

A man and a woman are shown in a close embrace, their faces partially visible in profile. The man is on the right, leaning towards the woman on the left. The lighting is soft and warm, creating a romantic and intimate atmosphere. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

MY

REFLECTION

Drama

By Jennifer Ngoveni

Chapter 1

It's been years now, and I still feel like a part of me is missing. No matter how hard I try to mend the broken pieces , It still seems like I haven't even tried at all. Here's my story!

I'm Zandile Twala, I'm 18 and I live in a small town with my mother who thinks not having a man in her life reflects bad publicity and it's not good for her image , but who cares?

She cares!

I don't know how many men I've been introduced to so far, but what I know is that none of them were good enough to be my step father...they were all after my Dad's money that my mom is spending recklessly on fancy dresses and luxurious

places she goes to for her dates.

Tonight's one of those nights...I mean most of those nights where my mom leaves me home alone and scared of the dark, holding onto my teddy bear and wrapping myself in blankets just to cover me from fear.

"Honey, I'm on my way out now! Your food is in the microwave." After that the door slammed...I looked out of the window only to see her kissing and hugging a different man, meaning her last date didn't go well as expected. I closed the curtain and headed downstairs to eat. I opened the microwave and took out the plate.

Burnt spaghetti and meatballs??

Yugh...not even my dog can eat this.

Yes, I have a dog named Jasper... he's got a small house outside the house because my mom does not like dogs.

I put back the plate in the microwave and head back upstairs and shut my door. I jumped on my bed and took out a small DVD player, used to belong to my Dad.

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Then I played Seventeen by Alessia Cara.
*My daddy says that life comes at you fast
We are all like blades of grass
We come to prime and in time
We just wither away
And it all changes
My view with a looking glass
Won't catch the past
Only photographs reminds us of the
passing of days
And nothing stays the same from
yesteryears see I recall being afraid of the
dark
Holding on to teddy bears, I'd wrap myself
in blankets Just to cover me from fear
That was then and now I'm-...*

The song was cut short because electricity just went off and it was dark In here and I was all alone so scared.

Suddenly it started pouring rain and thunder was rumbling so hard.

How I wish all of this was a dream.

I sneaked to my mom's room and took sleeping tablets and before you know it, little Zandile was asleep .

It was morning and I had to get up early and get ready for school...I was in grade 12 and I was a very bright student I'd pass with flying colors and trust me I was every teacher's favourite kid in school.I was everything every student would wish to be:smart,intelligent I had what we call potential but what I didn't have was friends I was just a loner always buried in my books...and if other people were to walk towards my direction at school was if they needed help with school stuff or needed advice of some sort since I was a motivational speaker even though I wasn't motivated myself.I guess my dad being not around kind of got to me and affected me emotionally.

I got out of bed with Jasper following me around like I had some sort of puppy love potion on me and yes I'd let him in when my mom was not around.

I knelt down and brushed his fur backwards and he sat down still like he just got hypnotized by my touch then I headed to the shower and took my 2 minutes shower...here's the thing with me, I don't like water..me and H2o are rival enemies but it's not like I had a choice. I wore my school uniform and prepared Jaspers meal and put it on the floor and he came running like he hasn't eaten in years then I took out an apple from the fridge and headed out "bye Jasper" I said closing the door mom wasn't back yet so I decided not to lock coz I was sure she didn't take spare keys with her...

At School

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It wasn't a different day from the others it was normal except for that we had a new student whose name was Linda I don't remember her last name though and she was kind of cool because

she came and sat next to me during art class and she couldn't stop talking and the next thing she was calling me chomi and trust me I didn't even hear a thing the teacher said all I heard was "*Zandile you're pared with Linda for the project*" great!Just great! Now I had no other choice but to be stuck to this talking machine of a human being. The bell rang and it was now lunch break

Linda:So where we headed ...I was thinking we could go to the field...I noticed there are hot jorks in your school unless you hungry of course we could first pass by the cafeteria and...

I swear by the time I get home my ears will be bleeding because of this girl..she is so loud and doesn't even keep her mouth shut for a minute or two

Me: I think I'm gonna go to the bathroom I'll see later bye...I ran off in the speed of a tonado before she could respond because I wasn't going to stay another minute with that girl!

I arrived in the bathroom and stayed there for what felt like 30 minutes and the bell rang and I went out to attend my last class for the day which was chemistry and Linda was not in my class what a relief...wa ze wa siza uNkulunkulu. By the time class was over my whole energy was drained I wanted to do nothing else other than getting home and jumping on my bed and drifting off to sleep. When I got home I could hear laughter before I even entered the house I guess mom was home with her new man and it was time for the endless introductions which I wasn't cut out for because I didn't have the energy to stand there and pretend that I like the man who is going to 'replace my father or who is already replacing him' just so I please my mom cause I hate seeing that disappointed look on her face but it is what is...I walked to the kitchen where he was sitting with my mom preparing dinner I put my school bag on the table and pulled out a chair and sat opposite my soon to be step-father...

"Zandile!!"

That was my mom Her name was Thandiwe and right now she was shouting my name because I didn't greet the guest and I knew that later on when this man has left I was going to get the 'I didn't raise you to be disrespectful' lecture

Me:Sawubona Malume

I said in a very low voice with my mouth not fully opening when I spoke only my lips were moving

—:Sawubona my baby unjani?

He said smiling at me and I can say his smile was genuine...but that didn't mean I was going to soften up to him, he was still going to geeet it!

Me:Ngiyaphila,May I please be excused?

I said that looking at mom who didn't even bother looking back at me or even saying anything..

—:of course you can my baby but before you do that I'd like to fully introduce myself.

I rolled my eyes

—:I'm Donald Nkululeko Dlamini and your mother and I are ...in ..uhm...

Me:...dating?

Donald:uhm yes ...but I didn't want to put it like that...how about we say your mother and I are in a relationship instead of...

I quickly cut him out because he was wasting my time here with his long unnecessary speeches

Me:okay Don I heard...it's okay if I call you Don right?

Don:of course it is my baby...you can call me anything you like.

My mother immediately shot me a death stare and I stood up from the chair and took my school bag and ran upstairs I was definitely going to face my punishment when her boyfriend has left the house.

I decided that I wasn't gonna stay in my room forever so I took off my school uniform and changed into pjs. I wasn't even going to freshen up because I told you before..I hate water!

I went downstairs and I was about to enter the kitchen when I heard mam'Thandi and Don talking and I decided to evesdrop

Don:you know you don't have to punish her for calling me by my name right?

Mam'Thandi:she needs to be taught a lesson, kumele a funde ukuthi abantu abadala baya hlonishwa Nkululeko I will not have a spoilt brat disrespect her elders in my house

Don:hay ke ngiyakuzwa Tee, but harsh disciplinary on the kid you'll be pushing her away and from what you've told me before you're the only one she has..so I beg you,please if you won't do it for her then at least do it for me, be patient with her

Mam'Thandi:Fine ke Ngizobona

Don:There's nothing to see here Mamakhe

Mam'Thandi:yah ngizwile

I decided that I've heard enough then I entered the kitchen and sat on the kitchen chair silently still thinking about the way Don talked to mom about how I acted

towards him I mean if it was any other man he would've just influenced mom to give me a harsh disciplinary lesson, I guess he is not so bad after all. Mom dished up and the dinner was a silent one then she excused herself saying she needs to go freshen up before Don leaves I guess this is her way of leaving me to bond with my soon to be step father. I cleared my throat while looking down at my plate

Me: So tell me Don.. what are your intentions with my mother?

Don: uhm well I fell in love with your mother the moment I saw her and...

I cut him short because I didn't want to hear more... it was supposed to be my father expressing how he feels about my mother.

Me: Don't you have a wife and kids back at home waiting for you? Well I'll do you a favor and not make life hard for you if...

His facial expression had already changed from happy to sad

Don:I don't have a wife and kids, my wife died during Labour 5 years ago and it still hurts like it happened yesterday but since I met your mom I feel like I'm starting a new chapter in my life with you included in it...but if you are not happy about our relationship then I am more than willing to end things between your mother and I, for my daughter's happiness matters more,goodbye Zan.

He patted my cheek and wiped of the tear that was already falling of my cheek. Then he took his car keys and left. Honestly I didn't know what to say and I actually felt like i was the worst person for treating him like that I'm sure he meant no harm and now my mom is so going to kill me for driving the man she likes away..I've never seen my mom so happy and mostly cook dinner! That was something she hasn't done in ages.And lastly when Don called

me Zan it kind of reminded me of my father he was the one to call me Zan when he's happy and Zandile when he was angry saying it does not give it's full meaning if it's said in half.

Here's what my name means:Zandile is a name that represents a tendency to exhibit extremes in terms of material success. You are either possessing a great deal of good fortune or none at all.In Zulu it Simply means Bandile meaning they have multiplied.

My mom came downstairs and I was clearing the plates when she entered

Mam'Thandi:Wayaphi uNkululeko?

Me:ngizokwazi kanjani ma...

Mam'Thandi: Yeyy! You better not have said anything that made him leave Yezwa or you'll have me to deal with...now wash those dishes and clean this kitchen

She clicked her tongue and started dialing on her phone and I guess it didn't go through because I heard that 'tu tu tu' sound.She tried again pacing around the kitchen and there was no change...

I finished washing the dishes and cleaned the kitchen and went to bed leaving my mom sitting on one of the kitchen stools.

I felt so guilty seeing mom like that I really hated swing her like that which is why I've been chasing all the woman that came in her life by threatening them because I was scared that one day I'd get to see her like this. But I wasn't going to mention that it's my fault that Don left because I was going to be in so much trouble and she would never forgive me for me. I couldn't help but think that I sabotaged my mother's happiness for my own selfish reasons and also on some " I was looking out for my mother note" because for Christ sake she's old enough to look out for herself even though I was only afraid that she was still hurt by my father's death to be able to make right decisions which was one of the reasons why I did what I did.

Chapter 2

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For the past two weeks my mom was back to the way she looked when my father passed away. She was back to her depressing state and I was not happy about it. I blamed myself for everything because if I hadn't confronted Don none of this would've happened. I decided that when I come back from school I'm going to steal my mom's phone and get Don's numbers and call him and explain everything and maybe try to get him back with my mom I hope he hasn't moved on yet.

Before going out I went to my moms room to check up on her to see how she was doing...I knocked on her door and she

wasn't responding then I knocked again
She answered but didn't open the door
Mam'Thandi:Honey I'm okay...please go to
school I'm gonna be fine, mommy loves
you okay?

She was sniffing and I could feel that she
was holding back her tears and I just
responded that I'll see her when I come
back from school then left.

At School

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School was not so bad I guess somehow it
made me forget about my problems at
home with Linda blabbing none stop.I went
for my classes and my last class for the
day was Art class...and I was sitting with
Linda who couldn't stop talking as usual
and I tried to tell her to keep quiet for a
minute since the Teacher was going to
announce what our project was going to
be...

Mrs Robitson: Alright children! Get your Canvas, paints and paintbrushes ready for you are all going to do an art painting of Mona Lisa and of course you're doing that in groups that I've grouped you few weeks back

The bell rang

Mrs Robitson: ooh I guess class is dismissed then.

The students didn't even wait for her to say class was dismissed because they were already out of the door when she said that.

Linda: Wanna come to my house today so we start with the project...remember the due date of submitting is Monday and today it's Friday so the sooner we start the better.

I know that once Linda says something it's final even though she asked she doesn't actually expect you to respond because she doesn't take no for an answer

Me: yeah sure

I actually didn't wanna go because for some reason I was worried about my mom I don't know why but I had this feeling that something is up but I decided to brush it off because it could've been just a feeling nje and didn't mean anything.

We waited for the car that was going to take us to her house...I mean she had a personal driver imagine...they must be filthy rich.The car arrived and it was one of those we see on tv driving celebrities around.We arrived at this Huge mansion my Jaw dropped immediately.

Me: you live here?

Linda: yes Chomi,this is my uncles house the one I told you about...he took me in when my parents couldn't afford taking me to school and he said he was going to put me through school and I'll be staying with him...let's go in

We went in and I felt like I was in one of those houses they show on Top billing and damn the kitchen utensils and all looked

very expensive. Linda told me to sit in the living room and wait for her to go freshen up so we can start with the project..in the mean time the maids offered me snacks and I was literally enjoying myself and had forgotten about my problems at the moment.

As I was still enjoying myself the entrance door opened and the glass of juice that was in my hand fell..I felt like my eyes were deceiving me. Don entered with a woman who looked 5 years younger than my mom and they were both laughing and seemed happy and when Don saw me he immediately stopped laughing and I couldn't read his expression if he was sad happy angry or what. He came where I was sitting and put the files he was holding on the table and the lady he walked in with was just standing there.

Don: How are you Zan?

He said hugging me and I don't know why

but tears were already streaming down my cheeks because of the question he asked maybe...I mean how was I? I also didn't know where to start because there was a lot to tell

Me:I-um...

He patted my back and I just couldn't stop crying thinking about my mom's state that she wouldn't be where she is if it wasn't for me

Don:Dineo please get her some water

He said to the lady he walked in with

Dineo:yes sir

Me: Is She your girlfriend? Is she the reason you're not taking mom's call? Mom is...

Don: Calm down Zan...she's just a colleague and I'm not taking your mom's calls because I thought...

Me:Screw what You thought Don! My mom is not okay she's depressed because she couldn't get hold of you and she thinks she has lost you and ...

I was shouting as if it's his fault deep down
I knew it was my fault but we all need
someone to blame when the going gets
tough right?

Don: Young lady I will not have you raise
your voice at me yezwa? Ngim'dala and
you'll show me respect

Me: NgiyaXolisa

I said in a low voice looking down

Don: KuLungile, now what is it you were
saying about your mother?

Me: She's not okay, she locks herself up in
her room and refuses to come out and eat
or talk to me all she does is cry and it
breaks my heart to see her in that state.

Don: I understand and don't worry
everything is going to be okay...since it's
late I'll get you a driver to take you home
and I'll come see her tomorrow since it's
weekend I won't be going to work and I'll
also get her the helps she needs

Me: Thank you

We hugged then I said my goodbyes to Linda and left...even though she was still trying to understand what was happening I didn't have the energy to explain everything that was going on I just told her that we will talk then I left.

When I got home I was sort of relieved that I got to talk to Don and mom was going to be happy that Don will be coming over tomorrow so they can fix things.

I got in my room and freshen up for the first time in forever..hey don't give me that look...then I put on my pjs and went to her room and as usual it was locked... I knocked and called her name but she didn't respond then I decided that this was it... I went to where we store all the house keys and took a spare key for my mom's room and when I opened the door I got the shock of my life she was on the floor with white foam coming out from her mouth and there was a syringe and a small bottle that had liquid stuff it it ...This couldn't be I

wasn't going to lose her too I quickly took her phone and searched Don's contacts and called him he answered on the forth ring

Don:Thandi h..

Me:she..she...

I was panicking and I wasn't going to have a panick attack now was I? Someone had to help mom.

Don:Khuluma Zanele ...yini?

Me:Mom tried...com..committing sucuide and I..she...

My vision was getting blurry now and everything suddenly became dark and it was lights off for me

I don't know what happened next but when I woke up I was in the hospital and Linda was sitting next to me holding my hand and her eyes were red that means she was crying..Yaz this one is so dramatic why was she crying who died from a panick attack?

Then I remembered the real reason I got here, my mom and I started panicking again

Me: Ma...where's...

Linda: Calm down...she's going to be okay..uncle Nkululeko is with her in her ward, everything's going to be okay

Me: What did the doctors say? I want to see her

The doctor walked in with a smile on her face. Honestly I don't know what she's smiling at because there's nothing to smile about here this place is just horrible and has bad memories

Doctor: Good Evening miss Twala, I see you're doing well.

I rolled my eyes

Doctor: I'm doctor Khumalo and Your doctor...according to the report here it says you had a panick attack...

Who doesn't know that? I mean the whole hospital knows that by now (I thought sarcastically to myself) and rolled my eyes again

Me: Doctor with due respect I already know since you've informed Linda here while I was still unconscious...I'd like to know how my mom is and if I can see her

Doctor K: Unfortunately the doctor treating your mom is Doctor Chauke and he will be with you shortly to inform you if there are any reports based on your mother...excuse me.

She walked out and after some few minutes another doctor walked in I assumed his doctor Chauke. I sat up straight preparing myself to hear whatever news the doctor had for us.

Doctor Chauke: Madyambu lamanene, naswona u fanel uri nwana wa manana Twala. (good evening, you must be Mrs Twala's daughter)

I nodded

Doctor Chauke: Ndzi lahawani ku ta ku tivisa leswaku mana wawe u le ka ICU nakona i swilo leswinene leswaku u tisiwile lahawani hi nkarhi handle kaswona atava a nga ponangi. (I'm here to inform you that your mother is in ICU and it's a good thing that she was brought here in time

otherwise she wouldn't have survived)

Me: Okay Doctor is there a chance that she could live...considering that she's in ICU now

Doctor C:ku hanya ka nkarhi wo koma(short-term survival)

68.3 % of these patients had life-sustaining treatment (LST) limitations ((n = 41); withholding 60.0 % and withdrawal...

I was not getting a thing the doctor said the only thing I got was short term survival and the rest I don't want to lie

Me:Okay Doctor..can I at least see her?

Doctor C: Of course... This way.

I got off the hospital bed and followed him and when I arrived at my mother's ward she was laying there her body looking lifeless and a tear escaped my eye... I didn't want to lose her she was the only thing I had left in this world. She was my reason of living, waking up everyday every morning and going to school was because of her I was that smart intelligent girl because of her and I just wanted her to come back to me. I held her hand and it

was so cold like there was no life in her body and I just couldn't stop myself from crying...and Don held me in his arms which were so comforting and I was crying even more than before...and then doctor Chauke came in and told us that we have to leave the patient to rest and we'll come back again the next day during visiting hours. Well I was discharged since I was fine physically but emotionally I wasn't .Don said that he was going to drive past my house so I can get few of my things because I'll be staying with him until my mom is fine and I didn't argue I just did as I was told because I could see that he cared and everything he was doing he was doing it out of the goodness of his heart. He waited outside as I went in to go get my things.

I packed a few clothes, toiletries and cosmetics and took my schoolbag and packed my all my books in it and before I headed out I passed by my mom's room I took a few shorts in her wardrobe and put it in my bag and one of her favorite perfumes and put it in my cosmetics bag

and when I was about to step out I stepped on two envelopes and I picked them up

One was written my name and the other was written Nkululeko I opened the one which was written my name first and read:

Dear Zandile

I know I haven't been the best mom in the universe and I'm sorry for that. Ever since your dad passed away I felt like everything that I was doing wasn't good enough until this day when I decided that taking my life would be the best answer even though it's gonna cause you pain. All I wanted was to give you a father figure and when I thought I have found the perfect one who'll be the best father to you even though he wasn't going to be the best as your father...just when I thought I've found the one

But I guess I was wrong and the only way to end this misery is to end my life. I love You honey,take care.

I threw the envelope down, I was defeated...how can she be so selfish. Who was going to look after me if she had died.I picked up the letter I threw down and took my bags then I went out and took Jasper along with me, I just hoped that Don didn't mind.

I got in the car and Jasper hopped in the back and I looked at Don just to see how he was going to react and he just looked at me without saying a word

Don:You've been crying?

Yes I've been crying I mean why won't I because I just went inside a house that reminds me of a lot so of course I was crying...but I didn't respond I handed him one of the envelopes that was written his name on the outside and he opened it but I stopped him

Me: please don't open it now

Don: o-Kay...what's inside?

I cleared my throat

Me:uhm..it's a letter my mom wrote for you before she tried committing suicide, I got one too

I said lifting mine up and he just nodded and drove off..the drive was a silent one till we got home...well I guess I can call it home since it's going to be my new home after all until mom recovers.

Me: I hope you don't mind that I brought Jasper with me since I don't know how long I'll be staying here so I wasn't gonna leave him there

Don: it's okay I like dogs

He said smiling awkwardly, and I laughed

Me:Mom hates dogs

The smile on his face immediately disappeared and he became sad,I guess this was affecting him too. I patted his back

Me: she's going to be okay,She's a strong woman you know,she's a fighter.

I was actually saying all this to console my self because my mother was definitely not strong and I noticed that when my father died.

His smile appeared again and he gave me one of his comforting hugs. I was really glad that God brought this guy in my life..if it wasn't for him i really don't know.He was really a blessing in disguise, and if I was him I don't think I was going to be so easily forgiving. I mean after depriving him the chance to love again after he lost his wife and kid he was still treating me like I didn't just do anything wrong. But nonetheless I was grateful for this man who'll be playing father's role in my life and I guess I can say I don't mind if he'll be the one playing my father's role because I wouldn't want anybody else to do it but him as he has earned it by showing that he cared and love for my mother and also by showing that he respects my requests and wants what's best for me and that my happiness was his first priority which is why he left mom just so I can be happy but in the process it ended up breaking her.

Chapter 3

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It's been a year and 3 months now my mom is in a coma and we've all lost hope that she's going to make it, even the doctors suggested that we switch off the machines and they've given us 3 more months that if she doesn't wake up within those three months they'll be forced to switch off the machines themselves. Don has been taking good care of me like I'm his own daughter and there are literally no complains except for that Linda got pregnant and Don had to send her back to her parents because she wasn't serious about what she wanted in life she even failed her matric. And I know y'all are probably wondering the symbol I obtained in my matric results.. I got a Diploma I

know it's not the best but with everything that was going on I had lost focus on school stuff and I was left behind but tried my best to at least not disappoint Don because this guy has so much faith in me and I wouldn't want to disappoint him. Well you see my relationship with Don you'd swear that we've known each other from the day I was born because of how we interact it's just on another level. Since I obtained what I wasn't expecting I decided that I would go to college and upgrade instead of going back to school and Don supported me throughout every decision I made and he didn't mind spending he'd always say anything for my Zan.

And as for Linda we no longer contact each other because she said it was my fault that her uncle chose me over his own

blood and honestly I wasn't the one who said she should open her legs for boys to impregnant her while she was under her uncle's roof disobeying his rules in the process.

I was making breakfast when Don walked in and he looked like he was in a rush.

Don:Good morning Zan, Good bye Zan.

This dude is crazy

Me:slow down,are you going to skip breakfast? Again??

Don:I'll grab something on the way I'm already late,bye love you.

He kissed my cheek then left before I could say anything.

It was my first day to start college so I had ate breakfast then told my driver that I was ready so he can come pick me up. I took my school bag and grabbed my water bottle then headed out and found Landry my driver waiting for me outside then I got inside the Car and greeted him.

Me:Hey Lanz

Landry:You know that this ting of yours of you dey call me when you know you no be ready dey bore me na.

He was Nigerian and now he was speaking with that Nigerian English and I almost laughed but composed myself because I didn't want to bore him more naw

Me:but you only waited for 3mins..

Landry:Shotop this ting you call your mouth,we ting you de talk? You no hear English they say time wasted never regain...don't try me oo

I couldn't hold my laughter anymore so I looked out the window and laughed silently so I don't fuel him up more. He started the car and before I knew it I had arrived at the campus and I got off the car and said bye to Landry then walked away and he drove off.

I was looking for my class when I bumped into this other girl who looked lost as me then we talked and it turned out we were in the same class as me then we went to class and waited for the class to begin and by the end of the day my energy was drained.

Me:need a lift home?

I asked as we were both waiting for our transports and I was waiting for my driver

Thandazile:Yes but the thing is I can't live behind that dumbass I call a brother..mom would shout at me if I were to get home without him.

Me:I totally understand,but I really don't mind waiting for him so we could go together

As I said that Landry pulled over and he parked close to where I was standing. He opened the window halfway and signaled for me to get in but I didn't

Landry:eeee weting be this naw, you want me to come carry you there?

Me:Landry I'm still waiting for one of..

Landry:if no be excuse after excuse me go call Oga now now and tell him when month finish me want increase of salary because this challenge na be facing be too difficult for my liking.

Me:please don't tell Dad

Well I call him Dad when I with Landry because when I call him by his name In from of his servants I don't want them to think he's too soft and start disrespecting him...only I'm allowed to disrespect him by calling him by his name haha.

Thandazile: It's okay Zandi..you can go Nathi and I will use an Uber

Me:No I'm...

Thandazile:Oh here he is

I turned around and damn they looked alike if he wasn't older than Thanda you'd swear they were twins.

Thanda:What took you so long?

Nathi:I don't report to you.

That's all he said and he took his phone out from his pocket and he switched on Bluetooth and connected his EarPods then put them on...and here I am telling you guys about what he was doing not mentioning that he was the type of guy you would die for and if he was food I'd say he looked scrumptious,on the other hand Landry was fuming for waiting too long and he was busy cursing in his Igbo language And I didn't hear sh*t!

We all got inside the car and Thanda was sitting in front so she can be able to give directions to Landry and I was sitting at the back with Nathi who was still putting on his EarPods and looking out the window as if there was something intertaning him out

there. We arrived at their house, it was not big and it was also not small but you could tell that they were struggling because of the paint that was wearing off and the cracks that were on the corners of the house and a small shelter built with zincs next to the house which I assumed was their kitchen where they cook because of the smoke that was coming out of it. Then an old woman but not too old came out holding a wooden spoon, then Nathi walked out of the car without saying a word to anyone and I watched him get inside the compound and waved Hi to his mother before getting inside the house.

Thanda: Thanks for the lift Zandi, Don't you want to meet my mom? There she is

She said pointing at the old woman who came out holding the wooden spoon earlier.

Me: I would love to

Landry gave me that look that says hurry up!

And I walked out of the car together with Thanda and we walked into the compound

Thanda:Sawubona Mam'Thoko,Unjani?

Mam'Thoko:ngi right mtanami

Thanda:ngiyajabula makunjalo ma...this is my friend Zandile,Zandile this is my mother.

I went closer and hugged her and she had a huge smile on her face.

Me:Sawubona Ma,nice to meet you.

Mam'Thoko:nice to meet you too mtanami,please come in side so I can dish up for you guys I just finished cooking pap and Inkuku that our neighbor was kind enough to give us.

Me:ngiyabonga ma kodwa I'm not here to stay,my driver is waiting.

Mam'Thoko:oh ngiyakuzwa mtanami please visit us sometime ne

I nodded and she came closer and hugged me then whispered

Mam'Thoko:phela u Thandazile doesn't

usually have friends so this is all new to me and I never got this opportunity to see my one and only daughter doing sleepovers and girls night outs and all that you girls do together

Then she pulled off the hugged and smiled with a tear falling down her cheek.

Thanda:Hay ke hamba we Zandi before you still my mother away from me phela that hug was long yoooh

I laughed and said my goodbyes then went back to the car and Landry drove off.

When I got home it was 6:29 and I knocked off at 5 so Don must be worried sick because he usually tells me that after school I should come straight home and if I want to pass by the shops I should do it during weekends. I tried talking to Landry that he doesn't rat me out but he was like "if oga finds out that me drive around with his small pikin after school hours he go burn me alive so me go tell him the truth plus truth never killed anybody oo"

We got inside the house and Don immediately stood up from the chair he was sitting on and he looked at me for an explanation and I looked down playing with my fingers then he looked at Landry

Landry:Oga me Dey try tell your small pikin that come on lemme carry you home...

I looked at Landry with my eyebrows furrowed because he never told me that but then I decided that I wasn't going to interrupt him or I'd get in more trouble with Don so I let him continue lying

Landry:then your small pikin say she dey wait for this other small boy then we go leave...

Don was now fuming when he heard that I was waiting for a boy then he looked at me but I avoided eye contact because I was scared of him when he was like that...I felt like peeing on myself that moment

Landry:de boy and de girl your small pikin be with got to the motor na we drive to

their house and drop them then de girl na say you want meet my madam? Then your small pikin they like wasting time na she got off motor car went there meet madam and she came back me try telling her that Oga no go like this kind ting you doing oo na she kill me with silent treatment till we got here and that is all my Oga.

I was so mad at Landry not to even makeup a story that I had to go to the mall to get stationery or something he was such a pimp

Don:Okay Landry you may be excused

Landry:Thank you Oga

Landry left and after he has left Don looked at me.

Me:I swear I...

Don:And who permitted you to speak?

I looked down playing with my fingers..I was at the edge of shedding a tear because Don has never shouted at me before it was the first. And I couldn't hold back the tears so I started crying and Don just walked away to his study and I ran to

my room and jumped on my bed and cried hard and at this point I missed mom even more I drifted off to sleep and I was woken up by Don shaking me holding a tray of food and a drink of the side.

I woke up and sat up straight and he handed me the tray and I put it on my thighs and I started eating. It was Galitos spicy rice and a quarter leg galitos meat and cawlslow and Mango Juice my favourite meal and favourite drink. He was sitting at the edge of my bed watching me eat all this time and when I was done he took the tray and glass and placed on the lamp table on the side of my bed.

Don: You know since your mother is not well and doesn't seem to be recovering I made it my responsibility to raise you and raising a teenager isn't easy I know but I made it my mission to try and raise you even though I don't have experience when it comes to parenting since I don't have any children. And I would like you to please make it easy for me to raise you by obeying my rules and instructions and I

also want you to know that I love you as my own and I don't want you to doubt that when I punish you for disobeying my rules okay.

Me:yes dad...but I didn't disobey any of your rules.

Don:dating under my roof?

Me:no I'm not dating I swear it's just a misunderstanding

Don:Care to explain the misunderstanding?

I inhaled then exhaled and started explaining everything to Don including when I offered to give them a lift and also included their situations at home and after explaining everything he pulled me in to a hug and it was comforting as always

Don:I'm proud of the woman I'm raising really

He smiled and we went to the Cinema room to watch a movie till late and when we were tired we both went to our separate rooms.

Chapter 4

The next day I woke up did my morning routine and went downstairs for breakfast and Don came down rushing as always and I've gotten used to the fact that he doesn't have breakfast he only eats lunch, supper and dinner. He greeted me kissed me on the cheek and left. I finished my breakfast and called Landry that I was ready. And this time when he arrived he found me waiting outside the gate and he was surprised because he wasn't used to me coming out earlier. I opened the door and got in the car and he was playing P-Square's songs then he lowered the volume when I got in.

Landry: eheee Oga's small pikin, this one you came out early today Oga must've talked sense to that danda head oya

I just looked at him and rolled my eyes

Me: Shotop that ting you call mouth and drive

I said imitating his voice. And he saw that today I wasn't smiling so he just turned on the volume and drove off.

I arrived at campus and I went for my first class and Thanda was not there. I sat down and took out my chemistry books and started copying the notes that were written on the board and at the end of the class Thandazile came in rushing and she was sweating she must've been running.

Mr Van Tunder: You're late miss sibiya

I looked at Thanda and she was disappointed. She went out and I joined and we walked together to our next class while catching up

Me:Why did you arrive late today you missed out on a lot

Thanda:My mom didn't have transport money to give me since she used her last cent to buy food on the house and also buy us stationery so she had to go borrow on the neighbors.

I was really hurt by Thanda's situation you would never tell that, that sweet face was going through a lot.

Me:I understand let me give you my numbers so we can call each other and I'll come pick you up guys so you won't have to worry about transport okay

She smiled and hugged me

Thanda:What would I be without you but the thing is I don't have a phone ...oh wait give me your numbers I'll text you using Nathi's phone I'm sure he won't mind

The thought of me having Nathi's number just made my heart skip a bit but then I remembered what Don said then the excitement turned into disappointment.

Me:Okay 076 333 ****

Thanda:Thanks mngani

Me:Anytime

We went to our next class and after that we went to a little break since we don't have any classes then I noticed that I didn't see Nathi today until all our classes ended but then I guess he was just hiding as usual and I'll see him now that it's time to head home.

We were waiting for Landry to come pick us up and still Nathi wasn't showing up then I decided to ask Thanda

Me:are we leaving without Nathi today?

Thanda:Oh Nathi's not here today he didn't have any classes to attend

Me:oh okay

I said trying to hide my disappointed face.

Landry pulled up and we both got in the car and Landry didn't say much he just greeted us then drove off

Me:Since you missed Chemistry class I was thinking I could teach you a few things that you missed and you copy the notes or I'll send it on WhatsApp

Thanda:good idea thanks friend if it wasn't for yaz I don't know xem

Me:it's okay...(to Landry) please drop me off at Thanda's place I'll call you when I need you to come pick me up

Landry:aah Oga's small pikin you see now yo dey start wit this your tings oo...I don't like...I don't like oo

Me:I'll talk to Dad...don't worry

Landry:you better oo you better!

We arrived at Thanda's place and we got out of the car and he drove off ...Thanda was laughing like she was watching a comedy shows or something

Me:and then wena?

Thanda:Your driver is a whole mood trust me.

I laughed when I remembered the first time I met him ...I wanted him to drive me around almost the whole day so that I can laugh at his funny English accent and forget about my problems.

We got inside the house and Nathi was sitting on one of the torn leather couches watching a match...Liverpool and ManUnited was playing and the score was 2-0 and he wasn't taking it well then I figured he must be a fan of manunited.

I sat on one of the torn leather couches while Thanda went to eat because she was hungry and I said I was fine I'll just have water because I was thirsty and she left to get me the water and came back then went back and I was left with Nathi who had his full concentration on the small tv that was there.I decided that I was not going to disturb him so I took out my phone and called Don to let him know that I might come back home late today so he doesn't get mad at me like yesterday.

It rang twice unanswered then he answered on the forth ring

Convo

Me:Hey Don my favourite in the whole universe

Don:I don't have money

Me:haha very funny but that's not why I called

Nathi looked at me and when our eyes met he turned and looked back at the tv

Don:I'm listening

Me:I might come back hone late today because I'm at my friend's house the one I told you about yesterday and I need to help her with school stuff

Don:Okay but I expect you to be home by 7 young lady and no excuses

Me:Yes dad

He hung up and I let out a sigh of relief

Then Nathi switched off the Tv and looked at me for a few minutes without saying a word.

Me:what?

He cleared his throat

Nathi:do you really need to help my sister with school stuff or was that was an excuse for you to come see me?

Me:And why would I make up an excuse just to come see you?

Nathi: you tell me

He smirked and that annoyed me to the core because he thinks I'm here because of him who has been ignoring me..well not ignoring me but this was actually our first convo ever since we met if he hadn't spoken to Thanda on that day we met I'd swear he's mute.

Me: I got nothing to tell

I picked up my bag and took out my novel to distract me from this guy because he was not going to guilt trip me to confessing my feelings for him,hell no he wasn't.

Nathi:Is that Confess by Colleen Hoover?

I just looked at him surprised because I didn't think that he was a fan of Colleen Hoover.We talked a lot talking about

Colleen Hoover's Novels how they end and how they shouldn't have ended like that...and then talked about ourselves and we sure had a lot in common He loved reading Novels I also loved reading anything that's written on paper,he loved Writing Songs and I loved singing,he loved painting and I loved drawing and we both couldn't dance he even played Loyal by Chris brown song and he tried proving it and he was damn right...I guess I judged by looking at his hot body that he was a dance but he was flexible I guess if he did some few practices he'd get there and lastly we were both introverts. Thanda came in while we were still talking

Thanda:I see you two are bonding

She winked at me and I rolled my eyes

Me:and you sure took your time...

I checked the time and it was 18:20

Me:oh boy...it's 18:20 and I'm supposed to be home by 19:00.

Thanda: then that means we should waste no time and get started immediately

We went to Nathi's room since they said it was the one with a bigger study table I went ahead and taught her all that she missed and she was a fast learner and in no time she had grabbed all the keywords and all...then I called Landry to come pick me up and in the mean time while still waiting for Landry, Thanda was copying my notes while I was chatting with Nathi and we exchanged tenz the we heard a bell outside and went to Nathi's room get my books and school bag and told Thanda that I'll send the notes that she wasn't able to copy on Nathi's whatsapp then told them to say hi to ma when she comes back from the prayer meeting she went to then I left.

Outside Landry was about to hit the car hooter when I opened the door and got in

Landry: I knew that this your time keeping ting was an act...you dey call me long long now you dey make me wait for you and me don't have all night I have other errands to run.

Me:why don't you just quit Landry if you're tired of this job and go be an errand boy once man hay...

I was tired of this guy...complaining was his nature.

Landry:make I tell you dis ting you call mouth me na go slap it ...you be swollen and no go come out rubbish from dat ting again,me na feel for you only because you are Oga's pikin and me no want lose bread and Jam because of you. I no say bread and butter because butter I don't like, I like like Jam too much and never in this life that my papa from above gave me ever imagined eating bread without Jam...so for de sake of Jam I go spare you this time but next tym make I hear come out rubbish

from dat your mouth..mmmh..Mxm..mmh
you'll see what I'll do to you.

I was left speechless I didn't know what to say. I mean what would you have said yourself after hearing all that this Nigerian dude has said.I sat quitly looking out the window as he drove off.

I arrived at home and I found Don sitting at his usual spot and he was drinking which was unusual so I put my school bag and sat next to him hi was looking down and when he looked up his eyes were blood shot red with tears streaming down his eyes and I've never seen him like that. I hugged him and told him to let it all out and he did the later he calmed down .

Me:What's wrong?is everything alright?

I shook his head

Don:The hospital called

I looked at him waiting for him to go on

Don: they say your mother is no more....she was

tired of fighting so she gave up

I shook my head as he was saying all this I just could believe it.

My mother wasn't a strong person but still she should've fought for my sake who did she think will take care of me? yes I have Don but what if he gets tired and abandons me. I cried like someone was peeling off my skin but the pain that I was feeling wasn't physically it was emotionally I was broken. I had lost both my parents and I was all alone in this world. Why was this world so cruel? Why are our loved ones taken away from us while we still need them... I cried till I couldn't anymore and I was running out of breath and it was lights out ... Don tried shaking me but nothing happened he dialed Landry and he picked up at first ring and told him to rush over it was an emergency.

Is Zandile going to make it or will she follow her parents?

——*Stay tuned for Season 2 of MY REFLECTION*——