

Ntombe And Thongo



Ntombe'Thongo

Prologue

"Sakhile ngani yami, ngifuna ungethembise ukuthi uzolinda abaphantsi bakukhombise intombi ozoyishada. Ungajahi ngani yami, unegazi lobukhosi wena ooZingu bazokukhombisa indlela".

"Sakhile my child, I want you to promise me that you will wait on the ancestors to show you the woman you will marry. Don't be in a hurry my child, you have Royal blood running through your veins the Zungu ancestors will show you the way."

I kept quiet for a moment letting my grandmothers words sink in. I have been asking this woman who my parents were but she always found a way to change the subject and dismiss the matter. Now that she is dying she tells me this. Am angry but how can I show it when she is this fragile? "Gogo ngitshela salukazi ukuthi ngizalwa wibani?" (grandma please tell me old woman, who are my parents?) I asked for hoping that for once she will tell me the truth.

“Umawakho igama lakhe wuNomasonto ubaba wakho yena wowakwaZungu ebukhosini.” (your mother’s name is Nomasonto and your father is from the Zungu royal family.)

That was all my grandmother managed to tell me before she took her last breath and died in my arms. I cried angry that it took her so long to tell me who my parents were, angry because she suffered and struggled with me since I was a baby.

People say that my grandmother brought me home when I was just a few days old.

According to the stories people tell me, my mother who is my grandmother’s first born daughter, a loose woman as the people say got involved with an unknown man and got

pregnant with me. The man denied the pregnancy thus denying me.

They say that my mother was ashamed to face my grandmother and asked her friend to bring me to my grandmother then she disappeared and was never seen to this day. No body knows where she is or if she is still alive.

Now my grandmother is dead and I have no money to give her a proper burial. I know that the people here won't help as they call my grandmother a witch. After crying for a long time, I stood up and placed my grandmother's corpse gently on the mattress she used to sleep on then went outside. By the kraal where my three cows are kept was a spade, I

took it then went to the back on the house and started digging.

I know how deep the whole must be as young men in the rural areas where I live are the ones who are paid to dig holes people are buried in when there is a funeral somewhere around here. I dug for four hours straight until I got the desired six feet then tossed the spade aside and wiped the sweat that was dripping from my forehead.

I went into the house and in the corner of the rondavel we lived in was my grandmother's clothes and the one blanket she bought and never used because she said it was for visitors to used. I never understood what she was talking about as we never had any visitors at home.

I opened the trunk and took out the blanket then her favorite dress. This is the dress she only wore when she went to church and town. It still looks new because it wasn't worn much, I took out the shoes she used to wear with the dress and a head wrap that goes with.

I went to her and dressed her up while tears rolled down my cheeks. I have no one now, my rock, my protector and mother is now no more. When I finished dressing her up I wrapped her with the blanket. "You said that this blanket will only be used when we have visitors, well, a visitor had arrived unexpectedly and it's the kind that took you away from me. I hope this blanket will keep you warm wherever you are going. Please don't

bother me in my dreams asking for things that I can't afford to give you as you know what my situation is like. Rest in peace Mandlovu, you have done well in raising me and I promise to make you proud in whatever I do."

I wiped my tears then stood up and picked her body up then walked out of the house to the back where the hole is. Her last resting place. I gently placed her body next to the hole then jumped inside first before taking the body again and placing it gently inside the hole.

I did not want to just throw the body inside even if she can't feel anything, this is a woman that raised me into the young man that I am today. I struggled getting out of

the hole and when I was out. I started filling in the hole, it took time but I got it done then walked back to the front of the house just as my friend Zola arrived.

"Ndoda, sikephi isalukazi namhlanje?" (man, where is the old woman today?) he greeted as usual when he comes to my house and asked about my grandmother. "She died and I just buried her behind the house." I was numb when I answered him, his eyes popped then he ran into the house maybe to check on my grandmother but he did not find her as I already know then he ran to the back of the house. A few minutes later he came back looking like a wet dog with his shoulders dropped.

He loved my grandmother and she loved him like a son as well. "Maybe this is for the best, they were already calling her a witch and as much as she said she didn't care. I could still see the pain in her eyes whenever someone calls her that. She will rest in peace now and won't be bothered by the things of this world."

He took a seat on the bank stool next to me and we both sat there in silence.

Welcome to Ntombe'Thongo the first chapter will follow soon.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 1

"That is the woman who is going to be your wife, the one that is going to bare the heir of the Zungu clan." I woke up drenched in sweat, I have been having this dream for the past

two months and in this dream I am shown the face of the woman I am supposed to marry but I don't know her. I have never laid eyes on her and am sure that she is not from around here.

It's been two years since my grandmother died, I now have six cows and two sheep's. Am hoping that the sheep will reproduce as well and my livestock will increase. I don't have much of an education as I left school at grade 10 to take care of my grandmother as she got sick more often.

I now work odd jobs in the farms around, I drive a tractor in one farm during the harvest season and in another I am a milker. I milk their cows every morning so that the bosses can have fresh milk, they also sell the

milk and give me some when the cows have produced more.

I always get a lot of milk when a cow has just given birth and when the bosses sell that milk they make it more expensive as they call it full cream milk. I am not sure of the difference as to me it tastes the same just the one from the cow that has just given birth is creamier than that of a normal cow. But to me that is normal but to my bosses it means something different which am yet to discover.

I am yet to meet my future wife and my parents if they are still alive. I mean, I am 24 years old and if they are still alive they must be old as well. Zola arrives early in the morning just as I finished getting dressed, we are going to town to sell milk as one of my cows had just given birth

and I also did what my bosses do. I separated the normal cow milk and the milk from the cow that has just given birth.

I am going to sell it and charge a little less than they do. I want to see if I can also make something out of this milk business. "Finish up man or we will miss the bus." He urges me, we have to get the only bus that passes through our village to town and it leaves at 5 in the morning then passes through here at 5 in the evening which is the same bus that we will have to get on own way back.

"Am done, let's go. Take those two crates and I will take these two." Zola and I do the same jobs as very other young man in the village, work in the farms or herd cows and that is about all we can do around here. Zola takes the

crates and I take mine then head to the bus stop. We arrive just as the bus stops and people working in town got in. We get in right behind them and pay then stand as there are no seats available. The bus is full because this bus passes through 10 villages picking up people going to town before it gets to our village then we still have to pass through three more before getting to town.

The bus moves and it keeps throwing us from one side to the other. The roads are not so good, they are dirt roads and the only time the bus drives smoothly is when we get closer to town. Zola and I make small talk until we get closer to town and by that time the bus is too full with no space to move around.

"Do you think we will be able to sell all this milk today?" He asked, we have four crates of milk, my bosses leave with 20 a day and come back empty. So am sure we will be able to sell all of it. "If my bosses can sell 20 a day then what will stop us from selling 4?" Before Zola could answer a woman next to us speaks up.

"I am a domestic worker and my bosses always send me into town to get milk every morning, if you can come with me to the side of town where the white people live then am sure you will be able to sell this milk finish by 10. A lot of us that work for them walk together to town to get the milk." I smiled at her.

These are the kinds of people I want to sell to, I don't have to be standing on the side of the road on close to shops selling, I can go to

their houses and sell my milk to them. "We will go with you and see how it goes." I tell her and she smiles at us. "Am telling you, this milk will be finished and you won't even be able to sell to all the houses." I nod in her direction giving her an appreciative smile. Soon we get to town and the bus stops on the other side of the rank. People start getting off and we do too. We follow the woman as she leads the way to where she works. When we get there we stand at the gate and she goes inside.

"Angasobulalisi ngabelungu lo." (this one must not get us killed by white people) Zola says and I chuckled.

Before I could answer the woman comes back with a white woman. "Are you the ones selling milk? How much it is a litre? Do you have full

cream?" The woman asks a lot of questions and all I got was how much and full cream. As I said, I am not educated and English is not my first language.

I take a bottle from the crate with full cream as my bosses call it and showed it to her. "Full cream R14) my bosses charge R16 for a bottle of this milk, the woman takes it then opens and taste the milk. "On my God! It's so rich and creamy. Give me two bottles." I give her two more bottles and she gives me R50 and tells me to keep the change. I smile and thank her then she goes back inside. "See, I told you and you saved me a trip to town. Go straight in this road and knock on the houses. Come back again tomorrow because this milk will be fine this evening became these people

feed their cats with it as well." She tells us and we thank her and do as she told us.

By 10:30 our crates are empty and we made more than we thought because of the keep the change. "No man am jealous now, this business of yours is working and is going to make you a lot of money. Now I regret buying sheep instead of cows." Zola complains and I laugh.

"We can work together, when we get home help me milk the cows and again in the morning. I will give you a share of the money." I propose and he is more than happy to do it.

We roam around town until noon and we got hungry. "Go buy us some russians while I go buy a loaf of bread, we meet here after." I give him R20 and he goes while I go to the

supermarket to buy the bread. I went in and took the bread then walk back to the till.

That's when I saw her, the woman in my dreams, my future wife, Ntombe'Thongo.

I hurried going to her direction trying not to lose her, I caught up with her just as she was passing the till to go out and I held her arm. She stops then looks at my hand before she lifted her head to look at me and frowns. "Let go of my hand." She says looking disgusted and I immediately let go of her hand. The cashier is looking at us but I don't care, this is my wife and I have to talk to her.

"Ntombe'Thongo, the ancestors did say that I am going to meet you one day, they told me to wait for you and I did. We have to talk to so that I can explain to you." I tell her, she is

beautiful with flawless dark skin, there is not even one pimple on her face. He has big round eyes and plump lips.

She looks at me up and down then frowns even more. "Did you look at yourself? I am not your type and I will never have anything with someone like you. Tell your ancestors to show you someone else because I am sure that they are very confused if it is me they showed you. I am way out of your league and I bet from the way you are dressed that you are one of those farm boys who live in the rural areas which I don't belong. And never lay your filthy hands on someone like me again, go after the women on your league next time to avoid disappointment." She says then leaves me standing there looking at her.

I am hurt, I am not mistaken, she is the woman my ancestors showed me in my dreams, she is the one that I am supposed to marry. Did they make a mistake? "Brother I suggest you forget about her, do you even know who she is?" I shook my head as I did not trust my voice to answer without it breaking. I am really hurt by what she said, I have been working hard to make sure that I am able to provide for her when I finally meet her and now this.

"She is the daughter of a taxi owner, she is well off and her father treats her like a princess as she is the only daughter he has. The man has three sons, one is in the taxi business with his father that's his older son. The other one is a doctor in the private

hospital here in town, the one that caters for white people only and a few that can afford it. His other son is in Joburg university studying for a doctorate and that who you just met is his last born. The only daughter in the family." The cashier tells me. She seems to know a lot about these people and Ntombe'Thongo was right when she said that she is out of my league, I cannot compare to her indeed. I pay for the bread and walked out of the supermarket with a heavy heart. How can my ancestors deceive me this way? I wanted to cry but they say men don't cry.

I meet up with Zola again and he has the russians. I am not hungry any more, I just want to go home and talk to my grandmother mother In her grave. She told me to wait and for

what? My heart to be broken? "I have been waiting for you, what took you so long." Zola loves his food and he is irritated now because I took long.

"Sorry, here and I am not feeling well now. I don't want to eat, you eat and I will eat something at home." I tell him. "It might hunger, I get sick as well when I don't eat for too long." He tells me but I shook my head. "I don't want to get more sick on the bus home so I won't risk it. You eat." I lie to him and he nods and start eating. My mind takes me back to the words Ntombe'Thongo said to me and my heart breaks all over again.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 2

The king was pacing up and down waiting to hear the news of the gender of the baby that his fourth wife was currently busy giving birth to. His brother and right hand man was sitting patiently waiting, he was as nervous as his brother. The Zungu clan needed an heir and all his wives have given him were girls. He has nine of them in total and is hoping that this baby is a boy. The heir he so desperately need, his first wife Mancwane came in with a smile on her face and bowed a little before she spoke. "Baba isizelwe ingane." (my husband the child has been born) the king did not answer but looked at her waiting to hear what the gender is.

"Are you going to speak or just stand there Mancwane?" The wife bowed her head before she spoke. "Ubelethe ingane eyintombazane" (she has given birth to a baby girl) she spoke with a smile playing on her lips, she was happy because it meant that she still has to keep his position next to the king.

"Oh gods of our land! What have I done to deserve this?" The king threw himself on his royal chair defeated, his brother as well was disappointed, if his brother doesn't get an heir then there will be no one to take over the throne. He too can't take over the Zungu throne as he is the second born. In the Zungu clan no second born has ever sat on the throne and is something each one of

them grew up knowing. That they will be the right hand to the king nothing more.

"Kodwa bafazi ndini yhini le ningenza yona? Buyafa ubukhosi bo Zungu nina nimile ningiphathela amantombazane. Kodwa ngenzeni ko Zungu? Phuma la nawe." (What are you women doing to me? The Zungu throne is hanging by a thread while you all are busy giving me girls. What have I done to the Zungu ancestors? Get out of here as well.)

His brother's heart went out for him. "How are about you get another wife?" His brother suggested. "I can't do that, I am tired of these women, something is wrong and we need to find out what is wrong. We can't go on like this, nine girls and still no boy. Am getting old." The king told him frustrated. "Ten brother, it's ten girls

now that you have." His brother reminded him. "That's even worse! No man this can't go on, please go and call our seer we have to get to the bottom of this." He instructed his brother. He stood up and went to the seers hut. He found him outside busy with his roots and leaves.

"Ufunani?" Asked the seer not even looking at him. "Ngithunywe yi Nkosi ithi...". (I have been sent by the king and he says...) the seer cut him short before he could finish. "Angizi mtshela." (Am not coming, tell him) The seer told him still without looking at him. "Kodwa makhosi..." (But seer..) still he was cut short by the seer. "We Khulekani ngithe angizi." (Khulekani I told you that I am not coming.) he signed and left.

When he got to the king, his brother was pacing waiting for him. "Where is he?" Asked the king. "He said that he is not coming." The king got irritated by this. "He seems to forget that I am his king! Let's go there." The king led the way to the seers hut and he was still outside. When they got close he spoke. "Ufunani la Makhosini?" (what are you doing here Makhosini?)

"I am still your king Sibiya." The king told him. "You are not my king Makhosini, I answer to the Zungu ancestors not you." The seer told him. "Again I ask you, what are you doing here?" Asked the seer again. "My wife has given birth to yet another girl and I need an heir. I want to know what is wrong." The king told him.

"So what if they only give you girls?" Asked the seer and led the way to his hut. "I don't have an heir to the throne Sibiya and I am getting old. I need to know what is going on." The king answered irritated by the question. "Let me ask you something Makhosini are any of those women Mandlovu?" The king was taken back by the question. "No none of my wives are Mandlovu." The king answered. "That's exactly your problem." The seer answered making the king more confused. Was he supposed to have a wife that is Mandlovu in order to have an heir? "Was I supposed to have wife from the Ndlovu clan?" Asked the king making the seer groan in frustration. "What is wrong is that you don't listen, the Zungu's gave you a wife but what did you do?" The king was now more confused than ever.

What wife was the seer talking about? He was never shown any wife that he could remember. "I have never been shown a wife by the ancestors." The king denied, the seer took one of his liquid medicine that would make your body itch all over like you have an allergic reaction to something. But this was worse, it did not want a person to be warm or have clothes on as it itches more. The seer took a 5 litre of that thing and threw it at the king then stood there looking at him with so much anger. "What are you doing Sibiya?" The king asked, at that time the effects of the medication have not started. "Leave and come back when you have remembered the wife the Zungu ancestors showed you." He told them and pointed at the door.

The king was angry so he did not dispute and left with his brother following behind. It was not long after they got back to the throne room that the effects of the medicine started. It was like a thousand ants were crowding on his skin eating him alive. He took off his clothes looking like a mad man, his brother could not help the laughter that escaped his mouth.

The king could not even glare at him as he usually does because of the itchiness that was driving him crazy. His brother went to close the door just so that the king can have his privacy while naked as he was busy scratching himself like a mad man. His brother was laughing throwing his head back.

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Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 3

On the bus home Sakhile was so quiet that his friend Zola got worried, Sakhile was never this quiet and it worried him that he was now. He thought that maybe he was in too much pain. "Are you okay?" He asked him and his friend nodded. He kept quiet as well, the bus arrived at their stop and they got off then walked home.

Sakhile lit a candle in the house then they went and milked the cows. "I think that I should sell the sheep I have and buy cows, we can combine

them and continue with the business. Maybe one day we can get out of here." Zola told him, he has been thinking about this since they left town. "That is a good idea man." Sakhile agreed as they worked.

After they finished Zola left promising to come back in the morning to milk the cow that just given birth. After Zola left he went to the back of the house and sat down next to his grandmother's grave. "I found her mother, in town today and she looked so beautiful. More beautiful than in my dreams but she didn't even want to talk to me. I was clean mah like you taught me never to go out without getting cleaned and wearing clean clothes. I even ironed mah and you know how

much I hate ironing but I did." He sighed then laid his head on the grave.

"She will never want me mah, I am out of her league, she is from a wealthy background and will never be with someone like me. She told me this herself, you told me to wait for mah and I did for the past two years. I have never been with any girl like I promised but she rejected me and looked at me like I was beneath her. I know that I am but when you said the ancestors will show me my wife, I thought that she will accept me but I was wrong." He could not help the tears that fell out of his eyes.

Back at the palace the king was going crazy because of that medicine and the only woman that kept popping in his mind was Nomasonto, he dreamt of her once and he met her the

following week. Back then he was still a prince and his father was still alive. When they got together she had told him that he had someone else but because he was used to getting whatever he wanted. He did not listen and went after her anyway. When she got pregnant he denied being the father as he claimed that he was not the only one and that she must look for the father.

After that he kept his distance from her, he never told his family about it as he was going to be told to marry her and he was not ready. On top of that they had just met two months ago then she fell pregnant and he wasn't in love with her at the time so it was easy to leave her. He didn't even know what her clan name was and she is the only one that he dreamt of.

"Brother, you look deep in thought, are you thinking of the woman the seer told you about?" Asked the brother a bit excited. "No I mean that I don't know. The only woman I dreamt of was one from a long time ago, way before I was king, we got together but I left after she fell pregnant from someone else." The king told him.

"What was her clan name?" Asked his brother but the king shook his head no. "Then let's go back in the morning and tell him this, it might be enough to get him to tell you what needs to be done." The brother suggested but it was going to be a long night for the king as the itching was getting worse. In the morning the king's body was red with all the itching he was doing. He was sleepy and tired. But his brother

pushed him to go to the seer again and they went. When they got there the seer took one look at the king and smiled. "Sawubona Makhosini." (Good morning Makhosini) he greeted cheerfully making the king glare at him and not answer. The seer led the way inside and the two followed. "Did you manage to remember your chosen wife?" Asked the seer. "The only woman I dreamt of was one I was with years ago but she got pregnant by someone else and I left her," The king told him. "So what do you want when you left your wife and denied your son?" The seer asked. "Are you saying that she is the one that is going to give me a son?" The king asked but his brother had a wide smile on his face. "Brother he just told you that she was carrying your son." The king's mind went blank, he denied his son and

left his true wife. That was all he could think about. "Then that means I have a son out there that is being raised by another man, a prince of this land is being raised as a commoner!" The king roared, no Zungu heir has ever been raised outside of the Zungu kingdom.

The seer clicks his tongue with a frown.

"Whose fault is that? The gods gave you a wife and son but you denied him and left his mother who also left him to be raised by her mother. The gods have been angry at you for years because you gave someone else the position of a queen that doesn't belong to her." He told with so much anger. "Is that why you never wanted to crown Mancwane queen?" Asked the king.

"That's because she is no queen in this land!" The king was defeated, he has a son, an heir to his throne. He wondered how he was doing and the kind of man he was. If he thought correctly then he would be 24 years old this year. His first born, he could not wait to see him. "We have to get him home." The king declared. "The queen first" the seer told him. "What?" The king asked. "The first step is to get the queen back first before you go for your son. For once follow instructions." The seer told him making him sigh. "Where am I supposed to find her now?" The king asked defeated, he doesn't know much about Nomasonto, they were not together for that long, how the hell was he supposed to find her now. "That I will leave to you, now leave." The seer told them.

"I will help you brother, I can't wait to meet my nephew." He grinned widely. The king did not pay him any mind as he was focused on recalling the events of the past.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 4 (not edited)

In Soweto a woman has just come back from a long night shift at the hospital, she worked as a nurse and loved helping people. Or maybe it was her guilt that was making her go the extra mile for others but whatever the reason she was loved because of her hard work. "At least now the night is over, I can wait for the weekend so that I can go home." Her friend said when they were changing in

the locker rooms. "You have a day off tomorrow so you can sleep in and then prepare for your trip." She told her of which she nodded.

"Tell me Sonto, when are you going home? I mean my friend I have known you for 24 years now since the days of us on the streets until we got here. I have been going home year after year but not you. Are your parents still alive or you don't have a family? I know you never want to talk about this but I can't help but wonder." Her friend said making her sigh.

"I had a mother back home, my father died when I was in high school and am not sure if my mother is still alive. It's been years since we last spoke." Her friend was shocked to hear that, this friend of hers never wanted

to talk about her family but today she actually did. "Even if your mother is not alive anymore you have to go home Sonto you know, to get blessing from the ancestors just by stepping into your home. Am sure your mother would appreciate having you home even if she is not alive to tell you herself. Go home mngani." She encouraged.

"You know Sindiswa, when I was working on the streets I was ashamed of going home because of what I did back then that is why I worked hard and saved to her to the nursing school. Then when I was in school and still working on the streets I told myself that I will go home after I make something of myself to make my mother proud. But then years went by and I lost the courage to face

her." By now tears has already made way down her cheeks.

"My never even said goodbye when I left, I just gave my child to my friend to take her home and I left. I don't even know if he alive or dead. I was too ashamed to face my mother with a child who's father denied me. I just told my friend to tell her where the father was from and that was it. I never even told her that I was leaving I just disappeared and ended up here." By this time she crying hard with hiccups.

Sindiswa her friend did not know what to say, it was sad indeed, now she understood why her friend never went home but all that was in the past and her mother might have long forgiven her and only wished for her to come

home. He pulled her into a hug brushing her back comforting her.

"You know the thing about mother's is that no matter how much we offend them they always find a way to forgive us. My mother found out that I was working on the street on our first year at the nursing school. I denied it of course but I could not stop as you know that the money we made on the streets is what helped us pay for that school. But then my aunt saw me and told my mother and she was disappointed in me. Remember that year when I didn't go home?" She asked and Nomasonto nodded. "Well that was the year, I could not face her so I never went home and I stopped calling because I didn't want to hear the disappointment in her voice." She sighed

thinking about it. "But then she sent me a message telling me that no matter what I did and no matter how disappointed she was. I will always be her daughter and that she loved me. That is when I started working hard at school, for her, to make her proud for once and I did. What am trying to say is that your mother only wishes to see you again, what happened is in the past and will never hold it against you. Go home my friend." She told her as they cried in each other's arms. Sindiswa was the one that found her on the streets the second month after arriving in Joburg. She took her to her apartment and showed her how she lived. She told her that she can choose what she wanted to do with her life. For a year she tried finding a job but

she couldn't find any, she only had grade 12 and nothing else.

Having no other choice she joined Sindiswa on the streets is Selling her body to help Sindi at home, she lives with her for free and never complained but she felt that she needed to pull her weight as well or Sindi was going to get tired of feeding and sheltering her. But she had a goal, to go back to school and make something of herself. She influenced Sindi and they both enrolled. They have been together since then.

"I will go home when I get my leave in two months." She told her and that was enough to make Sindi happy. They got out of the hospital and each one went to their cars and driving to their separate homes. Sindi still lives in

Soweto but owns her house now and Nomasonto lives in randburg. It was quite a distance to drive to and from work every day but she did not mind.

She got home around 10 and ate something before going to bed. She did not sleep immediately thinking about what Sindi said. "I wonder what your grandmother named you and if she went looking for your father." She quickly dismissed that thought, her mother was a proud woman she wouldn't have gone looking for him. Her mind drifted off to the fading image of him but then shook her head and thought that it wasn't worth it.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 5

The Mdlalose family was sitting on the table having one of their usual family dinners, it has been a week since Bongekile met Sakhile. She was unusually quiet and that it worried her father. His daughter was a bubbly person and having her this quiet was worrisome. "Ntombi kababa udliwa yhini ngani yami?" (My daughter, what is bothering you my child?) asked her father concerned.

"Nothing." She answered as she played with the food in her plate. "Talk to us my child, whatever it is am sure one of us can help."

Her mother cooed as she spoke softly to her, Bongekile has bags under her eyes that she covers with make up, she hasn't had a decent sleep in days and it was starting to worry her. She dropped the fork on the table and started crying.

Her mother went to her side bringing her to her chest and comforted her. "I swear to God whoever made you cry you meet his maker tonight. I can't have my daughter crying here while the person responsible is out there doing God knows what." Her father was livid, this was his only daughter, his pride, the only one after three boys and he was very protective of her.

"Hawukahle baba, (be stop it) we don't even know why she's crying, let's wait for her to tell us what is wrong first." Her mother tried to calm her husband down, Mdlalose was a hardheaded man and she knew that If she let him explode like that then the whole of KZN would not sleep. "Khuluma Bongekile ngani yami, tshela ubaba kwenzekeni." (Speak

Bongekile my child, tell your father what is going on.)

Bongekile sniffed and lifted her head from her mother's chest. "I am tired daddy and all I want to rest. Just an hour of sleep would do me well, I have not been sleeping, every time I fall sleep I see this old woman asking me the same question over and over again. I can't take it!" She cried even more, her father was taken back by her explanation, he didn't think it would be something like this that is upsetting his daughter.

Now that he was looking at her properly, he could see how tired looking she was and wondered why she didn't say anything sooner. "What question is she asking you?" Asked her mother, her brother on the other hand was

busy with his emails and sorting out his patients files. He couldn't be bothered by his sisters tantrums and he knew that his parents will deal with her like they always do. "She keeps asking why did I hurt her son like that, I don't even know who her son is." She answered as she sniffed. "Bathakatha ingane yami baba, bayayithakatha ngenxa yokuthi ingafuni umfana wabo! Kuyacaca nje ukuthi lomfana akayifanele ingane yethu ntlobo manje bayamthakatha!" (They are bewitching my child my husband, they are bewitching her because she didn't want their son! It is clear that this boy is not worthy of our daughter and now they are bewitching her!) her mother exploded.

Mdlalose kept clenching and unclenching his jaw. Her brother looked up from his phone then

looked at his sister then shook his head and went back to what he was doing. "Kunemele siyobona isangoma sikhipe logogo lakwami, ngifuna amenze ihlanya lomfana abonwe habantu bonke njengomthakathi awuye naso lesosalukazi somthakathi." (We have to take her to a Sangoma for him to chase this old woman out of my house, I want him to make this young man mad together with his witch of a grandmother so that everyone can see the witch that she is." The father exploded with so much anger. "We will go there first thing in the morning but for tonight you are going to sleep with me in the guest room. I want to see if this witch will come with me there." The mother said and Bongekile nodded. She just wanted to sleep nothing more but this old woman she doesn't even know was keep her up at night.

She was tired and can't even concentrate at school anymore. Everywhere she goes it's like she can see her and then her question will ring in her mind like a broken record saying the same thing over and over again. "If you will excuse me, I am going to bed, I have an operation booked for tomorrow morning, I need my rest. Bongs I hope you will get to sleep tonight." Her brother Smanga said as he got up from his chair going up the stairs. He did not believe in sangoma's he believed in science and even now he was going to suggest that her sister go and see a psychiatrist but his father spoke first and no one goes against Mdlalose. So he thought going to bed was the best instead of just sitting there listening to them go on about sangoma's when his sister needed psychiatric help.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 6

After dinner her mother cleared the table and washed the dishes then they went to the guest bedroom as planned. Bongekile showered then went and joined her mother in bed. She stayed awake afraid of going to sleep in case the old woman comes again. "Go to sleep baby mama is here and I look after you. She won't come I promise." Her mother cooed as she brushed her hair, Bongekile nodded then closed her eyes to sleep. It wasn't long after she slept that her mother

felt sleepy as well, she couldn't even keep her eyes open and eventually she gave up and fell asleep. The air in the room for hot that Bongekile struggled to breathe, she felt like something was pressing hard on her chest making it hard for her to breathe. She wanted to scream for her mother but her voice was not coming out, finding that she was out of options she started prying and crying at the same time.

"I nguyena umshologu Ntombe'Thongo angixoshwa ngomthandazo mina. Vuka kumele sikhulume." (I am not an evil spirit Ntombe'Thongo you can't case me away with prayer. Wake up we have to talk.) a voice she knew all too well from the previous nights spoke making her shiver in fright but the heaviness on her chest was gone, she was able

to breathe normally again but the warm air in the room wouldn't allow her to breathe properly.

"Ngithe vuka Ntombe'Thongo!" (I said wake up Ntombe'Thongo!) the woman shouted making her jump waking up from bed and falling over the bed at the same time as she jumped when she woke up. She got up and scanned the room. She found her mother sleeping peacefully while the old woman was sitting at the foot of the bed.

"Mah! Mah vuka!" (Mother! Mother wake up!" She shouted calling her mother to wake up when she saw the woman, she was scared but her mother would not wake up. "Ungitshela umusugedile ukubanga umsindo." (Tell me when you done making noise) the old woman said as

she watched her going historical trying to wake her mother up. "Bengicanga kuthi manje uzobe ubona ukuthi akazukuvuka lomuntu." (I thought that by now you would have seen that she is not going to wake up) Bongekile stopped trying to wake her mother up.

"Ufunani kimi?" (What do you want from me?) she asked with tears in her eyes, she didn't know how she offended this woman but it seems that whatever she did this woman will not let it go. "Ngifuna ukwazi ukuthi ingenile le yami uyizwiselani ubuhlu" (I want to know why you are hurting my son.) asked the old woman. "Angiyazi mina mah ingane yakho ngiyacela ungiyekele." (I don't know your son, please leave me alone.) she begged feeling defeated. "Yonke into uzoyazi maduze nje, kuyokusiza

ukuzithoba uma iskhathi so fikile like." (You will know everything soon, it help if you humble yourself when the time comes.) the woman said the disappeared.

Bongekile didn't even try to wake her mother up this time, she was just tired, she sat on the bed with her knees on her chest as she rocked herself back and forth with tears flowing down her cheeks. She sat like that till dawn then fell asleep and it felt like she slept for a few minutes when her mother woke her up. The bags under her eyes were worse but she didn't even care to hide them with make up anymore as it was not helping. Soon they were packed in the car with her father driving, she looked out the window and watched the trees go by. She wanted to close

her eyes and sleep so badly but she was scared of the woman appearing again. Soon her mother announced their arrival, she looked out the window and saw that they had stopped in front of a big yard with about six to Rondavels.

There were nasty things hanging in the yard as she would call them if she was herself but at this moment she didn't even have the strength to comment on the stage of the house. They got out of the car and a young boy about eight years old told them to take off their shoes then follow him. They did as told then followed the boy to one of the rondavels. They got in and were told to seat on the floor on a grass mat. The Sangoma started

groaning and chanting. This went on for a while before he spoke. "Nina ningabakwa Mdlalose, vimani bo!" (you are from the Mdlalose clan, do you agree?) "siyavuma!" (We agree) they said in unison. "Nize la ngophupho, vumani bo!" (you came here because of a dream do you agree?)

"Siyavuma!" (We agree)

"Ingane yenu ikhethwe ngabaphantsi kodwa abangitsheli ukuthi ukhethelweni kodwa ngimbona ehola isigodi esikhulu esonamandla." (You daughter have been chosen by the ancestors but they are not telling me what she is chosen for but I see her leading a very powerful kingdom.)

"Manje makhosi kumele senzeni ukumsiza?" (So what must we do to help her?) asked her

father. "Izosisiza yena, Ntombe'Thongo hamba uye kulamfana owahlangana naye ezitolo ezinsukwini ezidlulile. Malele ukuthi uzothini." (She who herself, Ntombe'Thongo go to that young man you men at the shops a few days ago. Listen to what he has to say.) "Baba uyaphazama ingane yami le igama layo wu Bongekile hayi u Ntombe'Thongo" (You are mistaken, my daughters name is Bongekile not Ntombe'Thongo.) her father corrected. The sangoma looked at Bongekile. "Sikubiza bani lesalukazi usibonayo ephupheni?" (what does the old woman in your dreams call you?) the man asked. "Ungibiza ngo Ntombe'Thongo baba." (She calls me Ntombe'Thongo) answered Bongekile "Nalo ke igama lakho, ningahamba akunalutho engalwenza." (That is your name, you may leave, there is nothing

more I can do.) the man told them and they stood up following each other to the door. Her parents were as confused as she was, she could not think of who the young man is, there are a lot of young man she meets every day, how was she supposed to know who the one he was talking about is? And what's with the name? Those were Bongekile's thoughts.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 7 (not edited)

Weeks have passed and Bongekile has not remembered who the young man was but after coming back from the Sangoma she never saw the old woman again. She managed to sleep now and was back to normal. She was happy and going to school also hanging out with her friends. Life was back to normal and even her

parents forgot about the issue since nothing happened after.

It was a month end weekend and Mdlalose's taxis were busy on the road. Mdlalose was at the rank as usual during this time monitoring his taxis and writing down how many loads each driver has taken on the day. Late in the evening he was preparing to go home when he got a call that one of his taxis got into an accident. The man did not waste anytime and took his car driving to the scene.

When he got there the people were all okay with minor scratches and bruises as well as the driver but the taxi was a write off. The accident own it's was strange to him and the officials. The taxi rolled four times as the driver said but none of the people were

injured to a point that they needed a hospital but the taxi was a write off. Mdlalose organised another taxi to come and get the people where they wanted to go then got the other one towed.

He was heartbroken by this because it meant that he was going to lose one of his sources of income. The following day was a Saturday and another accident occurred. Same as the one that happened the previous day, the people were fine but the taxi was yet again a write off, Mdlalose was angry and scolded his drivers telling them to be careful on the roads or he is going to fire all of them and get new drivers.

Now the man lose two taxis out of the six he and was now left work four. The man paid for

more routes to make more money and be able to buy more taxis. He got the routes as usual but in a matter of 8 days all his taxis were involved in accidents and were written off. "Kanti baba kwenzenjani?" (My husband what is happening?) The wife asked worried about the situation they found themselves in. It has just been eight days but they have lost all their taxis. Mdlalose shook his head looking defeated, his arrogance was gone. "I really don't know but I suspect that someone at the rank is targeting me, something like this has never happened to me since I started this business." Mdlalose answered looking deep in thoughts. "Then I suggest we go see someone, we can't lose everything like this and not do anything." The wife suggested and Mdlalose nodded in

agreement. It was decided the following day he was going to see someone.

That evening the dinner was not like any other they have had, the mood was somber making everyone lose appetite. "I can borrow the money to buy at least two taxis and when they are doing well you can pay me back baba." The son Smanga told his father. "I would appreciate that son but let me first go and see someone and hear the reason behind the accidents. It will be useless to buy more taxis only for them to end up like the others." Smanga nodded in understanding. Bongekile couldn't care less about what was happening as long as she got her allowance at the end of the month and she has her car everything was okay. The following morning

Mdlalose went to the same Sangoma while the kids went to school and Smanga to work. His wife was a house wife. When Mdlalose stopped in front of the Sangoma's house he was welcomed by the Sangoma himself at the gate.

"Has your daughter spoken to the young man she was supposed to talk to?" That's the first thing the man asked as soon as Mdlalose got out of the car. "No but am not here about her, am here about another issuse." Answers Mdlalose making the man shake his head. "The two issues are related, until your daughter does what she is supposed to nothing will go well for you. Go back and ask her to do as she was told." The man told him then turned around and left.

Mdlalose stood there for a while looking at the retreating back of the man until he disappeared into one of his rondavels. He sighed then got into the car and drove back home. When he got home he saw his sons car, he wondered if he forgot something and came back to get it but he didn't really care. He parked then got out of his car, when he went into the house he found his wife and sitting in the living room looking like someone has died. "What is going on?" He asked without even sitting, Smanga lifted his head and looked at him. "I lost my job today." Smanga told him, the news came as a shock to Mdlalose his son was good at his job and people even requested him in that hospital. How can he lose his job like that? "What happened?" He asked taking his

seat facing him. "That's just it father, the reason is something minor that would not get someone fired but I was." He told him but Mdlalose shook his head.

"If it was minor how did you lose your job?"

He asked not understanding the whole thing.

"I forgot to ask my secretary to book a follow up appointment for one of my patients and today when he came I was with someone else. The dean of the hospital said it was negligence on my

Part and fired me. The reason is not really something I should have been fired for but I was. I still can't believe it." Smanga explained.

"How did it go with you?" Asked the wife.

"He told me that what happened is related to

Bongekile, he said that until she finds the young man nothing will go well for us and now I see that he is right. If she doesn't remember who the boy is then am afraid that things are going to get worse." Mdlalose told them, as much as Smanga didn't believe in Sangoma's this time he listened to his fathers words and thought about when everything started. He couldn't help but resent his sister for this.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 8 (not edited)

Bangekile came back from school and found everyone in the living room looking deep in thoughts with frowns on their faces. She threw her bag in the couch then she followed, throwing herself on the couch as well and sighed. "Yhini namuncu nje? Kufe bani?" (Why

are you all so sour? Who died?) she asked as she took her phone out of her bag and browsed her social media accounts. When no one answered she looked up from her phone abs frowned. "Smanga, why are you home so early, are you sick?" Smanga looked at her then clicked his tongue and stood up then left the room.

Bongekile shrugged not caring about her brother's behavior and went back to her phone. "Ntombi kababa" (my daughter) her father called out to her. "Baba" (father) she answered not looking up from her phone.

"Dad, I just received an email from my school reminding me to pay the tuition for this semester." She spoke looking at her phone before her father could say anything.

"Bongekile!" Her father raised his voice at her for the first time since she was born. Bongekile could not help but be emotional, she felt wronged by her father, she did nothing wrong and yet her father raised his voice on her. She looked up at him with glassy eyes, if she could blink the tears would fall from her eyes. Mdlalose did not like seeing her like that, it pained him to see his princess hurt that way. "Listen my child, I want to know if you have remembered who that boy the makhosi spoke about is." He asked her with his voice now soft. "No, I don't remember who he is, he is probably not important and that old woman stopped coming to my dreams so there is no need to bring about him anymore." She answered carelessly making her father sigh. "That's where you are wrong my dear, the

reason you are seeing me here and not at the rank is that I have lost all my taxis the past week. Your father has nothing now and on top of that your father lost his job. I went back to makhosi to find out what the reason was and he told me that until you speak to the boy nothing will go well for us. So I am asking you to think very carefully about this and try to remember who this boy is." Her father explained the situation to her.

"Smanga lost his job?" She asked frowning.

"Yes he did." Her mother confirmed. "He might have done something really bad for him to be fired." She said making her mother sigh.

"So father when are you going to settle my situation fee for this semester?" She asked not paying attention to all the other things her father told her. "Bongekile, we don't have

the money to pay for your school." Her father told her and she dropped her phone on the couch dramatically.

"What are you talking about? You just lost your taxis last week am sure that you still have enough money saved up to pay for my school." He said cheeky. "I don't have it Bongekile, the money I had I paid for routes that I can't even use now because all my taxis are written off. We are lucky this house is paid off or we would be kicked out of here by the bank next month." Her father explained. "How can you pay for routes when you don't taxis? That was foolish of you." She said making her father angry. "If you had thought of what makhosi said then we wouldn't be in this predicament right now! You are the one

who is responsible for all of this and yet you don't seem to care! This whole semester you are going to stay in this house and think about the situation you have put us through and maybe you will remember who the boy is." Mdlalose exploded then stood up and left the room. Bangekile was crying now.

"Why are you crying?" Asked her mother annoyed by her. "Because dad is shouting at me for something that is not even my fault, I didn't cause the accidents on his taxis his drivers did but his blaming me, Smanga lost his job on his own, I wasn't there but that is blamed on me as well just because some man wearing animal skin said so!" She cried even harder.

Her mother looked at her for a while before she spoke. "I want you to understand something Bongekile, if we can't provide for this family like we used because of your stubbornness am telling you my child that you are going to go out there and work. It's time you grow up sms starting thinking of this family instead of yourself!" Her mother told her then felt the room as well.

Bongekile cried even more feeling wronged, she has never worked a day in his life but now her mother wanted her to work. She wasn't even responsible for the accidents of the taxis even her brothers job yet all the blame was put on her now. She felt wronged by her parents, they even shouted at her, she

couldn't understand and that made her cry harder.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 9

A convoy of cars could be seen driving slowly in the rural areas, people would stop and stare as they drove past while children ran after them with excitement. The royal king Makhosini and his bother Khulekani are sitting in the car that was in the middle of the convoy with tinted windows. They looked out the window as they drove. "Does anything come to mind?" Asked Khulekani seeing that his brother is not saying anything as they drove. Makhosini shook his head. "No, you have to understand that it's been twenty four

years since the last time I was here." The king answered.

"Then we might have to ask someone if you don't remember any of these areas, what were you doing here anyway?" Asked his brother a question his been thinking about since this came to light. "I can here with a friend of mine, we just got back from Joburg and we came back early for holidays in November. I told our father that I will only be home on the second week of December while I spent the whole month here. That's when I had the dream of Nomasonto and met her the following week.

She told me that she was with someone when we met but I didn't care at the time, o wanted to be with her even if it was for just that

month I was here and I got her. The week when I was going back home she asked to meet me and I came. She told me that she was pregnant but I told her that it could not be mine and that it must have been the other guy's child. I left this place three days later and never came back." Makhosini told his brother thinking about the events of the past.

"Why did you feel the need to reject her? Did she give you any reason to believe that she was still with the other guy when you were together?" Asked Khulekani, if his brother was not sure why couldn't he just say that he will see when the baby is born instead of denying completely? "I was scared man, how was I going to explain to our father that I

made a girl pregnant here when I was supposed to be at school on Joburg? You knew how our father was, he never wanted us to be away from him and our friends could only visit us and not the other way around." That was the truth the late king never allowed his sons to go out with friends and always told them that it was dangerous. Makhosini was the crowned prince, the next in line for the Zungu throne and their father was more strict with him than he was with Khulekani even though he treated them more or less the same.

Khulekani understood his brother's reasoning.

"I understand and now we have to stop and get ask someone." Khulekani suggested and his brother nodded.

They drove for a little while and saw a woman

by the side of the road with a bucket of water on her head.

"Sawubona sis." (Hello) greeted Khulekani.

"Sawubona buti.) (hello) the woman greeted back. "Becela ukubuza sisi ukuthi uNomasonto uhlala kuphi lana?" (We wanted to ask if you know where Nomasonto lives around here?) asked Khulekani. "U Nomasonto wakwabani?" (What is Nomasonto's last name?) asked the woman. "Owakwa Ndlovu." (Her last name is Ndlovu) Khulekani told her. "Oh! I Nomasonto wahamba kudala lana sekuyiminyaka manje wahamba namawakhe sewasishiya. Sekusele nje lesasono somfana wakhe laphayana." (Oh, Nomasonto left here a long time ago and

he

even her mother died. Only that poor child of hers is left there now.)

Like a rural gossip woman she told the strangers all she knew about Nomasonto. Khulekani looked at his brother, yes the Sangoma said that must find Nomasonto first but it seems they will find his son first before the mother. He looked at him wanting to know what his thoughts are, should they continue with their journey or turn back? Makhosini nodded at him. "Can you tell us where the boy lives?" Asked Khulekani and the woman gave them directions.

Khulekani was excited as they drove following the directions the woman gave he

them while his brother was anxious and even his palms were sweating. they arrived in front of the rondavel and got out of the car. There was no one in on sight and they wondered where he could have gone. "I can't believe this where the Zungu prince has been staying, no wonder the ancestors are angry with me, I have been busy focusing on the wrong women while my son suffered. I wonder if he knows about me or knows someone else as his father." Makhosini said looking at the old rondavel in front of them like was about to cry.

"I wonder what would father have done if he was alive to see this." Khulekani said also looking at the house. "He would have killed

he

me with his bare hands or worse stripped me off my title and give it to my son. But I wouldn't have minded that, look at this place, it spells poverty just by looking at it, how has he been surviving all these years?" Makhosini said. "Maybe he doesn't even know that you are his father, maybe his mother told him that the other guy was his father. You did deny he was yours after all." Khulekani told him feeling bitter about the situation When Makhosini heard his tone of voice he knew that his brother was blaming him, he might have said that he understood but now seeing the poor conditions his nephew has been living under might have made him change his mind and blames him for his stupidity. Hell

he

he blamed himself for being a coward
because if wasn't then his son

he

would have been raised like the prince he was.

"Do you think he went to school?" Asked Makhosini making Khulekani click his tongue looking at him. "With what money? You can see that his grandmother was poor judging by the poor state of the house. So with what money do you think he was sent to school with? Am sure that the poor woman used every cent she had just so he can have food to eat." Answered Khulekani annoyed and even felt that his brother was asking stupid questions now.

"We will wait here until he arrives."

Makhosini said but Khulekani didn't bother to answer this time around.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 10

The royal family stood parked in front of Sakhile's home till late in the evening and around 5pm they thought it was time to go and come back the following morning. They were hungry from being there the whole day and there were no shops close by for them to get something to eat. Khulekani was disappointed that they had to leave without seeing him. When they left they passed Sakhile and his friend Zola on the way home from town. They had just gotten off the bus but they didn't see him because it was dark and there were not street lights.

The two wondered where the fancy cars were coming from. "You know when our business is doing well I want to own a car like

that." Zola said not taking his eyes off the shiny black car that just passed, he didn't even know the model of the car but that was his dream car. "Then we have to work hard man because a car like that must cost a lot of money." Sakhile told him making him sigh. "I wonder who did we offend in our previous lives to be born this poor on this one." Zola said sadly. "What makes you think that we were rich on own previous lives? We might have been the same or worse." Sakhile said making Zola scoff.

"Then that would mean we of the poorest of generations and if we don't break the cycle then even our grandchildren will suffer the same faith we did." Said Zola as they got to Sakhile's home getting ready to milk the

cows for milk for the following day. The royals got to the BnB in town and showered before getting something to eat. "Where do you think he was all day?" Asked Makhosini thinking about his son. "I don't know but you know the kinds of jobs that are available for young men in places like that, he might have been in the fields somewhere herding someone's cattle." Answered Khulekani but that didn't sit well with Makhosini. "Then we should be there early tomorrow so that we get there before he lives, I can't believe I don't even know his name or what he looks like." Makhosini said thinking. "Am sure he looks just me or father." Said Khulekani with a smirk on his face earning himself a glare from his brother. "Why would he look like

any of you when I am his father?" Asked Makhosini. "Because usually kids that have been denied rarely look like their fathers but would look exactly like the brother or the grandfather, it's always like the ancestors are mocking you for being stupid." Khulekani told him and Makhosini didn't say anything after that finishing off his meal and going to the room to rest.

The following morning the royals woke up early to get ready and by 7:45 they were leaving the BnB heading back to Sakhile's place but leaving Sakhile in town who has just gotten off the bus with his friend Zola going to sell their milk. When they got there he was not there but they were told by a boy that passed them that he leaves early in the

morning with a bus to town. The boy didn't know why he goes to town every day. "I think the ancestors don't want us to meet the prince first like the makhosi said. I think we have to go back and try to find his mother first." Khulekani suggested but he was disappointed. Makhosini did not answer but instructed the drivers to head back.

Bongekile woke up early this day and prepared herself to leave home and meet up with her friend in town. She couldn't stand the depressing mood in her home anymore and wanted to get out of there. She left the house at around 10 in the morning, none of her family members had come down yet at that time, these days it seemed that they liked being in the comfort of their rooms

than sitting as a family like they used to. The room one look at the house before closing the door behind her going to the garage and driving off. She met her friend in town and they sat in her car talking, well she was talking complaining about everything that was happening back home and how her parents were blaming her. The friend was just listening and agreeing with everything she was saying. In the afternoon they decided to go to the supermarket to get some drinks Sakhile was there getting his usual loaf of bread while the friend went to get the russians.

Bangekile saw him as he was in the line to pay. "Hey you, are you not the one I met a few weeks back? Yes I think that you are, I

need to talk to you dude like now." She said talking to Sakhile, he frowned looking at her but he ignored her and continued to stand on the line. "Did he just ignore me? Dude this is serious I need to talk to you." Bangekile insisted with a loud voice earnings an audience in the shop. "Why should I talk to you when you want to? Was it not serious when I wanted to talk or you just realizing it when you are the one who wants to talk?" Bangekile was standing there with her mouth open looking at him.

"It's just a talk i won't take much of your time." She insisted once again. "I wasn't going to take much of your time either when I wanted to talk to you but you refused so am sorry but I don't want to talk to people that

are out of my league because it got me scolded the last time I don't want it happening again." He said then paid for his bread and left. "Did this farm boy just talk back to me and even refused to talk to me? Who does he think he is?" Bongekile could not believe what just happened. "He did mngani and I think that was very disrespectful for someone like him." The friend said. " I know, right?" The friend nodded

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 11

Bongekile could not wait to go home and tell her parents that she has met the boy. She wanted to get them off her back and stop blaming her for their misfortunes. She

dropped off her friend then drove home, when she got there she parked then went into the house, her father was sitting in the lounge having a cup of coffee. "Dad" she called then went and threw herself on the couch opposite him. "What now Bongekile?" Asked the father annoyed, Bangekile gave him a big grin. "I just met the boy in town a few minutes ago." Her father placed the cup of coffee on the table and looked at her. "What did he say?" Asked them father with so much hope that things were about to change. "The fool didn't want to talk to me, can you believe it?" She told her father, it bothered her that the guy didn't want to talk to her yet he was desperate to do so the last time.

She could not understand what changed.

"Yes, I can believe it actually, now let's go back to town and find this boy." Her said making her frown, why does she have to go looking for the guy? His not even her type and if she went looking for him then he will think that she is into him. "Get up and let's go." Her father brought her back snapping her out of her thoughts, he was already standing by the door when she looked up. Not having a choice she stood up and followed her father outside and into his car. He started it then drove in high speed heading to town.

"Where did you see him?" Asked her father.

"He was at the supermarket when I met him buying something." She answered then looked

out the window, she didn't like that she was being forced to go and find this guy again. When they got to town they started looking around the supermarket but he was not there, they were around looking for him, three hours has passed and they could not find him. They went looking for him close to the rank, they started at the taxi rank then went back to the side of the buses and he was there. Bongekile saw him but had the heart to tell her father that he was not there as well. But her father saw the two young men she was looking at not far from where they stood. "Is he one of them?" Asked her father, having been caught she nodded her head. Her father took her hand and hurried to their direction. Sakhile was

talking to his friend Zola waiting for the bus home.

Bongekile and her father got to them.

"Bafana bami" (young men) he greeted them, Sakhile's eyes were fixed on Bongekile who has a frown on her face while Zola was confused as to who they were. Her father saw that Sakhile was looking at his daughter and he assumed that he was the one.

"Sawubona baba." (Hello) Zola was the one who greeted, Mdlalose looked at Sakhile.

"Young man, can I have a word with you?" He asked politely which baffled Bongekile, how can her father be so polite to a nobody like him? She could not understand. "Am sorry but the bus is about to arrive and there is not other bus going that side. If we miss it

then we won't be able to get home. We do live in the rural areas where taxis don't move." Answered Sakhile but his eyes were fixed on Bongekile.

"I understand you man, let me make you a deal, I will drive you and your friend home so that we can have time to talk." Mdlalose proposed, before Sakhile could answer Zola answered on his behalf. "We would like that sir." Sakhile looked at him but he shrugged. "We don't have to wait for the bus he can drive us home now, we don't have to stand of them bus for hours to get home and if he is planning something then am sure that we are more than capable of taking care of ourselves." Said Zola looking at Mdlalose, he did not like what he was insinuating, as much

as he has killed people in his line of work but that was not his intention at the moment. "If I was going to do something then I would have sent my people to come find you."

Mdlalose told them. "See?" Zola said looking at his friend. "Alright then we can go."

Sakhile answered making Bongekile huff next to her father, she didn't see the need for all this, but since her father has spoken then there was nothing she could do but lead the way to the car. Sakhile and Zola followed then with their crates on hand. "Put those on the boot." Mdlalose offered opening the boot for them to pack their crates in. They did then got into the back while Bongekile sat next to her father on the passenger seat. He

started the car and asked them to direct him.

“What did you want to talk about?” Asked Sakhile as the car left town. “Well, I am not sure where to start but recently we have had a lot of misfortunes in my family, first it was Bongekile my daughter here started not sleeping because of an old woman that kept asking her why she hurt her son, which I now believe it is you. Then my son lost his job and I lost my taxis. When I went to see someone he told me that my daughter had to come and listen to what you have to say.” Mdlalose summarised the issue, both Sakhile and Zola were listening attentively. “I hear you but then what does all of that have to do with me? Your daughter made it clear when I

wanted to talk to her that she wanted nothing to do with me." Sakhile answered Zola wondered when and where his friend met this woman. "That is exactly the problem here son, she did not listen to what you had to say and for all these things to be happening I believe that you had something important to tell her. Can you please tell me what you wanted to say to her? I just want to fix this." Mdlalose was begging now, he needed to fix things as soon as possible.

"Before my grandmother died two years ago she told me a lot of things and among those things she told me that the ancestors will show me the woman that I am supposed to marry, of course not didn't believe that at the time and I didn't care about any woman

as I still have myself to take care of."

Sakhile started and Mdlalose was listening attentively.

"Then when I didn't dream about anything for the past two years I thought she just wanted me to wait until I can be able to take care of myself before getting married. But then things changes a few months ago when I started dreaming about your daughter, everytime I slept I would dream of her, I didn't know her or where I was going to find her but I saw her in town a few weeks and I tried talking to her. She told me never to talk to her again and that I needed to find someone of my standard and leave her alone. I don't have a problem doing that because I also don't see myself marrying someone like

her, her daughter is rude and doesn't know how to treat other people. She thinks that she is better than everyone and I don't need stress of being with someone like her in my life." Sakhile told him.

Mdlalose was quiet for sometimes letting his words sink, Zola was shocked as this was the first time hearing of this. After a while Mdlalose spoke. "If I wasn't someone who believes in ancestors I would say that you just fed me bullshit but with how things have been going I would say that your ancestors are very powerful and I believe that your grandmother was the one who was keeping Bongekile awake at night after she said all those things to you. My daughter was chosen as your wife and we don't know the reason

why..." before Mdlalose could finish Bongekile spoke.

"If you are going to tell me to marry him then you might as well forget it father, I will never marry him, I would rather die than marry someone like him." She said then looked out the window.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 12

Mdlalose looked at his daughter lost for words he shook his head disappointed. He didn't know what to do or say to her now, he cleared his throat before he spoke. "I hear you my daughter and no one will force you to marry him because you will only disgrace him and us if we force you. But I want to tell you this, the ancestors are not to be played with,

we are already at our wits end and our situation is dire. Am not sure if you noticed but this are bad for us but this is your choice." After that no one spoke until they dropped off the two and Mdlalose drive home.

He was worried about what is to come next because after what Sakhile said he could tell that this matter was not an easy one. In Joburg Sindiswa was busy helping her friend pack. She was to go home the next week but has no time to park as she will be working till the day she leaves. "What does your mother like? I want to get her something for you to give her from me." Sindi asked with a smile. "I wish I knew, I have not seen my mother in years that I don't remember what she likes."

Answered Nomasonto feelings tears sting her eyes, she felt ashamed that she didn't even know what her mother likes. "Don't worry friend since she is a few years older than my mother then I will get her something according to what women her age like. What about your son, what do you think we should get him?" She asked

Again Nomasonto felt useless and ashamed. She didn't know what Sakhile would like as well, what kind of a mother was she? Did she even deserve to be called one? Those questions hurt her when they rang in her mind. "He should be 24 years old this year, that is if he is still alive." She could not continue as she choked on her tears. Her friend pulled her into her arms comforting

her. "Hey, it will be alright, you have to be positive that he is still alive and well. All you have to do now is buy things young men his age wear here am sure he will appreciate some stylish and branded clothes and shoes. Oh how I wish that I could go with you and witness such a beautiful reunion." Nomasonto chuckled wiping her tears.

"You are crazy indeed, what do you think will be beautiful about this reunion? They might even resent me and wished I never went back." This is what she has been thinking about since she decided to go back home.

"Nonsense! They might be angry at first but they will still appreciate that you came back. Now let's finish with your stuff then tomorrow I will go buy things for your

mother and son when you are at work. What are you going to do about a car?" She asked, Nomasonto planned on flying to Mthatha then drive home. "I think hiring a car would be best, can you take care of that for me as well?" She asked her friend. "Not a problem when you come back tomorrow I would be starting my night shift but I will leave a note with everything I managed to do and what I couldn't. But don't worry since am working nights it will be easy to get everything sorted before you leave." She assured her. "What would o have done without you?" She asked getting tears again. "Oh please, am a nurse today because of you, if you had not pushed me then I would still be on the streets but you pushed me and made sure

that we succeeded together. Am grateful for that and so is my mother. You are my Sister Sonto." They hugged crying together. They had been through a lot together, from men refusing to pay them after sleeping with them, some beating them up, some doing unspeakable things to them all in the name of pleasure and they had to endure because they needed the money. To having thick folders at a local clinic because of all the times they went for STI treatment and treatment for broken ribs from a beating they got the previous night. It was a lot but they endured because they needed the money and had goals to achieve. Here they are today hardworking nurses that people respected, it was truly an improvement. "We

will never finish packing if we don't stop crying." They laughed and continued packing. At the royal palace Khulekani entered the throne room in a hurry startling his brother on the princess. "Where is the fire?" Asked Makhosini. "What, why?" Asked Khulekani not understanding why he asked that. "They way you walked in here it's like you are coming to report a fire." His brother answered with a shrug. Khulekani shook his head. "I don't get how you are the older one when you are this childish." Commented Khulekani making his brother chuckle. "Who am I supposed to be childish with if not with you?" He asked with a raised eyebrow.

"You have four wives, you can be childish with any of them." Makhosini frowned upon

hearing that. "You have no idea how annoying they are now, ever since I knew about my son and my Queen they have been nothing but nuisances to me." Makhosini said. "No brother, you don't get to do that, those women didn't bring themselves here you did. That means that they are and always will be your responsibility until they die. You don't get to be annoyed by them, now more than ever you have to love them because you might lose the one heir you have." Khulekani told him.

"What do you mean lose him? Is he in danger? Have you sent reinforcements to assist him? Let's go and get him home."

Makhosini rumbled making Khulekani shake his head. "No brother your son is fine at

least I hope he is but am saying this because if this is how you treat your wives then don't blame anyone when they conspire against him. Don't act like you don't know how things go in royal families,

You are the only king in the Zungu clan that had more than one wife because of what you did. Now what do you think will happen when my nephew and his mother get here? Your wives will see them as threats to them and do you do with a threat dear brother?" He asked work his eyebrow raised.

"I remove it." Makhosini Answered not liking any of this. "So what do you think will stop them from removing the threats that would be your queen and heir? Thank brother please think this time around." Makhosini

sighed he didn't know what to do with his wives. "Anyway that is not the reason am here." Khulekani said with a smirk. "Oh Lord Khulekani what have you done now?" Asked Makhosini making his brother throw his head back laughing. "I am not that guy anymore brother but I did find your Queen, she is in joburg and works as a nurse in Soweto." Makhosini felt his heart beating fast and for some reason he was nervous.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 13

Khulekani Zungu arrived at OR Tambo international airport, the whole first class cabin of the plane he took was occupied by him and body guards or shall I say special trained warriors of the Zungu kingdom.

These are the warriors that are responsible for the safety of the king Makhosini Zungu but today the king has sent his special elites with his brother to go and get the queen of the land. When they arrived he stayed in the plane while ten guards got out to sort out the convoy while he was left with two by his side. He sent a message to his brother telling him that he just landed. Soon he was told that the cars are ready and he walked out.

Soon the convoy could be seen driving on the streets of Joburg heading to Soweto where they heard their Queen worked. Soon they entered the hospital and stopped. One of the guards went and opened the door for the prince. He got out and straightened his suit then took long strides towards the entrance.

He met a security guard at the door and one of his guards asked him if nurse Nomasonto Ndlovu was available. "Nurse Sonto did not work today but a person that can tell you more is her friend nurse Nzama, you can go over there and ask for her." The guard told them.

Khulekani was on full prince mode keeping a straight face as he walked off to the direction of the reception leaving the security guard wondering who they are. At reception still one of the guards spoke asking for nurse Nzama and soon Sindiswa was appearing from one of the corridors heading to the reception after being called on the intercom. When she came to view of the reception she stopped in her tracks when she

saw all the men standing there. She composed herself then walked forward.

"Hello, I am nurse Nzama how can I be of assistance?" She Asked keeping it professional.

"Nurse Nzama thank you for seeing us but I can we talk in private please, I promise not to take much of your time." It was Khulekani who spoke this time. Sindi nodded then led them to the nurses station then took a seat with Khulekani sitting in front of her. "My name is Khulekani Zungu, I am the uncle of Nomasonto's son and I came here looking for her but was told that she did not come to work today." Khulekani introduced himself and stated the reason for his visit. Sindi was

scared that something might have happened to her friend's child.

"Am sorry but Sonto left this morning going back home, she should be landing..." she checked her watch. "Actually she just landed an hour ago. Is everything okay with her son?" She asked. "We are not sure that is why we wanted to talk to her but thank you for your time." The answer he gave was vague but Sindi did not have time to ask as he stood up getting ready to leave. He thanked Sindi again and left the hospital sending his brother a message informing him of what had happened.

Back at the Zungu kingdom Makhosini called his wives in for a meeting, they were all wondering what the meeting was about.

"Mancwabe uyazi kuthi usibizelani ubaba?" (Mancwane do you know why our husband called us?) asked the second wife. "I don't know, am sitting here wondering the same thing.) she answered but before anyone else could say anything Makhosini came in. He went and took his seat. "Bafazi no Zungu, ninjani kodwa?" (Zungu wives, how are you) asked Makhosini as soon as he sat down. "Siyaphila Unjani ubaba yena." (We are well how you?" Makhosini nodded.

He wished with everything he had that Khulekani was here right now, he would know how to approach this. He cleared his throat and spoke. "I called this meeting today to inform you of two things." He scanned the room to her a feel on their reactions. "One

of the things I want to tell you is that I have an heir." The women's faces sunk when they heard that thinking that the second thing he was going to say was that he was taking another wife, the woman he made pregnant. That was not it though but they were not far off. "This child should be 24 years old this year and I want to assure you all that I didn't know that he was mine until the seer told me so. Another thing is that his mother is the rightful queen of this kingdom." He told them and let it sink before he said anything else.

Mancwane looked at her husband with nothing but pain in her eyes. "Where was she when you married me baba?" She asked, "She was there, she is the woman the Zungu ancestors show me in my dreams but when

she fell pregnant I denied the pregnancy thinking that the child was not mine but he was. I mean that he is and he should be coming home any day from now, his mother too." He told them, Mancwane could not sit there anymore and left the room with tears in her eyes. No wonder the seer never agreed to her being crowned Queen, he knew all this time that she was never going to be the queen of the Zungu kingdom. Yes, technically they were all queens but there could only be one true queen and that is not her. It hurt so bad to hear that, she has always been by Makhosini's side and supported him. She even agreed when he wanted to take all these wives even though she was scared that one of them might give him the heir he wants and

she will lose her position. She still agreed to it and now all hope of being queen were crushed. She was hurt and bitter. At the same time she could not wait to meet the woman the ancestors decided to bless with a Zungu heir. She wanted to see what was so special about her to gain favor in the eyes of the gods. After Mancwane left the other three had nothing else to say, they were both disappointed and angry. Angry that another woman they don't even know was going to be above them. Disappointed that they were not the ones chosen by the Zungu ancestors to carry their heir. That made them wonder what it was about them that made the ancestors not choose them. They all share the same thought though, they all

wanted to see the kind of a woman that was worthy enough to the Zungu ancestors to carry their heir.

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Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 14

Nomasonto arrived at king Shaka and went to get the car Sindi hired for her. She then drove all the way to pine town and when she got there she did some groceries. No one ever went home without buying groceries so she bought some, she didn't know if they still cooked outside or not but she decided to buy

a gas stove anyway. When she was done with shopping it was already late in the afternoon, she got to the car then start heading home, on the way she was not in a hurry in fact she wanted to drag the drive as long as she could. She was scared and didn't know what to expect. Soon she started getting into the gravel roads that indicated that it won't be long now till she got home. She could not see much as there were not street lights and it was getting darker. But from what she saw nothing much had changed, she sighed as she drove forward and silently thanked Sindi for hiring a van for her instead of a small car or it would have been a nightmare to drive on those roads.

Finally she saw the off ramp she had to take to go home, she stopped the car on the side of the road and stepped out. She was having a panic attack, scared to face her mother after so long, she took out her phone from the charger and dialed Sindi. She picked almost immediately. "Friend." She greeted. "I can't do this." She told her. "Where are you now?" Asked Sindi sitting up on her bed. "Like five minutes away." She told her pacing next to the car. "You know that today a man came to our work place looking for you, he had bodyguards and everything. He introduced himself as your sons uncle, Sonto I think that something is wrong with your son for them to be tracking you down like this. I was going to tell you this tomorrow but I

think you need to know. You can't turn back now, your son might need you more than you think right now." Sindi told her. Sonto has stopped pacing when Sindi mentioned the man that was looking for her. What could have happened? Did her mother track her sons father? Was her son okay? All those questions flooded her mind. "Thank you Sindi, I going now, I have to find out what is going on, if my mother tracked his father and they didn't look for me all these years then there must be an important reason why they are looking for me now. I will talk to you tomorrow." She said goodbye to her friend and told back into the car. She took deep a deep breath then started the car again and

drove. She was determined now to her home and find out what is going on.

When she stopped in front of the rondavel and saw that the bigger two roomed houses they had was no longer standing there her heart sank. The rondavel looked like it was going to collapse at any moment but what gave her hope was the small light that was coming from inside. Sakhile and Zola had just finished milking the cows when the car stopped at the gate. "Who is that at this time?" Asked Zola. "I don't know but the only person I can think of that has a car is that girls father but I don't know what he would want here at this time." Sakhile answered annoyed by the thought.

"Well, it won't help just standing here, we might as well go and see who it is because whoever it is doesn't seem like he is getting out." Zola said packing the crates. "Alright let's go, I need to get this over and over done with so that I can get some rest am tired." Zola agreed to that and they walked closer to the car, Sonto saw then and got out of the car, Sakhile didn't know his mother as she left him when he was only a few hours into this world. Sonto as well didn't know Sakhile, not even his name. When they got to her she greeted first. "Hello, I don't know if am at the right place but am looking for the Ndlovu household." Sonto nervously asked. "This is the Ndlovu household, how can we help you?" Asked Sakhile.

"My name is Nomasonto, I am the daughter of this house." She said and Sakhile froze looking at her. "Um would you like to come in mah? I can help with your bags." Zola spoke up when he saw that his friend was frozen, when she mentioned her name Zola knew that she was his mother. "I would like that, I have more things in the boot if you would help with that as well." She said then went to the back of the car and opened the boot with Zola following behind. Sakhile was still frozen in place not saying anything and just looking at the two.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 15

Zola helped Nomasonto take out the stuff in the boot then started taking it into the house while Sakhile was standing in the same spot not moving just watching them. When Zola took the last of the stuff Nomasonto closed the car. Right now she was anxious to go inside and see her mother. She didn't hear her voice when Zola kept on taking the stuff inside, she wondered if she was already asleep but if she remembered correctly her mother never slept early. She concluded that old age might be the cause, Zola came out while she was taking his phone sms handbag on the passenger seat. "It was nice to meet you mah but I must go home now." Zola said to her, Sonto froze a bit looking at him as she thought that he was her son and now

that he says that he is leaving then that meant that the one that has not said anything might be her son. She looked at him but could not make out his facial features as it was dark and that made her swallow hard. "Thank you for helping me, come back in the morning and I will give you something." She told her and Zola nodded.

"I will see you tomorrow" Sakhile nodded.

"Are we going to town tomorrow?" Asked Zola. "What will stop us from going? We have milk to sell, don't we?" His friend stiffened cringing. "I will see you tomorrow then." He said then left, there was awkwardness now that he left, no one spoke but Sakhile left her there and went inside with Sonto followed behind. She looked around but did

not see her mother. "Where is my mother?" She finally asked when Sakhile ignored her and was busy fixing his blankets to sleep. "Backyard." Answers Sakhile without even looking at her. Sonto walked out and went around the bed to check on her mother, she thought that she was working on a garden maybe as she used to love gardening when she was growing up. But when she got there she did not see her mother, she rounded the house but there was no sign of her. She went back inside. "She is not there." She said "oh believe me she is." Said Sakhile getting into his blankets and settling down. His behavior frustrated Sonto, "can you please stop playing around and tell me where she is?" She said to Sakhile who was now laying on his

back looking at the ceiling. "My mother is in the backyard laying peacefully in her grave and not sure what else you want me to tell you." He said then turned his back on her and closed his eyes. Sonto's knees got weak and couldn't not carry her body as she fell on her knees on the floor shaking. After the shaking for a while sobs started, Sakhile was annoyed by the noise she was making. "You know, some of us have to wake up early tomorrow and work. Right now that noise you are making it not helping at all, do you mind keeping it down? I know she was your mother whatever that meant for you but can you do the crying when tomorrow morning after I leave? Also you must be tired and since this is your home as you said that you are the daughter of this

household. How about you fix yourself a place to sleep and hold all the noise and tears for when am gone. Deal?" He said all that without even turning to look at her.

The authority and anger in his voice reminds Sonto of the night she told his father that she was pregnant. The man didn't shout at her or even raise his voice or change his facial expression but his voice was cold as ice and it froze her bones just like his sons voice just did now. If she never went through that experience with his father, she would have thought that he was calm but she knew better. She knew then that her son was more like his father. She stood up and looked around the room. She saw her mother's trunk and went to it then opened it. Her mother's

clothes were neatly folded inside and she cried silently looking at them. She closed it and looked on the other side. There was a thin mattress folded with a thin blanket on top of it and she knew that is where her mother used to sleep.

She went to it and unfolded it. She fixed a place for herself to sleep then went to her bag and took out her warm pjs and worked them then laid on the mattress. She would have loved a bath but she did not have the energy to connect the gas stove so she laid there crying silently for her mother. She didn't know when she fell asleep but she was woken up by a door opening and she lifted her head. Sakhile was taking out the crates and he was already fully dressed. His friend

from the previous night was helping him, she recalled that they mentioned going to town to sell milk. She sat up and spoke before they closed the door. "I can take you to town, I have something's to buy in town anyway." She offered. "No thank you we will take a bus." Sakhile declined. "Please, we are going to the same place and wouldn't make sense that you take a bus when I can drive you." She told them.

"We won't have to stand the whole way to town." Zola said and Sakhile nodded. Sonto stood up quickly and changed her clothes while the two stood outside. She throw on what was in front of her and wore her sleepers and walked out with her bag and car keys. "Let's go, I will open the boot so that you can put

your crates in there." She told them as she went to open the boot. Sakhile and Zola carried the crates and pack them then both got into the back seat. No one spoke as she started driving.

By seven she was already in town since she didn't have to stop anywhere like a bus would. "I will do some shopping, do you want me to wait for you when am done?" She asked. "No need." Said Sakhile and she nodded. They took out their crates and left after Zola thanked her for the ride.

Sonto sat in the car waiting for the shops to open. She took out her phone and called Sindi as she waited. It was like she was waiting for her call as she picked up immediately.

"Sonto." She answered. "My mother is gone

Sindi and my son who's name I still don't know won't even look at me." She cried, Sindiswa's heart broke for her friend. "Do you need me there?" She asked after swallowing the lump on her throat. "No, I have to fix this myself." She told her trying to compose herself.

"Where are you now?" Asked Sindi "Am in town, I just dropped my son and his friend off. His selling milk here on town Sindi, he did t even want to ride with me, he wanted to take a bus and he would have if his friend didn't convince him." Her voice broke at the end.

Sindi cursed herself for letting her go alone. She thought that things will be well as long as she went and she was regretting not going with her. "Okay do some shopping and get

your mind off things am sure there things that are needed at home." She suggested "that's the plan, the shops are opening now, let me go and I will call you later." She told her friend and she cut the call after getting more words of comfort from her friend. She got out of the car and went to the furniture shop and bought two beds, couches, a cupboard, and a wardrobe. She then paid extra for delivery to be made today. She then went to the hardware stop and bought poles and wire for fencing. She brought a carpet and a whole lot of household items. Those were all the things she wished she could have done while her mother was still alive.

When she was done she went back the furniture shop and her stuff was already loaded and ready to be transported. She asked them to follow her as she led the way to her home, she was driving fast on the way, she wanted to get there sort everything out before her son got back. The time was around 12 noon when she got back. People were out and about when she got back.

Neighbors came to see who it was bringing all those things there, the delivery guys were offloading when two of the village middle aged women came. "Ha! Nomasonto!"

Exclaimed one of the women. "Phindi?" She questioned, Phindiwe was her friend growing up, the same one she gave Sakhile to give to her mother when she left.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 16

Phindiwe nodded her head. "Yes it's me, of my God Sonto!" Phindiwe cried throwing herself at her friend and cried. She always felt guilty when she left and thought that something has happened to her when years went by with no word from her. "I thought you died Sonto, I stopped visiting your son because every time I saw him I felt guilty like I way the one that separated him from his mother." She cried more. "Am so sorry I put you through that Phindiwe please forgive me." She could not stop her own tears from flowing. "Look let's talk after I get all this

inside and I need someone to help me cement this house and finish it by later today and tomorrow I need someone to do the fence and some people to rebuild that house." She told her friend. "Okay I understand, my husband is a builder I can ask him and the eight guys he usually work with to help. That is if you are paying phela siyahlupheka lana (we are struggling here.)" Phindiwe admitted feeling a bit ashamed, she and Sonto used to have big dreams but she never got to leave this place and never got to fulfill any of her dreams.

"Of course am paying and I can pay you too if you could help me clean this place and get everything sorted inside." She asked her with a smile. "I will go and get you two people

to cement the house and they will do the painting tomorrow. I am Noma by the way." Said the other woman who was with Phindiwe. Sonto smiled and thanked her and she left in a hurry. Phindiwe and Sonto went into the house. "I will clean the outside and you do the inside. That way we will finish quicker." Phi ding suggested as she took a shovel, Sonto agreed and they started cleaning. Not long after they started Noma arrived with the two men and they were already pushing wheelbarrows full of sand. Sonto liked how efficient Noma was, she helped the guys at the back while Sonto did the inside. Around 4 in the evening Sonto was done with the inside and everything was in its place and the beds were made nicely.

She connected the gas stove and started cooking. She was thinking of her son, when she thought of him he thought of the fact that she didn't even know his name. She went outside and Phindiwe was collecting all the dirt. "Ngiyabonga Phindiwe." (Thank you Phindiwe) she thanked her. "Not a problem, I will be here tomorrow as well to help you out and bring my husband and the men to start with building." She told her. "Thank you, the building material should be here by 9 in the morning." She told her and Phindiwe nodded. "We will get to talk tomorrow about everything but I wanted to ask you something." She looked at her feet playing with her fingers. Phindiwe chuckled remembering how she used to act exactly

like this when she was nervous growing up. "I wonder why are so nervous, your actions remind me of when we were growing up, you used to act exactly like this." Phindiwe said laugh making Sonto relax. "Don't remind me, I wanted to ask you what my mother named my son, he wouldn't even talk to me last night when I arrived." Phindiwe sighed. "She named him Sakhile." She told her. "Sakhile." Sonto liked the name and how it rolled out of her tongue. "Let me go check on the pots, please stay and eat with everyone that is working here. You also can take some for your husband because it's late to cook now." Sonto offered and her friend agreed. Sonto went back and finished cooking while the men finished up. She took out the plates she

bought to dish out for everyone, they ate and the men promised to come back in the morning and help with the cleaning of the place where the other house was. She paid them and when they were leaving Sakhile and Zola were getting into the gate.

They greeted everyone as they came in while they walked out. Zola greeted while Sakhile went to put the crates away. "Wow mah this place looks beautiful, Yhoo it looks even better than the shop owners house." Zola was in awe looking around the house, the couches that took the space, the kitchen cupboards, the wardrobe and the beds standing next to each other covered in beautiful bedding. Sakhile's was covered in navy blue bedding while Sonto's was with an off white bedding

with all the pillows making the beds look like the ones Zola only saw in magazines in town. "Thank you, please sit and I will dish for you bath." Zola was more than eager to agree, the smell of the food filled the whole house and he could tell that it was good. Sakhile came on and looked around. He was amazed but did not say anything, he joined his friend on the couch and sat. Sonto dished for them and placed their plates in front of them then went and poured juice for them.

Then went to sit on her bed as they ate.

"Yhoo mah I have never eaten food like this before, we only see food like this on tv at the shop in the corner." Zola complimented as he ate, Sonto looked at Sakhile but he kept quiet and ate. "Thank you." Sonto

thanked her then went to the stove and switched it off as the water she boiled for him to bath was ready. When Zola finished eating he left, Sonto washed the dishes then put them in their places.

"I will be in the car while you bath." She told him but got no response from Sakhile, she left and Sakhile bathed then went to the wardrobe. He saw that one side had his mother's clothes hanging and others packed. He also saw that other shelves have men's clothing, he looked for his normal clothes but could not find them, he wore his shorts and stood at the door staring at the car. Sonto saw him and got out. She went closer to him. "Where are my clothes?" He asked. "I threw the only one away they were broken and

shaded. In the third and last shelve you will find clothes I bought for you in there. Your pjs are hanging on the other side." She told him nervously. Sakhile glared at her. "Those were my clothes ones that my mother bought for me and you had no right to throw them away without talking to me first. I get this is your home and you can do all this but me and whatever I own is off limits. I have no relation with you so stay in your line." Sakhile told her coldly then moved away from the door.

Sonto wanted to cry but she held herself and went into the house. She was tired after a whole days work, so she took her pjs and went to change in the car then went back into the house and found Sakhile wearing his

pjs standing in front of the bed. She didn't the cold look in his eyes like he hated the bed. She sat on her bed and looked at him. "Can we talk?" She asked "We have nothing to talk about." He said then took the big pillows off the bed putting them on the couch. "Please Sakhile, I..." Sakhile cut her short. "Is that the name you gave me before you dumped me? Did you even give me a name?" He asked making Sonto swallow a lump on her throat that continued to grow. "I never gave you a name but please give me a chance to explain." She pleaded. "If you had sent your mother and I money for food every month even if you didn't come back then I would give you a chance to explain but you never did that so you and I don't have

anything to talk about. Uma suffered with me while you were out there doing God knows what. So please don't bother me." He told her then got into bed and closed his eyes. 'Oh, mah I wish you were here to deal with your daughter because I can't, I really can't she just makes me so angry, I don't know her mah and I have nothing to say to her. You died without seeing her, you know her and I don't. You deserved to see her and talk to her more than I do. I don't need her but I know that you did.' He spoke in his heart before he closed his eyes and slept. www.ebookcat.com

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 17

Khulekani arrived home that evening but was too tired to go find his brother for a talk but on the way he had already made arrangements to go back to Sonto's place today. When he woke up in the morning he showered then met his brother for breakfast. "Bafo, I didn't hear you come in last night." Makhosini greeted his brother warmly. "I was too tired and I thought we will meet today, how did the meeting with your wives go?" He asked making his brother sigh. "Mancwane was the most hurt of them all, you know that she has been eying the position of Queen since she is the first wife but now that she won't get it she is hurt. The only others I think they just didn't like the

fact that another person woman is coming and she is going to be above them." Makhosini told him.

"You are wrong when you say Mancwane is the first wife, she is not and never will be. Mandlovu is your one and only wife that the Zungu ancestors chose for you. I want you to make that clear to your wives or they are will bother the queen a lot and am afraid that will anger the ancestors even more, we don't want anymore problems with them. Also your other wives are not only angry about another woman coming but about the fact that she is the one that gave you a son when they couldn't. When your son comes home you better take him to Sibiya for protection, am sorry to say this but I don't trust your wives, women are cruel and

resentful brother you are to be careful. You don't have a another son and if you lose this one then we might as well forget about the throne." Khulani told him stressing his brother even more. "I don't get how I could have been so stupid, look at all the danger I am about to put my son to. I knew that none of our grandfathers and even our father had more than one wife but I went and got me four." Makhosini said. "Five brother it's five wives and no I don't see the others as your wives only mere help to the true queen. Don't get me wrong I have always respected them as your wives but now my loyalty lies on the true queen just like I was taught by our uncle. You know that he was close to our mother to a point that others even thought that there was something

going on between them. He told me that is the way it's supposed to be, that my loyalty should be with you and the Queen but mostly the Queen since you also have the elite team. To be honest you having four wives has made my job difficult which is why I have not been close to any of your wives." Khulekani told him.

"Am sorry that I have made your job difficult brother." Makhosini apologized to his brother. "It's not a problem everyone knows that it's the stupid ones that end up being king and us the brains of the family have to be working hard to shield their stupid asses." Khulekani said with a playful smirk. "Ngisawubuti wakho njalo Khulekani ngizokugidliza wena. (I am still your older brother Khulekani I will beat you up.)"

Khulekani chuckles. "Hawu bafo ngiyadlala nje." (But brother am only joking) said Khulekani trying hard not to laugh making Makhosini click his tongue. "You know what let's go." He told him getting up from his seat. "But am still eating." Khulekani whined. "If you know how to joke then that means you can go hungry for a day no problem." Makhosini said and left the room.

"Ukhohlakele losathene lo." (His so cruel this devil) Khulekani mumbled as he followed his brother behind still eating. He met a maiden on his way out and gave her the plate then went to join his brother in the car. The wives were standing on their side of yard looking at them getting into the cars and leaving. The Royal house was big and separated four

times. The middle was the throne room where the king always is, that is separated by half walls and to the right is the kings chamber first where he sleeps and next to it is a queens chamber where all the queens of the land stayed. That was all there was to the royal house until Makhosini married Mancwane and Sibiya the seer didn't want to crown her as queen, Makhosini had no choice but to build the first house on the left side of the throne room also separated by half a wall. That is Mancwane's house then when he got the second and the third he built them houses that side as well. But their houses were not separated by walls, it was just one big yard with four two storey houses.

"I hope they are not going to get that woman it's too soon and we need time to adjust." The second wife Mandaba says looking at the directions where the cars have disappeared. "I hope so too, to be honest am more concerned about our daughter's and how they will get along with their elder brother." The third wife MaZulu says. "I don't care about that because if he even tries I will show him what am made of together with his mother. They can't just come here and change things." Mancwane said look bitter. "But she does have the right to change whatever she wants here, she will be the queen of the land after all." The youngest wife MaZondi says but earned herself a glare from the three. "If you want to be friends with her tell us

now." Mancwane said glaring at her.

"Mancwane what will be the point of fighting her? Makhosini won't chase her away because we don't like her, she is his rightful queen and the one that have his a son. Who are we to stand in the way of the Zungu ancestors?" MaZondi asked.

"Am done with this as you all can see MaZondi here has chosen a side." Mancwane said glaring at MaZondi who only shook her head without saying anything. "You forget quickly MaZondi we have been here for you since you arrived and now you are choosing an outsider over us?" Mandaba the second wife says. "Let her be, but she will regret it."

MaZulu threatens. Mancwane just glared at MaZondi before going into her house and the

others followed suit. MaZondi looked at them and shook her head. "If only they could put their emotions aside and see things for what they truly are. Our husband will not take it lightly if we do something to his true queen. But then who am I to say anything? Am only the youngest wife here." She spoke alone looking between the three houses before going into her own house.

Their daughters were all in prestigious boarding schools around the country none of them were except the new born who is only four months old now and is MaZondi's child. The others only come home when there is something happening or when it's holidays other than that, there were never home and their father was glad for that.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 18

Sonto and her friend Phindiwe were busy cooking lunch for the men that were building and others make a fence around the yard when the convoy of vehicles appeared. They were inside so they did not see the cars but the men outside saw them. One of them went into the house to inform Sonto. "There are fancy cars that just stopped outside the gate." The man told her, at first she thought that her friend Sindiswa is the one that came but she scratched that thought when she thought about what the man said. He didn't say a car he said cars. "I will go and check who it is." Said Sonto wiping her hand

with a dish towel. When she got out of the house she didn't recognize the cars but one man in one of those cars recognized her.

"Gods of the Zungu kingdom my chosen wife is more beautiful than I remember her to be." Makhosini exclaimed looking like he was talking to no one in particular but his brother was there next to him and could not deny the beauty of his brothers queen. His mouth got dry as he tried to say something, he opened his mouth and closed it because no words came out. He recovered quickly though and got out of the car. He straightened his suit jacket and took another glance at her before peaking into the car. "You can't get cold feet now brother." Makhosini swallowed hard, he has never felt this way about any of his

current wives, none of them made him speechless and his mouth dry. Or get his heart booming in his chest as if it's going to come out.

After what felt like a decade he snapped out of it and first asked his brother. "Do I look alright?" Khulekani raised an eyebrow as his brother, the man never cared what he looked like, the Zungu men went were handsome and no one could dispute that. When people hear of king Makhosini Zungu the first picture they drew in their mind was that of an old man with a pot belly but Makhosini was far from it. He was old now yes but he had the abs of a twenty year old and only his beard that is white and a few white hairs on his head would tell you that he has lived some

years. "I never thought I would see the day my brother underestimates his looks and I think the queen and I will have talk while you compose yourself." He chuckled then closed the car door and went to where Sonto stood. Gods! He could act around his brother but now his heart was beating like an African drum in his chest and his hands were starting to get sweaty. "Hello there how are you?" His voice came out softer than he intended to a point that he cleared his throat. "Hello, am well thank you for asking and yourself?" Sonto greeted him back. "My name is Khulekani Zungu I came here with my brother." Sonto only heard that he was Khulekani Zungu and after that she heard nothing. She could see his lips moving but

could not heard what he was saying. His heart was beating a thousand times a minute, well at least that's what she thought. Finally the car door open and Makhosini stepped out. He then turned and looked at her. Their eyes locked and Sonto shook her head. "No" that came out as a whisper from Sonto. "No." She said a little louder this time as Makhosini came closer. "No!" She said now tears streaming down her cheeks, Makhosini halted in his steps and stopped looking at her with so much pain in his eyes. Khulekani was not far off, he wanted nothing than to pull the woman into his arms and comfort her. Her tears hurt him for some reason. 'Get it together Khulekani! She is your brothers wife!' He reprimanded himself internally. "I

see that it's busy here, why don't we go somewhere so that the two of you can talk."

Suggested Khulekani but Sonto shook her head. "I have nothing to talk to this man about, please leave." She said looking at Makhosini. "My dream please." Makhosini pleaded and alone shocked his brother. He has never heard him speak this way or call any of his wife with a pet name. What possessed him? He wondered

"No! You don't get to call me that not after everything that happened." Sonto said firmly looking at Makhosini, he took another step closer but she held out her hand and stopped him. "Don't come any closer, please." She sounded so broken when she said that making both brother wince. For some reason she had

that effect on them. "Brother please go wait in the car." Makhosini looked at his brother and he gave him a nod. With a heavy heart he turned around and walked back to the car. He was more hurt than angry and he didn't understand why it hurt so much to be rejected by her. "Can we talk a walk so that you can calm down? Am sure you don't want to walk in there looking like that." He offered and Sonto nodded. She knew that Phindiwe would want to know what the problem is if she walked in there like that and she wasn't that close to her anymore and she was not comfortable talking about this with her. Yes they were childhood friends but a lot has changed since then and she just

came back. She doesn't know the kind of person Phindiwe was anymore.

She and Khulekani walked out the gate and took a walk toward the woods at the back of her house. No one spoke as they walked until they were close the river, Sonto breath in the fresh air and walked forward. They came to view of the river and a small smile appeared on her face. She remembered coming here as a child, playing in the river and her mother will scold her when she got home all wet. "He used to call me his dream come true, he used to say Sonto you are my dream literally and I would smile and laugh at him because that to me sounded stupid. He told me that he dreamt of me a few weeks before we met but I never believed that. I

thought that he was just another boy trying to steal my heart and he did. I left a boy that loved me and treated me well for him. There was just something about him you know. A pull between us, something t that kept drawing me towards him. Since I met him and rejected him the first time I could not stop thinking about him." She sight as Khulekani listened.

"And when I was with him it felt like home, like I belong to him, like he was made just for me, I know they say that soulmate don't exist but your brother felt like another half of me that I didn't even know was missing and when he came into my life I felt whole again. Am not sure if am making any sense." She briefly looked at Khulekani. "You are

making perfect sense." He assured her but for only one reason. Because that's how he felt about her, she made him nervous and excited at the same time but he knew that it was forbidden. "And then when I told him that I was pregnant he had the audacity to tell me that he wasn't the only one, that my other boyfriend might have made me pregnant. He said that to me knowing very well that I had broken up with that guy when I got together with him. But he still denied me, I begged him you know" she laughed at her bribe younger self.

"I knelt before him and begged him like he was a king. You know what he did?" She turned to look at Khulekani again with her eyes blood shot red and he shook his head no. "He turned

and walked away. That night I saw my dream fading, my soulmate leaving me and my heart shuttering. I swear I felt it break into a million pieces right inside my chest and I couldn't do anything to stop it from breaking or mend it. He was the one who had a glue to mend it and make it alright. But he left me to fend for myself, for months I was depressed and I don't even know how I passed my matric." She might think of how she used to hide from her mother when she took a bath so that she doesn't see that she was pregnant. "After finishing my exams I was already seven months pregnant and I lied to my mother about a school trip to Cape Town where all matriculants had to pay 600 to go. My mother gave me the money and I stayed at my friends

place for 3 more months till I gave birth and I stayed another 3 weeks until I recovered then asked her to bring my son to my mother and then I hit hiked wanting to get as far away from here as possible and I did. I ended up in Joburg and only came back home a day ago, my son resents me and my mother is dead. I have been scared to come home since then and when I find the courage to do so, I find my mother dead and my son wanting nothing to do with me. Not even an explanation, I don't want to talk to your brother Khulekani I am not ready." She told him and he nodded. "We will leave and come back after three days. I know that is not enough time but you have to talk to him sooner or later." Khulekani told her. "Do I have to? Because I don't want to and I have

nothing to talk to him about." Khulekani sighed "am afraid it's not that easy, talk to him and hear what he has to say." He told her then got turned around and left but with a heavy heart. He didn't want to leave her, he wanted to comfort her and tell her that everything is going to be okay but he acknowledged that was not his place but his brothers place to do so.

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Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 19 (I did not edit)

When he got back to the car that day Makhosini asked him what they talked about but Khulekani would not tell him. He made it clear to his brother that he was not going to share what the future Queen had told him and break her trust. Of course Makhosini was angry but understood at the same time, he was angry that he had to wait for three days to go back and talk to her.

The days have passed and they were getting ready to go back but Khulekani thought of calling the seer first, the way he was feeling whenever he was close to the Queen made him nervous and he wanted someone to talk to about that. He called a maiden at the palace to take the phone to him and soon his voice was heard on the other side.

"Khulekani" answers the seer. "Am sorry to disturb you with phone calls but I have something bothering me." Khulekani said. "I know that." The seer said. "What do you know?" Asked Khulekani. "That you want to ask about what you feel for the queen." Khulekani was speechless and didn't know what to say. "There is no need to be ashamed Khulekani, this happened to your uncle and your great uncle before that. What am trying to say is that it is normal, that woman was made for a Zungu prince and you are one as well. But for you what you are feeling is a bond that will let you know whenever she is hurt and needs you or whenever she is in danger you will feel it first because that is how the two of you are connected. She is not

meant to love you but your bond is that of a protector to her." The seer explained. "Is that why it hurt seeing her cry and hurting like that?" Asked Khulekani. "Yes, your bond is special Khulekani as much as Makhosini is her husband and soulmate he can not feel her pain like you will. The feelings you will have for her is the need to keep her safe and protected even from your brother. Her interests to you will come first before anyone and your brother has that with his elites that were selected by the gods to protect him." The seer explained and Khulekani sighed in relief. That's exactly how he felt when she was crying, he wanted to take her into his arms and comfort her. It also hurt to see her crying and hurting that

way. "Thank you for explaining seer, I was worried that I am developing feelings for my brothers wife but I have a question though, why didn't I feel her pain all these years?" He asked, if they were connected then why? "That is because the bond was not active and that is because the two of you had not met but as soon as you two met the bond activated and that is why you felt the way that you did. Am done talking now, bring the Queen home soon." The seer gave the phone to the maiden without even cutting the call. Khulekani shook his head looking at the phone, he was relieved by what the seer said, he could not imagine a life where him and his brother were fighting over a woman. The queen is beautiful yes but she was not his but

his brothers. There was a knock on the door and opened. On the other side stood Makhosini and Khulekani laughed when he saw him. "Jesus! Why didn't the Queen come into your life sooner? I didn't know you can dress this way brother but damn! You look like the younger version of yourself." He teased his brother. "We have no time for this nonsense Khulekani let's go." He said turning and leaving with Khulekani on his tail. "You say that now huh? Okay but don't ask me how you look when we get there." Khulekani continued to tease his brother but Makhosini ignored him walking to the car up front. The doors were already opened by the guards when he got then and slides inside with Khulekani getting into the other side.

"I didn't even get to eat! But no worries I will ask the queen for food." Makhosini looked at his brother like he grew a pair of horns.

"Khulekani Zungu, how well do you know her for you to be asking for food?" Asked his brother shocked by how shameless his brother was. "Technically I have known her forever like if the ancestors chose her for you then I have known her just as long, besides we are friends now and we talk.

Unlike some people I know." Khulekani said making Makhosini squint his eyes looking at him, he was really shameless, how could he?

"You are shameless." Makhosini said making Khulekani grin. "Thank you, my king." He teased and bowed a little. Makhosini saw that he was not going to go anywhere with

Khulekani and decided to just let him be. Soon they were parking outside the gate and they could see the building of the house coming along nicely. Khulekani was the first out of the car leaving his brother behind heading straight to the house and knocked when he got to the door.

Sonto was alone and had just finished cleaning. She turned and saw him then smiled. "Good morning Khulekani." She greeted him politely. "Good morning my Queen, but mine is not a very good morning am afraid." He told her with a straight face. "What happened?" Asked Sonto looking worried. "My brother decided it was a good idea for us to leave without giving me a chance to have breakfast and now am

hungry." Said Khulekani. "Unbelievable!" Said Makhosini standing by the door and Khulekani winked at him. "I will make you some breakfast." Sonto offered and Khulekani had the biggest smile on his face looking at his brother. "You don't have to do that Khulekani can sort himself out, he is a grown man."

Makhosini said glaring at Khulekani but Sonto only glared at him but did not answer.

Sonto made him omelette with peppers, Small cut Vienna's and cheese. Then cut some of the bread she baked and placed it on a plate.

"How do you like your coffee?" She asked Khulekani. "Strong and black with two sugars" he told her and Sonto nodded and made the coffee. She placed everything on a tray then placed it in front of Khulekani. "Thank you my

Queen." Said Khulekani. "It's nothing and please stop calling me that." She told him. "But you are my Queen or didn't you know that my brother here was of royal blood?" Asked Khulekani making Sonto glare at him, she didn't know and they didn't know each other that well for them to share such things. "Interesting! And no I didn't know but I think I know why you are here now if you are from a royal family. You want my son is that right MK?" Khulekani choked on his coffee and started coughing uncontrollably. "MK?" He questioned looking at his brother with a small smile playing on his lips. "Shut up Khulekani, in fact eat and leave so that we can talk." Makhosini reprimanded making Khulekani chuckle. "No, he is not going

anywhere, I feel more comfortable when he is here. So say what you want and leave."

Sonto told him making Makhosini glare at his brother who was smiling behind the cup of coffee. He cleared his throat before he spoke. "He is not the only reason I came, I came because I was told that you are the true queen on my kingdom and our son will be the next king." Makhosini said. "Did you just say "our"?" Makhosini shifted on his seat uncomfortably. "Yes that's what I said." He confirmed and Sonto nodded. "How is he ours now when he was mine when I was pregnant?" She asked making Makhosini swallow hard. "I was young and stupid back then Sonto and I was scared of what my father would say." He told her. "Oh so I wasn't scared of what my

mother would say coming back home pregnant? Because it doesn't show from you men when you have made someone pregnant you are able to hide it, yet with us even a fool can see you and you left me through all that. Do you know what I did after I gave birth?" She asked now almost in a whisper. Makhosini shook his head. "I gave him to my friend to give him to my mother and I ran. I ran and never looked back until a few days ago when I came back. My Mother was dead and I couldn't apologize to her for what I had done. My son who I didn't even name before I left hates me, I can see from the way he looks at me that he resents me. So that's how it is MK, we both fucked up our child." Khulekani could not hold his

laughter when the queen swore, no one had ever spoke. To his brother like that and now the queen just didn't without even caring that he was a king. "Shut up Khulekani!" Makhosini reprimanded his brother. "Am sorry." He apologized but could not stop the chuckle that escaped his mouth when he looked at Sonto. He thought his brother has met his match indeed. "I know that we have and am sure that he hates me too but am here now for the both of you." Makhosini said. "Why would you be here for me?" She asked him with a raised eyebrow. "Because you are my chosen queen, I was not telling lies when I told you that I dreamt of you when we met and it turns out that you are the woman the Zungu ancestors chose as my

queen. I only heard about it recently from the seer and I sent my brother here to go looking for you. We came here first but there was no one at home." He told her. "Tell me something, we're there no women you can marry instead of coming after the one you used and left?" She asked him, Khulekani didn't like it when she said she was used, for some reason that didn't sit well with him. "Am sorry Sonto." He apologized. "Answer the question MK." She said with a stern voice. "If what you are asking is if I am married then the answer Is yes." He answered, for some reason he didn't want to tell her that he was married, he wished at that moment if things could be different. "If you are married then what do you want with

me? I have a life and a job in Joburg. I don't need you." She told him and his heart sank. "Sonto, I know that you have made a life for yourself but please, I can't go back without you the Zungu ancestors will punish me even more than they already have." He begged. "Oh that is interesting, so still you coming here is for your own gain. What have your ancestors done to punish you because I don't see anything wrong with you?" She asked with a raised eyebrow. "They gave me only girls, I have no son to take over the throne only our son." He told her and she laughed bitterly. "That is no punishment at all! So what if they gave you only girls? Are they not children huh? You have no idea what I have been through and I am afraid with my

past. I will never be your queen, your ancestors if they really chose me then they must know what I had done to survive after leaving home. I can not be your queen, one of your wives will have to do." She told him making them both wonder what she has done "What have you done that is so bad for you to think that you are not worthy?" Asked Makhosini. "Am afraid it's none of your business, now please leave we are done here and I don't know how you are going to meet Sakhile and talk to him because he leave early in the morning and comes back late in the evening. As for me, For get I ever existed. Now leave." She told them and the brothers stood up and left. She cried after they left think about the

life she had to live in Joburg and how she could have lived a better life if Makhosini had taken responsibility for their child.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 20

"Find out everything you can about her life in Joburg." Makhosini instructed as soon as they got into the car. "What are you going to do after you find out?" Asked Khulekani with a raised eyebrow. "I will use that to convince her to come home with me, whatever she did Khulekani was because of me, am also to blame for whatever she did, if I had been there for her then she wouldn't have done whatever it is that she did." Makhosini told his brother determined. Before Khulekani could take out his phone to get to work it

rang in his pocket. He took it out and answered. "My prince the seer wants to talk to the both of you." A maidens voice came from the other side, Khulekani put the phone on speaker. "We are listening." Said Khulekani and his brother looked at him.

"Makhosini the gods just showed me something, their anger has exceeded and the only thing that will appease them now is for you to bring their queen home." He told them. "What will happen if we don't manage to convince her to come home with us? Because she is not willing." Khulekani asked. "Then all of your brother's children will die, Makhosini was not punished by the gods but was blessed with daughters and now if he doesn't get their queen home, then he must be ready

to bury a child every week. You have three days." The call was cut.

The two brothers looked at each other. "If we are honest without putting feelings into it. I understand why the gods would decide to take your children." Khulekani said. "Tell me about it brother because I fail to understand why they would do that."

Makhosini said with a gloomy expression.

"Because they were not supposed to be there to begin with, the queen was the one that was supposed to bare all your children but she wasn't so now if you can't give them what they want then they will take what they gave you back." Makhosini listened to what his brother said and now he was more than eager to find a way to get his Queen home. He took

out his phone and made a call himself. Soon the call was connected. "My king." The latter answered. "We are friends, I don't need you calling me that like you are one of my subjects." Makhosini said and the latter chuckled. "What can I do for you my friend?" He asked making Makhosini sigh on the other side. "I will send you a name and I want you to find everything you can about that person starting from 24 years ago in Joburg around Soweto or Randburg and am sorry to rush you but I need that information by tonight. It is a matter of life and death." Makhosini told the latter.

"I will get you everything you need by tonight." The latter said then dropped the call. No one said anything as they drove back

to the BnB they were staying in, this was still going to be their home until the queen was ready to go home. Makhosini didn't want to set food in the palace without her, he didn't want to risk losing one of his daughters because he didn't listen. Khulekani made his own calls to his own contacts to help with getting the information they needed.

"Sakhile" Makhosini said his son's name making his brother look at him. "What about him?" Asked Khulekani. "His grandmother named him well, prince Sakhile Zungu future king of the Zungu kingdom. It's sounded fitting." He said with pride. "We have to do something to say thank you to that woman for raising him for us." Khulekani told him. "I think we should get her a thumb-stone but

after we have sorted out all of this."

Makhosini said and his brother nodded.

It felt like hours went not moving for

Makhosini while his brother went for dinner

he declined and kept looking at his phone but

no word yet. At around eight in the evening

his phone rang just after Khulekani's pinged a

message. Khulekani looked at his own phone

then took out his laptop, Makhosini was told

that the information was sent to his email

and the call was dropped. He took out his own

laptop and fired it up. Soon it was on and he

was going to his email. He opened the one he

just got and saw a lot of videos and another

attachment. "Come here." He called his

brother, he was scared to open the videos

that were attached, Khulekani looked at him

then he pointed at the laptop sitting on the bed. He understood and went to his brother's laptop then clicked on one of the videos and soon two women could be seen on the screen. They are wearing short dresses with high heels. The quality of the video was not so good and it was short. Then Khulekani clicked on another.

After watching the videos and reading the medical records everything was clear what Sonto was doing. "Oh gods of the Zungu clan. What have I done to my queen, it's my fault Khulekani, I did this to her, did you see how thick that medical report is? Every week two of three times she would be admitted to the hospital, if not that then she would be in for bruises and broken bones. I did that to her

Khulekani, no wonder the gods want to take my kids from me, I literally killed their queen as they watched, I made her suffer for years and she was right. I am selfish, I was living the life while she did that every day trying to survive because of me. If she had not met me then she wouldn't have had to leave her home and go through that."

Makhosini looked like he was going to cry, he was hurt by what he found out. "I know brother, this is the time for you to make things right and treat her like the queen she is." Khulekani said his brother took his jacket and wore it and that confused Khulekani.

"Where are you going?" He asked. "To my woman, I will sleep in the car if I have to and I will stay at her gate and stave if I have to

but am never letting her out of my sight again." Makhosini said and got out of the room.

"Oh boy! The Queen really has made him crazy and I can imagine the headlines if the reporters could get hold of this. 'The great king Makhosini Zungu has gone mad trying to get his queen home' that would be hilarious." Khulekani said thinking out loud then went out to join his brother in the car. Soon they were on the road again, the time was just after ten at night but Makhosini did not care. The drive back was a silent one, Khulekani admired the queen even more for getting out of that life and making something of herself. The road was empty as there are not many cars that go to the rural areas and

soon they were parked outside the house.

The Lights were off and Makhosini sighed in relief. "What are you hoping to gain by doing this?" Asked his brother. "My queen's forgiveness and meet my son for the first time." Makhosini answered.

Khulekani was also eager to meet his nephew so he did not mind. "Well then, let's get comfortable because it's going to be a long night." He said pushed his seat back and closing his eyes.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 21

In the morning Zola went passed the car and into the gate. He knocked on the door and Sakhile opened. "Why didn't you tell my that you were buying cars?" He asked making

Sakhile raise his eyebrow. "What are you talking about?" He asked and Zola stepped aside for him to look. Sakhile saw the cars and he didn't know who they belong to. "I don't know these cars maybe the daughter of the house knows, wake her up and tell her. You two seem to get along just fine." Told his friend as he moved out of the way for him to go inside as he stood out there looking at the cars. Soon Sonto joined his and she recognized the cars. "That's your father." He told Sakhile who frowned upon hearing that. "In case you don't know I don't have a father or a mother only a grandmother and she is back there laying six feet underground." He told her then went inside to finish getting

dressed. Sonto went to the car and knocked on the window waking up the brothers.

Khulekani lowered the window and greeted.

"My Queen good morning." He greeted.

"Morning Khulekani I would asked what you are doing here this early but it seems like you slept here.

Sakhile is about to leave if you wanted to talk to him it will have to be now." He told Then and Makhosini was now fully awake getting out of the car following Sonto inside. Just as Sakhile and Zola were about to head out. Makhosini looked at his son and Sakhile was a splitting imagine of Khulekani one would say that he was his son instead of Makhosini but Sakhile had his father's intimidation aura. "There is no need to ask questions

brother this here is a Zungu heir." Khulekani said looking at a younger version of himself. "Zungu, Gwabini, Manzini, Sengwayo, Geda, Ncwane, Nyama kayishi, ishangababhebhezeli, Wena owaphuma ngenoni emgodini, Sengwayo!" Thunder roared outside and lightning stoked right in front of the door as Makhosini finished praising his son with his clan names. Zola was shocked, Khulekani had a proud smile on his face sleep long forgotten, Sonto standing behind Makhosini shocked by what just happened and Sakhile looked bored. "Are you done? I have a bus to catch." He said looking at Makhosini with a bored expression making Khulekani chuckle, the gods knew how much he liked this pair, they didn't give a damn who his brother was and how they

spoke to him always refreshing for Khulekani. "As much as I like you and how strong you are but you are not going anywhere until we talk. Don't think am forcing you but the Zungu ancestors are here now, you saw what just happened and if you are going to be hard headed then you won't even make it to where you are rushing to because you will have an accident on the way and many people will die. Only you will survive, can you live with that?" Asked Khulekani, he wasn't telling lies, he once did what Sakhile was planning to do now going to some wrap concert after his father told him not to go. He would not listen and want. They didn't get far when an accident happened and everyone in the car died living

only him to explain to the families of his friends.

"Am sorry my friend but I don't want to die, I will take a wheelbarrow and sell the milk to the farm workers so that it doesn't go off." Zola offered. "No, they will pay for it since they are responsible for us losing business today and you can give the milk to who ever is in the car and go home. We will talk later." He told his friend then looked at the two men. "What are you waiting for? Pay up." He told them coldly Khulekani looked at his brother with a smirk and his arms folded. They way he was liking this was too much, having no choice Makhosini took out his wallet. "How much do I owe you?" He asked. "How much 24 years of nappies, milk, clothes, toys and everything I

would have needed growing up?" He cocked his head to the side looking at the man. Khulekani couldn't help but chuckle earning a glare from Makhosini. He took out all the cash in his wallet and gave it to his son. "Now can we come in and talk?" He asked "Ask the daughter of the house."

He said then moved from the door and took a seat. "It's going to be a long day, my Queen can I get some food please?" Khulekani Asked getting into the house before Sonto could say anything.

"Not a problem." She wants inside after Makhosini and it was starting to rain outside. "How are you Sengwayo?" Asked Makhosini sitting in front of him. "Is that supposed to move me?" Khulekani laughed throwing his

head back making his brother glare at him. "Am sorry but damn it feels good." He didn't have to say what feels good as Makhosini knew that his brother liked that his son was putting him in his place like that. It was going to be a long day indeed.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 22

"Whether it moves you or not it is who you are and I know that I was not in your life growing up but I am here now. Yes I am 24 years too late and it's my fault for denying you when your mother was pregnant. In turn and she left you. She didn't have the easiest of lives as well but she survived and made something of herself. She is here now, we

are both here to try and right the wrongs we have made in your life." Makhosini told his son who just looked at him with a straight face. "You denied me and now 24 years later you are here, to do what exactly? Because I don't need a father now, I needed you when I was 7 walking to school in the winter cold kicking morning dew with my bare feet with no shoes on because my grandmother could not afford them. I needed you when it was time for me to go to initiation school but you were not there, I had to leave school and work to help my grandmother raise money to be able to send me to initiation school to become the man that you see today. All along I had thought that I was initiated using her clan name but when she died I found out the

reason why there was a Zungu man taking care of me during that time. I didn't have the best of clothes when I came back and I didn't have a celebration either but mother made sure that I was initiated and with the correct clan name. She didn't have to do that as you know that the woman that gave birth to me was not married and that makes me the child of the Ndlovu's not the Zungu's. You are a king and am sure you know what am saying is right and for your information being a father is not donating your seed and leave like a snake to it's young. Being father means stepping up and taking responsibility. You did none of that so please dear king, what the hell are you doing here because your speech didn't move me one bit and quite frankly you

don't have a son here the Ndlovu's do."

Sakhile told him.

Makhosini's heart sank at his words and Khulekani was now serious. He could see the pain in his nephew's eyes even though his face showed no emotion, he was both proud and hurt at the same time. Proud because Sakhile was proving to be a king indeed even after growing up outside the Zungu kingdom his ability to hide his emotions from the world and speak with a clear voice like that showed that he was indeed the future king of the Zungu kingdom. Hurt because his nephew suffered so much while they lived the best life money can buy. "I am not going to talk about my brother or the daughter of the house as you call her but I am going to

apologize to you my king for we have wronged you in more ways than one, your schooling should have been different from others as you are the future King and your initiation should have been an event to be celebrated by the whole kingdom for you are their king and their hope for the future. As your uncle am sorry for failing you Gwabini and from this day forward I promise never to let you down. It hurts to hear you speak this way Manzini because it only verifies how incompetent I am for not finding you sooner and making sure that you got the life you deserved. Please find it in your heart to for me Nyama ka Yishi, I have wronged you Zungu please forgive me my king, I didn't

know." Khulekani told his nephew hurt that he had to go through all of that.

"I have nothing else to say and I will not give you empty promises. I have already done lot of damage in your life and all I ask for from you is a chance to prove myself to you as a man that was supposed to be a role model to you. Give me a chance to redeem myself in your eyes, as per tradition I would have had to give something to your grandmother, a thank you for raising you and an apology for ruining her daughter. I would like you to give me a chance to do that and since she is not alive please tell me what you would like and I will make it happen." Makhosini told him. "I don't know what my mother would have wanted for ruining her as you say but as per

tradition I will charge you two cows for disrespecting my mothers home and deflowering her daughter without marrying her. I will charge you another two cows for making her pregnant and for running away that is another form of disrespect on your part so another cow for that. As for giving you a chance I don't know if I can do that, I need time alone without you breathing down my neck, I am a man and you can't just ask a full gown man to just do as you ask. It doesn't work that way." Sakhile told him. "I understand and all that you asked for will be here tomorrow." He told him. "Not so fast king, you will do things the right way, you and your brother will not just come here and deliver the cow because you can, no, you will

send your people to do all that the way it should have been done and I don't want to see your faces here when that happens." He told them Khulekani chuckled. "A king you are and a true man who upholds customs and traditions. I am happy to see that you put your emotions aside and did what needs to be done with a level head. You will make a great king." Khulekani praised him. "There is not need to praise me, I might have been raised by a woman but that doesn't mean she raised me as one. I find your words disrespectful and I think you have said enough. Please leave and we will hear from your people when they come. Now when will that be so that I can prepare for their arrival?" Sakhile asked his father. "The day has not changed, they will

be here tomorrow to do what is right and after this has been concluded we would like to talk to you again so that we can tell you why we came looking for the both of you this time." Makhosini said. "One thing at a time king, let's get this done then we will see. Now please leave." Sakhile told them once again. Makhosini sighed "very well then." He stood up and so did Khulekani. Sonto wanted to see them out when Sakhile's words stopped her on her tracks. "Where do you think you are going? I am trying to make things right and you think you can see him out like his your husband or a visitor here. Well in case you forgot how things work his none of that here but the man that has wronged this family, your mother Nomasonto! Act like a grown up

at least and use your head." He told her as he stood up and left. The house felt suffocating to him and he needed air. The brothers heard that and as much as Khulekani wanted to defend his queen he could not. Sakhile was right she is not to treat them like they guests when they have wronged the family and until everyone is done as per tradition she should have no contact with them.

Ntombe'Thongo

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 23

Sakhile left the house after asking for Sonto to borrow her car, he went to Zola and they drove to the farm in Pietermaritzburg. They got there in the afternoon and they went to meet with the farmer. He wanted to buy the

farm as the man was old now and lives alone, the man asked for a million rands to sell the farm and Sakhile was more than willing to go into the bank with him and transfer the money. The old man contacted his lawyer and a land transfer was made. They then drove back home. The following day Sakhile still left work the car to town and bought the small dairy store in town which costed him four hundred thousand which he paid from the cash Makhosini sent. "You are a business man now my friend and a prince on top of that, I admire you." Zola said. "No we are businessmen, the dairy is under both our names, Zola you and your father did a lot for me and my mother and am not about to throw you away now." Sakhile told him. "What? You

did that for me?" Zola could not believe it, in their mild business he only contributed one cow and now his friend made him a partner. "Yes I did, what you and your father did for me is more than what mine did for me and this business partnership is me strengthening that relationship showing you that I will be there for you as well." Zola wanted to cry but couldn't as they were in public. "Thank you my friend." He thanked him. "But I want to ask you partner, what do you think of us expanding this dairy, we can make it a two in one kind of shop, on one side it will be the dairy where our milk will be sold and we will get people to deliver milk every morning to the houses we are already selling to then on one side we can make it a bakery." Zola liked

that idea. "A bakery coffee shop of some sort for those who want to come in sit have with scones or muffins and maybe add breakfast and lunch." Zola suggested and Sakhile agree. They went home and asked Sonto for help with getting the right people for the bakery and she was more than happy to assist.

In the Mdlalose household things have gone from bad to worse, over the past months, Smanga was struggling getting a job and Mdlalose's savings were running out.

Bongekile could not go back to school as there was no money to do so, his brother Mbuso was also struggling but was lucky to get sponsored by his professor to finish his degree. Bongekiles car was sold and now only

two cars remained in the house. That of her father and Smanga's car. Things were no longer the same and Bongekile didn't go out much as she didn't have money to spend now and that made her very angry. Her mother and brother now treated her like a disease, they didn't talk to her or sit in the same room as her. Smanga was angry that he lost everything because of her and her mother hated her because she was losing the lifestyle she used to have because of her and her friends were now talking about her behind her back. She used to be every thing those women wished and now she was losing all that all because of her daughter. Mdlalose was just taking each day as it comes, he never said anything to his daughter since

that day when she made it clear that she will not marry Sakhile. It was in the evening and they were sitting around the dinner table.

"Baba the annual gala for the taxi association is next week and I think we should attend.

We might find someone to help us get back into the business." The wife suggested. "It will be a waste my dear, even if I do find someone to help nothing will change instead I will get into more debts." Mdlalose told his wife who then glared at her daughter. "How did we end up with such a selfish child?" She said making Smanga scoff. "What are you talking about mother? You made Bongekile this way, you and father spoiled her treating her like an egg that will break and now that you can no longer afford the things you

usually did you ask that, are you not being a hypocrite? Because this is your own doing." He told him mother. "Can you both stop talking like am not here." Bongekile said. "You are here and listening to what is being said so there is no need to address you directly and you can also see how bad things have gotten and yet you still refuse to back down. Listen here dear I am not your parents so you won't get a scent of my savings and If you want something then you can ask your parents." Smanga said "you are spoilt and self." He continued. "Smanga no one forced you to get married to someone you don't love and certainly not a poor woman like that guy they want me to marry so why should I sacrifice my happiness for this family when

no one else has?" Asked bongekile "Our parents always told me that I deserve only the best so what is best about that guy? Nothing I tell you now and don't expect me to change what was instilled in me all my life just because things are not going well right now.." she continued. "Am not saying that my dear, I told you that I won't say anything about it since you don't want to but you will have to work for your own money now since we don't have any to support you anymore. The taxis are gone, your car has been sold and our savings are running out. Your brother is not working and the other is finishing school by getting handouts from others. You couldn't even go back to school because we couldn't pay and we still have this

house because I brought it that is a reality of things my daughter." Mdlalose spoke calmly.

"You know, I have been thinking about the reason why we are being punished, yes it's because of you at least part of it but what is it about that boy that is special that our own ancestors would turn their backs on us and let him do as they please with us?" Mdlalose asked. "His ancestors are not powerful I think it's witchcraft why else would they be so persistent?" Asked the wife but Mdlalose shook his head. "I don't think so, the boy might be poor but I didn't sense any evil with him, he is just a young man trying to make something of himself, he reminds me of myself growing up and I admire him. But

there is some else we are not seeing,
something that the gods know that we don't."
He told them. "He can be a god for all I can
but I will not marry him, his not in my league
and I will not stoop so low just so you all can
have a better life. I am not Abraham from
the Bible or Mary. I refused to be
sacrificed." She said standing up and leaving.
"Congratulations parents, the results of your
love for your daughter will be the end of us
now and I hope you are proud. Especially you
mother because you are the one who saw
everyone else as beneath you because you
had everything your daughter takes after
you. I don't know why you are complaining now
when she is exactly what you wanted her to

be." Smanga said then stood up and left as well.

Chapter 24

Makhosini was in charge now of everything, on the way he called his uncle he was in Cape Town, he moved there since his brother died and Makhosini took the throne. He told him that his sending the jet to pick him up and that he needed him urgently. Then he called home and asked his elders to accompany his uncle on the morning and organized the cows that are needed by Sakhile. He make sure that the five cows were there and about five hundred thousand rand in cash. By the time they got back to the BnB everything for the following morning was ready. "I am not ready

to see uncle after to many years." Khulekani said and his brother turned to look at him. "So it's okay for you to visit him whenever you are in Cape Town with one of your girlfriends but you not okay with him coming here?" Asked his brother. "That's different, when am in Cape Town I don't stay long enough for him to interrogate me about my love life and here he has all the time in the world to torment me." He said looking horrified, Khulekani didn't like the idea of getting married, he says that he is still enjoying his life and doesn't want distractions. "Well then brother when are thinking of getting married? You not getting younger you know." Makhosini said making Khulekani look at him with a frown.

"I am not talking to you about this, I will save my answers for uncle." He said making his brother laugh. "I will send some of the guys to the airport to pick in him and take him home." He said getting out of the car as they have arrived. Two hours later their uncle landed and the car was already there waiting for him. The guards took him to the palace and by then it was already late in the evening. But he didn't rest as he went to the seer to get all the information he needed as per Makhosini's instructions. The seer told him everything and he understood. He sat alone in the dining room having dinner when Mancwane came in. "Evening" she greeted and the uncle just looked at her. "Baba please talk to the king, he can't bring that woman

here, Who's to say that she and her son are not impostors?" Mancwane said to him. "Get out." That was all he said and his voice was not friendly at all. It made her shiver and hurried out of the room. "That one is a witch." Said the uncle as he finished his dinner then went to bed.

The following morning they woke up early and headed to the rural areas being accompanied by the guard Khulekani sent. On the other side Sakhile was with Zola and his father. The builders were already there building at that time, the fence was done and the place was starting to look like a home. "Tell me boy who is coming? Zola just said you needed my help." The old man asked. "The man who fathered me is sending people to do right by

my mother and me." Sakhile told him and the old man nodded taking off his hat and placed it on his knee. "I understand it must be difficult for you but since he is here now I think I will be a good idea to give him a chance." The old man said. "Why must I give him a chance now when he didn't want to be my father when I was young? None of my parents wanted me baba so why must I give them a chance now? What good will that do for me? You know how much I suffered and now that I am starting to stand on my own they come like I went looking for them trying to force me to be their child, it doesn't work that way and baba taught me that a man takes responsibility of his actions. You said a man is not defined by how much money he has

but by his decisions. What kind of a man is my father then?" Sakhile asked

"He is a coward son, I won't sit here and lie to you. He was wrong but I always understand why he is here even though it took him years, I say give him a chance to show you what he wants, watch him and observe the kind of man he is and that includes your mother." Before Sakhile could say anything more they heard a knock on the door, Sakhile invited the person in and it was one of the builders. "There are people outside." He told them and since the house was small. They moved chairs by then kraal and Zola went to invite them in. The uncles eyes were fixed on Sakhile and if he didn't know better he would say that he was his own

brother's son the way he looked so much like Khulekani. "Sengwayo, I don't have to be told anything and nothing will be said here. Ngidi being the cows and the money." The uncle said and Ngidi did as told. Sakhile and his representatives kept quiet and watched as the cows were brought to the kraal and a brief case was placed next to Sakhile. His uncle took out a black card and placed it on top of the briefcase.

"Sengwayo this is from me, in that card there is about 2 million rands, it's not much to make up for what my son Makhosini has done to both you and your mother. Please accept it and when you decide to go home, you will get all that belongs to you, we have wronged you and the Zungu ancestors to a

point that they want to take my grandchildren away. I know that if Makhosini did the right thing back then they would not have been born but they are here now and they are your blood. Please think of them as well." The uncles said. "Thank you Zungu and o will accept everything you owe me that much and as for thinking about your grandchildren that is not my responsibility but that of your son and his wife or wives. No one thought of me until your ancestors made a move and I will not think of anyone but myself as well. I have my own plans, goals and ambitions for my own life. Your son Makhosini is still fit to rule so am sure that you don't need me as yet and I would appreciate it if you let me live my life the

way I had planned without the Zungu' sin it."
Sakhile answered.

"As much as it hurts to hear that I understand where you are coming from but can you at least come home so that we can do an introduction ritual to the gods of Manzini." The uncle asked but Sakhile shook his head. "No, that would be disrespectful to the Ndlovu ancestors the ones that protected me till now, remember my mother was not married to your son when she had me so there is no need for me to be introduced to your ancestors. The only thing that can be done is an introduction when I take over the throne if that will happen but until then I belong to the Ndlovus not the Zungu's."
Sakhile told him. "You are rich but your

mother will be queen soon and it won't be long after then you will have to come and be introduced to your people on the day of her crowning." The uncle said shocking Zola and his father. They didn't know that Sakhile was a future king. "I will come but don't expect me to live at the Zungu palace and pretend to be their child." Sakhile told him. "You don't have to pretend to be their child, you are their child and the Zungu ancestors know that. Son that is your kingdom by birth right and even if you come and chase all of us out we will not say anything as that is your kingdom. What am trying to say here is that you have power, money and people." The uncle told him.

They went on talking just the two of them like the rest was not there until Sonto brought out food, the uncles heart skipped a bit and he cursed the bond these chosen women have on the Zungu men. Why could it not end with the Queen he was supposed to protect? He wondered. After lunch they left and Zola and his father left after Sakhile gave each of them ten thousand rand from the money thanking them for being there. The uncle had convinced Sakhile to talk to his mother before he left. Now they were sitting together. "They have done all that I have asked and more. Now we can talk and you can tell me what you want to say." He told her making Sonto sigh. "I was only eighteen when I had you and your father was

your age. He was in varsity in Joburg and I was doing grade 12. He came here with his friend to celebrate the friend's brother that just came for initiation. That's where we met, he perused me and I agreed. He stayed here for a month and when he left I was pregnant with you but he denied me." She wiped some of the tears that managed to fall.

"I did all I could to hide the pregnancy from my mother and it worked until I gave birth and knew there was no where to hide anymore so I sent you with my friend Phindiwe the one who has been helping me here and I left. I hitched hiked until I got to Joburg, I only had the clothes I wore and nothing and no one there. I stayed on the

streets for months eating in rubbish bins until a woman took me in, my friend Sindiswa. She was a sex worker back then and tried to get me to do what she did but I refused and looked for a job. A year ended and still no job, staying for free with her and I thought that she will get tired of me not bringing in anything so I joined. I worked as a sex worker as well for four years saving money. It wasn't an easy life, we would get raped and sometimes beaten when the clients did want to pay.

But on year five we registered in nursing school and studied together and that is how my life changed." She wiped her tear before she continued.

"I was still scared of coming home so I thought that I would work and save enough then come home and apologize to my mother and you. Make her proud of my accomplishments but I was too afraid that years went by until now." She told him. "Am I supposed to feel sorry for you for the work you did and hardships you endured? No dear Sonto because you chose to run away from home instead of facing your mother and raise me. That is the life you chose for yourself and whatever happened to you was no one's fault but yours. You chose that life, what I don't understand is why you didn't send us money then?" Asked Sakhile "The reason for that is stupid I know but I wanted to come myself and show off my accomplishments I

guess, it never occurred to me to send money so long but saved as much as I could so that I can come back here and do things for the both of you. It was stupid I know but that is what I thought." Sakhile shook his head. "For some reason the Zungu ancestors and still want you as their queen. So you don't have to stay here, your kingdom awaits your highness but I ask that you and your boyfriend give me space and I will react out when am ready." He told her and she nodded. "I understand, would you like me to take you to town to put the money in the bank?" Sonto asked. "No, I have my own plans." He told her and she nodded in understanding.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 25

Makhosini gave them two days after the uncles went but today was the day he was going to get his queen, this whole things made him feel like a young man he once was back he was chasing after Sonto who had her own boyfriend back then. It made him angry that she rejected him and he swore that she was not going to get away from him. Indeed Makhosini got Sonto after two weeks of pursuing her, they slept together that very same week and gods was he glad that he was her first. It made him feel like a winner and that was until she told him that she was pregnant the week he was supposed to go home and denied the pregnancy then left and never came back. But now he was not going to make the same mistake, now his daughters

lives were in danger and was the only one who can save them like she saved him. She gave her a son that none of the women he chose for himself couldn't. They were on the way there and the time was around eleven in the morning. "Whatever you do brother please don't make her do something she doesn't want to do because I don't want to take her side over yours but if I have to then I will. My loyalty is with her and you know this." Khulekani warned when they were getting close, Makhosini knew and understood why he spoke this way but what he supposed to do? "I understand Khulekani but if I don't get her home soon your ancestors might just show me what they are capable of by taking one of my daughters. Then what?" He asked frustrated

by the whole situation. "Don't say my ancestors, they are yours too and I understand how you feel but I won't let you force her into doing something she doesn't want to. Those ancestors of yours might even make me infertile if I let you and I want to have kids one day." Makhosini could not help but laugh. "Oh now they are mine?" He teased his brother. "They are both ours but what am saying is that they are cruel, I mean always knew that she was your true queen and Sakhile was a Zungu heir but they did nothing to prevent them both from suffering and in my books they are cruel." Said Khulekani and his brother could not help but think that what his brother said was true. "I want to believe that they had their reasons whatever they maybe

but they had them. We must not forget that they work in ways we don't understand and all we have to do is go where they want us to." Makhosini told him. Before Khulekani could answer they were already stopping in front of the gate. "I will wait here and remember what I said." Khulekani told his brother. "I understand." Makhosini said then got out of the car. His heart was beating fast anticipating her reaction but he told himself one thing before he got in that he was not leaving without her. He knocked on the opened door and Sonto who was standing at the wardrobe looking for A change of clothes turned and saw him. "Sakhile is not home." She told him before he could say anything. "Am here for you Sonto." He told her making her

sigh. "What can I do for you Makhosini." He didn't like that she called him by his full name. "Please sit, we have a lot to talk about." He told her with a straight face her calling him by his full name didn't sit well with him. He liked that familiarity between them to him it was more intimate. Sonto went and took a seat in front of him. "Again I ask, what can I do for you?" She asked looking at him. "I am here to tell you that we are going on home in two days, I have organized maids to come and keep an eye on the house and also monitor the builders. After the house is done we will come back and do an unveiling for your mother but for now, I need my queen home, I have been a king for year with no one to claim the position of my queen and stand by side like it should

be. Your crowning will be in a week after we get home and before you tell me about the bad things you think you have done and how you are not worthy I am telling that I don't care. I just want you." Makhosini told her.

"You only say that because you don't know what I have done." Said Sonto but Makhosini shook his head. "I know about your life as a street worker Sonto and still I say I don't care. Sonto I left yes, did I forget about you? Yes I did and that is because I thought you went back to your boyfriend after being with me and even got pregnant with his child. I was angry and most importantly my ego was bruised. I was a prince and I got everything I wanted but it was difficult to get you from the start, I mean I was after you for a week

before you accepted me which was something I was not used to. At school girls threw themselves at me and fought over me but you didn't want me. Then when I got you I thought you cheated on me which is something none of the women I have been with ever did. So my ego was bruised and I wanted to forget about you and I did. But through all that, after I saw you again was the day I felt alive once again. I felt young, happy, scared and even concerned about my looks which is something I have never done but you always bring that insecurity in me, like am not good enough and at the same time I feel happier when am near you and more alive. So I am not leaving you here, you are

my Queen Sonto and I need you by my side." Makhosini told her.

Sonto didn't know what to say, she was crying and felt unworthy to stand by his side. "Give me a chance sweetheart." Those words made her heart skip a beat, those were the exact same words that melted her heart back then and ended up giving in to him. The way he said those words pulled and moved parts of her heart she thought died the night he left her. Makhosini moved from where he was sitting and crouched in front of her. He then lifted her chin to make her look at him. "I know that you have a life sweetheart and if it will make you feel better I will build you a hospital that you can run and help our people but letting you go back to Joburg is not an

option." He told her but Sonto shook her head. "No Makhosini I..." he did not let her finish. As he captured her lips with his kissing her hard. The kiss was hungry and demanding making Sonto's brain turn to mush as she could not even think. She didn't remember the last time she was kissed like that and it felt good.

He pulled out after a while and looked at her. "Am leaving be ready in two days and am taking you home." He kissed her forehead then stood up and left her sitting there still dizzy from the kiss. "What just happened?" He thought out loud but Makhosini was already gone.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 26

Two days have passed and Sonto was anxious about leaving. She has been meaning to talk to Sakhile as he has been busy and didn't come home for the past two days. She had hoped that he will show up tonight so that she can talk to him. She was preparing for bed when the door opened and closed. She turned and saw Sakhile coming in looking tired. "Evening" he greeted then took a seat laying back and closing his eyes. "Evening" Sonto saw how tired he was and warmed bathing water for him then prepared his bath. Took out his pjs and placed them on the bed. "Bath first then I will warn the food and you can eat." Sakhile nodded, he has been

working hard at the farm getting the sheep ready for their annual shearing then met with the buyer of the wool from the that the old man used to sell it to then getting the milk delivered at the dairy where Zola is then he would get the two guys they got from their village to deliver the milk to their usual customers while Zola took care of the shop.

On the other side the was renovation for the bakery but Zola was taking care of that while he met with the lawyers and did all the paperwork. Sonto left to give him some privacy to bath, Sakhile dragged his tired body off the couch and took a bath. He felt a bit better after bathing then he wore his pjs and waited for Sonto who was dishing out for

him. He took his food and thanked her. Sonto sat in front of her. "I have been meaning to talk to you about something." Sonto told him and Sakhile nodded. "Makhosini is picking me up tomorrow and taking me to the palace with him. I want to know what you think." She told him, her heart was beating fast wondering what his reaction will be. She just got back and now she was leaving again. She felt like she was abandoning him again. "You are a grown woman Nomasonto so do what makes you happy and if being the queen of the Zungu kingdom then go for it. But please don't expect me to follow you, I know the two of you expect me to but I still have things to take care of and goals to achieve." Sakhile told her.

Sonto was relieved by his answer and understood where he was coming from. "I understand and he said that he will be sending maids to take care of the house and someone to monitor the builders. He also wants to do an unveiling for my mother when everything is done." She told him. "I won't stop him from doing what he wants, If sending maids and doing all that ha what he wants then he can do it." He told her. "Am tired as going to sleep now." He told her then took his plate and put it away then got into bed. "One more thing, my car will be here tomorrow from Joburg, I need to take this one back since it's a rental and you can use mine. You will need it more than I will." She told him and he hummed his response. The

following morning her car arrived and was told to pick of up. She drove to town with Sakhile and returned the rental car.

Makhosini called just as she was dropping the car at the dairy shop for Sakhile. It was a BMW X3 better than the rental car which was a Toyota bakkie.

She picked up the call. "MK." She answered. "Ndlovukazi yami usulungele ukuhamba?" (My queen, are you ready to leave?" He asked and she could hear that he was smiling on the other side. "Yes but am in town, I came to get my car and return the one I rented. I just dropped it off with Sakhile now I am going rent a special car to drop me home because he won't be leaving here any time soon." She told him. "Don't worry we will pick

you then take you home so that you can get your stuff. The maid and guards for Sakhile should be arriving the same time as us." He told her. "Okay then." She answered. "Wait there we are coming." He told her then cut the call. "Let's go Khulekani my queen is waiting." Makhosini yelled at his brothers door. Khulekani came out with a grin on his face. "How does it feel?" He asked his brother. "What are you talking about?" Asked Makhosini "Having to say that "my Queen" asked Khulekani. "To be honest I feel complete, she came and filled a void I never even knew was there, she is like a part of me that I never knew was missing. She just...what can I say, she completes me." Makhosini told him.

"Do you feel the same way about any of your wives?" Asked Khulekani again and Makhosini didn't even think about it. "No, I thought Mancwane completed me at some point but it was nothing like this." He answered honestly. Khulekani nodded as they got into the car going to meet. It didn't take long to locate the dairy show and outside the signage was being changed and there was renovations on the other side. They saw Sakhile and Zola giving orders left and right. "This boy will run that kingdom like a business, I can't wait to see the day when he orders everyone around." Khulekani said looking at his nephew. "I don't care how he runs it, he has shown me that he is responsible enough and matured for his age. I will just take a vacation with

my queen after the crowning and he will have to go and practice what it will be like when his turn come." Makhosini said. "You better be prepared for a no because your son is as stubborn as our father." Khulekani told him. "You right he does take after the late king on that." Makhosini conquered.

Makhosini got out of the car and walked to the dairy. "Gwabini" he greeted his son. "Busy your Queen is over there." He said then pointed at Sonto who was busy talking to an older coloured woman she hired to as a pastry chef at the bakery. She was due to start the following month. "Things don't have to be this way Sengwayo I know that I did you wrong but am trying to make amends."

Makhosini told him. "I know but I just don't have the time right now." He told him.

"Mshana ka malume" (my nephew) said Khulekani with a big grin on his face. Sakhile smiled at him as well. "Kunjani malume?" (How are you uncle?) He asked Makhosini was a bit jealous because his son didn't respond that way to him. "Am good, I see you are doing well here and if you need any help call me at anytime." Sakhile nodded. "I will keep that in mind." Sonto finally saw them and excused herself from the woman and walked to where they stood. "My Queen" smiled Makhosini making her blush. "We can leave now and Sakhile she will start when the bakery opens and I will get you two ladies that will help her." she told him. "Sure, uncle it was nice

seeing you again." Khulekani smiled "like wise" they shook hands and Sakhile went back to work.

"He can be hard headed all he likes but his coming to the palace in 8 days to take care of things." Makhosini said as they walked to the car making Sonto and Khulekani laughed

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 27

When Makhosini and Sonto got back the guards and maiden were already there. A building inspector and coordinator together with more builders and materials were already there. Sonto paid them no mind as she did not know that Makhosini had orders for the house to be made five rooms instead

of two. She got into the house and took her bags giving them to Makhosini to load them into the car. "Please take good care of my son, he comes back home late and he would be hungry then. Please make sure that there is food for him, there is enough groceries but when if running out call me here is my number." She instructed the two maidens. "Don't worry about that my queen, the king has organized everything for our stay here, we will be alright and there is no need for you to ask us to take care of the prince because that is what we were brought here to do." One of the maidens who had saw this as an opportunity to be with the prince the moment they told about him answered. She was one of those ambitious people who went

after what they wanted no matter the cost and at the moment he wanted to be with the prince. She didn't know what he looked like but she didn't care, she was tired of serving people wanted to be served for a change and being with the prince gives her that and more. Sonto smile grateful when she heard that. "Thank you" she thanked them then left the house meeting Khulekani at the the gate. "I thought you changed your mind and I was coming to get you." He teased. "I was worried about Sakhile he might not say it but I feel like I am abandoning him again." She told him. "I know that I have only known my nephew for a short time but in this short time I have learnt one thing about him. That he is a straight forward person, he doesn't hide how

he feels and if he felt like you are abandoning him again then he would have told you." Khulekani told her. "You are right, in as much as I know that he has not forgiven me, he also doesn't look at me with so much anger as he did before." Sonto told her. Khulekani didn't say anything more as he opened the door for her to get inside closing it behind her then he went and sat next to his brother on the other side. Soon the car was out of the rural areas as it merged into traffic heading to the royal kingdom of the Zungu's. There was not much to say on the road as Makhosini had already explained to her what was going to happen, he also called ahead and asked the maids to get the queen's chamber cleaned and ready for her arrival. The uncle

was there watching the maids clean the queens chamber, he after all one of the protesters of the queen. His Queen might be no more but his duty was to protect the Queen and was doing that on that side until Khulekani arrived. His presence made the maids uncomfortable and cleaned faster wanting to get out of there as soon as possible. The old maids who know him from the time of the late queen knew how strict he was and warned the younger ones before they went to clean the house. When they were done the seer went in and cleaned the house before the queen arrived preparing it for the next queen.

The wives could see what was happening from the other side frowning as they watched.

MaZondi was busy with her baby and had no time to spy on what the others were doing. Soon the convoy appeared at the gates of the palace, the seer was already standing outside chanting the Zungu and Ndlovu clan names praising the ancestors for bringing the Zungu queen home. The uncle was standing next to him, the gate was opened and they drove in. Sonto was nervous, the wives were standing outside wanting to see the woman who going to be above them. Khulekani was the first to get out of the car followed by Makhosini who could not stop the smile from appearing on his face. "My Queen, we have arrived home, come out so that the seer can welcome you to your palace." He said extending his hand to her and she took it

getting out of the car. As soon as she got out the seer sprinkled some herbs on her still chanting the Zungu and Ndlovu clan names. When he was done he left, "Welcome home my queen." The uncle welcomed her with a smile which shocked the wives as they have never seen him smile. Mancwane was frowning hard looking in their direction but they could not see Sonto properly as Makhosini and the uncle blocked their view. "Thank you uncle." Sonto thanked him. He led them inside the palace and they took a seat in the lounge as Khulekani took her bag to her house, he was the only one allowed in the queens chamber, no guard or maiden was allowed accept for those that she will choose for herself and since she has no chosen any yet Khulekani

was the only one allowed in. He placed the bags then went to join the others in the lounge. "So the crowning will be in five days it will go on for two days, everything has been arranged as per your request Makhosini the only thing that is left is for the both of you to buy your clothes for the days." The uncle told them.

"Ngiyabonga malume." (Thank you uncle) Khulekani thanked him as it was his responsibility to organize everything. "No problem but you and I still need to talk. We have a few things to straighten out." He told him and Khulekani nodded. "I will take my Queen to rest for a moment and see her house then I will see you both at dinner." Makhosini said smiling at Sonto. "I know what

that is like, your father was worse than you when he met your mother, so go on don't let us keep you." Everyone laugh and Sonto blushed as Makhosini led her out of the house to the small gate that went out to the throne room then her house. Makhosini opened the door for her and Sonto was amazed by how luxurious the house was. "You can change anything you like and make it your own. Every queen of this kingdom stays here and they change the house to fit their taste and style. I guess this was my mother's." Makhosini told her. "I like it just the way it is." Sonto did see anything to change as Makhosini showed her around to her the house was perfect.

"A seamstress will be here this evening to take your measurements and show you some designs you can choose from for your dresses. She only makes the queens dresses." He told her and she nodded in understanding. "Thank you, will your wives be at dinner?" She asked making Makhosini sigh. "No need to thank me it's what should be done for the queen of this land and I wasn't planning on inviting them but if you want to meet them today then I can arrange it." He told her but he did not want them there, he wanted this day to be about only them two. "I might as well get that over and done with." She told him and he nodded. "I will make it happen." Sonto went to bath while Makhosini went to organize with the chef to make a feast

tonight different dishes as he want not sure what his Queen liked. Then sent maids to tell the wives about the dinner and that they were expected in the main house at 7 in the evening.

- [x] Mancwane and MaNdaba chewed the poor maidens that went sent to inform as if it was their fault the king brought another woman in the palace. MaZulu the third wife just nodded and said nothing. MaZondi the fourth wife was the one who was curious asking questions to the maiden. Like is she beautiful? Is she friendly? Do you think that he will like us? What kind of a Queen do you think she will be? She was nervous and worried that the queen will resent them for being with her rightful husband. The maiden

had no answer for her though as she didn't see the Queen when she arrived. Which disappointed MaZondi a bit but she was still looking forward to seeing her at dinner.

Dinner time came and Sonto has changed into a long body hugging dress. A wedge sandal, a cardigan and covered her head with a small doek. She didn't know what she was supposed to wear or how she was supposed to act. She has never been married but thought that what she wore was presentable enough. Soon there was a knock on the door and she went to open. Makhosini was standing on the other side, he looked at her for a moment then pulled her into his arms and closed the door with his foot. He kissed her forehead and whispered. "You look beautiful my queen"

Sonto pulled out of the hug and looked at him. "Are you sure that what am wearing is okay?" She asked still nervous. "It's more than alright my queen come let's go." He took her hand and led her into the house. When they got in they could hear voices coming from the other side of the house, it was Khulani and his uncle. Makhosini led her towards the voices and when they came to view she saw that it was a dinning room. Everyone was there and all eyes were on them as they came in. Mancwane was sitting on the chair next to Makhosini's as she usually did but Makhosini looked at her but didn't say anything but looked at his brother. "Mancwane please move from that chair, that is the queens chair." Khulekani told her. "It's

alright I will sit on next to uncle." Sonto said. "No it's not alright see the head of the table is for my brother the king, on his left is you where she is sitting, the right is me as his right hand man then uncle next to me.

Mancwane will sit on the chair next to yours followed by MaNdaba, MaZulu then MaZondi. Mancwane has to move." Khulekani explained looking at Sonto the other wives had already moved as their husbands expression was not pleasant at all.

Mancwane was bitter as she moved from the chair, the woman was not even queen yet and already she was given her chair. Oh how she hated her, when everyone settled Makhosini led his queen to the chair and opened it for her before taking his own seat. "Now before

the dinner starts I want to make something clear, this is your Queen, the head of this household when I am not available anything and everything to do with this palace goes through her. I expect all of you to give her the respect she deserves as the queen of this land and if anyone of you had a problem with that they can leave but when you do leave you leave alone as you came without the Zungu children. I will not have such disrespectful behavior towards the queen of this land. I hope I made myself clear. Let's eat." Makhosini was now all king and the authority he showed made everyone bow. "My king" then all said in unison. The uncle and Khulekani had a smirk on their faces.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 28

The days went by fast, the dinner went well after the incident that day and the seamstress come and took Sontos measurements. Through the chaos of the week Mancwane managed to see Khulekani in the lounge copying and deleting the videos of Sonto. He was talking on the phone with someone telling him to make sure that those videos don't see the light of day as the person in them was very important.

Mancwane took the time when he went to the balcony to finish his call and stole one of the memory sticks with the videos. There were so many of them that Khulekani didn't notice that one was missing when he came back.

Mancwane went to her room and checked on the memory stick and saw the contents. She was the happiest when she saw what the memory stick contained and now she had a way to discredit the woman who came to take her place. It was late in the evening when Khulekani came back with Sakhile, they wanted him to be present in his mother's crowning and Makhosini sent his brother to get him. He knew that if he went himself or sent someone else Sakhile might refuse to come but Khulekani came back with him and Sonto was happy to see him. "How is everything back home?" She asked him. "It's okay the maids are a bit too much and the builders are doing a good job so far." He answered. "What about the farm and the

dairy?" She asked again. "Everything is coming along well and please stop asking me questions like you have been gone for 24 years Nomasonto it's only been a week." Sakhile said making Makhosini glare at him. "What? Do you have objections to what I just said?" He asked his father. "No objections but can you please try and be happy for your mother and I? Just this once." He pleaded with him. "Happy for you two? Of course am ecstatic that the two most irresponsible people I know are finally together. They are the king and queen are about to lead the people side by side. Though I feel sorry for these people because they might just be denied or abandoned for 24 years If they are not careful." He told him

then looked over at his uncle. "So uncle what am I needed for here anyway?" He asked making Khulekani laugh looking at his brother. "Well it will be nice to introduce both the queen and the prince of the land at the same time tomorrow." Khulekani answered. "Okay then after that I am leaving." Sakhile told him. "I was hoping that you can stay for a week until these two irresponsible people come back from their short vacation and am afraid that they might be gone for 24 years and I wouldn't know what to do with this place as I am not meant to lead at least with you here, the rightful heir then this kingdom might just have a chance to survive abandonment." Sakhile chuckled Makhosini glare at his brother. "We wouldn't want that

now, would we?" Makhosini said sarcastically. "We definitely would not, these people are used to the good life they might just die if they had to go through what I went through" Sakhile Answered making his father hung his head low and Sonto shift uncomfortably on her seat.

"Well that is true, time for bed now let's go to bed nephew we have a long day ahead of us tomorrow." Khulekani said and Sakhile nodded as they followed each other to Khulekani's chamber to sleep. "Will he ever forgive us?"

Asked Sonto sadly. "One day he will."

Makhosini answered. "He just called us irresponsible MK." She said sighing. "I know, his calling us out on our bullshit." He said then laughed. Sonto stood up and went to her

house to sleep. Makhosini followed after, he has been spending his nights in her house but slept in separate rooms. Sonto was not comfortable sharing a bed with him yet. The following morning it was chaotic at the palace, invited guests were starting to arrive as well as the people of the kingdom. Sonto was a nervous wreck not knowing what to expect, soon her two maids came in with breakfast. "My Queen, e have come to get you ready." They told her and she thanked them then started eating. She didn't even feel the food she was eating that's how nervous she was to a point that her mind was playing different scenarios as to how this day will go.

None of which gave her the comfort she needed, the maids helped run her bath and choose one of the four dresses the seamstress made for her. As she was busy getting dressed people outside were getting big screens out so that everyone can be able to see what is happening on the stage even from afar. Mancwane smiled looking at the setting standing outside her house with a cup of coffee in hand. Her two daughters had arrived the previous night Duduzile, Saneleand Samke. They are the eldest daughters of the king. Zama, Thandeka and Likhona were also there and they were the daughters of MaNdaba the second wife. Kwezi and Londeka the daughters of MaZulu the third wife. Then Banele and Phelo the

daughters of the youngest wife MaZondi. Mancwane saw the DJ coming getting into the car and hurried to his direction after checking if no one of importance could see her. "Good morning" she greeted with a smile. "Morning my Queen." Mancwane was the happiest when she was addressed as the queen. "Listen I want you to show this video right after the queen has been crowned it is a special gift from me to her." She gave the memory stick to the DJ. "I will do so my queen." Mancwane smiled and went back to her house to get ready.

Soon everyone was seated on the palace grounds and those that were far were watching the screens to see what was happening. The MC took the mic "Good

morning everyone, I hope you all are as happy as I am to be here today, this is a special day for us as the kingdom. Today is not only the crowning of our queen but also the introduction of our prince. The heir to the Zungu kingdom and without wasting more of your time let us welcome the royal family." People cheered and whistled. The first one to come out was the uncle followed by Khulekani, they went and stood on the far right. Then Makhosini and Sakhile followed and stood in the middle then it was Sonto followed by Mancwane, MaNdaba, MaZulu and MaZondi. Then the daughters came in and stood in front of their mothers on the lower step of the stage. "Everyone! I give you the Zungu royal family and for those who don't

know them I will make quick introductions. On my right we have the former king's right hand Mkhuseleli Zungu, next to him and the current right hand man and our king's brother prince Khulekani Zungu. Everyone knows our king the great Makhosini Zungu and next to him is our crowned prince and future king Sakhile Zungu. You know the other wives and the princesses of our land. I want to welcome them on this day by saying. Bayethe Sengwayo!" The crowd cheered and chanted "bayethe Sengwayo!" The wives were not happy that they were not introduced properly but Mancwane comforted herself by waiting for the big moment to arrive. The Royal family took their seats and the day began, speakers spoke and the seer did his

part then the time of the crowning of Sonto was done then she was moved to the seat next to Makhosini. "People of the Zungu kingdom, it is my pleasure to give you your king Makhosini Zungu and your queen Nomasonto Ndlovu!" The MC spoke and the people cheered happy with their leaders. Soon the screen went dark and a video started playing. It was Sonto standing on the street with another woman, three more women could be seen not far from them all wearing revealing clothes. A car could be seen on the video coming and stopping in front of the women. Sonto went to the car and bend over with her arms on the car window talking to the owner of the car, soon she could be seen getting into the car and it

drove off. The video was cut and it went to show the same car coming back and the man getting out with Sonto kissing her before he gave her money and she went then stood with the woman she was seen with earlier.

The video ended and people's jaws were on the floor. Makhosini was fuming with anger and Khulekani was already investigating the incident. Mancwane had a smirk on her face while the DJ was frozen in place not knowing what to do. Soon the people got over their initial shock and started shouting and swearing. "What kind of joke is this?" One could be heard saying. "Basiphathele unondindwa nje" (they brought us a whore!) one could be heard saying in the crowd soon it was chaos people swearing left right and

center. Sonto was shaking in her seat with her head down. Sakhile was angry about what happened, blood is thicker than water after all. He stood up and went to his mother crouching in front of her and took her hands in his. "Now is not the time for you to be weak, you are the queen and if you break down now these people will never respect you. Stand up and demand your respect. No one said a queen should be a saint, yes this was private and it would have been nice if it stayed that way but that is not the case now. So stand up and deal with it the best way you know how and I your son will be by your side am sure your husband will be there too holding your hand. We will lift you up, lean on us now and show these people who you are. Now get up Nomasonto be

that brave girl umah raised." By the time he finished Makhosini was there with them as well. "Am right here sweetheart." He said wiping her tears.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 29

Makhosini stood up and extended his hand to her and she took it. Sakhile took her other hand and they walked to the podium.

"SILENCE!" Makhosini's voice boomed throughout silencing the crowd immediately.

"Now, let me make one thing clear, this right here is my Queen and yours as well. If you don't like that then you are free to leave my kingdom together with the person who did this because I will not tolerate any disrespect towards her." His face was

expressionless and his eyes were cold. No one said anything after that as he scanned the crowd. Sonto took a deep breath then took the mic. "Show me a perfect person with no dirty laundry in their closet and I will step down as your queen right now." She said then scanned the crowd and there was silence. "We people are funny this way, we expect our leaders to be saints and forget that they are human as well. Yes I was once a sex worker, am I ashamed of that part of my life yes but thanks to whoever showed this video today I am no longer ashamed. See that part of my life made me the person I am today, I raised above my circumstances and send myself to school then became a nurse and helped people. Now tell me this, how

many of your daughters are sleeping around with married men, how many of them have had multiple abortions, how many have made something of themselves instead of deteriorating in this kingdom never having to realize their dreams, how many have many children from different father that denied them and still made something of themselves? How many are living with HIV not knowing where they got it from, how many go to clinics every week to treat STD's you as parents might not know but I can bet you anything you want that your daughter or your son has done one of these things or living with HIV they don't even know where they got it from. I should be an example to your children that no background or

circumstance can determine who you become in the future only you can determine your future. Now I never stood here and told you that I was perfect. This is your first time seeing me and I you, so instead of judging me by my past how about you give me a chance and judge me by my actions and the kind of Queen I will be to you all. The king already said that if you don't want me as your queen you can leave, I don't want that but I will also not tolerate disrespect and if you won't forward me the same respect you will be getting from me than I won't hesitate to banish you from this kingdom myself. I am no ones door mat, I am your queen and your leader. I deserve your respect until such time you witness me doing something as your

queen that will make you lose the respect you have for me not my past." She said then walked back to her seat with her head held high.

Now everyone was looking at their children, husbands and wives in a different way. What the Queen said made them think, in reality how many of their children are doing exactly what the queen did but instead of the streets they are selling their bodies to married men. Others are thinking of their daughters that have children that have no fathers, others of their daughters who's health is not the same as it was, some their daughters that look like saints in front of them but are they really? It was a harsh thing to be made to think this way and they

could all agree on one thing while sitting there that ignorance is bliss. Has the queen no mentioned any of these things they could still pretend like everything is okay but now it was hard not to overthink. The guilty ones were a shamed but put on a brave face so that others don't see. The young people of the kingdom were ashamed of what the Queen said because it was true, their biggest mistake was accepting their circumstances and didn't nothing to change them, relaying on government grants for their kids and the food parcels the royal family handed out to them every month. They were content and did nothing to change the situation. They forgot their dreams and accepted defeat. "Well, I have no more words to add to that,

our kind and queen have spoken. Indeed, who are we to judge if we have our own dirty secrets? They might not be out there for everyone to see but someone knows and that is the thing about secrets, someone always knows, you might think that yours are well hidden and have the guts to shame others but someone out there knows. Enough about that, the royal family had prepared a feast for everyone, if you look at where you are sitting there are food stalls on both side make a line and get yourself a plate of food. Drinks are available as well." The MC spoke and the people waited for the royal family to leave the stage before going to get themselves food. Everyone headed to the main house and took their seats. Khulekani

was the last to get in followed by the DJ, his eyes cold and he looked murderous. "Tell us, where did you get what you played?"

Khulekani asked making the DJ jump a bit, he was both scared and angry. Scared of what the royal family will do to him and angry that he will lose the gigs from the royal family now. They are the first to give him a chance and they always paid well. Now they will never trust him. "My prince, the queen right here gave me that memory stick when I came in this morning. She told me that I should play it right after the crowning and that it was a gift from her to the queen. I didn't think much of it as she seemed friendly." The DJ said looking at Mancwane who was now shaking in her seat.

"I have nothing to say to you, go and pack up then leave." Makhosini told her coldly. "Baba you have to understand, she came and took my place! I could not sit back and watch a woman like her take everything from me." Mancwane said glaring at Sonto. "Uzwa makuthwani mfazindini, akathathanga lutho kuwe ngoba Awu zange wana wundlunkulu wena." (How many times must you be told woman? She didn't take anything from you because you were never a queen.) Khulekani told her. "I said leave before I get the guards to throw you out." Makhosini told her. "Baba mxolele please" (father forgive her please" Duduzile pleaded. "Did you tell her to do what she did?" Asked Makhosini. "No father." She answered with her head

lowered. "Then this has nothing to do with you, unless you want to go with her." He asked looking at Dudu. "Cha baba angifune kuhamba" (no father I don't want to leave.) she answered and mouthed am sorry to her mother. "It's settled then, you have an hour to pack up and leave. A guard will be standing on your door watching you then make sure you leave when you are done." Makhosini said. "My queen and prince. We have people to meet outside." The two nodded as they followed behind him going to meet and greet the people. Mancwane was accompanied by a guard and her daughters to her house to pack. "Do any of you want to follow her, it will make my job much easier and have only the true queen to protect not all you while you

are busy plotting evil." Khulekani said looking at the remaining wives. "I for one have no problem with the queen prince Khulekani and am sure that Mancwane doesn't either. She is just angry, she has been the first wife for years waiting for the crown and now all of a sudden someone else comes and takes what she thought belonged to her and she retaliated. It wasn't right I agree with that but we also have to put ourselves in her shoes and try to understand." MaZondi said. "Well said MaZondi but did any of you give your husband a chance to see how he was going to do things? No you didn't, all of you here were treated the same by the king when you came here, he spend time focusing only on you, he took each one of you away to

places of your choice and only after you came back did you share him with others. He is doing the same to the queen but you people have a problem with that? How quickly you forget or did you all think that you can still give him and heir and be the queen? The Zungu ancestors choose their own queen and if it wasn't for my brother's stupidity none of you would be here and for your information. That woman out there did not want to be here but because the gods threatened to take your children that were not supposed to be born to begin with she came. Your children are alive today because she came, think about that the next time you think of plotting evil against her or her son. If the gods were willing to take away your children

if she didn't agree to come here and take her rightful place. Think of what they might do if you continue this nonsense. Now go out there and be good little wives or I swear that I will kick you out of here myself" Khulekani told them before he left.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 30 (it's not long I didn't have enough time before load shedding)

"Find out where they are going." That was the last thing Mancwane said to her eldest daughter before she left the palace.

Dudzile did not know why her mother wanted to know where her father and the queen were going. She thought that she wanted to go and try to persuade him to give her another chance. Since she also wanted

her mother back at the palace she agreed to find out. Soon Mancwane's car drove out of the Zungu palace leaving the kingdom behind. On the way she looked like someone who has lost her mind, she kept laughing and shaking her head. She could not believe that Makhosini threw her out like a used tissue after doing such a small thing, to her what she did was small and if they looked at it properly they would understand that she wanted the people to know the kind of queen they were going to have. What was wrong in warning the people? Her priority as the queen was to her people not a woman she barely knew. But it wasn't over, she was going to make sure that she never gets to enjoy her new position and certainly not while she

is cast out of the palace like that. She wanted revenge and she wanted her husband back. She didn't go far after leaving the palace, she booked herself into a BnB in town and waited for her daughter to contact her with the information she needed. Late in the evening people started leaving and Sonto went to her house to get her bags the maids packed for her. Duduzile went to her father, she knew that by the time he comes back from wherever they were going they would have gone back to school. "Dad, I wanted to say goodbye before you leave and tell you that I will miss you." Makhosini pulled his daughter into his arms and embraced her. "You know that your mother didn't give me any choice in the matter right?" He asked

and Dudu nodded against his chest. "I know dad." She pulled out of the hug and smile at him. "So where are you taking the queen?" She asked with an innocent smile. "Oh no! Dudu if you want something this time ask the queen to get it for you am not going shopping for your stuff again." Makhosini refused, every time he went away Dudu would ask for souvenir from the place he went. "First tell me where you are going and I will decide if I want something." She told her with a smile making her father shake his head with a smile of his own. "We are going to Rome." He told her making her gasp. "Rome really!" She could not believe it, he took her mother to Cape Town, MaNdaba to Victoria falls in

Zimbabwe, MaZulu to Maldives and MaZondi to Accra in Ghana.

The queen was going to Rome? "Then you have to bring me some thing dad, we are talking about Rome here!" Makhosini chuckled. "I will ask the queen to get all of you something, am sure she won't have a problem with that." He promised making Dudu nod, soon Sonto appeared and Makhosini left his daughter meeting his Queen halfway. "Ndlovukazi yami." (My Queen.) Sonto blushed "Ready to leave?" She asked and he smiled at her. "With you, always." He said smiling at her. "Just done leave for more than the week you spoke of." Said Sakhile from behind his mother. "Why?" Makhosini asked with a raised eyebrow. "Don't start with me Makhosini Zungu, I have things

to take care of and businesses to run. You two have a kingdom to run so please let's meet each other halfway." Sakhile said making Makhosini laugh. "Fine, we won't be gone for more than a week. Happy now?" He asked making Sakhile shrug "very happy." He left as they went out to the car that was going to take them to the airport. Dudu sent a message to her mother telling her where her father and the queen were going.

Mancwane frowned when he saw the message. "Rome huh, no worries you will be coming back and I will be here waiting." She said looking at the phone with a bitter expression. She made a call and soon the call was connected. "Ndlovukazi" (my queen) the latter answer the call making a smiled appear on Mancwane's

face. "Start with the plan knowing Makhosini as well as I do then they will be back in a week or so." She told the person. "Everyone we jaws to work with is ready for your command." The latter reported. "Good, tell them we are going old school and to be ready in a week with everything." She told the person.

"Ndlovukazi" (my queen) she cut the call then laid on the bed staring at a ceiling. In the jet Makhosini led Sonto to the room there and they laid down. "I haven't had time to ask, how are you feeling after everything that happened today?" He asked making Sonto sigh "You know when it happened I was more than ashamed, I wished for the ground to open up and swallow me whole. But when Sakhile spoke to me, I felt like I can do

anything, like I can take on the world and win because he was with me. You both gave the strength I needed to finish today and stand tall amongst my people." She told him. "Am sorry sweetheart, i have already failed you so early into our relationship and am sorry but at the same time I am proud of you.

What you said is true and now more than ever I want to speed up the building of your hospital and get all the paperwork submitted. The kingdom needs it in fact they need more than that. Having you by my side is opening my eyes to a lot of things that need to be changed in the kingdom and I thank you my Queen. I have no doubt that you will make a wonderful queen to our people." He told her kissing her forehead. "Thank you, that means

a lot coming from you." Makhosini pulled her into his arms sniffing her scent. "I love you Sonto." She stiffened in his hold and he pulled out and cupped her face making her look at him. "Sonto I mean what I just said, I love you, none of my wives has ever made me feel the way you make me feel, it's like I am meeting you for the first time all over again and I can't stop my heart from skipping a beat when am near you or wondering if am doing the right thing or look good enough for you. You make me feel like a teenage boy with a crush." He confessed his feelings for the second time to her.

"MK, I am not the same woman I was when we first met, I have been with so many men and I don't feel worthy of you anymore. Let me

keep the position of a queen like your ancestors wanted but anything other than that is impossible between us, focus on your wives and let me be." She told him. "Please don't say that sweetheart o beg you please. I want to be with you in every way possible please don't do this." He begged her. "I have made up my mind, focus on your wives, one has already left the palace and I am sure that wherever she is she blames me for it. I don't need anymore stress and being with you intimately is going to give me that. Please try to understand." She told him. "You are telling me that o should forget what I feel for you? Is that what you really want?" He asked with a serious expression. "Yes it what I want." She told him and he nodded and stood up

from the bed and felt the room. He was hurt by what she said but he could not force her to do something she doesn't want to. He went and took a seat then asked for a glass of whiskey from the hostess. He took his laptop and started working. He wanted to distract himself and not think about the woman in the room. They were going away together but he was not allowed to touch her, to show her how he feels about her and he hated it. He wondered what it would take for her to give him a fair chance, he thought that going on this trip was going to help them reconnect and be together again. But now that was not possible, he stood up and asked for another drink. The space was limited on the jet and he couldn't go anywhere to get some air and

take out some of his frustrations. The only thing he could do was drink his sorrows away, he hated everything about the situation he was in. He wanted to talk to his brother but he could not, at least not until they land, he felt suffocated. "Gods of my ancestors why are you punishing me this way?." He said downing yet another glass.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 31

The trip didn't go as well as Makhosini had thought, yes they enjoyed themselves and he got to know the real Sonto better but she did not once change her mind about what she said they slept on the same bed but not once

did she even touch him or indicated that she wanted things to go in that direction. It was so frustrating and it made him grumpy. Sonto could see that but she decided to ignore it, she wasn't ready to be with him intimately and there was a lot she needed to learn about this polygamy thing. She didn't want to just jump in blind on top on that she had to be queen and lead the people. It was a lot to deal with at once. It was their second day back and Sakhile went home. Sonto was spending time with the seer he was teaching her the duties of the queen of the Zungu kingdom, their ways and the rituals they perform. Then she would spend the rest of the day with Khulekani teaching her the history of the kingdom, who they are allied

to, what businesses they had and all that. At first she could not wait to come back but now she felt like the time they spent away was not enough. Her maids were doing a good job though taking care of her mail and sorting it out for when she starts her duties. She had a lot of mail from other kingdoms congratulating her to people needed her assistance and advice. She would take an hour before going to bed replying to the letters and drafting thank notes to those who wished her well then ask her maids to sort the letters from the people in order of importance. She had not time yet to reply on them until she knows all the laws of the kingdom.

The wives were also keeping to themselves and not present much in the palace as everything their did such as handling the complaints of the people was now given to the queen. They didn't do much though just sort the letters and give to Khulekani to resolve the issues. They were never given that much responsibility as the seer forbade it from happening saying it will conflict once the true queen takes her place. Sonto had just eaten dinner in her house when Khulekani came in. "My Queen, do you happen to have some food left?" He asked making Sonto raise her eyebrow at his question as he usually eats in the main house. "Yes I believe there is still food left, why, did they make something you done like?" She asks him. "No am just

avoiding my brother, his been grumpy since you both came back and he snaps at every little thing." He told her taking a seat while a maiden brought his food. Sonto knew why. "Just give him time he will be alright." She told him shrugging. "I don't know, something is bothering him and when he is like this, he can go on for a while. The last time he acted this way was years back when he came back from school, well we thought that he was coming back from school but it's the time he left you. He didn't talk to anyone that whole holiday, our father thought that he was sick but he said that he wasn't. He went back to school still like that and never came back for June holidays the following year." He sighed "My brother was away from home until he

finished his law degree and when our father asked him to come home he would make excuses that he was busy with school and wanted to concentrate. Our father let him be as he thought that he was scared of being king, our father did say that he was not going to wait till he died to step down. He wanted to step down as soon as Makhosini finished school, but my brother never gave him that chance and our father let him. He stayed away for four years. He finished school then took on an internship for a year and only came back home when he was told that our mother was sick." Sonto didn't know that and she couldn't understand because he left her not the other way around. "I done understand how he can act that way when he

is the one that left me." She told Khulekani. "He thought you cheated on him and got pregnant by someone else. I only got to know about that when we started looking for you. He was sad when he told me about you but didn't go into much detail like he wanted to forget or ever happened." Khulekani told her, but Sonto refused that it would be the same now. "Well this is not the same, I just told him that I am not ready for a relationship right now." He told Khulekani making him choke on the juice he was drinking. "So it's about you again?" He asked and Sonto nodded.

"My queen, I don't want to meddle but I think that my brother believes you don't want to be with him because he left you. Am sure he

believes that you are angry that he married other women and am afraid that his behavior will not change anytime soon. His been sleeping in the main house since you came back and hasn't spoken a word to his other wives. I think he believes by doing that you will see that he is serious about being with you. His stupid I know." Khulekani said. "He needs to stop that because they will think that I am the one who stopped him from visiting them and they will have me for it. I don't want that Khulekani." Sonto told him. "Then talk to him, tell him that and maybe he will listen." Said Khulekani getting up from the chair. "Am leaving now my Queen Goodnight." Khulekani said. "Let me walk you out. I need some hair after this talk." They

walked out together and Makhosini was standing outside when they came out. He didn't like it but he didn't not say anything. "Bafo, am going to bed now, see you in the morning." Khulekani patted his back and left. "Goodnight" Sonto said and turned to leave but he held her hand. She turned to look at him. "Can I please sleep with you? Nothing will happen I just want to sleep by your side." He asked her but she shook her head. "No, you have other wives that need you, I want things to go back to normal and I want you to go and be with the one you were supposed to be with today." She told him making clench his fists. "So you are sending me to others when I want to be with you? You really don't want me I see." He said angry that she

refused. "MK those women didn't bring themselves here they were brought by you and you promised to be a husband to them. So go and do what you are supposed to am not here to change things and what you are doing to going to make them hate me. I don't need that right now, so please be the husband you promised them you will be to them and besides you and I are not married we are just king and queen of this land. I am the one who has no right to you not them." She told him then turned around and left. Makhosini was left there thinking, she was right they were not married, how can he be so stupid? No wonder she didn't want to be with him, she thought of herself as a home wrecker and not the wife. Makhosini was

frustrated, they only did what was necessary which was the crowning and appease the gods but they were not joined together as husband and wife officially. When he thought about that he went to find his brother. "Vula Khulekani" (open up Khulekani) he opened for him and he went into his room. Khulekani was ready for bed at that time. "What's wrong?" He asked him. "I want to marry Sonto and make her my wife officially." He told him and Khulekani threw himself on the bed with a heavy sigh. "Did she says that she wants to get married?" He asked his brother. "No but she said that she doesn't have a right to me as well are not married and that my other wives have more rights to me than she does." Makhosini told him. "She was not wrong but I

don't think she said that so you can marry her, I think she said it to make you realize that you are neglecting your wives because of her. Brother I suggest you forget about getting married and focus on your wives." Khulekani told him. "That is just it, I can't do it, ever since I met her, she is all I think about, she alone was meant for me and those women faded to the background when she came here. I want to live for her, make her happy and love only her." He told his brother. "Makhosini Zungu I refuse to let you treat those women this way, they are your responsibility and you will fulfill your duties as a husband to them. I know that it will be difficult with your soulmate here I mean think about how our father was with our

mother? He was crazy in love with her to a point that her passing drove him mad. But you don't have the luxury of loving only your soulmate, you have three others now man up and make it work." Khulekani told him. "Well it won't be easy and I don't feel anything for them since I met Sonto again. It's like they don't exist anymore" Makhosini said. "I never said it will be easy but it has to be done. I won't let you create unnecessary enemies for the queens new doesn't need. You also need to get one thing into your head that they are not going anywhere, they are the mothers of your children and Zungu wives. Treat them like it, they deserve nothing but respect and loyalty from you and you will give it to them.

Now can I please sleep?" Makhosini had nothing more to say and left.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 32

It's been a week of Sonto learning the ins and outs of the kingdom. But today Khulekani was taking her out to a coffee shop in town. He wanted her to relax a bit before taking on her duties on Monday, they were sitting together having coffee and a sandwiches. "I needed this." Said Sonto taking a small sip of her coffee. "I know you did that is why I brought you here." Khulekani told her. "Thank you" she thanked him with a small smile. "Am only doing my job my queen, remember tomorrow we have a press conference to

introduce you to the press since we didn't invite them to the crowning. They are already hounding me about a time and I actually needed to get away myself before I went crazy." Sonto laughed, she saw a waitress and asked her for a glass of water. She nodded and left. "Let's get it over and done with so that on Monday I can start working on the issues my people are facing." She told him. "You right, by the way, my brother has approved the budget for your hospital and I have gotten the approval of the plans from the municipality. The building will be starting in a week or so." He told her making her smile content.

She pushed her chair back to get up and hug Khulekani. But the leg of the chair tripped

the waitress that was coming with a glass of water, it spilled over her shoulder with the contents wetting the whole table. She gasped then ran out the back door, while they were looking at her running shocked by her behavior they smelled something burning and when they turned back the fabric on the table was burning. It turned out that it wasn't water the waitress brought but acid, Khulekani jumped up pulling a frozen Sonto to him. "Get the owner now!" He yelled and by now the few people that were in the coffee shop were looking at the table talking amongst each other. "What did they do to the poor girl to make her want to burn them with acid?" One could be heard saying. "Maybe that was her man and that woman

took him." The other said. "I would have made sure that I don't miss then if that's the case." People were speculating talking as if Sonto and Khulekani were not there. Soon the manager appeared and bowed his head. "Sir and mam." Khulekani glared at him. "Are you the owner of this place of the manager? Because the badge you are wearing says manager not owner and I wanted the owner" Khulekani told him coldly. "Am sorry sir but the owner is not here at the moment but I can assist with anything you need." The manager told him. "How about I sue this place and the owner for attempting to burn us with acid, would that make him come out here?" The manager swallowed hard. "I will go and get her air." He hurried and said. "I

thought you might now go!" The manager left in a hurry going to the office. Soon a sound of high heels could be heard clicking on the tiled floor coming their way. Everyone turned to look at the direction, a tall full figured woman appeared wearing a navy formal dress, a off white three quarter jacket and off white heels. Her face was cold and one could tell just by looking at her that she had attitude. "I am the owner, I believe you wanted to see me." She said and connected her hand in front of her looking at the two.

Her attitude repulsed Khulekani, he looked at the table that hand smoking coming out from it and a huge hole from being burnt by acid then looked at the owner. "Yes I did now

please tell me why are we being targeted by your employees?" He asked glaring at her, the woman didn't pay him any mind instead he looked at the manager "get all the employees here so that this gentleman can point the one who targeted them." The manager nodded and went to gather everyone by this time Sonto was looking at this arrogant woman annoyed by the way she was treating them, that is no way to treat customers. Soon all the employees were standing there but the waitress was no where insight. "Here are all my employees, now please point out the one that targeted you." She said looking at Khulekani. "She's not here." He told her. "Am sorry but these are the only employees I have." She told them. "Haibo sisi I also saw

the waitress that came to this table and she ran after spilling the contents of that glass and you say she doesn't work here? How when she was wearing your uniform?" Asked a lady that was sitting on a table next to theirs. "I don't care what you saw, I know my employees and they are standing in front of you. If this gentleman can't see the one who "targeted" them then am afraid there is nothing I can do." The woman said then turned around to leave "get back to work" she ordered before walking away. Khulekani looked at his retreating back and shook his head "let's go, I will deal with this" he said leading Sonto out without even paying and no one stopped them. The owner was watching them leaving from the kitchen door then

went back to her office and made a call. "The plan failed" she said as soon as the call connected. "Don't worry I have time soon she will get what's coming to her." The latter said then cut the call. When Khulekani got to the car he made a call. "My prince" answers the person. "Find out everything you can about the own of Treats, the coffee shop in town." He ordered "On it." He cut the call and looked at Sonto "am sorry my Queen, if that glass didn't spill then she would have burnt you with that acid." He apologized with his head low. Sonto wave her hand dismissing him.

"I don't care about that but what I care about is who would want to do something like that to me? I know that I don't have enemies

here at least none that I know of, so who would want to harm me?" She asked "You are the queen now and a lot of people have seen you. Hurting you will hurt both my brother and the kingdom. You are the one that gave this kingdom hope, you brought our prince home and other people were already eying the throne seeing that my brother didn't have an heir and I could not step up and take it." Khulekani told her thinking. "Then if that is the case shouldn't they be targeting my son? I mean he is the one who's going to take the throne after his father not me." Sonto said thinking and what she said made Khulekani think as well. She made sense but he could not rule out anything until he finds out everything about that coffee shop. Back

at the Mdlalose household things were getting worse, savings were running out and the wife's car had to be sold to cover the household expenses. Smanga was helping but his savings were running out as well and still no luck in finding a job. Bangekile was only good for waking up late, watching tv and demanding food which irritated her brother so much. "Bangekile clean the lounge and fix the couches." Her mother told her coming from the kitchen. "Why? It's not like we are expecting anyone everyone distanced themselves now that we are poor." She said focusing back on the tv. "Even if we are not expecting anyone that doesn't mean we should let the house be dirty." Her mother reprimanded making her huff. "If you didn't

let go of the cleaner I wouldn't have to clean and since you are the one who fired her then why don't you clean?" She asked busy on her phone. "How were we supposed to pay her? I had to let her go because we don't have money to pay her and now get up and do as I asked." She told her with a stern voice and walked back to the kitchen.

Bongekile ignored her and continued being busy on her phone. Soon the WiFi switched off and the TV. She looked around but her mother was not in sight. "Mah!" She called for her mother and she came. "What is it?" She asked holding a dish towel. "The WiFi and TV just went off." She told her. "Oh okay" she said then turned to go back to the kitchen. "Mah why are they off?" She asked

annoyed that she wasn't answered. "That's because we didn't pay for the subscription so they witched them off." She told her and she huffed getting up from the chair. "What!, why did you pay them?" She asked following her mother behind. "Because we don't have money to pay them." She answered and continued being busy with a pots on the stove. "Then what am I supposed to do in this house the whole day?" She asked horrified that she had to be without WiFi and she didn't have data since she didn't get her allowance anymore.

"Mmm let me think, how about you go out there and find a job to help out?" Her mother said. "I will only find a job when you do, remember you said that a man must

provide so then ask dad to provide and not ask me to go looking for a job." She told her then opened the fridge to look for juice but there wasn't any she huffed and closed it with a bang. "I can't seem to get anything I want in this house." She mumbled. "My dear child it seems that you are the only one who doesn't see that the situation in this house is not the same as before, we don't have money for the things we used to have and soon we won't have money to buy food. Am not sure what you are going to do then because it seems you are turning a blind eye on purpose like this has nothing to do with you but it does. As much as it is my fault you ended up this way am also telling you that it's time to wake up now and start using your brain. Your

father and I won't be alive for long to make sure that you have food on the table and clothes to wear. You have to start being independent." She told her. "Well, that time has not come yet, you are both still here and can make a plan. Besides I am going to marry a rich man that I won't have to work a day in my life." She told her then left the kitchen going to her room. Smanga who was standing by the door listening shook his head looking at his mother.

"Uthini ke manje mah?" (What are you saying now mother?) he asked looking at her with his head tilted to the side. "Smanga I admit that I ruined her but I never thought that things would turn out this way for us. I only wanted her to have a good life and never

have to struggle. For her to have standards and not just settle. I wanted her to know that she can have whatever she wanted and I never thought it will turn out this way. I don't know how to fix it and for once in my life I am scared for her. Am scared of what she will do to live the life she is used to."

She answered looking worried and sad.

"There is nothing you can do now than to let her learn the hard way, it's too late to teach her new things now." He told her then left the kitchen leaving his mother deep in thoughts. Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 33

Today was the day Sonto went to see the site where her hospital will be built, she was accompanied by guards and MaZondi. They

had gotten pretty close Over the past weeks much to Makhosini's disapproval. He liked that they got along but hated that all MaZondi could talk about when they are together is her and that affected him and his mood. He would end up shutting her up with a kiss wanting her to stop talking about the woman he could not get. It was too much for him to bare, he tried avoiding her as much as possible but that was an impossible task as he had to consult with her regarding many decisions that have to do with the kingdom. Just having her sitting there talking so close yet so far was killing him, he slowly withdrew to himself but did his duties to his wives. There wasn't anything he did for one that he didn't do for the other, he would

take time in each day to spend go out with them to dinner or whatever they liked. The wives were happy as they thought Sonto was going to take him away from them but it was the opposite, Sonto was the one mostly busy with the matters of the kingdom while Makhosini spent time with his wives and ended up being MaZondi who asked him when he was going to spend time with Sonto. Which Makhosini changed the subject and ended up not answering her.

MaZulu has not fully trusted Sonto but they talked, MaNdaba was the trouble maker and the villain of the Zungu kingdom. She distanced herself from the three as she was more close to Mancwane not the two younger wives. Khulekani had found out that the

owner of the coffee shop was Mancwane's best friend, they grew up together and went to school together. When she got married to her brother the friend was in Cape Town opening another coffee shop. So he put two and two together and figured that it was Mancwane that was behind everything. She didn't tell Sonto though as he didn't want to worry her but assigned extra security to her. He was currently sitting with his brother in the throne room after the meeting they had just had with the architect that was going to build the hospital while his secretary went to show Sonto the site. "So when is the construction starting?" Asked Makhosini "in two days my king, I must say having the queen here has really changed things, this

hospital should have been built a long time ago. Clinics and hospitals are far from this kingdom I saw when I was coming over." The architect said. "Well, what can I say? Somethings do take a back seat when there is no one motivating for them." He said as he walked him out of the throne room. Khulekani has not said a word, his been sitting there throughout the meeting and not said anything.

"Well then am sure the people of the kingdom will be pleased by the changes that come with the Queen and she does seem like a wonderful woman. Congratulations my king you really do have a true queen by your side." Makhosini smiled with pride in his eyes, what man doesn't want to hear others compliment

his woman? "We shall see." He said as the architect got into the car and drove off to the site. He went back to the house and looked at his brother that looked deep in thought. "Bafo kwenzenjani?" (Brother what is going on?) he asked as he took his seat. "I don't know but I feel like something is going to happen." He told him. "What do you mean? To whom?" Before Khulekani could answer the seer budged in. "Khulekani Zungu! Why are you ignoring your job?" Both brothers looked at him confused. "Musa ukungidonsela amehlo wena maan! Ukephi undlunkulu Khulekani Zungu ikephi indlovukazi yo Zungu wena mfana?" (Stop staring at me maan! Where is the queen? Khulekani Zungu where is the queen of the Zungu kingdom?)

Khulekani jumped from his seat and ran outside to his car with his brother on his tale. Just as he was closing the door Makhosini was closing the backseat door and he didn't waste time driving out the palace gates in high speed. Getting to the site felt like forever yet it was a twenty minute drive, when they got there MaZondi's cry was the first thing they heard followed by the moans and groans of the guards. All six shot on both legs and laying on the ground bleeding. MaZondi had a gash on her forehead also bleeding, Khulekani scanned everyone looking for one person only. His Queen, Makhosini was the first to speak to MaZondi. "Where is she?" He asked through gritted teeth. "Baba they took her, men in a white van came out

and shot the guards then took her." She explained as tears streamed down her cheeks. "I tried to stop them baba I couldn't am sorry." She cried but Makhosini's concern was not on her but on Sonto. "Khulekani!" He called for his brother who shook where he stood, that did not sound like Makhosini his brother at all but like his late father the late king Muzikayise Zungu. "My king" he bowed not because he wanted to but the power that radiated off him was too much to bare. "You drive, we are getting my queen MaZondi I will get someone to come pick you up and send the guards to the hospital." He wasn't standing when he said that he was walking towards the car as he took out his phone making a series of calls to his elite

guards. As soon as they merged into traffic the convoy of black Mercedes Benz fell into line follow the car they were driving in.

"Check traffic cam, atm cams, highway cams, I want a white van that just left the highway about 20 minutes ago found and I need up dates on my screen pronto!" Khulekani was on Bluetooth calling his connections while Makhosini was busy with the elite on the other side. "Spilt up! Only one car remains with other the rest take the different routes that pass here, find the van and the Queen. I need feedback every five minutes." He ordered on the earpiece no one had to say anything, they had recurved their orders and they started to split. The whole thing was

done so meticulously that traffic was not affected at all.

Sakhile was about to drive back to town to pick up Zala at the dairy when he suddenly felt his eyes heavy. He could not keep them open no matter how hard he tried, he leaned on the seat and closed his eyes for a moment but as soon as his eyes closed his grandfather appeared. "Sakhile, bazomlimaza umntanmi hambomlanda ndodana." (They are going to hurt my daughter and get her son.) that was all she said before the vision or dream as he did not know what it was shifted to show a woman being roughly pulled out of a car and into another then. Shifted again showing the previous car being burnt then to the woman being dragged out of the second

car and into a rusty looking building then tied to a chair. 'You used to sell right? How about giving it to my men for free' he heard a voice saying then a mocking laugh followed. 'Please let me go' as soon as he heard the pleading voice the vision show a beaten up Sonto with a busted lip and dry blood on her forehead running down to her cheek. His eyes snapped open and scanned his surroundings. He looked at the time and found that it wasn't even 10 minutes since he closed his eyes. He started the car and drive off but he couldn't shake what he saw and decided to call his uncle. It didn't take time for the call to be connected. "Not a good time mshana really not a good time." That was Khulekani's answered after picking up the call. "She really was taken

wasn't she?" He asked defeated. "I don't know how you know that but yes she was and are on the trail of the car that took her." He answered "that is useless the car has been burnt." Sakhile told him and before Khulekani could answer they saw smoke and the far distance where his people directed them. He pressed on the accelerator wanting to there the fast and indeed it was the van they were looking for burning. "Bloody hell!" Khulekani cursed under his breath. "I don't know how you knew about the things you just told me but the van is in front of us burning."

Khulekani confirmed "And I thought it was a dream." Sakhile said as he pulled over trying to think of everything he saw In the vision. "What vision? You know what forget about

that, it seems you know more than we do lead us to the right direction Gwabini." Khulekani. "He is like baba Mthombo" Makhosini said with a low voice but Khulekani heard him. "Our grandfather?" He asked shocked. "Yes." Confirmed Makhosini. "OZungu, OGwabini, Nyama ka Yishi Isha ngababhebhezili khuluma nathi nkosi silalele." (Talk to us my king we are listening) Khulekani said after praising their him.

Their grandfather was a very powerful king he had the ability to see things before they happened and now Sakhile did too Makhosini could not help but feel blessed. "TAke the grovel road and don't turn anywhere. Drive straight down, be careful they are waiting and doing things fast. They know that they

don't have much time and want to cause more damage before you get there." Sakhile told them and Khulekani didn't waste time making a u turn to the gravel road he mentioned as Makhosini informed the elite. Everything was done fast as Sakhile told them, he cut the call on the other side and looked up in the sky. "What exactly do you want from me mah?" He didn't understand why his grandmother would show him these things. Of course he didn't get an answer the sky was clear with no dark cloud in sight. He got into the car and continued driving.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 34

The place Sonto was held in smelled of gasoline, the smell was nauseating and Sonto didn't know which one was worse, the smell of her blood as they beat her up of the gasoline. Her right eye was already swollen and could only open it just a little bit. Mancwane stood there watching as she was being beaten by her men. "If only you had gone back to joburg and continued whoring none of this would be happening but no! You had to stay and take my place and my man." She spat as she watched with an evil smirk. "I was only taking back what was mine to begin with." Sonto answered with a weak voice but the smile on her face is what drove Mancwane crazy. "Looks like you want more beating." She said then looked at one of the man and he nodded

then punched Sonto hard on the stomach taking the air out of her lungs. She held her breath letting the pain pass as she inhaled slowly, it hurt so bad but she wouldn't give Mancwane what she wanted. To see her broken and begging her for her life. She spat blood and opened her one eye looking at her. "You can beat me all you like but you will be the queen and you will never have Makhosini or move back into the palace. You are a fugitive now and that is what you will remain as until the day you are caught and pay for all that you have done." Mancwane smiled.

"Great speech but let's see if you are going to be able to keep that attitude up when am done with you." She told her then came and bent in front of her. "I am going to remind

you of the good old days, remember the streets?" She whispered to her and Sonto spat on her face.

"That will happen over my dead body!!"

Mancwane laughed throwing her head back.

"What makes you think that you have a choice? Anyway don't answer that. Now all of you hurry up, that pigheaded Khulekani will find us soon." She ordered the man and that is when Sonto noticed the dirty mattress on the far side of the room. She shivered thinking about the times her usual customer, Blake would shove her in one of the shacks he used as a warehouse for drugs in Soweto. He paid well but he was a filthy pig that liked causing pain to get off. Each time when Sonto went with him she would come back

with broken bones. Either a rib or her nose, his type of pleasure was inflicting pain and got off in the screams the women make when he broke their bones. Wherever he would take her there would always be chains and a dirty mattress he would have her chained up on while he kicked her and getting harder and harder as she screamed for him to stop. Blake never slept with her or any of the women he would buy but he would beat them to a pulp until he came in his pants then go drop them off where he picked them up. He came around at least 5 times a month and those would be the number of times she would end up in ICU with yes another set of broken bones.

She hated Blake but his money was what got her to finally stop working on the streets and register to further her studies. The men untied her then pushed her to the ground then laughed when she fell face first as she was pushed. "Get up you whore! It's not like we will give you something you are not used to." Said one of the men as he picked her up by her hair. As much as she didn't have the energy his grip on her hair was too tight that it felt like her hair was going to come out with the roots. She willed her shaky legs up and prayed for her knees to hold her up. "Damn you are such a whore, they haven't done anything and yet your legs are already shaking like this." Mancwane tormented as she shoot of the side watching. The man

dragged her all the way to the other side of the room and threw her on the smelly mattress. If she were in a better position she would have asked where they got it from as it smelled like urine and vomit. It had brown stains on it like it once belonged to a drunk who couldn't hold his bladder when he is drunk.

When the smell invaded her nostrils she gagged trying to stop the bile from coming up. She heard clicking and lifted her head. The man that held her by the hair was undoing his belt. "I want to fuck your mouth till I cum, I want to see my sperm running down the corners of that sexy little mouth of yours." He smirked looking down on her and pulled his pants down with his briefs. His

member stood proud pointing at her, she was on her knees looking at him. "Undress or we will do it for you." He said getting closer to her. "I would like to see you try and undress me." She said calmly, but that was just a facade as she was falling apart inside. She didn't know what to do but she wasn't going to give them the satisfaction of being her give up. "Boys!" Mancwane called to the other four and they rushed to Sonto's side roughly trying to undress her, ripping her top apart in the process. She was fighting them but they were too many for her to fight off at the same time. Just as one manage to rip the bottom part of her dress they heard Mancwane curse under her breath. "Shit!"

They turned to look at her and she was looking out the small window.

"They are here, they found us." She told the men. The one pulled his pants up and ran to her side looking out the window as well. "Shit! quickly into the tunnel now!" The man instructed Mancwane pushing her toward the wooden door on the floor that was help open by one of the men. Sonto didn't see the door before and was shocked to see it now but was relived at the same time that she was going to be saved. "Burn it to the ground, now!" Mancwane instructed as she went into the door followed by four of the men. The one that pushed her stood there with a lighter in hand. "You thought we would just leave like that?" He questioned with his head

tilted to the side with an evil smirk before throwing the lighter on the floor with it catching fire immediately because of the gasoline that was poured in the room. He then ran to the door and got in the closed it behind him locking it as he followed the others. Smoke filled the house quickly making Sonto crawl towards the middle of the house, it hand also caught fired but it was not as much as it was on the sides Makhosini and Khulekani saw the smoke just as they were closed to the house and they panicked. They stopped the car when they were close enough and Makhosini got out before it even stopped properly and ran to the door kicking it. Khulekani soon joined and they kicked together. The door fell forward

but before they could go in strong arms held them behind. "Sorry my king but we cannot let you go into a burning house." Makhosini's elite were the ones that held them back while the others went in without hesitation covering their noses with their jackets as they went in to try and protect themselves from the smoke. "I order you to release us now! My Queen is in there!" Makhosini roared angry, Khulekani was overpowering the man that was holding him that another man had to come and hold him back. A few minutes later the men that went into the house came out holding Sonto. As soon as they were out the men released them, both brothers ran to her and Makhosini was the first to get to her taking her from his elite.

When Khulekani saw the state she was in he turned around and yelled looking up in the sky. "Aaaaaah!!" He looked like a crazy person with veins popping out on his neck, arms and forehead. Makhosini could not even hide the tears that fell from his eyes as he took her to the car. Khulekani soon followed while the elite looked around the house to see if there was someone still there. The flames on the house were already high and the smoke was thick in the air. Khulekani got into the drivers seat with his eyes bloodshot red. He looked like an animal as he pressed hard on the accelerator heading to the hospital. With shaking hands Makhosini tried to clean the blood on her face gently and then tried to check if she was violated in any way but she

would wince every time he touched her. She was in and out of consciousness as they drove. "Stay with me sweetheart, you are safe now, am here and am never letting you go." Makhosini whispered to her. Khulekani didn't say a word, he felt like a failure, his Queen was taken from right under his nose and he didn't do anything to protect her. He regretted not going after her when he felt that something was wrong and looking at her state he could not help but think the worst

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 35

The brothers paced the hospital hall like crazy, all the hospital staff stayed far away

from them as they could tell that they were in no mood for talking. Every minute they spent there without an update felt like hours, it was an excruciating wait and it was driving them insane. After what felt like a life time a doctor came out and they both stopped pacing and looked at him. The doctor paused in his steps seeing the deadly look in their eyes, it wasn't directed at him but at that moment he felt like going back and ask someone else to come and give them an update. "My king, my prince." He cleared his throat when they didn't respond but stared at him. "The queen will be fine, she was badly beaten with two broken ribs, we have also noticed that those ribs were broken before which is why they broke easily this time. The

swelling on her face will go down soon." The doctor reported and waited for them to ask questions but wished they didn't he wanted to get out of there as soon as possible. "Can I see her?" Asked Makhosini and the doctor was quick to nod. "Yes, yes you can but she is sleeping, she will wake up soon through." He answered then led the way to the ward not wanting to waste time. Both brothers followed behind the doctor, when he got to the ward he stopped outside the door and gestured with his hand. "You can go right in." He told them then stepped aside giving them space to walk. Makhosini opened the door and went in followed by Khulekani. The doctor closed the door behind them and left immediately.

Khulekani stood at the foot of the bed while his brother took a seat on the visitor chair. He took her hand and squeezed it a little. "Am here sweetheart, please wake up." He spoke softly to her. Khulekani looked at her and felt guilty. "Am sorry my king, I failed to protect our queen, it's my fault that she is here." He lowered his head ashamed.

Makhosini looked at his brother and did not like that he blamed himself. "It's not your fault Khulekani, the only person that is at fault is the one that took and made her like this. The one we have to find and punish for what he has done. Now snap out of it and find him. I know that if anyone can find him it is you." He tried to encourage him but he shook his head. "I would like to stay until she wakes

up if that is okay with you." He told him. "You are his protector Khulekani of course you can stay." Khulekani nodded and after that silence filled the room. They sat there quietly waiting for her to wake up, they were both deep in thoughts trying to figure out who the person that took her is. They had no enemies that would be bold enough to do something like this. Well, at least that is what they would like to think. About an hour and half later Sonto started to move her hands then fluttered her eyelashes then opened her eyes. She quickly closed them because of the light and because it stung the half closed one. She tried again and opened them.

One was blood shot red but the good one was fine. Makhosini took the jug of water and poured a glass for her then helped her drink. Then put the glass aside then took her hand again. "How are you feeling?" Asked Makhosini. "Like I have been hit by a truck a couple of times but am okay." She told and looked at Khulekani. He could look at her and she saw that he was avoiding meeting her eyes. "Don't ever scare me like that again. I thought I had lost you and it drove me crazy" he told her. "I will try not to, did you find her?" She asked and for the first time since she woke up Khulekani looked at her. "Her? Were you taken by a woman?" Asked Makhosini. When she said her Khulekani knew who she was talking about. "Mancwane"

Khulekani said and Makhosini turned to look at his brother then Sonto who nodded. "You are telling me that Mancwane the one that used to be my wife did this to you?" Asked Makhosini for confirmation. "Yes and it wasn't the first time." Khulekani answered "What do you mean it wasn't the first time?" Khulekani didn't tell him about the coffee shot incident since he has been acting up he tried to avoid him as much as he could.

"About a week ago I took the queen to the coffee shop in town, a waitress there almost burnt her with acid but unfortunately she slipped and the acid spilled on the table then she ran. I investigated the incident and found out that the owner was Mancwane's best friend, I had people monitor her and tell

me whenever she met with Mancwane but nothing had happened until today." Makhosini fumed in anger. "She has gone too far! She is the mother of my children and that is why I only kicked her out of the palace and didn't kill her but now she had pushed me too far. Zama Ncwane is going to pay for this!"

Declared Makhosini already on his feet with veins popping on his forehead. "I think she is sick or maybe too angry I don't know. But the way she spoke and how she looked at me told me that she was losing it. She blamed me for taking her place and stealing you from her" she told him. "I was never hers to begin with! And I am no toy I am not owned by anyone." Makhosini said. "I understand where she is coming from but I also think that she went

to far." Sonto said thinking back to the rusty house she was in and shook her head trying to get rid of the image.

"She ordered them to rape me and then burn me alive in that house." She told them with a low voice. "Starting today you will not leave my side, Khulekani will fine her and we will deal with. Until then you are I will not be separated" Makhosini declared. "I will not let her break me, I believe that she wants to see me broken but I won't give her the satisfaction. She will not see me down." She told them determined. "I love your spirit baby but you are not leaving my side until she is found and dealt with." Makhosini told her. "Get well my queen." Khulekani told her then left the room, he was angry that someone

could be so cruel, Mancwane acted like she was not a woman and did that to another woman. Come to think of it, most of the human trafficking rings it's women that lured others into that trap. It's never the men that choose, yes they do the kidnapping but the women they work with are the ones that come up with recommendations as to who must be taken next and when. If that wasn't the case then a lot of women wouldn't go missing and not be found like that. It's always another woman close to the one that was taken that has something to do with the disappearance of the other.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 36

"Smanga please my son, just a tray of chicken would be enough." She begged but Smanga shook his head. "Am sorry mah but I don't have money." He told her and turned to leave. She held his arm. "Smanga please, we have been eating pap and cabbage or rice and potatoes for weeks now. Please, am tired of eating the same thing every day." She begged some more. "Am tired as well mah but this is all that we can afford, we are low on cash and what is left is what we are using to buy what we can to have food. You refused to sell any of the stuff in the house even though you can see that the situation is bad. Am tired mah, am trying to get a job but one is responding to me and I don't know what to do anymore." He told her and he left going up

the stairs. Bangekile came in the kitchen looking depressed. "Am thinking of going to town and look for a job to help out mah." Her mother looked at her in disbelief. Bangekile had changed over the weeks as things continued to get worse, at first she thought that things will get better and that it was only a matter of time before they do. But when she started not having data on her phone to keep her busy and sending callbacks she saw that nothing will change. At least not anytime soon, since then she has kept to herself. She tried sending callbacks to her friends but none of them responded, that hurt her because she used to spend a lot on those girls but now that she needed them they were not there.

They stopped visiting when her car was sold and could not drive them around anymore. Calls also lessened until they stopped all together. "Are you sure?" Asked her mother teary eyed, now they depended on the little that Smanga had left, Mdlalose would go out early in the morning in hopes of being picked up by one of the construction vehicles for the day so that they can get something. Sometimes he would be picked up and that money would be used for electricity or something to cook for the night. The other times he not be picked up and he would spend the day sitting in the backyard looking miserable. Oh how he wished that he had force his daughter to marry that boy none of this would be happening to them. He would

sometimes think about that. He would look at Bongekile and wonder if she even feels guilty at all since this was all her fault. He didn't talk to anyone anymore not even his wife and some days he would go to bed without eating. He hated that he had to depend on his son now to eat, he could see how frustrating the situation was to Smanga and he didn't like it. "Mah I know that I have been selfish, it's just that I am not used to this, I have never lived this life before, I never lacked anything, I mean, I had a car at eighteen, wore the most expensive brands of clothing and had money to spend every month without working for it. I had it all and I didn't have to lift a finger to get it. Yes I saw things changing but I still had hope that things will

turn around. But now, now we are poor mah, we can't afford anything what else can I do to help than go looking for a job?" She told her mother who's tears were now falling. "But you have never worked a day in your life just like me, who would hire you?" She asked worried about her daughter. "I never thought I would ever say this but I will take anything I find mah. We need the money." Her mother hugged her and cried. "Don't cry mah we will okay, I don't know how but we will." Her mother sniffed and looked at her. "Go tomorrow morning, it is late now, I hear that job seekers wake up early if they want any chance of getting something." Bongekile nodded. "I will mah." She told her.

Her mother wiped her tears and they went to spend the day talking in the lounge. Mdlalose was in the backyard as usual deep in thoughts. His voice was missed around the house but no one could get him to say anything these days. In the evening her mother stood up and went to the kitchen with Bongekile followed behind. "What are we eating tonight?" She asked and her mother looked at her with sad eyes. "The usual." She answered taking out three potatoes they had left. "Let me peel them and you can do the rice." Her mother nodded and gave her the peeler. She went to take the rice and found that they only had enough for this evening. Tomorrow they will have to cook pap for lunch and the little cabbage they had left.

She missed those days when she didn't have to worry about what they will eat and wished that Mdlalose gets something in the morning. She hated going to the neighbors to ask for things, she used to be on top of the world and looked down on those people. Now that things are bad she was ashamed to go to them for help.

They made dinner and ate. Today was one of the days that Mdlalose didn't eat, he just went straight to bed without saying anything to anyone and nobody said anything to him as well. The following morning Bangekile woke up the same time as her father and went to boil water in the kitchen since the geyser was not working anymore she bathed then left going to get a taxi to town. She got off at the rank

and looked around at the people that were rushing to get to their workplaces. She stood there not knowing which direction to go, after standing there for a few minutes she decided to start from the top of the town and move along. With that plan in mind she hurried up the main road then from one shop to the other looking for a job and she got the same answer. "We don't have anything available at the moment." The sun was up and shining bright now. She was hungry and tired. She has been walking all morning and still nothing. She last ate in the evening and had no money to buy something to eat. Just the few rands she had for taxi to go home. Wiping the beads of sweat with the back of her hand she continued walking around not

knowing what else to do. She saw women in maid uniforms walking together laughing at talking. She hurried to catch up to them, she had a headache that she didn't know if it was from hunger or the sun. "Hello" the ladies looked at her. "Hey, how can we help you?" Asked one of the ladies. "I came here looking for a job but I haven't gotten anything so far. Do you know of a place that is hiring? I would take anything I don't mind." The ladies looked at the branded clothing she was wearing and wondered why a person like her would be looking for a job. "On the side we work in there is nothing, Mary did the white lady next to your house get someone?" She turned to the other woman she was with. "Yes, she got someone yesterday but I heard

that the coffee shop was looking for someone to wash the dishes and clean. Since you don't mind go there maybe they haven't found anyone yet." The lady answered, Bongekile hasn't been in town for a while and she didn't know about any coffee shop around there.

"I am not sure of where the coffee shop is, can you please point me to the right direction?" She asked politely. "You have to go back to the main road and go straight down. Right at the corner where the dairy is, the coffee shop is right next to it. You know where the dairy is right?" She asked. "Yes. I know where it is, thank you so much for your help." The ladies nodded and watched her leave. "I still don't get it" the one that was

giving directions said. "What don't you get?" Asked the one called Mary. "Like her clothes maan, those are things we only wish we could have, she is wearing them and looking for any kind of job available. How did she buy those things then" asked the lady. "Things change, maybe she had money once and things didn't work out. Or maybe her boyfriend booth those things for her." She told her. They kept looking in the direction she disappeared to before going their way.

Bongekile had hope now and even her steps were lighter. She didn't care about the blazing sun now, getting to the dairy she saw that it was open but the bakery was not. There was a note on the door. "Closed till tomorrow @7am." She sighed disappointed,

why would it be closed? She looked at the dairy and there was a black woman on the counter not the usual old white man. She wondered if the man has hired more staff recently. She sighed and walk to the rank. Getting a job was difficult that is what she learned today but she was coming back in the morning, she wanted to be there when they opened and see if she can't get a job then.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 37

Bongekile took a taxi home that afternoon feeling a bit hopeful about the following day. Upon arrival her mother met her halfway. "How did go?" She asked anxiously. "It went alright but I didn't get anything. There is a

coffee shop that is looking for someone but it was closed when I got there. Am going back tomorrow and am sure that I will get something." Her mother sighed not feeling hopeful at all. "Don't worry mother I will get something tomorrow I promise. Is there something to eat? Am hungry." Her mother nodded and led the way to the kitchen, she warned the food and gave it to her. She ate then washed her plate and went to rest in her room. Her father got something this day so he was not at home, Smanga spent his days on his laptop job hunting. On his way back Mdlalose bought 2kg rice, some potatoes and a tray of meat. It felt good to be able to do this, it depressed him not being able to provide for his family, made him feel

useless and that was not a good way to feel as a person. His wife was happy when he came home with those things in the evening as she didn't know what they would eat that day. She cooked and called everyone to the table when the food was ready. Mandlalo was there as well that evening. "I went job hunting today and I am positive that I will get something tomorrow." Bongekile told them. "I appreciate that you are trying my daughter I do but I don't think you will get a job, you have never worked a day in your life and no one will hire you." Mdlalo told her. "But am still going to try dad, I know that I have never worked but I have to start somewhere right? Maybe some day I will be able to go back to school and finish my degree." She

told her father, her words shocked Mdlalose because he has never heard his daughter speak this way. "God willing my dear, God willing." Mdlalose said. "How about you consider marrying that guy and then everything could go back to normal to us. Since now your brain started working do you understand that this is your doing?" Asked Smanga, Bongekile lowered her head. "I know that I should be considering that now Smanga but would you marry me after what I have done to that guy? I was mean to him, called him names and even if I look for him and tried talking to him, he would not give me the time of day because that's exactly what I did to him." Bangekile said regretfully. Smanga clicked his tongue. "You right, if I

were that guy I would never marry someone like you, but we all know that for things to go back to normal you have to marry him. I can't believe am saying this." He sat back in his chair. "I never believed in the ancestors and when I was told about this issue I did not believe it or care for it. But now, now I understand that there are other forces at play when it comes to us Africans. I maybe have studied and become a doctor but science is not all there is. To think that I chased families out of the hospital that wanted to burn incense and talk to answers telling them that it was unhygienic." He chuckled darkly thinking about the things he had done as well.

"You might have been the reason we are in this predicament but I think that I am being punished because of my own actions. My ignorance, I think the ancestors are trying to show me that they do exist and that I should acknowledge them. We have never known poverty because dad worked hard and his ancestors were behind him. He provided us with the best life a life that we took for granted and become arrogant instead of humbling ourselves. Umah here was the queen bee of the community and looked down on our neighbors. I never said anything mah but I was observing." His mother shook her head. "I wasn't that bad." She defended herself but Smanga shook his head. "Remember when our neighbor the one that lives in a shak, she

came here in the middle of the night asking me to go look at her child because he wasn't breathing well. We had a huge fight because you refused for me to go there saying that they must call an ambulance and wait. You said that I worked in private hospital and had better patients than the likes of her. Remember that? You mah didn't have or know what humanity was." His mother had tears in her eyes, she remembered the incident and her telling her neighbors off the following morning. Smanga was right, she was that bad. No wonder they gossiped about her. "I know Smanga and I think this is a lesson for all of us. As much as we don't like it and not used to it. Maybe this is mean for us to learn something, to reflect and become better

people." His mother said and everyone nodded. "Does that mean when things go back to normal that I don't have to spoil you?" Mdlalose raised his eyebrow looking at his wife and daughter. "That's not what we mean baba just not over do it like the last time." He laughed and that is a rare thing for him these days. They went to bed happy that evening with renewed hope. Yes things are not going well but they believed that they will be okay. The next morning they repeated the same routing with Bongekile waking up with her father and leaving the house early. She wanted to get to the coffee shop before it opened and maybe she will get the job. She took a taxi to town and got there just after 7, she didn't look so confused this morning as

she followed the people rushing to their work places. She was rushing to get to the coffee shop on time. When she got there they had just opened, she sighed relieved. She made it.

She fixed herself then went forward. "Good morning" she greeted the man that just opened the door, he had his back on her so she didn't see who he was. Zola turned and was shocked to see her but did not show it. "Good morning, how can I help you?" He asked wondering what she was doing there. "I am here looking for a job, I heard that this place was hiring." Shocked again Zola looked at her without saying anything. "Are you serious right now or you just came to mock us once again." His words confused Bongekile, she didn't

remember Zola so she didn't know what he was talking about. "I am not here to mock anyone, I am really looking for a job and I will take anything that you have." Again his words shocked Zola, he blinked a couple of times and looked at her. Nope! There was no doubt about it, it was her. "The only job we have is for a dishwasher and cleaner." He told her certain that she will not take it. "I don't mind." This time Zola's eyes popped what was happening now? Was he being pranked or what? He looked around trying to spot her friend or someone. But there was no one, just people going about their business. "Are you sure you want this job?" He asked not believing that she of all people will be willing to wash dishes. "Yes I am." She answered with a smile Zola

could not believe it, for the life of him, He just couldn't and was waiting for the shoe to drop.

"Right! Come on this way then, that is if you are willing to start today but we would like it if you did, that will take a lot of pressure off our waitresses." He told her as he led the way inside. "I don't have a problem with starting today." She told him and he stopped in his tracks and turned to look at her. He shook his head then continued leading the way to the kitchen. "This is our kitchen, you will get a uniform so that you don't dirty your clothes. It's clean now but soon it will be chaos in here, washed the dishes as they come so that they don't pile up. Also help cleaning when the baker is busy because

believe me it does get busy. Lunch is at 13h00 you do get a sandwich and a juice for lunch that is provided for staff for free. But if you want to buy or bring your own lunch you can do that as well. We have lockers right through that door and you can use the empty one. Any questions?" He asked "Where can I get the uniform?" Zola could not be anymore shocked. He walked to the cabinet and took house an overall and turned to her. "What size shoe do you wear? We have a size, 3,4&5" he asked "A size 5." He nodded and took out Tommy shoes and handed them to her. "Thank you." He nodded "you can change in the locker room." He told her and turned to leave but she stopped him. "I wanted to asked where the cleaning supplies

are kept." She asked him. "The cabinet behind you." she nodded and turned to look at the cabinet. "Thank you so much I promise that I will not let you down." This time Zola chuckled, this must be some kind of a joke that he could not wait to tell Sakhile about when he comes to pick him up in the evening. "I will leave you to it then, if you have any questions you can ask the staff as you can they are already busy setting up in front. My office is the other door if you have any complaints." She nodded and Zola left. When he got to the office he took out his phone to call Sakhile but then thought about the meeting that he was having thing morning. He placed the phone in the table and looked at the door sitting there in disbelief. "What

just happened?" He asked no one in particular as he was alone in the office.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 38

Soon the kitchen started getting busy and Bongekile worked without complaining. The baker was impressed by her, a young woman her age doing such a job without complaining was rare but then she thought that she will soon complain like they all do. She washed the dishes, cleaned the kitchen floor and cleaned the tables every time a customer leaves. The waitresses were happy to not have to clean. Zola kept checking up on her to see if she was still there and each time he

found her busy with something. Closer to closing time the coffee shop was closed for customers to give her time to clean the front. The waitresses and the baker left. She was alone cleaning and making sure that the coffee shop was clean as well as the kitchen. She then went to Zola's office and knocked. He invited her in and she opened the door and went in. "I wanted to clean your office before I leave." She told her but he shook his head. "It's not dirty you can clean it tomorrow." He told her and she nodded. "Are you done now" he asked and she nodded. "Yes I am." She told him. "Alright then, you can leave." He told her. "Thank you." She turned and left. She went to the locker room and changed then put her uniform in her bag

and left. It was six in the evening when she left and she was exhausted. She took a taxi home and she could not stop smiling. She was happy about her first job, she was invisible in the workplace as no one really paid attention to her and she liked it that way. It meant that no one was going to give her issues and that she will do her job and leave.

When she arrived home her mother was already waiting for her, she called her during the day but her phone was in her bag so she didn't hear it and when she got to the taxi. She didn't take it out so she didn't see the missed called. "Oh dear God! Bongekile, I was worried sick." She pulled her into a hug, she was confused as to why she was worried. "Am here mother, why were you worried?" She

asked. "I called you the whole day but you were not picking up and I couldn't not help but think of the worst. It's not safe out there." Bangekile sighed, she understood why her mother was worried. "Am sorry mah but I was busy the whole day I couldn't use my phone while working." She told her making her sigh in relief then her eyes widened. "You said working, does that mean you got a job?" Bangekile smiled at her and nodded. Her mother pulled her into a hug one more time squeezing her tightly. "Mah I can't breathe." Her mother pulled out and held her shoulders. "Please tell me you are not joking." She asked looked into her eyes. "Am not joking mah, I am working as a cleaner at the coffee shop in town. Look." She took out her

uniform and showed it TJ her mother. "Oh my, am so happy for you baby" she said.

"What has she done?" Asked Smanga coming down the stairs. "She got a job, she a cleaner at the coffee shop in town." His mother told him smiling. "Congratulations sis, you have just made me proud." Smanga told her and she smiled. "Thank you" she was happy, this was the first time his brother told her that he was proud of her, she didn't know that it would feel so good to hear him say that. "Let me wash my uniform then bath." She told her mother but she shook her head. "No let me wash it for you and you can bath then come and eat am sure you are hungry." She told her. "Thank you mah but am not that hungry they give staff free lunch so at least I had

something to eat during the day." Her mother smiled. "That's good then, go bath and I will wash it for you." She nodded giving her the uniform then went up the stairs leaving her mother and brother still looking at her. "I never thought I would see the day when Bongekile works and as a cleaner."

Smanga said. "I never thought she would ever work either, I knew that she was going to study and have her degree but I thought that she will get married soon after then later start a family." His mother said. "I never saw her as someone that could have children, the daughter you raised was not the type but this Bongekile might just make a good wife to someone one day." He said then

went to the kitchen to get water then went back to his room.

Sakhile arrived at the coffee shop thirty minutes after Bongekile left to pick up Zola. "Man am I glad to see you." Zola said when he saw him. "Man please we are not dating, why would you be happy to see me like you don't see me everyday?" He asked with a raised eyebrow. "Mxm am serious man, I wanted to call you in the morning but then I thought about the meeting you said that you will be having this morning." Zola told him. "What's the matter?" He asked thinking that it is something to do with the business. "I hired a cleaner today." Zola started. "Am glad man, so what is the problem?" Asked Sakhile. "The problem is the cleaner man, you won't believe

who it is." Sakhile couldn't think of anyone. "Who is it?" He asked his friend. "Your wife." Zola answered with a smirk on his face. "My wife?" Asked Sakhile with a frown. "Yes your wife, the daughter of the taxi owner, remember her?" Sakhile shook his head. "No man am in no mood to play this game with you am tired it has been a long day." Sakhile said leading the way out. "I see you don't believe me, so how about you drop me and wait in the morning so that you can see for yourself." Zola proposed. "Just tell me if you want to show me the woman you are interested in man and not make up things. We both know that she will never work as a cleaner, but in this life." Sakhile refused to believe it. "That's what I thought too when she showed up

asking for a job, I told her what the job was and expected her to insult me and leave but she didn't. She took the job and worked the whole day, the baker is happy with her and so are the waitresses." Zola told him. "Okay let's do this then, I will stay in the morning to see for myself." Zola was more than happy with that arrangement, after that Sakhile didn't say anything else but huh brain was working, why was she working as a cleaner? Did she know that the coffee shop belong to them? Did she not notice Zola? He looked at his friend could read her mind and answered his unasked question. "No, she did not recognize me maybe it's because of the change in me you know. We don't look the same you have to admit that." Zola said. "I

disagree, we are the same people it's just the clothes that changed and if it's really her and did not recognize you then that means she hasn't changed at all." Sakhile said Zola shook his head. "I thought so too but after seeing her at work today, I have to admit that something change in her, I don't know what but she was not as arrogant as she was when we met her. I don't know man but you have to see her for yourself." Zola told him. "That I will have to see for myself but am telling you now, that girl will never change, have you ever seen a leopard change it's spots" he asked. "Man that is a human being and people can change. Don't write her off just yet." Zola said but Sakhile shook his head. "Food me once, shame on me, fool me

twice?" He raised his eyebrow at his friend and by now they were parked outside his home.

"I don't care about all that man, just wait and see tomorrow." Zola got off the car and left.

Sakhile started the car and drove home.

When he got out of the car the guards were already outside. "Greetings my prince."

One of them greeted. "Greetings." He greeted them back. "I got a call from the palace, the king was very angry that we were not with you. He said that now more than ever we should be with you. He said that you can talk about us staying behind again when the person that took the Queen has been found." Sakhile nodded, he didn't like them following him around but now he had not

choice. "Fine! You can come with me tomorrow." He told them and the guards nodded. When he got into the house the maidens has already warmed the food. "My prince, would you like to eat first or bath." Asked the maiden. "I will take a bath first." He told her and she nodded. She left and the other one went then took a seat next to Sakhile. "Let me massage you a bit, you look tired, you shouldn't be over working yourself like this." Before Sakhile could say anything she was already behind him massaging his shoulders.

"You are so stiff my prince, I think it will be a good idea to massage your after you have taken your bath. I have oils that will help your relax." She told him and before he can

answer the one that left before came in and glared at the other one. "Your bath is ready my prince." She told him and Sakhile stood up then left. "What the hell are you doing?" The other one asked. "Taking an opportunity and if you are not able to recognize opportunities like this then one day you will be serving me." She told her then left, she went to Sakhile's room and found him in the shower. She set up everything for the massage and dimmed the lights. Just as she finished Sakhile came out with only a towel wrapped around his waist. He stopped in his tracks when he saw her. "Come lay down here my prince and I will massage you." She told him with a smile. "I think am okay." He said but she went to him and took his hand. "It's only a massage my

prince nothing more." Sakhile let her lead him to the bed then asked him to lay down on his stomach. He did as told and she got on top of him and sat on his bum. Just as he moved to protest she spoke. "Don't move, I will be done soon, just close your eyes and enjoy." Sakhile didn't say anything, she poured oil in her hand and started massaging him from his shoulders down to his back. It felt good so Sakhile closed his eyes. The maiden continued with the massage then when she was done she got off him. She went to his feet and massaged them as well. It felt so good that Sakhile relaxed enjoying the feeling.

She went to his legs and massaged them. She then moved the towel up leaving it close to

his bum then massaged his legs and each time her hand went up in between his legs almost touching his package. Sakhile could sex that the massage was not the same now as he also started getting hard. She kept teasing getting closer and closer to his package. His breathing changed and became laboured. He was so hard that he wanted a release, he didn't know what happened but Bangekile's face flashed in his mind and he opened his eyes and got up. "Enough, you can leave now." He told her and did not wait for her to say anything as he went to his wardrobe to get his pjs. The maiden smiled after seeing the tent the towel made. 'It won't be long now.' She thought as she gathered her stuff and left his room.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 39

The following morning Sakhile and Zola drove to town as usual. The drive was silent but not an uncomfortable one, it was in the morning and Zola knew that his friend was not a morning person. When they arrived at the coffee shop at around 6:45 Bangekile was already there waiting outside. Zola was the first to notice her and chuckled. "What are you laughing at?" Asked Sakhile. "Oh nothing in particular just that I like employees who are punctual and arriving for their work on time no matter what the job is." Zola answered vaguely. "Are you going to tell me

what you are talking about or should I just stop asking?" Asked Sakhile navigating the car to park. "Oh no need for me to tell you anything because you will see soon enough." Zola smirked and Sakhile just shook his head. Zola slowly got out of the car with an amused smirk on his face wondering what his friends reaction would be. He closed the car door then walked to the entrance of the coffee shop. "Hello there Bongekile, I see you quite early this morning." Sakhile froze and lifted his head to look in front of him. Indeed, Zola was right, that was Bongekile, shock quickly left his face and composed himself wearing a blank expression. "Hello Mr Ngwenya, good morning. I thought it will be a good thing to arrive on time." She told him and Zola

nodded. He opened and they both walked in. "I like that." Zola said, Sakhile came in. "Get me a cup of coffee and breakfast. I have a meeting to get to." Sakhile told her, Bongekile turned when she heard his voice and froze when she saw him. She heard his request but she didn't think it was directed at her. "Zola, is your employee going to get me what I need or I need to fire her to show her that I am not joking." Sakhile said looking at his friend, Zola chuckled.

"Bongekile, meet the second own of this place and I suggest you get him what he needs if you want to keep your job as he said." Zola said trying hard not to show the smile that threatening to show on his face. Bongekile's palms started sweating when she heard that

Sakhile was the boss here. What changed in the past months, wasn't he poor? She could not understand. "How do you like your coffee sir?" She asked then swallowed hard, she knew how to use the machines but prayed that the baker arrives before she has to make breakfast. She want sure if he would like something she made. "Surprise me." He said with a wave of an hand as he walked to Zola's office. His friend chuckled. "He is the difficult one of us, I suggest you get on with it." He told her and followed his friend to the office.

Bongekile quickly made a cuppa coffee with cream and made a cup for Zola as well then put them on a tray and went to the office. The door was not closed so she pushed it

opened and got in. Sakhile was standing by the window looking out while Zola was relaxing on his chair. She placed the tray on his desk then straighten up. Your coffee sir." Those words shocked Sakhile, he didn't like hearing her address him that way, he hated it for some odd reason and in turn his anger rised. How could he feel sorry for her when she treated him like garbage just months ago. He turned and looked at the coffee then glared at her. She swallowed hard. "I will go and make breakfast. Anything you prefer?" She asked looking at him, his eyes were cold and full of resentment. At least that's what she thought. "I said surprise me and be quick I still have a long drive ahead of me." He told her making her even more nervous. "Yes sir."

She said she left the office making sure to close the door behind her. Zola laughed looking at his friend. "Tell me something, why are you angry?" Zola asked. "Am not angry." Sakhile denied. "Right! Then what is going on?" He asked once again. "Am just wondering what happened to her." He said then took a seat in front of his friend's desk and added sugar to his coffee before taking a small sip. "I was wondering the same thing yesterday but I didn't get a chance to find out. Do you think her father has something to do with this?" Asked Zola. "No, I don't think so, that man loves his daughter, even if he was disappointed that day he didn't really want her with me. I don't know why he even came looking for me but it was not to convince his

daughter to be with me. Maybe he wanted to see me but my question remains. What happened for her to be working here today Sakhile asked. "You want me to ask her?" Asked Zola. "No, I will get the information before the end of the day..." before she could say more there was a knock on the door. Zola invited her in and she opened the door and came in with a tray with two plates on it. Zola removed some files from the table to create space. She placed the plates on the table. She made yesterday's breakfast special and Zola was impressed clearly she was paying attention in the kitchen yesterday.

"Thank you." Zola thanked her while Sakhile took his cutlery and started eating. Bangekile

was disappointed that he didn't say anything, she excused herself and left. "A thank you wouldn't have killed you." Zola commented as he started eating as well. "What does she know about manners?" Zola threw his head back laughing. "Touché my friend but she is your future wife given to you by the ancestors. Sooner or later you two will have to talk and sort things out." Sakhile scoffed. "The only reason she would talk to me now is because she knows that am in her level now not because she really wants to. With that being said, I don't want to talk to the likes of her." Bongekile was outside when he said that, she was coming to get the cups and the tray she left so that she can go clean them in the kitchen. It hurt to hear him say that, she

didn't knock she left and went to the bathroom. A few tears fell from her eyes when she got there. "You will never be in her lev my friend not unless she marries you. Remember you are a prince not just any but one from a very powerful kingdom a mere taxi owner is nothing to you and if you asked you would maybe find out that your family even owns the hospital her brother works in. You two are not in the same level anymore." Zola told him, Sakhile didn't like hearing that, he didn't like it when his friend addressed him as the prince. He didn't feel like he was yet. "Let me go now, tell me how she does today." Sakhile said as he stood up after eating. "So how is the future princess's cooking?" Zola teased. "This is not cooking

Zola this is breakfast, get her to cook proper food and I will judge. Until then don't ask me questions." He said and Zola laughed. "You are so defensive this morning huh, what is going on my prince" Zola mocked earning himself a glare from Sakhile.

"You are annoying you know that?" Asked Sakhile making Zala laugh. "What time is your meeting today?" Asked Zala "in the afternoon at 1" Sakhile answers "then why are you leaving now? Stay and we can look at the books together with the bookkeeper she is coming at 10." Zola asked. "Alright then," he took his seat once again. "I want to tell you something." Sakhile start and Zala looked at him then straighten on his seat. "Am all ears." Sakhile sighed. "One of my maids is

coming onto me." Zola's eyes popped. "Which one?" He asked "the short one." Sakhile answered. "Damn that one is beautiful and well built." Zola complimented. "Yes she is, beautiful and with skilled hands." Bangekile's mouth went dry and a lump on her throat formed. She was about to knock and take the plates when she heard him say that. 'He has moved on' she thought but that didn't sit well with her. She knocked on the door and Zola invited her in. She worked fast gathering the plates and cups. She placed them on the tray then left closing the door. "You think she heard us?" Asked Zola "Even if she did I don't care, she rejected me so why should I care if she heard me or not?" Answered Sakhile irritated but he hoped that she

heard them, she hoped that she felt the same pain he felt when she rejected him like that. "Well, what do you mean she had skilled hands?" Zola asked, a memory of what happened the night before flashed into Sakhile's mind. "She gave me a massage last night and it didn't end well." Told his friend. Zola sat up straight now with a serious expression. "Please tell me you didn't sleep with that girl Sakhile" he looked at his friend. "So what if I did?" He asked instead of answering. "Then I would say that you are following your father's footsteps." He told him but Sakhile shook his head. "This is different, I didn't get my chosen wife pregnant she rejected me." He told his friend anger of what Bongekile did returning.

"That as it may, the ancestors did not choose another wife for you, so until then you should be doing exactly what umah told you before she died." Zola reminded making Sakhile sigh. "I didn't sleep with her, she decided to invade my memory just as I was starting to feel something and lose my mind." Zola laughed throwing his head back. "Just admit it, you have feelings for your wife." Zola teased. "I don't, am not sure why she just came to mind at that moment but don't worry Nothing will happen between that girl and I. Imagine what Makhosini would say if he heard that his precious prince slept with a maid." Zola chuckled. "His so up tight!" They laughed thinking of Makhosini.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 40

Bangekile was quiet today, even got the baker worried because the day before she was talking even though not much but they had a conversation. She kept herself busy and away from the office. The bosses are their lunch and Sakhile left after a meeting they had and then time was around 13h00 in the afternoon. It hurt her to see him leave without saying a word to her. What was she expecting anyway? For him to tell her that she was his chosen one and that he wants to be with her? She was stupid for even feeling that way she is the one that rejected him and now she is hurt when she heard him talk about a girl he likes. That was hypocritical of her, soon it was time for her to clean up

before closing, she cleaned up quicker than the day before, she wanted to avoid seeing Zola but when she was done and leaving the locker after changing. Zola was coming out of his office. "Leaving now?" Asked Zola. "Yes, I will see you tomorrow." She didn't wait for him to respond and left in a hurry. She got to the rank then got into a taxi and sat at the back by the window. She placed her bag on her lap after taking out money to pay then covered her face in her hands and let the tears fall. It hurt so bad and she didn't know why. But what Sakhile said and how he spoke to her hurt her. Yes, she did not expect him to be nice to her but when he actually gave her the cold shoulder it hurt her. 'Get a grip Bongekile, you rejected him do what he does

shouldn't affect you.' She tried convincing herself and wiped her tears discreetly so that people don't see. The taxi finally left the rank and she looked out the window trying to distract herself from thinking too much.

When she got closer she got off a bit further from her stop. She needed to walk and compose herself properly before getting home. But even with the walk thought of Sakhile invaded her mind 'I would never marry someone like him that will happen over my dead body.' The words she said to Sakhile came back to her mind like she said then a few minutes ago. She remembers that day, it was when her father took them home because he wanted to talk to him. She had

looked at his home in disgust and swore that she would never be with the likes of him. He was not the kind of man her mother described, the kind that will take care of her. What changed? Was he acting all along? She could not understand any of it but that didn't matter much to her, what bothered her the most was the woman he was talking about. Has he moved on already? Her thoughts were cut short as she got home. Her mother was waiting for as when she came in. "How was your day baby?" she asked making her sigh "it was okay mah." She told her walking past her trying to get upstairs. "No it wasn't, what's wrong? We're you fired?" Asked her mother worried. "No mother I was not fired." She told her and

took steps walking away but her mother was right behind her. "If you were not fired then what happened?" She asked her again.

Bongekile sigh in defeat and turned to look at her. "I met my boss today and it's the guy that wanted to marry me." She told her then left her there with her mouth hung open. She went upstairs and changed then went back down to the kitchen to boil water for a bath. "Didn't you say that he was poor, then how can he be your boss?" Asked her mother confused, she thought that the reason that her daughter didn't want her was that he is poor. "He is, I mean he was, hey mah I don't know." She was confused herself, she wasn't sure what was happening. "This doesn't make sense to me, what could have changed in

these couple of months?" Asked her mother. "I don't know mah I really don't know." She said. "Did he mistreat you? Is that why you looked like you were crying?" Asked her mother, she knew how resentful men can be. "No he didn't mistreat me, he just made sure that I know who's boss and that he has moved on." She said then took the water and leaving the kitchen without giving her mother a chance to say more. Her mother continued with the cooking and soon Mdlalose arrived from work as well. She prepared bathing water for him as well before calling everyone down for dinner. At dinner they made small talk but bongekile was quiet. "Bongekile met her boss today." Her mother said looking at her father. "I didn't know she didn't meet

the boss yet, who hired you then Bonhekile asked her father. "My other boss, they are partners I think." She answered then focused on her food. "Does the other boss have a problem with you?" Asked her father. But Bongekile didn't answer. "Her second boss is the young man that wanted to marry her." Her father's eyes went wide in shock. "That can't be right, that young man was poor and even if he worked hard his success wouldn't have been so quick." Her father said. "That's what I also don't understand, if he was poor a few months ago how does he own the new coffee shop in town?" Asked her mother. "Maybe he was never poor to begin with, did you think of that?" Smanga said. "I saw his house Smanga and it was not that of

a rich person. Are you sure that it's him bongekile?" Asked her father finding trouble believing the news. "It's him there and his friend is the one that hired me, I didn't notice it at first but when I saw them together I recognize them." Bongekile told them. "Rich people can do those things when they want a woman to marry, but I have only read about it, what if this man was rich all along but then his been meeting women who were only with him for money? Maybe he did that to see if Bongekile would accept him even when he is poor you know accept him for the person that he is and not his money." Smanga said and Silence filled the room. "That might be the case then because he owns that shop and his friend is always there

in his office dressed nicely and nothing like the guy I met before. When he came in as well today he was dressed in branded clothing and looked nothing like the guy I met at the supermarket or the one we took home." Bongekile said then got up and left the table. Everyone was looking at her with questioning eyes.

"Why does it look like this whole thing is bothering her?" Mdlalose asked. "It does because she looked like she had been crying when she came back from work and she said the he made sure to show her that he is boss and that he has moved on." Her mother told them. "She better not be bothered, she is the one that said that she will never be with the likes of him and if I was that guy I would

have treated her the same. Besides We don't even know if she wants that guy for who he is now or she just wants to use him for his money. Even so he won't give her the time of day after how she treated him, she can't be jealous and want him now when she sees that his not the poor guy she met. That will only make her seem like a gold digger. I suggest you tell her to leave that poor guy alone. She is there to do a job, she might be embarrassed now when he sees her working for him but she was to suck it up and learn that everything you do in life has consequences." Said Smanga then sad back down. He could see how his mother was looking when they spoke of Sakhile not being poor. "I will tell her." His mother said

sounding disappointed. "You better mah, the way you sound disappointed is like you wanted her to go after this guy now. Am warning you don't do that, we are trying to be better people here and trying to do things the right way. If we go back there then am afraid that things will never change for us." Smanga reminded then stood up and left as well. "His right mnkami (my wife) we don't need to go back there and sink even deeper than we already did. If that young man wants her and she accepts him then fine but if he doesn't then we should not push her to him. It might just make things worse." His wife sighed, she was thinking about that. "I wont lie I was thinking of asking her to talk to him and apologize. But now I see how that will seem

and how it might just push him further away from her. I won't do anything even though the thought of getting our lives back was appealing. I will be a better mother this time." She promised her husband. "That's all I ask and maybe this is the work of the ancestors for her to be working for him. Maybe this is their way of bringing them together and if we interfere then it might not work out the way they planned and punish us more." Mdlalose said. "I understand, let us go to bed you are working tomorrow." She cleared the table then they went to bed.

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Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 41

A week has passed since that day, Sakhile now made it a point to make his meetings in the afternoon so that he can be at the coffee shop in the morning and ask Bongekile for his breakfast and lunch. She even got used to it but he still have her the colder shoulder and never said more than necessary to her. Today they had a good and health inspector coming, also a potential investor that want to have the coffee shop in the other regions of the country and make it into a franchise Business. Bongekile worked later the previous day making sure that the place was properly cleaned and this day she was making sure that no tables stood dirty or with dirty dishes laying on them. Sakhile and Zola were very visible in front this day

making sure that everything was in order. The food and health inspector arrived at ten in the morning, they did the safety checks for compliance and stayed for lunch. After that they approved their business and guys were happy but they still had an investor coming. They both had a quick cup of coffee before the investor arrived. "Welcome Mr Smith, it's a pleasure to finally meet you." Said Zola leading him to the office. "Like wise young men but I would like to have some lunch before we start." The man said. "Not a problem we also didn't have anything this to eat yet." Said Sakhile leading him to one of the tables at the back. "I must say that I am impressed by the establishment having something like this nationwide will be a great

investment. I am talking office buildings in CBD's nationwide and malls." The man said.

"That would be a good business move indeed." Sakhile said and a waitress came and took their drinks order then left them with menus.

"That's exactly what am saying but there is a condition to my investment, I see you both are young and I don't doubt that you trust each other but I don't know either of you and trusting you won't be easy." Said the man and the two looked at each other. "What exactly are you saying Mr Smith?" Asked Sakhile looking at the man. "What I am saying is that I will only invest with family men, but I don't see any rings on your fingers and I take it that you are not married. Am I right?" Asked the man, Zola sighed defeated but Sakhile was

quick on his thinking. "Oh that won't be a problem Mr Smith because I am married, my wife is actually here she likes helping around when she is not at school. For now we are married traditionally until she is done with school then we can make our marriage official and I would like it if you would honor my invitation." He said with a smile. "A young man with brains and family oriented. Those are good qualities in a man, now I have no reason not to sigh with you. Can I see your wife though?" Asked the man with a smile. "Of course, let me go and get her." Sakhile stood up and went to headed to the kitchen to find bongekile. She was busy with the dishes. "I need you, now." He said and Bongekile wiped her hands and followed him to the locker

room. "I have an investor out there that would like to meet my wife, you think you can play your part just for today wife?" He asked Bongekile wanted to smile, he still considered her his wife. "Not a problem" she said. "Let's go then we don't have time to waste." He said then took her hand and led her to the front.

Zola was the first to see then and couldn't help but smile at the sight. "Mr Smith, this is my wife Bongekile and love this is Mr Smith the man who wants to invest in our business." Sakhile said as he pulled a chair for

Bongekile who genuinely smiled at him, Mr Smith was looking at their interaction. "A pleasure to meet you Mr Smith, am sorry that you had to meet me this way, I promise to be more presentable the next time we

meet." Bongekile said offering him her hand to shake. Mr Smith waved his hand. "Don't worry about it, at least you are better than my wife, she would have met all of your wearing her garden boots and gloves. This only means one thing to me Mr Ndlovu that you have chosen well, you have chosen a woman that is not afraid to get her hands dirty instead of the ones that only look good and expect to be taken care of. Those ones are just arrogant but useless." Mr Smith said and Sakhile looked at Bongekile smiling. "Am happy Bongekile is not one of those, imagine being looked down upon because of the clothes you wear then those every same gold diggers be the first to come after you when they see that you have money." Sakhile said

Andrew Bongekile swallowed uncomfortably. "I have met plenty of those believe me, I didn't get to where I am because I was wise. I met a lot of those women who only wanted me for my money. But when I met my Betty it was different, I had been working on my father's old car that he left me when he died, I was dirty and full of grease. I went into the house to get a cold one but I was out, I took my keys and went to buy some. I got a six pack and when I got out I pumped into her. I apologized and she looked at me up and down then smiled and said I will let this slide since I can see that you have been working hard the whole day. I was confused at first until I looked at the overalls I was wearing and smiled. I asked her out that

every same day and a year later we got married. My wife didn't know I was rich when she met me but she didn't care, she wanted me for me nothing else." The man shared his story. "That sounds like a good woman, I wish to find one like that when I get married but it's difficult because the ones we meet these days first want to see the kind of clothes you are wearing then the car you are driving." Zola said and Sakhile looked at Bongekile with a smile as if he was saying "you are one of those." And Bongekile smiled back uncomfortably.

"Be very careful of those ones, you will never have peace because they are spoilt and yet they don't even know how to work for the money they love spending." Mr Smith said.

"Then I will have to take my time looking because some of us are not as lucky as you two are." The men laughed. "Am sorry Mrs Ndlovu for taking you away from your work, I just wanted to meet you and you can leave." The man said smiling at her and she returned the smile. "It was nice meeting you again Mr Smith and I hope to see you again with your wife this time." She said politely. "Of course Mrs Ndlovu." She smiled then left. Sakhile watched as she was leaving impressed by the way she carried herself. "You will see your wife again Mr Ndlovu no need to drool over her now." Mr Smith teased making Zola laugh throwing his head back. "Mr Smith I like you already." Zola said making the man chuckle. "It's not like that Mr Smith." Sakhile

defended himself. Before the man could answer he suddenly got serious looking ahead. Zola saw who he was looking at but Sakhile has his back on him. "John Smith we meet again." Said Khulekani as he joined them at the table.

"Prince K Zungu, how are doing?" Asked the man. "Wait John you are not important let me greet my nephew first. Mshana kunjani?" (Nephew how are you) asked Khulekani with a smile. "Themba umalume ngokumosha izinto wena ufika endaweni kusabe abelungu umazelaphi ke lo. (Trust my uncle for ruining things, you arrive sms scare white people, how do you know this one?" Asked Sakhile making Khulekani laugh. "Hawu mshana husamabhizinisi nje esisebenzisana naye.

Mara ungisabiswa hukuthi ngangike ngamfika ngesibhaxu egeza." (His just a businessman we work with and his scared because I once slapped him while he was being rude.) Sakhile laughed. "Hamba malume" (you go uncle.) said Sakhile. "John, I hear that you will be working with my nephew here." Said Khulekani looking at the man. "I didn't know that he was your nephew and I thought your brother only had girls." Said John. "You would like that wouldn't you John and no this is my brothers first born before the girls. We kept him and his mother our current queen hidden away from sharks like you John." The man chuckled. "You know very well that I wouldn't have never done anything to him anyway it doesn't seem like you need me for

this business Mr Ndlovu your family has more than enough money to invest in it." The man said. "See that's where you are mistaken John another reason why you don't know my nephew here is that he is his own man who doesn't depend on the royal family's wealth to get ahead. He makes things happen on his own and if you were planning on investing on his business you can do so without the worry of the royal interfering believe me that day that happens will be the day we lose my nephew here." Khulekani said and John signed.

"Am relieved to hear that and to be honest I was not looking forward to working with you." The man admitted and Khulekani laughed.

"Why?" He asked. "You are hot headed."
Chuckled Khulekani standing up. "Only some of the time." He walked away going to the back. "Well I guess we can sign the contract, the deal is yours gentleman and your uncle is the reason I don't want to work with single men they don't have their priorities straight." Laughed Sakhile looking in the direction his uncle disappeared to. Zola was just happy that they were getting the contact and Bongekile could not stop smiling since she came back to the kitchen.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 42

"What are you doing here Malume?" Asked Sakhile looking at his uncle eating, they had just concluded their meeting with MR Smith and Zola had gone back to his office to finish some documentation. "Can't I come and visit my nephew without being questioned?" Asked Khulekani not looking at him but focusing on his food. "You can but we both know that you would have called if you just came for a visit, now you just showed up which makes me wonder why?" Khulekani stopped eating and looked at him. "You are annoying are your grandfather, you know that guy never let us get away with anything growing up and you are acting just the same. It's hot good boy." He said still avoiding answering the question. "Thank you uncle, so why are you here?" He

asked again sitting back on his chair looking at him. Khulekani dramatically dropped his cutlery on the table. "A person can't even enjoy his meal in peace because there are people who can't stop asking questions." He mumbled wiping his hands, Sakhile kept quiet and watched him. Khulekani finally looked at him. "Well, I am here following a lead, the people that took your mother came here and I came looking for them." Sakhile nodded. "Need any help?" Asked Sakhile and Khulekani smiled. "I thought you will never ask, now I will give you all the information you need to be on the lookout." He told him. "And what will you be doing uncle?" He asked him. "Going back home to protect your mother." He smiled and Sakhile shook his

head. "Nope, that is not going to happen, Nomasonto is protected back at the palace, we are going to look for those people together. You forget I am not your prince yet and you want to leave your responsibilities with me? Not happening uncle, we look together or am not helping." Sakhile sat back and looked at his uncle who was frowning. "Do you know that is your mother we are talking about right?" Asked Khulekani. "You do know that she is your queen and the woman you are supposed to protect right?" He also raised his eyebrow looking at his uncle. "Yazini Sakhile (you know what Sakhile) you are an ass but you are right. Let's look for this damn woman so that

I can go back home." Said Khulekani defeated.

"Now you are talking uncle, so tell me where do we start and why are you in a hurry to go back home? You don't even have a wife to go back to." Khulekani clicks his tongue.

"Uyadelelwa ke manje (you are being disrespectful now) I may not have a woman waiting for me but I will have you know that I enjoy being home." Khulekani defended himself. Sakhile chuckled. "No that is not the case, you just want to be close to Nomasonto because as much as you know that the relationship you both have can never amount to anything, it doesn't stop you from falling deeper in love with her with each passing day." Khulekani looked at him for a while

before answering. "If we are going to work together then I suggest you stop calling me out of my bullshit and we already have a seer we don't need another. Anyway am fighting the feelings for that every same reason, knowing that they will never amount to anything and that is the reason why I want to pesue her friend from Joburg. She will make me forget about her." Khulekani said but Sakhile shook his head in disagreement. "You only want her friend just to be close to her without her having to be suspicious of your actions. Malume dating her friend is not going to help what you need to do is to start looking at Nomasonto the same way you look at your brothers wives. I know it will be difficult and that it is different but you have

to try. Ubabomkhulu (big uncle) told me that he changed women all the time but none of them can make him feel even close to what your mother made him feel. He said that he got married thinking that it will eventually stop but it never did. He said when she died a part of him died with her and that is part of the reason he moved to Cape Town. What am trying to say is that it won't be easy for you too but you have to try, make the effort and never act on it or it will be the end of your relationship with your brother." Sakhile lectured.

"You are too young to be talking like an old man like this and I feel sorry for the woman you will marry because you are too disciplined. Also, don't forget that my

brother that you keep referring to is your father and I will take what you said into consideration. It won't be easy like you said because no one has ever made me feel the way she makes me feel. She brings a smile to my face without even trying." Sakhile shook his head. "I don't want to hear it, that is still the woman who gave birth to me you are talking about." Sakhile said making Khulekani chuckle. "Can't you say your mother?" Asked Khulekani. "Nope not yet." They laughed.

"Okay but on a serious note I am doing my best and to make sure that I don't do anything I explained to your father what is going on, I told him everything and of course he wanted to hear from uncle and the seer. They explained the same thing as well but

that didn't stop him from threatening me though." Shrugged Khulekani making Sakhile chuckle. "What did he say?" He asked trying to hold his laugh. "He told me that if I cross the line he will forget that am his brother and kill me. Can you imagine?" He asked dramatically making Sakhile laugh. "Yes I can imagine." Khulekani clicks his tongue. "You just like your father, now tell me when am I meeting makoti?" He asked just as Bongekile came to clean his table. "Ask her." Said Sakhile pointing at Bongekile with his eyes. "Uthini manje mshana?" (What are you saying now nephew?) Asked Khulekani confused. "Oh just that this is my chosen wife the one that wants nothing to do with a low life like me, she said that she would rather die than be

with the likes of me." Bongekile lowered her head tears pricking her eyes. "Mameshane! Makoti,uyangazi ukuthi ngiwubani mina?" (Daughter in law, do you know who I am?) Asked Khulekani.

"No need to tell her who you are uncle please." Sakhile begged. "Ntombe'Thongo ngikhuluma nawe njalo." (Ntombe'Thongo I am talking to you.) Khulekani ignored his nephew and asked Bongekile. "Cha baba angokwazi?" (No sir, I don't know you.) she answered still with her head lowered. "No wonder." Said Khulekani and Bongekile left. She didn't know how to feel about that conversation but one thing she knew was that no one of no importance goes around asking people if they know who he is. That mean whoever the man

with Sakhile was, he was important, so important that people who matter know who he is but who was he? That was the question in her mind. She was tired of this day and its surprises. She wanted it to end now so that she can process all that happened. First Sakhile introduced her to an important client as his wife and now this man who is supposedly his uncle is asking if she knew who he was?

Who was he? Why doesn't she know him? She knew everyone that is important or at least she thought she didn't because she didn't know this man but from the way he spoke he was someone of importance. Evening came and Sakhile, Zola and his uncle left. Bongekile cleaned but her mind was not in it, her mind

was on that man and his identity. "Are you alright girly?" Asked the baker as she was about to leave, she could see how distracted she was cleaning the same place over and over again. "Yes, am fine." She answered trying to smile. "No your are not, tell me what's wrong?" She asked. "Nothing really just thinking about what that man said." She told her. "What man?" Asked the baker. "The one that just left with the bosses." She told her and the woman smiled. "Khulekani Zungu? Don't mind him, his just a joker don't take anything he says to heart and am sure he didn't mean it." She smiled at her. Khulekani Zungu, Bongekile thought of the name but she couldn't remember anything about him. "Okay then, thank you did Zodwa." She

smiled at her. "Not a problem dear, finish up so that I can lock up." She nodded and finished cleaning then went to change her uniform.

Zodwa locked up and they left together and separated at the rank taking different taxis. As usual Bongekile went to sit at the back and took out her phone. She had bought some data for herself. She went to good and searched for Khulekani Zungu, a lot of Khulekani Zungu appeared, she looked at some pictures and thought it will only finish her data so she searched for Khulekani Zungu in KZN and his picture was the first to appear. The caption of the picture was what shocked her to the core. She read it again. "Prince Khulekani Zungu of the Zungu kingdom didn't

disappoint once again with his wardrobe at the queens crowning." The piece continues to read. "I wonder if the women in KZN are not appealing to the prince because in his thirties the prince is still single, ladies what are we doing wrong?" Bongekile kept reading the same piece but could not believe it. If he was a prince and Sakhile was his nephew then that means "Oh God! What have I done!" She said out loud. "Yhini ntombazane, wenzeni ngani yami?" (What is wrong my girl what have you done!) one of the nosy women in the taxi asked. Bongekile didn't know she said that out loud. "Oh no mah it's nothing, I just forgot my charger at work." She lied. "Oh, okay, don't worry you will get it tomorrow." She said. "Yes

mah" bongekile went back to her phone and took screenshots of the article and Khulekani.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 43

Dedicated to: Namza KaLuuh Moon 🌙 May the Moon Goddess Selene Bless you.

Bongekile's mind was buzzing the whole way home, she was scared, shocked and ashamed.

If she could be so arrogant as just the daughter of a taxi owner and disrespect an important man like that then what did that mean about her, the kind of person she was.

The more she thought about it the more ashamed and angry at herself she was. She was or maybe still is a self-centred person who deserves what she was getting. All the hardships she was going through she

deserves them. She couldn't help the tears that escaped and fell on her cheeks. The woman who was sitting next to her saw her wiping the tears. "Don't cry now child, you will get your charger when you get to work tomorrow." Bongekile smiled through her tears. "It's not a charger mah, it's just that I am a horrible person." She choked on her tears trying to cry silently. The woman pulled her into her arms and comforted her. "My child, you may think that you are a horrible person but you are not, I have done worse things when I was in your age, Things that I thought didn't deserve forgiveness and I even thought that I don't deserve to be loved. But I met a man that loved me regardless of my faults and flaws." The

woman tried to comfort her. "You don't know what I did mah." Bongekile told her. "You don't know what I did too. Tell you what, I will get off with you and you tell me what you did. I will tell you what I did too then we can see who did the worst." Bongekile just looked at her thinking that she was joking. But when she got to her stop the woman got off with her. "Now start talking." The woman said making Bongekile sigh. "I grew up in a comfortable home and had everything I wanted and needed. I had a car and an allowance every month. I lacked nothing and that made me look down on people. My mother didn't help either, she told me that I deserve more and that I was better than those people who were in lower standards

than I was. Made me arrogant and act holier than thou. But the last time I did that I did it to the wrong person. Someone whose ancestors made sure that I lost sleep for weeks and when that was over things in my family started falling apart. My dad lost everything and my brother lost his job for no reason at all. Even then I was still arrogant and when we lost everything and the friends I had left me. He was the one that gave me a job and recently I found out that he is more important and superior than I ever was. Am ashamed of what I did and I don't know how to look at him from now on without feeling stupid and disgraceful." She told her and wiped her tears.

"That is nothing compared to what I did, Your problem can be fixed and I can see that you are working on it already. Mine on the other hand can't be fixed no matter what good I do it will never change what I did or erase it." The woman told her. "It can't be that bad and everything can be fixed."

Bongekile told her. "Not what I did, I didn't have all that you did growing up I had more. My mother was a principal of a school and my father was a doctor. They both expected a lot from me and I did the opposite of what they expected. They wanted me grounded at home reading book and getting good grades but instead I went to parties and slept around. I had my first baby when I was sixteen, my parents sent me to my

grandparents because I was going to embarrass them but when I got there and saw the fun my friends were having. I realized that I was not ready to be a mother and I told my grand parents and they told me that I slept around and brought a baby. That I had to take care of it. The child was annoying and cried a lot. One day they left me alone and went to church. The baby woke up and started crying again. I tried to comfort her but she didn't stop and eventually I got tired and put half a bottle of cough medicine in her bottle and made her drink. She did and fell asleep. I was the happiest when she finally did." She sighed thinking back.

"My grandparents came back asked about the baby and I told them she was sleeping. Hours went by and my grandma kept asking me to go check on her which annoyed me because I finally got to rest but I came back with the same answer every time that she was sleeping. Later on my grandma went to check on her and came back to tell us that the baby died. I had killed my child, the autopsy showed that she died of overdose, the cough medicine was not suitable for a child that small. I killed my child and I felt nothing. I was happy when my grandparents sent me back to my parents but things were not the same back home, my parents didn't talk to me or look at me the same way and for a sixteen year old that is freedom. Not being reprimanded or asked

questions when you gone! I enjoyed it and by eighteen I had failed my grade 11 the second time and found out that I was pregnant the second time. I was told it was twins and when I asked for an abortion I was told it was too late. There was no way I was going to tell my parents that I was pregnant again so I went to the back door doctors with my friend. I was given medication and I went home and took it. At first I felt nothing but just before midnight the pain started, it was mild but then it got worse. I couldn't breathe and I couldn't move. My bed was full of blood and I called my parents but they couldn't hear me. I fainted and woke up in the hospital a week later. I was told that my womb was damaged and that I could never have children again. I almost died

that night and still my parents said nothing. I saw then that I had to change and be a better person. You see my mistakes cannot be fixed but yours can." She told her and by now Bongekile was crying.

"That is so sad." She said crying. "It is but I don't want you crying for me, I did all that to myself and my parents died before I could ask for forgiveness to them. I see we have stopped, this must be your home, I will tell you the rest of my story some other time. I told you this so that you know that everyone makes mistakes but it's the lessons that you learn from those mistakes that make you a better person. I never learned anything from mine until it was too late but it seems that you learned something from yours that is why

you are feeling that way." She told her but Bongekile shook her head. "I don't think feeling guilty is learning something from what I did." She told her. "Yes it does and if you didn't learn anything then when your family lost everything you would have gone and looked for someone that will give you the life you had and not go look for work like you did. You going out there and looking for work to help your family situation means that you have learned and making amends. Take it one day at a time and things will fall into place. I have to go now, think about what I said." The woman told her. "Thank you mah, for everything." She thanked her while hugging her. "No thank you for calling me mah, I never thought that someone would ever call

me that after what I did. Thank you."

Bangekile nodded and the woman left. This whole time her mother kept on looking at them from the window wondering what they were talking about and who that woman was. Bonge-kile composed herself and went into the yard. Her mother opened the door before she could knock. "Are you okay!" She asked as soon as she came in. "Am fine mah just tired." She told her moving past her. "No you not, you have been crying what has that woman done to you?" Asked her mother making her sigh. "She didn't do anything to me mah and she is not the one who made me cry. She was helping me and comforting me." She told her mother. "Then talk to me baby what is going on that you needed to be

comforted by strangers?" She asked.

"Sometimes mah it's good to talk to strangers and I don't want to talk about this anymore but I will talk to you when am ready." She offered her a small smile before going upstairs. "Come down for dinner" her mother called after her. "I am not hungry mah I just want to sleep." She told her and continued to walk. Her mother looked back at the window where her daughter and that woman were standing then back at the stairs where Bongekile disappeared to. "What happened to you?" She thought out loud. Back at Sakhile's home they had just eaten dinner. "So tell me nephew what are you going to do about your chosen one?" Asked

Khulekani. "I dont know uncle." Answered Sakhile. "You are good at giving others advice but you can't solve your own issues, what a pity." Khulekani mocked "No doctor can treat themselves uncle, so if you can help them please." Khulekani chuckled. "You do know that you can't just leave her right? She is chosen for a reason and if you leave her. Then you will end up like your father with many wives you don't love and can't give you an heir." Khulekani told him. "You already told me this uncle but what p pop am I supposed to do when she doesn't want me? I cant exactly force for her you know." Said Sakhile. "Am not saying force her but show her that you still want her and that you are interested." He advised "but I do show her,

she makes my food every time I am at the coffee shop and I introduced her to Smith as my wife." Sakhile told him. "Can you stop acting like an old man? Ask her out properly and see what she will say." Khulekani told him. "Ask her out so that she can reject me again? I don't think so." Sakhile refused. "Take your time and find the right moment to ask her out. You won't know if she will reject you again unless you ask." Khulekani told him. "I will see but am not looking forward to being rejected again it not nice." Khulekani nodded. "I understand but don't give up." Sakhile nodded.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 44

The maid heard what Khulekani and Sakhile were talking about and didn't like what she heard. She cleaned fast and went to the room she shared with other one and made a call. Soon the call connected. "Mawe." She sniffed even before her mother could say anything. "What is wrong my child?" Asked her mother concerned, no mother wants to hear her child cry over the phone and this mother was the same. "Someone is the taking my prince mawe (mother) I didn't want to tell you until we make things official but this other girl is using muti nakiyena mawe (is using witchcraft on him) and I don't want to lose him." She sniffed some more and her mother chuckled. "A prince, a real prince?" She asked. "Yes mawe, he is from where I

work." She confirmed. "Don't worry child, I will send you something cooking him kudla le kunathwako (food to eat) and put it in there. He will be yours my child. Wait for the parcel tomorrow afternoon." Her mother promised her. "Thank you mawe." She thanked her. "Anything for you my child." She cut the call and smiled. "Am a swati woman and they underestimate me this way nx, I did say that the prince is mine. She got her chance and ruined it, it's mine now." She thought out loud. The other maid came in. "What are you thinking about looking serious like that?" She asked. "Am thinking about going to town tomorrow, we need some things for the kitchen and other stuff." She lied. "Hay I don't want to go this time, you go yourself, I

went the last two times." Complained the other maid. "Don't worry I am going, I also need pads am out." She said. "Get me a pack as well." She asked as she took off her clothes getting ready for bed. "Not a problem, I will leave after we finish cleaning in the morning." The other nodded, they had a car and a guard that was there to take them to town for supplies. They got into bed with her smiling as she thought of being the next princess.

When morning came she was first to wake up and breakfast for Sakhile. He came in as he was finishing. "Good morning my prince, I made you breakfast." She told him but before he could answer Zola came in.

"Morning, that smells nice, can I have some?" He asked "Have mine and I will have something at the coffee shop." Sakhile answered "Mmm I should have known that you now enjoy your wife's food" Zola teased. The maid didn't like what she heard, so he wanted to marry her? She scoffed silently. "I dont know what you are talking about I just want to go and drop you off, uncle and I have some business to take care of." Sakhile defended himself. "Right, you know I can drive myself right?" Zola asked "Can you eat your food so that we can go please, I don't have time for this it's too early." Zola laughed. "Not a problem but I will remind you of this when i am the best man at your wedding." The maid dropped a cup and it

broke disturbing the two. "Am sorry my prince I didn't mean to." She apologized looking at him with pleading eyes, not pleading for forgiveness but for him to notice her. If her eyes could talk they would tell him that 'I am here waiting for you, why can't you see me!' But unfortunately they don't. "It's just a cup don't worry about it. Zola are you done? We have to go." Zola stood up finishing off his coffee. "Am done now, let's go." Then left the house. The maid looked at the closed door with a deep frown wondering who this woman was. 'It doesn't matter though he will be mine and after tonight he won't have eyes for anyone but me.' She thought as she finished off cleaning. The other maid come in as she was wiping the

table. "Am sorry I woke up late." She apologized to her. "Not a problem but you will have to make food for prince Khulekani when he wakes up and I will cook dinner tonight." The other maid was grateful that she didn't have to cook, it was her turn but her colleague was willing and she was not about to stop her. "Thank you." She thanked her and she smiled thinking about how this will be the last day she will have to cook for anyone. After tonight her colleague will be cooking for her and soon call her princess. She smiled "Am going to bath so that I can leave early." She told her and she left. When she was done bathing she left for town. She got there and did her shopping and called her mother around 1 in the afternoon and she

told her that the lady she gave the parcel to was in town then gave the lady's number. She called the lady soon after she cut the call with her mother. The lady told her where she was and she went and met up with her taking the parcel her mother sent. She was all smiles when she got back to the car going home with the driver.

When she got home she freshened up before going to the kitchen and cooking while talking with her colleague. "Did the prince come back during the day? I heard in the morning that he will be busy with his uncle." She asked.

"Yes he was here, do you think prince Khulekani will ever get married?" Asked the other maid. "I don't know, why do you ask, do you want him?" She asked with a raised

eyebrow "No I don't want him. I am just asking because he is getting old you know." She explained. "Khulekani is a prince, it doesn't matter when he gets married women will still throw themselves at him." She told her and the other one nodded. "Let me go and iron the washing." She stood up and left. The other one went to the door and checked then went back and took out the herbs from her bra. She put them in a bottle of parsley and closed it. Khulekani, Sakhile and Zola came in just as she finished cooking. "It smells so good in here." Zola complimented. "Just say you want to eat here man and stop complimenting like it's the first time it smells nice here." Sakhile teased. "You know what If umah was here she was going to hit you with

a dish cloth for what you just said and told you that you don't appreciate." Zola reminded and Sakhile chuckled. "But I do appreciate you and umah just liked picking on me."

Sakhile defended himself. "I don't believe that from what I know about you I believe Zola. Hey you are arrogant man, not arrogant but uyazitshela you love yourself too much. You are just like your father." Khulekani supported.

"Oh please, I am nothing like your brother, the man feels himself too much, I think someone told him that he was good looking and he never forgot that and took it to heart. Now his ego is inflated too much no one can handle it." Sakhile said making the two laugh. "That sounds like someone I know, you know when we

were struggling here with nothing, there would be an even here in the village, we would go and help out and when we are offered food Sakhile would never eat. Yet he had no food in the house, if that is not feeling yourself I don't know what is." Khulekani laughed. "That's a real Zungu for you, we don't bow to anyone and we don't show our weaknesses to anyone." Said Khulekani the maid came to serve the food, she started with Khulekani as he is the oldest then went to take Sakhile's food. She saw that they were not paying attention to her but talking and added the herbs on Sakhile's food. She then went to serve him then Zola. She went back to packing the dishes but kept an eye on them to see if Sakhile was eating. She was pleased when she saw that they

were all eating as they talked and laughed together. When they were done eating she went and collected the dishes with a smile on her face. She even smiled as she hummed a tune washing the dishes.

It's not long I know but it's something and I am taking care of a sick child so please understand for now. I don't want to leave this book halfway I want to finish it and we are close to the end.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 45

"Ntombe'Thongo vuka, vuka Ntombe'Thongo kubi, vuka manje!" (Ntombe'Thongo wake up, wake up Ntombe'Thongo there is trouble, wake up now!) she jerked up from her sleep and looked around the room. It looked like

she was still in her room but there were people there. The old woman she saw when she couldn't sleep, a man with a crown and a woman with a crown. They were all standing in front of her. "Who are you?" She asked terrified of the people in her room. "It's time now, it's time for you to show us that you can be a true Zungu queen, you were chosen for a reason and now time has come for you to fight." The woman with a crown spoke. "I don't understand what am I fighting for?" She asked not knowing what this was about. "This is what you are fighting for child." Now it was the old woman that deprived her of sleep that spoke. They all moved at the same time and revealed Sakhile who was standing there looking at her. "Help

me." He said and her bottom lip quivered. Tears fell from her eyes, she watched as he turned into a dog with a leash and a woman holding that leash pulling him around. "No! No! Leave him alone!" She shouted trying to get to the woman but she disappeared and the three people were where they stood before. "What is happening to him?" She asked crying. "You have to save him, don't let her win, save your husband." Now it was the man with the crown that spoke. "How do I help him? He disappeared! She took him!" She said crying. "You have to stop her from taking him, his your husband and only your love can save him. Save my grandson" said the old woman. "Save your husband." Said the woman with a crown. "Save the future king of

the Zungu kingdom." Said the man. Then they disappeared. She jerked up from bed sweating and tears still running down her cheeks.

"What is happening?" She spoke as she choked on her tears crying, she was really hurting and worried about Sakhile. What was wrong with him, why did he need to be saved? Those are the questions she had in her mind but with no answer. She looked at the time and it was just after 3am. She laid back on the bed sniffing with the words from the people in her dream ringing in her mind. 'Your love can save him, save my grandson, save your husband, save the future king of the Zungu kingdom.' She stood up and went to the bathroom and washed her face with cold

water. She looked at her reflection on the mirror, her eyes were puffy and red. She went back to her room to try and sleep for a couple of hours before she woke up for work. She didn't know when she fell asleep again but she was woken up by a knock on her door. "Bongekile wake up or you are going to be late!" Her mother called from the other side of the door. She looked at the time and it was around 6 in the morning. "Am awake mah." She called out to her then got up and made her bed. When she was done her mother knocked again bringing her water. "You overslept today, here is the water have a bath." She told her and she nodded and took the water. She bathed then wore her clothes and left for work. She wondered if

she was going to see Sakhile today and if she did what was she going to say to him? Tell him about the dream! 'No he will think that am crazy and that I am lying to get closer to him.' She thought. 'I guess I will have to fight in secret then.' She decided. That morning Sakhile woke up as usual and had his bath. When he got to the kitchen Zola was already waiting for him eating breakfast. "You are here early." He commented as he took a seat next to him. "Yes, we have to leave early today I have a lot to do at the coffee shop." Answered Zola but Sakhile didn't hear a word he was saying, his eyes were fixed on the maid checking her out and of course. She pretended like she didn't notice. "Are you going to eat here my

prince?" She asked him. "No his not, we are leaving now." Zola answered giving the maid a glare. "We are?" Asked Sakhile. "Yes we are, let's go." Said Zola pushing his chair back and getting up. "I guess we are then." Said Sakhile sending another look the maids way then shook his head and leaving the house. By the time he got into the car Zola was already seated on the passenger seat. "What was that?" Asked Zola. "What are you talking about?" Asked Sakhile as he drove out. "Did you sleep with that girl Sakhile?" Asked Zola "What? No!" Sakhile denied. "But you want to." Zola said "No I don't." Sakhile denied once again. "Don't lie to me Sakhile, I saw the way you were looking at her just now." Zola said making him sigh. "Fine! But you have to

admit that she is beautiful." Sakhile complimented with a smile. "Yes she is but you have never looked at her that way and she has been working for you for months now. What changed?" Zola asked "I don't know man, she just...I don't how to explain it but today she looked more appealing you know." He said. "No I don't know just like you don't know how she just suddenly became appealing. You are not going to sleep with that girl Sakhile!" His friend said firmly. "Come on man, you and I both know that it doesn't work that way, I will have to approach her first before she can even consider sleeping with me." Sakhile said. "No, that is not the case with her and you know it, she already threw herself at you before

giving you inappropriate massages so no taking her to bed won't be difficult. So you better not do it." Zola said. "That was just a massage Zola nothing happened." Sakhile defended himself. "That is because you didn't suddenly wake up and found her appealing. Now that you do I am afraid of what you will do. Please man. Stay away from her, we don't know why umah said you must not sleep with anyone and that you must wait for your chosen one. Maybe she knew something we don't and I don't want you finding out the hard way." Zola tried to reason with him "okay I get it, I won't try anything with her." Sakhile said and Zola didn't say anything after that. When they got to the shop Bongekile was also arriving. Zola got out first

and opened the door. "Good morning sir." She greeted him. "Morning and you don't have to call me sir." He told her as then walked in. Sakhile joined. "Sawubona ntokazi" (good morning) he greeted and Bongekile smiled at him. "Morning, would you like some breakfast?" She asked him with a smile, Zola noticed that she was looking at him in the eyes and she never does that she always has her head bowed when she spoke to Sakhile. "That would be lovely thank you." Sakhile answered and Bongekile smiled. "Coming right up." She said and left for the kitchen. "Now that is a woman you can approach and sleep with." Zola commented as they walked to the office.

Sakhile shook his head "I don't know man, I think that am starting not to feel anything for her. I mean she rejected me and I think that I am starting to move on." Zola turned to look at him. "You woke up feeling a lot of things this morning and I don't like either one of them." He said looking at him wondering what was going on with him. "Well change is good sometimes" he said taking a seat. "Yes change is good but not this one, not the kind that you suddenly wake up feeling for no reason and I don't trust that kind of change it's weird and you don't do things without thinking and now you sleep and wake up with new feelings? No. I refuse to believe that." Zola told him. Before Sakhile could answer bongekile come in work a plate

of food. "Now I know that this is not your usual but I made it specially for you and I hope you like it." Sakhile looked at the food. It was omelette with cheese and Vienna's. Sliced avocado on the side sprinkled with salt and black pepper. Toasted bread, grilled tomato and a glass of orange juice. The food looked good and appetising. "Why are we not selling that here? This looks good." Said Zola taking a fork and tasting the food. "This is so good we are adding this to our menu and we can call it the SZ special." Zola said excited. "What does SZ stand for?" Asked Sakhile taking his fork back from his friend. "Sakhile Zungu special breakfast" Zola said making Bangekile smile widely looking at Sakhile as he tasted the food. "Nice I love it, thank

you." He thanked her. "Anything for you dear." She said and got out of there fast leaving Sakhile and Zola looking at the door where she went out.

'What was that? Stupid! Stupid! Bongekile what are you doing?' She reprimanded herself as she went back to the kitchen. "I think that the wife is trying to get to rje husband's good side and I love it." Zola said chuckling taking a seat on his chair. "Did she just call me dear?" Asked Sakhile still thinking about it. "You heard right my friend and the way she said it. Damn! It was so affectionate and a way only a loved or in this case a wife could say to her husband. The gods are with you my friend and your beautiful wife is coming around." Zola said,

Sakhile looked back at the door then at his friend and thought about what Bongekile just did, he smiled but then the maid came to mind and his smile was replaced by a frown.

What was going on with him?

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 46

"Come on baby one more." Sakhile kisses her one more time. "I wish we can stop sneaking around, I want to be with you fully and show the world that we are together." She said.

"All in due time my love, if Zola finds out about this then we are doomed." He tells her but she pouts like a little girl. "But you are a prince and you can do whatever you want, why

must you listen to your friend?" She asking making Sakhile sigh. "Listen Lerato, if Zola finds out my uncle finds out then my father finds out and I told you that if they do. Then I will be forced to marry that girl, is that what you want, for me to marry someone else?" He asked making her sigh in defeat, this is not working the way she planned, Sakhile was hiding her like a dirty secret and refuses to sleep with her saying that he is waiting for the right time. "I understand but promise me that you will fix this." Sakhile smiled at her and pulled her into his arms. "I promise my love, it won't be long now." He kissed her forehead then left going to his room to shower. Sakhile was been seeing the maid Lerato for the past three weeks in

secret. It started that night when he went back home and found her half naked on his bed. It was like something snapped in his and he could not control himself. He wanted to sleep with her but when he was about to his member did nothing work, he stopped and made an excuse that he was tired. Since then he would desire her when he sees her but when he wanted to go further then kissing nothing would happen. He told her that it was not the right time yet and that they will do it when the time is right. The issue bothered him because according to him, he loves Lerato but he could nor understand why his member was not working, I mean it worked that time when she gave him a message until he thought of Bongekile and now Bongekile

was out of his mind but his member was not working. He wanted to talk to Zola about it but what was he going to tell him when he asked how he knew that it was not working? He made it clear that he didn't like Lerato and the way he is with her now says it all. He doesn't like her and that made things difficult for him.

Soon Zola arrived and Lerato was making breakfast. She looked at him and went back to what she was doing. "What is your problem?" He asked and she ignored him. "Keep up that attitude and I will tell uncle Khulekani about you and make him fire you. He is not Sakhile and I promise you that you won't have same effect on him that you have on Sakhile. I don't even know why he even

looks at you because I see nothing special about you." Zola told her then clicked his tongue, Lerato turned to look at him. "Look I don't want to fight with you and you didn't have a problem with me before am not sure why you have a problem with me now. So I should be the one asking what your problem is." She said annoyed that she had to act all nice to him, he is nothing yet he acts like he is everything. Her relationship is not moving forward because of big mouths like him. "My problem is you throwing yourself at my friend, your prince and forgetting what you came here for. Sakhile has a wife and Unfortunately it is not you so stay away from him or I will have you fired." He told her looking at her coldly. "I understand but what

do you want me to do? You already said that I am here to work so how am I supposed to stay away from him?" She asked equally annoyed by him. "You are here to work so do that and leave the rest. In fact I don't want to see you making breakfast anymore have the other maid make breakfast and dinner. You will do whatever she doesn't when you do these things and I better see her when we come back not you." Sakhile came in at that time. "Alright I will do as you say." She said then dished for Sakhile. "No, he won't be eating here." He stood up and walked to the door. "What is going on here?" Asked Sakhile. "What is going on is that we have to leave. Now." Said Zola and Sakhile Shrugged then followed him out.

'Oh how I wish I could have you killed for being too forward.' Thought Lerato looking at the closed door. The two got into the car and drove out. "Wanna tell me what that was about?" Asked Sakhile. "It was about the fact that my brother and friends has suddenly turned into some brainless prick that runs behind maids." Sakhile did not say anything, there was nothing to say anyway. "The attitude and disrespect that girl has is like you two are already sleeping together and she thinks that she can be disrespectful to everyone else just because you two are sleeping together." Zola continued. "We are not sleeping together." Sakhile said. "You are not acting like employer and employee either. You give her attention like she means

something to you and that is the reason she is like this now. Stop Sakhile, when did you become so stupid and naive?" Zola was angry now, he did not understand how his friend just changed like that. Sakhile is the most level person he knows but now his acting like a boy with his first crush. "Look, I already said that nothing is going on between me and Lerato..." Zola cut him off. "Hold it right there! Hold it right fucking there, you said who?" Sakhile was confuse by the anger his friend was showing. "I said Lerato." Answers Sakhile "right, now tell me, what is the name of your other maid?" Sakhile realized his mistake but it was too late. "Look man it doesn't matter..." Zola cut him short once again. "Yes it doesn't but that ones name

matters right? Is that why you know hers?" Sakhile was also annoyed now. "Would you stop treating me like a child! I told you that nothing is going on between me and that girl. So why don't you take that and let me be? Also remember that I am not a child and I can date whoever I want." Zola chuckled shaking his head. "You don't even see it, this is what am talking about, you are not yourself, you don't use your brain when it comes to that girl and you don't even see it!" Zola was pissed, his friend was changing and becoming someone he doesn't recognize. "You know what my man, you are right you are not a child, so go ahead and make your mistakes and maybe you won't regret it in the future." That was all Zola said before looking out the

window watching the trees go by as they drove. Sakhile thought about what his friend said but no matter how he looked at it. He did not see anything wrong with dating Lerato, it's nothing like he was going to marry her, he was just having fun before being tied down to the woman he doesn't even love. He sighed and glanced at his friend then focused on the road. Zola did not like the tension between them, they have never disagreed on something like this and he didn't like it. Sakhile was not acting like himself and he didn't like it. He also knew that people change sometimes but his change is not business or influenced by money but a maid. It was like he loses his mind when he is around her, the way he looked at her, the

way he just smiles looking at her, the way he defends her and the way he speaks and doesn't see reason when it comes to her. He hated it. They drove in silence until they got to work, he parked the car and Zola got out first and greeted Bongekile before opening then asking her for breakfast.

These past three weeks have been difficult for Bongekile, one day she found herself going to church and then going every day after that. What puzzles her the most was the fact that she only prayed for Sakhile when she got there and then she started praying everything night before going to bed and every morning before bathing and getting ready for work. Then when she gets to work and even prays for his food before

serving him. She was doing a lot of thing that were out of character to a point that they became a norm to her, a routine, and something that was now a part of her. She was still nice and coming up with different recipes for breakfast to make for Sakhile which Zola ended up adding to the coffee shops menu and the customers liked them. They would be coming in and asking for the day's breakfast special because each breakfast was made once a week now because of how many she had created. This was good for business but it didn't bring her any closer to Sakhile and on top of that he was busy looking for his mother's abductor. They were close though as they got a lead that they think is a sure thing and would be going to

check it out today with his uncle. Bongekile made one of her special breakfast and prayed for it before going to the office to serve her bosses. She knocked and entered. She felt the tension in the office and noticed that for the first time they were not talking like they used to. She wondered if it was something to do with business or what. "Darling, your breakfast." She said like she always does when she served him. Sakhile frowned. "Could you stop calling me that, I wanted you once and you rejected me. I introduced you as my wife to a client sms you agreed to help. But that doesn't mean that I want you because I don't, so please stop acting like you care and serve me like your boss not your husband. This is a place of

work and I expect you to be professional.”

He told her, his words hurt her, she wanted to cry right there and there. The lump in her throat was growing by the minute, no matter how hard she tried to swallow it down it remained there. She decided to just nod and not say anything. She did not trust that she could open her mouth and speak without choking on her tears or letting out a sob.

After nodding she walked out of the office and went to the locker room. Zola looked at his friend and shook his head but said nothing. When Bongekile got to the locker room her bottom lip trembled and let out a choked sob with tears running down her cheeks. She was so hurt, she has never been hurt or felt pain like that before. It felt like

she could feel her heart break into pieces inside her chest and the person who could mend it was sitting two doors away from her like nothing happened. She knelt down on her knees with her hands on the floor and her tears dripping on the tiled floor. She took deep breaths to stop herself from crying but the tears wouldn't stop. "Why am I doing this to myself? Because of a dream? Since when do I believe in dreams?" She laughed at herself mockingly. "Oh the mighty Bongekile Mdlalose now believes in dreams and prays. Hahah" she laughed at herself, at how naive she was being and stupid her actions were. "He will never forgive me, so why am I doing this to myself?" Tears wouldn't stopping coming. "Dear Lord, I am a sinner that I

know, I am not here to ask for your forgiveness but am here to ask you to help that man have peace. I have hurt him badly I can see that and his hurtful words are a sign to tell me that. I can take the pain for I have brought it to myself but I ask that you help him find peace. Not for my sake but for his, I have done him wrong and hurt him. His words don't hurt me as much as knowing that I caused him to be that kind of person. When I met him, he was humble and always wore a smile but what I did wiped that genuine smile off his face. Now he only show people what he wants them to see, to protect himself from being hurt again by ignorant and stupid people like me. If moving on and forgetting

me will help him heal then I will leave my job, if my presence hurts him even more then I will leave and stay away from him but please help him find peace." She prayed then sat there for a moment before standing up going to the office again. She knocked and waited to be invited in before opening the door and went in. "Mr Ndlovu or shall I say prince Zungu, I came to apologize for my behavior, I wasn't thinking and I am sorry for that. Mr Nzama thank you for giving me a chance when I needed one but I think it is time I leave this job. I will work today but I won't be coming back tomorrow." She said and Sakhile scoffed.

"These are the disadvantages of hiring people who have no work ethic, now she is

quitting because she doesn't like being reprimanded by her boss." His words now made Bongekile angry. "What is it you want from me? What? Because every thing I do is wrong in your eyes." She asked him. "My problem is that you are supposed to be my wife and yet you give up when things don't go your way. You are supposed to be the future princess of my fathers kingdom, do you think that will be a walk in the park? Suck it up and work. But if you can't even handle that then I think the ancestors have made a mistake in choosing you as their future Queen." He said then stood up and gathered his things and left.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 47

Bongekile stool there looking at the man leaving. "I suggest you listen to your husband and he is right being a queen won't be easy and it's not something you can quit." Zola said, he knew that Sakhile was right about that part but the way he said it was not right. He has changed but what made his friend happy was the fact that he was affected by what Bongekile, it was clear that he didn't like it when she said she was leaving. Which made Zola think that there is still a part of him that still cared for his

future wife. "I will listen, I made him this way didn't I? So why would I cry when he speaks to me this way? I just wished that someone told me how vindictive men can be." Zola looked at her and noticed that she was crying. Her eyes were puffy and red. "Don't give up on him, if you and I give up on him then what do you think will become of him? On my side I can't just walk away from my brother because he never walked away from me and you on the other hand. You were chosen by those who are no longer with us those we can even question or talk to try and understand why they do certain things. What you have to go on is faith that they chose you for a reason and that they didn't make a mistake. That they didn't choose you for him

to punish you. My advice is for you to find a way to talk to them and ask them what it is they want you to do. Ask them to show you the way." Zola told her. "How do I do that?" She asked, Bongekile doesn't know these things, in her home these things were never done so this was new to him. "Just light candles and burn incense and bare your heart to them. Just like God they are not blind or deaf." Zola told her and Bongekile nodded in understanding. "I will do as you say, let me go back to work now." Zola nodded and she gathered the dishes and left going to the kitchen.

On the other side Khulekani and Sakhile together with the palace guards were scouting the place they were told Mancwane

would be in. It looked like an abandoned farm but well guarded which told them that she was there. This farm didn't look like it had anything but what would the guard surrounding the premises be doing there is there is nothing? The elite squad acted like they were given orders surrounding the place immediately staying out of sight from the guards. "6 outside and 2 inside. We can take them out." The elite reported to Khulekani. "Wait for my signal." He said then stood up and walked toward the guys and they pointed their guns at him. "Wow wow wow guys I only wanted to..." the elite took them out with silencers and Khulekani shrugged "Oh well, I tried to warn you." Sakhile shook his head walking towards him. "You think that you are

staring in a movie I see." Khulekani laughed. "It's called swag mashana get in line please." Sakhile only shook his head. "Two inside is out you can come in." The elite reported through the earpiece. "Well, let's go and see what awaits us in there." Said Khulekani and they walked to the front door of the farm house and knocked. Mancwane thought that it was one of the guards outside when she went to open. When she saw that it was Khulekani she quickly closed the door in his face and ran back.

"Where does she think she is going to go?" Sakhile shrugged as they walked in, the elite came forward holding her. "Now that is no way to treat visitors Mancwane, two royal prince's of the Zungu kingdom come to visit

and you close the door on our faces. That is not how a royal wife acts." Khulekani shook his head acting disappointed. "My brother would be disappointed to hear of this." He said, the elite sat Mancwane on a chair and she smirked looking at them. "My apologies my dear prince for my manners, I think being away from the royal palace for this long has made me forget how to act as a royal wife." She said and Khulekani nodded. If one could hear them talking and didn't know what was going on they would think that they were having a civil conversation. "I understand." Khulekani said. "Thank you, now how can I help the Zungu prince's today?" She asked looking calm like nothing was happening, she already knew that her guards were dead the

moment she came across the elite when she tried to run away. "Oh nothing much you know, just here to take you back to the palace, your husband and sister wives miss you dearly." Khulekani said and Mancwane fought the urge to shiver.

It would have been better for her if Khulekani was the one who was going to kill her. He has no emotional attachment to her and was going to make it quick but now he was taking her back to Makhosini's and that is a different story. The man was going to make sure that she suffers before killing her and she knew that very well. "I don't think taking me back would be wise, just tell them am sorry and that I missed them as well." Mancwane said but Khulekani shook his head." Am afraid that

won't do my dear, you see my brother would never forgive me for not bringing you home and the queen. Well, let's just say that she has unfinished business with you and you know that as her protector I can't let her down." Khulekani told her. "I don't understand or get how you can be so calm but no matter we don't have time to be talking to this woman here, I have a business to run." Sakhile told his uncle. "What a pity, I was enjoying our conversation Mancwane but the future king has spoken, you see he is just like his father and doesn't like wasting time. I would say go and pack but that won't be necessarily as you are going home. Now please let's go." Khulekani stood up and gestured to the door.

"It's a pity indeed, I would have liked to pack my gun, I have grown fond of it over the past couple of months and it would have been nice if I got to use it again." She said then sighed walking towards the door, on the outside she looked calm but on the inside she was falling apart scared to death of what Makhosini was going to do to her when she got there. "You really did forget our ways, a royal wife doesn't carry guns like some gangster she has guards that would give their lives to protect her." Khulekani said. "Touché my prince touché." Khulekani smirked. "I have a question though." Sakhile said to Mancwane "ask away my prince" she said as they walked to the car, she was busy looking around for an escape route but each side she looked at

the elite was there. She cursed them in her head for being too much. "How did you get here? Like how did it come to this?" He asked and she stood next to the truck then turned to look at him. "The Zungu men can love when they love a woman and they can be cruel when they no longer feel the same.

With your father I was love, Makhosini loved me and even when he married the others he promised me that nothing will change between us and it never did. But when he found your mother, he treated her in ways I never thought possible, with her he was a different man, a loving man, the kind that would burn the world around him if she asked him to. The kind of love that would have made him give up his throne if she wanted

him to. He looked at her in a way that he never looked at any of us." Mancwane said looking deep in thoughts. "And what way is that?" Asked Sakhile "The way that says you are my world, you have my heart do with it as you please, the way that said I am at your mercy and from then I knew that I had lost him and I snapped. That man promised me the crown and he failed to give it to me. Not only that but I realized that I never had his love or heart either and that just killed me. I wanted to hit him where it hurts the most." She told him. "But wouldn't have been more effective or gotten you the results you want to kill me instead? His heir," he asked her and she shook her head. "No, if I had killed you then he would have mourned you then he

and his queen would have gotten another prince because she is the only one who can give him male children. Killing her and then you was my plan. Then he would have had nothing like he left me with nothing." She said.

"I always heard people say be careful of a woman scorned but I never thought they meant some psycho shit like this. Your species is crazy as hell." He said thinking about Bongekile and for some reason he was sad. "No need to be sad nephew, you have only one wife and you won't have to go through some crazy shit like this." His uncles and his words just made him feel guilty. Good day my people, I wrote what I could before

my birthday got crazy. I know I won't be able to write tonight, I hope you can

forgive me

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 48

Mancwane was quiet all the way to the palace, Khulekani and Sakhile were sitting at the back of the van talk and laughing. Upon their arrival at the palace the guards opened for them and the van drove in. Once they drove in the elite team disappeared, the van came to a stop and the guards opened the back for them. They got off and looked around.

Makhosini was standing in front of the throne room with his queen and the wives.

Khulekani had sent a message telling him that they captured Mancwane. "You father is too

much, what are the other wives doing here?" Sakhile chuckled. "Well, maybe he wants them all to learn what happens when you mess with his queen." Khulekani thought that what he was saying made sense. "Oh they will see alright, my brother might look soft but his not." He said then looked at Mancwane. "Come out now your husband awaits." Mancwane rolled her eyes. "No need to formal now Khulekani like your brother missed me, we both know why he wanted me." She said getting out of the van, she saw her sister wives standing there looking in her direction. She looked at her house and sadness filled her. That is where she lost her purity, gave birth to her first child and the two that followed. That is where she raised

them and that there where she was at her happiest. She had good memories in that house of her and Makhosini. She looked in his direction and the glare he gave her made her heart sink. She has lost him, she has lost the man she loved, the one she thought she will spend the rest of her life with and the father of her children and it was all because of her. She looked in the Queen direction and saw pity in her eyes which made her scoff. Why did she have to pity her? She is the reason she was losing everything now, so why does she have to act or was it all a show for Makhosini? She didn't know, all she knew was that she hated being pitied by her. "Awu Ncwane, hasambe pho" (Ncwane, let's go now) Khulekani said. "Can't a

woman say her last goodbye to her home?"

She asked then moved forward, she glanced at Makhosini and found him still glaring in her direction. It hurt her but she didn't show it, she walked forward with confidence, the same confidence she had the day she was brought into this home years ago. Khulekani looked at her and laughed. "Uma mkhulu wakho mshana hayi uzitshela ngeke, buka nje indlela ahamba ngayo ubonisa uyihlo ukuthi akamdingi nje ntlobo." (The confidence your big mama has nephew is too much, it's like she is telling your father that she doesn't need him." Sakhile laughed walking behind Mancwane with Khulekani.

"She wants to remind him who she was before the so called queen." Khulekani

laughed looking at the queen then back at Sakhile. "Wathi so called Queen mshana," (You say so called Queen nephew?" He laughed and their laughter annoyed Makhosini but they were not even paying attention to him. Mancwane stood in front of Makhosini with a smirk on her face, she wanted to cry and throw herself at her sisters but she must maintain the confident look and she refused to give the queen the satisfaction to see her hurt. "Follow me." Said Makhosini and Mancwane was disappointed that he didn't even greet or acknowledge her in anyway. The queen was the first to follow the king and in order the wives followed him to the back of the palace where the old throne room was. It was a

modernised rondavel when she walked in Makhosini and his Queen were already seated. Anger rose from the pit of her stomach when she saw her sitting on the very chair she waited to sit on all those years.

The wives took their seats and she stood by the door. "Don't be disrespectful woman find a seat we have a lot to talk about." Makhosini said. "I wonder who are you to talk about disrespect when you brought a street worker in the kingdom and made her queen." She was busy cleaning her nails as she said that and didn't see when Makhosini got up from his chair or how he got in front of her so fast but she woke up when a slap landed on her cheek leaving her ear ringing. "Makhosini Zungu!" Reprimanded Sonto on her feet,

Makhosini looked in her direction still angry with veins popping. "I will not have you hitting women here no matter what they do or say! You are king so act like one!" Makhosini walked over to his chair and took a seat once again then glared at Mancwane. "I said take a seat." His voice was dangerously low it made Mancwane shiver. She walked to the seat that was already prepared for her in front of the king and queen like the offender she was. "The same person you humiliated and have her kidnapped is the one that is standing up for you now, not your sister wives or anyone else but her. The one you hurt the most and that is the kind of woman you hurt."

Makhosini spoke, the wives hung their heads low as Mancwane looked at each and every

one of them. "Now, if it was up to me I was going to have you killed but the same woman you did all these things to refused, she is the one that pleaded your case and asked me to reconsider." He clenched his fists trying to contain his anger. "She has decided without my approval to send you to a mental institution for a month then after that you will be handed over to the police. The children will only visit you in the institution but will not visit you in prison." Mancwane shook her head. "No Makhosini please, don't keep my kids away from me please." She pleaded with him making him scoff. "Tell me this, while you were on the run, how did you think you were going to see your children? Because I removed you from the visitor list

them their school and told them to call the police if you show up there. So please tell me, how were you planning on seeing them?"

Mancwane had no answer and just looked at him. She didn't think about her children when she was on the run, she only thought of plans to get back at Sonto and eventually kill her. The kids were not even on her mind and that is when she thought that the mental I situation was not a bad idea. She has indeed lost her way and needed help. She sighed when she thought about it. "It's okay Makhosini, I will go to the in situation." She told them and Makhosini laughed. "It's not like you had a choice." He told her.

Mancwane looked at her sister wives. "Please look after my children, tell them that they

won't see me for a while, tell them that I am going to get help and when I am better I will come back and see them. Tell them that I am sorry that I am not a good mother to them and that I love them." MaZulu nodded looking at her tears in her eyes. Mancwane looked at the other two and nodded then looked at the Queen and her anger rises. "I will not say thank you for not having me killed by your husband, you are the reason I am here right now, you came and took everything from me. You deserve to be dead and I deserve to be sitting on that chair wearing that crown." She spat looking at her with nothing but hatred. Makhosini wanted to stand up but Sonto help his hand, a gesture that made Mancwane angrier. "I think it's time you took

responsibility for your actions Mancwane and stop blaming me for them. One, you were not crown even when I was not here and this husband of yours belonged to you. The chief priest refused to crown you. Secondly, when I arrived I understood when you showed the kingdom that video, I understood your anger and where you were coming from that is why I asked your husband not to cut your off financially. Third, I didn't look for your husband he looked for me and brought me here. I didn't want to come but he pleaded with me because all of your children's lives were in danger. Fourth, you had me kidnapped, beaten and arranged for me to be raped that aaa all you. No one forced you to do it, you could have taken your time to heal

then move on with your life but no you wanted revenge on the wrong person. Five, I never had a romantic relationship with your husband besides that month when I was only a teenager but when I came here, I never slept with him even when we were away I never did. Six, I didn't marry your husband even though the chief priest says the ancestors require me us to be wed."

Makhosini looked at her shocked, he didn't know that the chief priest said that. "You mean to tell me that the Zungu ancestors want their queen to be an official wife and not a concubine like you instead on being in this palace?" Asked Makhosini making Sonto sigh

She did not want him to know but now that is was out she could not hide it. "Yes that's what he told me about two months ago."

Makhosini said as livid, he always wanted to made her his wife but she refused and now she kept this from him. "Then my dear queen, we are getting married in a month." His words were final and Sonto has no energy to argue with him. "We will talk about this after this meeting." She told him then looked back at Mancwane. "I had a life in Joburg, a job and a house. I had to give all that up for your children and what did I get from you? Humiliation, kidnapping, beatings and almost getting raped and burnt alive." She shook her head looking at Mancwane. "You feel betrayed I know but am not the one who

betrayed you, your husband is the one that betrayed you and should have directed your anger at him not me. I only went home to see my son and my mother not to be hijacked into becoming a queen. You are just like any typical woman blaming the woman when they did nothing, you should've dealt with your husband not me." She told her and it was Makhosini's turn to hung his head. He wished that he stayed with Sonto and never had other wives. He was the cause of this and he regretted his past.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 49

There was silence in the room after Sonto spoke, each one thinking about what she said. "The people from the institute are already here and they will take you away after lunch if you want to eat here one last time and maybe look around your house for the last time before you leave." She said but Mancwane didn't say anything still thinking about what she said. "Let me know if you will be eating here or I will tell them that you are ready to leave." She told her then stood up and left the room. Makhosini followed her all the way to her house and got in. "My Queen, please let us talk." Makhosini pleaded making Sonto sigh then went to take a seat. "I didn't tell you because I didn't want to be pressured into getting married, for you this

is nothing new but for me it is and it won't be the same as I had imagined my wedding would be. I never imagined sharing my husband and that is something I still have to accept and I have to be honest it bothers me. I would rather not have you than share you and when we get married it will be to please the ancestors but it will only be on paper nothing more." Makhosini looked at her defeated.

"My Queen I made a mistake back then and I made more when I married these women. It was not my intention to marry so many women but I wanted an heir to the Zungu throne, it is my responsibility to make sure that when I step down there is an heir to take over. I didn't know that I already have one and that is my fault as well but my Queen, you have

been punishing me for months now, I am in love with you Nomasonto but you have made me love you from a distance and if you are going to continue punishing me then why don't you just marry my brother then, he is single and you will be the only woman in his life."

Sonto looked at him with so much anger. "You want to pass me over to your brother, how am I going to be your queen then if am married to your brother? Don't be stupid Makhosini." Makhosini sighed "you think I wanted to even suggest this? I don't but I can't give you what you want, you are the one who refused for me to send these woman back home and be with you. I wanted to set them free so that they can move on with their lives but you refused. What do you

want me to do then? I love you but I can't be with you and it hurts." Sonto sighed "You can't force them to leave, talk to them and if they want to leave then let them if not you will still be a husband to them." Sonto told him.

In the throne room Mancwane was still sitting with her sisters quiet. "Please eat with us for the last time." Begged MaZulu.

"You know he doesn't love any of you right?" Asked Mancwane speaking for the first time. The wives looked at each other. "I know that but he treats us well." MaZondi answered.

"He treats you well but is that enough? Don't you want someone who is only going to love you and give only you attention and love? Someone you can call yours, someone you

won't have to share. Don't you want more?
Am not saying leave if you don't want to but
if you want more then ask for your freedom
Makhosini will never be yours, he belongs to
the queen just like the ancestors intended
and even if you leave your children here you
know they will be taken care of. Your queen
already saved them once without even
knowing them how much more now when she
knows them? She a mother that one and was
born to be a mother. Our children will remain
the princesses of the Zungu kingdom and will
be treated as such. Why don't you leave and
find your own happiness before you end up
like me. Let's go eat so that I can leave." She
stood up and left. "She is not wrong you
know, especially when it comes to you

MaZondi you are still young and can still get married and live a happy life. As for myself, I need help to start the business i always wanted and I can do something I love."

MaZulu said "I will have to think about it before making a decision but I don't see myself doing anything than being the royal wife. Let's go eat with our sister." The the third wife and they went.

"What do you think your brother will do to his first wife?" Asked Sakhile, the issue has been bothering him and was worried that he may have her killed for what she did. "If the decision is my brothers then she will be dead by the end of the day but If your mother has something to do with it then she will have her arrested or something like that." Khulekani

answered, they were walking back home after taking a walk around the palace grounds and just as they were about to pass the chief priest hut he got out. "Woza la wena mfana." (Come here boy) Khulekani and Sakhile looked at each other. "Why are you looking at me for? You are the boy not me." Khulekani said making his nephew laugh as he went closer to the chief priest. "Here, give me your wrist." Sakhile gave him his wrist and he put a bracelet made of some animal skin. It was beautiful though and Sakhile liked it. "What is it for?" He asked the chief priest. "Just something you should have been given as a child to protect you as the heir to the throne and I should have given it to you during your mother's crowning but it slipped my mind." The

chief priest told him. "So what does it protect me against?" Asked Sakhile. "From asking stupid questions to your elders and from being made a fool of." Sakhile picked up that the old man has had enough of his questions now. "Alright old man. Thank you." He teased and the chief priest clicked his tongue. "Call me old man once again and I will show you who's old." Sakhile chuckled walking away to join his uncle.

"How old has he been the chief priest of the kingdom? The man looks ancient." Sakhile said making Khulekani laugh "I grew up with him here am not sure how old he is or how long his been protecting this kingdom." They both turned to look at the chief priests but then back at each other. "He could be a

ghost and we wouldn't know, when I take over am retiring him." Laughed Khulekani. "Let's go eat and don't let him hear you say that or he will really show you who's old." It was Sakhile's turn to laugh as they walked to the main house, they found the wives already sitting and eating. They stood up and now to the prince's as they came in. The king and queen were not at the table. "Are the king and queen not joining us?" Ask Khulekani. "How can they join us? Makhosini wants nothing to do with me so why would he want to dine with me?" Asked Mancwane and Sakhile checked shaking her head. "What did you expect when you got here?" Asked Sakhile "maybe a hug and a kiss." Khulekani said making Sakhile laugh. "There is no way

she was expecting that, MaZondi mawami ngicela ungiphakele bandla." (MaZondi my mother please dish for me.) Sakhile asked MaZondi giving her a charming smile. "Yazini Sakhile. Kumele ushade manje ngeke ngaphakelana nawe mina." (You know what Sakhile, I think it's time you got married I will not be dishing for you here.) said MaZondi while dishing for him and put a plate in front of him.

"Kodwa mah Uthi ngishade njani imfazi abanginike yena oZungu engangifuni?" (But mother, how am I going to get married when the woman the Zungu ancestors gave me doesn't want me?) asked Sakhile digging into his food "inkinga wukuthi awakwazi ukushela intombi, intombi iyashelwa mfana wami" (the

problem is that you don't know how to talk to women, you court a woman my boy." Sakhile laughed, Khulekani loved the relationship his nephew had with MaZondi she was like a second mother to his and Sakhile saw no problem acting like her first born son whenever he was at the palace. Mancwane clicks her tongue looking at MaZondi. "You know what Mancwane I hope you have all the time you need where you are going to find yourself and learn how to be a good person because if you don't then that mouth of yours might be your downfall in jail and there will be no one protecting you. Think about that before you open your mouth." MaZondi said looking pissed. "I always knew you liked the queen I just didn't know that you were

also playing mother you her son too."

Mancwane said. "That's where you are wrong, he is not her son but ours, as the Zungu wives Sakhile is all our first born child and will be treated as such. Stop being jealous and petty or won't get you anywhere and you have no business commenting on the matters regarding the Zungu children, you are no one here but only a passing unwanted visitor so act like and keep your mouth shut." Said MaZondi "Mashele wena mah." (Tell her mother) said Sakhile smiling.

Khulekani chuckled shaking his head "You think you still have a voice here but you don't I suggest you listen to the royal princess."

Mancwane widens her eyes. "What did you say?" She asked "The Queen said we deserve

more than just to be called royal wives. She said that we might not be queens but we are of royalty status that makes us royal princesses of the Zungu kingdom. A ceremony was done and the chief crowned us. Each one of us a part of the Zungu businesses and palace duties that we handle. That all happened last month. I know you don't like the Queen but she respects us and got us recognized in this kingdom not just as mother of the princesses of wives but princesses ourselves." Mancwane fumed with anger after MaZulu the second wife explained the situation to her. "Tell your Queen am ready to leave." She said then stood up and walked outside with a guard right behind her.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 50

"Baby! You back" Lerato said with a smile as she walked into Sakhile's room the following morning. Sakhile looked behind him confused, she threw herself at him and hugged him but Sakhile pushed her away. "What are you doing?" He asked looking at her with a serious expression. "Don't worry babe, I checked and there is no one." She went closer to him once again but Sakhile took a few steps back. "What is wrong with you today? Please leave my room, you were

supposed to be in the kitchen working or something not in my room and tell the other one as well that I don't want any of you in my room. Now please leave." Lerato looked at him confused. She looked around to see if Khulekani was there too but she was told that Sakhile come back alone. So what was this? Was Zola there? But no one said anything about him. "Sakhile what is going on?" Sakhile fumed with anger. "Are we friends now that you would call me by my name? Listen here, when I come back here I want you gone clearly you forgot what you came here for." Lerato looked at him teary eyed. "Am sorry my prince, I don't know what got to me, please give me one last chance and if some thing like this ever happens again

then you can send me away." She pleaded with him crying, she want not crying because he was sending her away but could not understand how the muti stopped working like that. Her mother assured her that is will last but what happened now? "This is your last warning, let it happen again and am sending you packing. There are a lot of people in this village even that would do anything to have your job. Keep fooling around like this and you will find yourself without a job. Now get out of my room." She bowed her head and left the room.

He sat on his bed feeling a headache, he held his head with his hands and closed his eyes. Images of him and Lerato kept flashing through his head. He shook his head trying to

get rid of them. "What the hell is going on with me?" There was a knock on his door and he got annoyed thinking it was the maid again. Before he could say anything the door opened. "So, you went and got drunk last night when you came back and didn't invite me. You should tell me when you have new friends so that I don't bother." Zola teased. "I don't know what you are talking about, I just have a strange headache, do you mind driving today?" He asked his friend as they walked out to the car. "No problem, did you take something for the headache?" He asked as they got into the car. "No I didn't, this just started not so long ago, maybe I over did it with that maid." Zola frowned. "What have you done abs what maid are you talking

about?" He asked already with an idea who the maid in question is. "That other one, the one that have me a massage that other time. She came to my room this morning calling me baby and hugging me, can you believe that?" He asked Zola looked at him. "She did what? Is the name of that maid!" He asked "how would I know the name of my maids? We are not friend Zola they work for me and I don't want to be close to them that would give them a wrong idea." Zola looked at his friend confused

"Did something happened while you were home, a ritual something, anything?" Asked Zola "nothing special happened besides what we went for, Mancwane was sent away by the Queen and we had dinner as a family before

I came back." Sakhile told him. "So nothing else happened?" Asked Zola. "Just that I got this from the chief priest, apparently I was supposed to get while I was younger but you know what happened." He shrugged. "You don't look like you have a headache now, did you just want me to drive?" Asked Zola looking at his friend as they entered town. "No I really did have it and they made me hallucinate and when that happened the headache worse." Zola got worried Sakhile is not one to get sick often but when he does get sick it would be bad. "What did you hallucinate about?" Zola was worried about him. "Look don't get me wrong and you and I agreed that the maid was hot but when I got these hallucinations I saw her." He told him

and Zola got annoyed just as he thought that his friend was back to normal now his claiming to hallucinate about that damn maid. "What are you two doing?" He asked not really interested. "We were kissing and hugging we looked like we were in love." Zola looked at him annoyed but that turned into a frown when he saw how disgusted he looked thinking about that. "Imagine doing that when I made a promise to umah Yhoo that old woman would have woken up from the dead just to hit me hard and bring me back to my senses." Zola looked at him thinking about what he just said, just a day ago he knew that maid by name and defended her and now he is disgusted by her. What was going on? They stopped and got out of the car. Zola

went to opened and Bongekile was standing there waiting. "Good morning." He greeted her with a smile and Bongekile returned it. "Good morning." Sakhile was annoyed by their friendliness. "Are you going to open or are you two going to stand there smiling at each other the whole day?" He asked sarcastically making Zola chuckle "It's opened jeez" he said Bongekile walked in with Sakhile following behind. "So you not going to greet me?" He asked testing the water, he was thinking about what his uncle said about trying again. Bongekile was shocked to hear that, he has been rude to her for a while now. "Good morning Mr Ndlovu would you like some breakfast?" She asked waiting for a rude remark from him. "Yes please my darling

princess." Both she and Zola were shocked. "Breakfast won't make itself my dear wife." He winked then walked away to the office. Bongekile looked at Zola but he shrugged and followed behind. Bongekile was left looking in the direction they disappeared to, she shook her head and went to the kitchen. There was a woman with her back on her and she thought that it was the baker.

"Good morning mah" she greeted cheerfully. "Good morning child" Bongekile stopped what she was doing, that voice, she knew that voice but where did she know it from? She slowly turned to look at her and found her already looking at her. She gasped not believing her eyes. "I don't have much time child, we have helped where we could it's up

to you now. Pray and continue burning incense because it is not over yet. The more time he spends in her presence the stronger their bond will be. The muti she used is strong but you can defeat her if you continue to do what you have been doing." Before Bongekile could say anything she vanished just as the baker came in. "Good morning my girl making breakfast again?" She asked "yes I am, good morning." She went back to what she was doing but her mind was still trying to process what just happen. She just spoke to a ghost, did they exist or was she seeing things? "Mah, do you think ghosts exist?" She asked the baker "of course they do, all those people that have died but can't find peace for one reason or another are here with us

trying to find a vessel." Bongekile looked at her. "A vessel?" She asked not understanding what she was talking about.

"A vessel is someone that can see and talk to ghosts. Some are dangerous while some just want to send a message and when they get what they want they find peace and leave this world to go and rest with their ancestors." The baker explained. "I didn't know that." She admitted. "Well am not surprised, with how you told me you grew up, you would never know such things but if you see one be careful as I said some of them are dangerous and evil that is why they can't rest." She warned her. "Thank you." She thanked her then went to the office to give her bosses breakfast but she could not stop

thinking about the ghost of Sakhile's grandmother she just saw or Sakhile's behavior earlier on. www.ebookcat.com

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 51

Mrs Mdlalose has just finished making dinner when her husband came down, poverty has been better since Bongekile started working. Now they didn't have to worry about where their next meal will come from but the vast change in her daughter worried her. "You look worried, tell me what the problem is." Mdlalose asked his wife. She sighed taking a seat next to him. "Am worried about our

daughter baba, bongekile is not the same and it worries me." Mdlalose was confused by this, to him their daughter changed for the better but now his wife is saying some different. Could there be something that she is doing that maybe he is not aware of? He wondered. "But my dear wife, our daughter is doing well, she is behaving in a way I never thought she would, she is thoughtful and considerate. She goes to church and she prays. She even worships the ancestors something we never taught her." Mrs Mdlalose shook her head. "That is the problem baba." Mdlalose didn't understand how that could be a problem. "How?" He asked his wife because to him daughters confide in their mothers and thought that

she might have said something to her that he didn't know about. "Bongekile prays and goes to church hell she even worships the ancestors something she didn't get from us then the question is where is she getting it from, who is feeding our daughter all this nonsense?" Her words confused her husband. "Tell me something, our daughter is finally doing well and you are concerned about where she is getting that from? Can't you be happy that she has changed and leave it at that?" He never thought that there was something wrong with the daughter he raised until they were in this predicament and saw how bad their teachings have been on her and now his wife was seeing something wrong with that, he did not get it.

"How can I leave it at that when my daughter is no longer mine?" She questioned which confused her husband even more. "How is she not your?" She stood up. "When was the last time she confided in me, when was the last time she spent a day with me? All the free time she gets she spends it praying and for what? If she is not praying she is burning incense like a witch burning herbs to perform a ritual. Since when is she a seer or worse a born again." She stared pacing "what I am getting from all this is that you are jealous that she is not spending time with you and not that she is doing all these things." She glared at her husband in disdain "am not jealous I just want to know what my

daughter is up to. Nothing about what she is doing is normal." Mdlalose sighed "there she is coming you can ask her yourself why she is doing all this. I am going to bed." He stood up about to leave the table "but we have not had dinner yet" she said "am not hungry" he said and bongekile came in. "Hello parents" she greeted and her father greeted back before going up the stairs. "Come and sit down bongekile we have to talk." Bongekile sighed thinking that something else might have happened. She went and took a seat at the table opposite her mother. "What's wrong now mother!" She asked sounding defeated. "You can tell me that, what is wrong with you?" She asked and bongekile looked at her confused. "I am not sure what you are talking

about mother." She told her. "I am talking about the fact that you now pray and use incense. What is that about?" She didn't need her mother's nagging right now.

"It's about me trying to be a better person mother nothing more" she was worried that her mother might have found out that Sakhile is prince somehow. "Well I don't believe that, I wasn't born yesterday Bongekile and if you wanted something to believe in you would have chosen one like a normal person but you chose to devote yourself to two things the ancestors and God now I know for a fact that Christians don't really believe in the ancestors because they have God and Sangoma's believe In the ancestors but you my darling daughter are

using both and I want to know why." She asked and Bongekile didn't know what to say. "Is there something wrong in believing in the ancestors and God at the same time? I happen to believe in both mother and I see nothing wrong with that." She answered hoping that she will let it go. "No you don't believe in both and if you do then who introduced you to them because I damn well know that you didn't get that here."

Bongekile saw that this was far from over and stood up trying to leave. "I am just trying to do everything I can to get this family back to what it was, it was you who said I didn't care and now when I do you have a problem? I don't know what more you want

from me mother." She tried to defend herself.

"Oh no my darling there is nothing wrong but I know what you are doing bongekile because I have done it before. You are a woman on a mission my dear child and it's not for work. This kind of mission is for a man and I want to know who and if he is worth it." Bongekile looked at her mother not knowing what to think "what do you mean you have done it before?" She asked sitting back down. Her mother smiled "how do you think I won your father?" Bongekile thought that her mother truly understood what she was going through. "He is worth mother and I want to help fix things. I have done him wrong and now he is slipping away from my hands and I don't know

what to do. If I don't help him then him and his kingdom are doomed. Right now I am fighting with everything I have got to win him back and save him from whatever it is that is going on with him but it's difficult because the one moment he is alright and the next his rude and mean. I don't know what to do anymore." Dear Lord a prince! My daughter is fighting to get a prince, then that means if she succeeds then I we will get out of this predicament and be set for life. I taught her well. She smiled taking her hand. "Leave everything to my darling, when you come back from work tomorrow I will have something ready for you to use and you will have him where you want him." Bongekile was pleased to hear that, she was pleased to have

someone helping her. "I would appreciate that mother, it's time for me to pray now and I will come back and eat after." She told her and new mother smiled feeling proud. "I will keep your food warm." She told her then Bongekile left going to her room to pray as she usually does.

She prayed then when she was done she tried to light the incense but it wouldn't burn, she looked at it to see if it was not wet but it wasn't. She tried lighting it again but still it wouldn't burn. "What is going on here?" She wondered and tried again but this time it lit but the fire exploded into a huge ball and she fell back on her behind looking at it with eyes popping. 'You don't listen!' A reprimanding voice came from the fire then it went off like

it was never there and there was no smell of incense to say that it burnt.

Nothing just a shocked and confused

Bongekile

Will post another one later on.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 52

Walking behind someone who has a cloak covering his/her head going down the feet. I could not see the face nor the feet of the person. The deeper we go into the forest the thicker the mist making it more difficult to see ahead. If I lose this shadow of a person moving in front of me then I will get lost in this forest and never find my way out. The mist it thick making the forest look even

thicker, it's so thick that one would think that someone is burning something out there and all the smoke is coming this way. I keep following the shadow from behind and keep hiding when it looks behind. I don't want whatever it is to see me, I don't know what it is and I don't know how dangerous it is. I have to stay hidden. After what feels like forever we come to a clearing and the moon light is brighter this side. There are caves everywhere and the person looks behind before going into one of the caves. I followed suit but got scared when I get to the entrance of the cave, there human skulls hanging around the entrance and human hands with rotting flesh. I couldn't go in because I didn't know if I will ever get out

but I peaked inside to see and the person opened the cloak uncovering her head and I saw her face. I jumped up and looked around and found that am in my room but I couldn't get the face I saw out of my mind "mother" that was her in a cloak in the cave. Just what is my mother? Is she a witch? I couldn't tell but what I saw made me reluctant to accept her help. What kind of help is she going to give me anyway? Is she going to turn me into a witch or is she going to use witchcraft to help me? What am I thinking, the woman is my mother, she raised me and I have never seen her using any kind of muti but when that thought came into mind the cave came into mind and her face in that cloak. What was

she doing there? It took a while for me to fall asleep again.

But I woke up again in the morning with her knocking on my door. I got scared thinking about the dream I had. "Bongekile if you don't wake up now you will be late." She said from the other side of the door. "I am awake mother and about to take a shower." I tell her but make no attempt to open the door. "Then I hurry up, I will make breakfast so long." She says and I hear her footsteps fading from the door and I release a breath I didn't know I was holding. I get up and make my bed then took out clothes to wear before going to the shower. I took my time in the shower so that by the time I get out I will only be left with time to get dressed and

leave. I got out of the shower after an hour and got dressed. When I was done I ran down the stairs after taking a deep breath. "Bye mah." I didn't wait to hear what she said, I opened the door and left. When I get to my stop i sighed relieved, I stop a taxi and go to work. In a taxi I look out the window and that whole time the dream keeps playing in my mind, also the incense that wouldn't burn, the questions she asked about my behavior. Did I maybe irritate a witch with my prayers? Is that why she was so agitated when she asked me about it? Come to think about it, she was always i outside my room every time I opened my door after praying. I never thought much about it but now I just

don't know or maybe seeing ghosts in day light is making me paranoid.

I took out my phone and sent a message to my brother Smanga. "Please call me in 5 minutes it's urgent." I sent the message, I need someone to talk to and Smanga has a good head on his shoulders. I got off the taxi just as my phone rings and I answered "what's going on Bongekile? What is so urgent?" He asked and I don't know how to tell him. Oh hey Smanga did you know that our mother is a witch? I am not even sure that she is but something tells me that our mother is not just a normal woman.

"Bongekile, talk to me dear sister what is the problem?" He asked again. "I don't know what to say this but I am just going to say it, I

think that there is something wrong with our mother." I tell him "what do you think is wrong with her?" He asks. "I think she is witch, I know that is crazy but please listen to me, mother was angry last night asking me why I prayed lately and why I was worshiping the ancestors. Then when I tried to light the incense it wouldn't light then there was a voice that came out of it when it finally lit up and then I dreamt of her wearing a cloak and going into a cave that had human skull and hands." I tell him and I hear him sigh on the other side. I wait for him to say something. "Look my dear sister I cannot deny or confirm if mother is a witch or not, but all I know is that you have changed into a better person. What mother is or is not is none of

our business. She gave birth to us and raised us. For that we owe her our lives, what I suggest you do is what you have been doing. Pray and pray harder than you have ever done before. Maybe you will be the one to save her, to save us all." He tells me. I sighed thinking about what he said, he is right I own her. "I understand and thank you for your understanding and listening to me without judging." He sighs once again. "Who am I to judge Bongekile? Our lives are a mess right now and all that has happened has made me believe in the things I never thought possible. If the ancestors are there then the witches are there too and if our mother is one of them then all we can do is stay out of her way. I don't want you fighting witches on

top of everything that we are facing right now dear sister. Put your head down and pray. Try not to show her that you know something either and I will do the same." He tells me "but she already offered to help me and I agreed." I feel so stupid right now. "That is fine, what she does help take whatever she gives you and bring it to me. I will take care of it, Bongekile I don't want you to be in danger." He says "She also implied that she did something to our father last night when we spoke and I don't know what to make of it." I tel him. "As I said dear little sister your might be the one to help us all in this family. Pray for all of us and don't give up. When you feel like you can't go on anymore talk to me and I will give you what little

strength I have to keep you going but don't give up. Our lives might just depend on it, this family's survival might depend on you." He tells me and I wiped my tears. "Thanks brother." I thanked him. "Always my dear." I cut the call and walked to work. I am late but they will understand because I am never late.

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Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 53

Sakhile came into his room and found Lerato laying on his bed wearing langere. He stood by the door looking at her. "Hawungitshela

we Lerato, umthetho wakho uyadelela yhi?" (Tell me Lerato, are you disrespectful by nature?) he asked leaning against the door frame. "Come on baby, I wore this specially for you, am ready to take the next step, please make me yours." Sakhile looked at her for a while without saying anything, he turned and left the room going to the car. He started it then went to the maids room, "my prince, what can I do for you." Asked the other maid shocked to see him there, he doesn't go to their room so she thought that something was wrong. "I came for Lerato's clothes, give them to me and pack even then dirty ones." She wanted to ask what was going on but refrained from doing so. She did as told them have the suitcases to him.

Sakhile took them and went to load them in the car then went back to his room. He has left his jacket in the car and Lerato smiled seeing him without it. She was already under covers when he he returned to the room. He walked to the bed and pulled the covers off her and she giggled. "Oh baby! Take me please am all yours." Sakhile pulled her down by the ankle which made her giggle more. He yanked her off the bed and pulled her to her feet. He picked her up and threw her on his shoulder like a sack of potatoes, "Baby where are you taking me." She asked with a seductive voice but Sakhile kept his mouth shut and walked to the car. When Lerato saw the car her eyes widened. "Baby I didn't know that you were wild, you want to take me

In the car wow." Still Sakhile said nothing and when he got to the car he opened the back and threw her in there then closed the door. He went to the drivers side and drove off. "Baby where are we going?" She asked now worried that he was not saying anything. He drove to the bus stop and when he got there he stopped the car and went to the boot. He opened it and took out her suitcases and put them on the side of the road then went to open her door.

"Get out." He told her and Lerato looked at her. "Baby what are you talking about, what are we doing here?" She asked now worried seeing the suitcases. "I said get out before I make you." She looked at him but his expression was neutral, she couldn't read him

or tell what he was thinking. Sakhile saw that she was not moving and he pulled her out by the arm then closed the door. "Sakhile what are you doing?" She asked now hysterical. "Am firing you and leaving you here to get a buy to wherever you came from." He told her then moved to the drivers seat but Lerato held her arm. "Sakhile please, it's late and there are not buses moving at this time please." She begged now already crying, the evening cold penetrating her barely covered skin. "You should have thought about that when you decided to behave like a slut instead of a maid." He pulled his arm from her roughly and got into the car. She held the door open. "Sakhile you can't leave me here!" She was between shouting and crying. "Watch me." He

pulled the door hard closing it then start the car, Lerato was banging on the door begging him to not leave her there, Sakhile didn't even look at her as he drove off leaving her there crying. "Sakhile!!" She called running behind the car but he pressed on the accelerator leaving dust behind. She stopped running behind the car and fell on her knees crying. "Please, don't leave me here." She cried sitting there for a while. After crying for a long time she stood up and walked to her suitcases. She opened them and took out a tracksuit, sneakers and socks. She was grateful that he at least packed her clothes, she looked at the langere in anger and wore his tracksuit. She stood there not knowing where to go, it was dark out and the only bus she will get is the

one at five in the morning. She thought of where Zola stayed and she didn't know. All she knew was that he stays in the houses not far from the bus stop. She wiped her tears and pulled her suitcases walking down the road. She saw a house and went. The house was brightly lit but there were dogs. They barked in her direction when she went closer and she stopped hoping that someone will come out but no one did. She was scared of dogs so she ended up leaving going to you the next house. It was dark so she moved on and found another one that still had lights on and went. She first checked if there were dogs but there weren't any and she went into the yard. She pulled her suitcases but it wasn't that easy. These are the rural areas and there are

dirt roads. She finally got them to the stoop and took a deep breath before knocking on the door. "Wubani lowo?" (Who is that?) asked someone from the inside. "I am lost and looking for Zola, Sakhile's friend and am not sure where he lives. Please help me." She begged from the other side of the door, she heard footsteps coming to the door and heard the latch being opened. Soon the door opened and a middle aged woman appeared. She looked at her then her suitcases. "You want Zola?" She asked and Lerato nodded with tears in her eyes. "Hayi oZola nabo bayayenza indaba, yhini engakulandile estopeni? Bheka manje uyalahleka. Nathi! Woza la ngani yami." (Zola is something else, why didn't he go get you at the bus stop? Look now you are lost.

Nathi! Come here my child.) A boy about twelve years old appeared behind her. "Mah?" (Mother?) "take a wheelbarrow in the shed and accompany this young lady to Zola's house. She got lost." She instructed and the boy looked at her then nodded, he went out and brought the wheelbarrow then loaded her suitcases in. "Thank you." She thanked the woman, "hayi akuna nkinga wena Nathi ungambe udlala usheshe ubuye." (It's alright and you Nathi don't go around playing and hurry back.) the boy nodded and pushed the wheelbarrow leading the way with Lerato following behind.

They walked in silence all the way to Zola's house. Five houses away they got to Zola's place. The boy whistled to indicate that

someone was outside. Zola opened the door and saw the boy coming into the gate with someone following behind. He didn't know who it was because it was dark, only a few houses have generators for light including Sakhile's one. He waited for them to get close and saw Lerato. "Oh hell no! No no no! What the hell are you doing here?" He asked her, the boy was confused by his outburst. "Zola please, let me explain." She begged, Zola folded his arms looking at her, "Alright, explain." Lerato looked at the boy and hesitated. "Oh, he should be the least of your problems, Nathi put those things down and go home." The boy nodded and took the suitcases off the wheelbarrow placing them next to Lerato then pushed the wheelbarrow and left. "Am

still waiting for the explanation or you can leave my house and go back where you came from." He told her and Lerato swallowed.

"Sakhile kicked me out of the house and left me at the bus stop. I need a place to sleep just for tonight and I will go in the morning." Zola laughed throwing his head back.

"Uthi wenzeni?" (What did he do?) asked Zola still laughing, Lerato was hurt by his behavior but wouldn't show it because she still needed him. "Zola please, help me." She begged." Not so long ago you were acting like the queen and now you are here asking for my help? My friend chased you out for a reason. I know your type and I know Sakhile. You must have done something terrible for him to chase you out of the house at this time of

the night. So it's either you tell me what you did or leave." This was embarrassing, how could she tell Zola what she did. "You might as well tell me what you did because he will tell me anyway." Zola looking at her with a smirk. He has been waiting for this day and now that it finally came. It was too good to just let it pass like that. "He found me in his bed okay! Now are you to help me or not?" Zola looked at her and folded

His arms. "You are homeless yet you still cheeky, I think a night out in the cold will teach you some manners." He said then closed the door in her face.

She was left standing there with her mouth hung open not believing what he just did. While standing there the lights were

switched off. She panicked and started banging on the door. "If you wake up my father with that banging I will make you regret the day moment you decided to come here." He threatened and Lerato stopped knocking and waited. She stood there for twenty minutes waiting but instead of the door opening she heard snores coming from the house and that made her cry even more. What was she going to do now?

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 54

Lerato could not sleep a wink that night, after standing on the door for a while hoping Zola would open she finally gave up. It was

scary to go anywhere so she went into the kraal where Zola's sheet used to be before he sold them and bought cows like his friend. It didn't smell nice in there but it was the only safe place at the moment. It was now too dark and didn't want to go back to the house she got help from. Hell she didn't remember which one it was or if she was going to find it if she went look because it was dark and she couldn't even see in front of her. She sat there scared of what might happen during the night. The little things scared her, the noises of night owls, the sounds of coyote at the far distance, it was all so terrifying that she could not close her eyes. When the first rooster sounded in the early hours of the morning she knew that it

was time to leave. She smelled terrible because of where she slept but she didn't care. All she wanted was to get out of there. She pulled her suitcases and walked to the bus stop. It wasn't so scary now because there were other people going to the bus stop. When she got there she waited like everyone else and when the bus came she got on and sat on top of her suitcases since there was no place to sit. Zola woke up as usual and went to his friend so that they can go to work together. He has a smile on his face he was even whistling as he walked in. His friend was having breakfast served by the other maid. "What got you so happy early in the morning?" Zola smiled. "Life is good my friend, life is good and I have every reason in

the world to smile. Why are you so grumpy early in the morning when I can tell that things are looking up." He asked taking the breakfast from the maid and thanking her while shoving a piece of bread in his mouth then moaned as he chewed. Annoyed by his tactics Sakhile glared at him but he just smiled. "Oh come on, can't a guy just be happy?" He asked taking a small sip of his tea.

"Am not grumpy this is my usual self." He answered. "Well that is exactly why I am happy because today you seem like the friend I grew up with not some guy who behaved like he was slapped with a woman's underwear." Sakhile stopped eating and looked at his friend. He hated men that behaved like they

are bewitched and here his friend was saying that he behaved the same. What an insult it was to him. "Get to the point, will you? I can see that you have something to say, now say it." Zola chuckled. "I had a visitor last night, an interesting visitor actually but unfortunately I could not give a roof to my enemy. So, do you want to tell me why one of your maids was at my house late in the even last night?" Sakhile clicked his tongue. "You did well by not letting her stay, the women is disrespectful, I found her half naked on my bed when I got home acting like we were lovers or something. I tell you the sight of her like that on my bed repulsed me. So, I sent her packing." Zola threw his head back laughing. "About time you woke up and saw

that woman for what she is, when I told you about her you would not listen, in fact you would defend her and make me seem like the one in the wrong. I think umah woke up from the grave and fought for you." Sakhile was confused by what his friend was saying. He doesn't remember them talking about his maid or him defending her. Why would he defend her to begin with?

"Now why would I defend her and why did we talk about her that I didn't listen? Because the last time we spoke about her was when we both complimented that she was well build and you said I shouldn't bother because I have a wife, who doesn't want me by the way. So what are you talking about?" Zola looked at his friend and saw the seriousness in his

face. "Sakhile please tell me that you are pulling my leg? We spoke about this woman many times and you wouldn't hear a thing. I even thought that you were sleeping with her the way you were defending her. I even asked her to stop making your breakfast." Sakhile stopped eating and looked at his friend. "You told her to stop? I thought that they were taking turns when I came back from the palace and she wasn't making breakfast or dinner. But I don't remember talking about her or me defending her." He tried to explain, it was Zola's turn to stop eating. "Did something happened while you were back home?" Sakhile shook his head. "Nothing out of the ordinary no," he told him. "No man, something must have happened

because I swear right now you sound like a man that was bewitched. How come you don't remember anything that happened? Do you even remember that you were rude to your wife that she even wanted to quit her job?" Sakhile looked at his friend trying to see if he was joking or not but he looked serious with no sign of mischief. "The only thing that happened was that I was given this. But I don't remember being rude to Bongekile, you know me. I keep my distance from her and enjoy the food she makes," Zola stood up and started pacing. "That little shit! Bloody witch came here with the intention of getting you and she almost won, if you didn't go home with your uncle and gotten that bracelet then you would still be head over hill

influctuated with her," Sakhile didn't know what to say.

"We are not going to work today we are going to the palace instead. My uncle needs to tell me where they found that thing from." Zola nodded. "The palace it is then" they both got up and went to the care then drove to the palace. On the drive there silence filled the car, Zola thinking about the possibility that his friend was bewitched and Sakhile trying hard to remember the things that Zola was talking about but no matter how hard he tried nothing came to mind. "Do you really think I was bewitched?" He asked she he nodded. "I think you were, the day you left with your uncle to look for your mother's kidnapper we had a misunderstanding and it

was because of her. Man you even said that I was jealous of you." Sakhile laughed out loud. "I must have been bewitched for real if I said that and then only thing I remember about that day is leaving the coffee shop then all the things my uncle and I did nothing else." Zola nodded and soon they got into the gates of the palace. Khulekani met them as they got out. "Now this is what I call a surprise, my nephew and his right hand man, to what do we owe the pleasure of the prince of the land coming to the palace." Zola chuckled. "Well, I wish I can say it's good news uncle but your nephew here was bewitched." Zola folded his arms looking at his friend. "Couldn't you wait until we got inside?" Asked Sakhile "No his right, what am

I hearing and who did it?" Asked Khulekani
"One if the maids the short one." Zola
answered. "Good, get back into the car, we
are going to get her and she will meet her
ancestors today. No one bewitched the
prince of this land and live." Khulekani said
and left in a hurry going to the chief priest
hut. "We should have waited now we can't
even get to eat my mother's food." Sakhile
complained.

"Stop acting like a child and MaZondo should
stop treating you like one, you are a grown
man." Zola reprimanded. "Hayi ku mah,
ngoyodla mina." (Not to my mother. Am going
to eat." He left Zola standing there watching
him walk into the palace. His never seen his
friend act like a child like this.

Ntombe'Thongo

Chapter 55

Khulekani got into the chief priest hut and he looked at him then went back to mixing his herbs. "Funani Khulekani?" (What do you want Khulekani?) "My nephew is being bewitched, the prince of this land is being bewitched and I need answers." He told him. "The only answer I can give you is for you to find that girl and her mother. Stop them but before that I need to go to his house and get rid of the rest of the muti his still eating." Khulekani was shocked by this. "What do you mean by that?" He asked "I mean he still takes the muti everyday for dinner, it's not working as well as it was supposed to because his wife is working on her side but it does still have an effect on

him thought now it's slower in working because I also gave him the bracelet." The chief priest explained. "You mean his still under the influence, I will kill that girl." Khulekani fumed in anger. The chief priest took out something like a marble with three dots that looked like small eyes. "Take this, it will show you where to find the girl and her mother. Follow it and I will go with Makhosini to remove the muti and cleanse the house." Khulekani took the marble thing. "So if you knew about this then why didn't you do anything about it?" Asked Khulekani angry that the chief priest let this happen. "This was not my fight but the future queens, she had to learn to humble herself and fight for what is hers. She has done that and the ancestors have given me the go ahead to

help, that is what am doing now." Khulekani was quiet for a moment thinking about what he was just told. "So that means the future Queen does want her husband after all." He said but the chief priest didn't answer and Khulekani knew that he won't be getting anymore from the old man. "I shall take my leave now, thank you and thank the Zungu ancestors for their hard work in protecting us." The chief priest still didn't say anything and Khulekani left. He met Zola next to the car, he peaked into the car looking for Sakhile. "Don't look his inside, he said his not going without eating his mother's food." Khulekani clicks his tongue. "I get that he didn't get to be babied but these mothers of his are going to ruin him." He said looking at the door of the

palace. "Oh no he was babied by his grandfather uyatetema nje lo (his being a baby)" Zola tells him. "Let's go and get him." They walked into the house and found Sakhile eating and talking to MaZondo.

"Hasambe wena" (Let's go.) Sakhile looked at MaZondi but she shrugged. "Ngiyadla malume." (Am still eating uncle.) he told him and Khulekani took the food and put it away then pulled him up by the arm as Zola laughed. "Nomasonto! Makhosini! Uyangibulala umalume!" (Nomasonto! Makhosini! Uncle is killing me!) Zola and MaZondi burst out laughing, Khulekani was shocked by the outburst to a point that he let him go and froze looking at him. Sonto and Makhosini came in running. Makhosini went to his sons side

inspecting him for injuries and Sonto was standing there asking what is going on.

"MaZondi stop laughing and tell me what's wrong.?" It only took MaZondi one glance at Sakhile then Khulekani and start laughing all over again. Zola was on his knees laughing and Sakhile was back to eating his food like nothing happened. "Khulekani Kanti uyenzani ungani yami?" (Khulekani what are you doing to my son?) his brother demanded snapping Khulekani out of his shocked state. He looked at his nephew and chuckled. "Why don't you ask this mama's boy of yours what the ruckus is about." Sonto and Makhosini looked at Sakhile with questioning eyes. "He doesn't want me to eat and we are going to the gods know where and I can't go hungry. Zola knows

I don't eat takeaways and uncle knows it too." Makhosini sighed "Hawu bandla sakhile ude umemeze kangaka pho?" (but Sakhile to yell like that though?) ask Sonto defeated. He shrugged shoving a piece of bacon in his mouth. "That was the only thing I could think of at the time Ngiyaxolisa ndlovukazi (am sorry my queen)" Makhosini shook his head. "Why don't you just move home then if you like your mother's cooking so much? It's clear that those maids don't cook for you." Makhosini suggested but Sakhile shook his head. "No the maids cook but they bewitch me right now we going to find the one that I threw out last night." The parents were shocked by the revelation. "What do you mean bewitched?" Asked Makhosini and Zola

told them the whole story while Sakhile didn't care as he continued eating. "Mah can I have a lunch box for the road?" He asked for seconds. "Hawuthule Sakhile!" (Shut up Sakhile) Sonto reprimanded. "Mara ndlovukazi ungisukela angenzanga Lutho mina. Angithi nawe wahamba manje bayangiloya ngithini ke manje. Ngiyakele ngidle lana ngoku ngeke ngiloywe lana. Hlala phantsi sindle futhi yazi ngikukhumbulile nawe njalo Makhosini." (But my Queen I didn't do anything, you also left now they are bewitching me, so what must I do? Let me eat here because no one will bewitch me here. Please sit down I have missed you, your too Makhosini) he smirked and Makhosini shook his head. "When will you call me your father Sakhile? You are being

disrespectful now, no wonder you are being bewitched." He said but took a sit anyway. "Hawu baba ngiyandlala nje Nyamakayishi." (But father, I am only joking.) he said pacifying him by calling him by his clan name. "This is serious and for us to only find out about this is not right. How am I supposed to trust anyone with you now?" Makhosini asked and Sonto looked like his far in thoughts. "I dont like this, but I trust the chief priest and when this is done your wife must come home as per tradition so that she can be the one to cook for you before they take you from right under her nose." Sonto said making Zola chuckle. "Oh but she already cooks for him, I forgot to tell your my queen, the coffee shop's menu has been extended to

more food stuff and that is food made by your daughter in law for her husband mara ingane yakho nkosiyami inekhanda eliqinile.

(But your son my king is very stubborn)"

Makhosini chuckled. "He takes after me and we wanted to tell you that your mother and I will be getting married in two weeks time."

Makhosini told him and Sakhile looked

MaZondi. "Wena mah uzizwa njani ngaloku?"

(You mother, how do you feel about this?)

MaZondi smiled at him, she liked how

considerate Sakhile was he wasn't just happy about his parents getting married but was concerned about her too. That moved her.

"The queen spoke to us first my son and asked for our blessing. She even told us that if we don't want this marriage to happen then

she won't go through with it. I must say that she is not the woman we thought she was because at first we thought was going to take your father for herself but she is not like that. Every decision of this household is decided by all of us. So rest assured that when they say that they are getting married is not their decision alone but ours as well."

Sakhile nodded and turned to Sonto.

"Mother, do you want this? I know that he hurt you in the past and that doesn't go away that easy. I don't want you to be pressured into anything just like I am not being pressured to move here. I want you to be happy with this decision before you commit. So I ask you. Is this what you want?" He asked his mother. "What I want more than

anything in this world is for my son to call me mother like I deserve to be called one."

Sonto answered and her answer hurt Makhosini and Khulekani as well. "Mother, you are my mother I forgave you a long time ago. I just like calling you Sonto because you look like my sister than my mother but if you want me to call you mother then I will. I love you Sonto ka mah. Ungizele ntokazi yakwaNdkovu wanginikeza ubomi yebo awungikhulisanga kodwa uba ubungangifuni ngeba wangibulala ngisesesibeletweni noba mhlazana ngizalwa kodwa awukwenzanga loko. Uhumama kumina Nomasonto anginaye umunye owangizala ngaphandle kwakho. Ngiyabuza futhi, uyafuna ukumshada ubaba?" (You gave birth to me woman of the Ndlovu clan, you gave me life

and yes you didn't raise me but if you didn't want me then you would have aborted me or killed me the day I was born but you didn't. You are my mother Nomasonto I don't have another besides you. I ask you again, do you want to marry my father?) Sonto was now crying.

"Yes. I want to marry him." She told him making Makhosini smile. "I will be here then by your side to give you away." Sonto stood up and hugged him. She didn't know how to tell him or how he was going to react to the news. But now she was happy. "Thank you." She thanked him. "Hayi yeka manje sisayobamba umthakathi thina. Hasambeni malume." (oh no leave me now we are still going to catch a witch, let's go uncle.) he said

standing up. "Uyahlanga sizezodla nathi ke, angithi nawe udlile." (You crazy, we are still going to eat as well, you ate right) Sakhile looked at his friend but Zola also pulled a chair and sat down. "Usuyangijikela nawe manje." (You are also turning against me now?) he asked his friend. "Let's go my son and see your sister. Let's leave them be." Makhosini said standing up and Sakhile followed as they left going to MaZondi's house to see the little princess.