing to go to the airport if she isn't on her way there yet.

"Don't and then me wena Themba isikhathi bani?" he looks at his watch then looks at me again; I'm halfway towards the door at this point. All I want is to see myself far away from this place as soon as possible plus the incident that

happened in here has made me hate hospitals and look at doctors in a different light. I know it isn't right to paint everyone with the same brush but from what I've experienced I beg to differ.

"Uhm it says quarter to two." he answers me after scratching his bloody bald head.

I take a deep breath and then face him "okay I see and when did the hospital call you?"

He scratches his head again then looks at me.

"That does matter I'm here now aren't I?"

"I'm nyere nyow nyaren't nyi?" I reply in a mock tone.

"Well chances of me seeing Thandolwam before she leaves for KZN are slim now

do you realize?"

"ngiyaxolisa mfowethu bengingaqondile ukukucasukela ngeke ngiphinde kodwa I can try to make you meet her before she leaves. Her place isn't that far from the hospital right?"

He tries to pacify me and he better keep to his promise of not ever happening again. I nod my head in response that Thando's place isn't far from here.

"So simeleni asambe we might be lucky and find her still packing or..."

"kulungile ngikuzwile ake sihambe ke." I cut in.

He takes my bag from my one working hand and we leave to the parking lot. We get in car and he speeds out of the hospital I don't dare look back because I intend to put it behind my back exactly



where it belongs. We reach Thando's place in no time as we are approaching the gate we spot that friend of hers who's name I can't remember well but I do hope he recognizes me and let's us in.

"ENHLE !"

Themba calls out to whom I assume is Thando's roommate/best friend. I guess they met when she accompanied Thando to the hospital and thank God my brother remembers her name because I was hopeless. She looks around trying to locate the source of the voice she looks back and sees our car. She starts walking towards it with a smile proof that she recognises it and is probably familiar with the owner.

"Themba? Sbali? Kuhambani?" she asks immediately she gets to us. She still has a smile on her face guess she doesn't like frowning a lot even from the one time I

met her she was actually cool and friendly. So we smile back although mine is a bit forced because nerves man nerves; tapping my other leg in anticipation and hope that Thando is still beyond this gate. My insides are even churning and turning like turn tables that's how nervous and scared I am that we might find her already gone.

"Konke kuhamba kahle Nkosazana umfowethu lapha ufuna ukubona uMaNdlovu ngaphambi kokuthi ahambe edulini . So o saze khona yena?" Themba speaks on my behalf well I hope its on my behalf and I pray that the next words that come out of her mouth are what I'm expecting.

"Oh! I see I just spoke to her ten minutes ago. She was still waiting for me to get back from school." she says and her answer doesn't really correspond to the question asked.

"Caa sisi not to sound rude or anything kodwa umbuzo uthi ukhona Thando noma ca?" I finally find my voice because she seems she likes to play games. And I'm not here for games I'm here to see Thandolwam finish and Klaar.

She let's out laughter even Themba joins in I guess I don't get the joke because I'm not laughing shem.

"Do you mind sharing the joke."

The both keep mum and look at me they are tempted to laugh again guess I'm the joke now "I'm I'm sorry yebo uThando ukhona I will let the security to let you in."

"Thank you that's what I wanted to hear Nkosazana not inonwane." she shakes her head in laughter and heads back to the small gate and get in I guess she

does as promised because the gate opens  
and Themba drives in.

He finds a parking spot before I even get  
out the Enhle girl is already next to the  
car fiddling inside her bag. I get out and  
Themba decides to stay put in the car she  
finally manages to find whatever she's  
been looking for. Out she comes with  
keys I look at her with my eyebrows  
raised she jiggles them in front of my  
face well attempts to since she is short.

"And then?" I ask still confused as to why  
she is jiggling her keys in front of me.

"Well you need to see Thando isn't it?"

"Yes..." I say now even feeling unsure.

"Well then you will need these I hope you  
still remember the flat number."

"Are you sure about this?" I ask because

believe you me I know my women she can be a fire spitting dragon when she wants to.

"Totally she is probably expecting me any minute now but instead of me going in first you will go. So here you go." she offers the keys again and I take them. I move towards the building block in a speed I didn't even know I still had considering I'm still weak from being bed ridden in hospital.

"DON'T FORGET IT'S THE SECOND FLOOR FIRST DOOR." the midget sorry Enhle shouts after me I just raise my working arm to signal that I heard her and keep on moving.

I get to the stairs and start climbing up I try to steady my breathing as best as I could but not being active for a month can get you feeling and acting like a couch potato. But I soldier on and keep

climbing till I reach the second floor I put the keys in and luckily they work; not that I didn't trust Enhle but I was still unsure about her sending me straight into the lion's den.

"Leaving without saying goodbye?" I asked once I got in the flat and found her already dragging her bags.

The sight of her makes me happy all the nerves gone and replaced by my usual charming and cocky behavior. Her dreadlocks bouncing as she moves and her curves damn her curves her work uniform doesn't do justice to them.

"You? What are you doing here?...I mean shouldn't you be at home resting?" she asked in clear shock and surprise she was expecting Enhle and instead she got me her prince charming.

Not to sound cocky but yes of course I'm

damn charming; it runs in the Dlamini clan. I watch as her face goes from shock anger mortification and concern in a split second. It can only be MaNdlovu wam ever since I met her I've established that woman are a whole well of emotions you always have to test the waters first before you dive in or else you will either burn or freeze.

"And you shouldn't be standing for long woza." she says dragging me by my arm to the nearest couch and I just oblige because one she is a fire dragon when she is upset and I don't want to see that side of her today.

"I'm right where I'm supposed to be MaNdlovu." I say to her with my cocky grin I like it when she blushes and squeems beside me. She hides it by stuffing my sides with the throw pillows on the couch to make me comfortable.

After bickering back and forth and Enhle finally coming into the picture we also bicker all the way to the airport well more like we try talking to her but she only talks to Themba because in her own words she is upset that I'm not at home resting as per the doctor's instructions. She claims it's the Shaka Zulu blood in me that makes me super stubborn but I don't care I wanted to see my baby before she leaves and there is nothing wrong with that if you ask me. In a jiffy we arrived at the airport and just like that we had said goodbye.

| | |

I spent the weekend at Themba's house as planned well the plan was I have to stay at his house till I can actually walk again. But I don't know if I will survive living with my brother and his family for that long I love my own space heck I'm already missing my apartment. There no



one would be hovering over me trying to feed me lentil soup or soft porridge that I always have to force it down my throat. What I want to eat is proper food not liquids I've already had my fair share of that in hospital and I don't want again. What I want is a good juicy steak a burger maybe throw some good grilled chicken in the mix. Overall I just want meat is that too much to ask I don't think so but MaShange thinks otherwise because she is stuffing me with her horrible soups that got me thinking that she is doing payback for all the times I bought candy for the kids behind her back.

"Malume Malume..." speak of the devil and the devil shall surface. The little demons make their way into my bed busy jumping up and down and shouting Malume. I can feel a headache creeping out from the back of my head and boy oh boy it's definitely going to be one long

day. I love my niece and nephew but I don't want to be in their presence more than 24 hours even their own parents know that it's torture. I can't wait to have this cast off but it still seems so far away like a dream that will never see the light of day.

"Hai hai mtshana yini manje ngomsindo?" I bark out but not too loud to frighten them.

"Soyi Malume." bubu says with her cute grin.

"Yebo soyi Malume." Nkanyiso follows also with his two front missing teeth smile.

I nod my head to say it's okay they get off the bed and sit down on the carpet not really sit down because they are little demons that are always high on sugar. So they can never sit still or be in one

place for long.

"Uphi umawakho Nka?"

"Ekhishini oh now I remember she said we should call you for breakfast" he says with his little finger on his temple while his sister is busy hopping from one side of the room to the other as I've said before they are sugar rush demons it doesn't matter what time of the day it is.

"Okay tell her ngiyeza." I say to them and they hop out. I gently retrieve my phone for the headboard and call the one person I always call in the morning MaNdlovu wam. It goes straight to voicemail she is probably already at work it's Monday so it's understandable instead I leave her a text message "Sawubona MaNdlovu imbali yami ephuzi engikhumbuza ukukhanya kwelanga nomoya wezigodi unosuku oluhle futhi ngiyakuthanda yezwa."

I press sent and drag myself out of my room not eager to have a protein shake for breakfast. Some bacon and eggs with toast will definitely do me good right now but with MaShange in charge a nigga can only dream alright.

36.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

I have been back in Pretoria for almost a week now I came back on Sunday after church. MaGladys even went with us together with her daughter and grandson. I don't know if I should start saying I have siblings or what because our parents decided to be together but not married; it gets confusing sometimes although it hasn't been long since we met. Everytime the daughter calls I don't know as to how I should address her

sister or friend or what I don't know so I just call her by her first name Nelly. Her son has developed a certain liking for me hence the constant calls I've been getting since I came back. My dad still calls me like usual and sometimes when he calls now he is with MaGladys since they're not hiding their relationship anymore turns out dad has long met MaGladys kids. She has a son too who I guess he is a Casanova and a bit of a spoiled brat from what they have told me about him he is in the entertainment industry they say but I've never heard of him. He definitely still a rookie if you ask me not that I know everything and everyone in the industry I'm just saying he is definitely new to the scene or old hence I've never heard of him.

The week has went by in a haste. I haven't seen Sibusiso but we've been talking on the phone. He will be removing his cast soon so that's definitely

something positive happening right now. Him being able to use his arm again it's a blessing and I can't wait to actually see him. Feel him breath in his scent stare into his brown orbs and get lost in them. Funny how I never thought to this day that I Thandolwethu Ndlovu will fall in love. Fall in love with someone who is equally in love with me I pinch myself every single morning I wake up. A good morning text from him always with a cute quote on how I mean the world to him it feels like a dream and I definitely don't want to wake up from it. Getting out of bed with a purpose is the best feeling in the world that's how Sibusiso makes me feel. Like a have a purpose in life like I didn't just come to this earth to simply exist. My life has always felt like I'm living according to a timetable before he came into the picture. Wake up go to work come back read a book have dinner with Enhle while she fills me up on drama going around then call dad sleep and

repeat. In a way it was a wheel I always came back to the same point I started. Now getting out of bed I look forward to new things new people and new stories most of all I look forward to those cute random love texts from Sibu wam.

My phone pings on my bedside table. It's a text from the one and only Sibusiso Dlamini his name is still saved by Kofi because man looks like Kofi.

The text reads " Sawubona muntuwam its a beautiful sunny day just like you. Enjoy your day and oh please do think of me. \*Wink emoji\* NGIYAKUTHANDA YEZWA?"

" I love you too" I say with a whisper on instinct. The blush on my face is so evident I'm happy. There is just something about a Zulu man telling you they love you and then adding the YEZWA part at the end. Goosebumps I tell you I finally get the strength to get

out of bed. I quickly sent him an I love you text and get started with my morning routine.

It's Friday so I'm definitely getting a half day but with the work load of all the four days before combined. Getting out of my bedroom after getting dressed I quickly prepare breakfast Enhle is finally done with her exams and girl has been scarce from this flat. To think in the beginning it used to be just us two against the world with no boyfriend or girlfriend to visit or stay up all night till the early hours of the morning talking. Now we are certainly certified gone girls and it feels so damn good.

" Good morning. " speak of the devil and the devil shall appear.

" Sawubona girl I see you have found your way back to your first love." I tease her. And she pouts.



" hau don't be like that I've been around njena!" She says plopping herself on the kitchen counter. She attempts to steal bacon from the pan and I slap her hand away. " ouch!"

" Well that's what you get for stealing." I tell her.

" bu..but.." I give her a look and she immediately keeps quiet.

" anyways I'm glad you're here Kade ngikukhumbulile mfazi."

" Nami Kade ngikukhumbulile. So how is work oh and usbali?." she asks batting her eyelashes her doing that makes me laugh because if Sibusiso saw her doing it he will straight up ask her if she has something in her eyes or what. You can never try to be cute for that one shem.

" Emsebenzini ku'right and uSibu wami uright Kakade." I say with a blush talking about him always makes me look beetroot red and mushy inside. " Nantsi" I give her a plate.

"Thank you I missed your food." she hums already stuffing her face with bacon.

" you don't mean it. You that has been leaving me alone in this flat you surely have been getting well fed wherever you've been disappearing to." I look at her from the top of my coffee mug a blush makes its way to her face and she just hides it by drinking her coffee."Or am I wrong? Cause that blush begs to differ." I continue taunting her.

" uhm hum hum well you can say I've been getting well fed but not being fed food your kind of food if you know what I mean." she adds a wink.

"Oh My God! you naughty girl." I respond once in dawns on me what she actually means. " You are so shameless it's sickening." I say as we laugh.

" Oh well let me tell you ke mfazi I am happy. If someone asks you the definition of happiness girl feel free to shout Enhle at the top of your lungs." she says beaming and grinning I know for sure that she deserves this and more after her tragedy with whom shall not be named. Excuse me.

"Damn girl! You and I both but I can attest to the fact that you are happier than I've ever seen you. And one person that deserves to be happy is you mgani." I go around the counter to give her a hug.

"I'm gonna cry so stop mgani but thank you. You deserve this happiness too." she

says as we let go from the hug.

"We can safely say we are now certified gone girls huh?" I say and we can't help but chuckle

" That we are certainly. Anyways I'm going to head to bed and you have to get to work." Enhle says looking at the clock on the wall.

" shit I'm late." I quickly scramble to my feet take my bag and phone; give Enhle a kiss on the cheek and I'm out of the door.  
| | |

I'm now sitted in the taxi on my usual seat thanks to Shibase. I was almost late. When I got in the taxi it was already full with just one person left. But by the looks of it the taxi I'm in should have long gone five minutes before I got there. From my observation everyone was already fidgeting in their seats others looking

agitated and constantly looking at their wristwatches. I also know the feeling of waiting for the taxi to fill up so I can get to work on time. But in this case it was left unfilled on purpose someone in the back kept whispering saying that Shibase kept pointing people to the other taxis when they wanted to get in here. I could feel the stares burning my back I didn't dare look back to see who was looking at me or why. One thing that hasn't changed from my routine is me being cold in the taxi I have my headsets tucked into my ears and looking out the window. I don't talk to anyone I just greet when I get in and that's it. I know Shibase purposely kept the seat for me He winked at me once I sat down and he closed the door. He must have realized I'm moving later than usual and saved the seat. If he did it to score points with his boss then good for him.

I continue starrng out the window as the

taxi is moving. I watch as the Jacaranda trees go by they look like they have no life in them due to the harsh winter weather. But soon enough they will be blooming looking like newborn babies fresh beautiful and captivating. A new sound comes on in the taxi music the taxi has been quiet ever-since it left the depot even those whispering at the back had stopped. The sweet alluring sound of Ringo Madlingozi blasts through the speakers singing Sondela. It reminds me of my dad and his tell-tales of he and mom's love story. He said mom loved this song and she bullied him into loving it too regardless of his die hard love for maskandi. My mom was his soft spot it was their wedding song. I silently tune to the song and continue looking out the window.

As we pass hatfield my phone rings in my bag. I take it out and find out it's my father calling. I press the green button

accepting the call.

" yebo baba." I say as I answer.

" yebo Thandolwethu

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unjani mtanam?" He says on the other side.

"Ngi'right Baba wena unjani?" I ask

" Hai ngiphilile eh I called to ask you if you can come home next weekend." he tells me or asks me I don't know.

"Eh! Kodwa Baba I just came back from home. Kwenzakalani?" I ask now confused and scared of the unknown.

" Caa Thandolwethu I'm the adult here and not you. Umbuzo uthi can you come home next weekend. Yebo noma caa?" He speaks with his detective tone and I

gulp down before I can answer him.

"Yebo!" I say after a second of contemplating my answer.

"Yebo yini MaNdlovu khuluma phela you know that you're talking to your father not a stranger emigwaqweni." his detective tone is still in full force making me even doubt my answer more.

"Yebo I will come back home next weekend Baba." I tell him after releasing a sigh.

"Good see you then. Ulethe uEnhle. "

" Ba..." he drops the call before I can get the words out of my mouth. I keep starring at my phone in disbelief once my dad gets like that it is never good. His dominant side just takes over and everyone has to tip toe around him. I take a deep breath and put the phone



back in my bag.

|||

The customers keep pouring in it's like they don't realize it's Friday and some of us need a break. I constantly keep checking the time on the till screen it feels like its moving at the speed of a snail today and I can't help but huff out in annoyance. Ever since my dad's call this morning my mood just switched from a hundred to zero real quick. I can't seem to focus on my work as my mind keeps wondering back. What is so important that I have to go back home for the second time in less than a month? Last time he summoned me was because he wanted me to meet Gladys and his tone that time wasn't like today. He was begging me and sounded nervous but today today he acted like I got into a fight at school and the principal reported me to him. It was unlike him to actually

just want me home in the middle of the month considering I was home just last week. He always understood that I can't constantly keep making trips back I needed to save money. This time Enhle even has to come along she doesn't have a choice neither do I.

" Excuse me mam." the voice sounds faint so I don't pay heed.

" MAM EXCUSE ME PLEASE WE NEED HELP HERE." the voice says a bit louder this time even tapping on the till. I jolt in my seat and find a huge line behind the counter.

I look around for the manager and fortunately he isn't anywhere close to my till. Instead of helping the people I look at the white woman that called out for me.

" Sorry. " I say to her as I take out the 'counter is closed' sign. I put it on and

the people in the queue start to complain while huffing. I don't wait to hear their insults Instead I pack my till and leave.

I take a moment to breathe once I get to my locker. I slide down to the cold floor with my knees up to my chest and my head on top them. The cold from the floor calms me a bit down. My phone vibrates in my pocket and I take it out.

" remember when things seems too much to handle take a deep breath. And remember I love you. Xoxo." the text reads it's like he could feel I'm not holding up at all. Instead of texting back I call him. It rings for a few seconds before he answers.

"MaNdlovu wami uright kodwa?" He says immediately.

"Angazi wena unjani?" I respond. I'm not being rude it's just that I don't know how

I'm feeling my emotions are just all over the place. It's like I'm running on pregnant woman hormones.

"Hhm mawunjele Thando when you say you don't know how you're feeling. Do you want me to sense it from where I am?" He sounds mad maybe I also don't know it seems like I don't know a lot of things today.

" Caa Dlamini it's just that I'm not my usual self today. My head is buzzing and my emotions are all over the place." I tell him.

" If you say so. Are you sure you're not on your..?you know woman staff." he says and I chuckle

" on my what Dlamini? casa phela." I ask him on purpose I already know what he means and I'm definitely not on my periods because I finished just two days

ago.

"Hai man Thando you know exactly what I'm talking about. Don't make me say it out loud." I laugh out loud. He is so cute sometimes and he just made my laugh without even trying.

" Thank you for making me laugh." I say in a low tone feeling shy all of a sudden as if he can see me.

" My pleasure sthandwa sami you know it's my duty to make you laugh. Besides I knew you were in your feelings when I sent you that text." he says sounding arrogant.

I chuckle " oh really? So tell me how did you know I'm not okay since you don't have the seventh sense?" I also put on my cocky side.

" Oh believe you me I don't need a

seventh sense. I have eyes everywhere." he tells me feeling all proud and mighty

"Weh Mr I have eyes everywhere so what am I doing now?" I ask to test his claim.

"Well that is obvious baby you are at work. And you ain't working the till cause you're talking to me right now. So somewhere in the store away from the manager's eyes." he says.

"Mxm that was an easy guess I shouldn't have bothered asking." I sulk. "Baby I'm hungry." I tell him even though he can't do anything about it but I just like being a baby sometimes.

" See I told you I have eyes everywhere so don't worry I got you. Go to the front door you will find a delivery man with a package for you." he tells me and I quickly stand up in surprise.

" Ah baby I was playing with you." I tell him.

" Well ke mina MaNdlovu angidlali. Now go." I start moving on calculated steps. I check the coast for the manager and he seems busy in his office so I take hurried steps to BabKhumalo at the door.

True to his words there is a delivery man next to BabKhumalo I'm sure he refused to let him in. That man can be a hard nut to Crack reason I was surprised how Sibuhle got to him the other day.

"I see him." I say into my phone.

" Good now enjoy your lunch and remember I love you yezwa?" He tells me and I nod my head.

" Thando stop nodding your head I know you phela when you see food you can't think of anything else." he reprimand me

in a mock tone.

"Sorry nami ngiyakuthanda." I say it back.

"Good now go eat." he immediately drops the phone.

I go to the delivery man and BabKhumalo.

"Sanibonani." I greet.

"Oh sawubona mtanam Unjani?" BabKhumalo greets back. While the delivery guy nods his head.

"Ngiyaphila Baba." I say with a smile and turn to the delivery guy right now I don't have time for chit chat. "Uh I believe you're here for me?" I ask with a raise of my eyebrow.

"Uhm I'm not sure but the delivery says



to MaNdlovu wam." he says and I blush. Oh Sibusiso Dlamini what will I do with you.

" Well that is definitely me. Thank you." I say as I retrieve the paper bag from him. He nods and turns back out of the store.

" hmm umkhwenyane?" BabKhumalo says with a side smile. He likes news this one as much as he likes food so I don't entertain him. With a small tight smile I turn back inside to devour my lunch.

| | |

37.

SIBUSISO DLAMINI.

Staying indoors handicapped with no where to actually go had me going crazy

especially with the little demons around excuse my language. But Buhle and Nka are only cute when you speak with them on the phone not living with them under the same roof. Although at some point they had me thinking about starting my own family. I mean I'm a 32 year old man and not married heck I'm the only one in the Dlamini household not married excusing the Princess. I would like to believe that I'm ready to finally settle down my grandparents have already approved of MaNdlovu and the only thing left for me to do is sent the letter to her homestead asking for her hand in marriage. I miss her so much that even phone calls aren't doing me any justice.

|||

I'm finally getting my cast removed I thought I was going to remove it ealier than I expected. But for three weeks straight I had spend it with this itchy

nonsense on my arm it wasn't even white anymore because of Nka and Buhle. They had smeared their crayons and markers of different colors and shades on the cast that I couldn't even make out what some of the drawings were. MaShange constantly took pictures of it saying it's a work of art. I even sent one to MaNdlovu complaining that the kids are abusing me instead of standing up for me she cracked up in laughter and exclaimed they were being cute.

"Cute? I don't think the word cute should be in the same sentence as Nka no Buhle they are mini demons laba." I had said to her.

"Oh well I think they are cute besides they are just kids Sibuhle so definitely they would want to draw on your cast they draw on everything they see angithi. " she said trying to make me see things from a different perspective but I still didn't concur.

In response I just groaned and she just laughed. Hearing her laugh made me smile but going crazy because I haven't seen her in weeks since I've been discharged. I understood she can't come to this side of town because she was always busy and she had been stressed since her dad called her to come home. From what she told me she wasn't able to go on the week her dad requested her to. Actually her dad had postponed the date to month end which is this week he bullied her into taking a leave. In all this I'm the real culprit I had called my dad to tell him it's time to gather the uncles and sent the letter. I couldn't travel to KZN so I had no choice to tell him on the phone.

"Baba! iskhathi sifikile." I had said immediately he picked up the phone.

"Iskhathi sani mfanawami?" he asked.

"Kuthi izinkomo zaka Dlamini zithungwele amacqekeni akwa Ndlovu Baba." I said. My voice was stern and confident no wavering or stuttering.

"Hau hau hau!

Lusibalukhulu

Malandela ngokulandela izinkomo

Zamadoda

Jama kaSjadu Nkomo zidla ekhaya ngoba zeswele abelusi

Mdlovu Magaduzela Magwenyane Nkosi

Mzizi Mdineka Nyanya Msuduka

Inkonekaz'evele ngobusw'emgedeni.

USamkethe esinembay'emaLangeni

UMswazi kaSobhuza

Sgwinya mkhonto notho laso

Wena owaFodo ka Nombewu

kaNomagaga

Wena wase Dlebe

Mfolozi emnyama inkethabaweli Nyanya

Mabonel' empunzini Mlangeni

wena ka Miso (Misizwe)

Mgoqo ovimbe'sangweni nansi impi izwe lafa ngathi na??

Ngonyama.

DLAMINI Izindaba zemnande leso. Ngiyasichenya ngawe I will inform the uncles." he had said in ululations as he recited our clan names. It was safe to say he was beaming with pride and I hope Grandfather and Grandmother are also proud wherever they are. It has long been coming.

"Ngiyabonga Baba uzonjela kuthi yini impendulo yabo." I said before ending the call.

"Yebo Ndodana." and he dropped the call. I released a huge amount of breath relief spreading over me that finally MaNdlovu will be mine.

|||

Immediately I got out of the hospital doors I stretched my arms in excitement. Even throwing punches in the air Themba just looked at me as if I was crazy but I didn't care. What was running through my mind however was MaNdlovu I'm talking about my sunshine soon to be Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini. After stretching my neck and arms I put out my hand to Themba.

"Yini manje ufunani?" he asked confused.

" Car keys." I simply said. However the look he has now tells me I look like I have grown horns.

" Uyahlanya!" he exclaims shaking his head.

"Well I'm not so keys please I have things to do." I ponder on with my arm still stretched out.

" Weh Sibusiso Dlamini do you realize that the car you are demanding is mine and I also have plans?" he looks at me funny but I don't give up. I straighten up my spine and shoulders and look him straight in the eye.

"So?" I ask him.

He chuckles "uthi So? Kepha ingabe uyazizwa ?"

" I would like to believe that I'm not deaf and neither are you. So... the keys please." I say a bit more serious this guy is acting like I'm leaving him behind. He will simply be in the passenger seat so I don't know what his deal is.

" uyazi izimangaliso aziqedi la kwa Dlamini." he says with a clap of his hands and shaking his head.



"We Bafo isikhathi sigcothwa amagundane so please can you please give me the keys so we can leave." I tell him. He finally gives up and hands them to me.

I smirk "see that wasn't hard now was it?"

" Mxm" he shakes his head.

We get in the car and I heard straight to Menlyn Main. On the way Themba keeps giving me side glances I don't give him attention instead I keep drumming my fingers on the steering wheel to the beat of the song playing on radio. I connect my phone to the Bluetooth speaker and call MaMbhele Nkazimulo's wife. She is an event planner and interior designer.

"Sibali?" she says with her chirpy loud voice

"Yebo Makoti ubusy?" I ask her before we can engage in unnecessary pleasantries.

"Nope not at the moment. Ufunani?" she asks.

"How fast can you prepare a picnic package for two?" I ask her holding my breath.

"Depends how fast you want it." she responds and I chuckle.

"Okay how about an hour an hour thirty minutes at the latest?"

"Consider it done. But if I may ask what is the occasion?" she asks. Did I tell you she likes gossip? She is a chatterbox this one.

" That's for me to know and for you to never find out...Oh and please include a bouquet of white roses." I add on.

She lets out a chuckle "oh well see you in a bit."

" See you soon Makoti better get started. I will be transferring the money soon." I tell her and then drop the phone once she says good bye.

Themba continues giving me his side glances

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I tell her and then drop the phone once she says good bye.

Themba continues giving me his side glances but doesn't say anything.

" Oh stuff it why are you looking at me like that?" I ask him acting annoyed.

"Looking at you like what?" he asks with a shrug of his shoulders.

" Don't try to play it off you've been stealing glances at me the whole ride. So what is it? I know you're a curious cat just like your brother's wife." I respond to him as I turn into Menlyn.

"Hai Bafo I'm not curious kodwa I'm just concerned that you Sibusiso Dlamini are acting out of character." he tells me.

" What do you mean by acting out of character? I've always been like this njena." I ask him while clarifying my actions.

" hhm if you say so ke bafo." he deads the conversation and looks ahead. I chuckle parking next to the taxis. I get out.

" Ngiyabuya." I tell Themba who is sulking or just plain out annoyed I don't know. I get out of the car and go to one of my taxis.

I find Jabu with the other taxi drivers " imikhonzo manene." I greet others nod in response while others just mumble out greetings.

" Hau Bozza yami sekuyisikhathi eside ngikubona. Unjani?" Jabu greets me beaming in excitement.

" hai ngiright bafo wena unjani?" I respond as we engage in a hand shake.

"Sisaphusha Bozza kuyahlangana." he says.

"Eh I need a favor from you." I tell him .

" Okay Bozza yami. Shoot." he gives me the go-ahead.

"I want you to stall imeidi yami when she gets here. Make sure she doesn't take any of the taxis and wait till I get back. Can you do that for me?" I ask him. I know Thando is still at work because I was texting her before we came here. Today is her last day before her leave so I have to do this today.

He nods his head in response and I pad his back in appreciation. I hurriedly get back to the car before Themba decides to drive away and leave me here.

|||

Returning back from MaMbhele's house with the picnic basket I park in the same spot opposite the taxis. Themba gets out of the passenger seat and gets in the drivers seat. I retrieve my basket from the back. The queues seem to have gotten longer compared to an hour ago I

try locating Jabu through the crowd of people but I can't see him. I will have to cross over to the other side.

" Good luck Bafo." Themba says to me before driving off. I chuckle.

I cross to the other side where the taxis are. People are busy looking at me funny like you've never seen a grown ass man with a picnic basket before? The girls are starrng at me with puppy eyes "sorry ladies I ain't here for you." my subconscious says.

I finally get to see Jabu he is busy hopping up and down in front of a lady with dreadlocks thick and very familiar. She is wearing a gloomy face she doesn't even look a bit interested in whatever Jabu is doing. She is however constantly looking at the taxis and the long queue of passengers yet to board them. I walk in

long strides and reach where they're standing.

"I think the lady has had enough don't you think?" I say to Jabu my voice stern and deep. He turns around and staggers back.

" Bozza...I...I wa.." he struggles with his speech. Instead he just moves out of the way.

"Thank you Jabu now the keys to your taxi please." I tell him with my palm out for him. Shaking he retrieves them from his pocket and leaves them in the palm of my hand.

MaNdlovu is still oblivious to mine and Jabu's exchange. She has her earphones tucked in her ears her dreadlocks covering the sides of her face. I slowly walk towards her and stand just two steps in front her.



" Sawubona Nkosazana." I greet her. She jolts awake from her daydream in surprise. Before I can say anything further she throws herself at me. I hug her back and it feels like the very first time. The warmth spread throughout my body and everything and everyone else disappears. We are in our own bubble and I would hate it if someone popped it it feels like home. Like we were always like this like I've never left.

"I missed you so much." she says in a muffled voice still clinging to me.

"I missed you too." I say. My voice sounding groggy.

She hesitates letting go off me but she finally lifts her head from my shoulder. We stare into each others eyes her brown eyes have a glint of tears in them but she

doesn't let them fall. She breaks the stare by shaking her head in disbelief.

"someone tell me I'm dreaming." she whispers to herself but I hear her.

"You're not it's me Thandolwami. I'm here." my voice also comes out in a whisper.

She stares at me again but more intense this time she runs her index finger at the side of my face all the way to my beard. Her hand rests on my thick scruffy beard as she picks on it the tears finally fall and on reflex I wipe them with my thumb. She grips my waist and looks at me from left to right she scans my arms and chest. Her eyes stops on my right arm then look back up at my face for confirmation that it's real. I nod my head in accordance and she beams in glee.

"For real for real?" she asks vocally this time so I answer vocally too.

"Yebo MaNdlovu I had it removed today."  
I confess

.

She beats my other arm with her tiny fist  
"And you didn't bother to tell me?"

"Ouch!" I rub the spot she punched and  
she folds her arms and pouts. " Well it  
was supposed to be a surprise. So  
Surprise!"

She rolls her eyes and look the other  
way. I let out a chuckle women are  
stressful I tell you but we can't leave  
without them alright.

"MaNdlovu wami." I call out to her and  
she continues pouting while tapping her  
foot on the ground. I retrieve the flowers  
from the basket I hold them next to my  
chest. I look at her taking her all in and  
call out to her again. "MaNdlovu  
ngiyaxolisa thatha."

She stops tapping her foot and looks at me then the flowers and back to my face. A small smile creeps up on her face as she takes the bouquet from me. I mentally punch the air in victory as he brings the flowers to her nose and sniff them with her eyes closed. I take a picture in my head this woman is beautiful every word in the universe that describes beauty definitely means Thandolwam.

" I would love to stare at you all afternoon MaNdlovu but we have to go another surprise awaits you." I tell her. She finally takes her attention from the flowers to me.

"Another surprise? What are you planning Dlamini?" she asks me with her eyebrow raised and her free arm resting on her waist. She looks cute but right now it's not time to answer questions but to act.

" I'm not telling you anything but let's go." I pick up the basket and take her hand in another. We reach the taxi and let her get in once she is settled I wink at her closing the door. I put the basket in the back and run-walk to the drivers seat. With our seat belts on I drive out of the mall.

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38.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

"The purpose of our lives is to be happy."- Dalai Lama.

When life comes at you fast sometimes you don't know whether to embrace the changes or turn back and say I didn't sign up for this. But fact remains whether in

denial of the changes they are there and you have to live with them. Take my life for instance in just less than two months I fell in love viewed life differently through another person's lenses. My dad finally got the courage to move on and introduce me to his newfound love. My best friend and sister Enhle also in the process of healing found someone who is willing to go through the process with her. She is happy and I? I am beyond the word happy I'm ecstatic. Meeting Sibub was never something I imagined happening this year my goal was to focus on my personal growth Enhle my father and work. But I guess it is true when they say when God shows up he shows off.

Now I'm in this passenger seat with this gorgeous man. His golden amber orbs are starring right ahead I don't know where we are going and at this moment I don't really care. I'm just glad I am with him after so long his accident sort of threw

my life off balance and wavered my faith in God. I couldn't make sense of what was happening frequently I will question his mercy and his will in my life. Like how he will just bring someone in my life and try to take him away from me so soon. I was mad angry at the world but I persevered I let his will be done and lived my life the way I saw fit.

His one hand is griping the steering wheel whilst the other is in my hand. Only letting go when he changes the gear the sunrays bounce off his skin rich in melanin creating a dreamy golden brown hue around him. He randomly keeps squeezing me and kissing the outside of my hand and giving me side glances. I feel giddy everytime his lips comes in contact with my skin the butterflies in my belly are having a field play but I wouldn't have it any other way. He doesn't say a word and neither do I. I'm going with the flow well more like I'm

following his lead I bring the roses to my nose and sniff them for the millionth time since he gave them to me. The feeling reminds me of the first time he gave me flowers that was actually the first day we met. I couldn't understand how a fine ass man like him would even be interested in me enough to gift me flowers. I also couldn't comprehend why I even accepted them in the first place well actually I knew but being the type of person I am it was out of character for me to take the flowers. Especially since I was rude to him that very morning. I stare out the window the trees and buildings move as we also drive away from the city.

Moments later we are driving towards the Pretoria botanical gardens. I gasp in surprise turning in my seat to look at him.

" You do realize the park is already closed



right?" he doesn't answer me but continues driving the gate opens and he drives through. My mouth is still open in shock.

" You were saying?" he gives me a smirk and concentrate back on driving."Oh and please close your mouth we don't want flies laying eggs in there." his cocky grin takes over and I gasp yet again.

" You..you are ...agh." I sulk pouting and fold my arms on chest.

He parks the taxi and gets out. He goes around the taxi taking out the picnic basket first and then finally comes to my side. He opens the door for me and give out his hand for me to take setting my bag and flowers aside I get off with his help. I close the door behind me.The scent of the freshly cut green lawn envelops me and I inhale in the freshness. The sun is just about to set

and the yellow orange hue in the peripheral looks like a sight to behold. It's saying stand still and take me in the beauty of it all and close it with a tight lid to revisit everytime you miss it. I walk in step with him till we reach a side of the park that is just way too precious than what I've already seen. There is a waterfall enchanting and magical. The sight is breathtaking that I can't stop gasping and smiling at the same time. I turn to Sibusiso who has his phone out the flash is on meaning he is taking pictures.

" Lusibalukhulu Dlamini? Yini iplan lakho?" I ask him with both my hands resting on my hips instead of answering he clicks another picture.

After he is satisfied with the pictures he has taken he answers me." Nothing Sthandwa Sami I just want to spoil my woman. That's all." he smiles not his

usual cocky smirk or grin but a beautiful smile that accentuates his beauty. This man is gorgeous in all shades known to man his pearly white teeth just complement his brown skin and I swoon at his enchanting looks. " Now come on I'm sure you are hungry." He leads me to the picnic blanket with everything already set up. As for when he did it? I don't know. I sit down on the blanket and he follows suit there are cute triangle chicken sandwiches fresh fruits including grapes my absolute favorite. Freshly squeezed orange juice water and a whole lot more. There is even a cute vase with sunflowers on the side. I grin at the sight

" Here." he says handing me a glass of champagne well I didn't see that before.

" Thank you." I take the glass from him and take a sip .

"How are you I never got to ask you?" I say after putting the glass down. He looks at me and sighs.

"I'm fit like a horse ready to go on a ride baby." He responds landing a kiss on his biceps I giggle Sibusiso will always be Sibusiso.

"Hai man wena usile yazi." I let out another giggle and he smirks.

"Well only for you baby only you. Wena unjani?" he ask me.

"I'm happy you're fine and that ugly cast is finally off.." I tell him

"But?..I can hear a but coming MaNdlovu." I look away from his piercing stare.

I sigh" I have to go home tomorrow as I told you. When dad asked me well more

like 'demaded' initially he wasn't sounding friendly. His whole police/detective side came out of play. I was actually surprised when he moved the date although I was relieved but it dawned on me that he shouldn't have postponed so I can get it over and done with. Whatever is the issue." I rant. Sibu is listening to me so attentively but I feel bad that I kept talking without a break.

"Sorry for ranting on and on I guess I just needed to take it off my chest." I apologize.

" Don't be sorry baby this is a safe space for both of us so rant on. I don't mind." He reassures me.

"I know but.."

" Shh! No but MaNdlovu." he interject me with his index finger on my lips signalling me to keep quiet.

"I.." he presses the finger with a shake of his head. I nod my head in surrender.

"Now what do you think he wants you home for?" he asks me. Taking a sip of his drink I watch him his Adam's Apple moves as he swallow. I gulp down saliva to moist my dry throat and clear the image out of my head.

"Honestly I don't know. And the fact that I don't know is making my nerves worse." I tell him and he nods in understanding.

"Okay enough with stories that touch let me feed you. Yiza." he says with a sandwich in his hand towards me. I chuckle then lean in and take a bite. He keeps feeding me till he feels I've had enough.

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After stuffing our faces with food we laid down on our backs on the blanket. We rested under stars randomly pointing them and saying random nonsense followed by my giggles and his chuckles. The moment was perfect even in silence it felt like a million conversations were being had. We would steal glances at each and blush I don't know what paradise looks like but that picnic date felt like one. Suddenly out of nowhere as we were gazing the stars with our hands locked in each others

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Sibusiso spoke.

"How would you feel being my wife?" he asked.

Me being the lovestruck puppy I am I turned my head and looked at him. I studied his side profile before he turned to face me after feeling my stare. I embroidered every little detail of his to my memory from the scar next to his ear

to the way his eyebrows will furrow in concentration and to the thick bush of beard that I loved playing with. I went back to his golden brown orbs the same eyes that caught my attention the first time we met in that taxi when he pretended to be a taxi driver. The very same brown orbs I found myself drowning in they always pulled me in I could never say no to those eyes.

So I finally answered "it will make me the most happiest woman alive." my voice came out husky due to being quiet for a while my throat was dry so I gulped down saliva to moisten it.

"Good having you as my wife will make me the happiest man alive too." he said squeezing my hand tighter in reassurance and then turned back to gazing at the sky above us adorned in shiny crystals.

The night ended with me being driven



back to my place and we shared a kiss well more like kisses. He just couldn't stop kissing me and in his defense it was payback for all the weeks he spent away from me and couldn't even hold me in his arms. Reluctant to leave we ended up cuddling on the couch even fighting over what movies to watch. He wanted action films while I wanted to watch some romantic comedy. In the end no one won because the TV ended up watching us making out on the couch. He ended up leaving just after midnight and I dozed off at the speed of lightning. Guess I was more exhausted than I let on.

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We are traveling by bus by we I mean Enhle and I. She returned early in the morning and we started getting ready. We boarded the eight thirty bus at Bosman Station my eyes were still groggy due to lack of sleep but I kept my eyes open till we left the city. From there I slept off.

"Mgani buka it's our first pit stop." Enhle stirred me awake. I rubbed my eyes off of any sleep and took in my surroundings. We were already outside Gauteng in North West Portchestroom. We got out of the bus and went to the bathroom to relieve ourselves and buy snacks.

Fifteen minutes later we were back on the road. There is nothing special about this trip except having Enhle with me whom at the moment is on the phone with her love interest. I however I'm starring out the window looking at monuments and landmarks as we go. I have my earphones tucked in my ears listening to music my Playlist is full of diverse genres I don't have a favourite genre. If a song is good enough for my ears then I definitely listen to it. My butt is already sore from seating for so long my head on the other hand is buzzing with questions. One that is more dominant is why does

my dad want us home so urgently? It's unlike him to be so demanding. Normally he would say he doesn't want us home as much because he wants us to enjoy the freedom of finally being away from him. Enhle started living with us last year after her incident so for her going home to dad is not a big deal. My deal However is that I've lived with this man all my life I know him and also don't know him at the same time. He is like a chameleon he changes color anytime depending on his environment that what makes him extra scary. I wouldn't be surprised if he and MaGladys decided to tie the knot they are old yes but this might be their second chance at marriage and a complete family where both spouses are present.

After over eight hours of endless pitstops bumps and naps and endless Stonepaper scissors game. We finally reached Durban I couldn't even feel my butt these busses better do better when it comes to their

seats these thin sponges ain't doing justice to our bums. MaGladys daughter came to pick us up I introduced Enhle since they didn't know each other physically. After all the pleasantries we all got in the car and drove home I wasn't even in the mood to watch the scenery as we went. What I wanted however was to get home and sleep traveling long hours isn't pap and vleis. But one thing that bugged me was why did dad not come to pick us up? On top of everything Nelly came she doesn't even stay at my father's house. So with the nagging feeling clawing at my skin I decided to just put my self out of misery and ask.

"So do you know what's happening?" I asked Nelly. She looked at me through the rear mirror then shrugged her shoulders.

I let her be I couldn't really force her to tell me. Getting in the yard my dad's

truck is in the driveway sticking out like a sore thumb compared to the other cars on our streets. I get out of the car dragging my luggage behind me Enhle and Nelly follow suit. I knock before I push the door open MaGladys is in the kitchen stirring something on the stove. Dad is nowhere to be found probably somewhere in the house.

"Sawubona Ma." I greet her. It's then that she turns after hearing my voice.

"Oh mtanam ufikile unjani kodwa?" she says engulfing me in a quick hug I'm a bit thrown off but I don't show it. I guess it's going to take some time to get used to her.

"Ngiyaphila Ma Nina ninjani?"

"Si sa Phila so asibonke uJehova." she says with a smile and I nod.

"Sanibonani!" Enhle's chirpy voice says as she gets in the kitchen with Nelly. I wouldn't be surprised if they already get along Enhle is a social butterfly.

"Yebo mtanam unjani?" MaGladys says to her with a smile on her face. She doesn't look surprised to see Enhle dad probably told her.

"Oh mina Ngi'right and fabulous wena unjani Ma?" she asks with chirpy voice again. I don't know if it's me but she is extra hyper for someone who traveled for over eight hours.

"Nami Ngi'right mtanam. Food will be ready shortly so please freshen up and settle in." MaGladys says leading us out of the kitchen and we all laugh.

Before heading to my room I turn back to MaGladys " ah Ma?"

"Yebo Thando yini?" she asks me wiping the kitchen counter.

"Do you by any chance know why ubaba asibizile ekhaya?" I ask my voice soft and pleading but instead she shakes her head no. My shoulders slump in disappointment." Oh okay." I turn back around heading to my room.

I find Enhle in my room unpacking. "and then wena did you forget the directions to your room?" I ask her.

"Nope." she answers still hyperactive and putting her clothes in the wardrobe

"So why are you in my room ke Enhle?" I ask confused.

"No reason just felt like sleeping in here. And we will get time to bond together with Nelly. She left a while ago to fetch her son from school." she rambles and i

just shake my head.

"Okay if you say so." I say putting my suitcase on the bed to unpacking too.

"Funny but this feels like some sort of family reunion. Don't you think?" I say to Enhle and she just shrugs her shoulders and hops to the bathroom.

" What is it with everyone shrugging their shoulders at me when I ask questions? Weird."

I continue unpacking my bag so I can take a nap. I'm in severe need of sleep right now my body have to recuperate for whatever dad will tell us when I finally meet him. After unpacking and talking with Sibusiso on the phone I take a bath and sleep.

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39.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

I'm stirred from my sleep by someone shaking me. Two things about me

1. I'm not a morning person.
2. I hate being woken up.

My father and Enhle are the two people that know those main points about me like the back of their hands. Now whoever has decided to evade my space and wake me up on top of that is definitely foreign in this house. Enhle is besides me and she pulls the comforter over her head because like me we both feel it's too early to wake up.

" Thandolwethu Ndlovu vuka man!" the voice says this time steady and commanding. I know all the voices of everyone in this house except this one

voice in particular. It sounds foreign yet so familiar like I've heard it before maybe when I was younger I don't know.

With a deep breath and a violent huff I sit up against my headboard violently rubbing my eyes. I then take a look at the person the one person who has the audacity to wake me up mina uThando Ndlovu. She has her hands on her waist that's the first thing I notice. Secondly there isn't an ounce of friendliness shown on her face instead a scowl rests there with her eyebrows scrunched together. And one thing is obvious she is familiar.

"Uyazi angazi kuthi uyenza kanjani ezi in-laws yakho uma wehluleka ngisho ukuvuka ngaphambi kokuphuma kwelanga." She says shaking her head. "In-laws?" my subconscious asks but I don't pay heed to it. It's a norm for African families to try to reprimand the girl child on what they consider laziness

by threatening her about marriage and in-laws. I was raised by my father And one thing he instilled in me is that I should maintain my own identity whether I get married or not. I should always learn to be my own person and not hide behind the stereotype surrounding typical African brides or woman in general. I would like to believe I have stuck to those teachings that my aunt trying to taunt me about being a typical Zulu woman doesn't phase me at all. However I don't understand why my aunt I'm talking about aunt Nomazwi my Fathers sister; whom at the moment has her glasses low on her nose like Tryphina from Muvhango is doing in my room waking me up.

"Sawubona Aunty." I greet out of respect. She looks at me up and down then clicks her tounge.

"Nyawubona nyanty nyawubona nyanty."

She mocks me. " Nawe Sawubona Thandolwethu I don't have time to chit chat get up and tell your sister to wake up too. You have to come help me in the kitchen." She backs out of the room before I could even respond. I just sigh in defeat and shake Enhle to wake up.

"Hai Thandolwethu leave me alone." she groans

"We ntombazane I would if I could but I can't. It's your aunt's orders and you know what she is like." I tell her getting out of bed and putting on my sleepers.

"Aunt?....there is only one aunt I know and that's aunt Try..." she sends the comforter flying off the bed as she gets up in a hurry. Her eyes are bulged out of their sockets she is busy running around the room like a headless chicken as she puts on her shoes and gown. " OMG I don't want to die young so help me God."

she prays before opening the door and getting out I just shake my head.

"Thandooooooo I suggest you hurry up if you still value your life." she calls out to me already out the door.

I tie my gown around my waist and drag my feet to the kitchen the time seems to be just a few minutes past four in the morning. If you ask me why we are up at this time on a Saturday even expect a shrug of my shoulders because I'm clueless. MaGladys and Nelly are also up sauntering around the kitchen Enhle is by the sink already scrubbing a pot. As for my aunt she is sipping on a cup probably drinking her strong blend of joke ceylon tea her favorite. She is barking out orders her strongest trait whenever there are family gatherings she is one of those aunts strict yet so lazy to lift a finger and work.

"AND THEN?" I ask in utter shock.

They all turn to look at me my aunt puts her cup in the counter and hurries to me. She drags me by my arm and gives me a knife as to where she retrieved it from nami angazi. "Yes girly stop wasting time and get to work the veggies won't chop themselves now will they?" she says to me thrusting a huge cabbage unto my chest. My mouth opens but nothing comes out I'm just here standing and gaping like a fish in need of water. I don't know if I should be surprised or shocked or just act like I know what is happening. With a sigh and a count to ten in my head I sit on the kitchen table and start chopping as instructed. Enhle starts to hum a song in the background as everyone keeps doing whatever they are doing. My aunt barking out orders MaGladys and Nelly cooking Enhle by the sink washing the dishes and me chopping whatever I find my hands on except my

Aunt's head of course.

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There is a mountain of food on the kitchen table and counters their mouth watering aroma has me wanting to indulge in them already. But everytime I raise my hand to pick at any of them my attention being on the fried chicken my aunt's slap always finds it way to my poor hand. In her words " hold yourself Thandolwethu this food is for the guests not you."

"What guests?" I ask again for the millionth time after attempting to grab a spoonful of creamy spinach and my aunt slapping my hand again.

"You will find out soon patience MaNdlovu didn't your father instill that in you?"I just look at her and not say anything. She is trying to get on my nerves and God

knows my father is the best dad and mom in this world. He has managed to embody the two roles like he was born for them and I'm proud of him. I'm the woman I am today because of him. I slip into a day dream and let the world around me dissolve from a second.

It was an actual second because my aunt is already shouting in my ear to get up from the kitchen chair I've been slumping on all morning to go and bath. The time is a little after nine how the time flew by so quick? I don't know Enhle and Nelly are having their own conversation in the corner when I hear voices from outside the same voices I've been hearing since dawn but didn't pay attention to. Now bear in mind I haven't seen my father since I got home I don't know if he is playing hide and seek or what but I'm yet to find out.

"NDLOVU!



GATSHENI!

BOYA

BENYATHIOBUSONGA

BUSOMBULUKA

MPONGO KAZINGELWAYO

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..."

Speaking of voices they are reciting the Ndlovu clan names at the top of their lungs Enhle and Nelly long ran to the window to take a sneak peek. They are busy giggling like little school girls and I just chuckle. My dad finally makes his presence known by stepping into the kitchen.

"Sawubona MaNdlovu." now I would greet back but I don't know which MaNdlovu he is referring to me or aunt Nomazwi.

"Sawubona bhuti." my aunt gets me out of the dilemma and greets back. My dad nods his head then turns to look at me.

"Yebo Thandolwethu ulale kanjani?"

"Ngilele kahle Baba ulale kanjani?"

"Kahle mtanam. Are you ready?" he asks looking at me from head to toe then looks at my aunt and MaGladys.

"Why angekho ready? And baphi abanye?" the three of us look towards the front window where Nelly and Enhke are peeping. I gulp down and stand on my feet running to my room before the lecture begins.

The voices outside continue chanting my clan names when I get into my room. The two troublemakers follow shortly stifling giggles. I turn towards them "Hau I didn't know that any of you girls is getting cuffed?" I ask with a smirk and my arms folded towards my chest.

They look at each other then look at

me "Us marriage?" they say simultaneously like a set of annoying twins. I could deal with one Enhle and now I have to deal with another like her.

"Cha sisi let me refresh your memory. Mina I'm already married remember?" Nelly says flushing her ring finger in my face.

"And as for me I'm not MaNdlovu I would be if I was Baba's biological child but I'm not. So.." they all turn to look at me their actions mirroring mine.

"What?" I ask. still a bit lost about what is happening.

"Don't what us you tell us nontombi. Did Sbali propose or say anything about getting married to you?" Enhle asks looking at me with her inquisitive eyes her eyebrows scrunched together and her arms still folded.

"Sibu? He didn't propose you know you would be the first person to know if he did." I tell her.

"What about the second part of the question? Did it happen by any chance?" Nelly asks

"Second part...OMG! you have to be kidding me." I say as the realization hits me hard. I start pacing up the room and they are just looking at me with broad grins on their faces.

"Checkmate." They both say as they high five.

"Bu...but how? We were just talking on Thursday night during the picnic and he randomly asked how I would feel being his wife. Obviously I said I would be ecstatic but I didn't know he was planning this..." I keep rambling as I walk

back and forth around the room. "He wasn't really proposing was he?" I stop and ask them hoping for a sensible answer atleast one that will make sense to me.

"Oh well what did you expect from a Zulu man? Mine just said he wants to sent his delegates to my fathers house on one of our phone calls. Kanti umuntu ukhuluma abantu besevele becula ngaphandle kwegceke lami." Nelly explains and my jaw is literally on the floor.

"And you didn't turn them away?" Enhle asks also clearly shocked as me.

Nelly just shrugs her shoulders " Well I already knew he was the man I wanted to marry so why delay?"

My whole body feels paralyzed so I just sit on my bed. I run my hands around me looking for my phone I find it in my

gowns pocket. I dial his numbers they are already engraved in my memory like my identity number. He picks the call immediately

"Yebo MaNdlovu wami." his groggy deep velvety voice says on the other side. The same voice that got me here now about to get hooked to this man in just less than three months.

Crazy!

My mouth feels so dry like there isn't an ounce of saliva to moisten my buds and throat. I open my mouth to say something anything at all but nothing comes out.

"Thando yini?" he asks concern lacing his voice. Still my mouth doesn't comply with my thoughts.

Enhle is cheering for me to speak out but

nothing I'm in shock. I'm even shocked at my body well myself for reacting like this. "Thando?MaNdlovu? Khuluma nami Sthandwa Sami." he keeps talking. Enhle finally takes the phone from my ear and talks. My arms slumps to my side. Nelly sits besides me and rubs my back.

"Hi Sbali it's Enhle talking. Eh your woman has been rendered speechless." she says looking at me chewing at her bottom lip.

She seems to be listening then nods her head "okay I will pass the message sbali and I can assure you she will be fine and ready on time." she says to the person on the other side then hangs up.

She looks at me smiles and starts ululating "halala halala uyashada namhlanje I do...." she awfully gives out a rendition of Brenda Fassie's wedding day song. Nelly giggles and I'm still just

in disbelief. After getting off from her high she starts talking " okay uSbali says and I quote 'Tell my lovely wife to be that she shouldn't overthink I always mean it when I say I love her and call her Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini. Also tell her to stop being in a trance and think back to the first time she asked me what I want from her and I said I want her to be my wife and she looked at me like I wa crazy but still blushed.' Now that's not all ke mtase he said don't keep him waiting because he can't wait to see you soon." she let's out a breath after her continuous ranting. "Now. Let's get you ready shall we." They both drag me to the bathroom and close the door behind me.

"Oh and please make sure you shave those legs they are about to come out to play today nontombi." Nelly says from the room and they both let out giggles

"If I were you I will get started now you



wouldn't want aunt Nomazwi getting in here as if she is going to war ukukulungisa uqobo." Enhle says and at that I wake up from whatever trance I was in and pour water into the bathtub.

| | |

40.

THANDOLWETHU NDLOVU.

"We found love in a hopeless place."  
\_Rihanna.

My aunt comes into my room as I tie my dreadlocks up she has a dress in her arms white with long sleeves and flowy. Atleast she got my favourite colour right for once. She hands the dress to me with a matching headwear. I put them on and wear my traditional beads left for me by my mom. They are special to me hence I

wear them on special days this day in particular is one of the most important ones in my life. It's a mark of a milestone a life changing experience from girlfriend to fiancée well traditionally a wife. She looks at me with tears brimming from her eyes I don't want to cry but this moment here is emotional and beautiful.

"OH mtana ka Luthando waze wafana no ma'wakho." aunt says emotionally and engulfs me in the warmest motherly hug.

I wish my mom was here but I know she is with me in spirit. She lets go the hug as Nelly and Enhle get in the room also dressed in long dresses and matching headwraps." You guys look gorgeous ghaa! I'm jealous." I compliment them with the biggest smile on my face.

"Rich of you to say that have you seen yourself in the mirror nontombi? Sibuy won't be able to hold himself once he lays

his eyes on you." Enhle says and my cheeks hurt from all the blushing I'm doing right now.

"Sisi sekuyisikhathi." MaGladys says to us peeping through the bedroom door.

The nerves come back and I try not to hyperventilate. My aunt gives the three of us blankets to cover our faces I just put on my morning sleepers and follow aunt out the door. I'm put in the middle between Enhle and Nelly we walk through the kitchen then into the sitting room where the delegates are. I made a small hole in my blanket to at least peek through My dad and my uncle Gqabashe whom I haven't seen in years is sitted right beside my dad. He is my mom's only brother and the only uncle I have. On the other couch there are men in those brown old formal jackets with Brentwood pants probably my to be in-laws. We lay down on the floor in the

middle I can hear whispers and murmurs going around. My heart is Palpating out of my chest my hands are sweaty and this damn blanket isn't doing me any justice at this moment.

"Ngakho-ke ngikholwa ukuthi uyawazi umakoti wakho ngikhuluma ngembali ofuna indodana yakho uyibonile egcekeni laseNdlovu futhi ifisa ukukhipha." my uncle's deep commanding voice says. More murmurs follow.

"Uhm yebo siyamazi." an unfamiliar voice says.

"Kulungile ke njengoba uthe ngeke kube nezinyanga zokuxoxisana futhi isivumelwano esifinyelelwe namuhla sisebenza. Khetha umakoti wakho." my uncle says.

I'm not surprised that the negotiations won't be prolonged. Have you met

Sibusiso Dlamini? When that man decides ukuthi what will be will be no one can go against that. It seems he made sure there won't be room for more negotiations.

"Here she is." a voice says followed by a tap on my back. I let out an ounce of breath I didn't even know I had held in. It seems the person that pointed at me went back to their sit because ny uncle starts to speak again.

"MaNdlovu sukuma ukuze bakubone." my uncle tells me his voice beaming with pride.

I get up with the heavy blanket still blocking my vision someone helps me. They uncover only my face and the Dlamini's nod their head with grins plastered on their faces. I blush and then face down because traditionally I'm not even supposed to look them in the eye.

"Ngiyabonga zingane zami you can excuse us now." my uncle says and Nelly and Enhle get up and we get out of the room following my aunt's direction.

"Yena muhle umfazi wangempela impahla" the men compliment their voices fading a bit as I get out of the sitting room.

The minute I get in my room I toss the blanket off me and take a deep breath followed by a grin. Enhle also squeals in excitement as we hop around the room in a tight hug. Nelly chuckles as she folds the blankets properly.

"Okay okay...let me get this clear. Mina uThandolwethu Ndlovu is about to be someone's wife?" I say in disbelief the emotion I'm feeling now is beyond happiness and the goosebumps prove it.

"Yes yes and yes you are someone's wife mogirl. And my little long ears might have heard that everything might be done this weekend. I told you before Sibusiso Dlamini seems like a man that knows what he wants." Enhle says

"Well I heard my uncle saying the negotiations won't be prolonged. I thought lobola negotiations normally go on for months." I say sitting down on my bed.

"Oh well from what I've gathered about your man he is everything but normal." Nelly says and we laugh.

Aunt Nomazwi comes back into the room with clothes in her arms. More like isidwaba countless beads and a beaded black bra. There is also a leopard skin bib.

"Thando umyeni wakho ungaphandle

futhi kufanele umondle ukudla." she says putting the clothes on my bed. "Kepha nina nobabili nizosebenzela izihambeli zokudla." she says turning to Enhle and Nelly.

"Yebo aunty." the two say at the same time and get out of the room.

"And then wena kungani ulapha?"

"I..I thought.."

"Why ucabanga Thandolwethu? Your husband is hungry and so is everyone in the yard. Thatha." she says throwing a shawl at me and I hurriedly put it around my shoulders as I get out of the room. Let me go serve my baby okay more like umyeni wami.

"Umyeni wami." I test it on my tounge and it definitely sounds better if not perfect.



I get out of the of the front door into the front yard I have a bowl of water and a dish cloth in my hands. Looking forward the yard has been transformed there is a stretch tent on the lawn and people I hadn't noticed they were here. The street is filled with taxis courtesy of Sibusiso Dlamini if I'm guessing right. My dad's bakkie has been moved from the driveway and some people are occupying the space platters of food in front of them. I finally start moving my feet scouting my surroundings as I move. I have only one person in mind and that's my Sibusiso I head to the direction of the stretch tent. It s filled to the brim with Zulu men speaking over each other I can imagine what a day at the taxi rank looks like just seeing what I'm seeing. I'm trying to find Sibusiso within the the crowd and noise I don't know if ny vision is alright or what but it seems like I should

have worn my classes. Everyone seems to have dressed in the same set of clothing so I try to find a face with a full beard but the results come back like the first time. I'm walking slowly so I don't show that I can't see the person I'm looking for.

"MaNdlovu!" a voice calls me from the crowd. I raise my head to its direction and find Themba on his feet with a smile on his face. I smile back and go to where he is next to him are the identical twins I once met at the hospital. They are seated in a circle the other man in the circle is facing Themba's direction but I already know who he is. He seems to have gotten a new haircut he is wearing a brown leather jacket well that's what I can make out from my view.

I finally reach them "Sanibonani." I greet them with the bowl still in my hands.

"Sawubona Makoti unjani?" the other twin who is hyper and forward says with the biggest grin on his face.

"Ngiyaphila Nkazimulo wena unjani?" his smile grows wider than it already was confirmation I got his name right.

"Hau I am prim and proper. Also ecstatic that you remembered my name."

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confirmation I got his name right.

"Hau I am prim and proper. Also ecstatic that you remembered my name." told you. I blush facing down.

"Yebo Thandolwami." the deep hypnotizing voice of my man says.

I blush as I turn to face him I was right he did get a new haircut and his full beard is well trimmed. He looks more

handsome than usual that I can't help it but stare at my feet well try to since the bowl is obscuring my view. I have become speechless just like in the morning when I called him.

"Let me help you with that." he says taking the bowl from me and then the dishcloth. I start playing with my fingers starring at my feet like they are the most interesting thing right now.

"Urm...I...I.. ngimele ngi.." I start mumbling the words not wanting to come out right. I look towards the house then the Dlamini brothers and then the house." I should get the food." I point towards the house and quickly back out of the tent. Sibusiso has a smirk on his face while Themba and Nkazimulo seem to be stiffling in their laughter. Nkanyiso on the other hand is passive as always. Damn it Sibusiso why do I always have to act like a speechless idiot whenever I see you? I

run walk into the house and pass the delegates with my father still seated on the couches. They are already eating meaning Enhle and Nelly are probably in the kitchen or hiding in my room till the old men finish. I fill Tupperware bowls with mountains of food once I reach the kitchen. I call out Enhle from the passage to come help me and she comes along with Nelly's son.

"Fana unjani where is mommy?" I ask him as we return back to the kitchen.

"Ngi'right aunty..umama une Baba." he says in his baby voice. I nod my head okay.

We carry the food outside with Sphamandla holding the smallest bowl of gravy. I put the bowl of pap(phuthu) down as Enhle puts the plates down.

"Sanibonani Sbali." Enhle's chirpy voice

greet them as I go back into the house get the other bowls of salads.

Sphamandla has ditched Enhle and is now following me around. We get back to the tent Enhle is in a full blown conversation with the brothers Sibuyi just chuckles and shakes his head here and there.

Surprisingly even Nkanyiso is talking whatever Enhle can't do is yet to be discovered. I squat down attempting to fish up for them just as I dig the spoon into the pap.

"Cha Makoti don't worry we can do it ourselves. We can't overwork your day now can we?" Nkazimulo says to me but he is looking straight above my head at Sibuyi.

"It's fine you're my guests and I have to serve you."

"Well if you say so you are allowed to

serve your man MaNdlovu." he says with a smirk still looking at Sibu's direction. I don't bother to look behind me because I know I won't like what I will find. Sibusiso can be a bit jealous if not rude and it seems like Nkazimulo is somehow trying to tease him to get a reaction out of him.

"Baby?" Sibu says with his hand out for me to take.

I slowly put the spoon down and take his hand he helps me up from my squatting position. I almost lose my footing but his arm is already around my waist holding me steady. "Than..thank you." my voice comes out as a whisper low enough just for his ears. He smirks looking down at me.

"Your welcome my wife." I blush and drop my face to hide the crimson red appearing on my cheeks. "Woza zikhulume." He leads me out of the tent

my hand still in his soft and warm.

We walk into the street and stand behind one of the taxis. He let's go my arm and stuff both his hands into his pockets whilst fold my arms under the shawl. He stares at me intensely in concentration like he is reading a chapter of his favorite book. As he's eyes continue boring into me I also take time to assess him. From head to toe his chocolate skin looks delicate and mellow against the sun his muscles are protruding out of the black shirt and brown leather jacket he has on crazy since he hasn't been working out in a long time. The pants aren't the usual abo BabKhumalo Brentwood pants instead they are slim fit navy suit pants that look just bit tight on him.

"You look beautiful Nkosazana." he finally says. I hadn't realized he finished reading me so I blush realizing he must have caught me staring too.



"Ngiyabonga." I answer my eyes still on the ground.

"So how does it feel being Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini MaNdlovu?" the smirk returns and my blush intensifies.

"Overwhelming but good." with my newfound confidence I look him straight in the eyes and our eyes lock.

"Hhm Overwhelming?..." he asks. His breath hitting my neck and his new trimmed beard pricking my sensitive skin. My breath hitches as he slides his arm behind me and let it rest on the small of my back. Goosebumps make a home on my skin. " How about exhilarating?" his voice comes out hoarse.

"Th...that too." I say after clearing my throat.

"How about now?" he leaves a chasty wet kiss on my neck I get a warm feeling at the pit of my stomach.

His fingers brush against mine and something cold is slid on one of my fingers. He lifts his head from my neck and back out a little giving some room. My eyes immediately snap to my hand my second finger feels a bit heavier than usual and on it rests the most beautiful ring rose gold in colour with a huge diamond. I don't know anything about carats but it's pretty big from my view and blinding.

I gasp.

"Sibu?" my voice comes out hoarse and tears build up in my eyes.

"It's myeni wami from now on MaNdlovu." his voice a bit stern but the smile on his face gives me a different

feeling. This man I mean my fiance is unbelievable as they get.

"I like Sibu wami better." I say with a cheeky grin.

I grab his jacket in both hands making tiny fists against his huge chest and pull him to me. Our lips interlock in a kiss so deep yet sensual and like always the butterflies come out just like the first time . I get lost into his hold his arms envelops me into him. For a chubby woman I sure look like a midget next to him my height being the disadvantage.

"Sawubona Nkosazana." he says after letting go from the kiss. I in particular still gasping for air.

"Sawubona bhuti." my grin as wide as the ocean mirroring his. I love this man.

"NGIYAKUTHANDA." we both say

simultaneously.

After a chuckle and a giggle we fall into fits of laughter. Who would have thought I Thandolwethu Ndlovu soon to be Dlamini will find love in a taxi?

Well neither did I.

\*\*\* THE END.\*\*\*

Epilog.

A Year and a half Later.

SIBUSISO

DLAMINI.

"You have made me proud mfana wami."  
the sweet voice of grandmother says.

Her velvety skin glowing in the dark her crown still as Glorious as it gets black and

full. Suited for the Queen she is but this time she looks my Thando's age. No wrinkles firm around her eyes when she smiles or laugh instead she glows more.

"Hau Gogo for what?" I ask her.

She laughs " we Sibuy you silly child. For a boy so smart you can be pretty dumb yazi wena." she says.

Her hands are behind her back and her pearly smile makes me smile too. I scratch the back of my head remembering that I actually passed my math test. "Hau Gogo I forgot. So what did you get me this time?" I ask.

It's tradition in our family that the grandparents gift us for every little milestone we reach. So passing a test definitely will get me a gift. Hopping to my feet I put my palm out with a grin plastered across my face.

"Ah ah not so soon..what are you supposed to say?"

"I am Lusibalukhulu the greatest to ever live. I am strong vigilant and a born leader." I chant out the taught monologue by grandfather with enthusiasm.

Grandmother smiles and nods her head agreeing with the words "That's right my boy you are Lusibalukhulu Mandela ngokulandela izinkomo Zamadoda Jama kaSjadu. Now here is your gift keep it safe." she says handing me a small pot plant instead of the normal red clay color it's painted in blue. Inside there is a small oak tree seems to be a few days old.

I look at my gift confused a tree in a pot plant? Normally we get gifts like a new ball sweets or just anything we would wish for just because our friends from

school had it.

"A tree Gogo?" I ask confused.

"Yebo mfana wami. You see this tree is not just a tree but a lesson you should grow up with." she explains but I'm still confused why would I need to learn a lesson? On top of that from a tree?

"Don't think too much my boy. Your duty is to nurture and water the tree so that it grows. The lesson in all this is to teach you the importance of responsibility." I just nod my head and accept the gift.

"Ngiyabonga Gogo." I say with a smile.

Her response is a wink and she is gone.

"Sibu...Sibu buka man." a voice says shaking me my wife's voice. I open my eyes the first thing I see is the fire spitting Thando furious and definitely not

friendly. This days I have to deal with this version more often than the sweet and shy Thando I'm used to.

"Baby unjani?" I ask her resting my back against the headboard.

"Nyinjani nyinjani? Ngilambile Sibusiso." and the waterworks start. I must say she is definitely a roller-coaster of emotions I can't keep up. I turn my head to the clock on the side table it's reads just twenty minutes after three in the morning may I say. It's dark outside and this woman right here I mean my wife claims to be hungry. I let out a heavy sigh and take a deep breath.

"Urm baby it's late so come back to bed you might be dreaming." I try to pacify her.

She breaks down into a full blown sob "I'm hungry Sibusiso should I go wake up



uMa to tell her you are a bad husband?" she says in between hiccups I don't know if she is joking or threatening me right now. But God knows I can't have both my mom and wife breathing down my neck at three in the morning. It's December holidays and everyone is home at the Dlamini homestead you can imagine the noise and ruckus that goes on during the day.

I jump to her side throwing the comforter behind me. I hug her kissing her tears away " There is no need for that sthwandwa Sami let's go make you food." I say with caution because she might decide she isn't hungry anymore.

"Really?" a grin takes over her face transforming it from sour look she had on a second ago. I nod my head yes.

"Woza MaNdlovu." I say grabbing her gently to follow me to the kitchen. She

follows me dragging her sleepers on the floor she might wake up half the house but I decide to shut up for peace sake.

"Okay tell your husband what you would like to eat." I say once we are in the kitchen. She is sitted on the kitchen table while I ransack the fridge for anything that she might eat without complaining.

"Urm.." she says with her hand on her head probably thinking about any other disgusting combo she might like since that's what she seems to like these days. I fold my arms waiting for an answer.

" Okay may I have some inkomazi with cereal." she says. I just nod my head and take out the inkomazi from the fridge. I know better to dispute her choices she will chow my head if I tried.

"Here baby." I say handing her a bowl of cereal and the inkomazi on the side.

"Thank you baby." and she digs in. She even starts having those foodgasms of hers. I can never get used to her doing that I'm already imagining unholy things I could do to her in this very kitchen we are in.

" I'm done." she says taking me out of my dirty thoughts.

I clear my throat and take the utensils to the zinc. We go back to our bedroom peacefully without waking up anyone. Even my own mother who is a light sleeper didn't wake up. I struggle falling asleep again the dream about my grandmother invading my thoughts.

| | |

The  
THANDOLWETHU

Next

day.  
DLAMINI.

These days my appetite has gone through the roof. I eat anything and everything last night I even had to wake up Sibusiso well more like forced him to wake up. I have an advantage when it comes to him I'm his weakness but problem is it goes both ways. I walk into the kitchen the aromatic scent of food leading me there my tummy even sings songs of hunger. I'm dressed in a knee length dress with puffy comfortable sleepers. The white pearl necklace Sibusiso gave me on our wedding day adorns my neck like a second skin. It's always there just like my ring they are like my work uniform pretty uniform on me. The kids are playing around the house Nkazimulo is even chasing them around he is a forward guy but quite funny always has been.

"Morning auntie."

**Sponsored**

always has been.

"Morning auntie." the kids greet me as their uncle chases them around the couch. "yeah morning auntie" Nkazimulo also greets panting for air. I just chuckle.

"Morning babies...Nkazimulo."

I head straight into the kitchen the ladies are in a loud chatter. Conversing about Lord knows what I have gotten to know them in the last year. MaMbhele is chatty fun loud and knows everything happening about every celebrity in town guess it's the perks of being an event planner.

MaShange is just a bubbly soul friendly and definitely never engages in any beef.

MaShezi Nkanyiso's wife is definitely the exact opposite of her husband she talks talks and still talk more. That's the best way to describe her and as for my Queen Mother umamazala wami she is just a beautiful humble woman I respect that

she accepts all our crazy personalities combined and has never tried to control how we manage our households. What I enjoy the most though is what she calls the girls pamper day every last Sunday of the month we get together with her and catch up. We get to share our problems and gives us her fair share of advice to the best of her capabilities. As for the Princess she is still a snob but I've grown to actually like and understand her it comes with the perks of growing up as the only girl.

My mother in-laws is definitely stirring her signature soft amabele porridge on that stove. Princess is seated on the kitchen counter her perfectly manicured hands furiously tapping away on her new iPhone. MaMbhele is sipping her special coffee in her favourite mug by coffee I mean the one made with grapes instead of coffee beans. And the others are just chatting away as they set up the table

I'm not late just that I've been over sleeping a lot somehow my mother in-law understands but it can be embarrassing.

"Sanibonani" I greet sitting down on the kitchen table. " And sorry for waking up late..again."

"Oh baby unga'worry. We all know what's like." with a smile and a shrug of her shoulders she says as she dishes up the porridge in a bowl.

"Yep we've been there done that it's not a big deal." MaMbhele adds on.

"I don't think you guys understand since this week started I've been more exhausted than ever. I eat a lot of crazy things and sleep a lot I even wake up my husband in the middle of the night. I'm sure he is pretty annoyed with me but he won't say..." I keep rambling.

"Girl we know so don't bother explaining."  
They all say in unison interjecting my  
mini speech. Except Princess of course  
who is busy giggling with her phone wait  
until her brothers find out.

"Thatha mtanam." mother in law says  
pushing a bowl of the porridge towards  
me together with a tub of peanut butter.

"Oh Ma there is no need I'm not hungry  
yet. I will eat together with everyone." I  
try to reject the gesture politely but the  
song in my stomach has other plans  
when it sings out loud for everyone to  
hear. I clutch my stomach trying to keep  
it down but it doesn't help. Everyone is  
now starring at me like I've grown horns  
on my head.

"So you were saying?" uMa says with her  
hands on her hips and her eyebrow  
slightly raised.



"Urm I guess I definitely need to eat."

I hold onto the spoon and scoop in some peanut butter. As the spoon disappears in my mouth and the goodness of the porridge goes down my throat. I moan in pleasure the taste is something I could never get used to and definitely could never get tired of having every day.

"Wow Ma I could never get tired of your food. Thank you."

"I know so please eat up. I have a gift for you." she says with a wink and the girls giggle. I just shrug my shoulders and keep putting an end to the song in my belly.

|||

"MaNdlovu come with me." my mother in law says taking me along. Everyone has long ate breakfast and they are all

scattered somewhere around the house and yard if not out. Sibusiso is also somewhere in the house with his brothers doing God knows what." Here is your gift mtanam." she hands me a gift bag. I take it with a blush on my face I open it and come across a pregnancy test. Bewildered I look up at her but only a big grin adorns her face.

"Urm Ma I don't understand."

"Don't worry you will soon. Just go in there and take the test." she says leading me towards the bathroom with her hands. I go but in slow calculated steps constantly looking back at my mother in law. I'm a confused hun at this moment trust me. Who gives a pregnancy test as a gift?

I tear the packaging open and read the instructions I do as it says and go back into the bedroom."Ma I'm not pregnant

am I? Okay I mean I don't know what a pregnant woman looks like but I don't think I'm pregnant. Plus I heard pregnant woman have morning sickness I've never had any of that." I mumble as I fidget in my sit.

"Oh but I know what a pregnant woman behaves like.

1. Huge appetite.
2. Exhaustion that's leads to sleeping.
3. And definitely fly by night moods.

Everyone is different when I was pregnant the first time. I hated the smell of toothpaste it smelled rotten to me. And with every pregnancy I experienced different things." she explains and I just nod in understanding even though I don't understand. " Oh and your husband relayed a dream he had last night just convinced me more that my assumptions are correct."

I look at her confused" dream? What dream?" My phone beeps before she can answer me signalling that the time has lapsed. I take the test without looking at it and give it to her." You check it. I'm scared."

"Wait let me call Sibu first." she says already covering her ear with the phone. "Urm Sibu mtanam come to my room please." Without any more words are exchanged she drops the call and immediately Sibusiso busts through the door.

"Ma yini?..MaNdlovu?" he asks clearly confused his eyes dart back and forth between his mother and I.

"Hai man take a chill pill. Here do the honors." she gives him the pregnancy test.

"What?" his frantic face gives it away that

he is as scared and confused as me.

"Don't what me wena mahn. That's the answer to your dream." he lowers his head and takes a peak at the stick in his hands. His eyebrows scrunch in concentration clearly trying to understand whatever is entailed on it. In a second his face moves from a concentrated confused man to a full blown grin. That if possible you would see every dentition in his mouth. In an instant I feel my body relaxing the tension in my muscles easily relaxes as I let out my own giggle.

"MaNdlovu wami." he traps me in his arms I squeal at the point of contact but he isn't ready to go." Ngiyabonga Sthandwa Sami." he says into the hug his voice sounding muffled and cracked. He let's go form the hug but still at arms range he is definitely crying. Sibusiso Dlamini is crying imihlola ngempela.

"Hai thank you Lusibalukhulu." I say wiping his tears. "We're going to be parents." he nods frantically and my own tears make way down my cheeks.

"Well my job here is done. Let me leave you too love birds." I can hear my mother in law say but none of us pay attention to her. At this moment we are each other's focus he squeezes me in another tight hug and I squeeze back too. He moves from the hug to my belly it isn't showing yet besides I have a smallanyana fupa that is stubborn so.. no big deal. He rest his hand there I don't know for what purpose but I let him have his moment.

"Thank you for choosing me to father you mtanam." He says to my belly and I chuckle to myself but don't say a word. In few months time I will be a mother to another human being. I never had a mother to nurture me and care for me but my dad played both roles with

perfection. So I plan to be just as perfect to my baby as my dad was to me. Will this be the last time you hear from me? Well that I don't know but what I do know is that this isn't the end. But the beginning.

I'm Mrs Sibusiso Dlamini I mean who would have thought? Definitely not me.

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