

ROOTED

One

The drive home is fast as always with me blasting my music on max.

“Sho sistas.” Pelo the security guard at the gate greets.

“Hi Pelo o kae?”

“Ke sharp wena?”

“Ke sharp. I’ll sort you out ksasa ne?”

“Ta sistas.” I tag in and drive in at that 40km restriction. ‘Slow down we love our children’ the sign reads. Well why don’t your children play in their yards? I hate how these kids believe that they have right of way in the street. Like child this isn’t your play ground. “They’re just kids.” Their parents say. So? What does that have to do with getting out

of the road when you see a car? Nxaa
bloody spoiled brats. I open the garage and
dad's car is parked in there. Ufunani la?
Now I have to park outside? Argh. I step out
and grab my bag as well as my laptop bag
then head inside.

I'm hit by the most mouth watering aroma
the minute I step in the kitchen. Dad is
humming and bobbing his head to whatever
that tune is. I place my bags on the counter
then walk over to him and hug him from
behind, resting my head on his back.

"Hello princess."

"Hello daddy. Ufunani la?" He chuckles.

"I came to see my favourite daughter."

"But I'm your only daughter daddy."

“No you’re not. “

“I am too.”

“I have a daughter in-law.”

“Argh kodwa still.”

“You’re my only princess.”

“Exactly.” I walk over to the fridge and grab a bottle of water. I don’t like the way he’s looking at me. It’s like he’s studying me.

“You’re still losing weight Nqobile.” I roll my eyes.

“I’m just under a lot of pressure at work.”

“Your mother wants you to move back in.” I give a baffled look. Me? Move back in with them? Nope. Never. I DON’T THINK SO.

“You know that’s ridiculous right?”

“It doesn’t sound so bad to me.”

“Ngoba you just want to suffocate me.”

“We suffocate you Nqobile?” He asks sounding a bit hurt.

“No you don’t baba but that’s because I live here and you live there. Look don’t take this the wrong way kodwa you and mom are still having sex and I don’t want to be subjected to your moaning and groaning every day please.” He snickers

“You’re disgusting wena.”

“Angithi ngifuze wena no mfazi wakho.”

“Mxm go change so we can have dinner.”

“Firstly who is your wife having dinner with if wena you’re here owning my kitchen?

Secondly please leave my house keys when you leave and I’m going to remove your name there by the gate.” He chuckles while

shaking his head.

“Hamba Nqobile. Firstly my wife is her own woman before she is my wife so she’s entertaining herself. Secondly why don’t you want me popping in here?”

“Because I want to have sex on my couch without having to worry that my dad might just walk in.”

“You’re not too old to get a beating wena.” I chortle as I walk away. I appreciate that they care and worry about me but I mean it when I say I’m fine. I’m better than I was before. They’ve been overbearing since the divorce. After it was finalised I had to move in with them for a few months because I wasn’t handling things well. I was literally losing my mind. I slept all day. Hardly ate anything. Bathed only when Ndile came to

visit. He ended up coming every day just so I could eat and bath. My whole family was affected by the situation more especially my youngest brother Malibongwe. He watched me drown and lose myself and that caused him to lose himself too. When he almost lost his life I knew I had to do something. So I woke up one morning and just moved on with life and I've been taking it one day at a time. It's been very hard but life has to keep moving. I end up taking a quick shower then throw on a tracksuit and head back down.

"This looks yummy." I say grabbing a plate.

"We're eating in the living room. Grab your wine ngoba I know it's the only thing you drink." I chuckle. This old man. I grab a

bottle and two glasses then head to the living room. He hands me my plate and we dig in.

“You make the best steak daddy.”

“Tell that to your mother please.” I shake my head.

“Your wife is crazy nope.” We chortle. Dad and I have always been close. Growing up I was always his ninja. Well we all were but being the only princess meant being a daddy’s girl. I appreciate the love he’s shown me and continues to show me because that taught me my worth. He set the standard high and it wasn’t easy finding a man that could measure up but I did and well shit happened.

“So how are you princess honestly.” I sigh.

“I’m okay. I mean some days are better than others but I’m still breathing.”

“Do you miss him?”

“Every day.”

“Oh princess.” He takes my plate and puts it on the table then pulls me into his arms.

“I don’t understand it dad. Like why couldn’t he fight for us? Why did he let them win?”

“It just means that he wasn’t the one for you.”

“I refuse to believe that.”

“Princess..” He sounds defeated and I don’t blame him.

“He loved me dad. I can’t take that away from him. I could see that he was just as broken by the divorce as I was.”

“If he loved you he would’ve fought for you. Damn it Nqobile you deserve someone better than that spineless prick.” I sigh then giggle. “Manje uhlekani?”

“You’re going to pop a vein and mom is going to be pissed.” He laughs and pokes me lightly.

“Uyadelela wena.”

“I know right.” I say looking up at him. He stares down at me and gives me what mom describes as his dashing smile. I can’t help but smile back. “You’re the most handsome man I’ve ever laid my eyes on.” He chuckles.

“If that were true you would’ve married a man that looks like me.”

“He’s also dark.”

“Real men are dark vele.”

“Not all of them are real men though.”

“You just threw shade at your ex husband I see.” I laugh.

“Usile wena.”

“Never. I need to go kodwa I’ll see you tomorrow angithi?”

“No I just need to sleep in tomorrow. I’ll see you for Sunday lunch.”

“You better come.”

“I will. It’s by lume’s right?”

“Yes.” He pulls me up and embraces me.

“I’ll tell your mother that you’re fine.”

“Thank you.” I say faintly.

“I love you princess.”

“I love you too dad.” He kisses my head then lets go. “I’ll sort the dishes out.”

“I wasn’t going to offer to do them anyway.”
We share a laugh. I love my dad. I honestly don’t know where I would be without him. I put the dishes in the dish washer then clean up around the kitchen. I grab a box of chocolate and a packet of caramel popcorn and head to my room. We’re binging on The Walking Dead tonight. No sleep formed against me shall prosper.

[05/09, 08:46] Mca: TWO

“Yes.” I answer my in my sleepy voice.

“Hi sweetheart.” My heart stops beating and I shiver. I haven’t heard his voice in such a long time but it still makes me weak.

“Hi.”

“How are you?”

“I’m fine and you.”

“I’m good.” Silence.

Kanti why did he call me if all he’s going to do is breathe.

“I was wondering if we could meet tomorrow.”

“What for?”

“Please Kuhle.”

“Forr ini?”

“I just need to see you please.”

“I don’t think I can.” I hang up and allow my tears to roll down my cheek. Why does it still hurt so much? I was doing fine and he just had to come and set me back. Why? A text comes through and it’s from him.

“I know you don’t want to see me kodwa I’m

begging you sweetheart please. Just five minutes.” Five minutes. Five minutes is too long in his presence. I can’t. I really can’t. I drag myself out of bed and head to the bathroom. I brush my teeth and wash my face then head to the kitchen. I need a very strong cup of coffee. I put the coffee machine on and get on with breakfast. Grease that’s what I need so I fry up some bacon, sausages and chicken nuggets. I grate some cheese and put everything on a plate. I pour my coffee and grab my plate and head to the patio. I love this view. The backyard is like a forest. I have green fingers so it was a must that we have a garden that would do justice. I remember how we used to sit here and watch the sunrise. That was our favourite activity. We’d just sit here watching the sun while

listening to each other's heartbeats. Sigh. Why did he have to call me? Why did he have to bring back all those feeling that I had buried? I was coming along just fine and he just had to. Fuck him. I hate him. Okay I'm lying but I'm justified in feeling this way right? Yes I bloody am. I've even lost my appetite now. Rhaaaa. I take my plate and go put it in the microwave then head back to bed. My phone is flashing indicating that I have a message. Two new messages. One from him and one from Bongwe.

"Kuhle I'm begging you sweetheart. Please. Just hear me out." I delete it. I don't want to hear him out. Why should I? What is that going to bring me? If anything it's just going to set me back worse than his call did.

"I need you." That's from Bongwe. I spring

up to my feet and run to the closet while dialling his number. It rings unanswered. Shit. I don't want to scare anyone else before I know what's happening. I throw on a loose fitting dress and rush out. I'm still trying his number and no answer. I grab my keys and run out.

Come on Bongwe pick up your phone. I say in my head as his phone keeps ringing. I'm driving like a maniac and I'm praying that I don't get into an accident. I get to his building and I practically run in the minute I park the car. I don't even wait for the elevator I run up the stairs and my heart is in my stomach. I bang on his door hoping he can hear me through the music.

"Malibongwe baby please open for me." I

keep knocking and knocking and knocking. I feel tears threaten to fall out my eyes but I push them back. I need to stay strong.

“Simpfiwe please let me in nana. I’m here now. Melo’s here please Bongwe.” I’m defeated. I’m sitting on the floor with my back against the door. My tears cascade down my face. I’m a bad sister. Why didn’t I see the message sooner? The key turns. I jump up and vigorously wipe my tears. I attack him with a hug the minute he opens the door. He breaks down and starts sobbing. We sink to the floor and I pull him into my arms.

“It’s okay nana. It’s okay I’ve got you.” His cries cut through the deepest parts of me. Malibongwe is my parents third born. Growing up he was always chilled and laid

back. He was and still is the nerd of the family. He's a scientist just like dad. Like father like son.

"It hurts so bad Melo."

"I know baby I know but Melo's got you okay? Everything is going to be fine." She shakes his head and tightens his grip around my head. "Yes Malibongwe it's going to be fine."

"Why does it hurt?"

"It has to baby."

"It hurts so so bad." I gently push him out of my embrace and cup his face.

"Yes it hurts but you're a Mkhize baby. We go through the most shit but we come out stronger than ever. Look at mom and dad, how many miscarriages did they go through

before they had us? Malume yena? Look at him today. You're stronger than you think baby." He nods and wipes his face. I give him a soft peck then pulls him in for a hug. "Now go take a long hot shower while I make us something to eat."

"I love you so much Melo."

"I love you too Bongwe." He gets up and walks towards the bathroom. I heave a sigh and quickly wipe the tears that fall. This place looks like kak. There are beer bottles everywhere. Sigh. The ash tray is full argh. So much weed Bongwe. I clean up then head to the kitchen to make us something to eat. There's rotten food in the fridge. This child needs to move in with me. I throw out the food and once I'm done there is nothing to cook. I order pizza and then chill in the

lounge. He's been in the shower for way too long. He walks in just as I stand up.

"Well look at you." He chuckles.

"You're an idiot."

"I ordered pizza ne, it should be here soon."

He nods and walks to the kitchen and comes out holding a beer bottle. Sigh.

"So I was thinking." I say taking a bite of my pizza.

"Did it hurt princess?"

"Uzokhala." We both laugh.

"Yes you were thinking?"

"Move in with me."

"Melo."

"Simpfiwe you don't have food, you drink

and smoke every day and I'm quite sure you haven't been going to work." He sighs.

"Melo."

"Melo what Simphiwe?"

"I'm fine."

"Well I'm not. I can't just sit back and watch you throw your life away."

"I'm not throwing it away I'm just dealing."

"Fuck you. We all deal with shit every day."

"Melokuhle." He says faintly.

"I'm here for you. Can't you see me?"

"I know."

"Then use us Simphiwe. We're at your disposal. We all care."

"Stop calling me Simphiwe you're hurting me." I chuckle. "I'll move in with you but

only for a short while.”

“That’s fine.”

“Thank you princess.”

“I love you ne.”

“I love you too.” He chuckles.

“Yini?”

“This is why you got divorced. You’re full of shit.”

“Voetsek.” We crack up. He’s still got a long way to go but I have faith that he’ll get there

(Just a taste. We’ll put a pause here until we finish up with the other two.)

[05/09, 08:46] Mca: THREE

Unedited

What the hell is that smell? My eyes swing open and I jump out of bed to investigate the smell. Dammit Malibongwe. He's listening to his depressing playlist while puffing on his weed.

"Seriously Simphiwe?" I smack the back of his head. He looks at me with little emotion then goes back to his smoking. Sigh.

"Simphiwe."

"Yini Melokuhle?" He snaps. I sit on top of the coffee table and face him.

"I thought we were out of that place."

"Yeah well shit happens." He shrugs.

"So each time shit happens we're going to go back there?"

"That's the only place where I feel alive

Melo.”

“Yet you’re dead when you’re in that place.”

“At least I feel something.” I nod and get up.

“We’re leaving for lunch at 12. Be ready.” He nods.

“Sharp.” I walk away. I kneel next to my bed.

“Lord please intervene.” That’s all I can say. My heart is heavy but I can’t even put words together but mom says the Lord hears what’s in our hearts. I slide back into bed and listen to my ragging thoughts. A soft knock comes through and Bongwe walks in.

“Melo?”

“Huh.” I close my eyes. I feel him getting into bed with me.

Silence.

“Please don’t tell mom you know how worried she gets.” I chuckle.

“I won’t.” I know how worried mom is about him and I don’t want to add onto her stress. She and dad need to enjoy their semi-retirement in peace without having to worry about their kids.

“I’m sorry.” I heave a sigh and turn to face him. His bottom lip is trembling and that just breaks my heart.

“Bongwe.” I say softly then pull him into my arms. He keeps exhaling and I know he’s trying to fight the tears. “Let it out Malibongwe.” He shakes his head.

“Simpfiwe cry.”

“I’m fine.” He tries to get out of my hold but I pull him closer. “Let me go Melokuhle.”

“I’m here and I love you.” I feel my chest getting wet. He’s crying.

“When does the pain stop?” He says softly. I wish I knew.

“Mom says it doesn’t but you learn to live with it.”

“I don’t want to carry on living if the pain doesn’t go away.” His voice is still low.

“You can’t say that Malibongwe.”

“I can’t breathe Nqo. It hurts each time I do. I can’t even smile.” A soft sob escapes out of his mouth and his hold on my body tightens.

“You need to try baby. We’re here and we love you.”

“It’s so sore.”

“I know baby I know but we’ll get through it all together okay.” He nods.

“Thank you Nqo.”

“I got you.”

“I know.” I’m trying so hard to keep it together for him but Lord knows it’s hard. I let my tears fall freely as I take my brother’s pain and make it mine. He’s resting on top of me with all his body weight. He must be asleep. I’ll let him get his rest because I know he hasn’t been getting any.

I close my eyes and drift off to sleep just for an hour.

I’m brought out of my slumber by my ringing phone. I reach for it and answer.

“Yeah.”

“Uthi yeah? Kanti where are you?” I open my eyes and check the caller ID. Mom.

“Oh hi.”

“Where are you?”

“I’m at home.”

“Melokuhle you’re still at home? It’s half past 1.” Shit.

“Oh damn. I just closed my eyes for an hour.”

“Just get here and call your brother while you’re at it ngoba he’s ignoring my calls.” I know she’s hurt by that.

“He’s not ignoring your calls mom, he’s sleeping.”

“How do you know?”

“He’s in bed with me.”

“Why? Why is he with you? Is he okay?”

She’s ranting. I know she’s panicking.

“Relax mama we were just spending some time together that’s all.” She sighs.

“Okay just get here.”

“Yes mama love you.”

“Love you too my little blip.” I grunt and hang up. I hate that name.

I shake Bongwe and he groans. I shake him again and he opens his eyes.

“We have to go get ready we’re already late.” He mumbles something as he gets off the bed and walks out. I rush to the bathroom to take a quick shower then go get dressed.

I head down and I find Bongwe in the kitchen snacking on biltong.

“You better replace my stash.” I say.

“You invited me to come live here so nah.”

He shoots back. Argh.

“Let’s go.” I grab my bag and we head out.

“Is everyone already there?” He asks.

“Yeah.” He nods lightly.

“Just relax. I told mom we were catching up so she won’t be all up in your business.”

“Thanks sis.”

“Sure.” The rest of the drive is filled with Bongwe’s chewing noises. Rhaaaa.

“We’re home.” I shout as we walk in the door.

“Bongweee.” She jumps onto him and he catches her.

“Hello gorgeous.”

“Hello.” She gives him her toothless smile and he smiles back.

“Where did your tooth go princess?”

“The tooth fairy took it.” Bongwe gasps.

“Why didn’t you fight for it?”

“Daddy said if I’m a good girl and let the tooth fairy take it she’ll leave me something.” He nods.

“And what did the tooth fairy give you?”

“A bicycle.” I chuckle. Typical of her parents.

“Can you ride it?”

“Yes come let me show you.” She wiggles herself out of her hold and takes his hand and drags him off outside. I make my way further into the house. There’s noise

coming from the kitchen.

“Hii.”

“My baby.” Mom pulls me into her arms then places a kiss on my cheek.

“Hi mommy.” She lets go of me then goes back to her seat.

“Nqobs.” I chuckle.

“Hi aunty Siba.” She gives me a soft peck.

“Uright?” She studies my face. I give her a faint smile and nod.

“I’m fine.” She nods and pulls me in for a hug.

“We’ll talk later.” She whispers in my ear before letting me go. Sigh. I know she won’t let this go.

“Hey freckle face.” She chuckles and lightly

pushes me.

“I had to sit here and listen to things that people my age shouldn’t hear because you were late.” I chortle. I know what she means. Mom and aunty Siba don’t have a filter when they’ve had a glass or two.

“Askies love but next time I’ll be on time.” She chuckles.

“Hmmm. The dad’s are outside.” I nod then head out to them.

“Sanibonani bo daddy.”

“Princess.” They say in unison. I chuckle. I give both of them hugs then settle on Bandile’s lap.

“My wife’s lap njalo.” I shrug.

“It was mine first njalo.”

“You need to find a new one for yourself.”

He says.

“Daddy.” I whine.

“Leave my princess alone wena Bandile.” I stick my tongue out to him.

“How are you sis?”

“I’m fine and you?”

“I’m good.” He reads my face then nods.

“Where’s Malinongwe?” He asks.

“Out front with the princess that got a bicycle from the tooth fairy.” I shoot my uncle the eye and he shrugs.

“She wanted a bicycle.” He says coolly.

“You spoil her.” I say.

“I also spoiled you so whoa.” We chortle.

Bongwe walks to us with a frown on his

face.

“Yini?” I shout.

“Your princess is bossy.” We share a laugh. She really is though. The mom’s walk out and settle next to their men and I move from Ndile’s lap to Bongwe’s and rest my head on his shoulder.

Family time is my favourite and Lord knows just how grateful I am to have these people in my life.

[05/09, 08:46] Mca: FOUR

Unedited

I open my eyes and look around my surroundings. Oh konje I slept over at home. I raise my head and I’m hit by the mother of all pains. This is why I slept over – I had too

much to drink.

I slowly make my way out of the blankets and steadily walk to the bathroom. I look horrible. No more alcohol for you Nqobile. Pshh yeah right, who do I think I'm fooling though? I always say this after a heavy night of drinking.

I brush my teeth and wash my face then head to the kitchen. There are giggles coming from there. Argh. Dad has mom in his arms and he's singing to her. She's looking at him like he's the only thing in the world. He gives her a soft peck and she giggles.

Tears burn my eyes and I turn on my heels and rush back to my room. I throw myself on the bed and start sobbing. My parents have always been my inspiration. I've

always admired the love that they shared and I loved how they weren't afraid to show it off.

We were raised in a household where loving openly and wholeheartedly was the norm. When I started dating my ex husband I thought he was my perfect match. Dad had set the standard pretty high and he just ticked all the boxes.

Now here I am crying because it didn't work out.

Someone budes in and I try wiping my tears away.

"Sis." He says softly. I clear my throat and turn my head.

"Huh?" He sits on the bed and pulls me into his embrace.

“I’m sorry you’re still hurting.” I nod lightly and allow my tears to fall.

“It’s okay nana.”

“But it’s not okay Melo because you’re not supposed to hurt because of a guy.”

“Calm down Malibongwe.” I wipe my tears and cup his face.

“I’m sorry.” I shake my head.

“It doesn’t hurt as much as it used to.” He sighs.

“I pray you find a better man than he ever was or ever will be.” I chuckle as I pull him in for a hug.

“We’ll see kiddo, we’ll see.” He kisses my cheek then gets up.

“Mom said to tell you that breakfast is

ready.”

“I’m not hungry but I will come down in a few.”

“Okay.” He walks out and I settle back into my blankets. I suddenly don’t feel like seeing anyone. I close my eyes and hope that I can fall back to sleep.

I’ve been lying in bed for close to an hour now and still sleep doesn’t want to visit me. A knock comes through the door.

“Ngena.” He walks in holding a tray and I sigh.

“I got you breakfast.”

“Thanks dad but I’m really not hungry.”

“Just a few spoons of the fruit salad

princess.” I heave a sigh and sit up.

“Fine.” I take the bowl and literally eat two spoons then set it aside.

“Melokuhle.”

“You said a few. Dad I really just want to sleep.”

“Bongwe tells us you’re not fine. Your mother wanted to come talk to you but I now the both of you were going to end up in tears.” I shrug. I don’t want to talk honestly.

“I’m fine daddy I swear.”

“You’re not but I can tell you just want to be alone so I’ll leave you. We’re going to the stores with your brother ne.”

“Okay. Please get me something nice.”

“Wine it is my princes.” We share a laugh.

“Mxm oho.”

“Lindokuhle is coming to fetch a file from your mother so if he comes and we’re not back just let him in okay.”

“Sharp.” He kisses my forehead.

“I love you princess.”

“I love you too daddy.” He walks out and I sink back into the blankets.

I get up and change out of my pyjamas and head down. I grab a tub of yoghurt and go settle on the couch.

The door bell rings and I rush to go open.

I can’t believe it. He looks exactly like his dad. Dripping in melanin and all buffed up.

“Melo.” He gives me his dashing smile.

“Ndo.” He opens his arms and I step into his embrace.

“How are you?” His voice vibrates against my ear.

“I’m good thanks and you?”

“I’m fine thank you.” He pulls out of the embrace and looks at me like he’s studying me. “You look good Melo.”

“So do you Ndo. Come in.” I step aside and he walks in. I lead him to the living room and we settle on the couch. “Can I get you something to drink?” I ask.

“Coffee?”

“How do you take it?”

“Black. Two spoons of sugar.” I nod.

“I’ll be back.” I walk to the kitchen and get to

make his coffee. I set everything on a tray and head back in.

“Thank you maMkhize.” I give him a faint smile and nod.

“You’re welcome.”

“So what have you been up to? Last I checked you were showing the fashion industry flames Melz.” I laugh.

“That doesn’t sound right.”

“Whatever. So?”

“Well I started my own publication about a year ago.”

“A fashion magazine?”

“Obviously.” We share a laugh.

“Are you still designing?” I shrug.

“Not as much as I’d like to but yeah.”

“You’re an amazing designer Melokuhle you can’t just quit.”

“I’ll get back into it struu.” He chuckles.

“You better.”

“And wena Mr Mngomezulu how’s the business world?” He shakes his head.

“It’s good. Growing.”

“Dude you look like your father.” He laughs.

“I get that a lot.”

“Even your sister. She came the other day with Aunty Minnie and my gosh.”

“Mngomezulu’s genes are very strong.” Too strong if you ask me. None of them look little their mother. Not even a bit.

“I bet you murder them in the boardroom just like him.”

“I try.” He says softly.

“What’s wrong Ndo?”

“Nothing.”

“Come on khuluma nami bra.”

“Let’s do dinner then we can talk about it.” I nod.

“I can never say no to free food and wine.” He laughs out loud even throwing his head back.

“Gosh Melo kanti unjani nah eh?”

“Ngright shame.”

“Yeah you definitely are.” We spend our time catching up on a whole lot before my parents get back.

We promise to have dinner on Wednesday night and I must say I’m looking forward to

it.

[05/09, 08:47] Mca: FIVE

Unedited

Now I love my career ne. I chose it and all
kodwa this 3AM call time thing is shit.

Tyson is the type that likes things to look as
authentic as possible. So if he can get the
sunrise why should he use photo editor to
manipulate the sunrise into the picture?

This is where the 3AM call time comes in.

Now I thought starting my own publication
meant me chilling in the office while sipping
on cappuccinos and going through my
emails. Look I knew that I would have to get
my hands dirty but I really didn't expect to
wake up at bloody 2AM in the morning and

go to work. Sigh.

I roll out of bed and go take a quick shower. I finish up then go throw on a basic looking outfit with a coat on top and sneakers. I'm not going to even make my bed. I head to the kitchen and make myself cereal. I eat while making a shake. Remind me again why mara I chose this career? Haai.

I finish eating then throw my dish in the sink, I'll see to it when I come back. I grab my bag, my shake and water then head out.

Dad would freak if he knew that I'm driving through the streets of Jozi during witching hour.

I arrive on set and the models are already being prepped. Tyson has already set up I

see.

“Morning team.”

“Mrs M.” I cringe.

“I keep telling you to call me Melo please.”

She chuckles.

“Okay Melo.” I shake my head. I hate that title now.

I make my way to Ty.

“Hey.”

“Melo how are you?”

“I’m grumpy as fuck and you?” He chuckles.

“The life of a bottom feeder, I’m used to this so are the models.”

“Argh.” We’re working on a #BeYou spread for the magazine. It’s all about encouraging each individual to live their truth because

we live in a world where we're often shut down for being ourselves so what do we do? We become something that we aren't.

Ty has this idea of the sunrise. He says it will signify a new dawn for each individual. I love the idea and Tyson is a great photographer so I know that whatever he is seeing in his head will come out looking ten times better on print.

"I was thinking ne." I know when this white boy says 'ne' he's about to spit some crap.

"Yeah?"

"How about we get you in front of the camera." I chortle. You see? Crap.

"No thank you."

"Think about it. You're the face of the magazine, you're the brand and it's not like

you haven't been in front of the camera before."

"Yes as a designer not as a model or a publication owner or whatever."

"You're a powerful woman Melo. A lot of women look up to you and with this campaign you can do a lot."

"Tyson."

"Okay okay I'm pushing. Next time though." I chuckle.

"I'll think about it." He nods and walks away. He probably knows that I won't but hey.

There is something soothing about watching the sun rise. All on those different occasions that I've had the opportunity to watch it I've always been at peace. It's a

beautiful sight.

I'm standing here watching Tyson and his models do their thing. The ladies in all shapes, sizes and looks look amazing. The sunrise in the background is doing the most right now. I think this is going to be most beautiful feature we've ever worked on.

One of the models walks to me.

"Hi Melo."

"Hi love. Beautiful work out there."

"Thank you. I love your work. I literally died when you said you were taking a pause from designing." I chuckle. She's dramatic.

"I'll be back one day."

"I hope so. I have always had this dream of walking in one of your shows. Your final showstopper gave me life. I still haven't

seen anything that can match up to it.” I give her a genuine smile. It always makes me happy when people appreciate my work.

“Thank you love. I really appreciate it.”

“Don’t forget me when you get back into it ne.” I chortle.

“Someone please come snap a pic of us. I need to remember this moment.” Lee comes through and snaps a few and promises to email them to me.

“My friends are going to die.” She squeals and runs off. Such encounters always leave me feeling warm and fuzzy.

The shoot wraps up at around 6AM.

Imagine I should be waking up now. We pack up and head out. It’s a Saturday so I’m

grateful that I don't have to go to the office. I think we all are.

I get home and throw myself on the couch. I'm not even sleepy anymore so I know that going to bed will be a waste. I should catch up on my series. I head to the kitchen to make popcorn and some coffee.

My phone rings just as I settle. Who calls so early? It's Ndo.

"Mr Mngomezulu."

"MaMkhize how are you?"

"I'm good and you?"

"Good. How was the shoot? I wanted to call earlier but I didn't want to disturb."

"It went really well Ndo. The whole sunrise and the models really made waking up at 2 worthwhile." He chuckles.

“I’m glad it went well. Look I’m flying in and I would love to do dinner.”

“Come over I’ll cook.”

“Ukuphi uMalibongwe?” I chuckle.

“Whether he’s here or not doesn’t matter kodwa he’s at Bandile’s for the weekend. He left on Thursday.”

“How is he?”

“He’ll get there.” He sighs.

“I’ll see you later ke.”

“Sharp.” I hang up.

So Lindokuhle and I have hung out a couple of times now. We had our planned dinner then we did random lunches whenever he was in town after that. It’s been four months of beautiful grownup friendship.

He's mostly based overseas and in Cape Town when he's here. I've been promising to visit him in Cape Town and I will one day yazi.

It's 1PM and I'm still watching TV. I love watching my series once the season has finished. This thing of cliff hangers literally gives me a headache. I can't handle waiting a week for an episode ngeke.

My phone. Hmm it's busy nyana today.

"Hello."

"Sweetheart." My heart drops. I sigh.

"Lerato."

"How are you sweetheart?"

"Ke sharp wena?"

“Ke sharp. Can we please meet Melo please?”

“Whatever you want to say you can say over the phone.” I’ve honestly made so much progress over the past couple of months that I don’t want to have a setback.

“Please Melo.”

“Bona mo it’s either you talk now or forever hold your peace because after this call I’m blocking your number.”

“I just want to apologise.”

“I forgave you Lerato.”

“I should’ve fought for you.”

“Yeah but you didn’t.”

“I’m sorry Melo. I am so sorry sweetheart. I shouldn’t have let my family get n between

us.”

“You know what’s funny is that we had the conversation and you promised to fight for me. It was always so hard for me to be with your family because they didn’t think I was woman enough to be your wife. I heard everything that they said behind my back kodwa because I loved you so damn much Lerato I took all the jabs and punches mara wena when the time came for you to be my husband you just stepped back. Bona I forgave you and that’s all you needed akere. We don’t have kids or even a dog that will force us to stay in contact so please stop calling me. I will never agree to meet up with you. SO STOP.”

“Okay. For what it’s worth I truly do love you sweetheart.”

“I know.” I hang up and sigh.

Let me go cook.

I just finished putting on my dress and shame I look cute. Mom bought this a while back and I honestly don't know why I haven't been wearing it.

The doorbell rings.

“Hi.”

“Muhles.” He scoops me up in his arms and spins me around. I giggle.

“You smell and look good.” He's wearing a maroon suit with a white shirt and black loafers.

“You look better than I could ever.”

“There's the Mngomezulu charm.” He

chuckles.

“Can I get a beer please?” We walk to the kitchen and I get him his beer and pour a glass of wine for myself.

“You just got back?”

“Yep literally came straight here from the airport.”

“So vele you keep that car parked at the airport?”

“Yeah.”

“HmMMM nice life problems heh. How much do you pay nje?” He laughs loudly.

“As long as my car is safe.”

“HmMMMMM.”

“I can hear your judgement.”

“Vele I’m judging you ahh.” We share a

laugh.

Lindo is one of the most carefree people I know.

“So what did you cook?”

“Roast chicken and veg and a few salads on the side.” He raises his eyebrow. “Yes I made pap for you.” He chuckles and kisses my forehead.

“I should wife your ass.” I chortle.

“Mxm. Where do you want to eat?”

“In front of the TV please.” I nod and get to dishing up. I set his plate on a tray and take it to him with a wet dish cloth for his hands.

“Here you go.”

“Thanks Melo.” He takes the tray and I make my way back to the kitchen to grab

my plate.

“So how was the queen land?”

“Ahh it was okay. Cold and depressing.”

“Shame askiesi.”

“Ahh what can we say though.”

“The work needs to go on angithi.”

“Exactly.” We have our dinner with conversation flowing and laughter all round.

We're in the kitchen washing the dishes, he insisted. I'm washing and he's drying.

“So when are you visiting me in Cape Town?”

“Sizobaona.” I feel his eyes on me so I turn to look at him. “Yini?” I ask.

He puts the plate and dish cloth in his hand

down and steps closer to me.

“You’re so beautiful Melo.”

“Thank you.” I say softly.

He cups my face then lowers his head and brushes his lips over mine.

[05/09, 08:47] Mca: SIX

Unedited

I put my hands on either sides of his waist and enjoy the kiss. He sweeps his tongue and pulls me closer. Our tongues dance around and create something oh so sweet. His hands travel down to my waist and settle there.

The kiss is sweet and unhurried. I get shivers down my spine when he gently

sucks on my bottom lip. I haven't been kissed in over a year and Lindo is ending my draught with a bang. I hook my hands around his neck and this gives him an opportunity to pull me closer. I feel his bulge on my abdomen and I moan.

I did say I'm in draught. I haven't had sex in almost 18 months. When things started falling apart between Lerato and me we stopped having sex. Yeah we'd kiss after a conversation that we thought would turn things around but that's it. He presses his bulge harder and I swear I just creamed a bit.

I'm horny. I'm bloody horny. I want sex. It's not like I'm a virgin so it wouldn't be wrong for me to jump him right? My hand travels all the way down and I feel his gift. Wow. He

groans and gives my ass a tight squeeze.

Can he stop being a gentleman and rip my dress off already?

The pace has changed and the kiss is filled with need. I get on my toes and my quim comes in contact with this bulge through all this material. Sigh. I rub myself up against him. He keeps squeezing my ass and that's just adding fuel to the fire.

He pulls back and rests his head on my forehead. I still have my eyes closed. I was close man.

"Thank you for dinner muhles." I can't recognise his voice right now.

"Yeah." I say breathlessly with my eyes still shut.

"I should get going. I'll see you when I come

back.”

“Uyaphi?”

“Tanzania.”

“When will you be back?”

“In a week.”

“Okay.” He kisses my forehead then lets go. He walks out leaving me rooted in the same spot. What the hell just happened?

It’s been two days since the kiss and things between Ndo and I are just off. We haven’t spoken like how we used to. He blames work and I do the same but I know that from my side it was because of the kiss.

As delicious as it was it was still unexpected and I don’t know how to deal

with that.

My door swings open and my parents walk in. Dad is carrying a paper bag. They look good. My mom is ageing gracefully. Her curves give me life and don't get me started on her beautiful flawless skin.

"I didn't know you guys were coming." I get up and give mama a hug. She holds on to me.

"I missed you."

"I missed you too mom."

"Can I also get a hug?" I giggle and pull away from mom and launch myself at dad.

"Hi daddy."

"Hello princess. You're gaining your weight back." I roll my eyes.

“What did you guys bring?”

“Burgers.”

We settle on the couch. These are my favourite. I got the bacon and rib burger. Yum. Dad blesses the food and we dig in.

“Thanks for this.” I take a bite and moan.

“I know right.” Mom says.

“So how’s work?” I nod repeatedly. I took a huge bite so I’m still chewing.

“It’s good.”

“I saw some #BeYou board when we came in what’s that about?”

“It’s sort of a campaign we’re working on. It’s all about encouraging people to embrace who they really are.”

“Hmmm. It should be interesting.”

“You’ll love it mama.”

Dad’s phone rings and he excuses himself.

“We have two seconds, let’s go.” I chuckle. We always do it. It makes the gossip that much juicier.

“Lindo and I kissed and I don’t know how to deal with everything.” I blurt out.

“Whaaaaaaaaaaaaaat?” Zobuhle Mkhize is dramatic though.

“Mom man. Focus.”

“Lindo kuhle as in Mngomezulu? As in Shaka and Minenhle’s kid?” I grunt. This woman.

“Yes mom that one.”

“How did it happen? I mean last time I checked you guys were just friends.”

“We were. I mean we are.” I heave a sigh.

“He came over for dinner and just before he left it happened.”

“How was it?”

“Haai Zobuhle.” She giggles.

“Okay seriously now. Have you guys spoken about it?”

“No.”

“Why?”

“I feel awkward about it.”

“And yena?”

“Honestly he’s always considerate of my feelings so I think he’s just not bringing it up because he can tell ukuthi I kind of don’t want to get into it.” She nods lightly.

“What if Lindo is the one for you?”

“There is no one for me out there mama you know how I feel about this.”

“But hypothetically speaking.”

“No mom. You know I don’t want to be in a relationship. Not now. Not ever.”

“Oh Nqobile wam, are you going to deny yourself a shot at happiness because of Lerato?”

“It’s not even about him. It’s about me and what I can offer.” She sighs.

“You’re being too hard on yourself. Lindokuhle is not like Lerato.”

“Well Lerato started out as a Lindokuhle angithi.”

“Okay that is somewhat true but still.”

“How’s gogo?” She chuckles while shaking

her head. I know what she's thinking but I don't want her to say it.

"She's fine."

"She still won't move in with you vele?" She laughs.

"You know how she is. She says the house keeper is enough for her." I chuckle. My grandmother has always been about her independence. When mkhulu passed away she refused to move out of her house so we all took turns going to visit her and Bongwe until we were sure they were okay.

I think she doesn't want to move out of her house because it reminds her of mkhulu.

"I should go spend the weekend there."

"Yes and take your brother with you."

"Ahhh he spends his weekends at Bandile's

but I'll ask him."

"Is he fine though?" I nod.

"Yeah he's getting back into his school work and he's going to work so yeah."

"I worry about him."

"I know mom but he'll be fine."

Dad walks back in and mom starts laughing. I can't help but join her. I know what she's thinking. His phone call gave us enough time to actually catch up.

"You two seem to be having fun without me."

"Never daddy." I say innocently.

"Hmmmm." I appreciate these two human beings more than they can understand.

We spend time catching up on the weather,

work, life and everything in between.

I'm on my way home after a busy day at work. Everything needs to be perfect by deadline.

"Sistas."

"Pelo. O sharp mara?"

"Ai siyazama zama you know." I nod.

"I got your stuff ne, so just ring me when you're ready."

"God bless you my sista." I smile widely.

"Thank you. Later ge."

"Sho sho." So Pelo is a security guard at the gate and on the side he has a business. He sells the most amazing baked goods ever.

I wanted to sponsor him but he refused,

said he wanted to work for it himself so I insisted on buying him his monthly supply's. So every two weeks I buy everything on the list. He doesn't want me to deliver it for him because he feels like he's abusing me. Sigh. So his friend drops him off once every two weeks.

Mom has always taught us about the power of giving back and lending a helping hand. She always uses Thabang as an example. Apparently she helped him, gave him a job and paid for his varsity fees and now the guy is rolling in it. He was on the Forbes list neng neng and well mom was a proud mama.

So I'm trying to follow in her footsteps and make the world a better place.

Malibongwe is watching TV while eating something.

“Ya.”

“Hi sis. Your food is in the oven.”

“What did you cook?”

“Pap with run aways.”

“Unamanga.” I go get my plate and vele he cooked pap with chicken feet and tomato gravy.

I head back to the living room with my plate.

“This looks amazing.”

“Bandile taught me how to make them like that.” Of course he did. I dig in and lose it. This is to die for.

“Nice one buddy.”

“Yeah yeah.”

“So I was thinking of spending that other weekend ku gogo, are you coming with?” He heaves a sigh.

“Sure.”

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.” Mkhulu’s death affected us all but it literally crushed Bongwe. It was so hard having to watch my brother go through all of that.

“I love you.”

“I love you too Nqo.”

I’m in bed going through my emails when my phone rings. It’s Lindo.

“Hi.”

“Melo how are you?”

“I’m okay and you?”

“Can I please see you when I come back? I won’t be able to come to Joburg so I’ll book you a flight to Cape Town.”

“Okay.” I say softly.

“Great. I’m wrapping up quicker than I thought here so I’ll see you tomorrow evening.” He hangs up. Ini? Tomorrow? Some of us work. We can’t just take days off. Uyahlanya lo.

[05/09, 08:47] Mca: SEVEN

Unedited

Look at me driving like a maniac from the office. I left a bit earlier but traffic man. I drive in and rush inside to grab my bag. It’s not in my room. Where is it?

“You’re late. Let’s go.” Malibongwe says then walks away.

“My bag. Where is my bag?”

“In the car now come.” He shouts from somewhere. Argh I can’t even change. I rush to the garage to grab my handbag and laptop bag.

I make my way to Bongwe’s car and we drive off.

“I thought you were going to come early.”

“I left the office early kodwa traffic.”

“I didn’t see you in the morning. You look powerful.”

“Thank you baby.”

“So Ndo ne.” He chuckles. I grunt.

“Yini.”

“You know I want you to be happy and if he has the potential of making you happy then why not dive in Melo.”

“Malibongwe.”

“No honestly Melo you need to practice what you preach. You always tell me to take a chance on love well nawe take a chance. We know Lindokuhle, he comes from a good family and we definitely know that aunty Minnie will never let him get away with hurting you.”

“I hear you.”

“No you’re not, you’re only saying that to shut me up. Lerato wasn’t half bad honestly. Yes in the end he was a spineless prick kodwa he loved you. Now imagine a man that loves you more than he did and will do anything to make you happy. I’m actually

shocked that it took him this long to make a move.” I chuckle. I don’t like it when Bongwe makes sense.

“I don’t like you much right now.”

“You never like me when I make sense. You only like me when I’m high and quiet.” We chortle. He’s right now. A high and floating Malibongwe is the best at times.

“I’m scared.” I say honestly.

“A leap of faith is always scary but you have to take it in order to move forward with life.” He says softly. I put my hand on his thigh and he turns to give me a faint smile.

“A leap of faith.”

“Yes. That area we’re always scared of is where we always find our happiness and sometimes purpose.” Malibongwe might be

a stoner kodwa he is brilliant.

“Thank you.”

“I got your back.”

“And I you.” We eventually get to the airport and I rush in after bidding my baby goodbye.

Touchdown. There is a certain amount of warmth Cape Town brings to my life. I love it. It’s a city after my own heart.

I chuckle when I see this man with a board that has the name Muhles. Mngomezulu kodwa.

“Hi.”

“Hi ma’am Nqobile Mkhize?”

“Yes.”

“I was sent by Mr Mngomezulu to take you

to the hotel.” He insists on taking my unnecessarily large bag. I need options okay. However I am planning on going to work tomorrow so Lindo better not test me.

He opens the door for me and I slide in.

Lindokuhle wanted me to stay at his house but I refused so he put me up in our hotel.

So mom and Shaka Mngomezulu, who is Lindo’s dad, went into property together and somewhere along the line they built a hotel.

You could never tell that mom owns so much property. The way she is so humble. I love it.

We get to the hotel and I make my way in. I check in then head to my room to bath and get changed.

“Dinner at 9” That’s the text he sent in the morning. No please. No nothing.

I have on a black dress that hugs me in all the right places. I thank mama for my curves. They're not too big, just right.

My dress has a slit all the way up to my thigh. I need to really apply this shear oil. I pair my dress with a dusty pink heel and a clutch bag. I style my braids and finish off with a pink lip. I look good.

A knock comes through the door and I take a deep breath before going to open. Ndo looks dapper as always. Tailor made suit as always. He left his beard unshaven and I must say he looks much better with it.

"You look breathtaking Melo."

"Looking fine as always Ndo."

"Shall we?"

“Yes.” I grab my bag and we head out.

Sigh. Lindo is so extra though. He booked out the whole restaurant. WHY? Argh.

People with money.

“So what are you having?” He asks me.

“Go ahead and order for me.” He’s been ordering me around mos so he might as well.

“To drink?”

“Red.” He places our order and the waiter leaves.

“So how are you muhles?”

“I’m fine and you?”

“I’m good.”

“How was Tanzania?”

“Beautiful. We should go there sometime.” I nod lightly.

“Yeah.”

“What’s wrong?”

“I don’t appreciate how you just told me to come here. Like you literally made me drop my morning meetings.”

“Melo.”

“No don’t say you’re sorry because you’re not.” He chuckles.

“If you didn’t want to be here you wouldn’t be here huhles.”

“Screw you.” I push my chair and stand up. He also stands.

“Okay I’m sorry. I know it wasn’t right but I just didn’t know what else to do.”

“A please would’ve been nice you know.”

“I know I know. From now on I promise I will leave my jackass tendencies at home.”

“Kanti you know you’re an ass.” He shrugs.

“It’s that Mngomezulu thing.” I laugh.

“So arrogant.”

“Yeah yeah. Now can we sit back down and enjoy dinner?”

I settle back on my seat. He pours a glass of wine for me and for himself.

“I missed you Melo.” I look at him with me head tilted.

“Oh really now?”

“Yes really now. I always miss you when I don’t see you.” I chuckle.

“Ncoho that’s cute.” He bursts out laughing.

“You sure know how to strip a man of his manhood Nqobile.” I join him in laughter.

Our food arrives and I’m happy with his choice. Lamb shank with mash and vegetables for me. The potatoes are buttery and garlicky. Heaven.

“This is amazing.”

“Can I have a taste?” I chuckle. He’s having steak with creamed spinach and roasted veges.

“Angifuni.”

“Please.” He pulls a sad face. He looks too damn cute.

“Mxm.” I push my plate toward him and he smiles.

He ends up eating more of my meal than his. Argh.

“Dance with me.” There he goes again. I raise an eyebrow. “Please.” I chuckle and offer him my hand. He puts his hands around my waist and starts moving.

“There’s no music.”

“You want me to sing for you?” I giggle and nod.

“Yes please.” He clears his throat dramatically causing me to laugh.

“Some day, when I’m awfully low

When the world is cold

I will feel a glow just thinking of you

And the way you look tonight.” He’s looking deep into my eyes. Ngathi he can see

through the deepest parts of me.

“Yes, you’re lovely, with your smile so warm

And your cheeks so soft

There is nothing for me but to love you

And the way you look tonight

With each word your tenderness grows

Tearin’ my fear apart

And that laugh.. wrinkles your nose

Touches my foolish heart

Lovely.. Never, never change

Keep that breathless charm

Won’t you please arrange it? ‘Cause I love
you

Just the way you look tonight” Tears are
falling from my eyes. He has a very

beautiful voice. That was more than just him singing, I can feel it which scares me.

“Melokuhle I’m not perfect. Actually I’m an ass but a nice ass at that. I’m not promising you the moon and mars but I promise to make you happy at all times. All I ask is that you give me a chance.” I shake my head.

“Why not Melo?”

“We’ve had conversations Ndo you want something I will never be able to give you.”

“What is that?”

“You want children.”

“Yes but only in the future not anytime soon angithi.”

“I can’t have kids Ndo.” I say softly.

[05/09, 08:47] Mca: EIGHT

Unedited

“I can’t have kids Ndo.” I say softly then hide my face on his chest. I feel tears burn in my eyes and I try to blink them back but they slowly make their way down my face.

“Melo.” His voice sounds pained.

I can’t handle his pity. I thought that I would never have to say that out loud again but I was wrong. I can’t even explain the pain of having to utter the words ‘I cannot have children’, it cuts deeper than you can imagine.

Growing up in a home full of love from my grandparents, my parents and siblings, I knew that I wanted a big family. I wanted my little blips to grow up in an environment

filled with the same kind of love and support that I got.

I thought I'd instil in them the same values my parents instilled in us. I also thought I'd teach them how to be kind to each other and always have each other's backs like my siblings and I.

Sigh.

'Conceiving or carrying a baby to term will be difficult.' Those words uttered by the doctor changed the course of my life. I wish there was a way to erase them from my memory but unfortunately science is not that advanced as yet.

"Melokuhle baby please look at me." I shake my head. Does he want me to see the pity written all over his face?

“I want to go home.” I say softly. I just want to be alone honestly.

“I remember when we were in high school and our parents would joke about us being together. Remember how we used to laugh it off then give each other disgusted looks?” He chuckles. “Then time went by and life happened and we didn’t see much of each other and with me based everywhere except for home we lost contact. Fast forward to that day a few months when I had to come fetch something from your mom. I swear I had never seen a much more beautiful woman than you. We then started spending time together and each and every time we spoke I took something from you. Not only are you beautiful but you’re smart, loving, caring. Woman you are all the woman a man could ever ask for. I’ve fallen in love

with you Melokuhle. With your heart not with your ability to bare children. Yes I would love to have children of my own but my love for you outweighs my want for children.”

“You’re lying to yourself Lindokuhle. You might say that now but when all this sweet love you’re feeling now starts to fade you’ll realise that you wasted your time on an infertile woman.”

“Can we get out of here?” I nod lightly against his chest. “Do you want me to carry you?” I chuckle.

“No I can walk.”

“Okay let’s go.” I grab my bag and we head out.

The drive to his house is silent. I say his house because this is not the way back to the hotel. There he goes again making decisions on my behalf.

I really don't like it.

We arrive at his house and I must say it's totally not what I expected.

The space is modern sure but the splashes of colour I was not expecting. He has pink scatter cushions, not that there's anything wrong with that however this is arrogant Lindo. Unless he has a woman living with him then that would explain it.

"Welcome home."

"Thanks." We're sitting on the couch in silence.

"Would you like something to drink?"

“Vodka please.” He looks at me in shock.

“What?”

“Nothing.” I know he has something to say about that but argh I really don’t care right now.

He comes back with a whole bottle, juice and a glass.

“Thank you.” I don’t need the juice though. I pour a bit and down it then pour about a quarter of a glass and sit back. He chuckles while shaking his head.

“Are you settled?”

“Yep.”

“Is that why you got divorced?” Straight into it huh? I nod.

“When we found out about my condition

both families were informed. From the onset Lerato's family told him to divorce me but he fought for me for a little while until 6 months before our divorce. The cracks started to show and the venom that he would spit out of his mouth was beyond. I could tell that his mother had gotten into his head. We fought so much like it was my fault that I couldn't have children. So I filed for divorce. His family was happy obviously. I expected him to fight for us like he had promised to but he didn't."

"He is an idiot." I shrug. "Would I be too forward in asking what condition you have?"

"I had uterine fibroids and other physical abnormalities growing on the uterine wall."

"Weren't they removed?"

"They were." I say softly.

“Then shouldn’t there be a chance.”

“I was told it would still be very difficult for me to fall pregnant and even if I did the possibilities of me miscarrying were high.” He rubs his face in frustration.

“I’m sorry Melo. You don’t deserve this but this is the journey that God predestined for you and we have to make the best of it.”

“What best is there Ndo? HUH? What silver lining is there for me? The one thing, one thing that I want I can’t have.” I say softly.

“We can get a second opinion. We can fly specialists in and if there really is no chance for us to conceive then we can look at other options or we can live the rest of our lives travelling just the two of us or maybe we can get cats and a few dogs and be that couple you know.” I laugh out loud.

“We’re not a couple.”

“We can be if you agree to give us a chance.”

“Lindo.” I say softly.

“Just a chance Melo that’s all I ask for a chance.” He takes my glass and puts it on the table the cups my face.

“You’re going to hurt me Ndo.”

“I promise I won’t.”

“You know yourself Lindokuhle.”

“I love you Melokuhle, I would never hurt you like that.” I blink and my tears drop. All this crying is exhausting.

“One chance Ndo.”

“That’s all I need I swear.”

He shifts closer to me and puts his lips on mine.

He pulls me up and I straddle him. Fuck my dress just tore a bit. Argh whatever. My mound comes into contact with his bulge. He better not deny my dry release. Geez kodwa when last did umuntu dry hump? Beggars can't be choosers I guess.

I roll my hips in circles. The feeling through the material is amazing. I roll it back and forth and in circles. I can feel myself building up.

He groans in my mouth and tries to pull me up.

"I'm close. Don't." I murmur against his lips. He pushes my panties to the side and rubs my clit.

That's all I need to release. I moan in his mouth as I reach my destination.

Now I've been masturbating for 18 months so this little session was very much needed.

"I can't wait to make love to you." He says looking deep into my eyes.

"Now." I say softly. I really am horny.

"You're emotional right now. Let's go to bed." He gets up and I lock my ankles.

He gives me his shirt and I change into that. We get into bed and I rest my head on his chest and drift off to lala land.

I'm pressed. I need to pee. Strong arms are encircling my body. I try to escape his hold but he pulls me closer.

“Lindokuhle I need the bathroom.” He groans. “I’m going to pee on myself.” He loosens his grip around my body and I rush to the bathroom.

I have a thousand thoughts rushing through my head right now. Like am I sure about this? Do I really want to jump into a relationship with Lindo and risk ruining a great friendship?

I don’t know.

I finish up then head back to the bedroom. He’s already busy on his phone. The life of a business man.

“Morning.”

“Morning baby ulale kahle?”

“Yeah you?”

“I did. I’d love to make you breakfast kodwa

I have nothing in the fridge so we're going to have to order something."

"That's cool." I rest my head on his chest and read his emails with him.

"I need to be in Mpumalanga tomorrow."

"For how long?"

"A week if we push it then two." Sigh. Is this going to be a long distance relationship?

"Okay."

"You're more than welcome to come visit me." I chuckle.

"I have work."

"You're your own boss."

"So are you Ndo."

"Argh."

"Manje you're angry?"

“No.” Hee haike. Why do I get the vibe that he thinks I’m going to drop everything when he says he wants to see me? He mustn’t try me. I’m not that kind.

[05/09, 08:48] Mca: NINE

Short and Unedited

Lindokuhle Mngomezulu and I have been official for almost a month now. It’s been hard because of his constant travelling but Skype has made it bearable. Obviously the lack of physical contact has been bleh but hey it is what it is.

Right now I have a meeting with a very arrogant man who has been trying to get me to sell my publication to his girlfriend. Rolls eyes. No matter how many times I

refuse he just keeps coming back. He's starting to irritate me now. Why doesn't he start a new publication for his girlfriend? Argh.

I grab my phone and make my way to the boardroom. I walk in and there he is. Lord be with me.

"Mr Mavundla."

"Mrs Mphahlele." I roll my eyes.

"It's Miss Mkhize."

"My mistake, Miss Mkhize." I settle on my seat and lean back.

"What can I do for you?"

"You know what I want." I chuckle while shaking my head.

"And you know my answer to that."

“Name your price.” Cocky much?

“Nothing. I’m not selling you know that.”

“Miss Mkhize as a woman you should know how happy it makes you when your man gives you everything you desire.” He’s probably dating a gold digger this one.

“No I don’t.”

“Is that why you got divorced? Because he didn’t give you everything you wanted.” I put my feet up on the table and tilt my head.

“You thought you hit me where it hurt the most? Sorry for you.” He chuckles.

“I will get my hands on this company whether you like it or not.” Is this idiot threatening me? Mina Nqobile Mkhize?

“You’re rich why not start your own.”

“You’re smarter than that you know how hard it is to start from the ground.”

“More reason for me not to sell.” He laughs then stands up.

“I can’t wait to see your signature in the dotted line.” He walks out leaving me annoyed. I will never sell my publication. NEVER.

I make my way to my office then call my lawyer.

“Melo.”

“That idiot Mavundla was here. He even had the audacity to threaten me.” I’m pacing up and down with my hands on my waist.

I am fuming.

“Calm down.”

“I will not calm down until I know that you will do everything legally possible to make sure that he doesn’t even get a chance to attempt to do shit.”

“I promise you that he will not get a whiff of your company.”

“You and your team better not screw up. I cannot afford to lose my company.” I feel arms circle around my waist and immediately calm down.

His strong scent fills my nostrils and his warmth spreads through my whole body.

“We will make sure of it just calm down.” I sigh.

“Okay. Just keep me in the loop.”

“Always.” He hangs up.

I rest my head on his chest. I didn't know that he was coming back today. I must say I love the surprise.

"Who made my woman angry?" His voice sends a rush throughout my whole body. I hope that he's going to sex me while he's here. Kunini phela.

"Just some idiot who has been trying to get me to sell him my publication."

"Is he an issue?"

"He threatened me." I chuckle. "He had the audacity to threaten me?"

"Do you want me to deal with him?"

"Nah I got my lawyers to look at it."

"Okay baby. I know you've got this." I turn around and wrap my arms around his waist. I need to be a baby about this situation, I've

missed my man.

“I missed you.” I pout while gazing upon his masculine face. If you don’t know Lindo you’d swear he’s always angry but the more you get to know him the more you’re able to differentiate between his expressions.

Right now his face is soft and filled with nothing but love. Speaking about love I still have not uttered the magic words and I don’t think I’m ready too yet.

“I missed you too baby.”

“How long are you here for?”

“Just tonight. I leave for HK in the morning.” My heart sinks. In the past month we’ve literally spent less than a week together.

“Lindo.” I say softly.

“I know baby but you know how it is.”

“Are you at least spending the night with me?”

“Yes. I was actually hoping that we could leave now.”

“I have a meeting Lindo.”

“Postpone it baby please.” This is what I dislike.

“I can’t.” He gives me a soft peck then gives me his cute puppy face.

“Please Melokuhle.” I heave a sigh.

“After my meeting Ndo but I refuse to cancel a meeting unless it’s a emergency.”

“I understand.” He lowers his head and captures my lips in his. His hands travel to my butt and stay there.

A knock comes through the door and we

pull apart.

He moves to go sit on my chair while I lean against the table.

“Yes.” I shout. Tyson walks in carrying his laptop.

“Melo i need you to take a look at something for me.” He pauses and looks at Lindo. “I’m sorry I didn’t know you were in a meeting, I’ll come back.”

“No it’s fine. Show me.”

We settle next to each other on the couch and go through what he has planned. Ty is a creative genius and I can’t wait for him to execute this brilliant idea.

“I love this Ty.” I exclaim.

“You think it’s good?”

“I know so and I have just the model in mind for this one.”

“Oh yeah?” He beams.

“Yep.”

“International?”

“Definitely.” He chuckles.

“I’m ready for this. I know whoever you have lined up will be awesome.”

“We’ll have a meeting with the team next week. I’ll jot it down in my diary.”

“Alright boss lady.” He takes his laptop and walks out.

Lindo has his grumpy face on. YhUUU.

“Yini?”

“Are you that friendly with all your staff?” I

chuckle while shaking my head.

“I don’t have staff I have a team.” He clenches his jaw.

“Well are you?” Is he jealous right now? Is Lindokuhle jealous of a skinny white guy?

[05/09, 08:48] Mca: TEN

“Well are you?” Is he jealous right now? Is Lindokuhle jealous of a skinny white guy?

For as long as I remember Lindo has always been arrogant so this jealousy that I’m seeing now is new to me.

“Yes I am, like I said I have a team and that means being free and open with each other.”

“Well I don’t like it.” His face is still hard.

“Tough ngoba that is how I run my ship.”

“Melokuhle!”

“Uyahamba ksasa can we please not spend our time fighting. Now I have a meeting in an hour then I’ll be able to get off. Are you going back to the hotel or?”

“I’ll wait for you here.”

“My meeting is out of the office.”

“Do you mind if I go to your place and get started on lunch.”

“No problem.” I grab my bag and look for my keys. I give him the key to the front door.

“I’ll send you a code.”

“HmMMM.” Rolls eyes.

“Are you still grumpy?” I ask him.

“Yes.” He has his blank look on. Lindo is

such a big baby

“Haai ke. Mina I need to leave for my meeting so bye grumpy.” I start packing up and I can feel his intense stare drilling holes in my back. I turn around to grab my laptop and he holds my hand. I look at it then move up to his face.

“I’m man enough to admit that I might have overreacted. I’m sorry and you’re right we shouldn’t spend our day fighting.”

“Is this what you meant when you said you’re an ass?” He chuckles then pulls me into his arms.

“Part of it.”

“Cap it at that please.” I look up at him.

“I’ll try.” He leans down and places a kiss on my lips. “I love you Melo.” He murmurs

against my lips. That sends chills down my spine.

I have my eyes closed but I can feel my tears slipping through. Why does Lindo have to do this? He knows how I feel about this. He deepens the kiss and I pull him closer. I should actually stop this kiss before I'm late for my meeting.

I pull back and he rests his forehead on mine. Both our breathing has picked up. I heave a sigh before stepping away from him.

I clear my throat as I fix myself.

"I have to go. I'll see you in a few." He's looking at me with that Mngomezulu intensity that just makes you squirm. His dad does that as well. It's freaky.

“Drive safe. I’ll see you later.” He grabs his phone and keys then walks out. I release a breath. I know that he’s a tad hurt but I thought he understood.

I grab my bags then head out.

I need to get around to finding a new assistant.

I’m meeting with former Miss Universe Isabelle Mogale. I was there in Bangkok when she was crowned. You know that feeling you get when one of your own wins, in anything at that? The amount of warmth that spreads through your entire body? The tears that disturb your vision?

I still get goose bumps when I think about that day. I was 24 and I had a show in

Thailand that week and luckily we didn't have a show that day and I got the chance to go see the event. Now I have never had the desire to join a pageant but that day I thought 'hmmm maybe this is what I should be doing' but I knew it was just.

When she made it into the Top 5 I thought well that was it, well done for representing Africa as a whole so well. My heart was content with the Top 5 finish I mean we know that melanin is not appreciated in these pageants. So I sat in that auditorium waiting for one of those blonde women to be named Miss Universe.

Nothing and I mean nothing could have prepared me for the moment her name was called. My entire being went into shock. My mind was trying to process what was

happening and I could see that she was too. She got a nudge from one of her fellow contestants and in that was when the tears started flowing. The amount of joy in her face you couldn't miss.

When I was sure that Steve wasn't going to pull a fast one on us that's when I lost it. I screamed, I cried, I jumped, Lord I lost it. It felt like my best friend had won it big. That's how it should feel like right? When one of your own makes it, it should be a party. This unnecessary and petty beef we have going on with each other is the reason we're still at the bottom of the pile.

That win for me marked a new era in my career. I knew that I was a good designer but after Isabelle, a proud black South African woman took that title I started

walking around with my head held high. I was unapologetic about my gift. God had blessed me with the talent and I was going to use it to the max.

I get to the restaurant and as for a corner booth. This is the first time I'm meeting with Isabelle after months of communicating via e-mail and I am dog nervous. I think anyone would be if they were meeting such a huge name.

I spot her at the entrance. She's rocking such a simple outfit yet she makes it look priceless. A jean, white shirt and burgundy heels, that's all there is to it.

They lead her to my table and the sound of my heart thudding against my chest is deafening.

“Melo hi.” I’m shaking. I get up and we share a hug.

“Isabelle how are you?”

“Star struck.” I look at her in shock before chuckling. Such lies.

“Oh please if there is anyone who is start struck here it’s me.” She smiles. Why do all these Miss what whats have an amazing smile? Haai.

The waiter takes our drinks order then walks away giving us time to go through the menu.

“I was surprised to hear from you.” She says.

“And why is that?”

“Well apart from the fact that your publication is well on its way to being

internationally acclaimed.” I chortle

“Those are rumours, we’re still trying to conquer the local scene.”

“You already are.”

“Flattery.” We share a laugh. Isabelle has a blog that covers a wide range of issues that appeal to each of us. When I approached her I wanted her to write a monthly article on whatever social issue we’re tackling that month.

I’m trying to use the magazine to influence, especially young women in a positive way. SO every month on page 12 and 13 we tackle a social issue. Its not all just fashion you know.

“So I thought about your offer and I would be honoured to be part of the team.” I

almost squeal but I pull myself together.

“That is awesome. Welcome to the team.”

We spend the rest of our time going through what would be expected of her and how we will tackle everything. She brings a wealth of knowledge to the table and I am grateful to have her on my team.

I’m welcomed home by laughter and the smell of weed. Lindokuhle and Malibongwe are sitting in the living room playing FIFA while puffing on weed.

I am livid.

Firstly Malibongwe knows how much I hate that shit. Secondly why is he not at work? Or at least in his room studying?

They don’t even pause the game to

acknowledge my presence.

“REALLY?” They chuckle. I grunt. I’m annoyed.

“Are you back from your meeting baby?”

“I’m going upstairs to take a shower when I come back down this fucken smell better be out my house.” I make my way to my room and throw myself on the bed.

Now I understand that Malibongwe uses weed as a way of suppressing his emotions and as much as I don’t agree with it I understand. I asked him to keep it outside or in his room at least. Now Lindo is also puffing with him. Instead of encouraging him to quit he joins in. Rhaaaa.

I strip then get into the shower and allow the water to wash away my anger. I finish

up then wrap a towel around my body and head into the bedroom. Lindo is lying on the bed with his eyes closed. Argh. I grab my phone then make my way into the closet. I drop my towel then start applying lotion in my body.

“Fuck.” I turn around and find him standing there with his eyes out. I turn back and continue with what I was doing before walking to my drawer and picking out lace undies. I put them on then look for a dress to throw over. I don’t do a bra when I’m home. My girls need to breathe phela.

I feel his hands around my waist and soft kisses on my neck.

That’s what I’m talking about.

I tilt my head giving him a bit more space to suck on. His hands travel to my breasts and give them a gentle squeeze. I moan and put my hands over his.

“Ndo please I need more.” I say softly.

“Ufunani baby?” Really? Should I be sexy about it or just blurt it out? Argh we’re both grown here.

“I want your dick.” He chuckles then removes his hands from my girls and turns me around.

“You’re so sexy.” His voice sounding strained. His eyes are small and red and he just can’t stop licking his lips.

“Take me.”

He pulls me closer and smashes his lips on mine. I can feel him throbbing. He picks me

up and I wrap my legs around his waist. He walks us to the bedroom without breaking the kiss and gently lays me on the bed.

I don't even want foreplay. I've been horny for too long. Fuck I've been playing with my own nipples and rubbing my clit for so long that it's starting to annoy me. I unbuckle his belt then put my hand in there. Well hello there. Come meet your home for the next, well I don't know how long.

He grabs my wrist and pulls my hand out. Before I can even protest I feel his tongue on my slick seam. He moves it up and down before going ham.

This is pleasure.

He's sucking and licking and flicking. Yeeey it's going down. I hold his head in place and squeeze my thighs. He pulls on my clit and I

lose it. He's gently sucking on it and the moans coming out of my mouth. WOW.

He slides his thick finger in and moves it around in circles. My word. My legs begin to shake and I drip all of my juices in his mouth. He gets off the bed then strips naked.

lyaphela idrought today!!

I reach over to my side drawer and pull out a condom then hand it to him. He puts it on then climbs back on the bed. I pull him closer and we share a hunger kiss that's covered in all my juices. He rubs his tip over my clit before slowly pushing in. I wince a bit when the head makes its way in.

I open my legs wider and he pushes in slowly. Bliss I tell you.

"MELO MOM IS HERE." Malibongwe shouts

and Ndo jumps off the bed leaving me empty. I can hear him putting on his clothes and I dare not look at him.

I'M ANGRY.

“Baby your mom is here get dressed.” My tears make their way down my face and I let them.

ALMOST. I almost had me some dick.

Thanks mom.

[05/09, 08:48] Mca: ELEVEN

You know when you pour water on a cat and it looks like some nasty looking thing with big eyes? That's how I feel right now lying on this bed. I am well marinated. Well lubricated kodwa dickless. I felt him you know. He pushed his head in. He was

slowly making the rest of the way in but here I am with unsatisfied juices running out.

“Baby you’ll find me downstairs.” I hear the door close. Mom could walk in let me go get dressed. No actually she should see me like this. I’m sure she had a session with dad before coming here. Mxm.

I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom to wipe myself. I go grab a dress and throw it on then head down. They’re in the kitchen laughing. Must be nice.

“Hello.” I take a bottle of water from the fridge and down it.

“How are you, baby?” I give her the ‘really’ look.

“Fine you.”

“Why didn’t you tell me that Lindo was here? Yazi mina no Minnie were talking about him just the other day and how she doesn’t get to spend a lot of time with him.”

“Is it?” I give her a fake smile. I feel like crying yazi. Mom is glowing and you can tell its dick glow. As old as they are they’re still getting it down you know.

“Yes actually let me call her.” I shake my head and walk out. I know she doesn’t know ukuthi idrought iyangibulala kodwa still I blame her for stopping the party.

I make my way outside and settle on the swing under the tree. I need to breathe a bit. Do you know how sore it is being denied the chance to release? Sigh.

Bongwe makes his way to me.

“Mom says to tell you that Lindo’s parents and dad are coming over for dinner do she’s gone to the stores to buy a few things.” I chuckle while shaking my head.

She’s taken over my house just like that?

“Why?”

“Because they haven’t seen Lindo in a while.”

“Manje mina ngingenaphi?” He chuckles.

“Mom disturbed a session huh?”

“Voetsek.” He chortles while I grunt. Apart from the sex I really just wanted some down time with my man. Lindo and I literally have a phone relationship. With him leaving for HK tomorrow I don’t know when I’ll see him again futhi for how long. Sigh.

“I’m sorry sis I know what “celibacy” does to you.” I laugh.

“You should get a girlfriend wena.”

“I still have my whole life ahead of me so whoa.” We share a laugh.

“You’re 23 Malibongwe.”

“Exactly still very young futhi you know I don’t want to get married.” I shake my head. He wants to drive mom crazy.

“Is it?”

“Yep I’m going to spend the rest of my life on the road.” I chuckle. Knowing this one I know that doesn’t mean travelling.

“HmMMM that’s nice.”

“I’m going back in.” He walks away leaving me with my gorgeous surroundings.

I love my garden though. There is something about nature that just makes everything right.

Lindo stands at the door and looks at me. I think I’m also mad at him a bit. He was in the kitchen, he could’ve told mom that we

wanted to spend some quality time together.

He walks towards me. He is a fine specimen this one. He sits on the other swing and we swing in silence.

“I guess Malibongwe told you about our parents coming.”

“Yep.”

“And you’re angry?”

“Don’t get me wrong ne but you’re leaving tomorrow and honestly we haven’t spent

much time as a couple. How do we grow when things are like that? I get you have to work. I understand it but we're only a month in and already I'm strained. I miss you all the time Ndo and here you are today kodwa my day gets high jacked."

"I understand your frustrations and I'm sorry you feel that way. I know you probably feel like I should've told her to cancel but they were so excited."

"What about me though? When do I get to be selfish? Less than a week in a month, that's how much time we've spent together. Look I'm not saying it's wrong that you want to spend some time with the parents but ya whatever." I went from being horny to being

a wet pussy to an emotional Melo in a space of a few minutes.

“I wish there was something I could do but you know how it is baby.” Rolls eyes.

“I know. Let me go see what I need to do in the kitchen.” I get off the swing and he does too. He pulls me into his arms and holds me tightly.

“I will try get some time off I promise.”

“I know.” He kisses my head then lets go and I walk into the house.

Malibongwe is peeling potatoes. Haibo.

“What are we doing?”

“Peeling potatoes and making green salad.”

“Let me carry on with the peeling, you make the salad.” He hands me the knife and I start peeling, mina and a peeler are not friends shame. Lindo walks in and yena noBongwe have this fat conversation about nothing really.

Mom comes back with shopping bags, well at least we get free groceries.

“Are you okay Melo?” See now I feel like bawling.

“I’m fine.”

“You’re lying to me.” Does she want me to tell her that I’m bloody horny? Argh.

“I’ll be fine.” She pulls me in for a hug.

“When you’re ready baby.”

“I know.” She kisses my cheek then gets to cooking.

So vele we’re hosting a dinner party in my house without my permission? Ya ne. I still

can't believe it.

“Wena noLwandle need to leave my keys when you go and this time I'm serious.” She looks at me in shock.

“Melo.”

“Haai Zobuhle you just came in here and decided to throw a party nje.”

“I guess I should've spoken to you kodwa haai.”

“You should've mom. Look I don't mind it but you and Aunty Minnie should've at least

asked if we had plans before deciding to just have this dinner.”

“Did you have plans?” Yes!! We were going to shag. All night long.

“That doesn’t matter now.” She rolls her eyes. Argh.

I hear laughter from somewhere in the house. Who’s here? Ndo and his mom make their way into the kitchen.

“My baby.” She pulls me into her embrace.

“You smell good.” I say. She really does.

“Mngomezulu knows how to give gifts.” She says then giggles. Aunty Minnie, hmm do I still call her aunty now that I’m dating her son? Haai angazi anyway, Aunty Minnie and her husband have one of the cutest relationships ever. I love how he softens up when he sees his wife.

Uncle Shaka is a really cold person, well that is if you don’t know him but once you get to know him, he’s actually funny.

“How are you my Melo?”

“I’m alright thanks and you?”

“I’m good kodwa mina nawe need to talk.” I chuckle. I know it has to do with me and Lindo.

I walk out the kitchen leaving them to gossip about their husbands. I want to go join Lindo and Bongwe but it looks like they’re having a serious conversation. Argh. Let me go call my best friend, hopefully she’ll answer this time.

I make my way to my study to dial my boo. As expected it rings unanswered. She can’t even blame the time difference yazi.

I’m frustrated and I still have to host people. Ya ne.

Dad walks in wearing his dashing smile. I

love this man though with everything in me.

“Malibongwe tells me you’re frustrated.” I chortle. Already?

“Nex ngiright mina.”

“And that’s why you’re in here by yourself?”

“I was actually trying to call Rea but ya.”

“Hmmmm. How are you my princess?” He pulls me in for a hug and I sink right into his embrace.

“I’m okay and you?”

“I’m fine. I’m sorry your mother ambushed you like this.” I laugh. He knows his wife this one.

“Haai phela in culture it is said that when a husband apologises for his wife he has to pay.” We share a laugh.

“Nqobile you have money though.”

“So?”

“You have issues my child.” He always says this when I ask him for money but he ends

up depositing it anyway hai daddy though.

Let me go change so I can play the unexpected horny hostess. Rhaaaaa.

[05/09, 08:48] Mca: TWELVE

Unedited

So it's been two weeks since the dinner and since Lindokuhle left for HK.

Sigh.

I wish I could say I got it all after the dinner kodwa dololo. Instead of staying and loving me he decided to leave when the parents left. I was so disappointed but I worked

myself and I came so hey. I honestly don't understand why he had to leave. I haven't addressed it and I don't think I am ever going to. I mean indlulile so hey.

I make my way to the bathroom to take a quick shower. I have an extra busy day today. Back to back meetings nje, I need all the strength I can get.

I finish up then head into the closet. Comfortable is the order of the day. I can't be rocking crazy looking heels, yazi if I could I would rock sneakers. I get dressed then go make my bed and I head to the kitchen once I'm done.

I thought Malibongwe would be up by now. I

rush to his room and barge in without knocking. He's sleeping while cuddling with his favourite teddy. Sigh. I shake him a bit and he slowly opens his eyes. They're beyond red.

"Rough night?" I ask.

"Yeah." He responds softly. I get scared when he's like this.

"Do you want to go back to Dr M?"

"I don't need a shrink Melo."

"I beg to differ."

“Ngiright Melokuhle I swear.”

“Aren’t you going to work?”

“No.” I heave a sigh.

“I’m leaving for work now, please don’t do anything stupid.” he gives me a faint smile.

“I won’t hurt you like that Melo.”

“Good. I love you kid.” I kiss his forehead.

“I love you too.” I get up. “You won’t find me

here when you come back ne I'm going to gogo." That makes me happy.

"Okay maybe I'll come through ksasa."

"Alright sharp." I head back to the kitchen and dish up last night's leftovers.

Malibongwe is seriously stressing me out and I cannot afford to be stressed right now. With my workload and everything that is happening around me it's just too much for me. If only he would just go back to Dr M then I would relax a bit.

I finish up then head out.

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You can tell nje when you walk into the office that deadlines, deadlines, deadlines. My whole team is on edge which is never good because this is how mistakes happen.

“Morning Melo.”

“Hi Tazz how are you?” He grabs his tablet and walks with me.

“I’m good and you?”

“I’m alright thanks.” We get to my office and I throw my bags on the couch.

“I wanted to run this by you first before the meeting.” I turn to look at him. “I have five designs ze cover.”

“Why five?”

“The juices.” I chortle. Oh do I know about the juices. Once they start flowing you can’t help but keep designing even though you know you that you probably have the one already.

“I get you. Okay let’s take a look.” He shows me the designs and I love them all. We have a hard time narrowing it down to three but eventually we decide. We’ll hear what the rest of the team says at the meeting.

“So you still won’t give me a shot.” I chuckle. Tazz has been asking me out for such a long time. Look there’s nothing wrong with him but office romance man. He looks at me and smiles. Now Tazz is a gorgeous man. Well built, dangerously handsome and above all else he is a great guy. His personality is on another level kodwa hai.

“Hawu Tazz we’ve had this conversation before mos.”

“Yazi Melo you drive me crazy. I’d do you good.” My nasty mind has already run off with me. Horny bitch.

“Tazz.” I say softly. This guy just won’t give up.

“Melokuhle I just can’t help how I feel however I respect you and your space so I will back off.”

“Thank you.” I don’t even know why I’m saying sorry but okay. He leaves and I get into my work. Emails first. I go through my emails and respond to the ones I need to respond to.

A knock comes through the door and Tyson walks in.

“Boss lady.”

“Hey Ty.”

“I just need you to sign off on this location.”

“Is it for the swimwear feature?”

“Yes.” I nod as I read through the agreement. Everything checks out. I sign it then hand it back to him. I should probably get ready for my meeting. Hopefully Lerato isn't on her periods today. Yhu that one she drives the entire team crazy nje.

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The meeting went well. No drama.
Hallelujah. I head back to my office and I
find Amanda chilling there.

“Hey you.” I walk over to her and we share a
hug.

“How are you?” I settle next to her and pull
the paper bag that’s on the table.

“I’m fine and you?” She sighs. I know that
something is up.

“I’m okay.”

“What did that idiot do?” She chuckles then

gives me a faint smile.

“Nothing I can’t handle.”

“Amanda.”

“Hai Melokuhle I came to see my friend not my sister in-law please.” Sigh. There’s two and their issues though. Argh.

“Okay ke friend what’s up.” I ask. She bursts into laughter. Hawu and then?

“I overheard Malibongwe telling Bandile that mom cock blocked you.” She continues laughing and I can’t help but join her. Mxm.

“Dude yazi uZobuhle and timing yho and then she invites Lindo’s parent ‘s yazi I died.” We continue laughing. Thinking about that day just makes me so damn mad.

“So she denied you vele.”

“Straight and then stupid Shaka also decides to leave yhoo I cried.” She’s laughing so hard that she’s even struggling to breathe. Typical Amanda.

“Shuu okay that’s hilarious manje uLindo yena ubuya nini vele?” I shrug. Whenever I ask him that he scratches his head so I stopped asking. I’ll just see when he comes

nje.

“I don’t know if we’re going to last.”

“Haai Melo don’t say that.”

“It’s true. Look I’m all about an ambitious man who gets the job done but this is too much I feel.”

“Maybe things will get better.”

“Or they get worse. We should be in our honeymoon phase instead we’re in this whatever the hell it is.” She sighs.

“It’s hard I know but like you once said if you put in the effort then it will work out.”

“I hear you sis.”

“Chin up doll he’ll make a plan.” I chuckle.
This one though.

We have lunch while catching up on our gossip. She lets me in on what is happening between her and Bandile, only because I forced her, I need to have a conversation no Bandile serious.

She gets an urgent phone call so she has to rush off.

I get back into my work and I think it's safe to say that I'll be working late tonight. I just want to push.

It's knock off time and everyone is heading out.

I get on with my work, futhi it's not like there's anything waiting for me at home.

Tazz walks in. Argh.

"Just came to check if you need anything." I check the time and it's a little after 8. Where did time go?

"Nah I'm good thanks."

“Okay well please don’t leave too late phela it’s not safe out there.”

“I promise daddy.” He groans.

“Melo stop.” I chortle. Haibo.

“Bye Tazz.”

“Goodnight Miss Melo.” He walks out and I get back into it.

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It’s 10PM geez I can’t believe I stayed so

long. I pack up then head out.

The drive home is short and peaceful. I think I should leave the office around these times every day. I park the car and head in.

I'm actually hungry. I grab my bags and make my way to my room. I switch on the lights and I get a huge fright when I see Lindo sitting on the couch.

"Oh my God you scared me." I release a breath.

"Uphuma kuphi Melokuhle." He looks angry. Hai. Firstly how did he get in? Argh he didn't

leave my key.

“Work duh.” He has a glass in his hand. He stands up and slowly makes his way towards me.

“Work? At this fucken time Nqobile? I am not an idiot phela.”

“Haibo Lindo what’s your problem?” How or when the glass that was in his hand ended up smashed on the wall behind me I don’t know.

His eyes are blood shot red and he keeps fisting his hands.

“Uyangijolela Melokuhle.” I keep moving backwards slowly because this man is scaring me.

“Ndo.” I say softly.

“ARE YOU FUCKEN PLAYING ME MELOKUHLE?” He shouts and I get chills down my spine.

Who is this man?

[05/09, 08:49] Mca: THIRTEEN

Unedited

Now my daddy taught me to always stand up for myself and to never let anyone walk

all over me. Yes I'm freaked out by Lindo's action but I remember my dad's words.

“When your back is backed up against the wall remember that you weren't meant to survive but you did. You fought for you and your mother and you made it so nothing on this earth can shake you or make you feel inferior. ALWAYS BE PREPARED FOR A FIGHT NQOBILE.”

I look at this angry man making his way to me. I have nowhere to go. MY BACK IS AGAINST THE WALL.

“Uyangijolela heh Melokuhle?” He spits those words in my face. I might be a lot of

things but a cheat?

ME?

Nqobile Melokuhle Mkhize? Hehehe.

“Step back Lindokuhle.” He cages me in. He doesn’t know that my uncle taught me how to kick a man in the nuts ne?

Let him try me.

“It’s fucken 11 o’clock in the night and wena you’re only getting home then you want me to believe that you’re coming from the office?”

“Even if I was from wherever nje it doesn’t give you the right to talk to me like that.” He chuckles. His eyes are darker than I have ever seen them.

“Uzonya Nqobile.”

“Fuck you Lindokuhle.” I push him away.

“Fuck you.” I push him again. “Fuck you.” He keeps chuckling as I push him.

Angazonginyela lo.

He grabs my hands and holds them in his.

He keeps clenching his jaw and I don’t give a shit right now.

“Stop it.” He says through gritted teeth.

“Let go of my hands then take your shit and get the fuck out of my house and leave my key on your way out.”

“I’m not going anywhere until you answer me Melo.” I chortle.

“Yes. I have a man out there and I was with him and yes he fucked me good. There you go now leeeeeeeeeee.” He chuckles then lets go of my hands.

He grabs his keys and phone and walks out.

I hear the garage door opening. He must've parked in Bongwe's garage.

What the hell just happened though? Did Lindo actually do that to me? Kahle kahle what's his problem? I'm too tired to actually think about this. I strip then go take a quick shower. I finish up then make my way back into the bedroom.

Now usually I don't use my alarm system but I think today is a different day. I activate the alarm then get into bed and rest my mind.

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I open my eyes and the first thing I do is

grab my phone. It's 5AM. Well it is almost wake up time so let me.

I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom. A quick shower then I head to the closet to get dressed. I pick out one of my favourite creations. It's a knee length tight ass red number. I pair it with a pink heel and I leave my hair loose.

Yaaaas boss lady. I like it when I look dangerous.

I grab my bag and head out. I'll grab something to eat at the office. I hope I don't catch traffic hle.

I get to the office and I think I'm early. Oh well. I throw my bag on the table and settle in my chair. I actually need to get back into designing. I miss it. I get started on my work and soon the office is buzzing.

A knock comes through and Tazz walks in.

"Miss Melo." I smile at him.

"Hey Tazz you good?"

"Yeah you?"

"Yep." I get up and make my way to the couch. He doesn't move his eyes from me. I

settle next to him.

“Fuck you look gorgeous.” He’s leaning back on the couch and he has his index finger in his mouth.

“Thank you. Now what can I do for you?”

“Yhooo Melo you can have lunch with me that’s the first thing you can do for me.” I chuckle. This one is an idiot sometimes.

“And the second?”

“You can have dinner with me.” I smile.
What did I expect mara?

“You’re such an idiot.” We share a laugh.
Tazz is literally a breath of fresh air.

“I just love seeing you smile nje.” I continue laughing.

“Tell you what you can spoil your boss today and buy her lunch ne.”

“Anything specific?”

“McD’s would be nice.”

“I knew there was a reason I liked you so much. You’re bloody cheap man.” What? I

laugh so loud. My word. I didn't expect that.

The door opens and Lindo walks in. My laughter dies down and I look at him.

"Mr Mngomezulu what can I do for you?" I say in my most professional voice. He keeps his gaze on Tazz and Tazz being the stubborn being that he is he also doesn't back down. Testosterone at its best in here. Sigh.

Tazz stands up and fixes himself.

"Melo I'll see you at lunch."

“Sharp.” He walks out and stops when he gets to Lindo. They stare each other down for a bit before Tazz bumps Lindo’s shoulder and walks out.

Sigh.

“Friendly with all your staff huh?”

“What do you want Lindokuhle?” I ask sternly. He sighs and rubs his face. He walks over to me and takes my hand and we sit on the couch.

“Ngyaxolisa.”

“For what exactly?”

“I should’ve handled things better. I’m so sorry Melo.”

“You’re forgiven now leave.”

“Melo.” He says softly.

“What you did was uncalled for and I will not stand for it. So please Mngomezulu please leave.”

“I have issues Melo but I promise that I will work on them baby please give me a chance baby please.” I shake my head.

“Work on your issues le kude Lindokuhle.”

“I don’t want to be without you Melo please forgive me.” Sigh.

“Look we’ll talk later kodwa right now I have to get back to work.”

“I love you Melo.” Sigh.

“I love you too Ndo.” And I mean it. It’s shitty but hey.

“I’ll be home for about a month and I’m hoping we can spend more time together.”

“We’ll talk later Ndo.” He nods and gets up. He walks out and I sink into the couch. Am I ready for the issues that Lindo comes with though? Like I thought I knew him but he just proved me wrong. I fear that whatever he’s dealing with is much much deeper than I could comprehend.

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It’s lunchtime and I’m waiting for Tazz to come through with my food. Just as I’m about to call him he walks in.

“I thought McD had you for lunch.” He chortles.

“I had to fight off the cashiers phela everyone wants a piece of this.”

“Weeah.” I chuckle. Big head. He sets the food on the table and I go join him.

“I mean no disrespect ne Melo kodwa I would love to tear that dress off of you and just have you.” Now please remember I’ve been horny for over a year. I think I’d accept dick from an antelope if it were possible.

“Tazz.” I say softly. I’m trying to control my breathing kodwa heei.

“I’d lock the door and have you right here

right now but again I respect you. Let's eat.”
Haibo how do I eat after that? This guy
though.

Lunch is definitely going to be awkward
now.

[05/09, 08:49] Mca: FOURTEEN

Unedited

So lunch with Tazz went ahead with
awkward vibes. He apologised for coming
on too strong and promised to step back. I
appreciate that he knows that he went a bit
too, although I would've honestly jumped
him if the office was empty.

It's the end of the day and I'm packing up. I want to binge on my series tonight.

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I get home and kick my shoes off then take off my bra and throw it on the counter. Malibongwe hates this.

'We eat here and wena you just put your boob things on here.' I love how dramatic her gets about it.

Speaking of that one, where is he?

I grab my bags, bra and shoes and head up. I start in his room, he's not here. Hawu. I

make my way to my room and throw my stuff on the bed. I grab my phone and dial his number.

“Sis.”

“Hawu ukuphi kanti?” I ask.

“I’m still with gogo, I think I’m going to spend the weekend here.” So that means I have the whole house to myself. Yes I used to live alone but now that I’m used to living with someone it’s just foreign for me to be by myself.

“As long as you’re good and safe then I’m

chilled.”

“Gogo wants to talk to you.” He doesn’t even wait for my response, he gives her the phone.

“My little blip.” A smile breaks out onto my face. Mkhulu used to call me his blip. I hated it so much.

“Gogo wami omuhle.”

“Haisuka udlala ngami. How are you my baby?”

“I’m fine and how are you gogo?”

“I’m still breathing by the grace of God so I have no complaints. Well except for one.”

“What’s wrong?” I ask. I know what she’s going to say though.

“My granddaughter hasn’t come to spend time with me in a long time. She promised that she will come sleepover ahhh I’m still waiting.” I chortle. My grandmother is also full of drama when she wants to be yazi.

“Hawu gogo kodwa.” I say trying to calm myself. “I tell you what, how about we have a girls weekend la next weekend. You, mom, Amanda and myself?”

“That would be lovely my baby.” I thought she’d protest.

“Great then I’ll see you next week Thursday.” I say.

“Gogo ask her about her boyfriend.” I hear Malibogwe shout in the background. I can’t help but laugh.

“Konje, I hear that you’re dating Minenhle’s boy.” Gogo says.

“I am gogo.”

“Is he treating you good?”

“Yes” I respond.

“You deserve to be so happy blip and I pray to God that Lindokuhle makes you happy.”

“Gogo.” I whine.

“Yes I know that you’re happy without a man kodwa we weren’t created to be alone.” Once she starts going off about husbands and partners I will not hear the end of it.

“Gogo I’ll let you in on everything next week

ne.”

“Okay baby, I love you.”

“I love you too gogo. Bye bye.” We hang up.

I love how positive my grandmother always is. Life has thrown a few unpleasant situations her way but she rose above them. Between her and mom I had no choice but to be the true definition of my name.

Whilst I still have my phone in my hand let me call that man.

“Muhles.” He answers breathlessly.

“Ndo hi.”

“Unjani?”

“I’m ok and you?”

“I miss you.” He says softly. I miss him too.

“I’m cooking, do you want anything specific?” I ask. He messed up and we’re going to talk about that but I miss spending time with him.

“Anything is fine with me. I’ll see you shortly.”

“Sharp.” I hang up and rush to take a quick shower. I finish up then throw on a loose fitting dress. I make my way to the kitchen to get started on dinner.

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“It smells good in here.” I walk over to the stove and check on my pots.

“Thanks, would you like something to drink?”

“I’ll sort myself out.” He walks over to the fridge and grabs a beer. “Melo.” I turn to look at him and he sighs.

I'm still angry at him for what he did. I just don't understand why he couldn't address me like a normal person would.

"Khuluma." I say leaning against the counter.

"I want to apologise for the stunt I pulled. I had no right to address you like that."

"You had no right to make me feel that scared Lindokuhle."

"I know and I'm sorry. I just lost it when you came home that late. Yes I should've called and checked up on you but my mind just

ran off with me and I just got so mad.”

“I have never given you a reason to doubt me Ndo. Above all else I’m hurt that you would think so low of me.” I don’t want to cry. Do not cry Melokuhle. I keep shouting in my head.

“I know I know but like I said I have issues Melo.”

“So do I but you don’t see me throwing them in your face. You’re always travelling, don’t you think I get insecure about that? Kodwa because I trust you I don’t act a fool about it.” He sighs and rubs his face.

“I’ll work on myself I promise you baby please just give me a chance.”

“I’m not some weak girl who needs a man phela I can live without you.” He chuckles and makes his way to me.

He pulls me into arms and gazes into my eyes.

“I love how feisty you are maMkhize. I promise it will never happen again.”

“I’ll stab you if you try me.”

“I know.” He lowers his head and captures

my lips in his. I get tingles throughout my entire body.

Lindokuhle Mngomezulu better take care of this ache.

He picks me and I wrap my legs around his waist.

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We're sitting on the couch and I am straddling him. I keep grinding myself against his bulge. He pulls my dress up and I'm left in my bare state. The cool breeze hits me gently and my nipples stand firm. He still has on his pants and top. Something's got to give. I pull his shirt up

and it's gone.

My bare chest against his is heaven. He stands up then lays me on the couch. I miss his warmth. I need him to hold me. He slowly works on his pants without breaking eye contact. His shaft springs free and I involuntarily lick my lips. I need that all the way in me.

Sex gods can nothing interrupt this session please.

He leans back down and kisses me. I need this taken care of. I pull him closer and he chuckles. He sits back down then pulls me to straddle him again. I don't even want

foreplay.

“Condom.” I murmur against his lips. My quim might be flooding but my mind is still on right. I used to have a box in here somewhere. “Drawer.” I say. He reaches over and pulls one out. The box is open, hmmm Malibongwe.

I help him put it on then lead him to my entrance. I slowly sink myself all the way down.

“Shit Melo you’re so warm and tight.” His voice on my neck sends shivers down my spine. He cups my face and forces me to look at him. He gives me his beautiful smile

and I can't help but return it.

I start moving in circles while looking in his eyes. He grabs onto my waist and holds me in place. He starts pounding me hard and I wrap my arms around his neck. He rotates his hips. Yho what is he doing to me?

He lays me down on the carpet and puts my legs on his shoulders. He begins to thrust hard and fast and I lose it.

"Ndo." I say loudly. This man. I moan as he continues to hit the spot.

"I love you Melo." He says softly. He starts

moving in circles and I feel myself building up. I feel vulnerable. With each thrust I can feel myself falling more for him. I'm close. I hold onto his forearms tightly as I ride out my wave.

He picks up his pace and goes ham. He pulls out and rams back into me. What the hell. He starts groaning louder and louder. He continues thrusting quick and hard. He's not in control of his body right now. He lets out a loud groan before pulling out and flopping next to me. He pulls me to lie on his chest and kisses my forehead.

"I love you Melokuhle."

[05/09, 08:50] Mca: FIFTEEN

Short and Unedited

Idrought iphelile. Yhoo I am so happy I could literally dance for the Mngomezulu gods. Yey uLindo done scratched the itch real good.

Round after round after round. I was pounded. Pounded so damn good at that. I need more of that actually. I had been deprived for 18 months and that one night doesn't make up for all those months in fact we haven't even scratched the surface.

“Good morning baby.” His voice sends shivers down my spine.

“Hi babe.” His hand cups my breast and I move closer to him.

His solid member is poking my back.

“I’m hard for you.” He says in a pained voice.

“And I’m wet for you.” I respond. He dips his finger in and groans.

“You’re swimming baby.” He says against my ear sending chills down my spine.

I arch my back and move my booty closer. I need to feel him there. He groans and starts kissing on my neck.

“Take me.” I say. He rubs his tip on my entrance and I push him back. I’m not playing that raw game until we get tested.

“Yini?”

“Condom.” I say. I hear him grunt before reaching over to the drawer. I have condoms strategically placed throughout the entire house. Yes I’m a hoe like that. I knew that one day I would get some and I was ready phela I didn’t want to fall for that ‘no condom’ trap. Nope.

He lifts my leg up and pushes himself in. I clench my walls around his dick. This is the

best part, like when it goes in yhuu. He cups my breast before he starts thrusting. He is moving slowly. He did say last night that he wants to take his time with me.

He plants wet kisses on my shoulder while murmuring something I can't make out.

You know when you're in the moment and you just feel like you're connecting with the person you're with? That's how I feel right now. I feel like Lindo and I are connecting on a level that I can't comprehend. His slow strokes are opening parts of me that I didn't want to.

I feel vulnerable and I don't appreciate it.

He gives my nipple a gentle pinch and that's all it takes for me to reach my high and he follows shortly after.

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Lindo and I are having a lazy day. He's in his boxers and I'm in his shirt. We're sitting on the floor having pizza and wine.

"So when are you getting a house in Joburg?" I ask. He looks at me with a frown on his face.

"I have a house in the Cape though."

“And I am not disputing that however I live in Joburg and I’d like to believe that seeing that you’re with me now you’ll be spending your time at home in Jozi.”

“What happened to you coming to Cape Town though?”

“I can’t just pack up every time you’re in town Ndo.”

“Of course you can.”

I hate how he always wants me to drop my work for him. As the big boss himself he should know how difficult it is, or maybe it

has everything to do with the fact that he didn't start his own company. I mean it was handed over to him.

"How's your sister?" I ask trying to change the subject.

"She's good, just driving mom crazy though." I chortle.

His sister is what I like to call free spirited like nude art kind of vibes. She actually has a naked art piece of herself hanging in her bedroom at their home. Her parents hate it but they can't take it down because it's still her bedroom when she visits.

“Aunty Minnie should chill.” He chuckles.

“Apparently she brought home some biker guy with no manners. Mom says dad lost it and punched the guy, Enhle didn’t talk to him for a while.” I continue laughing. I need to link up with Enhle struu.

“Your sister is my spirit animal.” He frowns.
“And then?”

“You better not be thinking of joining this naked life ka Nhle.”

“And if I am?” He chuckles while shaking his head.

He looks up and his eyes are red.

“You don’t want to know.”

Is he trying to scare me?

“Lindo lalela la, I’m not one of those floozies you’re used to. I’m not a yes sir kind of woman. If you think you’re going to control me then you know you have another thing coming okay?”

“I know.”

“Good. So how are we spending this

month?”

[05/09, 08:50] Mca: SIXTEEN

Unedited

I turn around and look at this man of mine. His chocolate skin and his beautiful thick lips are my favourite. He scrunches his nose and scratches his eyes. I can't help the smile that creeps up on my face. He looks so cute.

He opens his eyes and meets mine. We have an intimate conversation with our eyes. He chuckles lowly before pulling me closer.

“MaMkhize.” His thick husky voice sends

shivers down my spine.

“Mngomezulu.” I say softly.

“Yes stick to that. Don’t call me Lindo ever again.” I chortle.

“Okay Mngomezulu.” He groans and buries his face on my bust.

He takes my hand and makes me feel his erection. I laugh and shake my head. Nope. Not doing that. I roll out of bed and grab my gown.

“Come one baby, kancane nje.” I giggle and

walk out onto the balcony.

There is something about the sound of waves that just calms me. The gentle breeze hits me and I take it all in. This view is magnificent.

I think I want to live here forever. I want this amount of peace every day.

He wraps his arms around my waist. I lean back and rest my head against his chest.

“It’s beautiful isn’t it?”

“It truly is.” I respond.

Lindo and I are in the Seychelles. This is the second week of his time off and I must say it has been bliss. We arrived about two days ago and we have been cooped up in our room since and that is how we plan on spending the rest of our time here.

We stay in that position until I feel him poking my ass.

“I can’t get enough of you muhles.” I giggle and rub myself against him.

So we got tested and we’re both clean which was the most amazing news to Mngomezulu because he believes that the

rubber reduces the pleasure. Rolls eyes.

“You kept me up all night baby.” I say.

“And you’re up now so it’s not like I’m depriving you of sleep.” He places a wet kiss on my neck.

His kisses are my weakness and he knows that.

His phone rings saving me from almost getting ravaged on the balcony. He walks back in and I follow him.

“When?” I hear him say.

It sounds like business. Sigh.

“Kodwa baba I explained to you.” Oh it’s senior.

I give him some privacy. I settle on the couch and browse through the menu. I get a giant burger for him and a fish burger for myself along with a bottle of wine. He flat out told me that this week will be spent indulging in junk. I love my junk so that was music for my ears.

He walks in and flops himself next to me. He puts his head on my chest and I hold him.

“What happened?” I ask.

“Dad is just impossible at times. He just doesn’t want to see reason!”

“You want to talk about it?”

“I’ve given my whole life to this but it seems like that’s not good enough.” He says softly.

Now I know that uncle Shaka has pushed Ndo hard. He was groomed to take over the business and take care of the family. At some point he hinted that he wasn’t happy but he brushed me off when I asked him

about it.

“Ndo.” I say softly.

“Being the only son sucks sometimes.” He pauses and sighs. “You’re going to hate me for this but-”

“Don’t say it.” I say. “Can we just eat then we’ll discuss this.”

“Okay.”

I know his dad probably asked him to handle business somewhere meaning we might have to cut our trip short. Sigh.

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We're lying in bed having some down time. I'm reading a book and he's watching me which is annoying. I tossed him a good read but he just browsed through it then set it aside. Tis tis.

"Can we talk now?" He asks.

Sigh.

"Sure." I close the book then sit up.

"I have to go fix something at the office in the big apple." I heave a sigh.

I knew that was coming.

“When do you have to go?”

“I told him I can at least go next week.” I nod lightly. “I know that it takes away from our time.”

“Is this how our relationship is going to be?”

“You know I’d spend more time in SA if I could right?” He says cupping my face.

“I know Ndo.”

“I would like us to enjoy our week then we will deal with the rest later.” He says.

“I’d appreciate that.”

I’m going to dwell much on this set up and how this travelling is going to affect us. I just want to enjoy my time with my man.

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“Where do you see us in 5 years?” He asks.

I wasn’t expecting this. 5 years?

“I don’t know. A cute warm home maybe? With 5 dogs and a pig.” He chortles even throwing his head back.

We’re in his house in Cape Town. We landed last night and we’re both going our different way tomorrow. I board a flight to Joburg and he boards one to the apple.

“A pig Melokuhle?”

“Yes hawu pigs are cute angithi.”

“So you see a future for us?”

“I do.” I answer truthfully.

I might still have my reservations because of what I went through with Lerato but I feel like Lindo wouldn't put me through something like that.

"Would you consider getting a second opinion?" I heave a sigh.

I know he's talking about my infertility issues.

"I don't know if I'm ready to get my hopes up Ndo." I say softly.

He cups my face and pecks my lips.

“Whatever happens we’re in this together. Mina nawe Melokuhle. I told you I love you and not your ability to give me kids.” I nod lightly.

“I love you too Ndo but I’m scared.”

Lindokuhle can literally go out there and find a woman who can give him what I can’t.

“I’m not going anywhere.” He says.

[05/09, 08:50] Mca: SEVENTEEN

Unedited

“My little blip.” She says with a wide smile

on her face.

She opens up her arms for me and I step into her embrace. My grandmother gives the best hugs known to man. It has everything to do with that beautiful heart of hers. I believe that when a person is beautiful on the inside it radiates on the outside. Everything they put their hands on automatically warm.

“Hello my beautiful gogo.” I kiss her cheek then lead her to the couch.

We settle and she cups my face.

“You look like your father.” I roll my eyes.

I get that a lot. I think it’s because I’m such a daddy’s girl. However when I look in the mirror I see my mother.

“Don’t let him hear you say that ngoba you know your big headed son is.” She chuckles and pinches my cheeks.

“That’s my son you’re talking about.” We laugh.

I admire the strong women that raised me. Looking at my grandmother now you can tell that she’s a fighter.

“When are your daughters getting here?” I ask.

Gogo, mom, aunty Siba, Amanda and I are having a girl’s weekend. Amanda and I are in charge of the food and mom and aunty S are in charge of the drinks, I know we’re getting drunk.

“Koko.” That’s Amanda.

She walks in carrying her overnight bag. She looks beautiful in her shorts, plain tee and flops. She drops her bag and settles next to gogo.

“MaMkhize how are you?”

“I’m okay and you gogo?” She rests her head on her shoulder.

Sigh. I know Amanda hasn’t been feeling well over the past few months and I hope that she’ll open up to me this weekend.

“I’m fine. I’m happy that all my babies are going to spend the weekend with me.”

“It’s going to be awesome. Nqo uright?”

“I’m fine love. Let’s go put our bags in the

room.” We get up and walk to my room.

We each have our own rooms here obviously she shares a room with Bandile but because he’s not here she’s sleeping with me. We put our bags in the closet then sit on the bed.

“What’s wrong Amanda?” She gives me a faint smile.

I’ve come to learn that that smile is really not genuine.

“Nothing babe I’m just tired really.”

“I don’t believe you. Were you tired the last time we hooked up as well? Come on babe you know I’ve got you. Now what did that idiot brother of mine do?” she chuckles while shaking her head.

“Nothing I can’t handle. Now stop stressing please. We’ve going to have an amazing weekend ne.” With that said she gets up and walks out.

I grab my phone and dial Bandile.

“Nqo.” He says sounds excited.

“What did you do to beauty?” I’m not even

going to be nice about it.

He heaves a sigh and keeps quiet for a while.

“It’s nothing we can’t solve together.” He responds.

“Whatever you did I’m disappointed in you.”

“Ei Melokuhle beka ezakho.”

“You know mom keeps saying you have your father’s jerk-ish moments. Well this is one of them.” I say then hang up.

Now I love my brother. He's actually the best there is out there but just like everyone he has his flaws which sucks because he's such a great person so when he messes up it's easily identifiable. I just hope whatever they're going through isn't too hectic.

I make my way back to the living room and the mama's are here.

"Hello hello." I give mom a hug then aunty S.

"Hey baby."

"Hey unjani?"

“I’m good and you guys?” I ask.

“We’re good as well.” Mom answers.

“I got everything you asked for Nqo.” Aunty says.

“You’re awesome wena. Okay you oldies relax and Amanda and I will sort out the food.” They all nod in agreement and we make our way to the kitchen.

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Amanda and I were able to put together an assortment of finger snacks and a full meal. This girl is a beast in the kitchen. Meatballs,

chillie bites, samoosas, spring rolls. Sigh I'm in heaven. All these are my favourites.

For mains gogo asked for mac and cheese with extra bacon. I laughed at that request then I remembered that Amanda adds some special something that just transforms the whole dish.

"Red or white?" Mom asks.

"Red." Amanda responds.

"Me too." I chip in.

I love the fact that I can sit with my oldies

and just be free.

“So mama how’s Malibongwe?” Aunty asks.

Sigh. My baby brother. We all worry about him but he hasn’t had an episode in weeks which is a good thing. I just hope that he stays like this.

“He’s okay. He’s pushing through and he’s choosing to live. That’s all we could ever ask for right?” Gogo says.

I love over at mom and she has tears in her eyes. This Malibongwe issue has hit mom so hard. I can’t even begin to imagine the

pain of hearing you last born cry and beg you to take away his pain.

“He’s a Mkhize he’ll be fine.” Mom says.

I’m glad she’s positive about this issue.

“Melokuhle tell me about uLindo.” Gogo says with a cute smile on her face.

“Haai gogo there’s nothing to tell. He’s an amazing man and I love him.”

“You love him?” Mama asks.

I know I had said I will never love anyone after Lerato but Lindo made it impossible for me not to fall for him. He was slick that one.

“I do mom. He has all the qualities that I want in a man. Yes he’s not perfect but he is everything and more. He makes me feel like everything will be alright you know.”

“No one deserves happiness more than you my blip.” Gogo says

“How did you know that mkhulu was the one for you?” She looks at me and chuckles.

“That arrogant Mkhize man. Believe it or not in the beginning I wanted nothing to do with him. He was full of himself and he was unapologetic about it. He pursued me for about a year before I agreed to be his. I knew right there and then that I wanted to spend the rest of my life with this man. I knew that he wasn't a man that easily gave up and he went for what he wanted.

I have loved him for so long and I have no regrets whatsoever.” She has a wide smile on her face as she says this.

My grandparents shared a special kind of love. I was blessed enough to be able to witness it.

“And you mama?” I direct the question to mom.

She chuckles and shakes her head.

“We were young but your father was always adamant that he would marry me and when he asked my father for my hand in marriage I wasn’t shocked but it set in that this man was it for me. He irritates me sometimes but he’s my irritation angithi.” We all chortle.

My parents love each other with everything and that cannot be taken from them.

“I’m sure Sibahle and Amanda can add in

about how irritating Mkhize men are.” Gogo says and we continue laughing.

“Yhoo mama sometimes I just want to smack Langelihle all the way back to wherever he came from but like Zobuhle said he’s my irritation.”

“How did you know aunty?” I ask.

“When he kept on feeding my ice cream addiction I knew that I had to have him in my life forever.” We all burst into laughter.

“My sons are something else. Idiots like their father would say.” She pauses and

smiles. "He would be so proud of all of you."

"Mama." Aunty says softly.

"Anyway Amanda how's Bandile?" Gogo asks.

Ya ask her gogo.

"He's good gogo." Gogo nods lightly.

"We're here if you need to talk okay."

"I know gogo."

So I'm not the only one that sees this good.

We spend our evening drinking, eating and laughing. My heart is so content right now. I love my people so much. I honestly couldn't have been blessed with a better 'squad'

We all retire to bed in the early hours. I'm surprised that gogo was able to stay up this long but then again she lives with Bongwe so anything is possible.

I haven't spoken to Lindo today. Futhi it should be morning or day whatever. I grab my phone and dial him. I miss him so much. I can't wait to see him.

“Hello.” A woman’s voice comes through

[05/09, 08:50] Mca: EIGHTEEN

VERY VERY Short and Unedited

I remove the phone from my ear and check the number I dialled. Indeed I dialled Lindo, now who is this person answering his phone?

“Hi.” I clear my throat and try to pull myself together.

I’m trying not to let my mind run away with me. Lindo is supposed to be handling business. Whoosaaa.

“Yes.” She responds.

Okay calm yourself Melokuhle.

“May I please speak to Lindo.”

“Sure. Babe your phone, I think it’s your sister.” Babe?

My tears drop involuntarily. How could Lindokuhle do this to me? I thought we were good. He’s cheating on me? Wow. Stupid Melokuhle.

“Please hold on he’s just stepping out of the

shower.” She says.

Wow.

I can hear her talking to him in the background, she’s giggling at whatever he’s saying. His voice is getting closer to the speaker. I hang up and bury my face on the pillow. Did that really just happen? Did a woman just answer my man’s phone? Wow.

“What’s wrong?” Amanda says softly.

That just opens the floodgates. I wail. I don’t think I’m hurt, I think it’s the shock.

“Melo baby what’s wrong?” I hear mom’s sweet voice.

I can’t even talk. My head is buzzing. I want to puke. Yep I need to puke. I run to the bathroom and release everything that I had. Mom is rubbing my back lightly. You know when your mind doesn’t know how to handle things and it just starts attacking you physically? That’s me right now.

“Are you better?” She asks softly.

I nod lightly. Amanda walks into the bathroom with my phone in hand.

“It’s Lindo.” I shake my head.

I don’t want to talk to him. I don’t want to see him ever again.

I get up and rinse my mouth. I need mom’s warmth so I walk out and head to her room. I open the blankets and slide in then wait for her. She walks in and joins me. She pulls me into her arms and I start crying all over again.

Why did he make me fall in love with him if he knew that he was going to do me like this? Was I not worth being the only one? IS IT BECAUSE I CAN’T HAVE KIDS? He said he had my back. He said it was us against

everything and everyone.

“What happened?”

“He’s cheating on me mama.” I say softly.

“Lindo?”

“Ya.”

“Ini?” I can feel her heartbeat picking up.

“She answered his phone mom. I know what I heard and I know that I’m not overreacting. He’s cheating.” I say softly.

Saying it out loud has just made it real.
Mngomezulu vele? He got on the plane and
said he was going to take care of business
kanti nex.

“Melo.”

“I told him mom, I told him I didn’t want a
relationship but he kept pursuing me. He
made me fall in love with him. I love him
mom. I love him so much.”

“Shhhhh it’s okay baby get some sleep we’ll
deal with everything when we wake up
okay.” I nod against her chest and snuggle
closer.

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I've been lying in bed awake for a while now. My mind keeps replaying the conversation and my chest constricts. It wasn't a dream. It actually happened.

The door opens and mom walks in carrying a tray.

"You're awake, finally." I sit up and stare at her.

I'm not in the mood for human interaction and I know mom won't let up.

“Here I made you some tea.” I shake my head. “You need to eat phela.”

“I’m fine mom please.” She sighs and settles next to me.

“What are you planning on doing?” I shrug.

I don’t want to do anything. I just want to forget and move on. That’s all I need to do.

“Nothing.”

“You’re clearly not in the mood to talk to anyone so I will give you your space. I love you.” She kisses my forehead and walks out.

I reach over and grab my phone.

‘Answer your phone Melokuhle.’

‘Baby we need to talk please just let me explain.’

‘MaMkhize please.’

‘I’m flying out I hope we can talk when I get there.’

‘I love you so much Melo.’

I wipe my tears and delete all these messages.

He doesn't love me because if he did he wouldn't have hurt me like this. I guess not all that glitters is gold right?

[05/09, 08:51] Mca: NINETEEN

My heart feels like it's been put in a shredder and shredded like those documents that I shred every other day. Is this karma for wasting tree life like that? Must be.

I spent my Sunday in bed stuffing my face with all the available junk in my pantry. I ate until I couldn't no more then went back

again. I caught up on my series and movies while at it. Girl's weekend was ruined so yeah. I just needed to be alone with my thoughts and I knew they wouldn't allow me to so I left.

Sigh.

I don't even want to go to work today but I have a meeting that I can't miss. I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom. I step into the shower and let the water do its job. My muscles are so tense. This is what I hate about being emotionally strained it just messes up my body.

I finish up then head to my closet to get

dressed. I throw on one of those shirt dresses with black red bottoms. I look decent. I grab my bag and head out. I'll grab some coffee at work.

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Smile Melo.

"Morning team." I cheerfully greet as I walk into our meeting venue.

I don't like to address it as the boardroom. That sounds too official.

"Boss lady you good?"

“Yep y’all?”

“We’re good.” I nod and settle next to Ty.

The meeting goes on and ideas are following. I should be taking notes but I honestly don’t want to be here.

“Are you okay?” Ty whispers in my ear.

“Just tired.” I whisper back.

“Go home. We can handle this.”

I think I’m going to take him up on his offer.

It's not like we have a deadline to meet and I trust my team go manage a day without me.

"After this meeting."

I try my utmost best to focus and before I know it the meeting is over. We pack up and I head to my office. I grab my bags and make my way out.

"Leaving already Melo?" Tazz asks.

"Yeah I'm not feeling well so I trust y'all to do the thing angithi." He chuckles while shaking his head.

“You know we will. Go get some rest.”

Tazz moves his eyes from me to something behind me. I turn around and there he is. He looks sharp as always. Black slim pants and a white shirt. If the situation was different I'd be drooling but right now I'm just annoyed.

“Hello muhles.” He says with a smile on his face.

I can't even be rude about it because I don't want people knowing my business. Sigh. I look at him and give him a wide smile.

“Hey.”

“You going to a meeting?” He asks pointing at my bags.

“Home.” He frowns and nods.

I turn around and Tazz is not there anymore. I heave a sigh and make my way towards the elevator. Lindokuhle follows me and we step into the elevator. It's so tense in here and I don't know how to react to it.

“How are you Melokuhle?”

“I’m okay and you Lindokuhle?”

“I’m okay. Can I drive behind you?” Well.

We need to talk so yeah. Plus I would like to have this conversation in the comfort of my own home. I mean I know where all my weapons are so yeah.

“Sharp I’ll send you a code.” We step out of the elevator and he walks me to my car.

I get in and drive off. If there was one thing that mom taught me it was to never let anyone see me breakdown, apart from the close people in my life of course. She said

people might just turn around and use your moment of weakness against you.

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Sigh.

We're sitting on the couch in silence. I have so many things running through my head and I'm scared that I might end up saying things that aren't so 'friendly'.

"MaMkhize." I stare at him blankly. He heaves a sigh and drops his head. "I know you have a lot of questions and I will answer all of them but I just want you to know that I love you."

“Who is she?” That’s all I want to know right now.

“I used to be based in New York mostly up until a few months before we started dating. I had someone that side and things were going well until she started complaining about my travelling and how I hardly spent time that side anymore. Our relationship took a lot of strain and we broke up and a few months later we started dating.”

“So she’s an ex.” I ask.

“Yes.” He drops his head.

“So what was she doing in your room Lindo? Why was she so comfortable answering your phone?”

I’m trying so damn hard to keep myself in check.

“She just dropped by.”

“Did you sleep with her?” I don’t think I want the answer to that.

He looks up and his eyes are glistening with tears. My heart sinks. Did he really?

“Ndo?” I say faintly in a shaky voice.

“It didn’t get that far baby I promise.” He kneels in front of me and takes my hands in his.

The fact is he cheated on me. He gave another woman what was supposed to be mine. He broke my trust. He promised to always treat me good and always have my back and then turns around and does this.

“How far did it get heh Lindokuhle?” I’m getting worked up now.

“Melokuhle please.” He says softly.

I chuckle while shaking my head. I try to get up but he holds me down.

“So you kissed her right? Then what? Travelled down to her breast and enjoyed that angithi? Bese?” I’m too calm for my liking.

Yes my tears are flowing but I’m not shouting. My voice is low and controlled. It’s actually shocking. It’s scaring me.

“Melokuhle I’m sorry baby, it was a moment of weakness baby I’m sorry.” He has tears flowing down his face and I am not moved.

“Okay tell me this. Why didn’t you go all the way?”

“I just couldn’t do it Melo. The thought of you hurting because of me, I couldn’t.” I nod lightly.

“Yet here I am hurting because of you. Tell me this, if I had done the exact same thing with my ex husband how would you feel?” He looks at me with a frown.

“Melo.” He says softly.

“Exactly.” I push him off of me and make

my way to my room.

I throw myself on the bed and allow my tears to flow. The fact that he even let her come into his space hurts me. I would never allow Lerato into my room like that. To think that he went crazy when I came home late. Just wow.

How do I move past this?

Do I want to move past this?

I already have my insecurities as is and he just added onto them. How do I trust him with his busy travel schedule?

Do I want to forgive him?

I don't think so. I think Ndo and I are through.

[05/09, 08:51] Mca: TWENTY

Unedited

When Lerato decided to side with his family and I guess see me as 'unworthy' I was crushed. This was a man I thought I'd see the 'end days' with. He was literally the centre of my universe. My days began and ended with him. He was the man that made it all seem worth it and when it got hard he walked away without a fight.

I was done with the heartache. I was through with men until Lindo came along. He forced his way into my heart. I fell in love with him. I love him. So much at that. Sigh. Love sucks.

I finish doing my make up then head to the closet to pick an outfit. I'm mourning so black is the order of the day. I get dressed then make my way to the kitchen. He's humming some song and moving around the kitchen. I think he's dancing, I don't know.

"Bongwe."

"Hey sis." He makes his way to me and

pulls me in for a hug.

We stand there soaking each other's love in. I must admit I've missed my weed head. I'm glad he's back.

"Unjani?" I ask cupping his face.

He chuckles and takes my hands in his. My brother is too much of a man to be 'babied' which is ironic because he needs to be babied.

"I'm good and you?"

"I'm fine. I missed you though." I say.

“I missed you too but I’m visiting so take advantage of this okay.” I chuckle lowly.

“You’re not back?”

“No I’m actually moving back to my place.” I frown.

Look I get that he’s doing better but I can still worry right? I mean we’ve been through this before and each time it ends with me rushing to him and praying that he hasn’t succeeded in his attempt.

“Why?”

“Because I’m good and plus you and Lindo need your personal space.” I chuckle and move away from him.

Lindo ne.

“Of course baby brother.” I say as I grab a plate and serve myself.

“Yini?” He asks.

He’s hovering over me and I hate it. Both my brothers are tall and I’m not short but I am shorter than them. They both have this bad habit of making me feel ‘small’ or ‘inferior’

because of their height. Malibongwe used to get me to open up by doing this a lot.

“Nothing Simphiwe now please step aside I want to eat and go to the office.” He looks at me long and hard, like he’s trying to read me before nodding and stepping aside.

“I swear I’m good I’m just exhausted and I’m trying to get back into designing and you know how much of my energy that sucks.”

“Free backstage passes and access to models.” He says with the world’s biggest grin on his face.

Of course that's all he's thinking about – girls. Tis tis this brother of mine.

“Unje vele. Anyway let me love and leave you.” I shove a streak of bacon in my mouth and walk out of the kitchen. I rush to my room to grab my bags. I hope that there is no traffic, I can't afford to be late really.

I say my goodbye to my brother then head out.

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“Melo Mr Mavundla is here for you.” I roll my eyes.

Doesn't this man get it? How many times do I need to say no for him to actually get it through his thick skull? Rhaaaa. I get up and make my way to the boardroom.

"Mr Mavundla."

"Miss Mkhize." He says with a grin on his face.

It takes everything in me not to roll my eyes at him. Again I ask why he doesn't just start his own publication for his girlfriend.

"How can I help you?"

“You can help me by signing on the dotted line Miss Mkhize. I don’t sleep at night because my woman is breathing down my neck. She really wants this.” I chuckle and stand up.

I don’t have time for this honestly. I fix my skirt and my make my way towards the door.

“I wouldn’t walk out if I were you.” I turn to look at him. “You know accidents happen every day Miss Mkhize.”

“Again? You’re threatening me again?” I’m annoyed.

“More like giving you a friendly warning.” He gets up and grabs the contract. “I’ll leave this with you and I hope that the next time I pop in you’d have signed it.” He shoves it in my hands and walks out leaving me shocked.

Would he really go as far as killing me just to get his hands on this? Are people that sick vele? I don’t know whether to take his threat or not but I’ve watched too many movies to just brush it under the carpet. Actually fuck him! I worked too damn hard to bring this baby to life to have some blesser think he can shake it out of me.

“Are you okay?” Tazz asks with a concerned look on.

I nod lightly and give him a faint smile. I head back to my office and throw myself on the couch. I don't know what to do. Maybe I should call dad. Yep that's it. I grab my phone and dial my dad.

"Princess." He answers cheerfully.

Now dad and I speak almost every day and every time we talk he sulks like I haven't rang him in months. Like now I know he's going to complain about how I haven't come see him.

"Unjani Lwandle?" He laughs out loud.

“We Zobuhle this child of yours uthi Lwandle kimi.” He shouts.

Now mom has been invited into the conversation gosh.

“Angithi that’s your name though.” Mom shouts back.

Yes mom tell him!

“Mxm anyway how are you Melo?”

“I’m okay and you dad?”

“I’m good. What’s wrong?” I heave a sigh.

I love how dad is able to sense when I’m not good. Well I hate it at the same time but I appreciate it more than anything.

“So daddy there’s this man-“

“Haibo Nqobile another man? uLindo yena?”
I roll my eyes.

Dad doesn’t know about Lindo and I and I’d like it to stay like that for as long as possible. Knowing Lwandle and Langa they would freak out and go around breaking

knees – their words not mine. I remember how angry they were when I was dumped. They wanted to go teach Lerato a ‘lesson’ thank God for their wives. They knocked some sense into them.

“Just listen please. Like I was saying this man has been bugging me for some time now. He wants me to sell the publication to him. He just threatened me and I feel a bit uneasy about that. As much as I would never sell what he said just shook me a bit.”
I say.

His breathing has picked up. He’s mad.

“Who is he?”

“Yehlisa umoya before mom starts worrying.”

“You can’t tell me that some idiot is threatening you and then tell me to calm down. Who the hell is he?” I hear some shuffling in the background and if I’m right he’s on his way here.

“Some Mavundla guy.”

“HmMMM.” He hangs up.

Great. Uyeza vele. He better not come with Zobuhle though because I know that she

will go all dramatic on us. Sigh. I settle back in my seat and get on with my work.

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The door swings open and dad walks in followed by uncle Shaka. Haibo.

“Hello princess.” I get up and go give both of them hugs.

We settle on the couch and they both stare at me like I took their favourite toy. Uncle Shaka has the most intense gaze ever. Lindo actually took that from his dad.

“So uthi who’s this man?” Uncle Shaka asks.

“Sfiso Mavundla.”

“Never heard of him but I will make a few calls and see what I can find about him. How long has he been a thorn?”

“A few months. I’ve been shutting him down but he doesn’t take no for an answer.”

“I see.” Dad is just sitting here quiet. “Look I suggest that we get you security just until we can figure out if he’s bluffing or if he actually has the means to execute this threat.” He still has that intense look on.

“Security? Come on that’s movie things.” I protest.

I don’t want to have anyone following me all day every day. No, I can’t handle that.

“Non-negotiable Nqobile Mkhize.” Dad says sternly.

“You won’t even know they’re there.” Uncle Shaka adds in.

Oh but I will know they’re there.

“But-“

“No buts this is for your safety.” Dad says.

I nod lightly. Stop being stubborn Melokuhle. Just go with it and it will be over before you know it. I hope that this man isn't some big shot gangster what what.

“I'll come through to you tomorrow and we will go over everything okay?” Uncle Shaka says before pulling me up and into his embrace.

He holds me for a while before placing a kiss on my cheek.

“Lwandle we'll chat later then.” They fist

bump and he walks out leaving me alone with dad.

“Why didn’t you tell me sooner?”

“Haai dad like I said I was handling him.” He raises an eyebrow and I can’t help but laugh.

I can see that he’s worried but he’s keeping it together for my sake and I truly appreciate that. He spends the rest of the day with me at the office. Moments with Lwandle are always the best. As much as he’s my dad he’s my friend. I love how he makes it easy for me to just be myself.

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I'm in the kitchen cooking dinner with a glass of red wine in my hand. I'm making a quick bacon and mushroom pasta dish.

A knock comes through the door which is odd unless it's one of the neighbours. I rush to go open.

"Hey." I stare at him blankly.

He looks good though. Argh he always looks good. Pig!

"How did you get in?" Is the first thing I ask.

“I asked Bongwe for a code.” I nod lightly and walk back into the house.

He’ll follow me in if he wants or he can just stay out there. I get to the kitchen and get on with my cooking. I feel arms circling my waist and I heave a sigh.

“Dad told me about that Mavundla character. We’ll sort it out okay.”

“Okay. Thank you now please step back.” I say softly.

I hate the effect that he has on me. Yes I’m angry at him. I’m hurt. I’m disappointed.

Fuck I don't want him around me but now that he's here I can't help but react.

Yes I broke up with him. I don't think I can be with a man who clearly has unresolved issues with his ex futhi he travels more than the president. I don't want to be one of those women that call their man a thousand times a day just to 'check in'.

I don't want to be insecure.

I already have issues that I'm struggling with I can't add this onto the list.

[05/09, 18:25] Mca: TWENTY ONE

(Extended)

Unedited

What the hell is that? I grunt as I open my eyes and try to locate the source. Oh it's my phone. I reach for it and answer without checking the caller ID.

"Hello." I say in my sleepy voice.

"Ye wena Melokuhle why did you remove my name off of the visitors list mo gate?"

"Rea?" I sit up and rub my eyes.

“Who else? Just do something tu.” She says sounding clearly frustrated.

I’m still confused. I’m sleepy and this person is being loud and she’s not even making sense. My eyes find the large watch on the wall and I grunt even louder. It’s flippen 7AM on a Saturday morning, I mean can’t a girl get some sleep?

“Melo.” She says softly.

“Huh?”

“I’m at the gate send me a code.” She says then hangs up.

Much better. Why couldn't she say that from the beginning? Argh but Rea is so dramatic at time. I send her a code then roll out of bed and rush to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. I had planned on staying in bed the whole day and binging on my favourite series kodwa that's cancelled.

Knowing Rea she is going to cook up a storm, feed me then get me drunk. My friend believes that alcohol makes the world go around. Well sometimes.

She's banging on the door like she's a police officer. Oho she must wait. I finish up

then rush down to open for her. She gives me a deadly stare before chuckling. She pushes me aside and walks in. Sigh. She hates waiting.

I close the door and follow her in. She's already raiding my fridge.

“Why don't you have pickles? You know I love pickles!” She huffs and closes the fridge.

Rea is a special case I tell you. We met at one of my shows and she was walking my show stopper. She was this beautiful ball of energy and we just clicked. After the final show I had a celebratory dinner with my

entire team including all the girls that walked my show. I remember how Rea was sitting on my right and she was chatting my ear off. She went on and on about how she couldn't believe how young I was, which was baffling because we're age mates and she was also doing it big in the industry. Having already walked shows by the biggest brands and names worldwide.

We chatted up a storm the whole evening and from there on not a day would go by without us communicating. That's how we became friends and we've been inseparable since.

"I don't know maybe because I don't eat them." I shrug.

I switch on the coffee machine then take out two mugs.

“But I eat them.” I chuckle lowly.

“Kodwa you’re hardly here Rea.”

“Still Melo.” I roll my eyes.

She’s just being needy right now. She gets like that when she’s been away from home for such a long time. I walk over to her and clasp her in my arms. She sinks right in and heaves a sigh.

“It feels good to be home.” She says softly.

“It’s good to have you back babe.”

“Let’s go cuddle.” She says.

“Grab some junk and let’s go.” She giggles and pulls back from my embrace.

She raids the pantry and comes out with a substantial amount of junk. I pour our coffee then make my way up to my room. We settle in bed and dig in. I don’t care that it’s 8 in the morning.

“So when did you come back?” I ask.

She's been travelling and getting hold of her has been a mission nje. Her phone is not her friend when she's working.

"Last night. I spent the night with Kabelo."
She says while giggling.

Kabelo is her I guess permanent fuck buddy. They've been together in this manner for about two years and apparently the arrangement works well for them. She hasn't caught feeling and apparently he also hasn't but I think they're lying to each other.

"Of course you did." I say while chuckling.

She knows how I feel about their set up but I'm honestly not one to judge.

"I had to go calm myself before coming to see you. Now tell me about this boyfriend that you have."

See what I mean about her and being unavailable when she travels?

"He's fine but we broke up. He cheated and that is all there is to it." I shrug.

She has her jaw on the floor and her beautiful big eyes are out on display. I

chuckle while shaking my head and shove a handful of chips in my mouth.

“Wait he cheated? He cheated on you? What the hell!!” She shouts.

“Argh it’s whatever really yazi. I’m over it.” I say trying to sound as convincing as I can.

The truth is I’m far from ‘over it’. My heart still yearns for him. I want to curl up in his arms and have him whisper sweet nothings in my ear. I want him to wrap his arms around my waist while I cook. Sigh. I just want him.

“I know cheating is a deal breaker for you but are you sure you can’t try to work it out?” She asks while looking straight into my eyes.

I’ve always said that I could never stay with a man who was able to give some other woman a piece of himself. I’m not willing to walk around feeling insecure because of a man. Nope.

“I don’t think so. Look as much as I love him I don’t think I can just put everything aside you know.”

“I understand babe but looking at you now talking about this, I can still see the twinkle

in your eye. You love him there's no doubt about that and I remember from the conversations we've had about him he seemed solid. I'm not saying give him another chance though but I'm just saying don't let love go because of a mistake." She takes my hand and kisses it.

Her words hit me and I can't help but think about giving him another chance. Is it something I'd be able to go with? I know myself though I'd be questioning his every move. All these trips that he takes yhu.

"Hey don't think about this now phela this is my time. You can think about him when I leave." She says dramatically.

I laugh and reposition. She's right. This is girl time and we are going to spend it gossiping and catching up and gossiping some more.

I've missed this one for real.

My phone pings and I reach for it.

"I know you won't give me the time of day face to face so I will put everything in a text. I'm sorry Melokuhle. I truly am. I was weak, not really an excuse but it is the truth. I broke your trust and I know that once trust is broken it is not easily fixed but I promise that I will do my best to earn it back. You

deserve happiness and I know that I can give it to you. I want to give it to you Nqobile. I love you so much baby, I mean it. I have never loved anyone the way that I love you. You are my forever. Please just give this ass a chance to fix thing. Ngiyakucela maMngomezulu wami omuhle.”

This one is smooth sometimes. I can't help the warmth that spreads through as I go through this message.

Rea snatches my phone and reads the message.

“If this isn't the universe then I don't know phela I was advocating for motho o now

and then he texts advocating for himself.
Ke universe doing the things.” She says with
so much drama on her face.

I chortle while shaking my head.

Universe is this you?

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I’m sitting on the counter watching Rea
move around the kitchen. She does her
thing in this space. She is making
everything meat and I am not complaining.
Growing up in a home where mom had killer
kitchen skills and my almost twin grew up
to be a chef food is definitely a thing for me.

“Where are those delicious brothers of yours?” She licks her lips dramatically.

I roll my eyes. She has a ‘crush’ on both my brothers. She and Malibongwe openly flirt and well at least Bandile doesn’t give her the satisfaction, as he shouldn’t vele.

“They’re around.” I respond.

“Malibongwe really needs to stop playing and just do the damn things.” I shake my head.

“Leave my brother alone you devil!” She

chortles and throws a dish cloth at me.

“Hanyane fela my friend Just a dip.” Rea is nasty yazi.

“So how’s D?” I ask trying to steer the conversation in a different direction.

She chuckles lowly.

“He says I should stop travelling because he’s about to die so I should take over his business.” She rolls her eyes and I can’t help but laugh.

D is Rea’s uncle. He took her in when her

parents passed away. I've seen the way that he adores her, she is his baby. You could never say that he is her uncle. Apparently he wasn't supportive with her choice of career but because he wanted her to be happy he allowed her to pursue this whole modelling path.

"Manje wena uthini?" I ask trying to stifle a laugh.

"Nna ke reng? Yhu never! Imagine giving up Milan to run a car wash."

"Car wash and a restaurant." I add in.

“It’s a pub Melo.” She rolls her eyes.

D has a very successful car wash and a pub in the same centre. I’ve seen him in action and the way he runs his ship is admirable. He is passionate!

“Whatever. So what are you going to do?” she heaves a sigh.

We both know that D isn’t ‘dying’ so at least we don’t have to worry about that. I think he’s just lonely and he wants his daughter by his side. I remember how dad would complain every time I travelled, on some ‘I miss you when you’re not around’.

“I miss him too when I’m not around and the truth is I know he won’t be around forever but I can’t just give up everything that I’ve worked so hard for, that he’s worked so hard for.”

“I get your frustrations babe but bona ke how about you choose your gigs wisely. So don’t just take any show but take the huge ones in that way you get a bit more time off to spend with D.” I say.

“That could work. Argh let’s not depress ourselves. Anyway how’s work?” She always does this but I get her now.

“Some man is threatening me for my

company dude, like it's at a point where uncle Shaka had to get me security." She gasps dramatically.

One thing about Rea is that she loves theatrics. Everything she does is extra. Unnecessarily extra at times.

"You lie? What does he want with a magazine? Is he gay?" I chuckle.

"No apparently his woman wants it so he will do everything he can to get it for her."

"Melo this is serious mos."

“Argh it’s whatever man, all I know is that he is not getting my blood, sweat and tears. Ngeke!” She shakes her and takes out the meat from the oven.

I know what she’s thinking. She’s thinking that I’m a stubborn bitch and you know what it’s all good. I’m no walkover vele.

She sets everything on a plate and I grab a bottle of wine and follow her back to the bedroom.

We spend our time stuffing our faces with meat and downing it with wine. She lets me in on potentially becoming the first African face of an international brand and we get

more wine to celebrate that. I am so proud of her. If anyone deserves this it is her. Her work ethic is out of this world. She is that type that gives their all in everything they do.

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I'm catching up on my series because insomnia has me by the clit. Rea is sleeping peacefully next to me. I envy her mxm.

My phone rings and I chuckle lowly. It's Lindo.

"Hi." I answer.

"Hey baby how are you?"

“I’m fine and you?”

“I miss you. I miss you so much.” He sounds extra.

He’s probably been drinking this one. Yep that must be it.

“Ukuphi?” I enquire.

“I’m at a friend’s house and I miss you.” I can’t help but chuckle.

“So you woke me up just so you can tell me that you miss me?” I roll my eyes.

“Yes maMngomezulu.”

“MaMkhize you mean.” I say trying to sound cheeky.

He chuckles lowly.

“You’re going to be my wife angithi so.”

“Hmmmmm.” I don’t know what to say to him.

“Can we do breakfast later?” Konje it’s 3 in the morning.

“I have plans.”

“With who?” He asks in a demanding tone.

Even in break up he is still commanding shuu.

“None of your business, now go get some rest.” I say.

“Ngyakthanda yezwa.” I shake my head.

“Goodnight well morning Ndo.” I say before hanging up and switching my phone off.

I know he's probably going to try calling again. Sigh. I miss him too. Fighting the edge to tell him that was so difficult but I'm glad I did. I still need time to really think about whether I'm willing to fix things with him or not.

[05/09, 18:25] Mca: TWENTY TWO

Unedited

The sun has risen and I haven't slept a wink. When my insomnia sneaks in it definitely sneaks in. My eyes are heavy and so is my body but dololo sleep but I am not about to pop some sleeping pills. First because I threw all of them out but mainly because I promised Malibongwe that I wouldn't touch

another pill no matter how badly I needed to sleep because I needed him to pull himself together.

When I was at my lowest my brother also fell apart. With everything else that he was already dealing with that hit him harder, so hard that he overdosed on well sleeping pills. I'm glad that we found him in time. After that I got rid of all my pills and worked on myself for his sake.

I reach for my phone and switch it on. My messages come flooding in. A million of them are from Bandile.

“Cook something nice.” Why is he coming

here? On a Sunday even argh.

“Ufunani.” I text back.

I don't want visitors. I just want to spend the day in bed with my bitch. Like we were going to order in and chill.

“Whatever you're making is fine. See you later. Love you.” That's his response.

He knows damn well that's not what I was asking. Argh. I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom to wash my face and brush y teeth. I'm annoyed man. I finish up then make my way to the kitchen. I'm not

cooking for Bandile ngeke. I'm just going to make two salads and I'll order some chicken and pizza. He'll get what I give.

I raid my fridge and I realise that I have to dash to the stores ngoba my fridge is on life support. I rush back to my room. Rea is still snoring mxm. I throw on a dress then grab my keys and purse. A quick in and out before Sunday traffic at the store.

I rush out and in no time I'm pushing the trolley. I have so much unnecessary things in here. A few bottles of wine are needed.

"Miss Mkhize." I roll my eyes.

“Mr Mavundla.” Out of everyone I had to bump into him? Argh.

“You look beautiful.” He says with a smirk across his face.

If he wasn't such an ass he would be a very handsome man. He's tall, caramel and his beard looks good on him. He's wearing grey sweatpants and a hoodie. He looks like he also just rolled out of bed.

I flash him a fake smile and push my trolley. He follows me and I can feel my blood boil. This man threatened me and now he's here in my personal space.

“Can I help you with anything Mr Mavundla?” I say without even stopping.

“No.” He clears his throat. “Have a fantastic Sunday Miss Mkhize.” He brushes my arms gently before walking away. What the hell? He turns around to look at me and he gives me a smile before turning into the aisle. I’m shook. I get on with my shopping. I pay for everything then make my way to my favourite bakery. I get doughnuts, croissants, Danish pastries and a chocolate cake. Breakfast is served.

I drive home with this annoying feeling that I’m being followed. I know security is close by but still I can’t but feel paranoid. My thoughts calm a bit when I drive into the

estate and see that no one is actually following me.

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I'm in the kitchen making these bloody salads. I ordered the chicken as well as the pizza. It's 12 in the afternoon and Rea is still out. Skinny people and sleep rhaaaa. A knock comes through the door and I rush to go open.

My brother, looking rather handsome is standing there with a bouquet of flowers and a bottle of wine in his hand. A man after my own heart! He walks in and I follow him in after closing the door. He already has a wine glass in his hand. Shuu.

He opens the bottle he came with and pours for himself. He takes a sip then frowns.

“This thing is hot man.” I chuckle while shaking my head.

“What did you expect?” I ask while rolling my eyes.

I walk over to the freezer and pull out a packet of grapes. I freeze grapes and use them to chill my wine because ice waters it down. I hand him the packet and he grabs a few and throws them in the glass. He sips and nods this time around.

I'm looking at him and he looks exhausted and not physically. I guess it has to do with why he's drinking my wine. Yes my brother drinks but he'd never jump on wine like this. Maybe whatever is happening between him and Amanda is that hectic.

"What's wrong Ndile?" I ask softly.

He heaves a sigh and walks out of the kitchen. I follow him and we settle on the couch. Is it that hectic?

"So you know Amanda and I haven't been great over the past couple of weeks." I nod lightly. "Here's the thing I want a child Nqo."

I raise an eyebrow.

He wants a child? Haibo.

“Manqoba.”

“I really want a child and she’s having none of it. She went as far as calling me selfish.” He pauses and chuckles. “Am I selfish for wanting a child though?” He asks.

“But do you get where she’s coming from though? Do you understand how she feels about this?” I ask.

He sighs and rubs his face in frustration. He

leans back on the couch and closes his eyes. I still have mine on him and I can see he is battling with himself.

“I understand where she’s coming from Melo I really do but I can’t help feeling this way. I couldn’t keep it to myself ngoba she could see that something was bothering me so I had to tell her.”

“I get these emotions that you have but you have to try and push them aside just for a little while until she’s ready. You know she won’t deny you your dream family but you have to understand Ndile.” I hope I’m getting through to him.

“I get you. I’ll apologise then let it go.” He still has his eyes closed.

Shame this is really difficult on my brother. I know when he yearns for something the feeling stays there and ends up consuming him until he actually gets it. I can’t even imagine how deep this is for him.

“Communicate with her. She’s your wife and she loves you. That woman would lay her life down for you and you know that.” I say.

Amanda would sell her last strand of hair if it meant that Bandile gets to live happily. Sigh. I should check in on her. I know how tough this subject is for her.

“Manje you left her alone?” He chuckles lowly.

“She’s not talking to me phela.” He shrugs.

I chortle. Silent treatment from the beauty always leaves him sweating. She literally doesn’t say anything to him. Sure she’ll cook and clean kodwa to utter a word, nex. He will beg and cry and be some more and she will not budge. That treatment keeps him from being a mini ass-like Lwandle. Apparently dad also had well still has his shitty moments. Mom says he knows how to correct himself before it actually sinks in though.

“Melo why didn’t you wake me up?” Rea shouts as she walks in.

I look at her and shake my head. She’s only wearing her underwear and a top. My brother looks at her then quickly looks away. I can’t help but laugh at that how quickly he looks away. Now Rea likes teasing this one because he doesn’t play along to her silly games.

I don’t get why he’s uncomfortable though because he has seen her walk a lingerie show or maybe this is just too close to home? Either way I’m happy about his reaction.

“Oh hi Ndile.”

“Hello Rea unjani?” he asks without even attempting to look at her.

“I’m good and you?”

“I’m fine.” He says then nods lightly.

Awkward silence passes the room. I can’t help but laugh. Rea is a bitch nje. She joins me in laughter and walks away. Bandile just shakes his head and chuckles. I know what he’s thinking and I will not comment on that.

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So Rea got a call from Kabelo and she couldn't be happier to leave. Mxm so much for 'I missed you'. It's just me and my brothers and I' enjoying our time.

Malibongwe came through earlier and by the looks of things he's spending the night. I think Ndile might also need to spend the night ngoba he's high and drunk. Yep high. Malibongwe gave him a joint and the rest is history.

We're laughing and drinking, just having a great time nje. These are the moments that I cherish above all else. My siblings were my first friends and they will always be my friends through it all.

“So Nqo where’s my cool brother in-law?”
Malibongwe asks.

I chuckle lowly. He’s so high it’s not even funny. I’ve stopped trying to get him to cut down on how much he smokes because it’s quite useless honestly. It calms him down so ahh.

“Amanda told me what he did, mina naye need to have a conversation.” Bandile says.

I love drunk Bandile yazi.

“What did he do?” Malibongwe asks.

Bandile better not say anything because Bongwe will lose it. He loves Ndo.

“Nothing.” I jump in. “Ukhona he’s actually around.” I say.

Malibongwe nods then gets up.

“Uyaphi?”

“Ngyeza.” He responds then makes his way out of the room.

My special child that one.

“Don’t you dare tell him what Lindo did, you know he will lose it.” I say to Bandile.

He knows how protective Malibongwe is and he definitely knows that he will lose it and we don’t want him in that space.

“Yeah yeah whatever I’m still going to punch him when I see him.” He says dramatically.

Argh. I leave him there and head to my room to call his beauty. I let her know that he’ll be spending the night because none of us can drive in the state we’re in. She says she’s cool with him not coming back ngathi ujabulile futhi.

We spend the rest of the evening drinking and making noise. I learn that Malibongwe is 'attempting' to date which is a great thing but I hope that he guards his heart with everything in him. I don't want him getting hurt period.

My time with my siblings is always amazing. I appreciate them more than words could express.

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY THREE

Unedited

"You looked beautiful yesterday." It's a text from an unsaved number.

The only people that saw me yesterday were my brothers and Rea and I know it's not any of them because my brothers slept here and they're still here and well Rea isn't this stupid. A light bulb goes off and a cold chill travels down my spine. Mavundla. He's the only other person I saw yesterday.

Where the hell did he get my number? Why is he being so personal now? Why can't this man just leave me alone?

I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I feel so unsettled. I'm not going to leave the house today. I know usually I'm all about facing things head on and standing my ground but Mavundla is creeping me out. I finish up then head to the kitchen to get started on breakfast. I know

those two big heads are hungover and hungry.

I get started on breakfast and Bandile walks in just as I switch on the coffee machine. He grunts and rests his forehead on the fridge. Shame he drinks ne kodwa compared to Malibongwe and I he's a baby. Actually he and I are babies compared to Malibongwe.

"I feel like shit." He groans.

I can't help but laugh at him. What did he expect accepting joint after joint after joint from Malibongwe? Phela Bongwe is an expert in this field he's been at it since he

was 16.

“What did you think was going to happen?” I ask him.

“Leave me. Shit! Amanda is going to freak out.” He leans against the fridge and sighs.

“You’re lucky I love you. I called her last night.”

“How did she sound?”

“Happy that you weren’t coming home.” I say in a chuckle.

He grunts before opening the fridge and taking out a bottle of water. He downs it in one go then burps. He has his nasty moments.

“I hate it when she gives me the silent treatment and I know that I’m in the dog house for a while. I’m going to apologise and she’s going to tell me that she’s good kodwa hey the silent treatment Melo.” He sounds like he’s actually in pain.

I chortle. Serves him right.

“Don’t just apologise communicate with her.”

“I hear you.” He keeps on grunting and it is just a funny sight. “Let me go call my wife. Breakfast better be ready by the time I come back.” He walks out leaving me shocked.

Did he just? Mxm he doesn't know me this one. Okay I'm also hungry so I have to finish this. I chop up some chillies for my chilli relish. I fry up some roughly chopped onions, then throw in the chillies, followed by some thyme and a can of chopped tomatoes. A few spices and herbs and we're good to go. I love this stuff and it goes with just about anything nje. I finish up then clean up around the kitchen while I wait for those two idiots. My phone pings and I'm hoping it's not the office.

“Aren’t you going to the office today?” Again that unsaved number.

So he’s watching me? What is wrong with this man? Okay I’m scared now. I’m seriously freaking out. I don’t even hesitate I dial dad and impatiently wait for him to answer.

“Hello my baby.” Mom’s voice comes through and I have the urge to ball my eyes out but I remember that she doesn’t know about this issue.

Dad didn’t want her stressing and I don’t either. Knowing mom she’d have me

moving back home and quitting just so I can always be by her side.

“Hi mom how are you?” I’m trying my best to sound as normal as possible.

“I’m fine and you?” She sounds so cheerful.

“I’m okay. Mommy may please speak to daddy please.”

“Are you okay?” She asks.

I clear my throat. Mom knows us like the palm of her hand which sucks in such instances.

“I’m okay mama I just want to check in with dad ngoba I have Bongwe here.” I say.

“Is he fine?”

“He’s good mom.” I know how much he worries about him. We all do.

It’s been such a tough journey for him and with that dreaded month approaching I fear for his state of mind. I hear some shuffling before dad’s voice comes through.

“Princess.”

“Daddy it’s Mavundla.” I don’t even have time to greet him.

“Go on.”

“I bumped into him yesterday but I didn’t pay much attention to it and this morning I received two smses and I think they’re from him.”

“Why didn’t you let us know that you saw him izolo?” He sounds angry.

“I didn’t think it was a big deal I mean people bump into each other at the shops you know.”

“BUT STILL MELOKUHLE.” He shouts.

“Don’t shout at me!” I yell back.

I hate it when he yells at me especially when I’m stressed. Actually this is not even stress, this is fear and I hate feeling this way.

“Okay sorry.” He sighs. “I don’t know what else can be done because he checked out and nothing off the books came up. I don’t know what more I can do except add more security. I think you should maybe consider moving back home.” He says softly.

Hearing my dad sound so defeated breaks me. I know this isn't anything that he's ever had to deal with before and it must be frustrating not knowing what to do.

"Dad I don't want to put your lives at risk if it's that serious." I say.

I don't think I'd be able to forgive myself if anything happened to either of them because of me.

"We're going to get the police involved and that's final Melokuhle." He says sternly.

If that puts him at ease then I'm good. I just want this man off my back. We talk for a while and he assures me that yena noUncle Shaka will try their best to get him to stop with whatever it is he's doing. I trust them and I know they have my best interest at heart.

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"Why didn't you wake me up?" Malibongwe says walking into my room in just his briefs. SMH.

"You know weed knocks you out so how was I supposed to wake you up?"

"Oh yeah that's true." He throws himself on

the bed and pulls me into his arms.

I appreciate how he is able to sense when I'm low and I need a hug. I settle in them and rest my head on his chest.

"What's wrong?" He asks while brushing my cornrows.

I'm surprised he hasn't made fun of how crusty I look. 'You have so much money Melo kodwa you look like this' like he looks any better nje. I've told him about Mavundla and he knows about the security but I don't want to alarm him. He's getting himself together and the fact that he's living alone again is good and I don't want to set him

back. Knowing Malibongwe he's going to insist on moving back in and I don't want that.

"I'm just feeling low." I lie.

He pulls me closer and kisses my head.

"I woke up feeling low as well." He says softly.

"Want to talk about it?" I ask.

"Nah I'm okay now. I spoke to mam'Zonke and she lifted my spirits." He says sounding like he's smiling.

I love how he's gotten so close to Siyanda's mom over the years. It's been really beautiful to watch.

"Anyway I'm here if you want to cuddle all day or better yet you can call Lindo and you can cuddle while he gives you some dick." He sounds so stupid.

I lightly punch his chest while laughing. He's nasty. Of course he would think about my need for dick even when I'm emotionally low. According to him releasing helps with what and what and releasing mixed with weed is even better. I won't even attempt that.

“He’s not around and even if he was.”

“You were crying for dick manje you have the opportunity to have some and you’re acting fresh oho.” This boy really is an idiot.

My phone pings and my heart races.

“I guess we’re staying in today. That dress you had on yesterday does wonders for your body.” That bloody unsaved number again.

My heart beats out of my chest and I feel my body getting a bit weak. I hate it when

my body shuts down because of my brain

“Melo?” Malibongwe shouts.

I can hear him panicking and I hate that there is nothing I can do about it. I just have to ride it out.

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I open my eyes and I can feel that I’m not in Malibongwe’s arms. I look up and I find him looking at me with a smile on his face.

When did he get here? I know for sure that Bongwe called him and I don’t blame him because shame he doesn’t know. I’m actually surprised that he’s in the country. I thought he wasn’t.

“Hi.” I say softly.

“Hey. Are you okay?” He sounds worried.

“I’m fine yeah.”

“You had Malibongwe worried for a second I’m glad that you’re good. I don’t know what I would’ve done if something happened to you Muhles.” The smile on his face is contagious.

I smile back at him. God I say again I hate that I miss him so much. The heart is a bloody treacherous organ yazi nxaaa kodwa

I admit I feel at home in his arms.

I think this is my home.

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY FOUR

Unedited

They say you fall asleep differently when you're in the love of your life's arms and I agree. I'm not saying I haven't been sleeping well however being in Lindokuhle's arms made falling into a blissful slumber a breeze. I swear the second I snuggled up against his chest I just went out. I felt safe. At peace. I was home and I still am.

I lift my head and my heart swells at the

sight of this man. All sorts of decadent chocolate yumminess. His untrimmed beard somewhat suits him but I think I prefer the clean look. I lick my lips when my eyes move to his. They're so juicy and delicious, I wish I could pounce on them right now. Gosh but Lindokuhle Mngomezulu is so handsome. Okay I'm lying he isn't the best thing since sliced bread but he's all that for me.

"Stop staring maMngomezulu." His voice snaps me out of my admiring session.

I giggle and hide my face on his chest. He chuckles and runs his hand down to my ass and gives it a tight squeeze. An involuntary moan escapes my mouth causing him to

groan. I can feel his shaft wanting to come out to play and I am more than ready.

Look we'll deal with everything else later, right now I just want to dance. Just a little bit.

"Melokuhle." His voice is strained. Good!

"Yes baby." I respond seductively.

"I know what you want right now and I will give you the stick until you don't know your name but before that I just want to apologise. I'm sorry for being an ass, I'm sorry for cheating on you baby, I'm sorry for

breaking your trust and I'm sorry for making you feel less than what you actually are. I promise if you give me another shot Melo, I promise that I will prove to you that I am a man worthy of your love and trust. Please just give us one more chance and if I mess up again I promise I will step back."

Sigh. As much as I know he is my home and I love him I' just scared that I'm going to end up being one of those women who follow their man when he goes away on business because of my insecurities.

"You hurt me so bad Lindo. I didn't expect that from you you know. I thought that we were solid and that we were all we needed or was I perhaps counting my chickens

before they hatched?” I ask.

“You are everything that I need and more baby. It was a stupid moment and I am sorry it happened. Please baby I promise you, never again.” He says gently.

“What about your travelling Ndo? I know its work but it also put a strain on our relationship.” I express.

Lindokuhle travels like a typical businessman. Those types shouldn't have women and children in their lives because of the fact that they're never home. I know for a fact that Ndo would lose it if I travelled half the amount that he does, so how I'm

expected to stand for his travels is beyond me.

“I spoke to dad and he promised to reduce my workload.”

“I don’t understand how you’re the big boss but still do so much. Kanti what’s the point of your team? Why do you have people in your corner if you’re not going to use them? I know he’s your father and he is the owner of the company but you have to stand up to him baby. You have to make him see just how much this is affecting you personally and not just us as a couple.” I say.

“uShaka doesn’t listen to anyone but

himself okay and his wife.” His voice softens up a bit when he mentions his mother.

“Then have a conversation with Aunty Minnie and ask her to talk to your dad.” I say.

If anyone can melt uncle Shaka it’s definitely Aunty Minnie. Lindo chuckles and tightens his grip around my waist.

“You do know you’re going to have to stop calling her aunty Minnie soon right?” He says mischievously.

“Oh and why is that?”

“I’m going to wife your ass and she is going to be your mother.”

“Oh usho kanje?” I say trying to suppress the smile that wants to break out on my face.

“Yes now am I forgiven? Are you giving us another shot?”

“I’m not scared of lonely just so you know. So mess up again and you and I are through, for good this time!”

“Yes ma’am. Now can I please get a kiss.”

He says.

He doesn't need to tell me twice. I reposition and get on top of him then lower my head and take his lips in mine. Oh how I've missed these juicy lips. I love how perfectly they go with mine. His hands are firmly on my ass and he is helping my grind against his shaft. I can feel it pulsing and it's making my blood rush. I deepen the kiss and sweep my tongue into his mouth. I want him so bad right now I can't take it. Sensing my need, he takes my night dress off and I'm left in just my underwear.

His hands travel to my breast and stay there gently squeezing them. His running

his thumb in circles on my nipples and it's sending signals all the way down to my quim. Damn it Mngomezulu I need him to fuck me right now!

"Baby I need you." I murmur in his mouth.

"I'm right here baby." He murmurs back.

Good! I pull out his shaft and it is leaking heavily at the head. I pull out of the kiss and sit up to get a better look of my mean machine. I chuckle at how strained his face looks. His eyes are small and red while his lips are slightly pouted. I gently give his shaft a squeeze and he whimpers.

“Melooo.” He says softly.

He loses it further when I wipe his precum with my thumb and lick it off. My bean is throbbing more than it should and it is crying out for some attention. Unexpectedly he shifts my panties to the side and his finger lands on my clit. I don't get why he's not hand mercy on it ngoba yey he is rubbing up a storm. He grabs my hand and tries to redirect his shift to my entrance but I stop him.

“Condom.” I say breathlessly.

He curses under his breath and reaches for my size drawer. I'm not playing that game.

Hell no! No glove no love straight. He hands it to me and I am more than happy to do the honours. The second I slid it in he lifts me up and helps me sink into him. We moan and groan as we welcome each other back home.

Argh I would actually rather he be on top of me and fucking the day lights out of me kodwa beggars can't be choosers. I'm bouncing and figure 8-ing like crazy futhi his groans are fuelling me. I continue doing my thing until my legs begin to shake and I stop to catch my breath. He uses this as an opportunity to flip us over and get on top. He inserts himself to the hilt and I can't help but suck in my breath. Fuck he feels so damn good!

He's hitting all the right spots and I'm blabbering about what? I don't know. I'm probably thanking uncle Shaka for how well endowed his son is kwaz'bani. It's not long before a wave washes throughout my entire body and I know he's almost at the finish line as well by how uncontrolled his movements are. One, two, three thrusts and he hides his face on my neck as he shoots his load into the glove. I'm holding onto him for dear life as we both try catching our breath.

"I love you Kuhle." His voice vibrates on my neck.

“I love you too Kuhle.” I say pulling closer like I want to sink deeper into him.

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I’m woken up by Ndo shouting on the phone. I’m immediately alarmed and I sit up. I don’t like the look in his eyes. This is the Lindo that tried to intimidate me once.

“I DON’T CARE WHAT HE THINKS!” He roars.

Who is he talking to? I look at him with pleading eyes hoping he will calm down but it’s like I don’t exist in this moment.

“I’m not going there mom, if it’s so bad then why doesn’t he go personally?”

Oh he’s talking to his mom.

“Then let it. Look I have to go. Sharp.” He hangs up and puts on his pants.

I want to ask what the matter is but I’ll let him cool off first. He moves around the room getting dressed and he’s still not saying anything. Kanti this guy?

“I’m going out.” And just like that he’s out of here?

Hours after we just fixed things and he leaves me hanging like a wet soak? He's going to drive in his state and he expects me not to worry? Selfish much? Argh. I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom to take a quick shower. I finish up then make my way to the kitchen to refuel. I find Malibongwe cooking up a storm and I can't help but smile. He's a pretty good cook when he wants to be this one.

"Your man came to snack and leave kanti."
He says mockingly.

I smack the back of his head causing him to laugh.

“Kahle kahle he used you.” He adds on.

“Simpfiwe voetsek!” I say laughing.

“Free pussy things.” He continues laughing.

Have I ever mentioned how much of an idiot he is? Mxm we’ll he is.

“What are you cooking?” I ask.

He laughs and shakes his head. Argh. I open the fridge and grab an apple. I’m hungry now for real. I open all of the pots and my moth salivates when I see the stout chicken in the oven. My brother nails this

dish and he always leaves me wanting more.

“I’m cooking them I’m leaving. I was supposed to leave in the morning kodwa I wanted to make sure that you’re fine before leaving.” He says so genuinely.

I walk over to him and hug him from behind. My little miracle fighter. Looking at everything this one has been through I’m always grateful when he pulls out of his dark times. I know how hard it is for him but he fights like nobody’s business and I am proud of him.

“I’m fine baby, thank you.”

“Well I’m glad. So where did Lindo rush to?”
He asks.

I wish I knew baby brother. I wish I knew.

“He had to go take care of something but
he’ll be back.” I say.

“Oh okay. So I was thinking of taking a road
trip but I know you guys are going to freak
out.”

“And where are you going?” I ask.

“I haven’t thought that far yet but I know is
that I need a bit of time away from

everything. I'll probably go visit Liyana's grave before I go just so that I can have some sense of peace I guess."

"And Siyanda?" I ask.

He shrugs and goes back to his pots.

"Malibongwe it's been years." I say softly.

"Don't get me wrong like I said I forgave her but that doesn't mean I want to visit her. Ngisharp ngaye." He says sternly.

I hate how much anger he still somewhat harbours in his heart towards Siyanda. Yes

he says he forgave. Yes he was there at the unveiling kodwa that's it. He doesn't even talk about her, he cleared out all of her stuff in his apartment and took them to her mom's. There literally is no trace in his life that there was once a woman named Siyanda who he loves with his all.

"I hear you baby." I kiss his cheek then walk out of the kitchen.

He needs his space. I have a couple of missed calls from the office and mom, argh I'll return them later. Right now I need to check on that man. I dial his number and it rings unanswered. Whatever I just hope that he's fine wherever he is.

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY FIVE

Unedited

I check the time and its 22:47, I still haven't heard from Lindo and his phone is off now. The amount of worry I'm experiencing I can't even explain. I've resorted to crying now because I'm scared something bad has happened to him. When I was in varsity there was a girl I knew and her boyfriend went awol for a couple of days, like no one could get hold of him. We ended up thinking he was cheating only to find out that he was involved in an accident on his way back home and the car was burned beyond recognition so it was hard for them to contact the family. I don't even remember how they found him but yeah.

I'm sitting here playing the worst case scenarios out in my head. What if I'm sitting here angry at him and he's been involved in an accident? What if he got hijacked and left for dead at the side of the road? Oh God. I grab my phone and just as I'm about to dial the bedroom door opens and he walks in. We lock eyes and suddenly I go from worried to angry. There is not a single scratch on his face so he's fine.

I'm burning! I am mad! How dare Lindokuhle put me through this kodwa?

"Were you arrested?" I ask.

He looks taken aback by that question. I don't care he must answer.

“No.”

“Were you in hospital?”

“No.”

“Did you have a flat tire?”

“Melokuhle kanti yini?”

“Answer the question.” I say clearly annoyed.

“No.”

“And I’m assuming you weren’t hijacked
ne.”

“Of course not.”

“Hmmmm.” I say then make my way to the
closet.

Uyangijwayela lo! He just waltz into my
house like he owns the space futhi how the
hell does he keep getting into my house?
Nxaa. I strip naked and grab one of my
sleeping shirts and put it on. I find him

leaning against the door when I turn around.

“I needed space. I’m sorry I didn’t let you know where I was.” He says.

“How do you think I felt the whole day Lindokuhle when I couldn’t get hold of you? You stormed out of here angry as hell and I don’t even know why. Kanti what happened to communication?” I slightly yell.

He was selfish and inconsiderate and he needs to know that. Nxaaa.

“Dad was at it again and I just didn’t want to ruin your day with that so I saw it best that I

step out and get some fresh air. I'm sorry, I'll do better next time baby."

"Why couldn't you be angry la in the house Ndo? Okay why couldn't you at least say that you're angry and you need some fresh air? Why did I have to spend the whole day worried about you? Why Lindokuhle?"

"Melokuhle I'm sorry baby I'm truly sorry. I'm just so used to dealing with my issues alone and in this manner that it's hard for me to let go you know but I promise I'm going to work on it baby." He says slowly making his way towards me.

A part of me is relieved that he's fine but a

huge part of me is angry at him that I want to throw him out. He circles his arms around my waist and pulls me closer. I can't help but get on my toes and hook mine around his neck and hug him. I heave a sigh of relief. I was so worried about him.

"I'm sorry baby. It's just so hard being the only son and when your father is the Shaka Mngomezulu the pressure that much more. I'm so tired baby of fighting with dad because of work." He says softly.

My neck is getting wet. Is he crying? My heart sinks. Look I know that apart from the work issues Lindo has a pretty good relationship with his dad. I don't think anyone ever wants to see their man crying.

“Baby. “ I attempt to pull back from the hug but he holds me tighter.

I just want to see him.

“Baby let me see you. Please.” I say softly.

I pull back and he lets me. I cup his face and use my thumbs to wipe his tears. Am I evil for saying I love how vulnerable he is right now? This is the first time he’s actually opened up about this whole situation.

“Look I don’t know how bad the situation with dad is but I know that you guys have a

good relationship and if you could talk instead of fight then you could probably solve things. Just try talk to him baby.” I say.

He shakes his head and bites his lip. He’s trying to fight his tears but I wish he could just let them fall free. I know how hard it is for him right now. I give him a soft peck and he holds me tighter and deepens the kiss. It’s salty and slimy but my man needs me right now.

“I love you and I’m here for you.” I murmur against his lips.

“I love you too.” He responds.

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“So vele you’re no longer going to work?”
Lindo asks.

It’s been close to a week since the Mavundla incident and I haven’t left the house since. I don’t know a part of me is scared that the threat might be serious and I just don’t want to poke at the snake. We’ve gotten a restraining order against him and they’ve added more security which makes me feel uncomfortable because I’m just a normal girl who wants to do normal things but I can’t because of a psychopath.
Rhaaaa!

“Hai baby I’ll go back next week.” I say

dismissively.

He chuckles while shaking his head before placing a kiss on my forehead. I love forehead kisses yaz. There's just something about it that says 'you're loved'

"Well you can just quit working and become a house girlfriend." He says wiggling his eyebrows.

I laugh out loud even throwing my head back. He knows what I'm saying and I guess by his laughter he gets me. I could never be a housewife, Lord, I would die. What would I do all day? Clean, cook, clean some more than go shopping? Whooo no

thank you ma'am. That life has it's people and that is not me.

"Not a chance buddy." I say bending over to take out the frying pan at the bottom drawer.

I hear him grunt and I can't help but roll my eyes. Is he poking me? This man.

"Haaa ah Lindokuhle I want to cook."

"I said I'm taking you out for breakfast kodwa wena uzenza fresh angithi." He spanks my ass.

I giggle and push him back. I must say I like his irritating and playful nature. It's cute man for an uptight man as himself.

“Okay ke Lindokuhle take me out.”

“Vele I'm taking you out.” He says picking me up and throwing me over his shoulder.

I'm a giggling mess. He keeps spanking my ass and for some reason it's quite ticklish. He kicks open the bedroom door then walks us into the closet. He gently sets me on the couch before pouncing on me. This is what he wanted, not that I'm complaining though. Just as things get heated he pulls back and kisses my forehead.

“Get ready baby. Ngilambile.” And he walks out just like that?

Hehe this man! I throw on dress with some sneakers and I'm done. Why should I fuss over what I'm wearing? Haai. I grab my bag and head down. He's already waiting for me with his keys in hand. I walk out and wait for him in the car. We need to address this issue of him having my house key and access card. I know that he used Bongwe's the last time he was here and I bet he didn't give it back. He gets in and we drive off.

“So I have to be back in Cape Town tomorrow night.” He says.

Konje I forgot he doesn't live here.

"And when will you be back?" I ask

"Hopefully in a week or so."

This one is going to end up flying to the big apple or something for some big meeting, don't say I dint tell you.

"I'll be right here waiting for you baby." I say softly.

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“Lindokuhle!” Someone shouts.

We turn around and a gorgeous woman walks towards us. She has a wide smile on her face and Ndo returns it. They share what I feel is an unnecessary hug especially in front of me. His hands around her waist have me feeling some type of way. They pull back with broad smiles till plastered across their faces.

“It’s been so long.” She says.

“You look amazing.” He responds.

I feel like a third wheel in this encounter. I’m

awkwardly standing here waiting for one of them to acknowledge my presence kodwa no. The way she's ogling him is actually making me uncomfortable.

"Thank you and you look wow." She says.

It takes everything in me not to roll my eyes.

"Where are my manners, Enama this is my girlfriend Melo. Babe this is Enama." He says.

"Oh your girlfriend, hi, I'm the ex." She spits out.

Oh wow!

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY SIX

Unedited

I throw my bag across the table and make my way to the fridge. I'm annoyed! Highly annoyed at that and I don't think this idiot of a man gets that. I had to stand there and take in the disrespect from his girlfriend while he stood there with a broad smile on his face. What the hell is that? And then he has the audacity to tell me that I'm over reacting. Really? Hmmm

Too early for wine my ass! I grab a bottle of wine and a glass and make my way out into my garden. We didn't even have breakfast

and if he thinks I'm going to cook for him then he has another thing coming. The gentle breeze hits me and I feel myself slowly calming down. This special bottle of wine was given to me by dad. He had taken mom to Cape Town for a relaxation weekend and they obviously did the whole vineyard tours and I got a few of these bottles. He said the minute he took a sip of it, he immediately thought of me. Mom said he's encouraging me to be an alcoholic but he says he's preventing it. I don't know, all I know is that this stuff is good.

Mxm! Look at him walking in with his sorry face on. He must go. I actually feel like seeing my parents now, so he must go.

“Melokuhle baby what’s wrong?” He asks.

What’s wrong? What’s wrong? What’s wrong? Is this man being serious? I’ll tell him what’s wrong. I chuckle lightly while shaking my head.

“You held your girlfriend in-“

“Ex girlfriend.” He interrupts me.

“Oh pardon me, EX girlfriend. Which is quite funny then ngoba you held her like she’s your girlfriend. You draped your arms around her waist and took in her scent in my presence. You smiled broadly and told

her that she looks gorgeous. How do you expect me to feel about that Mr Mngomezulu?" I say calmly.

I know my tone is annoying him and I don't care right now.

"I was just greeting an old friend Melo. I haven't seen her in years."

"You freaked out when you came to my office and you saw how friendly I was with my staff mind you no one touched me but you got angry. So angry that you even popped a vein. Tell me this, how would you feel if I were to bump into Lerato and hug him and tell him he looks handsome?" I ask.

Bloody hypocrite has his jaw clenched and hand fisted. See what I mean? Hypocrite! He'd blow a gasket if I were to hug a man in his presence kodwa yena he's allowed to do such shit and I must understand because 'I haven't seen her in years' nxaaa.

"Melokuhle!" He says sternly.

And there he goes using that Mngomezulu tone to try and intimidate me. Kanti doesn't he know that I am a Mkhize and I will not get intimidated by the sound of his voice nje?

"Lindokuhle." I respond with so much sass.

I'm waiting for him to blow a fuse so I can properly kick him out. He's not even apologising for his actions instead he's here making me feel like I'm the one in the wrong for feeling the way that I do. Who does that?

"Ukwatile?"

"Fuck yeah Einstein!"

"Don't swear Melokuhle!" He shouts.

"You disrespected me Lindokuhle and when she threw that 'I'm the ex' shit you didn't do

anything about it instead you stood there and listened to her go on about how single she is. Yini leyo?" I'm fuming!

This girl went on and on about how finding a good man is so hard and how single she is and how being a working woman is so hard and blah blah blah. I guess she thought I was one of those women that sponge off of their men, shame if only she knew. Lindokuhle stood there agreeing and taking in everything she was saying.

"I'm sorry baby." He says softly.

"For what?" I ask.

“For what just transpired. I understand that you didn’t like it and for that I apologise.” He says almost sounding sincere.

Hmmm. I refill my glass and turn my chair around to face the garden. I know for a fact that if I didn’t bring it up he wouldn’t have apologised so argh. Let me just sip on my wine and calm myself. He pulls a chair and settles next to me in silence. I appreciate that he’s letting me be for now.

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I’m on a conference call with my team getting an update on what’s been happening at the office. Malum’Shaka suggested that I work from home for a

couple more weeks, just until we are sure that the threat is 'cleared, his words not mine.

“So boss lady we were able to get Maria Mazur for the December cover however there is a condition.”

Of course there's a condition. These supermodels think they're all that.

“What is it?” I ask.

“She wants to be personally styled by you.”
Ty says.

I let out a low chuckle while shaking my head. I'm not in that side of things anymore and Maria knows that. See once you go big and assume that everyone will bow at your feet.

"I'm not a stylist."

"But you are a designer."

"Was!"

"Well she wants your designs Melo."

"There are a handful of stylists around the country who still probably have my designs."

Find them and let them style her.” I say.

“She insists boss lady.”

“Then we will get another model. Get Rea.”

“Look yes Rea is big but only if you follow the whole modelling industry as a whole. Look do you know who Alessandra Ambrosio is?”

“Of course I do.” I shoot back.

“And that’s because you are in the industry however you average joe won’t but Naomi Campbell and Tyra Banks on the other hand

we all know. So Rea won't work for December." He says calmly.

"Let me think about it, I'll get back to you." I say then hang up.

I hate being pressurised into doing things. As much as Maria will boost our sales that little condition ticks me off. Why couldn't she ask if I would be available to style her instead of what she did? Models are a different breed and I was so happy when I stopped designing because hey those people feel so damn entitled it's scary. Yes there are those that are humble and then there's the likes of Maria who think we're all just extra chess pieces on their board.

If I decide to style her then she'll start thinking she can make unnecessary demands in the future. I'd honestly rather get an unknown than deal with this crap.

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Mom just called saying she's at the gate with Aunty Siba and I'm excited to see them. I open the front door then head to the kitchen to see what I can whip up for them.

"Baby we're here!" Mom's voice fills the entire house.

I can't help the little happy dance my body

decides to do. There are absolutely no words that can describe how happy my mother makes me. Whenever I see her, a great amount of peace washes all over me. They walk into the kitchen and I gasp when my eyes land on Siba's stomach. Her bump is so cute.

"I thought mom was playing when she said you're pregnant." I say.

She laughs sweetly and waves me off.

"Langelihle is too old to be getting me pregnant honestly. Argh after this one I'm having my tubes tied." She says dramatically.

“You said that the last time.” Mama says laughing.

We join her in laughter. She’s right though that’s what she said after she gave birth to Ndalo but lume did say one more and well here we are with his one more. I wonder how Khanyi feels about this. I should ask her. I mean she went from being everyone’s princess to big sister of one well soon to be two and with her gift it must be something else.

“This time I mean it. Langelihle is almost 50 and he’s still shooting these kids into my womb hai.” She says sulking.

I am finished. Her face is priceless but you can tell that she is happy.

“As long as you can still carry them you will.” Mom says.

“Please no. Maybe you should fall pregnant.” Aunty says.

“Euw please no mommy please no!” I say dramatically.

Not only would it be weird to see m mother pregnant at her age but Bongwe would flip out. So no hell no.

“Futhi Lwandle and I don’t use condoms. I’m sure a miracle can happen when he pins me against the door.”

That’s my cue. I walk out of the kitchen leaving them in a fit of laughter. I know my parents are still having sex but geez I didn’t need to know that. I know for a fact that she said that just to annoy me. Whoo no Zobuhle Mkhize. I head to my room to dial my man, hopefully he can make me forget what Zobuhle just spit out.

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY SEVEN

Unedited

“Melo Mr Mavudla is here for you.” Tazz

says peeping his head in through the door.

I've been back at work for three days and already this pest is back. I just don't know what to do anymore. It's times like these where I wish my father was some hardcore gangster that everyone feared but no Lwandle decided to be a scientist. SMH. I remain rooted in my seat and continue going through my e-mails.

I will not give in to that man and his issues. Nope. I refuse. My door opens and the devil walks in rocking a Q&G original. I know it's Q&G because I obsessed over it for a while and wished that I had a man to gift it to. I must admit that it sits well on him. He has on his annoying smirk and I wish I could

just wipe it off.

“Miss Mkhize.”

“Ufunani? Futhi I have a restraining order against you.” I say grabbing my phone.

“That won’t be necessary. I just came to apologise. I realise that my actions might’ve been a bit too exaggerated and I’m sorry about that. I promise that I will keep my distance from now on and I will stop pestering you about your company.” He says in confidence.

I don’t trust him obviously. I mean this is a

sudden complete turnaround, maybe he wants me to relax and put my guard down and then he strikes. Well sorry for him I'm not that gullible. I cannot for the life of me fathom what the heck Mavundla and his girlfriend want so much with my company. Unless he wants an already established company to use as a front, then it would make sense.

"I know that I've been quite the pest and it will be hard for you to believe that I will stop but believe me I will. I'm also sorry about the messages I kind of got carried away so yeah. This is me stepping back before yeah anyway I hope your company grows in strength and success." He continues.

Why does he sound so sincere? Nah fam! I don't trust this act. He gets up and buttons his blazer then grabs his keys and phone from the table. The look on his face is different. This isn't the arrogant prick that I've come to know, he.. he looks a tad gentle, almost warm. I don't know I could be reading too much into the situation but I swear I see a human in there.

“Bye Miss Mkhize.”

“Sharp.” I say in confusion.

“I meant it when I said you're beautiful.”

I don't know how to react to this phela for as long as I've known this man he has been threatening me. This is the first time he is being nice. He walks out leaving me in confusion. What just happened?

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The day has surprisingly been going well, I guess Mavundla set the tone for it. I've just come out of a meeting with the team and sigh I was bullied into styling that diva Maria for the cover shoot. I know that little diva is going to drive me nuts.

“So boss lady dinner tonight on us?” Tazz says

Huh? Bafunani?

“What’s the catch?” I ask.

“Nothing. It’s just you haven’t been to work in a while and we’re just so happy that you’re back and feeling better.” Ed adds in.

Okay coming from Ed I believe it. Ed is the one person on my team who doesn’t just do or say things for the sake of it. He literally is a sharp shooter and I can honestly say that without him I would be somewhat lost.

“Dinner sounds good then. Let’s meet after work.” I say walking to my office.

I actually haven't been out in a while and I sure do miss getting down. My phone rings just as I walk into the office. A broad smile breaks onto my face when I see who it is.

"Hi D!" I greet cheerfully.

He chuckles lightly. I know for fact that he has a toothpick in his mouth right now and he's probably sitting on his throne with his feet up.

"My beautiful Melo okae?"

"Ke sharp wena?" I have this smile on my

face that won't go away.

“Nna ha k sharp, you just abandoned me.”
He says sulking.

Now it's my turn to chuckle. D needs to get himself a stable relationship that way he won't miss us so much. Rea is always complaining about how much D wants her to retire and come back home, that wouldn't happen if he had a wife or at least a girlfriend but his reasons for not marrying are heart warming. He says he didn't want to get married because he wanted all his focus to be on Rea. If that's not a great father then I don't know what is.

“Ahh D eish okay I'm sorry but nna I've been

under house arrest.”

“For eng?” He asks sounding alarmed.

I chuckle lightly.

“Argh it’s a long story. We’ll get into it one day. So what’s up?”

“Oh yes, I want to do something special for Rea but I just don’t know what. I mean I could do the whole party thing but you know how she gets. I could buy her a car but you know that’s going to backfire. I don’t know what to do for her.” He says.

He sounds so frustrated and I understand him because Rea is a special case. You can't do anything for that girl without it turning into some sort of issue.

“Yhu that's a hard one. Okay what's the occasion though?”

“Nothing, I just want to show her just how much I love her. I mean a parent doesn't need a special reason to spoil their kid akere?”

“You such an awesome dad mara weitsi D.”
I say with a smile plastered across my face.

A father's love is the best thing that a girl could ever experience. I wish more young girls could get to experience it. D and I stay on the phone for a while and I promise to think up something he could do for Rea. Hopefully she'll like the idea.

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"I will have the shrimp pasta, thanks." I say handing the waiter the menu.

I am famished and I can't wait to dig in. Everyone places their orders and the waiter walks off.

"So boss lady you good?" Ty asks.

“Yeah and you guys?”

Bonolo walks back to the table just as they're about to respond. She looks like she's been crying but knowing the kind of person that she is, she won't say what's bothering her. The guys don't catch that her mood has shifted, obviously! Mxm.

“B I need the bathroom.” I say.

They table erupts in laughter and I can't help but roll my eyes. These guys, I sometimes forget that they're complete idiots outside of the office.

“That whole girls go to the bathroom in groups is true.”

“Angithi you guys attempt to kidnap us from the bathroom so hey girls gotta do what girls gotta do to stay safe.” I say shrugging.

Bonolo chuckles as she gets up from her chair grabbing her bag. I grab mine as well and we head to the bathroom. Thankfully it's empty so it'll be easier for us to talk.

“So why were you crying?” I ask.

“Of course you noticed. Argh things are

slightly rocky between my partner and I so yeah.” She shrugs.

So Bonolo is lesbian and she is dating someone who is in the public eye. They actually met on set of one of our shoots and they hit it off and started dating shortly after that. They make a very beautiful couple but we know we can't just judge the book by its cover angithi?

“Are you guys going to be okay?”

“I don't know Melo, I mean I love her so much yes but it's just too much at this point.”

“So are you saying you want to throw in the towel?” I ask.

“I’m saying my heart is sore and I don’t know how to handle this pain.”

“Bonolo relationships won’t always be all flowers and hearts. At some point there will be thorns and all the unpleasant obstacles however you fight through all of that. If we were to give up at every sign of trouble in a relationship then none of us would be in relationships. Yes it hurts like hell but we try and if you feel like you’ve tried and you have really had enough then you walk away.”

“That’s the thing, my mind is telling me to

leave her but my heart is telling me another thing.”

“Take some time to yourself and evaluate your relationship.”

“I hear you. Thanks Melo.” She gives me a tight squeeze and I return it.

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The night is moving along swiftly with laughter galore. I died when Tazz narrated a story about how he was chased down the street in nothing but his briefs by a dog. So he was having a fling with this girl and he thought he was playing her kanti she was playing him. During the dead they head the

door open and in walked in this girl's fiancé. Tazz ran out kanti the fiancé had already unleashed the dog. I don't know how true that is but it's hilarious.

"Your phone." Ty says.

Konje I put in on silent. I excuse myself and head outside to answer.

"Ndo." I say softly.

"Hey baby how are you?"

"I'm good and you baby?"

“I’m good, just missing you and all your deliciousness.” His voice!

I grunt. He knows just how much I miss him and his package. I miss the things he does in-between my legs. Damn it man. This alcohol aint helping nayo. I lean against the wall and squeeze my thighs together.

“Lindo.”

“Yini baby?”

“Stoop.”

“Yazini when I get back we’re going to go

get tested. I'm tired of playing with the glove."

"Usho kanje?" I ask.

"Yes ngifuna ukukudla skoon!" I know he has a smile on his face right now.

"Kanjani?"

"Skoon baby skoon. Fuck Melo we're going to dance the whole night when I finally get you."

Well damn! I'm cuming!

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY EIGHT

Unedited

“Okay okay okay okay stoooooop.” I say breathlessly.

He chuckles lightly and stops tickling me. I know for sure that he’s not done but I appreciate the breather.

“Are you going to do as I say?” He asks.

Of course this is about getting me to do what he wants. Whoooo shame I’d rather stay tickled if that’s the case. I’m stubborn like that!

“Never shame and you know it!” I shoot back.

“Well I guess we’re back at it!” He says tickling me.

I am a laughing mess! I’m laughing and kicking, I even have a runny nose but Lindo doesn’t care because he is just going in hard.

“Okay okay fine I’ll do it. I’ll do it!” I scream.

He stops tickling me then cups my face and smashes his lips on mine. Oh how I love his kisses, more so when they’re hungry. His

hands are roaming all over my body giving his favourite parts a gentle squeeze. I'm at his mercy in this moment. The way his hands are feeling on me it's as though he's trying to imprint my body into memory.

“Wanna suck my dick?” He murmurs against my lips.

I can't help but giggle. Lindo is obsessed with me sucking his dick you'd swear he gets paid each time I circle my tongue around the head. So we got tested and we got came out clean. Remember that promise he made about us dancing all night without the rubber? Well did he keep his promise? He had me against the window, I swear I saw my neighbour peeping through

her window kodwa Mngomezulu didn't care when I told him that. I swear it was like he was on something the way he was devouring me.

It wasn't our usual sex but it was a tad more intense but I enjoyed it. He says he got carried away because iskoon siyam'hlanyisa! I can believe that, especially when he creeps into my house in the middle of the night. I've even stopped asking what deal he has with Malibongwe ngoba that's how he has access. Just last night he landed from Tanzania and shame he was tired but the beast he transformed into in bed? You wouldn't say that it was the same man who was going on about how exhausted he is and how he's on the verge

of quitting.

Speaking of quitting, I should quit while I'm ahead la. I push him down to lie flat on the carpet. I know that he thinks I'm about to suck his dick kodwa nex I'm bolting to my room. Before I even get anywhere he has me in his arms and he's spanking my ass. Oh the obsession!

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"I spoke to Dr Khan." He says.

We're laying in bed after yet another beautiful love making session. This one just enjoys shooting his sperm up my channels, pity I can't get my soldiers to meet with his

soldiers and create our own mini soldiers.

“Who’s that?”

“One of the best fertility specialists in the UK.”

Sigh. I’ve been running away from this conversation but he’s pretty ADAMANT so I will give him his spotlight. He says he sees a future with me and if this conversation doesn’t prove just how much then akazi.

“I see and what did he say?”

“He will fly in or we can fly out whichever

one works best for you but after going through your file he was a bit hopeful. Baby we have nothing to lose so why not?"

"You really want a child Lindokuhle?"

"I do BUT you know that doesn't change anything angithi."

"Are you certain that you will be able to stick it out, disappointment after disappointment after disappointment? I mean I'm used to it."

"Melokuhle!" He says sternly.

There he goes again. We're having an open conversation and yena he feels the need to be a whole man about it.

"No I'm not being negative however this is the reality that I know so yeah but we can go see Dr Khan."

"You sure baby?"

"Yes Ndo."

"Oh baby." He kisses my head repeatedly.

Melokuhle you have nothing to lose so what the heck. If anything something good might

just come out of this appointment right?

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Turns out Dr Khan was conveniently in the country this week. Hmm Lindo is a sly one. Anyway we're on our way home after the appointment and of course Lindo is all smiles. Dr Khan seems to believe that there is hope for us. He says with treatment we have a 49% chance of conceiving which is quite huge for Lindo, me on the other hand I don't know how to feel about this but if this treatment actually works and Mngomezulu and I are able to conceive then that would be the greatest thing God would've ever done for me.

“Breakfast?” He says snapping me out of my thoughts.

“Yeah that would be lovely.” I respond.

I’m actually thinking about the possibility of having a child with a man that isn’t my husband. Okay no that’s not much of an issue for me, the issue will be the fact that this man travels so damn much! Yes his workload has lightened a bit however he is still travelling quite frequently. Sigh. Melokuhle you done chose to fall in love with this man.

“Baby we’re here.” He says.

I turn to look at him and all I see is concern written all over his face. I can't help but smile at how handsome he looks with his frown on. He looks like a cross between a h-angry baby and a worried mother. So beautiful. I lean over and place a kiss on his cheek.

"Let's go. I'm famished." I say opening the door.

We make our way into the restaurant and he requests a corner table. Typical of him ke. We settle in our seats then place our orders. I just want to eat and I know that look he's giving me is saying 'let's talk'. Sigh.

“So before we eat Melo can you at least tell me how you feel about this entire thing?”

“I don’t know Ndo I’m scared and excited at the prospect of potentially conceiving kodwa I don’t want to get my hopes up too high. I’ve been down this road before and I don’t want to kill myself by being overly excited only to be disappointed in the end.”
I say truthfully.

After my first surgery I thought that maybe just maybe a miracle would happen and I would be with child however here I am a divorcee because I still couldn’t carry a child.

“I hear what you’re saying baby and I will

always be here no matter what. I must admit hearing that there is a slight chance of us receiving the honour of being parents I got carried away but I can't help it baby. I can't help but imagine you barefooted and pregnant in the kitchen with cravings driving you crazy you know." The smile he has on is so perfect.

I wish I could grant him all his hearts desires just so I could remain a permanent fixture on his face but reality is I can't. The reality is that his smile might fall into a frown quicker than her can utter the word 'baby'. Stop it Melo! Dr Khan said positivity.

"So how about you and I head to Gold Reef after this? You know carefree type of vibe!"

He says wiggling his eyebrows.

I chuckle while biting my bottom lip. See why I love him so much? He's just on it man!!

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: TWENTY NINE

"Honey I'm home!!" I scream at the top of my lungs as I walk into my parent's house.

"Blip you are so loud!" Gogo says pinching me from behind.

I turn around and attack her with a warm bear hug. I haven't seen gogo in a while and damn it have I missed her! She smells good

as always and her warmth cannot be missed. My grandmother is my everything and Lord knows just how lost I would be without her.

“When did you get here?” I ask still in her embrace.

She tries to pull back but I hold her tighter. I don't want to let go. I've really missed her that much. If I could I would just cradle up in her arms and lay there until the end of time. After we lost mkhulu I thought she would crawl under a rock and just feel her pain but no instead she stood tall and remained strong for us – MY DEFINITION of a strong ass woman!

“I’ve been here for two days now. Your parents insisted that I come stay with them for a few days.”

“Because you fainted mama.” Mom says emerging from the kitchen.

I look at gogo with a frown on my face. She never wants to take it easy this one. My grandmother still insists on doing her own washing and ironing sometimes. She still insists on doing her own garden, okay that’s somewhat sentimental because she used to do that with mkhulu and now Bongwe goes over to help sometimes.

“What happened?” I ask leading her to the couch.

We settle and I look her right in the eye waiting for her to let me in on her health. The smile on her face tells me exactly what her response is going to be which is annoying me slightly.

“It’s nothing big blip, I was just tired and that’s it.” She responds.

I knew she was going to brush it off.

“Mama needs to take it easy and that’s why she’s moving in with us.” Mom says

casually.

Gogo laughs lightly while shaking her head. I know for a fact that they didn't discuss this with her.

"You kids worry too much. I am fine and I will not be moving in with you, I mean who's going to look after my house and flowers?" She asks.

"Kodwa mama."

"Haai Zobuhle wena noLwandle are just dramatic. I am fine and should anything happen then maybe then will I consider

moving in with you.” Gogo’s word is final.

“Mama why are you being stubborn? You fainted because you’ve been neglecting your health and overworking your body.” Dad’s voice rings from behind.

I can tell that he’s actually pissed by just the sound of his voice. I know he’s not ready to lose his mother yet. I remember how hard it was for dad when mkhulu passed on and the fact that he had to man up and suddenly lead the family was tough for him, it still is. We once had a conversation when Bongwe almost landed in hospital and he opened up to me about how hard it is for him and how much he needs his father to lead him through this because he feels like he is

failing as a father. I didn't know what to say to him at the time but i tried to reassure him of what an excellent job he is doing as a father. He can't protect us from the harshness of the world sadly and he needs to accept that.

“Lwandle ngiyeke tu. Blip you're glowing, lomfana ka Mngomezulu is clearly taking good care of you.” Gogo says with a smile on her face.

I can't help the smile that flashes across my face. I feel like a kid in a candy store or a kid who just got a toy that they'd always yearned for. Sigh. Love is beautiful guys. Lindo and I are at a very beautiful and stable phase in our relationship. He isn't

travelling as much as he used to which is a plus ngoba we get to spend more time together. He's technically moved into my place. He actually wanted to buy a house in Joburg but we came to an agreement that he would move in and that's that.

I've started, I mean we've started, with treatment and we're very hopeful but I'm keeping my heart open to disappointment. Dr Khan said because I'd already had surgery to remove the fibroids, I'd only need to take the oral treatment.

I haven't told my family because I don't want to get their hopes up for nothing. Also I don't know how they would react to us wanting to get pregnant out of wedlock.

Yes my parents are open minded but this is a sensitive case. Although I am dying to tell someone and I think I know just who to confide in.

“Look at that smile.” Dad says warmly.

“uBlip is happy and that’s all I could ask for.” Gogo says pulling me into a hug.

“I’m very happy gogo. He’s treating me well and we’re spending more time together getting to know each other so I’m happy.” I say.

“You deserve the happiness Melokuhle. I

pray that even in the midst of the trouble you two are still going to face you remember this happiness and the love that you share.”

“I will gogo.”

“When are we going to meet officially as your boyfriend?” Dad asks.

I chuckle lightly. Dad says he will not acknowledge our relationship until he is introduced as my man officially. Lwandle is just being stubborn for nothing but mom says we should just give him his moment. I’ve been saying mom’s dramatic actions have rubbed off on dad and they’re actually

worse on him.

We spend the rest of the day catching up and messing up the kitchen. Gogo makes me promise to take her out next week and we agree that we'll have a girls weekend away. She's always wanted to do Zanzibar so I guess we'll do that. I should ask Mngomezulu for his jet and fly my queen out in style.

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"I'm at the gate please send me a code."
Amanda says softly.

I sit up and send the code then rush to the bathroom to brush my teeth quickly. It's

past 6 in the morning so I definitely know that some is up. Amanda would never rock up here so early in the morning without a valid reason.

I rush downstairs to go open the door then leave it open for her. I wasn't planning on making breakfast but I guess I have to now. I switch on the coffee machine and they walk in just as I open the fridge. Lwandile runs into my arms and I hold onto him tightly. He's too tall for a 7 year old. Okay yes he's almost 8 but still he's too damn tall man.

"Hello my handsome." I say placing a kiss on his lips.

“Hello my queen. I miss you.” he says cupping my face.

That’s one thing about Uthando he never says I missed you, it’s always I miss you. He’s too emotionally connected for his age but I guess growing up next to Khanyi who has this gift is forcing him to grow up before his time. I love how supportive he is of Khanyisile, they’re actually best friends and I pray it remains that way. The other day he allegedly slapped a kid at school for making fun of Khanyi who had an episode at school. Apparently the kid said Khanyi is possessed and Lwandile lost it. No one can say anything bad about Khanyi when Lwandile is around.

“I miss you too little guy but you’re always busy with school Mr Genius.” I say with a smile on my face.

Lwandile is next generation smart. He’s into science as well but I think it’s because he spends so much time with Bongwe.

“I just work hard. I’m tired can I go sleep?”
He says yawning.

Shame poor thing had to wake up at the crack of dawn.

“Of course love.” I kiss his head and he runs

off leaving us with smiles on our faces.

He's too precious. I turn to look at Amanda and she already has tears glistening her eyes.

"Babe." I say faintly.

"I'm pregnant." She blurts out before bursting into tears.

Oh shit! This is going to be tough.

"Amanda."

“He knew Nqo! He knew that I wasn’t ready for another one yet but still he went ahead and got me pregnant. Melo I’m only starting to actually get myself together now kodwa your brother doesn’t want to get that. 2 YEARS, 2 FLIPPEN YEARS, that’s all I asked for but he couldn’t wait.” She says with tears running down her cheeks.

“How did it happen?” I know it’s a stupid question but I need to understand.

“Argh it doesn’t matter now. I’m just so angry Nqo that’s all I care about right now.”

I know how much she wanted to work on herself and grow her name just as he has

over the years. She's currently training under one of the country's most reputable chefs and she's well on her way to actually heading up on of his restaurants so I understand her frustration.

Sigh. Ya ne!

[05/09, 18:26] Mca: THIRTY

Unedited

I'm woken up by the most incredible sensations between my legs. I squeeze my thighs together and lock him in. He's gently sucking on my clit and it is sending chills down my spine. His finger finds its way home and gets to work. Lort! He's sucking and working his finger and I am losing it. He

flicks the tip of his tongue over my clit and I lose it! This man will be the death of me I tell you. Before I can even recover from my high he's already making his way in.

“Ahhh Ndo.” I moan softly and pull him closer.

That's how I like our sessions- connected. I like feeling his body on mine, it just makes it that much better. He groans against my neck and that also adds to all these sensations I'm experiencing. His thrusts are slow and controlled, we're making love right now. I love these moments. He gazes deep into my soul and I feel it all. His love for me he cannot hide because his eyes sell him out.

“I love you Melo.” He says in a strained voice.

“I love you too Ndo.” I respond softly.

I really do and I hope my actions prove to him just how much.

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“It’s just two days baby.” He says pulling me in for a hug.

I’m very clingy right now and I don’t want him to go. He has a meeting in Cape Town, yes it’s two hours away but for some

reason I feel like it's a lifetime away. I even offered to go with him but he said I'd only be a distraction and he needs to be focused for that particular meeting. Argh I hate it when he gets all Mngomezulu focused.

"But I miss you already." I say sulking.

The past few days have been special, so special that I'd get home early from work and we'd lock ourselves up in our room and just connect. I don't know what has shifted in our relationship but something drastic has happened and I'm ready for the next step. This man right here has my heart, body and soul and I'm not mad about it.

“I promise to try wrap everything up in a day okay.” He says.

I nod like a little kid then get on my toes and place a soft peck on his lips. He pulls me close and deepens the kiss. Now he knows I’m going to cry when he boards mxm. He pulls back then kisses my head before bidding me goodbye. I don’t want him to go though.

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I’m at the office trying so hard to focus but I can’t because my entire focus is on Lindo. That tall dark man has solidified his spot in my life. I don’t think I see myself with anyone else in this lifetime. A knock comes

through the door stopping me from day dreaming about Ndo in all his glory. Aunty Siba and her stomach walk in with a paper bag in her hand. Yes. Food!

“Hello preggy.” I get up to hug her.

Her stomach goes crazy, I guess uyaz lo ukuthi this one (Me) is going to spoil him rotten. Yes I said him. Finally lume gets a mini him. When I spoke to him he couldn't even contain his excitement. I know how badly he wanted to have a boy that would carry down the Mkhize surname from his side. Yes as much as Bongwe and Bandile are his, he needed his own you know. Speaking of Bandile, apparently he was supposed to remind Amanda to go renew

her shot but he didn't and that's why she's so mad at him. He was always the one to remind her to go renew it but for some reason he let it slide this time. I know for a fact that he did it on purpose.

My brother was sneaky there and as much as I'm disappointed in him I'm glad that the family is growing. I hope it's a girl!

"I'm tired." She says flopping herself on the couch.

Shame judging by how she looks at the moment this pregnancy must be showing her flames. I watch her dig inside her bag and pull her phone out. She's definitely

calling lume. Yep I called it!

“Baby I’m with Melo so you don’t have to worry.” She says softly.

I love how soft spoken she is sometimes when she speaks to her husband. She knows just how much of a baby he can be and boy can she nip it in the bud.

“Yes Langelihle I will do just that. Now relax, I love you and I’ll see you later.” She says before hanging up.

Oh how I love the smile on her face right now. Growing up and watching the

interaction between them I was always left warm and fuzzy inside. There was and still is no doubt that they love each other beyond measure. They were created for each other these two. You should see him narrating the story about how she bumped into him and 'broke' – she says he's exaggerating, her phone when she was 16. Apparently he knew then that she was his but because life isn't a respecter of man, it took a few years and a few mistakes before they actually got together.

My uncle always sheds a tear whenever we decide to just sit and go through wedding albums. I would too ngoba yeey aunty looked like a dream! I didn't look half bad on my wedding but still.

“He doesn’t want you driving?” I say settling next to her.

“Lutho and if it were up to him I’d probably stay locked up in our bedroom eating grapes and cheese.” She says rolling her eyes.

I love how animated she can get sometimes naye.

“He just wants his son healthy hawu.” I say while chuckling.

“Yhu then he should’ve carried his son.

Khanyi and Ndalo came out just fine so he should relax. Uzokhuphula ihigh high yakhe phela.”

I chortle even throwing my head back. I also love the shots she throws at him sometimes.

“Haai aunty. So how are you?” I ask.

“Good baby I’m good! The question here is how are you?” She asks with a raised eyebrow.

Huh why is she being dramatic?

“Okay I can’t do this. Your parents feel like you’re hiding something, all three of them and I am here to fish.” She chuckles.

I can’t help but roll my eyes. I don’t understand why they couldn’t just come to me and ask what’s up. I actually don’t appreciate what they did. I thought we had an open relationship mos manje yini le? Mxm.

“And they sent in the preggie. That’s so low.”

“Yeah yeah. So is there anything going on?” She asks sincerely.

As annoyed as I am I cannot take the fact that she actually cares away from her.

“Lindo and I are trying for a baby.” I blurt out.

She looks at me in confusion before a frown falls on her face. I know what she’s thinking yazi.

“Melokuhle I-“

“He few in a specialist and I’ve been on treatment for a while now and the Dr is optimistic, so is Lindo however I’m leaving room for disappointment you know. I’ve been down this road before and it didn’t

yield any positive results so yeah.”

“Melokuhle how many times do I have to tell you about holding onto your faith even when it seems like nothing is coming together?” She asks.

I shake my head. I’m not looking for this lecture, not now!

“Don’t shake your head at me. Look I know it’s hard baby but we always have to remain rooted in our faith because God is a faithful God. He knows the plans that he has for us, which happen to be better than the plans we have for ourselves. Tell me this, are you happier now with Lindo than you were with

Lerato?”

Am I? I think I am. My relationship with Lerato was vastly different from my relationship with Ndo. With Lerato always always seemed to somewhat go smoothly and with Ndo it's like we're fighting the elements just to stay together. It's rough but it's beautiful.

“I am.” I respond in confidence.

“Do you think you and Lerato would've gotten a divorce had you fallen pregnant?”

“Honestly no.”

“Do you not see that, that was God’s doing? Had you and Lerato had a child together you wouldn’t have gotten the chance to experience this love that you and Lindo share. Sure you would’ve probably still gotten divorced because that clearly was written but there would’ve been a child involved and knowing you it would’ve taken years and years before you actually got to a place where you would take a chance on love again.” She says.

I don’t like her very much right now.

“Aunty I’m scared. I’m so scared of disappointing everyone. Lindo is so hopeful

and I know that it's going to crush him should we not fall pregnant."

"Baby ask God and the universe for all that you desire and it will be granted to you. Yes it will not come as you expect it however at the end of the day it will be given. Faith baby, have faith." She squeezes my hand.

Faith. Everyone is telling me about faith not knowing that I have kept it and I have been disappointed. Okay Melo one last try angithi and if it doesn't work then it's not meant to be.

"I hear you aunty I really do."

“Good. So are you guys talking marriage?”
She asks.

“Well sort of. He’s always said that he wants me to be his wife but we’re taking things as they come.”

“Yet you’re proactively trying for a baby? Melo.”

“I know how it seems.”

“Melo I love you and I want you to be happy kodwa honestly I don’t like how you guys are going about this. I thought you were at that stage where you’re considering

marriage and that's why the child topic has come up. Often times as women we make this mistake of giving these men some sort of power over us. Melo who's idea was it to try for a baby?"

I hang my head and sigh. It's not like that.

"We both want this but he initiated the treatment because he knew just how much of a factor it was in our relationship. He knows that I would set him free just so he can go out there and find someone who would bare him children."

"I trust Lindo however I feel like you two haven't actually sat down and spoken about

everything that comes with having children.”

“You think we were just in the moment?” I ask

“I don’t know because I wasn’t present during your conversation but if this is what you want then I will be here holding your hand through it all.” That smile on her face!

“I appreciate you.” I say.

“And I you now can you please get me water so I can down this burger. I got you the rip burger angithi.”

“You see you? I did well by advising my uncle to marry you.” I say wiggling my eyebrows.

We chortle so hard that she almost pees on herself. Oh pregnancy, you sure know how to make us look dumb.

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“Delivery for Miss Mkhize.” The delivery guy says.

I sign for the gift then take it from him. It’s a bouquet of red roses. My heart flutters. Mngomezulu though!

“The most beautiful woman I know. M”
That’s all the card says .

I grab my phone and dial his number but it sends me straight to voicemail. He’s probably in a meeting. I’ll try again at around 6PM. I put the flowers on the table then get back into my work. I’m working on a super secret project and I can only focus on it after work. Seeing that Lindo is only coming back tomorrow I’m planning on staying at the office until late and push this project. I can’t wait to finally reveal it to the world and have everyone go crazy over it shuu.

I stick my head into my laptop and get to work and before I know it the time is heading for 11PM. Might as well sleep here mos. I take my phone and I have a million missed calls for Ndo. Just as I'm about to call him the door opens and he walks in looking ready to murder a person. Why didn't he tell me he'd be home early?

"Baby what are you doing here?" I ask walking towards him.

"Kanti inkinga yakho yini Melo?" He asks in an intimidating tone

"Hawu what's wrong?" I'm honestly shocked.

“I made a plan to come back early just for you and like an idiot I waited for you to come back home but no uMelo doesn’t pitch.” He says walking towards the table.

He picks up the flowers and his face changes when he reads the card.

“Who the fuck sent you flowers Nqobile?”
He roars.

Huh? Kanti they’re not from him?

“I thought they were from you.” I say softly.

“You think I’m an idiot? Is that why you’re still at the office at this time? Is he the reason you weren’t answering your phone?” He’s still roaring.

His eyes are suddenly red and the veins on his forehead are out to play. I slowly make my way towards him. I need him to believe me.

“Ndo there is no one else. I honestly saw the M and I thought they were from you baby.”

He roughly grabs me by the arm and squeezes tightly.

“OUCH LINDOKUHLE YOU’RE HURTING ME!”

“I will not allow you to make a fool of me yezwa maMngomezulu?” He says through gritted teeth.

I nod lightly with tears threatening my eyes. He lets go of me and turns towards the door but not before throwing the roses across the room. He walks out slamming the door behind him leaving me shaken.

What the hell just happened? It’s the second time this man does this. I will not stick around to become a statistic. I feel slight discomfort on my abdomen as I pack up my bags. That usually happens when my emotions become too much for me. Let me

go face this monster that just creeps out of nowhere.

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I get home and he's not here. Sigh. If this is how he is always going to act when he gets angry then I'd honestly rather we call it quits now.

[05/09, 18:27] Mca: THIRTY ONE

Short and Unedited

I never thought I would find myself in a situation where I had to wrestle with my head and my heart. You see when Lerato sided with his family and decided to leave me, my head and heart were on the same page and letting him leave was hard yes but

somewhat easy. With this situation I find myself in right now I don't know what to listen to.

My head is telling me to leave him but my heart is fighting that bloody decision tooth and nail. My father told me to leave if ever I felt uneasy and that little stunt Lindo pulled definitely left me feeling uneasy. Why couldn't ask questions then wait for me to answer like a normal human being is beyond me. I thought communication was coming along just good but once again I was wrong.

I check the time and it's a little after 4AM, 4:07 to be exact. I've been sitting up all night waiting for him but because pulling a

disappearing stunt is his best act, he hasn't come home nor has he called to say he's safe. I hate the fact that I'm sitting here worried while he's probably out there getting shitfaced. A sharp pain shoots across my abdomen and I curl myself up into a ball riding out the pain. It feels like a sword is cutting through my insides and there is nothing I can do about it. The pain eventually subsides and I drag myself across the room towards the bathroom to down some pain killers.

My eyes are heavy but my heart heavier.
uLindokuhle why angenza so mara? I vigorously wipe my tears then head back to bed. My phone rings just as I decide to actually get some shut eyes, its Aunty

Minnie.

“Aunty.”

I can't make out what she's saying over her tears. The hairs at the back of my neck stand up and my heart sinks to the pit of my stomach. Lord no.

“Melokuhle uLindo is in hospital, we're on our way there now. I'll sms you the details.” Uncle Shaka says.

I don't even hear what she says after that because I'm already on my feet and rushing to the closet to get dressed. My tears are

already clouding my vision. I pray to God that he's fine. I throw on a tracksuit and rush back to the bedroom to put on my slippers and grab my phone and keys. I'm running around on the verge of bursting into tears but I have to keep it together. I just hope he's fine.

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The drive to the hospital was a tense one with battling the urge to speed across the highway. My heart is beating out of my chest and the discomfort on my abdomen is also acting up. I run in and make my way to reception. Just as I'm about to speak to the receptionist uncle Shaka grabs my hand and pulls me in for a hug. I think he senses that I need to cry because he tightens his

hold around my body and I just let my tears flow.

I don't know but I have this unsettling feeling and it's not caused by Lindo being in this place. I eventually pull myself together and pull out of his embrace then wipe my face.

"Are you okay?" He asks with concern dripping all over his words.

"Is he okay?" I manage to ask.

He nods lightly and starts walking. I follow closely behind him with my knees feeling

like they're about to cave. We get to his room and Aunty Minnie is shouting at the top of her voice.

“You know Lindokuhle. I never hid the fact that I went through hell from you and your sister. I told you everything! Every damn thing including the drugs, so I don't understand why you would decide to go that route knowing very well how we feel about them.”

Lindo has his head hung and I can tell by the movement of his shoulders that he's crying. Aunty Minnie mentioned drugs. Does that mean Lindo has been using? NO it can't be but then again that would explain his actions.

“I’m sorry.” He says faintly.

“Nyori nyori. You’re busy saying nyori la nxaaa what would’ve happened had you died Lindokuhle heh?! If they hadn’t gotten you to hospital in time? You’re so fucken selfish my child.”

“Lindokuhle.” Uncle Shaka says.

“Baba.”

“Why? That’s all I want to know.” He says calmly.

“I just needed an escape from everything. My life revolved around work and I just couldn’t handle it so I needed something to calm me down!” He says still with his head hung.

I blink once and my tears fall. I’ve been living under one roof with an addict? His actions when he would disappear and come back feeling a bit extra. How he’d be a bit more confident. That was the drugs? I groan lightly as a pain shoots through my abdomen.

“Uthi you went this route ngoba you couldn’t handle the pressure angithi mfan’wam? So let me make it simple for you, you’re fired with immediate effect.” Uncle Shaka says.

“Mngomezulu.”

“Ei Minenhle this is between me and this boy. Wena effective Monday you’re no longer CEO. You can go out there and find whatever job you want kodwa just don’t come back to my company.” He says before walking out.

I’m standing here shocked to the core. Did he just get fired?

“Mom.”

“Haai nawe! You know once he’s made up

his mind there is so changing it and in this situation ku worse. Just get yourself together Lindokuhle because I did not come out victorious only to have a son that will later die because of drugs.” With that said she walks out.

I don't think I want to be in here name. I turn around but he calls me back when I reach the door. I turn to look at him and he looks horrible. This isn't the man I love.

“I'm sorry Melo.”

I nod lightly and walk out. I don't even know what to say to him. I'm so damn disappointed! I get in my car and head to

the one place I know I will forget about this just for a little while.

[05/09, 18:27] Mca: THIRTY TWO

(A little snack)

VERY SHORT and Unedited

My stomach is in knots as I make myself to his room. On top of my abdominal pains, this unsettling feeling is also making me somewhat anxious. I find in lying on his back staring at the wall lost in thought. He doesn't even hear me putting the basket on the side table that's how far out of it he is. I pull a chair and sit. I'll wait for him to snap out of his world by himself.

So when I left here earlier I drove to D's

place. When I got there he was listening to jazz as always while sipping on his coffee. Apparently he's a very early bird.

“Di enemy tsa hao di fihla ka di nako tse banking on you being in deep sleep kanti nex you're sitting here sipping on some coffee.” He said so casually.

He led me to the kitchen, made me coffee and cereal because he's a bachelor and he usually eats at the pub so he doesn't have any groceries. No I'm not exaggerating when I say his fridge has nothing but beer and milk. His pantry is filled with cereal and all kinds of snack. When I asked him how he can refill on snacks but not food he went on and on about how he snacks on pretzels

while he's listening to jazz.

"I also eat those Doritos and peanuts when I'm watching a movie you know." He said while chuckling.

D is a special character and so totally random.

"So what's wrong? I know you were going to come see me but it's too early in the morning for a social visit. So what's happening?" He asked in his serious tone.

Suddenly he had gone from D to daddy D.

“My boyfriend and I are I guess going through things.” I said shrugging.

He leaned back and gestured for me to go on. I narrated the whole office scene to him then went on to tell him about his hospital admission and why he’s in hospital. By the time I finished narrating D was sitting next to me rubbing my back and bloody tears just wouldn’t stop flowing.

“I told him I was there for him. I thought that’s what I was there for. To love him and be his shoulder whenever he needed to release. Why couldn’t he talk to me D? Why did he have to lean on drugs instead of me or his sister even? Yes I know the pressure was too much but damn it man I was there.

I am here.” I said faintly.

He continued to comfort me as I cried cleansing my soul. Lindokuhle hurt me so much and the pain was unbearable. Not only was my heart bleeding for him as the child of a business magnet who pushed him to be what he wanted him to be but for the grown man who couldn't fully be who he wanted to be because of that.

“You know men are not wired like women nana. Some men are able to come right out and say ‘hey I’m drowning or I am suffering’ while others just chose to die inside like your man there. Its unfortunate that he decided to depend on drugs but that should tell you just how deep his issues are. No

one just decides to find comfort in something so destructive unless they feel like that's their last resort. So before you judge him and write him off, listen to him and hear what he has to say. He might just shock you and you might just have an 'aha' moment. Just go be there for him because right now he needs support more than he needs judgement. After you've listened to what he has to say then you can pack up and leave if that's what your intention is."

"When did you get so wise?" I asked chuckling lightly.

"Dealing with you and Rea I had to wise up. Now go and talk to that man because I know he's probably feeling like shit right

now.” He said.

I left D’s house and headed home to get a few things from Ndo. I ended up making a quick pasta dish, I know how hospital food is. Which brings me to this moment. I’ve been sitting here for a while staring at this man. He looks so broken and my heart bleeds for him. I wish there was more I could do for him.

“I thought you left.” He croaks.

My eyes move to his and the man looking at me is dead inside. His eyes look lifeless and cold. I don’t know how to help him.

“I brought you a few things. Food, snacks, I didn’t think of toiletries I’ll get those later and anything else you need?” I ask.

“I’m sorry Melo.” He says before his tears fall from his eyes.

I get up, squeeze onto the bed and pull him in my arms. He rests his head on my chest and sobs. Why couldn’t he do this before deciding to go down this road? Or was he already on drugs when we started dating? Was I so into him that I couldn’t see the signs? I feel like such a fool. Lindokuhle is such a beautiful soul and he doesn’t deserve any of this especially what transpired between him and his dad. He might not say it often but I know that he

looks up to his dad. Like I've said before outside of the business set up they have a really good relationship. I just pray that uncle Shaka will come around and be there for his son.

"I'm sorry baby. I promise I will work on myself to become a better man for you Melokuhle."

"Are you ever going to let me in on anything Lindo? How long have you been on drugs? Like what happened?"

"Can you just hold me? I promise we'll talk about everything one day but for now can we just sit in silent?"

I nod lightly. We reposition and he holds onto me for dear life. The wetness on my chest tells me his tears are still flowing and are nowhere near stopping. I wish I could take away his pain but unfortunately I can't but I will be there for him, hopefully that will be enough.

"I think I hate my father." He blurts out.

[05/09, 18:27] Mca: THIRTY THREE

Unedited

I'm woken up by someone shaking me gently. I slowly open my eyes and I find Aunty Minnie looking at us with a tired smile on her face. I don't know if I should be

embarrassed that she found us in this position or not but then again we're grown right? I carefully untangle myself from his hold and get off the bed. I'm glad that he was able to get some sleep.

She pulls me in for a hug and I soak in her warmth for a while before pulling back. I can't help but feel sorry for her especially after taking a good look at her and seeing the tired look on her face. We settle on the couch and both turn to look at him. I don't know what is going on in her mind but I know I am praying so hard in my heart that he makes it out of this test alive. I pray that he beats this addiction and gets his life together and actually starts living for himself. Will I still be his woman when that

happens? I don't know.

"I failed as a parent." She says.

I don't know how to answer that. I don't think she failed as such. I know that she raised them really well and that she has a very great relationship with her kids. I don't think Lindo fell into this lifestyle because of his parents parenting skills rather because of how tough his dad is towards him when it comes to business.

"You didn't aunty."

"If I didn't my son wouldn't be lying in a

hospital bed due to a drug overdose. The funny thing is I told Lindo about my struggles so how he chose to go down this path is quite baffling.”

“Like he said he needed an escape. You can’t blame yourself for his actions.” I say trying to calm her down.

“I should’ve tried harder Nqobile. I should’ve tried to make my husband understand but I failed to do that. I failed to protect my son.” A soft sob escapes her mouth.

I pull her in for a hug and comfort her. I wish I had the words but unfortunately I am blank. I just hope she will accept that this had

nothing to do this with her. I hope that she will forgive herself and if she feels that she needs to put more effort into the relationship with her kids then I hope she implements that.

“Mom?” Lindo croaks.

In a split second aunty Minnie is already up on her feet and by Ndo’s side. She kisses him all over his face and I catch him stifling a smile. He’s actually blushing! This is such a special moment. I feel like I should leave but I have this minor pain that’s not allowing me to be great. I think I’m going to start my period soon, I mean that must be the only explanation.

“I’m so sorry baby, and your father he didn’t mean any of those things you know that. He was just angry and you know how he gets when he doesn’t know how to control a situation.”

“I don’t blame you for any of this mama, if anything I’m at fault. I should’ve tried to reach out more but you know how your husband gets when it comes to business. I just needed a break, ngapha I had lost Melo and I just couldn’t handle things. I thought it would be just once you know but here we are.” He says faintly

I want him to break down in his mother’s

arms but he's keeping it together but I can see he is struggling to. He mustn't be a man about this, he should just wail like a child in its mother's arms. I watch this precious exchange between mother and son and suddenly I miss my brothers. I should call them and organise a young chill session.

"I love you baby and I promise we will support you through it all okay." Aunty Minnie says kissing his forehead.

"I love you too mom."

I can't help but feel warm and fuzzy inside. This one is a mama's boy but because he's such a man about everything he tries to

hide it.

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I'm on my way to Malibongwe's place now for a bonding session. Bandile can't make it because he has hectic shifts at work but he promised to see us next week. I arrive at his building and make my way up to his apartment. I walk in and as usual it's a cloud of smoke. Oh my little chimney bakithi! He's sitting on the couch eating something I have no idea what it is. I flop myself next to him and rest my rest on his shoulder.

He kisses my head before offering me what I've seen to be a bowl of mogodu. Ngoba

he's a romantic he feeds me some and like the foodie I am, I open my mouth wide open. Yeses this stuff is too damn good. This is mom's recipe and Bongwe only whips it on once in I don't know how many years. Okay I'm exaggerating a bit but he just doesn't cook tripe whenever nje.

"Are you okay baby?" I ask him.

"I'm awesome." He responds with a mouthful.

"Oh yeah? Fill me in!" I say.

I know he might not tell me what's got him

so happy but I gotta try.

“Well my studies are going well, work is also good and life is just beautiful man.” He says.

The genuine smile on his face is moving something in me. I can't recall when last I saw my brother this happy. I mean yes he is happy and all but this is much more than I could've ever asked for. My biggest wish and prayer has always been for my baby to be happy and at peace and this right here means we're well on our way there.

“I'm happy for you baby. We should celebrate.”

“As long as you’re buying then I’m down for anything.” He says.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. He always does this. Actually I don’t remember Bongwe ever taking me out yazi. He usually invites me out and I end up paying or he initiates a chill session at one of our places and he just pitches. Hmm the perks of being the last born.

“Malibongwe when are you going to start spending money on me mara? I mean I’m technically the most important woman in your life.”

“Hai third important and I don’t spoil the

first two so why should you get the benefits?" He says with a smirk on his face.

I gasp dramatically causing him to chortle. Have I ever mentioned what a beautiful laugh my baby brother has? It could cure a broken heart I tell you.

"You're so mean Simphiwe!"

"I know right. Argh anyway I wanted to run something by you."

"Go on." I say.

"I want to sell this apartment and get a

penthouse or a much bigger apartment. Obviously you'll have to chip in and help me cover the cost."

"Are you sure?" I say faintly.

We've tried getting him to let go of this place but he just wasn't having it. This is the apartment he shared with Siyanda and the fact that he wants to let go of it means he's actually coming to terms with his loss which makes me happy. We all know how hard Siyanda's death was on him and believe me when I say this is a huge step.

"Are you sure?" I ask him.

“Positive. It’s time that I try and move on with my life.” He shrugs.

“I’m so proud of you baby.” I kiss his cheek and pull him in for a hug.

I hope he will stick to this decision. Actually we should put this place up for sale ASAP before he changes his mind nje. I spend the rest of the afternoon with my baby catching up. I gather that he has a secret hideout that he doesn’t want any of us to know about. Hmk I wonder but as long as he’s happy then I’m good.

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It’s been a week since Lindo booked

himself into rehab and I haven't since him since. I wanted to give him the space to settle in before I go see him. Aunty Minnie says you become a monster when you don't get your daily fix. Apparently you hate everyone especially the people that forced you to go into that place however as time goes by you get to reflect and actually realise that they had your best interest at heart.

"So when are you going to see him?" Aunty Siba asks.

We're lounging near the pool and sipping on her speciality non-alcoholic pinna colada. Okay I'm lying mine is very much alcohol filled. She asked me to come over because

she was bored and none of her people were around. Kahle kahle she is using me but I don't mind as long as there's food and booze.

“Probably after two weeks. I'll ask his mom.”

“Yhuu uMinnie is beside herself with stress ngapha noShaka naye is walking around blaming himself. It's a mess but they'll get through it.” She says.

I know it's been hard for them but I didn't think it was this bad. Just as I'm about to respond my little light comes running out and jumps into my arms, luckily my drink

isn't in my han. I give her a tight squeeze and she giggles lightly.

"You look so beautiful." I say cupping her face.

"Daddy bought me this dress." She says proudly.

It's a shirt dress with a cute thin pink figure belt. My uncle has great taste when it comes to shopping for his kids, that I admit. She tilts her head slightly before shaking it.

"Are you going to have a baby?" She asks.

HUH?!

“Okay no did you have a baby?”

AGAIN HUH?! What is she on about?

“Ohhh.” She says before walking away leaving me baffled.

uKhanyi and this gift that always leaves us with more questions than answers sometimes. I know for a fact that she won't be able to answer me should I ask what she was going on about. Baby? What baby? Hai

[05/09, 18:27] Mca: THIRTY FOUR

SHORT and Unedited

I've been lying in bed wide awake for a while now but I just can't seem to get myself to actually get out of bed. I have a hangover of note and I am in desperate need to some pain killers. I know that all the medication in this house is locked up somewhere and the thought of waking up and possibly hearing my aunt and uncle going at it is a turn off. Yes I spent the night here because I was just too out of it to actually drive.

Aunty Siba insisted that I use my room, she said she'd wake me up in time for me to bath, head home then to the office but I guess I'm skipping work today. With the amount of days that I have missed I swear if I was a regular folk in a regular company

I'd be long fired. I should actually consider stepping down and getting a full time manager to steer my ship. I mean I have been thinking long and hard about getting back into designing and with the secret project I've been working on I won't have time to focus on the publication.

Yep I'm finding a manager. I've decided but I need to speak to my trusted advisors before making a decision. My mind drifts off to what Khanyi said yesterday but I brush it off. Sigh. I think I'm going to go see Lindo tomorrow. My heart misses him so bad that it almost hurts literally. I'm out here rooting for him to get better and pull himself together not for me, not for his family but for himself because he deserves

that much.

My phone vibrates and I reach for it. It's Bandile.

"Hey."

"Hey sis how are you?"

"I'm good and you?"

"I'm good. I need a favour." He says.

Of course this isn't a social call.

“What’s up?”

“I want to take Amanda away for a few days and I was wondering if you could babysit. I know Uthando has three sets of grandparents but I just want to give them a break.”

“I understand man and you know I’d love to have the little guy with me. Uza nini?”

“On Wednesday.”

“That’s good. I’ll go shopping ksasa and I’ll pick him up from school on Wednesday afternoon.”

“Thanks sis I appreciate it.”

“It’s nothing and you know it. Wena just go and enjoy your time with your wife okay.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too bhuti.” I say before hanging up.

I find it cute whenever he stresses about Lwandile. Man I can’t wait to experience the full pregnancy this time round. I hope that Amanda is demanding and makes him run around only to say she’s not craving what

she wanted anymore. He needs to massage her back and rub her knees. He must make her breakfast in bed and hold her head when she vomits. He must take her punches when she's moody and all. Man he must be present.

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I'm still in bed and it's almost 11AM. I'm just feeling lazy right now and I don't want to leave the blankets. I just want to stay in bed and catch up on my series and hopefully aunty S will join me because I know everyone has left for work and school unless lume decided to skip work today. I roll out of bed and throw on my gown before heading to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I finish up then head down to the

kitchen.

I find aunty snacking on some tomatoes. Haike. She giggles when she sees me, I guess it's her little secret.

“They give me heartburn so Langelihle freaks out when I eat them but I can't help it because it's what the baby wants.” She says popping a few more into her mouth.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head.

“I bet he's a monster husband.”

“Melo you have no idea. I swear I can't even

workout anymore because ‘you’ll hurt the baby’.” She says mimicking his voice.

I can’t help but laugh at how accurately she gets his voice. I mean down to his head action. I guess when you’ve been married for as long as they have you are able to get their actions right down to the tee.

“Look at how fat I am kodwa no Langa only cares about his son.” She says sounding annoyed.

I want to laugh but I know better than to laugh at a pregnant woman’s frustrations, it never ends well. So I keep my mouth shut and just nod lightly.

“Know what let’s go shopping.” She says.

“Haaa ahhh I was hoping we could spend the day in bed binge watching ama series.” I say.

She thinks about it for a while before nodding. Yes! Junking and chilling. We gather our snacks then head to my room because there is no way in hell that I’m spending the night my their sperm and cum infested bed. NOPE! I’m good.

We settle on RHOA, I don’t know why she likes them so much but hey. Nene is being extra as always and Sheeree is just being

shady man. Again why do I even know their names? Argh whatever! My aunt is having a ball and as long as she's good then I'm good.

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“So when are you going to see Lindo?” She asks.

“I was thinking of going tomorrow but I'll call aunty Minnie first to confirm.”

I actually hope that I can get to see him. I'm hoping that something in me will shift and I will make a decision as to whether I am staying or going because right now I'm stuck in limbo. I care about him and I love

him but I don't think I can be with him. Sigh.

"Hey don't put too much pressure on yourself. What has to be will always be. Remember that." She says caressing my arm.

I give her a faint smile and nod. We're in the kitchen making lunch. We're watching some movie I actually don't know what it's about because we have been talking right through it.

"Khanyisile!" We hear lume shout.

I rush to go see what is happening and I

didn't expect to see Khanyi throwing her bag across the room. My baby looks so upset and lume yena looks like he's fuming.

"Khanyi." I say softly dropping to my knees.

She runs into my arms and breaks into a sob that cuts right through my heart. She squeezes her arms around my neck and I squeeze her back with just as much need. Lume is already comforting aunty who is also sobbing.

"What's wrong princess? Talk to Melo." I say gently.

“My heart is so sore.” She says in between her hiccups.

“Why baby? What happened?”

“The baby wants to go home and I don’t want him to go.” She says.

“Khanyi what baby?”

“The small baby. Melo my heart hurts.” She says before breaking out into a sob once more.

[05/09, 18:28] Mca: THIRTY FIVE

“Melo.” She shakes me roughly.

Gosh. I open my and I find her terrified eyes looking at me. I frown slightly.

“What’s wrong?” I ask.

“There’s blood on my knees and on the bed.” She says on the verge of tears.

I look down and indeed there’s blood everywhere. Argh my bloody periods are early, too early and I’m not even home. I roll out of bed and she does the same. Shame she looks so frightened, my poor baby. I grab the sheets and luckily it didn’t go the way through. We make our way to the bathroom and I fill the tub for her. I tell her

to undress and get in the water while I go put the sheets in the washing machine.

I change out of my bloody pyjama pants then put on my gown before rushing to take care of the sheets. It seems like aunty and lume aren't back yet, I hope everything is okay. Yesterday after Khanyi's revelation about the baby, lume didn't want to risk anything so he and aunty left for the hospital. They dropped Ndalo off at mom and dad's and they promised to keep us updated and it's past midnight now. Maybe I should call them? Argh but they would've updated us if anything had happened.

I rush back to the bathroom and Khanyi is falling asleep. I quickly get her cleaned up

then rush her to her room to get clean pyjamas before going to take fresh linen and sheets. She gets dressed while I fix the blankets for her then tuck her in.

“I’m going to take a quick shower okay.”

“Okay.” She responds softly.

I rush to take a quick shower. As I’m standing under the water an unexpected wave of sadness washes over me. I don’t know where it comes from or why it’s here but suddenly I feel the urge to break down and cry. Before I can even attempt to fight it, I’m on the floor covering my mouth with my hands while balling my eyes out. If

someone were to walk in here and ask me why I am crying I wouldn't be able to say why, all I know is that I need to cry. I eventually pull myself and finish up with my shower.

I know I have a few tampons in the bag and the tight I was wearing during the day. I do my business then head to bed. The minute I slide into the blankets Khanyi wraps her little arms around me and kisses my cheek.

"Don't cry Melo. Everything is going to be okay." She says softly before turning around.

"I love you Khanyisile."

“I love you.” She mumbles before knocking out.

Her gift is quite special. How she always knows the right things to say at exactly the right time is always beyond me. I shut my eyes in hopes of actually falling asleep but I know that is not going to happen and I can't watch TV because I don't want to disturb princess. Sigh. I guess tossing and turning is the order of the night.

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How I managed to fall asleep is beyond me but I am grateful. My little angel walks in carrying a tray. I can't help but chuckle at

how she put the entire box of cereal as well as a whole carton of milk on the tray. Two plastic bowls and two spoons complete the set up. I sit up and watch as she sets everything on my bed before climbing on and handing me a bowl.

“Thank you Khanyi.” I say.

“I wanted to make you a full breakfast but mom isn’t here to help me with the stove. So we’ll have cereal.” She says softly.

I give her a warm smile as she pours some cereal for me. I guess she watches a lot of TV with her mom because my bowl isn’t even half full kodwa to her it looks just right.

I guess I can always go for seconds right? While she sorts out breakfast I rush to the bathroom to brush my teeth. I end up changing my tampon and I must say my flow is never this heavy. Maybe it's because they're early. I finish up then head back to the bedroom. She hands me my bowl and we dig in.

"Is daddy back yet?" She asks.

"Not yet princess but I bet they're on their way back."

"Her baby is okay but daddy didn't want to listen." She says before getting off the bed.

She mumbles something as she walks out of the room leaving me baffled. Oh Khanyi! I decide to call lume and find out how everything is going and like I thought they're on their way back. Khanyi will be happy about that definitely. I'm glad that both mother and child are good.

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I'm at the rehab centre to see Lindo and I must admit that I'm nervous because well I don't know what to expect. Also I'm in a space where I don't know what the future holds for this man and I. Do I love him? Yes! Am I willing to stick around and fight for us? I don't know. The fact that he's been showing violent patterns and the whole drug issue is a big deal to me. I don't know

man. I just don't know.

I lift up my head and see him approaching. I can't help but smile lightly. He looks somewhat different but he still has that Mngomezulu arrogance and handsomeness. When he gets to me I get up and we share a hug. Being in his arms feels different. I sure do miss him though.

"Hi baby." He whispers against my neck.

I get chills through put my entire body as his baritone voice hits the deepest parts of me. I think that's my weakness- his voice.

“Hi.” I say faintly.

After our long hug we make our way outside and settle under the shade. He has my hand tightly in his and I don't mind. I rest my head on his shoulder and he rests his on mine.

“I know that you're disappointed in me and that you somewhat blame yourself but please don't. The truth is I've been using for years now. I took my first line when I was around 16 after mom told me about all the shit she had to go through at the hands of all those men. The thought of her being that vulnerable hit me hard and I couldn't handle my emotions so I ran to drugs. I didn't get hooked thankfully but I'd occasionally do a line when things would get too much for me.

When dad started grooming me to take over the business I swore that I would stop and I did until about a two years ago. Everything started spinning out of control baby with all these new ideas dad was trying to implement and all the expansions, I had to travel more and I managed until we started dating and when my travels put our relationship in jeopardy I couldn't anymore so I started using again.

I don't know how I OD'd but I guess it had to happen but I'm committed to getting help and pulling myself together for you Melokuhle."

“You shouldn’t do this for anyone else but yourself Ndo.”

“I know but you’re the most important person in my life Melo and I don’t want to lose you.”

“Just work on yourself baby please.” I say pleadingly.

“You won’t leave me right?” He asks with tears glistening his eyes.

I give him a faint smile before giving him a soft peck. I don’t want to promise anything that I might not live up to.

“Melo please say it. Please say you won’t leave me.” He pleads.

“Let’s focus on you getting out of here first okay? One thing at a time Ndo.” I say looking into his yes.

He pulls me in for a bone crushing hug and holds onto me like there is no tomorrow. I return the hug and we stay in the position listening to each other’s heart beats and breathing with no words exchanged between us.

There goes that feeling again. That wave of sadness that doesn’t even make sense. I

want to let it out but this moment isn't about me. it's about Lindo and I intend of keeping the attention on him.

[05/09, 18:28] Mca: THIRTY SIX

Unedited

The past two weeks have been such a drag. I've literally been dragging myself across the floor just to get things done. My energy levels are at their all time low and my emotions are all over the place. I'm literally crying everyday and I have no idea why. Mom thinks I should take some time out from work and just focus on myself for a while. Obviously her husband agrees with her and you know what? I agree with them too.

Today is my last day at work and I'm handing everything over to Ed. He's practically running this ship with me even though he's more in invisible in the background kodwa I know I wouldn't be able to do this without him. I plan on being away indefinitely so I am really counting on him to come through for me and the publication.

It's the end of the day and Ed and I have gone through everything that we have to. He assured me that everything will be good but he said he'll call should he run into any problems and that's enough for me. I pack up my office then head to the car. I feel like I'm walking away from such a deep

relationship but I have to do this.

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The drive home is slow because I have tears in my eyes and I don't know why. I hate that I'm this weak cry baby now hai this isn't me man. I get home and head straight to the bathroom to take a long bubble bath. A glass of red and a book and I'm sorted. I plan on chilling in the water until it runs cold.

My phone rings while I'm indulging in my read. I grab it and answer without checking the caller ID.

"Hello."

“Hey baby.” Lindo’s voice comes through on the other end.

Last time I checked he couldn’t make phone calls so what changed?

“Hey unjani?”

“I’m okay. Just missing you baby.”

“I miss you as well Ndo.” I say genuinely.

I genuinely miss spending time with him and goofing around. Lindo and I have fun when we’re together. Yes he is arrogant and

uptight Mngomezulu to many but underneath all that is a ball of fun and a baby of a man.

“So the therapist is happy with my progress.” He says proudly.

I can't help but break into a smile. You can't miss the joy in his voice.

“That's amazing Ndo, I'm so proud of you.”

“Thanks baby. I can't wait to get out of here just so I can hold you in my arms all night long.” He says softly.

“You’re definitely coming along alright.” I say chuckling.

“Uyaphapha Melokuhle.”

“Just like you angithi.”

We go back and forth for a little while with chuckles and laughter in between. He fills me in on one of his new buddies at the centre who apparently has a huge crush on me. Apparently he thinks I’m Lindo’s sister. I laughed so hard, I mean yes Lindo and I are both dark but siblings? Come on. Anyway he says he let him believe that because he enjoys the stories he keeps telling them about us. It seems mina no guy

are getting married when he's released.

Haike!

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Touchdown and I am at peace! I make my way to baggage claim to get my bags. I just want to bath then head out for dinner at my favourite restaurant, Sticky Fingers Wood fire Kitchen. Lord I cannot wait to dig into their mouth watering steak. Ahhh you see now I'm already salivating. I grab my bag then rush out to get a cab. The drive to the apartment is quick because my driver isn't scared to step on the gas.

I have an apartment in P.E because mom and uncle Shaka are into property and their

business has grown to great heights. I'm always sorted when it come to accommodation because of that. I drag my bag to the bedroom then flop myself on the bed. First things first, call mom because she will freak. I dial her number.

"Lwandle wait man." She says while chuckling.

Of course she's busy with dad.

"Lwandle wait stop tickling me man yeses!" She shouts while giggling.

"I landed safely and I'm at the apartment.

Bye bye." I say.

"Nqobile did you buy groceries?" Dad asks.

So I'm on speaker. Argh but they always do this kodwa mom knows when it's time to gossip asidlali kanjalo.

"Not yet dad. I'll get to it tomorrow but I am going out for dinner tonight so I'm sorted." I say.

"Okay have fun okay but be safe." Mom adds in.

"Always mom. Okay I love you guys. Bye."

“Love you too baby sharp.” She says before hanging up.

Argh they disgust me. No seriously they do. I bet they're sucking faces right now. Mxm. I head to the bathroom to take a quick shower then get ready for my night out. I have on a free flowing maxi dress that is backless with sandals. No makeup, not even lipstick, just lip balm and my hair is tied up in a bun. Shem I look cute yazi. I grab my bag then make my way out.

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I'm sipping on my glass of red waiting for my steak. Like the aroma in this restaurant

is out of this world. I think we're all impatiently waiting on our food la. It's not a secret that I love food and good food at that and this place feeds my addiction.

"Miss Mkhize."

I look up and I'm instantly annoyed.

"Are you following me?" I hiss.

He looks shocked a bit but recovers and there goes his famous smirk.

"Unfortunately not Miss Mkhize. I was here for a late meeting. This is pure coincidence

actually if anything you're the one following me." He says.

I roll my eyes causing him to chuckle. My food arrives and I don't waste time digging in after thanking the waiter. Mavundla is still standing here looking at me like I'm some sort of zoo animal. I shrug as I get back into my meal. Suddenly it's dinner for two because he is seated and a waiter is taking his order. This man!

"I'm hungry and you're selling that steak so I'm buying." He says.

Right now I don't give a rat's arse what he's doing, I'm just into my food. His order

arrives and we indulge in silence. Well this is weird. I never thought that I would share a table with Mavudla either than the boardroom table. I can feel his eyes on me and it's making me feel somehow. We eventually finish our meal and now we're sipping on this bottle of red.

"I was going to hit the club later on tonight. Please join me." He says.

"Why?"

What? Mavundla tongue tied? I never thought I would see the day!

“Look I apologised about everything and I was genuine. Can we just bury the hatchet and have fun? We’ll see everything else tomorrow, heck you can even slap me for being such a dick towards you but until then can we just dance. Please Nqobile.” He says sincerely.

“Okay.” I say without thinking.

And just like that Mavundla and I are going clubbing. He offers to drive me to the apartment so that I can change and I agree. Suddenly I’m all too trusting but hey. We get to the apartment and I rush in while he waits in the car. I don’t even know what to wear. Gosh! I throw on a short with a bodysuit. I put on my red bottoms then

finish the look off with a demin jacket. I look okay enough for the club right? Yes I do.

“You look amazing.” He says the second he sees me.

“Thank you.” I say softly.

We get in the car then head to his hotel. Now it's his turn to change. He insists on me coming up with him because nywe nywe it's not safe for me to be in the car alone blah blah. I befriend his mini bar as he dashes off to get changed. I'm sipping on some white wine and I must say this is the good stuff.

He steps out looking fresh out of a video shoot. Kanti naye he can look like a small boy when he's not all uptight and threatening me. Hmmm.

“Shall we?” He asks.

I down my drink then grab my bag and we head out. This should be interesting. Partying with Mavudla so far from my comfort zone. Hmmm let's see how the night goes.

[05/09, 18:28] Mca: THIRTY SEVEN

Short and Unedited

Kuthi huuuuu. Heei uyajaiva lo bhuti! I don't think I have ever seen a person dance as much as Sfiso is dancing right now. These girls are all over him and he obviously doesn't mind. Mina on the other hand I can't keep up with him so I'm chilling here keeping hydrated watching him burn the dance floor.

We've been here for a few hours and I admit I'm having a great time. I'm letting my hair loose and it feels incredible. I'm having my Bernini which shocked him because apparently I'm snobbish! Rolls eyes. Of course he judged me based on my suit and boss mode. Mxm. He's having his Heineken, which suits him vele. Right now I'm having some water because hydration is important.

This creep that's been eyeing me the whole night settles next to me.

"You look great." He says.

I nod lightly and keep my focus on Sfiso. He's doing the most right now and the crowd is welcoming him.

"How about you and I get out of here?"
Again this creep!

I choose to ignore him and continue enjoying the show. He slides closer to me and puts his hand around my waist. I remove it roughly but he puts it back.

“Ai fokof man!” I shout.

I can feel him getting aggressive and I don't care! He must just leave me the hell alone! He tries to kiss me but I slap him so hard that my palm feels like it's been thrown into an inferno. I don't know when Sfiso got here but this creep is on the ground with Mavundla delivering a few blows to his face. A few guys intervene and manage to get Sfiso off of him. He grabs my bag then holds his hand out for me and leads me outside.

We get outside and he pulls me in for a hug. I feel awkward but I let him embrace me.

We stand in that position for a while before he steps back.

“Are you okay? Did he hurt you?” He asks searching my eyes for something.

I shake my head lightly.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.” I respond.

He nods lightly before flopping himself on the ground. I join him and we sit in silence for a little while.

“Shit I’m tired!” He exclaims.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head.

“What did you expect phela you were the main entertainment for the night.” I say.

“We were burning it together and you abandoned me.” He says sulking.

Grown ass Mavundla sulking? I have seen it all!

“Haai you were attracting all those girls and I just couldn’t.”

“Wanna get out of here?” He asks.

“Where to?” I ask.

“Woza.”

He gets up and holds his hand out for me. He helps me up and we head to the car. We drive off with his playlist doing the most. Why we are being blue, I have no idea but I’m enjoying this. The breeze coming through the window is also calming the mood. I can’t help but wonder where this man is taking me. Hopefully it’s also got a great vibe.

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“I’m a law abiding citizen and we’re not supposed to be here I say.”

“Argh stop being boardroom Melo and be fun and free Melo please.” He says pulling me towards the water.

“Dare you force me into the water I swear I will hate you more than I already do.” I shout.

He pauses then turns to look at me with a smile on his face. Argh what’s so amusing?

“Okay let’s sit here.” He says.

He forces me to sit on the sand. As a lover of nature I'm in my element right now. The moon is out in its glory along with the stars. The ocean is singing a peaceful song for us right now and I am humming along.

"It's beautiful isn't it?" He says finally.

"It really is. There is something about God's creations that will leave you in awe."

"I know what you mean." That's all he says.

Actually what time is it? Argh I left my bag in the car.

“Have you ever wanted something so bad but couldn’t go for it because you know what the outcome is going to be?” He says randomly.

I turn to look at him but he has his gaze fixed at the water. Again he doesn’t look that arrogant man that kept popping into my office.

“Even if you know that outcome trying won’t hurt futhi nothing is ever cast in stone angithi.” I say.

“Some things are. I mean argh never mind.”

“Whose business are you trying to steal.” I say jokingly.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“You’ve got jokes I see you. It’s actually personal.”

“Just take the leap man. You never know what might happen.” I say.

“Yazi you’re not the mean bitch you portray yourself to be.” He say laughing.

“And you’re not so bad yourself Mr

Mavundla.”

“I’m glad you think so because.” He pauses.

I’m waiting for him to go on but nothing. Oh well. We chill here until the breeze gets too much. We head back to the car and decide to go get some food because we’re both quite famished.

[05/09, 18:28] Mca: THIRTY EIGHT

Unedited

“Ya.” I answer without even attempting to open my eyes.

I am shit tired and this phone has been

ringing loudly annoying the crap out of me.

“Don’t tell me you’re still sleeping.”

“Ufunani?” I shoot back.

“Get up, go bath and come down. I’ll be waiting. 30 minutes tops!” He says before hanging up.

Argh. I’m not getting up for nothing. I am kak tired man all I want to do is sleep and sleep and sleep. Just as I drift back to sleep by phone rings annoying me once more. It’s him again. Tjeer what’s his problem?
Rhaaaa. I roll out of bed and head to the

bathroom. Remind me again why we're so buddy buddy? I brush my teeth while I fill up the tub. Did I mention that I'm tired? And this man yena sounds like he got a full 8 hours of rest.

He only dropped me off at 5AM and the time is a little after 9AM now. Less than 4 hours of sleep that all I got and I need way more than that! I take a bath then head back into the bedroom to get dressed. I'm rocking a short denim skirt with a black crop top and a sneaker. I grab my sling bag then head out.

He gets out of the car when he sees me and we share a chuckle when we realise that our outfits are coordinating. He's wearing a

black t-shirt, jean shorts and sneakers. He steps up to me then pulls me in for a hug. He smells bloody good man. He lets go, opens the door for me then jogs to his side after I slide in.

“That took long enough.” He says dramatically.

I roll my eyes as I buckle up causing him to chuckle. He switches the radio off then drives off.

“You slept well? He asks stealing a glance at me.

“What sleep ngoba you woke me up!” I say.

“Hai Nqobile phela we had agreed on 8AM. Futhi you’re the one who said 8.” He says laughing.

I don’t remember agreeing to 8AM anything. All I remember is us getting a whole lot of food at the McDonald’s drive thru. We chilled in the parking lot and munched down like we had been deprived for years. Yes we spoke about a lot of things one of them being spending the day together kodwa I do not remember us touching on time but argh I’m up and all so it’s fine.

He seems to be very comfortable in driving

around these streets of P.E ai but let me not even ask. We ride in comfortable silence with me busy texting my girl Rea.

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“So Nqobile how old are you?” He asks with a smirk plastered across his face.

I gasp dramatically before taking a sip of my red cappuccino.

“Mr Stalker Mavundla I thought you knew.”

“Well I do but I would feel better if you were to tell me yourself.” He says.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head.
This one is sneaky.

“I’m 27 and you?”

“How old do I look?” He asks.

“Well you behave like a 18 year old so.” I say
shrugging.

I didn’t expect him to laugh out loud. He’s
even throwing his head back. Who would’ve
thought that Mavundla knew how to laugh
and all? The wonders of this world!

“What a jab Miss Mkhize.”

“Just saying.” I say.

“Well I’m sorry to disappoint kodwa I’m 35.”

Huh? 30 what? Since when? Wait! He doesn’t even look it. Woooah I guess this whole eating healthy and working out lifestyle really does pay off.

“Oh then why were you so childish?”

“You keep wounding me Nqobile.” He says clutching his chest.

I roll my eyes at him earning myself a pinch.

“Ouch!” I shout.

“Qhubeka wena nje. Roll your eyes at me once more.” He says sternly.

I can't help but laugh. Is he trying to scare me? Ai ke.

“Nope! Not intimidating, not even one bit!” I say.

“I keep forgetting that you're one tough fox. Anyway Miss Mkhize tell me more about yourself.”

“How about you tell me about yourself because I know for a fact that you know all there is to know about me.”

“Fair enough.” He says. “Well as we’ve already established my name is Sfiso Mavundla.” He pauses and chuckles while I roll my eyes.

“I grew up in the Eastern Cape but later moved to KZN where I was raised by my grandmother who was my world. I moved in with my grandmother when my mother was killed by my stepfather. To this day I can still hear their arguments whenever he would come back drunk.

You know after he beat her to a pulp and she ended up in hospital I thought she would leave him but I guess she wanted to leave in a coffin which she did. Anyway I moved in with my grandmother, God bless her soul. She was so hard on me but I know that if she wasn't I wouldn't be the man that I am today. I actually named my holding company after her, Kelisiwe Holdings. Well I just didn't want to use her full name, Samukelisiwe but yeah.

Getting to this point was hard you know but we made it."

I think I'm at a loss for words. I didn't think he had it this hard because of his arrogant and tough exterior then again we're always

told not to judge a book by its cover. I'd always pegged him to be from a loving home with parents that pushed him to be the best he could be. Wow.

"Your grandmother must be really proud of all that you've achieved." I say.

He gives me a full smile and a light nod.

"She is. Well she passed on last year but she was able to see all her hard work coming to pass you know. I was able to take her to the one place she wanted to see since she saw the beautiful clear blue water on TV. She passed on a happy woman and I think that's the main reason my heart is at

peace with her departure.” He says with a full blown smile on his face.

I can't help but return it. His story just moved something in me and suddenly I miss my own grandmother. I catch him gazing at me. His gaze is deep and intense and for some reason I can't break away.

“I'm going back to Joburg tomorrow.” He says without breaking the gaze.

“Okay.” I don't know what more to say.

“Dinner tonight?”

“Sounds good.” I respond.

He nods lightly before looking away. Ever been so wrong about a person? Okay no I don't think I was ever wrong about him. That's how he presented himself to me however I think I'm glad I was able to see this human side to him.

“So Nqobile, unqobeni?” He asks leaning back on his seat.

SMH.

“Death.” I say.

“Heh?” he looks confused.

“I wasn’t supposed to make it, well the others before me didn’t so the chances of me making it were slim but here I am.” I shrug.

“Your parents had it hard ne?”

“Very but in the end they were blessed.”

“With a very beautiful feisty daughter. Oh they were blessed alright.” He says laughing.

“Hey!”

I throw my serviette at him but he catches while laughing. Argh this guy is stupid nje!

[05/09, 18:29] Mca: THIRTY NINE

Unedited

“You look ravishing.” He says breathlessly.

I give him a smile and a light nod. He doesn't look too bad himself. He's wearing a black jean, back t-shirt and a leather jacket. He looks pretty chilled yazi. I have on a black skirt with thigh high boots and a basic top. Nothing to write home about.

“Thank you. Nawe you don't look too back.”
I say smiling.

“I’m in the presence of a great fashion designer so I had to at least look decent.” He says patting himself on the back.

I’ve learnt that this one is a joker and in certain moments he is big headed. Again I ask, who would’ve thought that I would be civil towards Muvundla? I guess it’s true what they say, under that wolf layer lays a harmless sheep. Well sometimes because heei some people are just wolves dressed in wolf skin vele.

“You’re dumb but thank you for making the effort.” I respond.

He chuckles while shaking his head before opening the door for me. I slide in and for some reason he decides to buckle me up like I'm so little kid. He jogs to his side once he's done and gets in. He's jamming to my favourite Sjava feel good live session and I can't help but get into it. Being in the fashion industry meant getting into good music and that wasn't too difficult because I was already a music head.

“You listen to Sjava?” He asks with amusement dripping all over his words.

I turn to look at him and you can't miss the amusement written all over his face. He had clearly written me off as a snob.

“I don’t look like I listen to Sjava?” I ask.

“Honestly? No you don’t. You look like you only listen to a handful of South African artists and most of them are white.” He says chuckling,

What? Am I offended? A little, I mean look I don’t consider myself a snob. Yes I can go in hard on this English thing but that’s just about it, either than that I am as black and South African as they come. Also this thing of being judged based on looks must come to an end. Not just on a personal level but on a professional level as well. How many people have been written off because they

don't 'look' like they can do certain things?
Argh it's annoying.

"So based on my looks you got all of that?"

"The way you carry yourself." He says.

"Kahle kahle how does a person who doesn't jam to South African music look? Is it written on my forehead? On my lips perhaps? Like please enlighten me." I even have my arms folded.

"Obviously there is no specific look or whatever however this is the observation I have made which I am allowed to. It's my

opinion angithi? And I am entitled to one. My opinion of you isn't who you are and as long as I am not going out there spreading it then we have no problem." He says.

Did he just?

"Excuse me?"

"Oh Miss Mkhize lighten up. Ok I'm sorry if my opinion of you offended you."

"That's not even a sincere apology Sfiso." I say sulking.

"Firstly that's cute, secondly I love just how

my name rolls off your tongue. Now my apology was sincere Nqobile. I know people's opinions of us sometimes have a way of making us shrink ourselves or mess with our self-esteem and I'm sorry I was a jerk just now. However as sincere as my apology is, my opinion of you still stands until such a time that it can be changed. Meaning you and I are going to have to jam a lot more you know." He says then winks.

I can't help but chuckle. How can one be a jerk and a gentleman in one? Argh whatever. We arrive at the restaurant and make our way in. He asked for a corner table because it's more private blah blah.

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When I left home a few days ago I never thought that my first days would be spent with enjoying my time with Mavundla of all people. I'm not complaining though because this is better than dining alone. Well not really because I enjoy my own company but you get what I'm saying.

"How's your wellington?" He asks.

"Super juicy." I say going in for another bite.

"It's too bloody for my liking." He says pulling a disgusted face.

"It's not bad man, here have some." I say.

I push my plate towards him and he goes in for a bite. The second he chews, he starts gagging. I can't help but burst into laughter. He looks quite comical and the fact that he's not acting makes it that much better. If I was mean I would actually take a video if this moment.

"Fuck I'm a Xhosa Zulu man and I like my meat dead and buried." He says gulping down his beer.

I'm still laughing. Wow he's so dramatic. He has on this frown that I just don't understand. He looks so darn cute!

“Well Xhosa Zulu man, this is how I enjoy my meat.”

“See what I mean?” He says shrugging.

“Mxm oho.”

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I’m on my second bottle of wine and I think I’m well on my way to my happy place. Sfiso and I are having a great time. Laughter and free flowing conversation.

“Okay okay so between Heath Ledger and Jared Leto who killed the part?” He asks.

“Definitely Heath without a shadow of a doubt. I mean the man was just everything!”

“But Jared also tried.”

“Credit where it’s due.” I say.

We’ve been talking about movies and great actors for about 30 minutes now. His taste in movies is not so bad shame. Sure we have a few things in common but damn it his reasoning sucks. How can you try justify how Batman Vs Superman was the greatest movie ever, like that movie was such a yawn fest but Sfiso here believes it was great. So great that he watches at least once a month. I could never.

“I hear the Lion King remake is coming out soon, we should definitely go watch it.” He says.

Hmm how would that work? I mean I haven't thought about the possibility of hanging with him in our home base. Sure the past two days have been great but...

“I can you hear thinking Nqobile. Don't over think things. We enjoy each other's company, we're having a great time now so why can't we continue doing that in Joburg?”

“You know why Sfiso.” I respond.

“Nqobile.” He reaches over and that’s my hand in his.

I want to pull it out but I can’t.

“This is me apologising sincerely for being a jerk over the past months. I admit I went overboard with my threats. Look I should’ve stepped back the minute you told me you weren’t selling but I kept on pushing and pushing and for that I truly apologise. For those days you were too scared to leave the house because you were scared I would do something, I’m sorry. Just by the way I wouldn’t have hurt you Nqobile, I would never hurt you. Like I said I went overboard

and I apologise.”

He is sincere I have no doubt about t and besides I forgave him the first time he apologised.

“I forgive you Sfiso.”

“Great now can I please see you in Joburg so you can force me to try your uncooked meat?” He asks chuckling.

I can't with this guy!

“Okay ke.” I say.

He nods lightly before letting go of my hand. He's looking at me in a manner I just don't understand. He clears his throat before going in for his beer. Well then.

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"Thank you for tonight, I had a great time." I say.

"So did I." He responds.

We're standing outside of my door because he insisted on walking me in. The security guard gave me the eye but I didn't mind him. Unexpectedly Sfiso pulls me in for a hug and I don't resist. I can feel his heat beating and it's quite fast. Too fast. He pulls back

then places a kiss on my cheek before letting go.

“Goodnight Miss Mkhize”

“Goodnight Mr Mavundla.”

He watches me open the door then step inside before walking away.

[05/09, 18:29] Mca: FORTY

Unedited

Stepping into the house I am met by noise and more noise. So Bongwe has been staying here? I make my way into the living room and I am met by bottles and smoke

along with three grown ass men! One of them has a family njalo.

“Baby.” That comes out as more of a question.

They stop what they’re doing and look at me. I’ll make noise about all this alcohol and weed later, right now I’m just surprised that Lindo is here, out of rehab. He gets up and makes his way towards me. I find myself in his arms holding onto him for dear life. It feels like a lifetime since I’ve been in his embrace. I sure have missed him.

“When did you get out?” I ask looking up at

him.

“It’s been a few days now.” He responds.

I’m shocked. Why wasn’t I told about this?

“Why didn’t you tell me?” I ask.

“I was told to give you your space. You look refreshed so I know the fresh air did you good. I missed you muhles.” He says cupping my face.

I can’t help but get somewhat lost in his eyes. In this moment I see the Lindo I fell for. The gentle, carefree heart and not the

aggressive drug addict I've seen a few times. He lowers his head and captures my lips in his. I have missed his lips so much. His kisses have always been my weakness. The magic his tongue creates when it meets mine. How he gently sucks on my lip before gently biting it. His hands travel down and settle on my butt. He gives it a gentle squeeze before pulling me closer. An involuntary moan escapes my mouth. Oh man.

We're enjoying this kiss lost in our own world until my brothers start complaining. You think Lindo cares about that? Nope! Instead he deepens the kiss further and pulls me even closer. I can feel his manhood is ready to play. I haven't had

some in so long that I could just pounce on him right here, right now. He eventually pulls back and I hide my face on his chest. I can hear my brother sharing a laugh. Mxm.

“Look at me muhles.” He says.

His voice sends chills down my spine. I look at him and just smile. He is so handsome. He places a kiss on my forehead before letting me go. I turn around and my stupid brothers grinning. I walk over to them and we share hugs before I settle on Bongwe’s lap.

“Why aren’t you sitting on my lap Nqo?”
Bandile asks.

“Nywe nywe my wife’s lap. Remember that?” I say chuckling.

He rolls his eyes then shakes his head. He looks good. Things are good with his mini family which makes me happy.

“Sisi how was P.E?” Bongwe asks.

I heave a sigh and break out in a smile. That was a needed break. Just being away from everyone and everything did some soul good. The day after Sfiso left for Joburg I spent the day in doors catching up on my reading before getting some groceries. I hadn’t realised that I didn’t have any food

until I actually had to munch on something. In my excitement of going clubbing and out to breakfast and dinner I had forgotten that I didn't have food.

The following day was spent at the beach. Yes I went to the beach alone. I put on my bikini, packed up my sunscreen and towel and headed to the beach. I ended up buying an umbrella because the heat wasn't so kind. Obviously I received a few stares but who cares right? I mean why do we always give people the stare when they're by themselves? Whether it's at a restaurant or the beach or a store. Ngathi there's something wrong with being by yourself rhaaa.

The days thereafter were spent roaming around the city just taking in its beauty. No matter how many times I've been to a place I will never get used to its magnificence.

"It was great, relaxing. I really needed the break." I respond.

"So are you going back to work?" Bandile asks.

I don't think so. I mean with my secret project about to kick off I actually won't have time to be completely hands on with the publication and besides Ed has everything on lock and I trust that he will continue doing a good job.

“No.” I say.

“Hawu baby are you sure?”

“Yes baby. The magazine will survive without me. My team is pretty capable of running it.” I say.

I trust my team. Employing people who have passion for what they do is a plus.

“So does this mean you’re going to be a housewife?” Bongwe asks.

Trust the idiot to say such.

“I’m no one’s wife brother so I can’t be a housewife.” I respond with attitude.

Mngomezulu chuckles while shaking his head along with Bandile. Kodwa did I say something wrong? Because the truth is I’m just a girlfriend in this life thing.

“Lindokuhle when are you marrying my sister then?”

Oh Malibongwe. SMH. Lindo chuckles and looks at me. I can hear what he’s saying and hai I’m not going to answer him. He winks at me and I just shake my head. Argh let me leave the boys to their boy’s day. I

grab my bag then head up to my room.

'I hope you got home safe and that I am going to see you soon.' That's a text from Sfiso.

We've been texting every day since he left P.E. The other day he says he got into trouble with his team because he was texting me. I refuse to take the blame because he always texts me first so it's not on me.

'I did. I just need to relax a bit but otherwise I'm good. Hope your meeting went well.' I respond.

'I got the deal. Thank you for your insight.'
He responds immediately.

'I did nothing! You got that deal all on your own. Well done. You deserve a bottle.'

'Supply and I will be there.' he texts back.

I laugh lightly. Nope. I don't think so.

'Chat later.' I send.

I change out of my jeans into sweats and a top then relax on the bed. I think I should get a bit of sleep before getting back into my life.

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Lindo and I are having dinner in bed. Bandile made sticky wings and ribs before he left and I am grateful because I was not in a cooking mood.

“So how was rehab?” I ask.

He heaves a sigh before wiping his hands.

“It was tough but worth it. I learnt a few valuable lessons while I was in there and I am grateful for them. I realise now what is important and what isn't. I see where I went wrong and where I need to correct my

actions. So all in all I think it was good.” He says.

“I’m glad you took something away from this experience.” I say.

“You’re very important to me Melo and I’m going to spend the rest of my life making it up to you. You deserve the world and I am going to create the perfect one for you.”

“Ndo.” I say softly.

“Yes baby.”

“You almost hit me.” I say. “Heck you

manhandled me.”

He flinches like I’ve just hit a very sensitive spot.

“I know I was an ass and I’m not going to use the drugs as an excuse but I wasn’t in the right head space. I would never lay my hand on you baby. You are my life.”

“I hear you Ndo.”

“I’m so sorry Melokuhle. I promise you, it will never happen again baby. Ten fingers on the bible. Pinky swear and all of that.” he says pulling me in for a kiss.

It tastes meaty but it's all good.

"I love you Melo." He murmurs against my lips.

"I love you too." I say back.

To love him I do but am I totally relaxed around him? I don't know. My mind keeps drifting off to that moment in my office. Sigh. This is hard.

[05/09, 18:29] Mca: FORTY ONE

Unedited

OFENTSE KEKANA, My not so sane birthday girl. I trust you're having an awesome one filled with booze and orgasms!

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Mngomezulu is wrapped around me like a Japanese Wisteria. I literally cannot move a muscle but I'm not complaining. I don't mind being wrapped up in his sweat and all. I snuggle closer and he assists me by pulling me closer. His morning erection is knocking against my ass, I can feel each pulse, so I slowly grind my ass against it. He groans and pulls me closer.

Oho if he thinks I'm going to bust it open for him then he has another thing coming. I'm

going to turn him on just to deny him! He did it to me last night so payback's a bitch! His hand finds my breast and settles there. Okay maybe I might just let him have this round, just this one. Before I can even think about it he has inserted himself all the way in. I gasp when I feel his totolozi pulsing uncontrollably. Damn it this man's sex game will be the death of me I swear!

He flips us over and I am under him taking in his controlled movements. Our eyes are locked and our hearts communicating. My heart beats for him, there is no doubt about that. I love this man so much and a part of me wishes we could rewind time and erase everything that has transpired but I know that's just wishful thinking.

“I love you muhles.” He says faintly.

Those three words touch the deepest part of me and I find myself sobbing as I hit my high. He continues thrusting right through my wave. Damn it! A couple more thrusts and he reaches his pinnacle. He flops on top of me and I hold him tightly.

“We will make it right?” He whispers.

“Yes.” I say without thinking.

I want us to. MY heart wants us to. I just hope that my mind will also attempt to

come to the party. Last night Ndo and I spoke about the two incidents that left me somewhat fearful of him and he confessed that on both occasions he was high on drugs as well as jealousy. He also acknowledged that that wasn't an excuse and he was promised to work through it all. He also promised to let me in on certain issues that he's dealing with but only once he's ready. I'm not going to rush him but I am glad that he is committed to working on himself. That's all I could ever ask for.

We're lying in bed cuddling after our slow session. He keeps running his thumb in circles over my nipple.

"I think I just loved a baby into you." He says.

We share a laugh. Yeah right.

“Hey who knows?” I say.

“What if you’re already pregnant? Are you still on treatment?” He asks.

“I’m not pregnant Ndo, if I was I would know. Trust me.”

“There’s no harm in making sure right?” He says kissing my head.

Actually there is harm. I honestly don’t know how I would react if I were to find out

that I am pregnant. I obviously would be shocked and happy but I would be more scared than anything. I know they said be positive and all but when disappointment is all you know, being optimistic is a marathon.

“I guess.” I say.

“Imagine little you’s or me’s running around driving you crazy. Actually before we get there I can’t wait to experience the pregnancy with you. I can’t wait for you to annoy me with your cravings and mood swings. I can’t wait to experience the first kick with you. I can’t wait to jog all the way to the bathroom with you because you just can’t keep it in. I can’t wait for it all.” He says.

I feel him wiping my tears, tears I didn't even know were falling. Honestly as much as I want to be excited about the prospect of the possibility of having a mini bambino, the words "You won't be able to carry a child" still ring in my ears. A part of me believes that yes I might have a child but a huge part of me has made peace with the fact that I will die having not barred my own.

"I know it's hard mules but we need to keep the faith." He says.

I nod lightly and sink into his embrace. I pray that this happens for us.

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I'm in the kitchen making lunch for one. Lindokuhle has gone home to see his parents. Uncle Shaka said something about slowly integrating him back into the company. Lindo was happy about that obviously and as long as he's happy then I'm happy. My phone pings, it's a text from Rea.

"Fuck I think I'm pregnant!!!!!!!"

Oh shit!

I dial her number and it rings for a while before she answers.

“Melo.” She says softly.

I can tell that she’s freaking out. Now Rea is one person who wants nothing to do with kids and marriage. Yes she gets her itch taken care of by Kabelo whenever she’s around or whenever he’s travelling and they get to bump into each other but I know she’s always safe so I’m curious as to how we got here.

“How?” I ask.

“I remember the condom broke once but I was chilled because I was on the shoot mara I forgot here I was on antibiotics. It’s a

mess Melo.”

“Are you actually pregnant or you’re just assuming?” I ask.

“I missed my period so I don’t know.”

“I thought as much. Okay here’s what we’re going to do, we’re going to go to the doctor tomorrow then we’re going to take it from there.” I say.

Knowing Rea she is so over everything right now. I know she’s not hearing anything I’m saying right now. Thank God she’s in the country so I’ll fly out to Durban to hold her

hand.

“Okay Melo.” Shame man.

“Just try focus on your shoot today. You know chin up, strong face, body and all.”

“I’ll do what I’m paid to do. I have to go. I love you.”

“I love you too Rea.” I say before hanging up.

I can’t wait to laugh at her. She’s the ‘that will never happen to me’ hey hey, haaa nazo ke! Argh but shame I feel bad for her. I just hope that she’s not pregnant.

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“Was uncle Shaka civil?” I pounce on him the second he sets foot inside the house.

He chuckles lightly before pulling me in for an electrifying kiss. I guess I was missed.

“I missed you muhles. Fuck I never want to be away from you.” He murmurs against my lips.

Have I ever mentioned just how much I love a needy Ndo? He’s just so cute and not Mngomezulu like. Sigh. We pull back then settle on top of the counter. I rest my head

on his shoulder and he rests his on mine.

“Dad and I had a very open heart to heart and I think we have a better understanding of where each of us are coming from. I get now why he’s pushed me so much and he gets now that I am my own person before I am Shaka Mngomezulu’s son. Our relationship has always been good so it’s not going to be so difficult to get to get back to that space.” He says.

It warms my heart that both Mngomezulu men are committing to working on their relationship. Hopefully Lindo will now learn to confide in his dad instead of going that route.

“That’s great baby. I’m glad that you and uncle Shaka are good again.”

“When are you going to learn to call him dad heh Melo?” He asks laughing.

Argh. Dad for who?

“Dad yani?” I ask.

“When I wife your ass muhles uMinenhle will be your MOM and Shaka will be your DAD.” He says.

“Hawu usho kanje?”

“Yes. I love you Nqobile and I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I want to build a life with you muhles.”

“Ndo.”

He chuckles lightly. He actually chuckles a lot haai.

“So can we do a pregnancy test?” He asks.

“I’m not pregnant I told you.” I say laughing.

“But still.”

“Tell you what, let’s wait for a couple of weeks and we indeed are pregnant it would have revealed itself by then angithi.” I say.

“Hmm sounds fair enough.”

“I know you said that kids aren’t a deal breaker ne.”

“And they’re not.” He interrupts me.

“Yeah yeah kodwa ai never mind.” I say jumping off the counter. “I feel like going out tonight. Siyaphi?” I ask.

“Melo.”

“Are you hungry? Argh of course not because I know Aunty Minz feed you real good.” I say.

“Melokuhle.”

“I’m going to take a nap. Wake me up an hour before we leave.” I say walking out.

I don’t even want to think about what he wanted to say. Anyway I can’t wait for dinner and whatever else the night will hold for us

[05/09, 18:30] Mca: FORTY TWO

Unedited

I'm woken up by soft kisses all over my face. I grunt before turning to face the other side. I don't want to wake up. I'm dog tired and a late morning is all I need. He starts sucking on my toes and I jump out of bed like a possessed woman. My feet are extra ticklish and he knows that so whooah. He chortles while I throw daggers his way. Argh my head is pounding and he just made it 10 times worse.

So last night we went out for dinner and I kind of went heavy on the alcohol much to his disapproval. I just rolled my eyes while throwing my drink back. Now look I will have a drink when I want and in this case it

was to enjoy myself. I needed to let my hair loose and it wasn't exactly club vibes but I had a great time with my man even though he was grumpy because of my outfit.

Nywe nywe you're showing too much skin, like bhuti I'm only 27 years old so relax. I swear Lindo behaves like an old man at times. Don't get me wrong he's one of the most fun people I have ever been around when he's not all daddyish kodwa sometimes, let's just say even dad is less uptight but I love him as he is.

I head to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face I need a hectic concoction for this hangover. I finish up then make my way back to the bedroom.

The bed has been made and Lindo is nowhere in sight. I head over to the kitchen and find him cooking away. He chuckles lightly and hands me a glass. I don't even want to know what is in this mixture. I swear it tastes like one of those Jackass guys threw up in this glass and told him to give it to me. I burp and that disgusting smell fills my nostrils causing me to gag. I fight this for a good minute until I feel okay enough to down some juice. Now I was someone else I'd say I'm going to stop drinking kodwa I'm not so I'll just have to take this nasty thing each time.

"Sit I'm almost done." He says.

Only now do I realise that it's way past

midday. Yhu umuntu has been knocked out for that long and here I was ready to murder this Mngomezulu boy for waking me up in the morning. I guess I have to sober up and get on with the day.

“So I was thinking seeing that you’re working from home and I’m a long way from getting my exclusive chair back, we could explore you know.”

I nod lightly. He should carry on.

“So a little bit of travelling with lots and lots of sex.” He says wiggling his eyebrows.

I laugh loudly. He's such an idiot this one but travelling with my man doesn't sound so bad futhi all the other times we've tried taking a trip together have been cut short due to his schedule so this should be great. My heart swells at the thought of discovering life with Lindo. I think I've been down playing just how much I love this man. Yes he's hurt me and I still have my reservations but man my heart beats for him.

I never thought that I'd fall in love like this – AGAIN. For the longest time Lerato was it for me and for Ndo to just sweep in and own my heart like this is beyond me.

“Where did you just go?” He asks wrapping

his arms around my waist.

I didn't even realise that I'd zoned out. I sink into his warmth and settle. He places a wet kiss on my neck sending tingles down my spine. Lindokuhle Mngomezulu has the healthiest sex appetite ever. I mean look I love sex kodwa lo guy? Hai ngeke phela.

"Ndo stop." I say breathlessly.

He chuckles lightly then places a kiss on my cheek before going back to his pots.

"So where do we start?" He asks.

“I don’t know where can check later but can we do places that don’t require visas please.” I say.

“I agree with you there. Okay we’ll find something. Oh I have to go to Cape Town ksasa kodwa it’s a in and out thing.”

“Oh okay. I was supposed to be with Rea today and tomorrow but duty calls for her so maybe I’ll come with or I could go spend the day with my mom.”

“I think you should spend some time with mom because siyahamba angithi.”

“That’s true I guess.” I say shrugging.

He hands me my plate along with a glass of orange juice. We head out into the garden and have our breakfast, well lunch out here. We settle on the grass and dig in, in silence. You know when you’re able to sit with someone in complete silence and have no awkward vibes? This is one of those moments and for me that is very important because believe it or not I appreciate my silence once in a while.

Looking around my garden I realise that I’ve been neglecting it which is totally not on. My grandmother would have my head for lunch if she were to see this mess. I think I’m going to spend the day loving it.

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I roll out of bed and rush to the bathroom to pee. I finish up then wash my face and brush my teeth. Lindokuhle left at around 5AM, apparently uncle Shaka gave him the jet for the day so lucky him. I head into my closet then throw on one of his shirts. He always says I look good in his clothes. Pf course he'd think that though. I go make the bed before making my way to the kitchen to feed myself. I make some soft porridge. While that cooks away I clean around the house and throw our clothes in the machine. By the time I sit to indulge in my sour porridge I'm half way with my chores.

My phone pings and it's a VN from lume.

'Melo I miss you and you don't miss me which hurts me. Daddy says you're not allowed to hurt me so please come see me. Anyway I have a project that I need your help with. I want to make a vision board and mommy is always sleeping and daddy is a man so nope. So let me know when you'll be available.'

When did Khanyisile get so mature? Vision board what? Wow. I call lume and hopefully he'll explain what is happening.

"Princess." He answers cheerfully.

My heart smiles.

“Langa unjani?” I ask.

He breaks out into a laugh and I join him.

“Uyadelela. I’m fine and you?”

“I’m confused. Vision board?” I say.

“I have no idea she refused to tell me so please help her. Angazi go shopping for all those things and whatever you need to do. Actually take her for like a week.”

“What is she doing to you?” I ask laughing.

“Well let’s just say I apologise for thinking that you were dramatic at her age.” He says.

“Kodwa she’s gifted hawu.”

“That’s the thing, it’s not even the gift, it’s just her and her drama, so no take her please.” He says dramatically.

I can’t help but laugh at how extra he is.
Damn it!

“Ungaworry uncle wami I will take her off of your hands for a little while.”

“Thank you.” He says heaving a sigh.

We chat for a little while until aunty calls for him. Apparently this pregnancy is the worst for him because she is a monster. I can't say I feel sorry for him because he wanted the child so nope.

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I spoke to Lindo a little while back and he was busy at the office. Right now I'm walking around this boutique looking for something a little sexy to surprise my man. I want to dance for him and all that jazz. Beyonce is going to come in handy you just wait and see.

“So this is what you get up to when you’re not working on getting the big bucks.”

Argh I know that voice. I turn around while laughing. He looks like he just stepped out of the boardroom.

“Uyaphapha. Hello.” I say.

He opens his arms and I step into his embrace.

“How are you Nqobile?”

“I’m awesome and how are you Sfiso?”

“I think I’m better now that I’m seeing you.”

“You’re being extra now.” I say laughing.

“I swear I’m not. Your company is highly missed.” He says with a full blown smile on his face.

“Of course.” I roll my eyes.

“The day I discipline you for that eye action, hmmm.”

I chortle so loud I even throw my head back.
Jokes!

“So where to from here? Can we do lunch?”
he asks.

“Sure.” I say.

I head to the till to pay for my items before
we head out.

[05/09, 18:30] Mca: FORTY THREE

Unedited

“To drink I’ll have a beer and your steak and
veges and you Nqobile?”

“I’ll have a glass of pineapple juice and a rib
burger with cheesy fries please.” I say.

The waiter jots everything down before taking our menus. We thank him and he makes his way to the kitchen. I sit back and watch as Sfiso frantically types on his phone. He looks really invested in what he is doing. He finishes up then heaves a sigh.

“Problem?” I ask.

“You could say that but nothing I can’t handle. So Miss Mkhize what have you been up to?”

“Just taking some time out for myself you know and all of that.”

“And your ship?”

“Is still sailing. I have a great crew and you? How’s everything going? I read in the business daily that you might be acquiring Precision.”

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“You can’t believe everything you read in the papers Miss Mkhize.”

“It was online.” I shoot back. “And besides you’re the master of acquisition.” I say.

“Touché. Anyway I was thinking about it but

not anymore.”

“And why is that?” I ask.

“It’s got too many issues. Yes I could work tirelessly to turn it around and make it profitable again but the asking price and the level it has depreciated to aren’t lining up and they’re not even willing to negotiate so I will pass. It would’ve been great for my portfolio but nah I’m good.”

“Spoken like a true businessman my goodness.”

“You should know all these things mos.”

“Yeah I know enough to get me by however I am surrounded by business magnets so hey.” I say shrugging.

“Oh yeah? Who?”

“My mom was a beast in her prime still is when she needs to be. Also my man is a shark so yeah I get that whole industry jargon at times.”

“Zobuhle Mkhize I looked up to that woman and her rise in the property sector was just phenomenal. No wonder you’re wonder woman, your mom is superwoman.” He says genuinely.

“She’s more than that.” I say with a broad smile on my face.

“So you said your boyfriend is a shark, so that means he’s in the business world?” He enquires.

“Wait is this one of those instances where you pretend as if though you don’t know because you want to make me feel some type of way kodwa deep down you know that in that file you have you have his name and everything or you really don’t know who he is?” I ask.

I mean this man knew all there was to know

about me when he was still an arse or so I think. He behaved like someone who knew it all so I don't believe that whole 'who is he' act.

"No I honestly don't know who he is. My research was mainly on you and your business." He shrugs.

I still can't believe this guy is that creep that used to come to the office every day trying to intimidate me. I guess the saying do not judge a book by its cover works well here because really I would never have thought that there was a heart of flesh in there.

"Hmm I see well-" We're interrupted by my

phone ringing.

I reach for it and it's my man. I swear I have a whole damn zoo in my stomach.

"Baby."

"Hey baby how are you?"

"I'm good and you?"

"Good but I'm just missing you. "

"Well I miss you too. Buya phela." I say sulking.

It's only been a couple of hours but I can feel that something is missing and that something is him. I actually cannot wait to go away and be in his arms 24/7.

“About that, I will be back in the morning baby. Askies.”

“Hawu kanjani manje because you said?” I say.

My heart has sunken to the bottom of my stomach and my zoo has been drenched in disappointment. I bought lingerie for tonight and I was planning on cooking his favourite meal and serving him his favourite cognac while I dance for him. I was amped to get

my Beyonce on phela.

“I know baby kodwa I’m wrapping a few things up at the office so that I don’t have to come back here.”

“But Ndo.”

“I know baby I know or tell you what how about you come through here and we’ll come back ksasa.”

“No it’s fine.”

“I’m really sorry baby. I swear I’ll make it up to you.” He says.

“You better.”

“I love you maMngomezulu.”

“I love you too.” I say before hanging up.

Okay those butterflies are back now. I guess this gives me more time to perfect my moves. Yes! I’m snapped out of my bubble by Sfiso touching my hand. He laughs out loudly and I join him. Well that was almost embarrassing.

“You sure do love this guy.” He says looking me dead in the eye.

“I do.”

“HmMMM.” He says playing my fingers.

“You have beautiful hands by the way.” He adds on.

I nod lightly. Our food eventually arrives and we dig in. He keeps stealing glances at me and I keep rolling my eyes. He must focus on his food. I watch him pick up his fork and dig into my fries, this guy though. Yes I don't mind sharing my food but just not my cheesy fries.

“Nywe nywe steak and veges look at you now.” I say rolling my eyes.

“Again that eye roll Nqobile kodwa ku right and yes steak and veges but man these fries are everything.” He says dramatically.

He just reminded me of dad when he gets his Zobuhle moments and he’s all dramatic. I snicker in my head because I don’t feel like explaining all of this.

“Umuntu wakho uthini when you this dramatic and hip?” I ask.

“Unfortunately or is it fortunately angazi but I’m single.”

“And why is that?”

“I realised that I need a woman of substance. Someone who will help me build this empire instead of lounging around at home doing nothing but spending this money that we’re trying to multiply. I need a strong woman, a queen who knows how to lead her hive. A queen who will set me straight when I fall off the wagon. I need a strong willed woman Nqobile. Someone who will keep our home warm all the time. Unfortunately I keep attracting these girls that just want the nice life you know, latest fashion, hair, gadgets and trips.” He is gazing deep into my eyes.

I shift uncomfortably in my seat before

breaking eye contact. My heart goes out to him. Getting to know him I feel like he does deserve a head strong woman. He's an alfa and he can't be roaming around with these slay queens. Look there is nothing with looking good while helping grow the funds that keep you that good looking you know.

I hope that he will find his one who will help him achieve all that he has set out to achieve. He deserves it man.

“Anyway one day I will get her.” He says with a full blown smile on his face.

Again, I hope he does

[05/09, 18:30] Mca: FORTY FOUR

Unedited

I roll out of bed and rush to the bathroom to take a quick shower. I finish up then head to the closet to get dressed. I throw on a tracksuit with some sneakers then make my way back to the bedroom to make my bed. I grab my keys and bag then rush out.

Father God please give me strength.

I always dread this day however just like any other day it has to come. I HATE how it leaves us feeling but we're Mkhize soldiers, at the end of it we keep soldiering on. I find parking then head inside the building. Surprisingly the music is not blasting which

is a first. I knock and wait for him to ignore me until I threaten to knock until the building manager comes up. Again another shocker, he opens the door for me on the first knock.

I step inside and I'm not shocked being met by the smell of weed. I set my bag on the couch and follow him into the bedroom. I remove my shoes and jacket then join him in bed. He turns around, buries his face on my chest and cries. Every year this our routine however this year feels a bit better. A bit lighter. I'm not worried about him attempting to take his life because I can tell that he is trying and that's all I could ever ask for.

I hold my baby as he lets it all out. Warm tears trickle down my face and I allow them. My heart breaks whenever any of my brothers cry however Malibongwe takes the cup because he is the baby and he's gone through so much at such a tender age.

"Melo." He croaks.

"Yes baby." I respond softly.

"Thank you for coming."

"You know I will always be here for you. Whenever you need I will come running. I've got your back Simphiwe." I say.

“You’re always here for me Melo. I’m sorry for the times that I can’t be there when you need me.”

“Hey hey hey I’m good. I’m happy and you know that. I don’t cry as much as I used to. I smile more often now so I’m good.”

“I feel so fucked up you know. Like why do I have to cry every year on this day? Why does it still have such an effect on me? I don’t fucken understand why my fucken mind and my fucken heart can’t let go of this shit! I’m in constant pain Melo. Every day. Yes it’s better than the previous years but it still hurts.

My heart still yearns for them. I cry every day for the princess I never had the opportunity to meet. I miss Liyana so much Melo. You know sometimes I feel like she is here running around trying to annoy me. I miss Siyanda so so much and each time I get this pang in my heart, I get angrier because if she had just opened up to me or anyone then she would probably still be here and I wouldn't be stuck crying like some stupid boy."

"Men who cry aren't stupid." I chip in.

"Well I feel stupid for crying for someone who wanted to go. Again, as much as I'm

better than the previous year's I'm still suicidal and it hurts because I really want to go through with it most of the times but then I think about you and mom and how broken you guys would be. I know you especially would blame yourself.

I don't know what to do anymore Melo. I've prayed, I've tried finding a hobby, I've tried writing those letters mom recommended I do, I've tried drinking, I've tried smoking, I've tried it all but nothing works. Nothing helps with the pain. I swear the only thing that will help is death." He says breaking into a sob.

I tighten my hold around his body and allow him to cry. It's been three years since Siyanda took her life and things are still

hard for Bongwe. Today is one of the hardest days of the year because it is Siyanda's birthday. This is one of the days that hit Bongwe the hardest. We usually spend it on bed in tears and this year is no different. Sigh. I'm not mad at Siyanda but I am angry about this pain that my brother is going through.

Bongwe's phone rings and I reach for it the check the caller ID. It's mam'Zonke. Bless her heart. She cares so much about Malibongwe and I believe she is part reason that he is still holding on even though it is so hard.

"It's mam'Zonke." I say.

He sits up and wipes his tears before taking the phone from me.

“Hi ma.” He says faintly.

Shame my baby looks so horrible.

“I’m okay mama, Melo is here so I’m okay.”

I watch as fresh tears make their way down his cheeks. Kanti Simakade why do the good have to go through so much? There are murderers and rapists roaming these streets happily without anything bad happening to them kodwa thina who have

believed in you and followed your teachings since the beginning go through so much. It's unfair and I don't want anyone telling me that to whom much is given much is required or how the toughest soldiers get given the toughest battles.

"I'm hurting yes mama but I won't do that."
He says.

He laughs lightly and that warms my heart. At least he's smiling.

"I know mom and I love you too and yes I promise to come see you tomorrow." He says laughing.

I'm so grateful for mam'Zonke. He hangs up and heaves a sigh. He pulls me into his arms and I rest my head on his chest. He kisses my head repeatedly while I giggle like a little girl. My brother is my first boyfriend struu. He's my main man.

"Would you like to go out for lunch?" He asks.

I'm shocked but I sure am happy that he wants to get some air.

"I look like a boy but I would love to go out for lunch." I say.

“Great! Let me go wash my face so we can get going.” He says getting off of the bed.

My heart right now? It took him weeks to get out of the apartment last year and look at him now. I’m a proud mama bear. I’m proud of the progress he has made and I am proud of the progress he is still to make. I follow him into the bathroom to wash my face. We finish up then head to. I have no idea where to and frankly I don’t care.

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‘Miss Mkhize I hope this text finds you well. I just wanted to check in on you, hope you’re having an amazing day filled with nothing but laughter. Lol that sounds so

rehearsed but yes.

Sincerely,

Mavundla.'

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head.

Sfiso is so random, I can't with him.

Bongwe looks at me expectedly and I shrug.

"It's not Lindo so who is it?" He asks.

"An acquaintance, Sfiso."

"Where did you meet?"

"It's a long story but erm well it's that guy

that wanted to buy my company.”

“MELOKUHLE!” He exclaims.

I expected that.

“Like I said baby it’s a long story.” I say
heaving a sigh.

“Does Lindo know?”

I shake my head.

“Yho Melo ai angizingeni mina.” He says
throwing his hands up.

I never thought of telling anyone about my newly found friendship because I didn't think much of it but now that Malibongwe has just told me to tell Ndo I don't know. Look I know everyone will freak because of the whole threatening debacle and they won't even want to hear what I'd have to say about the person I've dined with.

Sigh,

Okay this is tricky. Very tricky.

"You do realise dad is going to flip right?"

Well thank you Bongwe!

[05/09, 18:31] Mca: FORTY FIVE

Unedited

Ever since my conversation with Malibongwe about my budding friendship with Mavundla I've realised that I should at least let my parents know because well Bongwe is a big mouth at times so I need to beat him to it. It's not even like this bumping into each other occasionally is going to get anywhere but hey.

"Babe."

I turn to look at him and find him looking at me with a concerned look on. I love how he has this slight frown on whenever I zone out

for a sec. We've been looking at holiday destinations and I have a few that have caught my eye. We've thinking of travelling for two months straight and I love, love, love the idea of being away from this city for that long. We're obviously looking at places that don't need visas and hopefully we can visit a few of them.

"Yes love?" I say with a slight smile.

"Are you okay?" He asks walking towards me.

"Ngiright baby, I'm just thinking about going to see my parents today."

“Maybe I should come with.” He says laughing.

I can't help but join in. He knows that as much as dad knows that we're together and in as much as we've had dinner as a family, he still hasn't been introduced to dad as my official man and naye he's not ready for dad's cross examination. I love how protective he is of me and no there is no but coming.

“Let's go Mr Mngomezulu.”

“Usile yazi, you want your father to have me for breakfast while you just watch on.”

“Who? Me? I would never do that to you sir.”
I say chuckling.

I actually would. I'd even cheer dad on because once he starts he just doesn't stop. It's really amazing just how he's only starting now in his older age to behave like his wife. Mom says dad has always been low-key dramatic kodwa I disagree. Well let me say I had never experienced that.

“Yes you baby.”

He cups my face while I wrap my arms around his waist. He is gazing deep into my soul, searching for only what is known to him. I get lost in his eyes for a while before I

feel my tears sting my eyes. My heart sinks to the pit of my stomach and my tears cascade down my face.

“What’s wrong baby?” He asks softly.

My bloody mind is what is wrong! I scream in my head. I just can’t seem to keep my insecurities in check. Yes he loves me but man my infertility plays a huge role in everything. I know he says it’s not a problem but I just can’t lock it away.

“I just love you so much Mngomezulu.”

“And I you maMngomezulu.”

“Mkhize.” I say giggling. “MaMkhize.”

“Enjoy it while it lasts yezwa.” He says whining.

I laugh as I get on my toes to place a kiss on his lips. He places his hand at the back of my neck and pulls me closer. He deepens the kiss while groaning in the process. These thick juicy lips are my everything damn it! How he gently sucks on my bottom lip before sweeping his tongue in. I could literally spend the whole day kissing on this man. In one swift move I’m laid down on the bed with him between my legs. I can feel his bulge knocking against

my thigh. Well hello there.

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I'm on my way home to talk to my parents before I leave for my excursion as Bongwe is calling it. Lindo and I are hoping to leave in a week's time. I left him at home busy finalising some payments and bookings. I'm as excited as a dog seeing its favourite bone. I get home and make my way in. Mom and dad are cuddling on the couch watching TV.

"Hello hello." I greet as I flop myself next to them.

"Hi baby, how are you?"

“Alright and you guys?”

“We’re good. To what do we owe the surprise?” Dad asks eyeing me.

“Can’t a girl just visit her parents? Yhuuu.” I say getting up.

I am going to assume that tattletale Bongwe mentioned something to his father about my visit. Oh well. I head into the kitchen to make myself something to munch on. I find mom’s baked goods and I swear I die and go to heaven. I take one of each and make some tea. After setting everything on a tray I head back to the

lounge. Mom has disappeared.

“Uphi?” I ask.

“Toilet.” He says.

I nod and settle in my seat before tucking in.
I might just move back home just for these.
I swear they’re that good.

“So daddy.” Here goes nothing.

“Yes.”

“Remember Mavundla?” I ask.

“Yes. Is he at it again?” He asks sounding alarmed.

“Actually no. So remember when I went to P.E?”

He nods lightly.

“Well I bumped into him and we spoke, he apologised, we had dinner and yeah.” I say so fast that I doubt he heard me.

I look up and find him looking at me with an amused face on. He chuckles lightly while shaking his head. Okay I don't know what

he's thinking.

“Let me get this straight, you had dinner with the man who had you confined in your house for weeks. The very same man who was threatening you for your company. The man who had us fearing for your life? Is that the person?”

“Dad.”

“No Nqobile my child I'm trying to understand if we're talking about the same person.” He says.

I hang my head and nod. Okay it sounds

bad.

“Hmm I see. Is there anything else?”

“We talk occasionally via text but that’s just it well except for that one time I bumped into him at the mall.” I say.

“Huh, I see.”

“Dad.”

“If you are telling me that you are suddenly friends with this man then I am telling you that you’re stupid and I am disappointed in you futhi I will never accept that friendship.”

“Don’t call me stupid!” I raise my voice.

“Excuse me? Are you raising your voice at me Nqobile?” He asks with a raised eyebrow.

“Do not call me stupid. You know how I feel about that.” I say sternly.

He knows very well just how much I loathe that term especially when it’s not in a playful manner. He knows!

“Then you should know that I wouldn’t use it if it wasn’t befitting. What makes you think

this guy suddenly wants to be your friend? What makes you think his intentions are pure after a death threat? I didn't raise a fool Nqobile! "

"I didn't say his intentions are pure I just said he apologised and we talk from time to time."

"Well then good for you kodwa just know when he goes back to threatening you my door will not be open for you. Stupid Nqobile ustupid!"

"LWANDLE!" Mom shouts.

“Hai stay with your doltish daughter.” He clicks his tongue as he walks out the room.

Did dad and I actually just have a full blown fight? Yes we argue but we hug it out then laugh about it. He has never walked out on me nor have I. This is different.

“What happened?” Mom asks.

I fill her in and by the time I’m done her jaw is on the ground. Firstly because we didn’t really let her in on the security because we didn’t want her freaking out and secondly because dad called me stupid.

“I will not lie to you and say I understand because I don't. How you went from fearing this man to letting him walk you up to your apartment is beyond me. I share the same sentiments as your father on this one Melokuhle. You have to cut all ties with him because trust me this little friendship you have going on is going to end badly. He apologised, you forgave so let it end there.

Now you're going to get up, go find your dad and apologise ngoba you know he hates it when you two argue and clearly this issue is big for him because he doesn't just explode. I'm actually disappointed in your decision and you know it takes a lot for me to be disappointed in you.” She says.

I don't know why this is such a big deal or is it because I've gotten to know Sfiso the human being outside of Mavundla the ruthless businessman? That must be it. The truth is I enjoy engaging in conversations with him and for me to just up and throw that away is going to be hard.

[05/09, 18:31] Mca: FORTY SIX

Unedited

After my conversation with mom I decided to go for a drive just to rid myself of any unwanted anger. I'm not even going to lie and say I'm not hurt by the manner in which dad addressed me. He could've found a better way to get his point across but whatever what's done is done. I just hope that once he's calmed down we can have a

civil conversation. My phone rings interrupting my jam session.

“So we’ve upgraded to phone calls now.” I say.

He chortles and I can’t help but join him.

“Wow I was not expecting such a greeting Miss Mkhize.”

“Oh I bet. Hello Sfiso.”

“Hello Nqobile how are you?”

“Ngright wena?”

“I’m alright. Wenzani?”

“I am driving from and you?”

“I’m waiting for the clock to strike 5:30PM so I can get up out of here.” He says.

“And why can’t you leave now? I mean it’s not even 1PM yet.”

“Because I have to lead by example. I can’t pack up and leave whenever it suits me, what message is that sending out to my staff?”

“Whooah okay ke Mr Boss.” I say chuckling.

“There you go again. Anyway I just wanted to check in and say hi.”

“Well hi.”

“And suddenly my day doesn’t seem like such a drag. Thank you Miss Mkhize.” He says.

“You’re welcome Mr Mavundla.”

“Okay bye.”

“Sharp.” I say before hanging up.

Such a random guy this one. Argh.

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I decided along the way that I hadn't seen my grandmother in a while so I'm going to pop y ad check in on her then I'm going to go see my princess. I actually don't think I'm ready for her dramatic antics yazi. Sigh but sizothini.

“Sawubona ma unjani?”

“Ngyaphila sisi. Your grandmother is out in

the garden you know her angithi.”

“She still doesn’t want to rest?”

“She says she will rest once she’s dead. Mhlwumbe wena ungakhuluma naye and she will listen.”

“Ahh kuphi la. Let me go check on her.”

“Okay sisi.”

MaNtombela is my grandmother’s, I guess care giver. They live together and as long as maNtombela is around then gogo is never going to move out of this house. I

sometimes wish that she could take mom and dad's offer and just move in with them but I understand her independence won't let her do that.

I find her watering her flowers. She looks so beautiful in her floral dress and summer hat. She has on her pink gloves that mkhulu got her. Now those things are worn out but she refuses to let them go. I know it has everything to do with the fact that it reminds her of her husband. Gosh how I miss him. I know he'd be proud of all of us for soldiering on even when things don't seem that great.

One thing my mkhulu taught me was to always push on in life no matter how hard

things get. 'You're a Mkhize blip and that means you can withstand the fire. You can push through even when you don't see a way out.'

I should actually go visit his grave. It's been a while.

"Gogo wami." I hug her from behind.

"My little blip. What a lovely surprise."

"I missed you maMkhize wami." I say kissing her cheek.

"I missed you to my baby. Turn around let

me see you.” I do as I’m told while she gushes over me.

I know we’re going to touch on my weight because that seems to be her favourite subject.

“You look good. I see that Mngomezulu boy is taking care of you still.”

“Yes he is gogo.” I say chuckling.

“Come let’s go make something to drink.”

We make our way into the house and she goes to the bedroom to get cleaned up

while I head to the kitchen. I know that just like mom, gogo always has baked goods stashed somewhere. Bingo! Some crunchies! Now I love how she makes hers. She used more oats than she does flour and that is where the secret to having crunchy lies. She also has her fluffy scones and those gigantic muffins. Look I'm in baked goods heaven today. Hopefully aunty Siba also has some goodies so I can make it three for three.

I set everything on a tray then make some rooibos for gogo. She is going to go off at me but I am having a cup of coffee. I don't get why she buys the stuff if she doesn't want anyone having it. She walks in just as I'm about to pour the water into the mugs.

“I see you found your stash.” She says.

“You know I will always find it. Do you still take one teaspoon of sugar?” I ask with an eyebrow raised.

“Hai mina uma wami died a long time ago phela.” She says laughing.

I join her in laughter while I finish making our drinks. I grab the tray and we head out to sit in the garden.

“Thank you my child.”

I nod lightly and take a bite of my scone.
Heaven!

“So blip how are things with Lindokuhle?”

“They’re good gogo. We’re really good.”

“That’s good. Tell me does he know about your issue?” She asks looking me in the eye.

“He does. We’ve spoken about it.”

She nods lightly before taking a sip of her tea.

“And is he willing to stick around even though his family name may never grow by his blood?” Yhoo.

Why is she making it sound so damn deep?

“He is gogo.”

“Are you sure Melo?”

“I am gogo. I told him about this in the beginning of our relationship and he’s here kodwa we saw a specialist and we’re hopeful.” I say.

“You don’t sound hopeful though.” She says

faintly.

I heave a sigh and wipe my face.

“I’ve walked this road before and well I’m still not a mother so in as much as I’m being positive I’m still leaving a lot of room for disappointment.” I say.

Sigh. I have made peace with the fact that I might never get the opportunity to become a mother but on the bright side, I get to mother my brother’s children. I would love to have my own tiny human though and that is not a secret. It hurts but it is what it is.

“Is he prepared for the disappointment though? You’ve been through it yes kodwa yena? And with you seeing a specialist is he ready because the treatment might not work.”

“He says he’s positive so sizobona khona.”

“Blip you can’t just say that. You need to sit your man down and talk to him. Prepare him for the fact that there might never be a child. Men get excited by the possibility of being fathers and when that possibility is crushed they tend to act up. So have the full conversation with him before anything.”

“I hear you maMkhize.”

“Good and bring him here. I haven’t seen him in years.” She says laughing.

See why I love this woman so much?

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I’m at Khanyi’s because I need to help princess with her vision board angithi.

“How are princess?” Lume asks.

We share a warm hug before I hug aunty.

“I’m good and you?”

“We’re happy that you’re here to take Khanyisile.” Lume says earning him a punch from aunty.

I’m chortling. I wonder what she does that’s so bad. Like my uncle isn’t so dramatic. Khanyi comes running and launches herself into my arms. She is tall and heavy but I hold her any way.

“You came to help me with my vision board?” She asks excitedly.

“I sure did princess. So go put on your shoes so we can go buy everything we’re going to need.”

“Okay.” She walks away.

Before she even gets anywhere she turns back and comes to stand in front of me.

“Remember when you were bleeding and your heart was sore?” she says.

My heart was sore?

“My heart wasn’t sore princess, I was just frustrated that I had to get us cleaned up and the sheets as well.” I say smiling.

“No you were sad. Anyway I’m sorry you

had to be sad. He's also sorry." She says walking away.

"Khnyisile." I call after her.

She ignores me and proceeds to her room. What the hell?

"What happened?" Aunty asks.

"I started my period the night you guys were at the hospital and she freaked out."

"So why were you sad?"

“I don’t know what she is talking about.” I say shrugging.

I make my way to her room hoping to find out what she’s going on about but knowing her I won’t get anything.

[05/09, 18:31] Mca: FORTY SEVEN

Unedited

Just as I thought Khanyisile didn’t let me in on anything but I expected that. She did however let me in on her future plans and how he is going to be the best sister to her baby brother. According to lume, baby boy might come early but they’re prepared for anything. I can’t wait for the new additions. Yazi it seems like aunty and Amanda are

always pregnant around the same time.
Khanyi and Lwandile and now these two but
I'm glad because it means they get to have
an age mate around them.

“Baby are you talking your red shoes?”
Lindo shouts from the bedroom.

Which red shoes? I have more than one pair
of red shoes, can he like be specific?

“Which ones?” I shout back.

“These ones.” He says walking into the
bedroom.

He has a pair or red heels in his hands. I already packed a pair of heels and he saw he saw me doing it. Argh he should just say he likes that pair and he wants me to take it with. Sly man!

“Do you want me to take them with?” I ask shaking my head.

“Yes baby.” He responds in his most innocent voice.

See? Sneaky sneaky but anything to make him happy. After my visit to my family I got back home to a warm tasty meal. He made chicken mac and cheese and I died. A man who can cook is a keeper angithi, and that

is why I am keeping this man. I still haven't spoken to him like my grandmother suggested but that's because I'm planning on doing it on our holiday, far from both our comfort zones. Makes sense right?

"Okay then pack then in."

"Thanks baby."

He doesn't even wait for me to say anything. He's already disappeared. Sigh. So our trip is going to be an African excursion. We're starting with South Africa obviously, spending a few days in our selected places. Tsitsikamma being the most anticipated. I've only been there once in my life and I

was still young so I didn't really grasp the beauty of it, so this is going to be amazing. We're also doing Zimbabwe because, hello Vic Falls! He also found a beautiful resort for us to rest our heads and I cannot wait. Judging from the pictures and reviews, we are in for a treat.

Lesotho is also on our list of go to places, as well as Malawi and obviously Mozambique. Mngomezulu spoke about the Tanzanite stone so Tanzania here we come. I heard that Zambia has the most amazing poets so I'm hoping to see a few shows, preferably at those underground poetry clubs. Yes they do exist, you just need to know where to actually look to find them.

Oooh I can't wait man! I don't think I've ever been this excited about a trip before. Okay maybe I'm lying a bit but I am over the moon.

"I was thinking we could go see Dr Moodley just so we can get the go ahead to travel you know." He says walking into the room.

Dr Moodley is my doctor referred to me by Dr Khan seeing that he can't always be in the country whenever I need to see him. He trusts him so I trust him as well. I actually haven't seen him in a while.

"Hmm I don't know do we need him to clear

us to have sex in our parts of the world?" I ask.

He laughs lightly and flops himself on the bed.

"No baby but we need to be safe angithi. Should there already be something in there then we need to take care of it."

"But we agreed that we would wait for it to reveal itself, so can we stick to that decision." I say softly.

"I know you're scared baby, I am too but at some point we have to go to the doctor to

check ukuthi kwenzakalani.”

“When we come back I promise.”

“Melokuhle.”

“Lindokuhle.”

“I’ve got you baby.” He says pulling me into his arms.

“You’ll got me when we come back please.”
I pull a puppy face.

I know I keep on saying that I’ve left room

for disappointment but it doesn't mean I actually want to be. Sometimes I wish we hadn't gone through with this whole thing because I don't think I will be able to handle the disappointment of not being able to conceive after we've gone through this whole process. Mom usually says I should look at myself in the mirror and therein lays my faith. She says I am her miracle baby meaning that I can produce miracles as well. See the difference between our situations is that she was able to conceive on different occasions while I can't.

“Okay baby just this once but when we come back.”

“I promise you Mngomezulu.”

“Great. Now.”

He dips his head and latches onto my neck. He is kissing, sucking and biting while I hold onto his arms. Is it just me or is he getting bulkier by the day? Yesses!

“Let’s go eat.” He whispers against my neck.

What? I don’t want to eat. Well I want to eat him. Before I can even protest he is out the room, again leaving me yearning for more of him. I’ve realised that he enjoys leaving me wanting more of him and you know what? I can’t wait for the day I give him a taste of his own medicine. I head

downstairs to join him in the kitchen. Smart man already has a packet of biltong out for me. He knows just how to butter me up sometimes. I sit on the counter and watch as he moves around the kitchen putting a meal together.

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We're leaving tomorrow and we are doing a little bit of last minute shopping. He needs more short and so do I, so we decided to go shopping, on him of course! We're having hand in hand around the mall and the stares this drop dead man is getting are making me laugh. Yes I know he's a yummy snack ladies! Just stay looking and not touching.

“These are cute.” He says pointing at a pair of cheeky shorts.

He’s right, they’re amazing. They have lace trimming in the front and I think with my thighs I could rock them.

“And that jumpsuit as well baby.”

I’m shocked at how he’s picking out everything that is short without even complaining. Hmm I think I like this him more than I do the other sides to him. I grab everything and make my way to the fitting room. He wanted to slip in with me but the lady at the door was having none of it. Bummer, there goes our fitting room sex.

He approves of every look which is good for him because I was still going to take them even if he didn't approve.

We pay then head out to go look for his stuff. We find a couple of cute outfits that match mine. Yes I did that! I'm sitting on the couch waiting for him to finish paying so we can go grab some food. I am hungry for days, I could munch on a moving cow.

'It's always a pleasure seeing you.' The message pops up on my home screen.

I look around and I can't see him.

‘Shouldn’t you be at the office? And why didn’t you come say hi?’ I respond.

‘I was rushing for a meeting and I didn’t want to butt heads with your man, I respect your relationship too much to cause problems for you.’

‘I doubt you would’ve but thank you.’

‘Have a lovely day further Nqobile.’

‘Same to you Sfiso.’

I put my phone away and wait for this man. He finishes up and insists on holding all our

bags. Now I look like an unreasonable girl who just took this swiped the hell out of this man's card. We decide to go leave everything in the boot before heading for lunch.

[05/09, 18:31] Mca: FORTY EIGHT

Unedited

The vast array of wildlife on this safari have been breathtaking, more so because we opted for the open vehicle safari. I was obviously all chicken about it but Lindokuhle Mngomezulu was having none of it. After begging and begging and more begging, he finally convinced me to and well here we are parked in the middle of nowhere a few metres away from the king of the jungle.

The ranger explained to us that his knowledge and experience will ensure that we have the best safari we have ever been on. I must say getting up at the crack of dawn for this magnificent view was worth it. God was just showing off when he created nature. The pride is lying there oblivious to our presence while the sun rises in their background. I don't think it gets any better than this.

I have my head rested on this man's chest while his is rested on mine. We're wrapped up in a blanket and I could stay like this forever. If we had thought that fairytales don't exist then surely we were with the wrong people. I believe that I have found my

fairytale with Mngomezulu. I have never been this happy and I can only get happier from here on right? Yes, this love and joy can only go from strength to strength.

“Did you know that a male lion can mate up to 100 times a day in a process that only lasts 17 seconds? They can go at this for around four to five days.” The ranger says.

Lindo chuckles loudly and I look up at him. What’s funny?

“Yini?” I ask.

“I can go 100 times a day kodwa I can last

longer than that 17 seconds.”

“Yeah because 30 seconds is an achievement right?” I say.

He laughs softly while tickling me and I try my utmost best not to burst out in laughter. We were told to keep it down but this man, lord this man.

“Take that back.” He says biting my earlobe.

“Okay okay I take it back.” I say softly.

I turn my focus back to the ranger. Lindo odom sometimes.

“It’s usually lionesses who approach the male of their choosing rather than the male approaching the female.” The ranger says.

Shela ntombi shela!

“Wena you wouldn’t have made your move on me if I didn’t ne.” He whispers in my ear.

“I wouldn’t vele.” I say chuckling.

That is the truth though. When we first hooked up I was still in a place where I wasn’t sure whether I wanted to do this whole love thing again. Honestly I just

needed him to scratch my itch in the beginning but as we got to spend more time together yeah I fell for the guy.

“You suck yazi.” He says.

I chuckle light and shush him. I’m trying to take notes here phela.

“Lionesses are often seen biting males during mating. This is because the male’s spiked penis can cause pain when withdrawn, which understandably makes her want to retaliate, but nature has a purpose for this, because in hurting her it stimulates ovulation to occur.”

“Interesting.” Lindo says.

“Go on.” I say.

I know he has more to say on this.

“It means I have to dig you deeper in order to plant something in there.”

I roll my eyes while shaking my head. I’m not even going to entertain that. We spend the rest of our morning on the game drive and I must say I truly enjoyed myself. Being so close to nature did something to soul. I should actually go on a game drive with my grandmother, I know she would enjoy this.

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I'm lying on top of the bed reading a book. Lindo is out doing God knows what. I don't even want to know, ngoba I am enjoying my downtime without him trying to sex me up every two minutes. Yes I enjoy being intimate with him, in fact I loooove it but sometimes I just want to walk around naked without being looked at like a snack.

The door opens and my man walks in with a bouquet of flowers in his hands. A wide smiles breaks out onto my face. I haven't received flowers in a very long time actually. He walks over and places a kiss on my cheek.

“Beautiful flowers for a gorgeous lady.” He says.

“These are so beautiful baby, thank you.” I respond with a wide smile plastered across my face.

“I realised that I haven’t actually doing my job as your man kodwa that is about to change baby. I’m going to place all my focus on us.”

“Ndo.”

“I love you Melokuhle and I hope that no

matter what you will always remember that okay.”

“Okay baby, I love you too.” I say cupping his face.

This man right here, words can't even express just how much I value him. This man is my life. My everything. My heartbeat. uMngomezule wam.

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“Hey sis.”

“Hey baby how are you?” I ask him.

“I’m fine thanks. I was here at your place ne and a delivery came through. It’s a big ass box and I don’t know what is in it. Should I open it?” He asks.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. Malibongwe Simphiwe Mkhize is such a nosy child sometimes. Why would he want to open my box? I mean it’s mine and not ours. Yhoo this boy.

“No don’t! Who is it from?”

“I don’t know.”

I hear some shuffling. He better not be

opening that bloody box. Lindo tightens his hold around my body and begins sucking on my neck. I want to moan but I'm on the phone with my brother. He pinches my nipples and I can't hold it in.

“There's a card and it just says, signed M.”

The last time I received a gift signed M I assumed it was from Mngomezulu but I was totally off so I don't want to say anything just in case I am. If this box is really from Sfiso then mina naye were going to have a problem. He can't be sending gifts to my house.

“Oh okay. I'll take a look at it when I get

home.”

“How long are you guys travelling for?”

“A month or so but if it’s too lekker to come back then we’re definitely not coming back.”
I say chuckling.

“Don’t you dare but please do enjoy and I promise not to let your flowers die.”

“Thank you baby, I love you.”

“I love you too Melo. Sharp.” We hang up.

I settle back into my man's arms and enjoy our cuddle session. These intimate moments always leave me feeling vulnerable. I always feel like he has the ability to dig in and see parts of me that I don't want him to.

"Melo."

"Baby."

"Why are you scared of doing the test?" He asks.

I heave a sigh. We're doing this?

“Because I’m scared the results might come out negative and I don’t know how you will handle that. Like I’ve been down this road before and I know the disappointment kodwa you don’t futhi you’re so excited about the possibility of having a mini you that I feel you will be devastated should you not be able to get what you want.

Are you certain when you say that a child is not a deal breaker for you? Will you be able to live the rest of your life without having fathered a child? I know there are a lot of options available to us but it won’t be the same as going through the cravings and feeling the kicks and and and.” I say.

“I love you and yes it’s going to hurt and honestly I don’t know how I will take the news should they be negative.” He pauses and heaves a sigh. “I’d always thought I would be a father you know but I love you and if we can’t conceive naturally then so be it.”

“Lindokuhle I need you to be certain because you say this now but-”

“But nothing and anyway we’re being positive angithi.” He says.

Positive!

Be positive.

Positive, he says. Ai sizobona.

[05/09, 18:32] Mca: FORTY NINE

Unedited

Whenever I think of Zambia I always think about how hectic their gay laws are.

Imagine not being able to fully express and live your truth because the law says so.

Imagine spending 14 YEARS in jail because of your sexual preference. I don't get it. Yes in some cases being with the same sex is a choice however in most cases umuntu doesn't choose to be attracted to the same sex.

Imagine not being able to fully show affection to the person you're with because of the fear of being locked up, raped, or killed. What a cruel society we live in. That time umuntu isn't even using your body to commit this 'sin' as they always put it. It's funny how some sins are greater than other, like yeah you killed someone, how could you kodwa wena fagot, you have committed the greatest sin known to man.

Sigh. Kunzima out here.

Anyway, my man and I are in Zambia and tonight is out last night here which kind of saddens me because it is such a beautiful country and I feel like I haven't seen enough of it. Heck I haven't seen enough of it. I wish

we could extend our stay but man says we'll come back one day. I don't want to come back one day, I want to stay now.

The warm heart of Africa has captured my heart and I wouldn't mind living here. We have had the honour of seeing the majestic Victoria Falls and I would've loved to see the myriad of waterfalls in the country however the main ones that I would've loved to see are located in the northern provinces which are very remote. We were told that a two or three week self-drive circuit would be the only practical way to explore these. It was a bummer but seeing the Zambezi River kind of made up for it. I swear I died and went to heaven and came back. I've said it before and I'll say it

again, nature is very beautiful. If I were to ever get compared to nature I would be a very happy girl.

Lindo and I are staying in the capital and have blended right in. Being from the city ourselves the restlessness of Lusaka is normal to us but what I love the most is the mix of people and culture in the city. You get the sense that in as much as you're in the heart of the country you are still connected to the rural parts which for me is a beautiful thing. We have explored Livingstone and when I say I felt at home I mean it. The tour of the Livingstone museum was one of my best experiences.

You know being on this trip with Lindo has

shown me that there is still so much that we don't know about each other, like the fact that he's an adrenaline junkie. Lord I have done the most ridiculous activities that I had never thought I would ever do, EVER, in my life. This man had me whiteriver rafting. I swear I pissed in my pants while he was laughing and enjoying himself. Man had me go on the gorge swing. Now it felt like that little full body harness of theirs was going to snap and I was going to go straight into hell. A 50 metres free fall, 50 bloody metres of falling before the bloody swinging kicked in. After several swings I was lowered to the ground where I had to make my way back up to the top. Bloody Mngomezulu purchased a DVD of my jump and is planning on showing it to Bongwe first. I'm going to kill him.

We also went on a horse ride and I must say I enjoyed that to the fullest. Obviously adventure guy was bored but he had to suck it up. We also took a cultural tour to a local village where we got the opportunity to help prepare a meal the traditional Zambian way. Lord the people of Toka Leya village are the warmest and their hospitality is out of this world. We also had the honour of attending a traditional ceremony which left me yearning for me. I need to know more about Zambia and it's diverse culture.

The river cruise, my word, so tranquil and the fact that we were surrounded by hippos and crocodiles made it that much more. I cannot even begin to describe the Zambezi

sunset, watching the sun hovering over the water while in my man's arms was the highlight of my trip. We had a spa date the next morning which was needed because we spent the entire night making love. My thighs are stiff from all the bouncing he had me do but I'm not complaining.

Right now we're getting ready for our night out. I was able to find an underground poetry club and that is our stop after dinner. I'm excited to get some meaningful poetry in me. Lindo walks in just as I'm tying my shoelaces. He looks devilishly handsome in his all black outfit. He is his father's replica my goodness. That Mngomezulu height, arrogance, and look.

“You’re staring.” His voice snaps me out of my ogling session.

I chuckle lightly and finish up. No makeup, just lipstick and we are ready to go.

“You look gorgeous muhles.” He says pulling me into his arms.

He turns me around so that my back is to his front and looks at me through the full length mirror. I’m wearing a black bustier with a high waist jean and black sneakers. I’m going to throw on a tribal print jacket to complete the look.

“What did I do to get so lucky?” He asks.

I smile widely and shrug. I don't know how to answer that yazi. He grabs his phone and snaps a few mirror usies, yes it's called a usie ngoba he's not alone in the shot. I don't mean to brag but man we look so good. He is the perfect height and size for me.

“You ready to go muhles?”

“Yes, let me just grab my jacket and bag.” I say.

He kisses my head before gabbing my stuff for me and we head out.

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We're sitting in this restaurant and I am having kapenta which is small sardine type fish that is fried in oil, tomatoes and onions served with nshima which is kind of like pap. This is authentic Zambian cuisine and I am loving it.

"So are you having a good time on this trip?" He asks.

"I am baby, are you?"

"I am. I wish we could spend all our time travelling."

“Right? However we do need careers to maintain such habits.” I say chuckling.

“Speaking of careers, dad said I should come have a chat with him when we get back home.”

“You’re ready to go back to work?” I’m concerned.

“I’m going to go out of my mind doing nothing so I guess I am but I don’t want to be CEO.”

“What does your dad think about that?”

“We haven’t really touched on it but sizobona. I just don’t want to find myself in that space I had found myself in you know. I don’t want to put strain on our relationship or on myself.”

“I understand baby but I think this time you’ll know just how to spread your time between everything you know.”

“Yeah futhi with you at home you can afford to come to a few meetings with me.” He says playfully.

“You seeeeee. Isssa win win!” I respond cheerfully.

All I want is for him to do what makes him happy and fulfils him. That's it.

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The ambiance in this place screams secret. The lights are slightly dimmed which always makes a room feel somehow. A beautiful tall and dark goddess takes the stage and I'm left breathless. She is the epitome of an African QUEEN. Now I'm grateful that I'm sitting right next to the stage.

"It's strange how a few short seconds can lead you in a whole new direction.

It alters how you think and act and see your own reflection.

From a single moment on, my life was forever changed.

Like everything I previously knew had suddenly been rearranged.

No one will ever understand just how I felt that day.

But deep within this poem I shall try to convey.

I cannot even begin to illustrate the repulsive person I once knew.

I intend to simply express the horror I went through.

I was abruptly pinned against the wall of a hard, rough concrete stairwell, at two AM, in

Mexico, where not a soul was likely to dwell.

Suddenly I was captured, no possible way to escape.

Wondering if u deserved it, it was truly my fate.

I tried to fly away, but my wings he had been broke.

I was like an innocent cow that he used to prod and poke.

My mind filled with confusion, and his filled with lust.

He took another part of me with each and every thrust.

Tears like elegant pearls gracefullu danced

down my face.

I peered into his soul with a firm look of disgrace.

His cold touch like a vacuum, sucking out life in me.

His ears were wide open but he wouldn't hear my plea.”

Lindo gets up and walks out and I rush after him. I find him leaning with his forehead against the wall. I hold him from behind and rest my head on his back. His body is literally shaking and he is scaring me.

“Baby what's wrong.”

“We just live in a sick world and ya. The possibility of the women in my life going through that is scary, I mean mom went through it and I have you and Enhle and I can’t always be there to protect you. It’s just a scary thought.”

“Baby.” I say softly.

I don’t know what to say. I can’t say that it will never happen to us because that’s not really guaranteed. Sigh. But my heart swells at the sight of a vulnerable Mngomezulu. I love it when he expresses how he actually feels.

We decide to ditch poetry night because it

started off on a gloomy note and head back to the hotel to have our own party. A party for two I can always do.

[05/09, 18:32] Mca: FIFTY

Unedited

I've been awake for over two hours now but I can't seem to get out of bed because my heart isn't ready for the day. Today is our final day of our wonderful vacation and we are in the ever beautiful Lesotho.

Sigh.

Where do I even begin to let you in on the beauty of this country, MY GOODNESS? Let

me start on our trip from Maseru to Katse Dam. We drove for about 6 hours through the picturesque Maloti mountains. The second we entered the hilly region, we were welcomed by snow covered mountains which were absolutely breathtaking. The higher we went the snow began travelling along side us. I swear I felt like a little kid in a candy store. Yes I've seen snow before but that was years ago. This man I'm with looked at me like I was some alien.

See the thing is he is used to seeing snow because he was a frequent visitor in the queens land. Well he should leave us basis people to gush in peace. Anyway when we got to the top and actually got the chance to see the whole view of the valley, I swear I

died. Everything, the view, the breeze, the sun, everything was just working together to create a magnificent memory in my mind. My moment was disrupted by Mngomezulu throwing a snowball directly on my face. And that ladies and gentlemen was how our snow fight started.

By the time we had to go back we were dog tired and the sun was already set. The moon was out to play and the area was sparkling due to the reflection from. The sky was so clear that it left me mesmerised. I don't think I will ever get another opportunity like this again. CONTENT. That's the word to describe how I feel right now.

He mumbles some inaudible sentence as he turns to give me his back. I snuggle closer and place a wet kiss on his back before resting my head. I've gotten the pleasurable honour of getting to know this man on a much deeper level and I have fallen deeper for him. Not only is he handsome but he is fun, intelligent, caring, a big softie – yes this big man is so soft it's amazing.

Have I mentioned that I don't want this trip to end? Gosh. Today we're doing our final activity and that is visiting one of the orphanages around the area. On our snowboarding day we met a couple who are from Botswana. It turns out the wife owns the orphanage we're going to and they

invited us to come and see how things are run and everything. I won't lie, I was hesitant at first but in the end I gave in and we'll here we are. Hopefully I'll be able to keep my emotions in check, because I try by all means to avoid children that aren't within my family but hey.

I roll out of bed and make my way to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. I finish up then make a cup of coffee from myself. I head outside to sit by the balcony and take in this beauty for the last time. I'm definitely coming back here soon, maybe with my siblings. Yeah we haven't had our downtime in a while. I guess I've planned our next trip.

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I'm dressed in sweats and a hoodie because the breeze here doesn't play, futhi we're going to be running around with kids the whole day so it seemed very practical. Lindo is also dressed in the exact same outfit as I am. SMH,

'I want to look as pretty as you baby.' He said.

I have no words for him. We arrive at the orphanage and I must say it is beautiful. The house is a grey triple storey house and judging from what we're seeing, it promises to be a positive environment. We make our way inside and we're welcomed by Warona

walking in with a toddler holding her hand.

“You made it!” She exclaims.

We share a hug and she shakes Mngomezulu’s hand before she leads us to where her husband John is. He’s sitting in the living room watching cartoons with a group of children. Loud laughter erupts in the room and I’m assuming what we’re watching just got to its funny point. These little humans are cracked up and it is a beautiful sight to watch.

John gets up and greetings are exchanged. Lindo joins him while I head to the kitchen with Warona. She introduces me to the

chefs and the caregivers as well as the cleaners and security guards. I must say this is top notch stuff. We make our way outside and settle on the swings. The play area is huge by the way. It is a full park at the back and you can tell that the kids enjoy these facilities on a daily.

“So Melo how are you?” She asks.

“I’m good and you?”

“I’m good. Thank you for accepting our invitation. It means a lot to us.”

“Thank you for the invite.”

“I’ll show you around the facility a bit later once the rest of the squad has woken up.” She says with a bright smile on her face.

“Of course. So how many children do you have here?”

“We currently house 35 kids but we’re hoping to expand to at least 50 in this house before finding another location for more.”

I nod lightly.

“And their ages?”

“They range from 2 months to 17 years. We only have one newborn you so she gets all the attention which she loves wholeheartedly.” She says chuckling.

“I know I would too. I mean a whole house filled with people gushing over me.” I say.
“ So why did you decide on Lesotho?” I ask.

“We have a home back home in Botswana and i don’t know I fell in love with Lesotho. I knew that there were people who needed my help and with what I had, we started this. My purpose is to help God’s children and I am fulfilling it.”

I nod in acknowledgement. What she is

doing is very beautiful and I want to get involved somehow.

“So how long have you and Lindo been together?” She asks.

“Just a few months going on a year and how have you been married?”

“5 years.” She says in a proud tone.

Watching her and John interact you cannot miss the love that they share. He adores her and that gives her the confidence to hold her head up high.

“Congratulations. The love you share is truly beautiful to watch.” I say genuinely.

“Thank you. It’s hard but it’s all worth it. I love that man.”

We continue chatting about random things for a while until we’re told that the youngest member of the family is awake. I also can’t wait to gush over her.

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Have you ever laid your eyes on something and immediately fallen in love? One look at her and my heart was taken by her. I love her. I want her. She is so beautiful. She is light in complexion and has beautiful

marble eyes. She has a cute pout on right now and I'm at a loss for words.

"Her mother left her at the gate and that was that. We named her Nthabiseng because she has brought a lot of joy in our lives." Warona says.

I'm still gushing over this angel. I am taken.

I feel him wrap his arms around my waist then rest his chin on my shoulder. In my heart this is such a beautiful moment and I want to experience it so bad. You see why I didn't want to come here?

“You two are such a beautiful couple and you are definitely going to make beautiful parents.” Warona says snapping a few pictures.

“She is so beautiful baby.” Lindo whispers in my ear.

She wraps her tiny hand around his finger. I don't want to let go but I know he wants to hold her as well. I hand her to him and he has the widest smile I have ever seen on him. They look so cute together.

“When you two have one, I want to be there when he or she arrives because this man is going to make the best father around.”

Warona says.

“I agree.” John says walking in. “He had those kids eating out the palm of his hand.”

“They’re such easy kids.” Lindo says chuckling.

“No they’re not but clearly they like you.” Warona adds in.

We have our little adult session with baby Nthabiseng before having to go out and join the older kids. I get to feed Nthabi and my heart swells. Oh Lesotho has just sealed its place in my heart. I am definitely coming

back for this one.

I can't believe that our trip is over and we're going back to reality. Sigh

[05/10, 13:32] Mca: FIFTY ONE

Unedited

Home sweet home.

Malibongwe has been living here, I can tell by the smell of weed in the air. This boy is turning my house into a dagga den. I think it's time I take back my key from him ngoba this is too much now. Clearly he's doing much better. Argh. I throw my bag and jacket on the coffee table before flopping

myself on the couch. Lindo walks in dragging our bags and leaves them in the middle of the room then comes to join me on the couch.

He pulls me into his arms and I rest my head on his chest. Home. To say that I have enjoyed our weeks of travels would be an understatement. Africa is such a beautiful continent filled with rich, diverse cultures. I think we all need to see a little bit of it before we depart from the land of the living. I wouldn't mind going on this trip again.

“Are you happy?” I ask him.

“Very much so maMngomezulu and you?”

“I am Ndo, I really am.” I respond genuinely.

Sigh. Happiness flows all in and around me.

“I miss Nthabiseng.” He says sulking.

I don't blame him, I miss her too. That tiny human is so precious and I couldn't out her down. We were meant to come back yesterday but I just wanted a little more time with her so we checked out of the hotel then spent the night at the orphanage. Lindo was running up and down with those kids much to mme Gladys's annoyance. I spent all my time with Warona and little Nthabi. God, that one stole my heart and my

whole entire being.

Lindo and I spent the night with her, nappy changing, feeding and all. At some point in the night I found myself in tears because I was experiencing something that I desire with my entire being. Having to leave her this morning was the hardest thing I've ever had to do but I promised to come check on her soon.

"You could always go back you know." I say.

"I'd love to baby but ahhh anyway are you planning on going back to work now that you're back?"

“Nope. I’m putting the final touches on my secret project so I need to focus on that.”

“Still won’t tell me vele?”

“Nope uzobona nje.” I say getting up.

I make my way to our bedroom and I’m greeted by the box Bongwe was talking about. I wonder what this guy decided to send. I open it and on top of the bubble wrap is a note.

‘Miss Mkhize

I do apologise if I am over stepping my mark, I just wanted to say thank you for

your input even though you're going to say you did nothing, what you added onto the proposal helped seal the deal and for that I am grateful.

This is just a token of my appreciation. I hope you enjoy it.

Sfiso.'

I toss the card aside and remove the bubble wrap. I don't know whether I should laugh or ini. This man bought me the entire set of Ziyanda appliances. I remember we joked about it during dinner but for him to actually but the set. Wow.

“And this?” Lindo asks walking in.

He picks the card up and reads it before putting it back.

“Who’s Sfiso?” He asks.

“An acquaintance.”

“An acquaintance that has your address?”
He asks chuckling.

I turn to look at him and he has his hard face on. Now how do I tell him that Sfiso is Mavundla? He’s going to blow a gasket.
Ngeke.

“Yes baby.” That’s all I say.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head. I know this man and I know that his mind is running on 200 right now. He’s angry and he is trying so hard to keep it together. This is one thing I don’t like about Lindo, his anger. He literally blows up in seconds and it is not a pretty sight.

“I once told you what would happen if I were to find out ukuthi uyangijolela angithi?”

Now it’s my turn to chuckle.

“I don’t appreciate how you’re always insinuating that I’m cheating on you. Anyway I wouldn’t be as dumb as to allow my side to deliver shit at my house. So you can pack that little whatever you want to call it that you just tried to pull away.”

“Okay ke tell me who is Sfiso?”

“My answer will not be different this time round, Sfiso is an acquaintance. Nothing more.” I make my way towards him.

I wrap my arms around his waist and gaze deep into his soul. He’s so jealous, it’s almost cute except Mngomezulu’s jealousy is scary. I saw it when I received those

flowers and he lost it.

“I hate that you always assume the worst of me before you even attempt to ask. I love you Lindokuhle and I wouldn’t play you like that.” I say softly.

“You’re a gorgeous woman Melokuhle and I get scared sometimes.”

“You don’t have to baby.”

“But I do because at some points I feel like I don’t deserve you.” He says before heaving a sigh.

“You deserve me Lindo, you love me and I you. You deserve me baby.”

“Okay baby.” He places a kiss on my lips.
“So what did Sfiso get you?” He asks.

“Appliances.” I say.

“HmMMM.” He places a kiss on my forehead before letting me go and walking go.

Sigh. He’s sulking but he’ll come around.
Right?

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We've been back for a few days now and Lindo left for Cape Town yesterday. It's all part of his integration back into the company. As long as he's happy and working then I guess I'm good. He's coming back in a two days time because we have an appointment with the doctor to see if anything is baking in the oven. Honestly I don't think there is because I would've noticed the changes but anyway we'll see.

Right now I'm on my way to see Amanda and Bandile. I haven't seen them in a while and I must admit I miss them more than I care to admit. The second I step into the house I am greeted by chaos. Lwandile and Khanyisile are singing out loud and no it is not a pleasant sound.

“Hi guys.”

“Hi Melo.” They chorus back.

I won't even attempt to make conversation with them. Bandile walks in from outside and he just shakes his head. I guess he also doesn't get it. We share a warm hug before heading outside.

“Where's your wife?”

“She's not feeling too well so she's snapping.” He says.

“Is it the pregnancy?” I ask.

“Yeah the morning sickness which isn’t just in the morning is really bad this week.” He says sounding sad.

Shame my brother wants nothing ka his precious Amanda and I know if he could he would take the sickness on himself. She is one blessed woman to have found a man who would literally do just about anything for her.

“Argh man hopefully it’ll get better as time goes.”

“Yeah I hope so. Anyway wena how was your trip?” He asks.

“It was amazing Ndile, like I feel lighter and my mind is clearer and I’m just more geared up for life now.”

That trip was more than just a fun vacation but it renewed my energy and my thirst for life.

“That’s good sis. Anything that renews your strength you know I’m all for.” He says.

“And that adorable princess?”

“Nthabi, we met her at an orphanage in

Lesotho.”

“How did you feel about that? The whole being surrounded by kids? Phela I know you avoid being in such situations with everything in you.”

“Ahhh like Ndile I’ve been crying over this baby thing for years now and I have honestly accepted that it just won’t happen for me so yeah but I was fine. I didn’t feel like digging a hole and burying myself.”

He scoots closer and pulls me into his arms.

“I pray that God grants you a miracle each

day Melo. If anyone deserves to experience the whole joy of pregnancy and motherhood it is you. I remember how you always held my hand when we were younger and how you made sure that I was eating before you would eat anything. You took care of Bongwe and I like it was your responsibility and you still do along with my child and our sister. I believe that God is a God of miracles and that this is the last time we're being all sob about this. What you desire, you will be granted."

"And if it doesn't happen then it is also still fine." I say.

"And if it doesn't happen then it is also still fine." He repeats

I love my brother and it's moments like these that I cherish more than anything else.

[05/10, 13:33] Mca: FIFTY TWO

Unedited

I'm on my way home from my doctor because I needed to have my blood drawn for tomorrow. The doctor said I could just do it tomorrow but I don't want to spend the entire day in that environment. Like I have been saying all along, I don't know how I feel about this visit but sekuzobonakala khona. My phone rings disturbing my session.

"Hey."

“Melo I’m on my way, I should be there in about 30 minutes.” She says softly.

I know my friend and she sounds so down right now. We haven’t spoken in a while because I was travelling and so was she. She had managed to book a gig in Tokyo and for us that is a big deal. I hope everything is okay.

“Are you okay?” I ask.

“We’ll talk when I get there.” She says before hanging up.

Okay now I'm concerned. Rea is the bubbly, light in the room and when she is down you can literally feel it. I pray it's nothing deep. Let me make my way to the market to grab a few things for us. Comfort food is what we're having today because I get the feeling that we're going to need it as well as alcohol. Lots and lots of alcohol for that matter.

I buy everything I need then make my way home. I hope my brother doesn't decide to pop in unexpectedly today. Speaking of Malibongwe, mom wants him to move back home because she went to go check on him and found nothing but alcohol in his fridge and takeaway packages in the bin. He is literally surviving on alcohol and junk. For

me that isn't really a big deal because at least he's eating. I get worried when he doesn't eat at all but he hasn't had an episode in a while so I'm happy about that.

I arrive home and get straight into cooking. I'm making pap with chicken intestines and feet. I'd add in giblets as well but they take too long to cook. A knock comes through the door as I'm rinsing the chicken feet. I wipe my hands and rush to go open. Rea oh my Rea, looks so gorgeous. Okay she's always gorgeous, maybe it's because I haven't seen her in a very long time.

"Hey baby." I say pulling her in for a hug.

“I missed you.”

“I missed you too.” I say squeezing her tighter.

I don't want to let go. If we could, we'd stay in this position for ever but that's not practical. We pull back and make our way into the kitchen. The smile on her face means my choice of meal has been approved and I can cook it in peace. I finish rinsing everything then throw it all in the pot. I get the ready cleaned intestines from this one specific lady at the market. She cleans them so well that even rinsing them feels like a waste. I could never get them that clean. Never.

“You look smashing Melo, I see Lindo is hitting it right.”

I laugh loudly while shaking my head. I forget just how idiotic she can get sometimes but I love her as she is.

“Ke re bona from all angles babes, all angles.”

“Ohh the dick love babes the dick love.” She says dramatically.

See what I mean?

“Wena, is Kabelo still hitting it?” I ask.

She chuckles lightly while shaking her head. Hawu what does that even mean? Haai let me leave her a bit. I grab two glasses and a bottle of wine along with some biltong and Doritos. She adds in a packet of gummies and we make our way to the living room. We can't cuddle up in bed anymore because indoda and the guestroom doesn't feel the same. I fill our glasses and take a sip out of mine. She digs into the biltong and moans in appreciation, I don't blame her, that stuff is good. It's no wonder Bongwe comes here just to munch on.

“So how was Tokyo.” I ask.

“The honour of being booked Melo. Like girl you know I’ve been booed there before but the fact that I got booked for one of the biggest fashion houses that is still surreal. I feel like I’m going to wake up from this dream and I am going to realise that it was just that, a dream. I don’t know.”

“Well it wasn’t a dream baby, you legit walked the hell out of that stage and solidified your spot in this industry. If they didn’t know who Rea was then they definitely know her now. I’m so proud of you pumpkin and I know you are going to reach for the stars from here on out. Bona the modelling world is yours for the taking!”

“Have I ever told you I appreciate you?”

“I don’t mind hearing it again.”

“Well I appreciate you Melokuhle Mkhize, so much so that I have decided to make you an aunt.” She says.

Huh? An aunt? It takes a while for it to actually click. Is this one saying she’s pregnant? What? How?

“You’re pregnant?” I whisper.

She nods repeatedly with tears falling down her face. Oh man. I don’t know whether

those are happy tears or what but knowing Rea she's not exactly thrilled about this.

"I feel so bad Melo."

"Why?" I ask pulling her into my arms.

"Because I don't want this. This wasn't part of my life plan and here I am expecting mara wena this is your dream you want the whole family set up but you can't have it the natural way. It hurts me Melo and the fact that I even considered abortion crushes me. I can't be so cruel when my best friend has it so tough." She says crying.

I tighten my hold around her body and allow her to let it out. I don't have a response for her. I have learnt to put aside my feelings and actually enjoy and celebrate when my people bring life into this world because I get to be a part of their life and enjoy the journey with them.

"I know that you're scared but I'm here for you and so is D, heck I know he is going to be beyond excited. I obviously won't encourage you to have an in fact I will try my best to talk you out of it, not because I can't bare children but because are a gift and the fact that he has already chosen a home in your womb attests to the fact that he already has a purpose in life."

“I’m so scared Melo kamo nna le Kabelo aren’t even dating we’re just fucking and now we’re bringing baby into our messed up situation.”

“I don’t think Kabelo is unreasonable. Just talk to him and see what he says then we can take it from there kodwa even if he doesn’t want the baby then ku right ngoba you’ve got us.”

“I love you.”

“I love you too pumpkin and we’re going to be just fine yezwa.”

She nods lightly as she continues to cry. I hope that Kabelo will decide to step up not for Rea's sake but for this child. Too many people are walking around with scars of their childhood weighing them down all because one or both parents didn't want to step up.

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Lindo and I are the doctor getting our results. The main test was the pregnancy test ngoba he believes that I'm pregnant so we're here for that.

“Now we found the pregnancy hormone in your blood-”

“So she’s pregnant?” Lindo cuts the doctor off excitedly.

“Unfortunately the tests came back negative for pregnancy.”

“But the hormone.”

“What that suggests is that you were pregnant but unfortunately you miscarried. I am so sorry.” The doctor says.

[05/10, 13:33] Mca: FIFTY THREE

Unedited

“Are you okay?” I ask him as we step into the house.

He nods lightly and disappears into the kitchen. I head to our bedroom and change out of outfit into my pyjamas and slide into the blankets. He walks in and goes into the bathroom. He walks back in and moves around the room.

“I’m going out.” He announces.

“Do you want to talk?” I ask softly.

“Nah. I’ll see you later.”

“Ndo.”

“Yeah.”

“Please just hold me.” I say softly.

“I’ll see you later Melo.” He walks out leaving me crushed.

After the doctor confirmed everything I instantly went numb. My mind drifted off to the night I started my period while I was with Khanyisile and how heavy they were. I also thought about her riddles about the baby and it all suddenly made sense. There were only two people in the family who were pregnant, well who we know are pregnant and they’re both still both carrying so it means she was referring to me.

I guess I was so negative about the possibility of ever falling pregnant that I didn't even think that she was referring to me. I don't know how I feel honestly. I think I'm okay because I didn't know about the pregnancy, I don't know. Ndo on the other hand I can tell is crushed. That man so badly wants to be a parent that it hurts me to know I can never bare him children. I wish he could've stayed and talked to me but I understand he needed his space.

I sink into the blanket and shut my eyes. I just need to rest for a little bit. Just for a bit.

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I'm woken up by my phone ringing. Without even attempting to open my eyes I reach for it and answer.

"Hello."

"Hey baby how are you." Mom's voice comes through.

"I'm good and you mom?"

"You sound out of it what's wrong?"

"Nothing I was just sleeping and you woke me up." I say.

“Oh I’m sorry. I just wanted to find out if you’ll be at Sunday lunch.”

Today is Friday. I don’t know if I will be good company so I won’t commit to anything as yet. Futhi my mother knows just how to get under my skin along with her husband.

“I’m not sure mommy but I will confirm with you or I’ll just rock up. It’s not like my one plate is going to mess up with your calculations.” I say chuckling.

She giggles softly and my heart swells a bit. The sound of my mother laughing is all I need to get through some moments. I have this strong urge to let her in on what is

happening but I just want to talk to Lindo first before telling everyone else.

“You’re right. Okay but I do hope that you will make it because I miss you princess.”

“I miss you too mom but if I don’t see you on Sunday I will see you sometime next week.” I say.

“Okay my baby. Let me leave you to your nap. I love you.”

“I love you too. Sharp.” I say before hanging up.

I check the time and it's 4:42PM. Lindo has been gone since before midday. I want to call but he might not answer his phone and I think that would hurt me so I will wait for him to come back home. I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom to wash my face and rinse my mouth. I make my way to the kitchen to get started on dinner. Spaghetti and mince should do. Everything comes together and by 5:30 I am done with everything.

I grab a bottle of wine and go settle on the couch. I'm staring at this blank screen and it is reflecting exactly what I am feeling. A small part of me keeps going back to all those times he asked me to do the test but I refused. Maybe just maybe if I had

listened then we would be talking a different story right now. A lone tear escapes my eye down my cheek but I catch it before it invites others. I guess this really isn't for me then.

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It's 11:30 PM and I am on my fourth bottle of wine. I've sipping slowly hoping that Lindo will come back but still nothing. I'm worried that something might've happened to him out there. The least he could do is let me know that he's okay. I down my drink and just as I'm about to clean up, he walks in. He doesn't even greet, he just makes his way to the bedroom. Sigh. I clear my mess before turning the lights off and heading to bed.

He's sitting on the bed staring into space. His eyes are bloodshot red and his face cold and hard. Sigh. I sit next to him and try to take his hand in mine but he slides it away.

"Ndo." I say softly.

"I'm hurt Melokuhle. I am so fucken hurt and the fact that I asked you countless times to take the test is also adding onto the pain."

"I'm sorry." That's all I manage to say.

“Yeah sharp.” He says getting up.

“Lindo you’re hurting me by not talking to me. You’re not saying anything to me.”

“I just want to sleep.” He says then walks out.

I don’t understand what just happened right now. I don’t know whether to go after him or not. I decide to get into bed and just sleep.

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When I woke up this morning Lindo was already gone and when I tried to call him,

his phone went straight to voicemail. I understand that he is hurting but I need him. I want to feel his pain, I want him to cry and let me in on how he's exactly feeling. I need him here with me. He can sulk while he's here.

Sigh. I'm still numb, however I think that I realise what happened. I lost my baby. Sigh. I down my drink before going to take a shower. I finish up, get dressed then head out to the mall. I find myself in a baby store looking at rompers. I can't believe that a tiny human can bring so much pain and happiness in one's life. I grab a white romper and booties then go pay for them. I head over to D's, that's where Rea is staying for a few days.

“My beautiful daughter.” He opens his arms for me and I walk into his embrace.

“You look so fresh D.” I say chuckling.

“I have a date.” He whispers. “Don’t tell your friend, she’s in a foul mood.” He adds on.

“My lips are sealed.” I say softly.

He kisses my cheek before letting go. I laugh lightly and make my way to her room. I find Rea cuddled up with her teddy while watching Eat, Pray, Love. I kick my shoes off and snuggle closer to her.

“I told Kabelo and he was shocked but he wants to step up, so much so that he wants us to make our relationship official because he loves me. He even wants to send his family to come and pay damages before I head back to the big apple. Melo what am I even going to say to D? Where am I even going to start?”

“Let’s go tell him now. I’m here so we can tell him together but we know that he is going to be excited ngoba he wants a grandchild.” I say.

“Will you tell him for me?” She asks sulking.

I chuckle lightly. She's just being extra yaz.

"First I got you a gift." I hand her the bag and she breaks out into a broad smile.

This is what I love seeing, a happy Rea. You know when you have a friend and you want them to be happy. When their happiness becomes your happiness and even when things are going south in your life, just seeing them happy makes you forget about your own stressed a bit? Rea is that person in my life. I would sell a limb if it ensured her happiness.

"Okay now that you're smiling, let's go tell D." I say.

We get off the bed and go find D. As usual he's listening to jazz and he's moving along to the beat. He stops when he sees us and breaks out into a smile. Weah where am I even going to start with this?

"Do you have something you want to say ladies?" He asks.

Rea nudges me and I stand there frozen. Remind me again why I'm the one breaking these news to him?

"Rea is pregnant." I say and suck in a breath.

He looks at us in confusion before breaking out in laughter. Well then. I guess we just have to wait for him to calm down.

[05/10, 13:33] Mca: FIFTY FOUR

Unedited

As I had expected, D is over the moon about the edition into the family and he couldn't stop raining about how much he has been preparing to be a grandfather for as long as he can remember. I can actually believe that but I think he's also happy about the fact that Rea will have someone to look after her, well in the future that is.

He obviously gave us a mouthful about being reckless and unprotected sex. We

tried to explain that they were always safe and that the rubber broke but still that wasn't satisfactory. He also threw a fit about wanting to meet Kabelo and how he wouldn't just agreed to have his family come pay the damages without having met him. Rea doesn't want that because obviously they aren't in a relationship but we had to nod and agree to everything he was saying.

When I left D was still going on and on about how much he is going to spoil the little one and how Rea was going to move back home once she starts showing. That is one thing that has her going crazy, the fact that she won't be able to walk in shows for a couple of months because of the

pregnancy. Hopefully she'll make peace with that fact soon.

I get home and as I had expected Ndo isn't home. Sigh. I understand, really I do but I wish he would just take a second to just hold me. That's all I want, for him to hold me. I'm trying so hard to stay strong right now. I just need my man to be there for me.

I change into my pyjamas and head outside into the garden with my bottle of wine and glass. I can't believe that I actually fell pregnant. I fell pregnant but I lost him before I could even acknowledge him. He left me. Just like that he decided to part from me without warning. Maybe if I had taken the test sooner he would've made it.

Maybe the doctors could've done something to save him. Damn it Melo! You should've just listened.

I down my glass and refill it. I grab my phone and dial Ndo's number. It rings for a while then goes to voicemail. So he's ignoring me? hmmm. I continue drinking while taking in the gentle breeze. I plan on getting completely drunk tonight.

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It's been a week since we received the news of our miscarriage and things between Lindo and I are still very tense. I also still haven't shed a tear because I just can't. Lindo and I literally say nothing to each

other and he is almost never home and when he is he is sipping on his whiskey with a hard face on. I'm letting him deal with his pain the best way he knows how to.

He walks into the bedroom and heads straight to the closet without acknowledging my presence. Sigh. He walks out wearing a different outfit, I guess he's going out again.

"Lindokuhle I understand that you're hurting. I get that you wanted this with everything in you and I am sorry that your desire couldn't be realised. I am sorry that I couldn't keep our child in my womb long enough for him to meet us. I am sorry that you're hurting right now but please Mngomezulu let me in.

Tell me how you feel. WE lost the child, so can we just go throw this together.” I say softly.

I come from an environment where communicating your feelings was always encouraged and going through something so tragic and not being able to talk about how I am feeling is crushing my soul. I haven't told my family because I keep hoping that he will come back and we will talk about it but that's not the case.

“Sizokhuluma Melo.”

“Hmmm.” I say and get off the bed.

I head into the bathroom to take a shower. I've been holding it together because I wanted to be here for this man when he finally decides to breakdown and actually let me in but I see that isn't going to happen anytime soon so I am giving up. Its slowly been sinking in that this has happened but the reason I am not allowing myself to cry is because I know I'm going to let myself fall into this deep hole and I can't have that.

Another thing is I promised myself that I will not burden my parents with my emotional issues because I saw what the divorce put them through and I know that this will kill them even more. I can't go to aunty Siba because she is pregnant. I can't tell Bandile because he is going to lose it, so will

Bongwe. Basically I'm keeping it together so that I don't have to hurt anyone else.

I finish up then head to the closet to get dressed. Once I'm done I grab my bag, keys and phone and head out. I just want to be out the house, that's all I know and that's what I'm doing. I find myself at one of my favourite germs. Its literally a hidden germ and you wouldn't know that they sell such amazing food here. It sits 30 people and has the friendliest staff.

I request a corner table and order a glass of wine while I go through the menu which has changed since the last time I came here. I settle on the chefs special ngoba if it were up to me I would eat everything on this

menu. I'm on whatsapp and my heart sinks a little when I view Lindo's. He's in his dad's jet meaning he isn't even in Joburg at the moment. Wow, just wow. I am speechless right now. So he left and didn't even bother to let me know, then again what did I expect?

When the waiter brings my food I ask him for a bottle of wine. I can't believe this man actually. You know what fuck him! Fuck everything. I dig in and moan in appreciation when this mushroom sauce comes into contact with my tongue. Oh I am definitely going to enjoy this.

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I'm sitting here looking at this couple playing with their baby and I can't stop the tear that flows from my eye. I quickly catch

it and draw in a deep breath for calling for the waiter. I ask for another bottle. So it looks like Lindo is at some party in a very gorgeous house. Well I do hope he enjoys. I want to ball my eyes out but my strength won't allow me so I will just sit here and down my drink while he downs his wherever he is.

I am hurt. I admit. I am so hurt and I don't know how to handle it.

My phone rings and I answer without bothering to check the caller ID.

“Yeah.”

“Hey.”

“Ya how can I help you?”

“Are you okay?” He asks sounding concerned.

“I’m fine. Ufunani Sfiso?”

“Nqobile.”

“What?”

“What’s wrong?”

“Nothing.”

“Where are you?”

“Sfiso why did you call me?” I ask.

“I was just checking in and I can tell that you’re not okay so please tell me what’s wrong?”

A few tears travel down my cheeks but I wipe them quickly and get myself together. I can’t be crying in public.

“Nothing. Thanks for checking in. We’ll chat some other time. I have to go.” I say then

hang up.

This bloody bottle is going to run out soon and it still hasn't done its job. Well I guess we're getting another one.

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Fourth bottle and I'm feeling out of it. How am I going to get home? Bongwe. Luckily I still have some vision left in me. He answers almost immediately.

"Sis."

"Please take a cab or whatever and come fetch me."

“Ukuphi?”

I tell him where I am and he promises to be here in a flash. I finish the remainder of my wine while I wait for him to get here. I hope that he won't ask too many questions because I am not in a position to answer him. As promised he arrives and makes his way towards me. He settles next to me and I can feel his intense gaze cutting through my skin.

“Are you ready to go?” He asks.

“My bill.” I say.

He settles it before taking my bag and helping me up. I didn't realise that I had so much to drink. We get to the car and before he opens the door for me he cups my face.

"The last time I saw you like this was after you found out about your infertility." He says.

"I just wanted to let my hair loose baby." I say giving him a warm smile.

"You know you can talk to me about anything right?"

“I know Wewe.” I place a kiss on his cheek.

He opens the back door for me and I slide in. I sometimes hate just how my siblings are able to tell when I’m not good. No matter how hard I try to hide it from them, they always see right through me. Right now all I want is a bed and I will see to everything else in the morning.

[05/10, 13:33] Mca: FIFTY FIVE

Unedited

I have my head rested on his chest and he is has a tight grip around my body. I appreciate him for being here for me when I didn’t even know that I needed someone here. Last night after he picked me up, we

drove straight to his place. When we got here he had me drink a glass of water then gave me his pyjamas to change into. He cuddled with me until I fell asleep and here I am waking up still in his arms.

“Uvukile?” He asks.

“Yeah.” I say softly as I reposition.

He kisses my head before heaving a sigh. He knows that something is happening and I hope he doesn't try to get me to spill the beans.

“Whatever it is that you're going through

just know that I am here and that we'll get through it together. I know it probably has to do with Lindo and you might not want to involve us but I don't like the fact that it has you drinking kanje. Yes I'm a fine one to talk but I just don't want you sinking back into that place that almost took you away from me Melo. I don't know what I would do if you were to go back there, so please share your burdens with us." His voice breaks at the end.

Sigh. Malibongwe was the most affected by my divorce and infertility blow. When I sank into my depression he sank with me and I wouldn't want that to happen again. Not when he has been doing so well and trying to heal and move on.

“I hear you baby and I’m sorry you had to witness me like this. I promise that I’ll go and have a chat with mom about things.”

“Promise me Melo.”

“I promise you Bongwe.”

“Good, so what do you want to do today?”
He asks.

I actually want to spend the day with Khanyisile. It’s a Saturday so at least I get to steal her from her parents and Ndalo. Ndalo doesn’t like hanging out with us. She

prefers chilling in her playroom and enjoying her time alone. She is actually like Lwandile, the only difference is that Lwandile can actually bring himself to interact with people as long as Khanyi is around. Now those two are going to grow up and cause so much havoc. If they remain this close as they grow old I swear people are going to assume that they're dating. They've got each other's backs and I love them for that.

I let Bongwe in on my plans and he seems to think it's a good deal because he knows that Khanyisile is literally our light when we're having some pretty dark days. We spend a few hours in bed catching up. Apparently things are going well at school

and at work and I am very happy about that. I'm glad that he is fighting for his life.

He decides to make me breakfast while I clean around his place. At least he has food now. We have our breakfast while catching up on one of his cop shows. I don't know why he enjoys them that much but then again he doesn't get why I enjoy The Walking Dead so much so I guess we're square up. After breakfast I take a shower because I only want to change when I get home then head to Khanyi.

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It seems like Lindo was here because the clothes he was wearing are in the basket

futhi there was a mug in the sink as well. I don't have the strength to even be thinking about this man. I get dressed then head out. I hope that she isn't at some friend of hers' party or something.

I arrive at lume's and make my way in. Aunty is lying on the couch with her eyes shut. I settle next to her and put her feet on my thighs and start massaging her swollen feet. She moans lightly before chuckling.

"I can't wait for him to come out yho."

"You're almost there, what 2 weeks?" I ask.

“Something like that. I just want him out so that your uncle can have his playmate and I can have my stomach and feet back ngoba he owns those. I mean look at my feet I don’t even have ankles yhu hai I can’t.” She says dramatically.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head and continue rubbing her feet.

“Soon you’ll have your sexy body back and you’ll be rocking those heels like they are nothing.”

“That soon better come soon. Anyway how are you baby?”

“I’m okay aunty and you?”

“Just okay? What’s wrong?” She asks.

I give her a faint smile. I know that she would be the right person to confide in but she’s just about to pop and I can’t have her water breaking on me.

“I’m just tired. I need to rest nje that’s all.”

“Are you sure?”

“Positive. Anywho I am here for Khanyisile, I know Ndalo won’t want to join us yena.”

She chuckles lightly.

“Futhi she’s out with her dad so you can have Khanyi all to yourself. She’s in her room, I know that she’s going to be very happy to see you.” She says smiling.

I hope she is. I make my way to her room and I find her staring at her reflection in the mirror with a frown on her face. I settle on the bed and wait for her to acknowledge my presence.

“Do you think I’m too dark?” She blurts out.

I look at her through the mirror and she

stares right back at me.

“It’s just that I look like daddy and he’s dad. Am I too dark?”

I continue looking at her. I don’t have a response I do however have a million questions for her. Khanyisile has never had a problem with her complexion. Also I’d expect her to start having these kind of insecurities once she gets to high school.

“Who said you’re dark princess?”

“Some kid at school said I’m weird and I’m dark.” She says nonchalantly.

A frown befalls my face. Kids and the nonsense they utter to each other, nxaa not with my Khanyi.

“Why did they say you’re weird and did you tell your teacher?”

“Because I saw blood down the hallway but they obviously couldn’t see it. Lwandile was there by my side so there was no need to tell the teacher. So do you agree with her? Do you think I’m too dark?” She asks again.

“Woza la.” I say.

She makes her way towards me and stands in front of me. I cup her face and gaze deep into her eyes. She is hurting and that breaks my heart a bit, although I do admire her ability to look unbothered about all of this.

“You are beautiful uyangizwa, You are a beautiful dark chocolate skinned goddess my angel. You are fierce and fabulous and nothing they say can take those qualities away. So whoever said that to you can go jump because there isn’t and there will never be another gorgeous Khanyisile.” I say softly.

She nods lightly with tears shining in her eyes. My poor baby.

“They’re mean to me Melo.” She blinks once and her tears fall.

I pull her into my arms and she lets it all out. Sigh. The fact that she can’t control her gift and what she sees and when she sees it is frustrating.

“What happened angel?”

“I heard a voice and it said I should go to the senior playground. When I got there I noticed that one of the girls had shackles around her ankle. She looked sad even though she was smiling with her friends and when I went to go tell her that

everything will be okay one day like I was instructed they were mean to me. They caused a scene and they laughed at me then later on that girl told me I was dark. I'm sad Melo." She says crying.

My heart breaks further. Being a messenger of God must be so hard and when you don't fully understand what is going on it must be worse. I pray that as time goes on she gets to learn more about the power she possesses.

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Khanyi and I decided to have a girls day in her room. We ordered everything junk and we borrowed aunty's laptop and we're

binging. Right now we're watching Gossip girl because apparently missy here overheard some girls at school talking about it and she wanted to watch it. I'm glad she is enjoying herself. My phone rings and she presses pause and looks at me. I'm disturbing her,yhu.

"Sfiso." I answer.

"Melokuhle. I hope you're feeling better today." He says.

I heave a sigh.

"I am thanks and how are you?"

“I will be fine once I can confirm that you actually are fine.”

“Sfiso.”

“Just five minutes of your time Nqobile that’s all I ask for.” He says.

“Sfiso I-”

“Please.” He says pleadingly.

Sigh.

“Okay.”

“Great you’ll let me know when.”

“I will ke. Sharp.”

“Sharp.” He says then hangs up.

I turn around and miss nosy is looking at me. What? I raise an eyebrow and she folds her arms. Haibo this girl.

“So you have a boyfriend.” She says with attitude dripping all over her words.

“He’s not my boyfriend.” I respond.

“Oh sorry.” She says and presses play.

Oh wow I can’t believe she actually let it go that quickly. Good. We spend the afternoon binging on our series while stuffing our faces. My Khanyisile is smiling and laughing and that is a very beautiful sight to see.

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I’m lying on the couch in my mom’s arms while she plays with my hair. I found myself driving home and just needing to be in my mom’s embrace. She hasn’t asked me anything, she’s just been holding me in her arms and giving me her love and warmth.

“Mom.” I say softly.

“Yes baby.” She responds.

“I had a miscarriage.” I say and my tears roll down onto her chest.

[05/10, 13:33] Mca: FIFTY SIX

Unedited

“I had a miscarriage.” I say and my tears roll down onto her chest.

I don't know if all I needed to do was say it out loud for me to cry but here I am balling my eyes out. My mom has me in her arms

rocking me back and forth.

It hurts.

It hurts so so bad.

I wish I could rip my heart and throw it out, maybe that way all this pain will subside. How could I not realise that I was pregnant? More so how could I not know that I was actually losing my child? My chance at probably being a parent and he left me, just like that?

“It’s okay baby, it’s okay. Let it all out.” Mom says with her voice breaking.

I continue crying as she rubs my back. This hurts more than finding out that I can't actually conceive and later finding out that I wouldn't be able to carry a baby to full term should I actually conceive. I remember how I left Lerato with the doctor after we heard the news and went to cry my eyes out in the bathroom. Imagine the disappointment of finding out that your body can't perform the one task that it was created to do.

"What's wrong princess?" Dad says sliding next to me.

I'm such a daddy's girl because I'm already in my arms crying harder than I was in

mom's arms. He pulls me onto his lap and continuously kisses my head while whispering that everything is going to be okay. I eventually calm down and pull myself together. I wipe my face before heaving a sigh. I turn to look at mom and she has her face buried in her hands. Sigh. This is why I didn't want to let her in on this.

"What's wrong maMkhize? Khuluma name."
Dad says softly.

Oh Lwandle, he is going to be so crushed. How do I tell him? Where do I even begin? I'm looking at mom hoping that she will raise her head and help me out. I don't want to see my dad cry. I don't want to see him cry. Mom looks up and finds me looking at

her. She heaves a sigh and looks at her husband softly. I get up from his lap and make my way to the kitchen. I grab a bottle of water then make my way up to my room and flop myself on the bed.

SIGH. I pray that my parents can get through this disappointment. Mom walks in and settles next to me. She looks at me softly before reaching for my hand and taking it in hers.

“Did you know you were expecting?”

I shake my head.

“Oh my baby.”

“Remember when aunty and lume rushed to the hospital and you had Ndalo here?” I ask.

“Yes.” She says.

“That was the night I miscarried. Khanyi told us about a baby that wanted to go home angithi and because I didn’t even know I was pregnant I didn’t even bother to go to the doctor. I didn’t think the treatment would work and so-”

“What treatment?” She cuts me off.

I kept the news of the treatment from my parents because I knew they would be very concerned, rightly so because they were the ones who held me at night while I cried my eyes out. I let her in on everything. From the initial conversation to the visit to Dr Khan and the hopeful news. By the time I'm done she has a disapproving look on her face.

"Melokuhle."

"Mama please." I say.

"I'm so sorry that you had to go through that my baby. I wish I could take the pain away from you because I know how deeply it cuts and how it takes a piece of you away. Oh

my baby.” She pauses and shakes her head. “I know that my saying everything happens for a reason won’t make sense right now but it had to happen baby.”

“Haai mama.”

“I went through five miscarriages my baby, they were difficult and I lost myself each time but in the end I was blessed.”

“The difference is that you never had any difficulties falling pregnant. The doctor told me that it will be even harder now for me to conceive. Like I’m done with this whole attempting to have a baby shit. I actually want to have my womb removed.”

“I know that you’re hurting baby but that’s no way to talk.”

“Ngikhathele mama.”

“How is Lindo taking the news?” She asks.

I know she’s trying to change the topic and I’m fine with that. How is Lindo taking the news? I shrug nonchalantly.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean I don’t know okay!” I snap.

Okay I didn't mean to do that. Sigh. I just don't want to talk about Lindo right now.

“Your dad was an ass at some point after our miscarriages and I remember how I would leave him every time. I hope that you guys will be able to work through things however if akulungi then don't force things an stay in and unhappy relationship for the sake of the people around you” She says.

I snuggle closer to her and rest my head on her chest. I don't know what the future holds for us, all I know is that right now I don't want anything to do with him.

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I've been staying at home for the past three days and in those three days dad has been avoiding me. He'd literally turn back each time he saw me. Mom says it's because the news of my miscarriage has affected him that much. Sigh. As I'm lost in thought he walks in and settles next to me. We sit in awkward silence for a little while until he decides to break it.

"I've been trying to find the right words but I can't seem to piece together a complete sentence. I am so sorry princess. I am sorry that you had to go through one of the most horrible things that a woman can ever go through. I feel like I have failed you as a parent. I feel like I should've protected you.

Yes I know that it is wishful thinking but I wish there was something I could've done.

I know that we had made peace with the fact that you wouldn't be able to conceive and I can imagine just how heartbreaking it must be for you to know that you lost out on something that you wanted so badly. I don't know what to say my angel. All I know is that I love you. I love you so much Nqobile wam and I wish that all your hearts desires could be granted to you but God knows why this had to happen. He knows why he denied you this blessing and I pray that you will be able to understand just how his ways work.

Fuck this is hard.”

“Daddy.” I say giggling.

He chuckles lightly. I haven’t heard him swear in a while so it is definitely comical. I hear everything he is saying.

“I love you too daddy and I’m fine honestly, I am.” I say.

I know just how difficult it was for him to come in here and say that and I appreciate him for that.

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I’m on my way to a nearby park to meet with

Sfiso. He pestered me so much that when he called this morning I gave in and here I am on my way to meet with him. I park next to his car and make my way towards him. He gets up when he sees me approaching and we share a hug.

“Are you okay now?” He asks.

“I’m good Sfiso and you?”

“Why do I feel like you’re lying to me?” He says.

“Now why would I want to lie to you huh?” I say chuckling.

“I don’t believe you but okay. Now that I have seen you I think my days will go smoother now.”

“Ei the lies we hear but ku sharp.” I say laughing.

He joins me in laughter and we settle on the bench.

“It’s good to hear your laugh, anyway I actually have a meeting in 30 minutes so I need to dash. I just really wanted to see you and make sure that you’re okay.”

“That’s sweet of you. Thank you.” I say.

He is looking at me in a manner that I can’t quite explain. He clears his throat and we get up from the bench then make our ways back to our cars. I can see him out the corner of my eye stealing glances at me. He has something to say but he won’t say it.

“Well I hope you have a good meeting.” I say.

“Yeah me too.” He adds in.

He pulls me in for a hug and holds on just a little bit longer this time. He pulls back

slowly then slowly cups my face and gazes deep in my eyes.

“You’re so beautiful Nqobile.” He says in a whisper.

“Sfiso -”

Before I can even finish my sentence I feel his soft lips lightly brushing over mine.

[05/10, 13:33] Mca: FIFTY SEVEN

His soft lips gently land on mine totally taking me by surprise. My heart is beating out of my chest while I can feel his hands’ shaking with what I assume is desire. I have

my eyes shut closed while I take in this moment. I open my mouth in an attempt to say something but he uses this opportunity to fully capture my lips in his. As our lips lock I settle my arms around his waist while he removes his one hand from my face and settles it on my waist.

His kiss is soft and unhurried. He pulls me closer and our bodies come in contact sending shockwaves throughout my entire body and chills down my spine. What is this man doing to me? Why is he having this kind of effect on me? He gently sucks on my bottom lip and I follow his lead. He sweeps his tongue in completely taking control of my mouth. Both his hands have settled on my waist while mine are rested

on his chest. The kiss is still slow, soft and sensual.

His hands are still shaking and I can feel his heart beating abnormally fast against my palm. Again a shockwave travels throughout my entire body. I feel tingles in my legs and that is an indication that I actually need to sit down. I pull back and bury my face on his chest. What the hell? My heart is racing right now.

“Nqobile.” His voice sounds so strained in this moment.

I try to respond but my mouth goes instantly dry. It’s like my voice has been

locked up by something. He moves his hands from my waist down to my hips and I think this time he also felt the shockwave travelling through my body.

“Your meeting.” I manage to say faintly.

“I don’t want to go.” He responds quickly.

I can’t have him missing a meeting on my account. I refuse. I draw in a huge breath and release it before raising my head. I find his eyes looking at me softly. I have never seen this look on him before. This is all foreign to me.

“I have to go.” I say trying to get him to let go of me.

“Have dinner with me.” He says pleadingly.

He is looking at me like he is trying to find something in my eyes, like he is trying to pierce through my soul.

“I can’t Sfiso.”

“Just think about it please.” He places a kiss on my forehead.

I close my eyes and take it in. Again why is he having this kind of effect on me? This is

all too foreign. He lets go of me then steps back and opens my door for me. He closes the door after I slide in and I open the window.

“I might just lose out to a deal worth millions but it doesn’t matter.” He says with a smile on his face.

I can’t help but return it with the same enthusiasm.

“Bye bye Sfiso.” I say pressing the ignition button.

“Just so you know Miss Mkhize, I don’t

regret it.” He says before winking.

He steps back and watches with his hands in his pockets as I drive off. What the hell? I just shared a kiss with Sfiso. Oh my gosh.

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“I’m going back to my place later.” I say to mom and dad.

“Hawu I thought you’d spend a few more days here.” Dad says.

“I can’t daddy. I’ve been neglecting my work and I have so much to do that I can’t afford to fall too far behind on the project I’ve been

working on.” I say.

I should be on my way to actually finishing what I have been working on but with everything that has been happening, I haven't been putting in the work that I should be.

“Okay princess I understand. Ladies, I need to go make a phone call I'll be back just now.” Dad says getting up and walking out the room.

“So I spoke to Minnie earlier while you were out and she has been trying to get hold of Lindo to no avail.”

“Ai angazi mina.” I shrug.

“What do you mean?”

“I mean I don’t know where Lindo is mom. I mean I haven’t seen that man in a couple of days so I don’t know. I simply do not know.”

“He’s hurting he’ll come around.” She says.

Like he’s he only one hurting angithi. Mxm.

“Anyway it’s your birthday next week.” She says excitedly.

Whoopee the big 2.8. I've never been one to have an issue with growing up. In fact I think I've always been on that 13 going on 30 tip, like I have been wanting to get to that milestone. I feel like there is something magnificent about that number. For me it feels like things will make sense more, like I would come into a better understanding of myself. I've been gradually working on me but the magic number 30 will literally be all about me and no one else.

“What are you planning on doing?” I ask her.

I know how excited she gets when our birthdays come around and Zobuhle being that person that loves cooking and having the family come together, this is a big deal

for her. I'm the only child whose "party" she can plan because obviously Ndile is married and Bongwe isn't big on celebrations so I will allow her to have her way.

"Just an intimate family dinner and maybe a few friends." She says.

"And a couple of my close colleagues as well." I add in.

"So we can have an outside set up or do you think we should book a venue?" She asks.

You see now venue yani? Haai.

“Let’s do it outside. I don’t think they’ll be more than 40 people so we can do one long table and a waterproof stretch tent.” I say.

“That will work. Let me work on it.” She is beaming.

I love it when my mother smiles. She deserves all the happiness and more for all the work that she’s put into raising us and ensuring that we were happy at all time.

“Perfect. Just don’t call me for anything okay.”

“Ya whatever Melokuhle.” She says laughing.

I know that I’m going to get a phone call from her sometime next week asking me what the colour scheme should be, what she should cook and and and but it’s all good. As long as my queen is happy.

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I’m back at my house and I’m in the living room with all kinds of samples of material, in every available shade. I also have paint samples that I am testing out on a white board that I have on the floor. I’m in the final stage of my project and I must say I am excited. I remember when I was working

on the publication and I would spend hours and hours doing research with stacks of notes all around me. This feels exactly the same only a tad more exciting.

‘You owe me a couple of millions.’ That’s a text from Sfiso.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. This guy.

‘WHY?’ I respond.

‘Ngoba I was late for my meeting and on top of that I was lost in thought throughout the entire meeting.’

'Haike mina I didn't say you shouldn't focus.' I text back.

'How can one focus with you invading my thoughts?'

'Hahaha.' That's all I manage to text.

'My millions Miss Mkhize BUT because I'm such an understanding man I will cancel out the millions for dinner.'

Sneaky, sneaky man this one. Just as I am typing my response Lindo walks in carrying a small bag in his hand. I take one look at

him before putting my phone to the side and getting back into my work. He makes his way towards me and sits on the couch. He sits there watching me as I get on with my work. I feel awkward right now.

“Can we talk?” He finally says.

[05/10, 13:34] Mca: FIFTY EIGHT

“Sure.” I say.

I lean back against the couch and look him dead in the eye. He can't seem to hold eye contact and his eyes keep roaming around. This man sitting in front of me isn't the charming Mngomezulu that walked into my parents house and asked me to go to

dinner with him. This isn't the man that held me in his arms and serenaded me. I can see him somewhere in there but the main exterior is not him.

"How are you?"

"I'm fine and you Lindokuhle?"

"I'm okay, I don't know. I" He heaves a sigh and rubs his face.

"Yazi Lindokuhle I had accepted the fact that being a mother in the 'natural way' would never be my portion. It hurt like hell and for a long time I blamed myself for

something I had no control over but with the help of my family I was able to accept my fate and move on. Then you came along and I fell so deeply in love with you that I was willing to once more put myself in a position where I would possibly get my heart crushed.

After our initial visit to Dr. Khan you were so excited and so hopeful that I tried to put my positive pants on hopefully that maybe, just maybe things would be different this time around and they were but unfortunately they had the worst results we could've ever hoped for.

I didn't know I was pregnant. I had never been pregnant before so the changes to my

body and emotions or whatever, if there were any, I missed. For you to say to me had I agreed to the tests earlier really hit me because I was already blaming myself. Like how could I not know that life was growing inside of me and how could I not know that it left?

Yes I handled it better because I was prepared for disappointment but this was a different kind of disappointment. This hurt deeper than being told I could never have a child in my womb. It hurt so bad but I put my brave face on because I could tell how hard it hit you. I wanted to be your soldier, I wanted to hold you in my arms while you expressed your disappointment and hurt. I know just how much you were and still are

looking forward to having children
Lindokuhle and I am sorry that I can't be the
one to gift you with that honour.

Yazi your reaction to the news I understood
for a while. You were hurt and you needed
your space kodwa what about me? What
about how I was feeling? Did you ever stop
to consider my feeling over the whole
situation? WE lost a child Lindokuhle. Not
YOU, not ME but WE and you weren't there
to share in my pain. I needed you Ndo. I
needed you because I couldn't run into my
mother's arms because I know just how
hard this subject is for her but you were
nowhere.

You left me and ignored me and that hurt.

That hurt more than anything else you'd ever done and everything that we had been through." I say with tears flowing freely down my face.

It feels so good to be able to tell him how I feel. I didn't realise that his disappearing stunt hurt me so much. I thought I was okay when I actually wasn't. He moves from the couch and comes to settle next to me on the floor. He pulls me closer and I rest my head on his shoulder.

"I won't lie and say that I understand how you're feeling because I don't and I'm sorry about that. I'm also sorry for going AWOL, it's just that I honestly didn't know how to handle everything and hearing that we lost

the baby, I just lost it. I needed some time to digest everything but it got out of hand.”

“Are you going to need some time to digest things every time we go through something deep?” I ask.

He says nothing. I take that as a yes.

“Where were you?” I ask.

“Spent most of my time in Cape Town with my mates.”

“Did you sniff a line?”

His body tenses up and I heave a sigh. Kodwa why would Lindokuhle do this to me? Is he going to relapse each time life gets tough? Clearly he isn't ready for this kind of disappointment.

"I'm sorry." He responds. "I just needed to forget just a little. The news cut really deep and I just didn't know how to handle it."

"Are you always going to run to drugs? Do you realise that my journey to pregnancy will be a difficult one? Do you realise that I might not ever get pregnant? Or that I might have a million more miscarriages? Do you realise that? So are you going to go down this road each time you receive such news?" I ask.

I need to know now.

“I DON’T KNOW MELO OKAY.” He yells.

“Yazi Mngomezulu you said that your love for me outweighs your want for a child however I think you lied to yourself. So for once can we have an open and real conversation? Tell me how you really feel.”

“I’m scared Melokuhle. I’ve been in relationships yes but none of them as serious as this one. Yes I definitely want kids, that has always been a dream of mine and when we lost this one, it felt like my dream was snatched right under my nose. I

know you kept on saying you know what it feels like to be disappointed and I thought I could take it but man it was hard. All I know is that I love you Mel and that we'll deal with everything as it comes." He says.

That to me sounds like him saying he might just run after the third attempt. It sounds like him saying, I love you BUT, and that but is a pretty big but. I don't want to deal with things as they come. I want to talk about this now so that work on it.

"I honestly don't think you're ready for all of this. I feel like because you fell for me, you believed that your love would outweigh everything else but we're always told that love isn't everything. I can't stand to see the

disappointment on your face each time. I love you and I don't ever want to be without you Lindo so this is very hard for me. To know that my struggles are killing you."

"I love you Melokuhle." That's all he says.

We remain in the same position with tears falling down my face uncontrollably. It hurts so bad to love someone and not be able to grant them all their hearts desires. I want to be that woman that gives Lindokuhle a million mini him's that will annoy the crap out of us. I want to be the one to build a home for him, for us, but this little issue is standing in the way of all of that. I know that there are alternatives available to us but I know he wants the whole experience,

hell I want it too.

We sit in silence for a while with each of us lost in our thoughts.

“So what does this mean for us?”

[05/10, 13:34] Mca: FIFTY NINE

Unedited

“Oh but love is never supposed to hurt my little blip.”

My grandmother’s words ring in my ear as I pull my covers over my head and allow myself to cleanse my heart. I have been in bed for the past couple of days crying my

eyes and lungs out. At some point I even ran out of air. I didn't think I would experience this again. See I didn't walk into this relationship with my mind trained on the possibility of it ending. I actually believed that this was it for me. That Mngomezulu was my happily ever after.

Why do we have to kiss a few frogs before we actually meet the one? Why do we have to cry so much while on this journey of love? Honestly it's exhausting.

It's official, Lindo and I decided to part ways. Saying it felt like I was pulling a plug on my entire being and I just wasn't ready for it. He held me in his arms while I balled my eyes out before heading to the bedroom to pack

up his things. I couldn't help him with any if that because I knew that I would probably cave and tell him not to go – Yes I love him that much! But I also love him enough to set him free from all the heartbreak and disappointment that comes with being in a relationship with me.

I sat there on the couch with tears cascading down my cheeks. He made his way towards me and squatted in front of me before cupping my face.

“All I ever wanted was to love you and build a home with you. I'm sorry for all the things that I have put you through Melokuhle and I am sorry for not being there for you when you needed me the most. I love you

maMkhize and I hope that one day once I have fully worked on myself and learned to accept the things that I cannot change, we will work on us but that's only if you haven't moved on by then. I love you baby and I am truly sorry." He said then got up and walked out of the house.

Just like that we were done. I sat there on the couch paralyzed by my pain and disbelief. It took me a few hours before I could gather enough strength to lift myself up and head to my bedroom which is where I have been ever since and I am planning to stay in here for as long as I need to.

"MELO!" I hear Malibongwe shout.

I've been saying I should take my key and access card back from this one. The bedroom door opens and he pulls the blankets off of me. Why does he have to be so extra? He squats in front of me and wipes my tears with his thumb.

"Lindo and I broke up." I say faintly.

He doesn't respond, all he does is get up, kick off his shoes and get into bed with me. He pull me into his arms.

"It clearly wasn't meant to be Melo and that's fine. I'm sure there were a few lessons you took away from the

relationship and that's all that matters angithi? As long as you walked away knowing that you gave it you all and that it genuinely didn't work out because God didn't want it to. I'm so sorry that you're crying right now. You are so beautiful Melo and you will find a man who will love you and cherish you all the days of their life." He says.

I can't help but giggle. The way my brother is such a chimney I forget that he is actually wise. He speaks sense most of the time and he knows how to 'go deeper'.

"I love you Wewe."

“I love you too. Now sleep before you get a headache ngoba I can tell you’ve been crying for a while now. I’ll go make you something to eat in the mean time.”

“Hold me until I sleep phela.” I command.

“This is why they dumped you. You’re bossy as fuck!” He says.

“Too soon dude. Too soon.” I say laughing.

We share a laugh and I must say it feels good. I snuggle closer and shut my eyes hoping to calm my heart and mind.

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Sigh. It's been almost two weeks since Lindo and I part ways and I miss him every minute of every day. I've been slowly trying to get back into my days. My breakup with Lindo made me realise that heartbreak leaves me crippled. I'm grateful to my brother for spending his days and nights with me. I honestly don't think I would've survived without him.

I'm in the kitchen making a cup of tea for myself. Bongwe is at work and after work he has class so it's just me today. My phone rings and I rush to go answer it.

"Mr Mavundla." I answer.

“And she lives!” He says chuckling.

Konje I didn't respond to his text. Damn it now I feel bad.

“I am soooo sorry.” I say dramatically.

“Oh yeah?”

“Yeah, eish I was just going through things and my phone was the last thing on my mind honestly.”

“It's okay Miss Mkhize, as long as you're alive and kicking then I'm good. I actually

wanted to ask you out for lunch tomorrow. I'm leaving for a trip soon and I would love to see you before I go."

"Where?" I ask.

He breaks out into laughter leaving me puzzled.

"I thought I'd have to beg and slaughter a chicken before you would say yes." He says chuckling.

Now it's my turn to laugh. I'm not that bad, am I?

“Wow Sfiso.” Argh.

“Would it be a problem if I picked you up?”
He asks.

“Nah not a problem.”

“You sure your man won’t mind?” He asks.

“Sfiso just come.”

“Okay ke. I’ll see you tomorrow.”

“Tomorrow it is. Have a great day.” I say.

“Same to you Miss Mkhize.” He says before hanging up.

Well at least I’m doing something tomorrow.

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Mom just pitched as I was trying to get into my work. I think Bongwe told him about the breakup because she is here stealing glances at me while we cook. uBongwe uyaphapha yazi.

“Yes mom Lindo and I broke up.” I say.

“And how do you feel about that?” She asks calmly.

She came prepared.

“I’m hurt. I thought he was my happily ever after but he was yet another frog that I had to kiss and it’s fine.”

“Why did you break up?”

“Because as much as he thought he could handle being with an infertile woman, he couldn’t.”

“Melo.” She says softly.

“I can’t run away from what I am. I am

infertile and infertile is me. I'm not angry at him though mama, I love him enough to release him. I realise that not every man will get it, I mean Lerato divorced me because of this issue. Again as much as I was angry at him for being a coward I realise that it wasn't his issue to deal with and that he didn't have to stick around. In as much as we keep telling Bongwe that none of these girls he dates are responsible for his happiness and healing, I need to understand that none of these men are forced to stay with me and go through this rollercoaster ride with me.

So Lindo couldn't handle it and that's fine."

"You have grown into such a wonderful

young woman maMkhize.” She says with a proud smile on her face.

“How can I not when I have the best role model available?”

“No I’m not doing this with you. I am not crying today Melokuhle.” She says walking out of the kitchen.

I chortle. Oh never a dull moment with Zobuhle. She comes back after a while and we continue cooking while catching up. She tells me that Aunty and lume gave birth while I was in my little bubble. I’m so happy I can’t contain myself. Langelihle finally got the boy he wanted and they named him

Bhekizizwe after mkhulu.

Mom showed me pictures and he actually looks like mkhule. Apparently Khanyi said the name was approved. I can't wait to meet our little champ. Now Amanda must give birth and Zizwe can have himself a playmate like Khanyi and Lwandile have each other.

[05/10, 13:34] Mca: SIXTY

Unedited

I woke up at the crack of dawn and rushed over to meet my little Zizwe. He is the cutest thing I have ever laid my eyes on. Okay I said the same thing about Khanyi and Lwandile and Ndalo, I guess the babies

in this family are just that precious to me. He's been pouting since I took him in my arms after he fed about five minute ago. He is what I have dubbed as a 'funny' sleeper. He literally makes all these funny faces and it is just adorable.

I put him down in his bed and watch as he wrestles a bit before finding his desired position. Too precious. I move closer to aunty and rest my head on her shoulder. She is in love and she can't even hide it. I don't even want to comment on lume, apparently he cooks and cleans and cooks and cooks and cooks. Aunty says she enjoys being fed but she doesn't want to get bigger than she is now but lume is having none of it. He made it clear that she

will only start working out after four months. I find it too cute.

Speaking of the dad he walks in carrying a tray in his hands. I spot bowls of fruit salads and oats. I love that he is hands on and is taking care of his wife. Aunty says he's on night duty, so she pumps and if she can't hear Zizwe wailing, he wakes up and feeds him. He sets the tray on the table and peaks at his son. You can't miss the excitement on his face. He was surrounded by just girls for so long that having a son must feel like winning the lotto to him.

"Ladies breakfast is served." He says with a proud smile.

“Thank you baby.”

He goes and places a wet kiss on his wife’s lips. He pulls back and they share a moment that brings joy to my heart. The way they look at each other, there is no question that the love they share is deep and can weather any storm. He walks out leaving us to enjoy our breakfast.

“So how are you?” She asks.

“I’m okay, I’m dealing.” I respond.

I know that mom has already filled her in on

everything and I'm glad she did because I don't think I have the strength to talk about this over and over.

“Leave it all in God's hands. He makes no mistakes nana and he never does things without reason. So wena just accept things for what they are and the moment kodwa never cease praying. Prayer changes things my baby even though it doesn't seem like they're being answered kodwa believe me your cries are being heard.”

“I hear you aunty.”

“So tell me, what are you busy with work wise?”

“I’m working on a little something something that I will reveal soon. I just hope that I don’t actually change my mind ngama last minute.” I say honestly.

I’ve been quitting and getting back into it and quitting then gettong back into it. Sigh. I have this fear that I might fall along the way which is always a good thing in business but in this case this fear is a blocking block in what I am trying to build but I will get over it.

“Well whatever it is I know is going to take the world by storm.” She says proudly.

I love how she is ever so encouraging. She's had my back for as long as I have known her and I love and appreciate her each and everyday for that. She tells me about how Ndalo is so withdrawn and prefers spending time alone in her room. Apparently she doesn't even like spending time with Khanyi anymore. I guess the addition of the new member really caught her off guard. I mean she went from being the last princess who had everyone's attention, to the big sister who didn't even ask to become one. Hopefully she will get used to the changes soon. I should take her out for some ice cream.

I leave at around 11AM because Sfiso is coming to fetch me anytime from 12 so I

have to be there when he gets there.

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Sfiso just called to let me know that he is at the gate. I grab my bag, fix my hair, then rush down. He knocks on the door and I head over to go open. He is wearing a brown skinny fit chino, a lightly tucked in basic white t-shirt that is hugging his muscles and white sneakers. I still can't get used to the fact that he is a normal person who doesn't wear a suit all day every day.

“Miss Mkhize you look breathtaking.” He says.

I roll my eyes earning me a poke. Argh but

he is being dramatic. I'm just wearing a jean and a wonder woman top, nothing special here.

“Uyadelela wena Nqobile.” He says chuckling.

“I know right? Ready to go?” I ask.

“Yes ma'am.” He says stepping out the way.

I close the door then lock it and throw the key in my bag. He opens the door for me and holds it open while I slide in then jogs to his side after closing it for me. We drive off with Immortal Technique keeping us

company. The only reason I know who the artist is, is because Bongwe used to listen to him religiously at some point.

“So how was your morning?” He asks.

“Amazing and yours?”

“Hectic. Tell me more, why was it amazing?”

“I met my baby brother.” I say with a wide smile on my face.

“Your parents are still popping babies?” He asks sounding terrified.

I can't help but chortle. Why would it be a bad thing if they still were?

"Yes they are." I say keeping a serious face on.

"Aren't they old? Okay no nevermind."

Shame he looks almost traumatised. My parents aren't that old though. Okay they are but still I mean as long as they're still having sex then a miracle can happen. I mean there's that one old lady on that one show who is having a kid with her Ben right? So why can't mom?

“And why was your morning hectic?” I ask.

I’m going to leave him thinking that my parents are still popping babies, as he referred to it.

“I had a meeting with my team which wasn’t as productive as I’d hoped it would be then I had to rush home to prepare for our lunch.” He says.

“Hopefully your next meeting will yield the results you’re looking for.”

“It better or else people are getting

warning.” He says with a hard face on.

Okay he’s a hectic boss. We drive into an estate and judging by how he was interacting with the guards I am going to assume that he is a regular here. The houses here are breathtaking! Better than the houses at my estate. WAY way better.

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Turns out he lives here and he wanted us to have a picnic because he enjoyed our time at the park. I see him! Apparently he prepared everything in this basket but I am not buying it. We have ribs, sticky wings, mini sandwiches, chicken fingers along with samosas, now those he says he bought but

the rest he insists on having made. I don't know but hey as long as it tastes good.

He chose a beautiful spot, just by the manmade lake and I love it. I spot a few stones not too far from us and I get up and go pick them up. I remember I used to throw stones with dad whenever we'd visit parks that had a lake. I used to think that he was superman because in my little mind I didn't understand how he was able to make a stone bounce multiple times on water. It was mind boggling.

"You throw stones Miss Mkhize?" He shouts.

I turn back and find him lying down with his head rested on his hand. I nod lightly and continue throwing them until I have run out of stones to throw. I make my way back and grab a wipe out my bag then wipe my hands before digging in. These wings are life! They have the right amount of zing and the sticky aspect of them is just perfect! He's staring at me while I attack these little sticks of yumminess.

I finish eating then wash it all down with some orange juice.

"If you really made these then I humbly ask for the recipe." I say.

Even the ribs were everything and more. I swear I have never had them that good. Don't let the chefs in my family hear that.

"I will forward it to you." He responds.

Always in business mode. I lay back and look at the sky. Luckily the sun isn't out to play right now. The sound of the birds chirping. The gentle breeze that is passing through. It's all so beautiful.

"Miss Mkhize."

I turn my head and come face to face with him. There's that soft look again.

“Yes Mr Mavundla.”

“You’re so beautiful Nqobile.”

“Thank you.” I say faintly.

He shifts closer and rests his forehead on mine. This feels so damn wrong but almost right at the same time. I don’t know why this man has this kind of effect on me honestly.

“I don’t know if what I’m going to say is appropriate considering you have a man.”
He says.

“I don’t.” I say faintly.

My heart breaks a little at saying that out loud. Sigh. He sits up then looks down on me with an intense look on his face.

“Can I tell you about the first time I saw you?” He asks.

“Yeah.”

“It was at Dr. Warren’s office. You walked out of that office looking like life had been sucked out of you and you seemed as if though you couldn’t breathe. I watched you

slowly make your way to the bathroom and fearing the worst I followed you. You got in there and let out the worst sob I had ever heard. A part of me wanted to walk in there but female bathroom and all so I made my way back to my seat hoping I'd make sure you were okay when you came out.

When you walked out of there it was like you weren't painfully crying a few moments ago. You had your head held high and your tears were dry. I couldn't approach you then and when you walked out of the office with your then husband I actually acknowledged that a strong woman as yourself couldn't possibly be single vele. You smiled at the lady at reception so widely and in that moment I knew that you were a

phenomenon of nature. I knew that there was none like you.

Anyway you have always been beautiful and I believe you will always be.” He says softly.

I remember the day he is talking about. It’s the day Lerato and I found out about my condition. I can’t believe he was there and that he actually remembers each detail.

“I don’t know what to say.” I say faintly.

“I’m leaving in three days time and I will be away for a little over four months.” He says.

He lowers his head and gently pecks my lips. What? He gazes deep into my eyes and I can see his burning lust. In a flash I have my hands hooked around his neck and we're sharing a deep and passionate kiss.

This is even better than the first kiss we shared.

[05/10, 13:34] Mca: SIXTY ONE

Unedited

He has settled in between my legs and feeling his weight, even though not all of it, on me feels somehow. I pull him closer as I deepen the kiss. He is trailing his hand up and down on my thigh and it is sending

tingles all throughout my body. Damn it, this man! He groans in my mouth and I can't help the moan that escapes my lips. It feels as if though I have no control over my body. I swear in this moment he owns me. So much so that I even forgot that we're in public.

He pulls out of the kiss and nuzzles his face on my neck. His hot breathe is sending signals all the way down to my sacred land. I'm probably leaking right now. He leaves a wet kiss on my neck before coming back up. His eyes are slightly closed and he has a lazy smile plastered across his face. He reminds me of a naughty kid caught with his hand in the cookie jar.

“We’re in public and you’re really beautiful Nqobile.” He says.

He’s so random.

“And you’re not so bad Sfiso.” I respond with a smile on my face.

He gives me a soft peck before flopping himself down next to me and heaving a sigh. My mind is racing with a thousand thoughts. I really just have one question, and that is – why does this man have this kind of effect on me? I feel like he has some sort of button that he presses before he takes my lips in his that totally leaves me powerless. The chills down my spine that just don’t

stop are proof that he knows what he's doing.

“I like you Nqobile, a lot at that and I would really like to get to know you better however I understand that things are complicated.”
He says.

I turn to look at him and he has his eyes shut.

“Sfiso I just got out f a pretty serious relationship.”

“That's why I didn't want to come on too strong but being here with you in this

moment I can't hold it in anymore. I'm actually somewhat relieved that you're no longer in a relationship. However I do understand that you need time for yourself and I respect that."

I don't know how to respond to that. Yes I do agree that Sfiso and I get along like a house on fire but I have never considered the possibility of us being together. Yes there have been times where I'd catch him looking at me a little differently but I guess I didn't read much into it because I was so focused on Lindo. I will admit though that I have enjoyed the kisses I have shared with him beyond measure.

"Anyway would it be asking too much if I

were to humbly request that we spend the next two days together, you know before I leave?”

“Uyaphi vele?” I ask.

“The States.”

“For four months though?” I say.

He chuckles lightly while pulling me to rest my head on his chest.

“Are you going to miss me Miss Mkhize?”
He sounds too amused right now.

I don't know, am I? I think I will. I enjoy the time that I spend with him.

"No I will not." I say.

"Of course not." He kisses my head.

We remain in silence just taking in the scenery and each other's presence. I know I've said this before but I'll say it again, who would have thought that I would be so comfortable around Sfiso. It truly is insane.

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We're on our way to a restaurant because Mr Mavundla wanted us to do diner as well.

I REFUSED to have dinner at his place because I don't trust that things will only end with just dinner. I mean the man kisses me and I lose all my senses so I know should we have gone to his house and had our moment I know that I would've been a goner. Futhi once he unhooks the bra, sis forget, wena you're getting ate and there is nothing you can do about it.

He keeps stealing glance at me and I can't help but chuckle. My phone rings cutting the tension in here.

"Hey baby." I answer.

He turns to look at me and the look on his

face is priceless.

“Ukuphi? I’m here and you’re not kodwa all your cars are parked. Are you okay?” He says frantically.

Shame poor Bongwe but I find it cute that he gets so worked up over me. So many siblings out there don’t care about each other and it is so heart warming to have brothers that would go to war for me.

“I’m fine, I’m having dinner with a friend but I should be back later.” I say.

“Oh okay. Just call me when you get home

ne ngoba I won't be here."

"Uyaphi?"

"I'm having dinner at Bandile's. Apparently Amanda is driving him crazy and he needs back up." He says laughing.

I join him and we laugh for a good few minutes. I say she should drive him crazy until the day she pushes that child out. I can't help but wonder though what exactly she's doing that has him needing backup. I should go see Amanda and get some gossip in.

“Let me know what how she’s doing that so I can get some pointers name.” I say still laughing.

“I will. Okay let me go. I love you.”

“I love you too baby. Sharp.” I say then hang up.

I catch this man looking at me with a questioning face and I will not give him what he is asking for. He doesn’t have to say it but I can tell that he wants me to explain who that was, well he can miss me with that. The tension is too much at this moment so I decide to connect my phone and jisten to my playlist. We’re jamming to

some Nina Simone and I can see he's a little bit shocked by my choice in music. I did tell him at some point that I listen to everything.

Now I know that I can't sing but u cannot help but sing along to my favourite track. 'I put a spell on you'. This woman's music leaves me breathless. I love her. I'm singing along while he is laughing, I'm assuming my voice is that raspy. Oh well, I don't care.

We arrive at his choice of restaurant and make our way in.

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"So how's the family?" He asks.

“They’re good.” I respond.

I feel bad that I can’t extend the question to him. I remember he mentioned that his grandmother who raised him passed on and he didn’t mention any other family members after that.

“Do you have any family around here?” I ask.

He shakes his head with a smile on his face. Why is he smiling?

“My extended family is in the Eastern Cape as well as in KZN.”

“Oh are you close?”

“Yeah they reach out when they want money but I have this one aunt who tries her best to check up on me whenever she can.” He says sadly.

“I’m sorry.” I say faintly.

I don’t like that wave of sadness that just passed through his face. I take his hand in mine giving it a gentle squeeze. He flashes a faint smile before returning my squeeze. My heart aches for him.

“It’s life Nqobile. Anyway I’m just happy that the one person that mattered the most went to rest knowing that I was stable and that I wouldn’t need for anything you know.”

“I can’t even imagine just how it must feel. I’m really sorry for your loss and that you have to go through this.”

“It’s okay. I’m good really. Yeah I get lonely occasionally but then I remember that I have an angel looking out for me and I get back up and put on my brightest smile.”

“And you do have a very beautiful smile.”

“I want to smile at you, for you, all the time.”
He says smiling.

See how sneaky and random he is?

“Anyway I know that it’s your birthday next week.”

“Konje.” I say rolling my eyes.

“Facebook Nqobile facebook.” He’s laughing. “As I was saying, your birthday now I know I won’t be here so would you mind if we had an early celebration? Nothing hectic just a movie then burgers and milkshakes thereafter.”

“That sounds good to me but you really don’t have to.”

“I don’t have to do anything, I know but I want to.”

That statement was two in one but okay. We enjoy our meal with conversation flowing between us. He’s quite the character this one. He tells me about the day he burnt his stepfathers leather jacket, athi he didn’t sleep at home for a few days hoping that all would be forgotten when he went back. I’m actually interested in hearing more about his childhood in the Cape but all in good time. He goes on to tell me about

the day his mom walked in on him almost having sex, apparently him and the girl had planned on losing their virginities on said day. By the end of the narration I am rolling on the floor with laughter. I feel like he fabricated half of the story but ke I have to take his word for it.

Dinner is going so well and I admit I don't want the night to end. He suggests going out for a drink later on in the night and I can never say no to a free cocktail.

[05/10, 13:34] Mca: SIXTY TWO

Unedited

He is 1.9M long.

His favourite colour is pink. Weird, I know.

He listens to Imagine Dragons, apparently they're his favourite.

He doesn't like cutting his beard but he keeps it trimmed because he has to look presentable for work.

He enjoys sipping on a glass of cognac after a long day at work.

Oh and he is a workaholic.

"Why do you work so much?" I ask.

“Well because I have no one to rush home to so I keep myself busy with work. Another reason is that I am dead scare of being broke. I grew up struggling so I know how tough it is at the bottom and I don’t want to find myself back there whereas I could have worked hard to prevent all of that. “ He says then shrugs.

I admire that about him.

“Just don’t work too hard because burnout is a real thing.” I say.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“Yes mom.”

I roll my eyes. Uyangijwayela lo! We're still at the restaurant having dinner. We'll we finished eating a long time ago then ordered more drinks. He got hungry again so he ordered another meal while I settled on fries. The restaurant is empty now and the staff has started cleaning even, that's how long we have been sitting here.

“Let me pay so we can go.” He says.

He pays the bill then downs his drink before we make our way out. We get in the car and chill for a few minutes.

“So where to?” He asks.

“I don’t know, any place chilled. Erm yho angazi.”

“We can go get drinks eDrive thru.” He says wiggling his eyebrows.

I chuckle loudly. Stupid man.

“Really now?”

“Now bona, it’s 11PM now and we have our movie date tomorrow and I actually would like you to be on time this time around.”

“That makes sense. Okay let’s go get ice cream for me and some juice for you then you can drop me off.” I respond.

“Who said I don’t want ice cream?” He asks sulking.

“You’re almost 50 Sfiso so you can’t have ice cream so late at night.” I say with a straight face on.

I don’t know how but he has me pinned with his one hand and is tickling me with the other. I am laughing so loudly that I bet the restaurant staff can hear me from all the way over here. Just as I am catching my breath his lips are on mine and we are

sharing a heated kiss. He pulls back and relaxes back in his seat before it can even get any hotter.

“I think I’m addicted to your kisses.” He blurts out.

I think I share the same sentiments, I whisper in my head. He presses the ignition and we drive off. We’re driving in comfortable silence. Do you know just how beautiful those late night, traffic-less drives are? The road is open and there is no one else on the road but you and you have the option of either cruising or rushing down the highway. I am so glad that he has chosen to cruise. The bright city light along with the brightness that nature has afforded

us is quite remarkable.

Some Bobby McFerrin would be amazing right about now but this silence is also special. Somehow his hand has found rest on my thigh and it seems like that will be our position for the rest of the ride. Had you come up to me and told me that I would be in Mavundla's car after he had confessed his feelings for me, I would've probably laughed in your face and told you that you needed to get your head checked.

I don't know all of this is but I'm in the moment currently. I am enjoying this and that's that. I might wake up in the next coming days feeling like this was all just for that moment and that I can't offer him what

he is seeking in the future but I will have no regrets because I would've enjoyed the current moments we're sharing.

I didn't realise that we're at the drive thru. Thank God for these 24hr places. We get two ice cream cups and make our way out. Do you know just how delicious ice cream is especially in the middle of the night? Yhoo. It's a little after midnight and I am busy gallivanting the streets of Joburg with Sfiso when I should be snuggled up in bed resting.

We have been silent this entire way and it's been enjoyable. Right now we're parked in my driveway still in silence. I should actually head in so he can go and get some rest,

“Thank you fo today. I enjoyed myself.” I say.

“So did I Miss Mkhize.” He responds.

I open the door and get out of the car and he does the same. He walks me to the door and watches n as I search for my keys in my bag. I unlock the door then head in to switch on the lights before heading back. I find him standing outside still.

“Are you a vampire?” I ask.

“Huh?”

“Well in the Vampire Diaries we learned that vampires can’t step into someone’s house without having been invited in, so the fact that you didn’t even get your toe inside the house means you have a story to tell me Mr.” I say.

He looks at me for a while before bursting out in laughter. I join him while shaking my head. He’s so loud that my neighbours might actually wake up and complain.

“Where do you get all this stuff?”

Khanyisile made me watch The Vampire Diaries and made me promise to get into the Originals as well. I haven’t gotten the

time to binge but I will. Phela I just realised that these things are real. Jokes!

“A very trusted source sir.” I say proudly.

“You’re a special case.” He says pulling me in for a hug.

I settle in his arms for a little bit before pulling back. He places a kiss on my forehead before letting go.

“Ulale kahle. I’ll see you later.”

“Please don’t wake me up early.” I say laughing.

“I promise I wont.” Goodnight Nqobile.”

“Goodnight Sfiso.”

I watch as he gets into his car and drives off. I walk inside the house, lock the door then make my way Up to my room. I need to sleep. I strip until I am left in my underwear and slide into the covers. He sends a text saying that he’s home and that he already misses me. Well he’s home and I can finally go to sleep.

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I have been up since the early hours of the

morning because little miss Mkhize decided to wake me up after I'd literally fallen asleep. Apparently her brother's wailing woke the entire house and she couldn't go back to sleep so she decided to call me because she missed me so much. In that moment I wished that she could've missed her Wewe more but it had to be me.

We spent an hour on the phone until she stopped responding and I figured that she must've fallen asleep. I tried to go back to sleep but I couldn't, so I am in bed snacking on my secret bedroom stash while watching Aquamarine. I have no idea why I'm watching Khanyi's playlist but hey.

I'm trying to focus on this movie but my

mind keeps drifting off to Sfiso. Lord, that man! I don't know what it is about him but I am very intrigued. As I have said before I lose my senses when he touches me. I don't want to read too much into everything though. Yes it is fun but again that might just be it. I need to let my hair loose and he has been doing a good job in that department whenever I needed him to I guess.

I'm just going to enjoy this day and we'll deal with the rest tomorrow.

[05/10, 13:35] Mca: SIXTY THREE

I think this is the loudest I have ever heard him laugh. He is really enjoying this movie

and there is no question about it, but then again who wouldn't? I mean Kagiso Lediga is just hilarious yena nje just by looking at him. Matwetwe is just so fresh and undoubtedly funny. It's a feel good movie and you can't go wrong with it. I am extremely proud of the work that our film industry is putting in and it can only get better from here right?

The movie has ended but this man here can't stop laughing and I admit, it is a beautiful sight to watch. He's trying to say something but it seems like the funny moments that we've just witnessed aren't allowing him to be great. We're making our way to go get some grub. He eventually manages to get himself under control and

heaves a sigh. Now it's my turn to laugh at how extra he actually is. Wow!

This is why I work my budget around mid month, because I hate walking in a crowded mall. Yes it's not packed like sardines but it's full man.

"I'd go watch that movie again." He says randomly.

"You enjoyed yourself ne?"

"Too much. I actually want to meet Kagiso Lediga and just shake his hand."

“Well Mr Money I’m sure you can make I plan.” I say.

“Actually you’re in a much better position to connect me with him. All you have to do is get him for the cover of your magazine and I pitch “unannounced” to come see you bese I get to meet him and I live happily.” He says with a mischievous smile on his face.

I can’t help but chortle loudly. This man though! I love how he thinks his plan is so fool proof. SMH. Maybe I might just surprise him with this. Hmmm just maybe.

“I see.” That’s all I manage to say.

“I’m a genius phela mina.”

Of course he is. I roll my eyes while shaking my head. Straight ahead of us I see him. He’s laughing with her and they seem to be enjoying each other’s company. Her hand goes to her visibly pregnant stomach with a full blown smile plastered across her face. I guess he got what he wanted – A FAMILY. He looks up and finds me looking at him and a frown befalls his face. I smile lightly and pull myself together.

“Melo, hey.” He greets.

“Lerato hi.”

“Okae?”

“Ke sharp wena?” I respond.

“Ke sharp.” He says.

Okay. Now we’re standing here awkwardly. This woman is looking at me and I can see the rage burning in her eyes. She slides her hand into his and rests her head on his shoulder. Marking her territory I see, well she needs to worry not because I have no desire to take her spineless man away from her.

“Where are my manners, this is Nomthandazo, my fiancé.” He says.

Wow. Oh okay. Sheww. I’m at a loss for words. I don’t know what to say. Congratulations? Yeah congratulations.

“Oh congratulations. Well uhm this is Sfiso.” I say.

I think he senses that there is a little bit of tension here because he has his hand around my waist. I look up at him and he gives me his dashing smile which I can’t help but return. I catch Lerato out the corner of my eye looking at us with a frown. He has a pregnant wife so he should relax!

Sfiso extends his hand to Lerato and they share a cold hand shake. Talk about awkward.

“Well it was lovely seeing you but we need to get going.” I say.

“Uhm yeah, sharp.” He says.

We all go our directions with Sfiso’s hand still tightly gripped on my waist.

“Are you going to tell me why you got divorced?” He asks.

“One day I might just.” I say.

He pulls me closer and places a kiss on the side of my head. I honestly don't know how I would've handled seeing Lerato if I was alone. I think I would've froze but I'm grateful that Mavundla was here to hold my hand I guess.

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The few times that I have spent with Sfiso have always left me yearning for a minute more with him. The guy is a mystery and just as you think you are figuring him out, you unpeel another layer that leaves you feeling like you hadn't done anything before. The best word I think I could use to describe him is 'INTRIGING'. Yesterday after movies and our late lunch he dropped me

off at home but refused to come in because, and I quote, “I don’t think I will leave this house having not fucked your brains out Nqobile, so to avoid confusion and looking like the dick who is taking advantage of your breakup, I will decline the offer.”

My clit danced a bit. No I’m lying it throbbed painfully. The manner in which he whispered it in my ear while his hand gently travelled down to my ass. If it were up to me, I would’ve pounced him right there and then but I composed myself. We shared yet another mind blowing kiss. He had he pinned against the door and passionately sucked the life out of me. It’s official, I’m addicted to his kisses and I am not ashamed. Lo guy uyaloya nje!

It's passed 12PM and I am still in bed. Sfiso and I don't have plans for the day because he has to go to the office but he did promise to come see me after work. I know that my heart is still very much with Lindo however I am truly enjoying these moments that I am sharing with Sfiso. That grumpy ass man is something else.

I roll out of bed then head to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. I finish up then make my way to the kitchen to whip up something to eat. I settle on some sweet corn. I want meat kodwa I'm too lazy to defrost and all of that, so I decide to fry some wors with a whole lot of onions. I'm a sucker for onions. After my

quick meal, I settle on the couch and have that with some pineapple juice.

The Walking Dead is back and I have an episode to catch up on. The stay at home life is nice nyana kanti however I think I'm enjoying it because I know that I'm working from home. Speaking of home people, I should go catch up with gogo, I miss her so much and I bet she misses me too. My afternoon is going to be spent catching up and stuffing my face.

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I'm standing at the door waiting for Sfiso to pull up. He called when he was at the gate and asked me to wait outside. He parks

then steps out of the car looking like he's on set for the cover of GQ. He has his arms open for me and I walk into them and soak the moment in. He smells and looks good.

"Hi." He greets.

I look up, get on my toes and place a kiss on his lips. I don't know why I did that.

"Hey." I respond after pulling back.

"I could get used to this kind of greeting everyday yazi."

"Is it?" I say chuckling.

“Yep. Anyway I missed you today.” He says sulking.

“You’re going to miss me for the next four months.”

“I might just cancel this trip.” He says.

“You said the trips you’re working on might be worth multimillions right?” I ask.

“Yeah.” He responds hesitantly.

“Then you need to go lapho ngoba I don’t do broke dudes.”

He burst into laughter and settles on the bonnet. GQ I said angithi?

“Melokuhle Nqobile ‘Gold Digger’ Mkhize.”

“Yep that’s me.” I say proudly.

Can I qualify as a gold digger vele? Anyhow Sfiso requests that I accompany him to get some dinner because he’s already given his helper leave. His eyes almost fall out of his socket when I say I don’t have a helper and that I’ve never had one. Do I look like the lazy type vele? I don’t know if I should be offended or not but hey.

We end up getting takeouts and he insists that we eat at the parking lot because we can't step into each other's houses. He's too much of a gentleman nyana yazi.

I'm going to miss my time with him.

[05/10, 13:35] Mca: SIXTY FOUR

Unedited

I've been trying to ignore this annoying sound but it's just not letting up. I reach over and answer then place my phone on my ear without saying anything. Whoever this is better have a good reason for waking me up this damn early.

“Nqobile.”

“Huh.”

“Vuka.”

WHO’S THIS?

“Nqobile I will not say what I want to say until I have your full attention.” He says.

I lift my phone from my ear and check the caller ID. 00131267 HUH? Is this one of those devil worshipper numbers that they use to have us go crazy? Remember that

story about the devil worshipers who had the power to give you a migraine that would kill you in a few days over whatsapp? Have they advanced to phone calls now? Oh Lord you can't let me go out this way ahh Father God. What will my obituary say?

"You're not waking up are you?" This voice?

Argh it's Sfiso! I sit up and heave a sigh before a smile creeps onto my face.

"Sfiso." I say softly.

"And she wakes up." He says laughing.

“It’s bloody 5 oclock in the morning so forgive me for not being the most alert person on the face of the earth.” I say.

“It’s past 9 this side.”

“Ekseni?”

“No in the evening. It’s actually Thursday ngapha.” He says.

Konje Chi town is a few crazy hours behind SA. Well at least yena he was still awake, mina I was sleeping. Heck I was almost dreaming about my next lotto winnings. Don’t tell anyone but I’m the one that won

that R200 million, I'm just playing it cool ngoba nabo Zweli will come running wanting a cut. Zweli is mkhulu's annoying brother. Mom hates him so much that whenever she's in her feels she'd start going off about how he should've died instead of mkhulu. Imagine though being R200 million richer. Lord! I'd probably splurge a little before I do any good.

Buy a little Louis Vitton bag that costs the price of someone's entire house. Like those bags are just ridiculously expensive and I don't understand why. Anyway I wouldn't need for nothing if I had that amount, not that I do right now however there are certain things that I can't do because my pocket isn't so extended. I'd like to do more

good so that would come in handy. Sigh
R200 million, how did I get here?

“Unjani?” I ask.

“I’m good and you?”

“Ke sharp.”

It’s been a few days since he left and this is the first time im talking to him since. The first day after he left I was bored out of my mind because he had kept my days occupied.

“Happy birthday my fiery Nqobile.” He says.

I chuckle lightly. It's my birthday. Happy birthday mkhulu's blip!

"Thank you." I say shyly.

"You should receive your gift during the course of the day."

"Is it a car?" I ask.

He does big gifts mos.

"Do you want a car?" He asks.

Knowing how insane he is, he might actually do that.

“Nah man anything I receive will be highly valued.” I say.

“In that case I do hope you will like it. Anyway I hope you have an amazing and don’t allow anybody to ruin it for you. Enjoy the dinner later on, okay?”

“I will. Thank you so much.”

“Anytime. Okay let me go sleep, I have a very early morning. We’ll chat later ke.”

“Sharp.” I say before hanging up.

That was a very welcomed birthday call. My day can only get better from here on. I put my phone away then sink back into my blankets, my lotto numbers await me phela.

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I have received a call from everyone one in my family and it's only 9AM. Mom yena called to confirm the guest list for tonight. So it's obviously mina – guest of honour, yena – party planner and giver of egg, dad – giver of sperm, gogo, lume, aunty Siba and her parents along with uncle Rori, Bandile, Amanda and her parents, Bongwe, Mam'Zonke, The Mngomezulu tribe,

including Lindo and Enhle, Rea along with D, Khanyi, Lwandile, Ndalo and my very precious Zizwe – And that’s just family. I’ve also got a few of my colleagues coming through. Looking at how long that list is I think I would’ve preferred if it was just family but hey we can’t take back the invitations now.

The door swings open and Bandile alongside Bongwe walk in carrying the biggest bouquet of roses I have ever seen. A few thousands maybe? I don’t know, all I know is that they are gorgeous. Ndile places a kiss on my forehead. I laugh at the fact that the roses are now chilling on the floor. I know just how heavy they are shame. Bongwe pulls me into his arms and we

remain in that position for a little while. It's been a tough year to 28 and he knows that. He pulls back and sits on top of the counter.

“Happy birthday sis.” Bandile says.

I give him a warm smile and a lightly nod. My nigga this one. Yes we have our fall outs but he was the first ever friend I had. My protector, my cry buddy. I remember how I used to use him whenever I wanted something from mom because he could play that sad card well. As we've grown older we've obviously found partners that would take over but he has and will always be my number 1 even when he's an ass.

“Thanks Ndile.”

“Ya happy birthday Melo.” Bongwe adds on.

I can't help but laugh at how high he looks. Mom will freak if this is how he's going to rock up at dinner.

“So we're going to spend the day with you before leaving to go get ready for the dinner.” Ndile announces.

“Yees!” I exclaim.

I might just take a puff of Bongwe's stuff even. They help me with breakfast and we

end up making a meal fit for a queen. The perks of having a professional chef for a brother. He made crumpets with berry compote served with cream, along with waffles served with bacon and maple syrup. We're also having some custard thing in a jar with pancakes, yey it's a feast! Bongwe decided to move the coffee table and set up a picnic in the living room. We settle on the floor and bless the food before digging in.

“Are you ready for the new edition into your little famiy?” I ask Ndile.

“I am.” He says beaming. “I'm enjoying walking this pregnancy journey even though I'm frustrated most of the time. I mean the unnecessary tears and tantrums but mom

and mama D say it's all part of the journey. The little kicks though and watching her reposition make it all worthwhile. I missed out on everything with Uthando but I'm doing my best to somehow make up for that with this one." He says.

"You're an amazing husband and father Ndile, there is no doubt about that. You just need to stop putting pressure on yourself because of your past mistakes." I say.

"Yeah Melo is right." Bongwe says with a mouthful.

He heaves a sigh and stuffs a waffle into his mouth. Bandile has always struggles

with somewhat forgiving himself but I hope that he'll learn for the sake of his kids if not for himself.

We spend some time catching up and laughing about our childhood memories. We had the best upbringing a kid could ever ask for yazi.

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I drive into my parent's yard and it's buzzing. I was going to get dressed here but decided against it which was a good decision because it seems like everyone is here. I make my way into the house and I must say am quite impressed. Drinks station and finger food. I appreciate the fact that we

don't have waiters, I feel like it makes things too formal.

"My baby." Mom says rushing towards me.

She kisses me on my lips before demanding that I give her a 360 of my outfit. It's just a white jumpsuit with gold accessories. She looks delish in a black figure hugging dress. I know that dad is losing his mind over this.

"I can't wait to see the outside." I say excitedly.

I see aunty Minnie making her way towards

us. This woman is aging like fine wine.
Damn it!

“Happy birthday my angel, you look breathtaking.” She says when she pulls me in for a hug.

I return the compliment and she asks to have a word with me in private before I attend to my guest. We head to the front and settle on the bench.

“Lindokuhle told me about the breakup however he didn’t want to get into details but he did tell me about his relapse. I am sorry Melo that you had to get this side of my son.”

“It’s not your fault.”

“But I feel like it is. As a parent you try your best to raise your children right and have them only take the positive attributes from you unfortunately Lindo inherited some of the negatives from me. The drug use and I bet he wasn’t so much of a strong communicator.” She pauses and sighs. “I just wanted to apologise for everything and I hope that you guys can somehow remain friends because at the end of the day we are family.”

“Lindo just needs to work on himself and as a friend I will never abandon him if he needs

my help.” I say.

“You truly are your mother’s daughter.” She says with a proud smile on her face.

That I am!

We make our way back inside then out to the back and I am in awe. Mom outdid herself here. The floating candles and rose petals in the pool are just to die for. The set up is clean and elegant. TIMELESS. The hanging fairy lights. Modimo! I love it.

I go around greeting everyone until I get to Ndo and Enhle. Can I just rave about how

amazing she looks with her legs out!
Bafeeee!

“You always look like a supermodel.” I say.

“Put me on your cover Melo.” She says
snapping her fingers.

“I just might.” I say.

We share a laugh before I turn to look at
Lindo. Sigh I miss him but I understand that
we really can't be.

“You look dapper.” I say to him.

“I had to look the part. You look beautiful and happy birthday.” He says.

“Thank you. So what’s been happening?” I ask.

“I committed to therapy, mom and Enhle have been making sure that I attend my sessions everyday so yeah. I’m working on dealing with our loss amongst other things.” He says sadly.

“Everything will work out Lindo, just have faith in God and in yourself. I’m glad that you’ve committed to healing. I wish you nothing but the best in that.”

“Thank you Melo. Anyway I got you something but you’ll unwrap it later.”

“Am I going to like it?” I ask.

“I hope you do.” He says laughing.

Laughter looks good on him and I hope he spends more of his days laughing and smiling.

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“She had insisted on no speeches but I couldn’t help myself so I’ll be brief. Nqobile, for those of you who don’t know Nqobile is our miracle child. After miscarriages

Nqobile was conceived. I actually found out about her after my wife was involved in a deadly accident. From the get go the odds were stacked against my little girl, the miscarriages as well as the accident, she wasn't supposed to make it but because she was and still is a fighter, she made it.

She conquered. uNqobile! My little blip words can't express just how much joy you bring into our lives. From the second you set foot into this world to this day you have been ensuring that our days are filled with smiles and we are grateful for that.

I just wish you nothing but joy. That's the only wish I have for you.

See I kept it short right? Haha I love you Melokuhle wami.” Daddy says.

I have no words for my father. He always leaves me teary eyed hai. Can we just get to the food part of the evening?

[05/10, 13:35] Mca: SIXTY FIVE

Unedited

My head is pounding so much that even attempting to open my eyes is a real struggle. I’ve been lying in bed trying to understand just how I even ended up in here dressed in one of my sleeper shirts. I still have a few clothes here at home just in case I decide to sleepover unexpectedly. So

last night after dad's heartfelt speech my brother's also decided that they both wanted to say something.

Bandile had me giggling and chucking at some of our childhood memories he shared. He basically told everyone just how I used to bully him and how I used him whenever I wanted to get something from mom, which is technically true because he was mama's boy and I was daddy's girl. After spilling a few of my secrets and basically painting me as a tyrant, he told me he loved me and that he would burn hell if it meant I was happy. I appreciate my main man so much. Bandile knows just about everything I've been through and he has been the positive energy whenever I would be pessimistic

about the situation.

After his speech he made way for Bongwe and I was not ready for how deep he would get. He started off by saying that he was already writing my 30th birthday speech and that it is going to start with the words 'thank you for saving my butt' because he knows that I am going to probably have to rescue his arse a couple of times in the next two years. I laughed at how true that was. My brother has his crazy moments but he's good people. He spoke about how much he wouldn't have made it through the past couple of years if it wasn't for me always checking in and nagging him. He admitted that he hated and still hates it but he is grateful.

I think we were all moved by his speech because Bongwe isn't always this soft. Yes it happens that he gets all emotional and 'mushy' but it seldom happens. After his heartfelt speech Khanyi thanked me for always watching her shows with her and the sneaky princess got me to promise in front of everyone that I would 'Showmax and chill' with her every second weekend. Sigh, here's to more of The Vampire Diaries – which I enjoy by the way, just don't tell anyone.

Once the impromptu speeches were done and I was left floating on cloud nine by all the love I was receiving, it was time for dinner. Mom's sticky ribs and wings

definitely went down. I loved the fact that it was a menu of street food served buffet style. Everyone was raving about how good the food was and mom well she giggled sweetly and played it down but I know she probably whispered a few cocky statements in dad's ear. Dessert was also served in the same manner and all I had was the oreo ice cream with extra chocolate drizzling. I was in dessert heaven.

After dessert, the kids retired to bed and the adults came out to play. I danced and drank and drank and drank some more then danced a bit more because I had drank so much. I was the drunk dancing queen but luckily everyone was in their element so it's all good. Now my problem as I am lying

here in bed is how I actually got in bed. All I remember is Bongwe threatening to push me into the pool because I think I grabbed his joint and ran away with it. That is the last memory I have of the last moments before waking up in bed.

I eventually manage to open my eyes and the first thing I spot is Malibongwe on the couch. Ukuthi why he didn't share the bed with me is beyond my understanding. I roll out of bed too quickly and I groan as my the sharpest pain shoots through my head. I swear there are a million toy soldiers from one of those Night At The Museum movies marching on top of my head. The pain subsides and I slowly drag my achy body across the room to the bathroom. For

someone for feels like shit I actually look so damn good. Okay I'm joking but I look decent.

I decide on a cold shower hoping that I will step out feeling better. The cold water is actually soothing and I could stay under this running water all day. I step out and wrap a towel around my body then head to the closet to get dressed. A boring uninspiring dress is what I settle on before going to wake Bongwe up. After some struggle he is on the bed snoring his day away.

I find mom and dad being all cute in the kitchen. He has her pinned against the pantry while she is looking at him with a smile on his face. Precious I tell you.

“Morning parents.” I interrupt their moment.

“Morning baby how’s the hangover?” Mom asks making her way towards me.

“I could use some pain killers and a really spicy breakfast.” I say as I settle on the high chairs.

Dad chuckles and hands me a tall glass he just pulled out of the fridge. It’s a concoction and I don’t care what is in it, as long as it does the job. I down it in one go blocking out the smell and taste. I finish it then down an entire bottle of water. Mom is laughing while taking out ingredients I’m

assuming for my breakfast.

“Thanks dad.” I say.

“Did you enjoy your birthday princess?”

“I did. Thoroughly at that. Thank you both so much.” I say genuinely.

Dad kisses my head before walking out the room.

“How was it being around Lindo?” She asks.

At one point in the evening I was sitting with

Lindo and I heaved a sigh at how civil we were with each other. We touched on a few things and he made me realise that I wasn't necessarily dealing with our loss. I promised to deal with it before it drowns me and that was that.

"It was okay. Like we both came to an understanding that we're practically family and that if we were to then decide to somewhat have an ugly breakup then everyone around us would be affected. We can't be selfish in our hurt by hurting our families. So yeah we're being amicable."

"You are so matured my baby, both of you and I hope that you will remain this way even when the next person moves on." She

says.

The truth is I don't know how I will react to that however as long as he's happy then kuright I guess. Mom gets on with making me breakfast then serves me and I announce that I will be leaving after I eat. Bongwe is still asleep and I just want the comfort of my home so uzoba strong lo! I pack up some of my gifts and dad promises to bring the rest later.

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So Sfiso's gift came in a small box tapped in that 'fragile' tape. I've been trying to get him on the phone but he hasn't been answering. I WILL WAIT for him to return it

so that I can give him a piece of my mind. I'm sitting on the floor with my material out and I am in my zone. I'm so nervous about all of this and I don't know if it's going to work or not but I'm giving it my all.

My phone rings interrupting me.

"Sfiso."

"Hey." He says sheepishly.

"What time is it?"

"Almost 7 in the morning." He says.

“Oh sorry I woke you up.”

“It’s okay. How was your dinner?”

“It was amazing. I really had a great time.”

“I’m glad although I would’ve loved to share it with you but next time.”

“Yeah next time. Sfiso your gift.” I say.

“Is beautiful just like you.” He says.

Of course he is going to say that! The truth is, it is a very stunning gift however I don’t

think I can accept it. The snugly bear I will keep but the bracelet? I don't think I can. He had a white snuggle bear sent over and the card on it read 'you're never too old to need a snuggle buddy'. I found it cute and I'm definitely keeping.

"Haai Sfiso."

"It's rude to return gifts you know that right?" He says laughing.

"Well luckily you've always known that I was a rude bitch so it doesn't count."

"Nqobile." He says sulking.

Sfiso got me a bracelet diamond. Now I'm a lover of thing and as a lover of things I know that this bracelet wasn't a few thousands. Yes to him it was probably pocket change but still.

"I can't accept this honestly."

"I miss you so bad right now and the last thing I want to be doing is fighting with you over a mere diamond bracelet. So can we please just not Nqobile, I am begging you."

I'm mum. I don't know how to respond to that. My initial response in my head is 'but I still ant keeping it' but I will zip it because

he asked me so kindly. He asks if he can facetime me and I agree. I look a hot mess but he just woke up so I think I'm decent enough.

[05/10, 13:35] Mca: SIXTY SIX

The past three months have been nothing but stressful and nerve wrecking. Why I thought I would be able to put everything together within this short space of time is beyond me. Right now I am at the building and I am on the verge of tears. My custom made chandelier slipped and fell as they were installing it. I'm grateful that nobody got hurt however looking at these shards of glass on the floor has just taken me a thousand steps back.

I don't think saying everything that could go wrong has gone wrong is right however the amount of negatives outweigh the positive. They painted the left wall with the wrong shade of grey. The grey wall tiles I requested weren't grey, they literally had to start over again because I wasn't happy. The ramp that is being built wasn't up to par. Everything is just really overwhelming.

"Okay guys let's clear this out." Craig says.

Craig is the project manager and not my most favourite person right now. I swear if I didn't know better I would say this is sabotage. I walk away to go answer my phone. I hope it's not more bad news.

“Melo hello.”

“Hey.”

Hearing his voice triggers something and my tears just fall. This is supposed to be my big moment however it seems as if though we won't even make it to open night. I'm even scared to check with my seamstresses because I'm scared that there might be a problem there as well.

“They broke my chandelier.” I sulk.

“What?” He yells.

He knows just how much I love that chandelier and how hard we worked on it to get it right. The use of extensive colours and shapes as well as the size. It took them a little over two months to get it made and a split second for it to end up in the bin.

“I swear I’m done with all of this. I’m canning this whole thing.”

“Come one Nqobile you can’t say such.”

“Everything has been working against me from get go Sfiso, I don’t even know where to fix first. By now we should’ve been done with the stage fitting as well as the back

offices kodwa akulungi.” I say.

“Sometimes when one is in the same area as greatness and prosperity the negative energies of this earth or should we rather say satan, whatever but those energies will do everything they can to keep you and greatness from being in the same room because they know that once you step in there, the world will shake.

Since you confided in me about this project I have been stressing the fact that you are distinguished. Nqobile there is nothing you cannot achieve if you put your mind to it. Yes things will go wrong but you cannot allow that to deter you from your end goal.

Now ngyezwa ukuthi you're tired and you're allowed to be. You're allowed to cry, heck wail if you need to but at the end of the day you pick yourself up and dust yourself off and conquer. UnguNqobile wena there wasn't a mistake made in naming you. So wipe those tears and receive this virtual hug from me."

I nod continuously ngathi he can see me. Sfiso ne, he has some bars of wisdom in him and he sure knows how to drop them. I remember when I first told him about what I was working on he was overjoyed. Mostly at the fact that he feels he has made some progress ngoba he's been let into secret projects now, SMH, but also at the fact that

I wasn't planning on sitting on my talents and passions anymore.

We spent the entire night on the phone and luckily he didn't have any meetings that day so we could chat. I told him about my vision for this and he added in what he thought would make it work even more than I thought it would. The whole concept of the grand opening was actually his idea and I do admit that it is brilliant. He has been a great help in making this happen.

"Okay." I say heaving a sigh.

"Suphel'amandla Nqobile. You've got this."

“Yazi I sometimes forget that you’ve got quite a bit of Xhosa in you.” I say laughing.

His Xhosa side surfaces when you least expect it and when it does it’s quite easy to forget that he is actually Zulu. I love how some Xhosa phrases just roll off of his tongue though – so effortless. I’ve also heard him butcher Sesotho a bit and that I think has been the highlight of all my conversations with him.

“You like the amount of Xhosa in me though Miss Mkhize.”

“I will not lie and say I don’t Mr Mavundla.”

“You’re quite something Melo. It’s erm , wow look at me unable to find a word to describe you.” He says chuckling.

“I do leave you speechless don’t I?” I say.

“You do. Anyway what are we going to do about the chandelier?”

The chandelier ne. My head is racing at this moment but not with solutions. If I could I would offload my head momentarily before screwing it back on.

“I don’t know, I guess I’ll have to get a readymade one and pray that they don’t

break it as well. “

“The person responsible has to pay though.”

“I know but how long do you think it is going to take to actually get Craig to cough out a hundred grand for the chandelier? The grand opening is in less than three weeks Sfiso so I don't have the energy to be fighting Craig for that. All I want is for him and his team to finish all the fittings so that my ladies can start making the space inspiring and setting it up for the opening.”

“Manje why are you biting my head off?”
He's laughing.

Idiot is laughing!

“I’m not. I’m just arghhhhhh.”

“Release and bring yourself back. You won’t get anything done if you’re agitated and stressed. Calm yourself then go talk to Craig. I’ll make a call to the guy I used for my house I bet he can help out. Sure it won’t be as amazing as the original piece, which you will get again, but it will add something to the space.”

“What would I do without you mara?”

“I’d pay big bucks to hear you say that, as my woman.” He says.

A moment of silence passes before us. I promised myself and him that I wouldn’t just jump into anything. Yes I enjoy our conversations and everything else but it wouldn’t be fair for me to give him half a Melo when he will be giving me a whole Sfiso. Then there’s the entire baby situation. I had thought that Lindo would be the last man that I would delve into the whole situation with.

Having to say ‘hey I can’t have kids’ before we get into anything exhausted me the first time and I know it will exhaust me again. Sigh. How many times will I have to explain this? Haai.

“I bet you would.” I respond.

“Get back to work Nqobile we’ll chat later.”

“Okay and thank you.”

“Anytime.”

We hang up and I draw a deep breath before going to face Craig. Keep calm Nqobile, I chant in my head as I head back in.

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“Nqobile Melokuhle Mkhize what is this invite I just received?” Trust my mother to be dramatic.

So I had invitations delivered to my family of course and all the high and powerful names in the industry. The press, bloggers, EVERYONE. If I’m going to make this work then I will need the exposure.

“Relax mom, it’s not that deep. I just wanted to do this and surprise everyone. Well SURPRISE!”

“Surprise Nqobile? Uthi surprise. You plan a whole come back and you don’t tell anyone. Don’t get me wrong I am burning with

excitement and pride right now but come on you know I would've loved to help."

"I know but I just really needed this for myself mom."

"Hmmm."

Hai dad must sort out his sulking wife.

"Do you want me to style you?" I ask.

"No I'll style myself thank you very much."

Rolls eyes. Let me leave her to sulk and get

on with my work. We're literally a few days away from actually pulling this off and I am bloody nervous. Sfiso came through for me with the chandelier guy who actually ended up doing some artwork on the wall which makes everything pop even more. The designs are done. The space is ready. The catering I hope will be as good as it was at the tasting. All that's left is for us to actually do this.

I'M NERVOUS.

"I'm sorry that I can't be there for your big day but I will be there in spirit." That's from Sfiso.

He apologises everyday but I understand really and between you and I, I didn't expect him to come actually.

Whoosaa can somebody say SHOWTIME!

[05/10, 13:35] Mca: SIXTY SEVEN

Unedited

This morning I woke up and cried. I cried so hard for all the weeks of stress. I cried for all the times that I gave up on designing. I cried for believing that I couldn't do it anymore and I also cried for the goodness that God has showed me over the years. I know for a fact that I wouldn't have been able to multiply what my parents had started me off with had it not been for him. I

also cried for the fact that Khanyisile called me last night to pray with me. I was so surprised but all she said was that she felt she needed to pray. After praying she told me that she would be at the show and that she wants a front row seat next to Lwandile and Ndalo. I hadn't assigned them main show seats but I guess I have to change things up now.

It's a little after six and I'm already at the studio. The place looks amazing. Okay so this place is my boutique but I call it my studio. I've decided to get back into designing and this is where I will be selling my designs from. Yes I will still showcase my work on the runway however this is my IT. The runway is clear grey and wide

enough to accommodate three models at once.

The theme for the opening that was suggested by Sfiso is a fashion show. So all the items in my come back collection will be showcased by models and will be available for sale from tomorrow. This means I have to be here early in the morning again to dress my mannequins. My show stopper is a grey light feel ball gown which will be walked by my Rea. She is so excited, not to be walking the show but for this project. She reminded me of one of the earlier conversations we had in our friendships and apparently I told her that I would own one hell of a boutique one day and well here it is. I don't remember that but

I'll take her word for it.

The event planner I hired is already here setting up. I love it when people are on time. I'm at the back making sure that all the outfits are perfect and that shoes and accessories are all here. My phone has been ringing off the hook but unfortunately I am not taking any calls because that will just make me more nervous than I already am. As it is I'm moving around like a headless chicken ngathi I didn't plan this event to be fool proof.

When the clock struck midday I have no idea. My models are here. The artists performing after the show are here rehearsing. It's all systems go at this

moment, THERE IS NO TURNING BACK. I make my way into the main space and I could cry. The flower arrangement, the chairs, the lighting, the food station – PERFECT. I don't know if I can say this is my biggest dream coming true but it is on the list and it has shown up.

I need to get ready because guests start arriving for the grey carpet at 3PM because the show starts at 5pm.

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I'm backstage helping my models get ready. Everyone is in a makeup chair getting their face beat. I'm working on Rea's face because this pregnancy has my friend

behaving like a monster and I know the MUA's wouldn't be able to handle her. She's sitting here munching on some grapes while sipping on some juice.

"Hold still Rea." I say annoyed.

"My baby is tired of sitting." She shoots back.

"Ai she must wait kancane tu. We have a show to do."

"Argh. Anyway has he called today?"

She's talking about Sfiso. She knows about

the beginning of this weird friendship we have and where it currently is. She gave me an earful about being comfortable around this guy but once I let her in on everything she told me to jump on him and lock him down. She also advised me to take my time and make sure that I have truly moved on from Lindo before anything. I think I'm doing a good job in moving on from Lindo. Yes it occasionally hurts but I've made peace.

"No. I don't know I haven't been answering my phone."

"I bet he did. It sucks that I don't get to meet this man today but when he comes back you're definitely inviting Kabelo and I

for lunch.” She says chucking a handful of grapes in her mouth.

Oh that’s another thing, yena noKabelo are official now. They spoke and they decided to give it a try. His family also went to pay damages and D being D asked why they’re only bringing inhlawulo and nt ilobola. Shame if only he knew yazi.

“I will invite you wena baby mama. Argh but then there’s still the whole situation with dad.”

“Haai Lwandle o tlaba sharp. If the guy apologised and repented then who are we to crucify him? Sure we actually do need to

get to the root of why he was such a jerk n the beginning but he is a sweetheart now and that's all that matters. Let's just see how things go before even thinking about telling bo Mkhize hobane I know both of them are crazy and if you're going to add your brothers into the mix then yhu."

Well gee thanks Rea. I decided to process what she just said. We finish up with her makeup and agree that we'll touch up before she takes the stage.

I decided to miss the grey carpet because I don't want any of the stress and all those questions. Mom calls me to let me know that they're all here and that they can't wait to see what I've put together. I shouldn't have answered her call like I hadn't been

doing the entire day because now I'm teary eyed and yearning for a hug from her.

We're five to hitting the stage. This is it Melo. Your big comeback.

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We have a screen backstage and I can see each model do their thing and it helps that I'm stationed right by the 'entrance' to the stage. I'm approving each outfit as it hits the stage and high fiving each model when they get off the ramp. They are killing it and I couldn't be more proud.

"Okay I need Rea to ready in 2 guys!"

This is it. The big end and I hope they actually like the dress. Rea walks towards us and my face beams with pride. My preggie queen looks killer in this. My word.

“I am so proud of you Melo. No one deserves this more than you and I am happy and proud of the fact that the last show I get the honour of walking in is yours.” She says kissing my cheek.

“Stop.” I whisper.

“Let me go sell this baby. No not my baby but this baby you created.” She says giggling.

The second she hits the stage I see expressions changing. The editor-in-chief of House Of Drab takes off her glasses and I swear her jaw is on the ground. Do I smell a cover? I'm so proud of my Rea, she really is working the crowd. She eventually gets off stage and it's time for the final walk. I look like shit in a demin dress and sneakers buy hey, life of a designer.

"Let's go get em." Rea says taking my hand.

We step on the stage and I'm suddenly overwhelmed. Ndalo comes charging toward me and wraps herself up around my leg before rushing back to her seat. My

family all have proud smiles on their faces and that warms my heart. Just as we get to the end of the runway I spot him in the crowd.

WHAAAAAT?! He's here? OMG.

He winks at me and I am having a hard time trying to control this smile. We head backstage and I wait for everyone to change before we head out to get food.

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I'm mingling with the crowd, doing impromptu interviews and taking pictures. I have three magazine cover requests including from my own publication. I'm glad

my team is on the beat. The live music is everything. The food is also on it. Yhuu the dessert? To die for. I catch him looking at me and I can't help but break into a smile. He signals for me to follow him and I do as I'm told. The minute we're out of sight he pins me against the wall.

"I thought you weren't coming." I say breathlessly.

"I wanted to surprise you. Congratulations Nqobile, I'm proud of you."

"Thank you."

“Okay now do I have permission to kiss you?” He asks cupping my face.

“Permission granted.” I say.

He doesn't waste any time taking my lips in his. Shockwaves throughout my entire body. Dammit I have definitely missed his kisses!

[05/10, 13:36] Mca: SIXTY EIGHT

Unedited

“I'm not staying though. I have one last meeting next week then I'll be back.” He murmurs against me lips.

We've been standing in this position with

our hot breath fanning each other's faces. I've missed his earth shattering kisses. Yes I said earth shattering because even though I will not admit it to him, they always leave me yearning for more while trying to bring myself back to earth.

"You should've stayed and concluded your business."

"And miss this moment? Nope. I'd rather be jetlagged."

"Look at you being sweet." I say smiling.

He places a soft peck on my lips before

pulling me into his arms for a warm hug. I wish we could stand in this position, in this little bubble of ours, all night however that's impossible. He's placing soft wet kisses on my neck as he caresses my back gently.

The shivers?

I can't. If I didn't have self-restraint I would probably pounce on him right here, right now. It doesn't help that his shaft is poking me on my stomach. Morals? My morals are about to vacate my system ngoba my fingers are slowly trailing down to his shaft. I want to grab and feel.

"Melo don't." He grunts painfully.

“I want.” I say breathlessly.

He grabs both my hands and holds them in his. He pounces on my lips and this one has fire! It’s fiery and lust filled. There is no denying that we want each other in this moment. Our moment is interrupted by my ringing phone. He loosens his grip around my hands and I reach for it.

“Rea.”

“Your parents are looking for you. Where are you?”

“I’m coming.” I say.

“Why are you out of breath? Modimo what are you doing?” She whispers.

I can’t help but laugh at how dramatic she is being right now.

“I’m coming in.” I say then hang up.

Sfiso rests his forehead on mine and gazes deep into my eyes. I can feel myself getting lost in them and I’m not even attempting to fight it. This man is slowly creeping his way into my system. Have you ever been so mesmerised that nothing else matters in

that moment? Well that is me right now. His intense yet subtle gaze has me under his spell. I'm selling my kidney's for this one.

"You're so gorgeous Nqobile." He says almost inaudibly.

"Ngyabonga."

"Use this next week to decide what you want to do and I'd really appreciate a concrete answer even if it's bad." he kisses my forehead before stepping back.

"Thank you for coming." That's all I manage to say.

He gives me his dashing smile accompanied by a slight nod.

“I’ll see you next week.”

“Sharp.” I say walking away.

The second my eyes land on Rea, She practically comes bolting towards me and pull me away. We settle on the couch and she looks at me expectedly.

“Where were you?” She demands.

“He was here.” I whisper.

She squeals loudly attracting a bit of attention to us including dad's who struts his way toward us. Rea is failing dismally to try and contain herself. She has on the world's mischievous smile and I swear she's like a fifteen year old right now. Dad reaches us and like a guilty party Rea bolts using her bladder as an excuse. Mxm.

"I saw that Mavundla character here." He says.

Is he going to scold me in front of this entire crowd? Yes dad isn't so bad however he does have a tendency of losing it when he's beyond worked up.

“Hmmm.” That’s all I say.

“Did you invite him?”

“Yes.”

“Ufuna silwe?”

“Dad please I thought we spoke about this.”

“I don’t get you my child.”

“Honestly you don’t have to. Just know that I’m not in any danger and that I am actually

enjoying our friendship dad. Don't you want me to be happy?"

"I do but not with someone who threatened your livelihood."

"Be like Jesus daddy, forgive." I say batting my eye lashes.

"Unfortunately for you I am no Jesu so no. Anyway your mother and I are leaving now so find her and say goodbye." He says getting up and walking away.

Sigh but why is Lwandle so thick-headed? Yes I understand that he cares and that he

is worried but can't he just take my word for it? I get up and go find his wife to say bye. I find her mingling with one of my favourite photographers. They're laughing and chatting up a storm as if though they have known each other for the better part of their lives.

"Oh Melokuhle baby I've been looking for you." She says pulling me to stand next to her.

"I was just getting some air."

"Beautiful show and congratulations on the boutique."

“Thank you so much.”

He excuses himself leaving me with a bouncing mom. Her energy is skyhigh and I doubt she will hit the sack the second she steps in the house.

“I just came to say bye. Daddy says you guys are leaving.”

“Yes it’s way way passed our bedtime.” She says.

“Well thank you for coming through. I appreciate your support.”

“I am beyond proud of you baby. You’re going far and wide, just you wait and see.”
She says pulling me in for a hug.

“I love you mama.”

“I love you too my baby.”

I think I’d also like to get some sleep now but with the way this crowd is set up, it would be a miracle if I were to leave for home at 3AM. Let me let my hair loose and enjoy my achievement. Well done kid. I am super proud of you!

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It's the Monday after the opening and I am dog tired. Yesterday I had to be in at 8AM to get the space ready for business today. It was such a challenge considering the fact that I only got home at 5AM. I swear I wasn't even anywhere near dreamland when my alarm woke me up. I had this really strong urge to cry but I soldiered on. We got the space ready and I am happy with the outcome. We're using the ramp to showcase our much more expensive and exclusive pieces.

My entire aim with this boutique was to react fashion that everyone could afford. Yes for the average joe on the street it could take a few months to save up for however the whole point is that you can

actually get it. Unlike those brands only set aside for the elite.

We've had a few customers walk in and we've already made a couple of sales which is awesome. My manager, yes I got a manager because I don't think I could run the store personally, also it's all about job creation. I can't wait to get home and just sleep. That's all I need right now.

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I'm on my way to go see Sfiso. He's been back for two days and I've had back to back interviews. He asked me to come to his house and at first I was hesitant but I decided to throw caution to the wind. I'm a

little early but that shouldn't be a problem. I park in the drive way and I can't help but chuckle at how just from the outside this house is so him. I make my way in and I'm welcomed by his helper who leads me down to the gym.

Imagine Dragons – Thunder is blasting through the speakers. I step in and I immediately fall in love with this gym but I can't even admire it fully because this man is shirtless and doing pull ups. The sweat dripping off of his back is somewhat inviting. He drops to the ground and turns around. You can see the shock on his face but it is quickly replaced by a broad smile. He makes his way towards me and before I can even get two words in, I'm in his arms

with my bag on the floor and my back arched against the wall.

Uyangiphuza this guy! He is drinking me. I had my legs wrapped around his waist and I can't help but grind against him. He tightens his grip around my ass and deepens the kiss.

I'm horny.

Yep I said it! I am thirsty.

Gosh and the fact that I am feeling his skin on my palms isn't helping my situation. Not one bit!

[05/10, 13:36] Mca: SIXTY NINE

Short and unedited

I'm not worried about the possibility of failing. No no no because this tall, strong man has a tight grip on me as he walks us out of his gym. I'm not concerned about the fact that he can't see the way because of this heated kiss we're sharing ngoba I trust that he knows his way around his house. My concern is that we might just bump into his helper and I don't think I will be able to face her after that.

I hear the door shutting and I assume that we have arrived at our destination. Yes we have because he is gently laying me on the bed. His breathing is erratic and so is mine. My heart is pounding against my chest so

hard that I felt as if he can hear it. I move up slightly and that proves to be a big mistake because my mound comes into direct contact with his shaft. He groans loudly and presses it harder.

YESES!!

I pull him closer and deepen the kiss. I want him. I need him. I've already kicked my shoes off and I use my toes to lower his sweatpants. Bona I'm taking the lead on this one.

"Are you sure baby?" He murmurs.

“Yes.” I respond.

“I won’t be able to stop.” He continues.

“I don’t want you to stop.”

He grunts before pulling back and taking off my top then coming back in for a kiss while he works my bra. His hand travels to my breast giving it a tight squeeze before flicking his thumb over my nipple. What I am currently feeling I cannot describe. We haven’t even gotten anywhere but already I am vulnerable. I’ve expressed just how his kisses always leave me dazed and in this moment, with the nipple touching and dick pulsing I’m a goner.

When he got rid of the remainder of my clothes I don't know. All I know is that I am bare right now with him staring down at me while stroking his cock up and down. He has on his signature smirk and I can't help but shy away because I know what he's thinking. Why is he just standing there staring at me like I'm some sort of meal though? Okay wait I am a meal.

He makes his way to the side of the bed and grabs a condom. I watch as he rips it open before handing it to me. Hai why must I help dress him? I sit up and with shaky hands while looking at this throbbing log of deliciousness I slide it on. My eyes are still on his shaft when I feel him gently push me

back. MY lips are on his creating sweet music and my soul is dancing to that tune.

He positions himself at my entrance before pullign back and gazing deep into my eyes.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes.” I say breathlessly.

I shut my eyes as he slowly pushes himself in but he softly asks me to open my eyes and look at him. I do as I am asked and I share a deep intimate moment with this man. IN this moment he looks so vulnerable, his eyes are giving him away. One big push

and he has inserted himself all the way in. MY face probably looks comical in this moment. I'm holding my breath as I wait for him to move.

The first stroke sends vibrations throughout my body and the others that follow do the same. The chills down my spine I cannot control. My moans are soft with my breathing uncontrollable. I don't know how I am going to get through this session. I feel like I am being transported into an alternate universe where only my vagina and his strokes reside. His kiss. His touch. His everything. I can't. I so cannot.

I unexpectedly come undone but that doesn't stop him. In fact it fuels him more

because he goes harder and faster. THIS MAN! This man is taking me into different parallels. The Mavundla parallel and I am all for it.

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I'm resting in his arms with my head on his chest. I haven't been able to utter a word to and I think that has everything to do with the fact that I need to give him a clear answer.

"I enjoyed every moment of our passionate act Nqobile and I hope you don't feel bad about it." He finally says.

"I don't." I respond without even thinking.

I honestly don't because I wanted it as much as he did. I enjoyed how his hands roamed around my body as if though they knew exactly where to land.

"So is this my answer?"

"No it's not."

"Then what is it?"

"This was just two consenting adults blowing off some much needed steam." I say.

He chuckles light and I can feel him shaking his head.

“But for real though.”

“There’s just so much to consider Sfiso. Do I enjoy my time with you? Absolutely! Am I falling for you? Undoubtedly so. Do I want to enjoy you kisses? All the time. And this, this moment, you owning my body. I want it over and over again but there is just so much to cinsider before committing to this.”

“Like what baby?” His voice is so soft.

“Can we just take in this moment? Can we just sit in silence and listen to each other’s heartbeats.” I plead.

“As long as you know that I’m not going anywhere.” He says kissing my head.

Sigh. Another man I have disclose my condition to.

[05/10, 13:36] Mca: SEVENTY

Unedited

Waking up this morning felt a little different, which was given considering the fact that I woke up in Sfiso’s arms. At first I felt do awkward about it but as the minutes and

seconds passed I began to relax until I reached this moment. Having his leg in between mine and feeling his hot breath on the back of my neck is something I can definitely get used to I feel.

Last night Sfiso loved my body so tenderly that my soul couldn't help but smile. I know that that's exactly what he was hoping to achieve. I thoroughly enjoyed every second of it even though right now I wish I had gotten my dose of sleep instead of being ravished the entire night. I have to be at studio in about an hour and I am dog tired. I've been trying to psyche myself up kodwa nothing futhi at this moment I'm thinking of calling my manager and letting her know that I am going to be a little late today. I

can't afford to be taking day offs in the first crucial weeks.

I try to reach for my phone but this one pulls me closer and kisses my back.

"Sfiso wait I have to call my manager." I say chuckling.

"It's still early." He whispers against my ear.

This guy mara. I wiggle myself out of his tight hold and reach for my phone with success. I send a message to my team on our group letting them know that I will be coming on late today then put my phone

away before settling back into his arms.

“Are you going to work?” He asks.

“Yeah which means I should be getting up and heading home so I can get ready for the day.” I say.

“I don’t want you to go.” He whines.

“Unfortunately I don’t have the luxury to slack off on my work.”

“I know baby but I’ll miss you.” He’s still whining.

This to me is so foreign because I am used to him as the mighty Mavundla who doesn't seem like he gets weak when he sees cats. This man is hardcore in some way but not on this moment.

"I'll see you some other day angithi." I say hoping that'll make him feel better.

"Later please and I'll cook."

"But I'm not sleeping over angithi."

"That's fine." He says.

He turns me around then gently caresses

my face before placing a kiss on my lips. Sfiso makes me so weak and I think I hate it. I hate that I have no control over my physical the second he kisses me. As always his kiss is electric and it has my entire being feeling like I am being is being electrocuted. I pull back and gaze at his rustic looking face with a smile upon my face. His beard hasn't been touched in weeks and I actually want him to trim it but it's not my place to say such.

“You're so beautiful Nqobile.”

“Ngyabonga.” I say faintly.

I could play this staring contest all day

however I have a job to get to. I roll out of bed with him protesting and rush to the bathroom. I wash my face then help myself to his mouth wash before heading back to get my clothes and get dressed. I need to rush home so that I can bath and get ready nje. I head back into the bedroom and I find the bed already made. He walks back in with a tray in his hand and places it on the table next to the couch before making his way towards me and pulling me into his arms.

“Mam’Gcina made breakfast. You should eat before you leave.” He says.

I nod lightly and he makes me sit on the couch and puts the tray on my lap. I settle

for the muffins and tea. You can taste that these are freshly baked. I think I will be a frequent visitor here just for these. I finish up then grab my stuff before taking the tray and making my way to the kitchen with him right behind me. I wash the dishes while he dries and head out to my car once we're finished.

"I'll see you later?" He asks cupping my face.

"Yes." I respond.

He places a soft peck on my lips before opening the car door for me. I slide in and he closes it. He steps back and looks at me with a smile on his face. I return it as drive

out. Well my day has just started on a high and I hope it carries through in the same energy.

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The studio is buzzing today which is a great thing. We've had a few models step in here and leave with a couple of items. My seamstresses have also been working hard to ensure that we have stock available. The items on display on the runway are the ones we could say have a heavier price tag, given, because they are the only items that are exclusive. So literally that one you see is the only one up for sale.

By lunch time we had reached our target for

the day. I am so impressed with my team's work ethic and I hope and pray that they don't begin slacking off as the months progress.

"Boss lady you have someone here to see."
Lebo announces then walks out.

I make my way to the front of the studio and my heart leaps for joy when I see my brothers with food in their hands. We make our way to my office and settle on the couch.

"Thanks for the food guys." I say digging in.

“Anytime sis. So how have the sales been going?” Ndile asks.

“Really good. We’re receiving positive results and it can only get better from here right?”

“That’s true. We’re all really proud of you Nqo and we know that you’re going to regain your spot as one of the best in Africa.” Wewe says.

“Well said brother.” Ndile adds on.

“So Ndile how’s Kayise?” I ask.

They gave birth to a beautiful baby girl who everyone is just in love with. She looks exactly like Amanda much to Ndile's annoyance because he wanted her to look like him. Seeing my brother so excited and so happy about this new journey warms my heart. I know he was still feeling bad about not being there for Lwandile but he gets his second chance and he is definitely giving it his all.

"She's such a peaceful child. She wakes up, eats, burps, then goes back to sleep. Mom says that might change though, however we're enjoying it for as long as we can." He says.

The smile on his face cannot be mistaken

for anything else other than joy.

“I’m really happy for you Ndile.”

“I know you are sis.” He says smiling.

“And you Bongwe?”

“Ahh just trying to give my all at school and at work. I don’t have time for women or babies.” He says shrugging.

I wonder if he’ll ever get to a point where he is ready to be someone’s partner or parents. However as long as he is in a good space then I’m happy.

My brothers and I spend the afternoon catching up and they even help us clinch a couple of sales with their charm. A group of women walked in and they went banana's over all that melanin plus Bongwe has that 'IDGAD' face going on which is apparently what these girls are into. Sigh but it was good seeing them enjoy themselves making me money.

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I've been dreading this conversation the entire day and now that I'm here I want to run away. The truth is I have developed feelings for Sfiso and I'd rather he decide to walk out on me than months or years later into this relationship he so wants. I'm tired

of disclosing my condition and I'm tired of having men walk out on me because of something I have no control over.

I make my way in and he has a cute picnic set up in the living room. Sweatpants, barefooted with an apron on top, flippen cute! We share a brief kiss before he instructs me to kick my shoes off and relax while he brings out the food. This isn't picnic food, this is soul food and I am grateful because that's what I need.

"How was your day?" He enquires.

"It was good. My brothers came by and the women went crazy." I say laughing.

He joins me and we share a brief chuckle. I bet if he were to come through I'd sell out immediately but I dare not say that out loud.

"Well if they have to parade in the underwear to get you sales then so be it!"

"Would you do that for my sales?"

"Baby I'd dance on rooftops." He says laughing.

"That's so damn cheesy argh."

I'm enjoying this moment. Savouring it

because it might be my last with him. My heart is beating so loudly against my chest.

“Hey what’s wrong?” He asks softly.

I guess he noticed that my mood changed in a split second.

“You want to know why I’m so hesitant in actually agreeing to be with you?”

“Yes.”

“Apart from the fact that my dad hates you, I have a condition. My husband left me because he couldn’t handle it and so did my

ex. So I need you to take some time out after I tell you and decide whether or not you want to still pursue a relationship with me.”

“Nqobile.” He says faintly.

“Years ago a found out that I couldn’t have kids. I can’t have kids Sfiso. I don’t know what more to say on this. I know that most men wants to pass on their empire’s to their children and with you being such an established business man I know you want to pass that on to your children and grow your name.

I’m just tired of men leaving me because of

something I didn't do."

I'm ready to grab my bag and walk out of here with my heart slightly bruised. I'm ready.

"Can I respond to that?" He asks.

I heave a sigh and nod lightly.

"This is obviously quite a shock to me, I honestly wasn't expecting such a bomb however I thank you for trusting me enough to let me in. I know with your past history that you will not believe it when I say that I am not going anywhere. Do I want kids? Yes.

Do they have to be mine biologically? No.

Nqobile I grew up in a broken home where my stepfather used my mother as a punching bag until he took her life and I was later raised by my grandmother. That messed me up pretty bad and for a long time I didn't want to become a father because I thought that I would project the same environment I grew up in on my kids but that was until I started therapy and she encouraged me to use those feelings for good.

What I'm saying is that there are so many children out there who grew up or are growing up in environments like I grew up in and all they need is a happy home. That's

why there's adoption angithi, for couples who can't have children of their own."

"You see you're lying to me. You're promising to always be there and adoption this and that will ride until you realise that you want the Mavundla bloodline to be carried through generations. You probably have the hope that a specialist can come in and save the day but that is not the case. I'm tired of being poked and probed at all in the name of conceiving.

This is why I am saying just think about it." I say getting up.

"Uyaphi."

I grab my bag, shoes and keys and make my way out. I will never get used to this. The last two guys said they'd stay and I didn't even give them space to think about it. Maybe if he takes his time out and figures out what he wants then that will make all the difference.

I feel his arms around my waist and my heart sinks. I want to sink into his embrace but I can't allow myself to do that.

"Please don't go."

"I have to go Sfiso just let me go please."

“I want you Nqobile. You can’t have children, so what?”

I heave a sigh while shaking my head.

“Can I please go?” I ask softly.

“Melokuhle.”

“Please.”

He lets go off me then steps back and watches on while I get in the car and drive off. Dear God why does this have to be my life? Why do I have to lose out on love

because of this?

See you Tuesday ke

[05/10, 13:36] Mca: SEVENTY ONE

Unedited

My tears blind my vision as I drive away. The minute I am out of the estate I park on the side of the road and allow them to flow. It hurts so bad to drive away from the man that could potentially become my happiness but I had to do it, not just to give him time to digest what I have just revealed but for myself as well. I take out my phone

and dial mom. I'm a grown woman but right now I need my mother. I need my best friend.

"Hi baby."

"Mommy please come." I say without even thinking.

I just want to be in her arms. I don't know how I'm going to break the whole Mavundla situation to her but we'll see.

"What's wrong baby? Where are you?"

"I'm driving home. I'll send you a code."

“Okay I’m on my way. I love you baby.”

“I love you too mom.” I say softly before hanging up.

I pull myself together then drive home. Why is life so unfair? Why do some of us have to walk this earth miserable? Don’t get me wrong, I have a great loving family whom I am grateful for. I have an amazing career which I love so much and I have awesome friends BUT...BUT I don’t have what my heart yearns for.

I sometimes can’t help but wonder what kind of mother I would be. Would I spoil

those tiny humans like I spoil all the children around me? Or would I scold everyone who actually spoils them. I don't know. I get home and find mom already parked outside. We share a brief hug before making our way inside.

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Mom and I are lying in bed with me in her arms. I love how she knows how to just hold me and never say a thing. It must be hard for her to do but I appreciate her self-restraint. I don't even know where to begin with this. Most of the time I feel so bad for stressing her out so much because I understand just how hard it must be for her to always hold me in her arms and comfort me because of this issue. Sigh.

“Mom.”

“Yes baby.”

“I opened up to another man today about my infertility.”

“Oh Melo wami.” She says tightening her grip around my body.

“It sucks so much mommy that this always has to be the first conversation I have with a man because I want them to decide for themselves whether they want to be with me or not.”

“I am so sorry Melokuhle that you have to go through this. I would give anything in this world if it meant you having a normal relationship and baring your own children in the future.”

“Do you think I’m less of a woman because I can’t have kids?”

“Konje how is our womanhood measured or defined? By our measure of having children? No it isn’t. So you my baby are not less of anything. You are a remarkable woman my Melo.”

“What if he decides to walk away from me

mom?”

“Who is he?”

I shift uncomfortable before heaving a sigh. I might just get an earful from her.

“Sfiso Mavundla.” I say softly.

“Isn’t Sfiso the guy you and your father were fighting about? The guy that threatened you and had you living in fear Melokuhle?” Her voice is slightly raised.

I know from that outside looking in, it’s very idiotic but Sfiso is such a teddy bear. Yes

her made his entrance into my life as the grim reaper but that's not who he is.

"It's him." I say defeated.

"Melo!"

"I fell for him mom. He makes me feel beautiful and worthy mama. He makes me laugh and he gives me the best advice and he talks me down the ledge. He's kind and always wants to make sure that I'm alright mom. He cares for me."

"Baby your father-"

“I’ll deal with Lwandle when the time comes but right now can we focus on me? On how I tried to not give in but in the end ended up falling for him. I see myself with him mom but this stupid condition is making it so hard.”

“What did he say when you told him about it?” She asks.

“He spoke about adoption but that’s the thing mom, Lerato said he’ll stick around but in the end left me and found someone to host his sperm. Lindo also made the same promises but the first bump we hit and he was gone. How do I know that Sfiso won’t do the same after a while? What if he also wakes up and realises that he cannot

stay with a woman who can't bare him kids?
It would hurt so much mommy. So so
much.”

“One day you are going to find a man who
will accept you with all your flaws. He will
love you so much that he won't even worry
about that. He will love you for you and not
your body's ability to carry children. The two
of you will be happy and in love and when
the time is right God will bless you in the
way he deems fit.”

“Is it wrong for me to say that I want that
man to be Sfiso?”

Driving away from him earlier today was the

hardest thing I've had to do. I realise now just how much and how deeply I have fallen for him. Not only does he care about me but he supports my dreams. He was actually interested in the step by step planning of the studio. He gave his input and when I was in a pickle he came to my rescue.

All this time that we have been talking and spending time together, he has never pressurised me into being with him instead he has genuinely been my friend. I want to explore where and how far this could go but I am so damn scared.

“You're not wrong baby. Just talk to him. Hear what he has to say and hear what your heart says thereafter. I know logic says to

let him go because he might be fooling you but your heart knows baby. It always knows.” She says then kisses my forehead.

I know dad is about to start blowing our phones demanding that I return his wife but she insists on spending the night with me which I am grateful for. She calls her husband to let him know that she will be spending the night because I am not feeling well and Lwandle being Lwandle he wants to come flying here but mom assures him that she’s got this. We decide to order in because none of us feel like cooking.

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“So has he given you a clear reason as to

why he came in guns blazing? I mean the man used to threaten you and now he wants to be in a relationship with you?"

I hear her concerns. Honestly I have never asked him why but I guess with our recent developments I need to.

"I hear you mom."

"I'm just saying until you know everything then be careful baby."

"He'd never hurt me." I say non-hesitantly.

My heart believes that and it felt at peace

as I said that. If he wanted to hurt me in any way he would've done it a long time ago. I refuse to believe that what I have been feeling from him isn't genuine.

“Okay ke. So how far have you guys gone?”
Oh lort!

“Mama haai.”

“I'm not boasting or anything but Lwandle is the only man I have ever slept with.”

I burst into laughter. She always says this. I don't understand why my parents think it is okay for them to tell me about their sex life.

“Well good for you mama.”

“And to this day he still is a stallion.”

“Shut up!” I yell.

I don't want to hear it! No, no, no. I grab my glass and make my way to the kitchen to refill. We made cocktails and Zobuhle poured so much booze into them that I feel by the third glass I will be a goner.

Sigh. The blessing of parents that are actually your friends I don't take for granted. I don't know how I would've gotten through

this without moment mom and her bear hugs.

OKAY TUESDAY FOR REAL FOR REAL NOW
[05/10, 13:36] Mca: SEVENTY TWO

It has been a week since Sfiso and I last spoke and I must admit that my days have been a drag. I don't know how many times I've had to reprimand myself from dialling his number. I don't know why I'm feeling this way when I was the one who walked away from him because I wanted to give him space to digest everything. I do wish though that he could just tell me now that

he can't commit to this so that I may focus on my healing before getting myself a dog.

Yes I have decided that should this not yield positive results I am retiring from the love game. I mean honesty which relationship starts with tears before it actually even begins? Mine! I have to cry and feel like crap before entering into a partnership. I can't be doing that to myself every time. Maybe my greater calling is to be a single animal shelter owner or something. I guess animals need love too right?

Mom advised me to reach out to him and hear what he has to say but I am scared. I'll just wait for him to say something and if he doesn't then that's that.

Tonight is me time and I have opted for an extra fatty home cooked meal for one and a great box office movie or two. I have all my ingredients for my extra meaty macaroni and cheese in the trolley. I also have my assortment of sugars as well. I prefer making my own caramel coated popcorn and I have found that using two or more kinds of sugars gives it that little bit of extra sweetness, not that it needs any but still.

I throw a packet of wine gums in the trolley before proceeding to my wine section. I've never been a fan of white but today I feel like going rogue. Wow Melokuhle is your life so boring that you refer to picking a different wine than you usually do going

rogue? SMH!

“I thought that was you.” A voice says from behind.

I turn around and I’m met by skinny Ike who is still skinny but not as skinny as he used to be.

“Ike oh wow hey.” I greet with a smile on my face.

“How are you?” He asks.

We share a brief hug. So I went to high school with Ike and to say he was the class

clown would be an understatement. The dude was always called into the office for goofing around in class. I remember this one time in our Biology class he decided to play a prank on our teacher because he didn't want to learn, so he took his phone and placed it on top of the cupboard then took someone else's phone and called his phone.

Our teacher got so upset that we all had to take out our phones and put them on top of the table. Imagine her frustration when the ringing didn't stop. She literally packed her bag, walked out of that class and never looked back. We were without a teacher for three weeks before she was replaced by a bulldog. Oh man fun times!

“I’m awesome man and you?”

“I’m good. I see you doing big things in the fashion industry. Congrats.”

“Thanks Ike.”

I always try and refrain from asking people what they do unless it somehow comes up because I feel like it is such a sensitive question.

“Well we’re actually going to be getting together in a few months time if you’re interested.”

“Oh yeah?” I say.

“Yeah but I’ll tag you.”

“I’d appreciate that.”

“Alright then see you around.”

“Okay sharp.” I say walking away.

Yeah high school was cool and all but I don’t think I want to see them again. What’s the point of all these reunion things if not to make some people feel bad about not having reaching their desired destinations

over the past few years and the worst part of it is that they don't even try to offer assistance, all they want is something to giggle about in their group chat nje. So nope, I'll pass.

I finish up with my shopping then head home to cook up a storm.

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Extra cheesy, extra meaty macaroni and cheese...Check

Extra spicy wings...Check

Caramel coated popcorn...Check

Wine gums...Check

Wine and a large chilled glass...Check

Let my me evening commence. I'm going to watch one of Bongwe's fast action packed playlists. Something with fast cars and extremely hot men should soothe me. I need to find out how they cast these people, I mean how can a movie have an all sexy cast? Like where's the balance? Ngeke sbali. I bite into my wings and the heat? Oh glorious!

I'm half way through my movie when my phone rings disturbing my peace. Argh I forgot to switch this thing off. I grab it and my heart palpates when Sfiso's name flashes. I know that I've been anticipating this call however now that it's coming through I'm not ready for it. I draw a deep

breath before answering.

“Hi.” I say softly.

He’s not saying anything. Why isn’t he saying anything? A minute of awkward silence passes by before I hear him heaving a sigh.

“I miss you.” He finally says.

My heart leaps for joy but quickly sinks when I remember that he hasn’t said anything on the issue at hand.

“Sfiso.”

“Can I see you today or tomorrow, I don’t know.” He says.

“You can come through today if you don’t mind.” I say softly.

I think being rejected in my own space is better than being rejected in public.

“Okay send me a code, I’m on my way.” He says before hanging up.

Sigh. I send him the code then down my wine before refilling my glass. Can I be slightly out of it before he tells me just how

much he loves children and and and. I think I'd been trying to prepare myself for this moment but nothing can ever prepare you for heartbreak.

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He looks good in his jeans and basic black t-shirt. I make way for him and he waits for me to close the door. I lead him into the living room and he makes himself comfortable on the couch.

“Can I get you anything to drink? Food maybe? I have macaroni and cheese as well as wings.” I say.

I think I'm blabbering. I don't know. He

chuckles while shaking his head slightly.

“Coffee and some food please and some of those caramel popcorn later.” He says chuckling.

I nod lightly as I make my way to the kitchen. I dish up for him then set everything on a tray before taking it to him. He wipes his hands, thanks me then hands the dish cloth back to me. He eats in silence while stealing glances at me. Is it this wine or does this man look like a snack right now? Yhoo. He finishes with his meal then takes his plate to the kitchen. Instead of settling in his original seat, he sits next to me.

“I know you said that I should take some time out and think about what you revealed to me and I did as you wished. I spent the entire week trying to get the look on your face as you told me this out of my mind but I failed. I failed dismally which frustrated me so much but it made me realise something. I realised that I’d actually fallen for you more than I thought.

Do you know how hard it was for me to actually keep myself from calling you? I was probably the grumpiest boss in the world this entire week but I had to do it because I respect you. So I thought about it and I digested what you said – you can’t have children. My answer to that is you probably

can't carry a child in your womb however you can have children.

You do realise that kids do not have to actually come from you to actually be yours. You can have an entire team of love children that you can call your own. You could get a surrogate and that way you can have your blood running through their veins. Nqobile mina ngifuna wena. I want to explore what this could become. I want to hopefully become the one that you turn to for most things. Like I said to you I don't think not having my own blood will kill me however letting you go because of a condition you didn't ask for will.

I know you've been disappointed, I get it but

all I ask is that you give me a chance to prove myself to you.” He says sliding closer to me.

“I’m scared.” I say truthfully.

“I know baby but take a leap of faith please.” He says cupping my face.

Gazing deep into this man’s eyes I can see without a shadow of a doubt that he means what he said but I am so scared. Too scared at that.

God this is so hard

[05/10, 13:37] Mca: SEVENTY THREE

Unedited

I am being pounded against the kitchen counter with my ass facing sky high right now.

Hard and fast!

I bet you my dark ass is visibly red – that's how much he is spanking it. I am enjoying it though I do admit. He withdraws completely leaving me feeling empty. Just as I am about to protest, he rams himself all the way in leaving me gasping for air a bit. Lendoda guys! He continues with his quick thrust. I'm almost there, he can feel it. He rubs his finger on my clit and I come

undone. He follows shortly after and dammit that groan does it for me.

“You’re going to be the death of me Nqobile.” He whispers as he places wet kisses on my back.

So after he said his piece he pulled me onto his lap and cradled me like a baby. I felt so safe in his arms and I knew in that moment that I wanted to feel this kind of security and assurance for as long as I could.

“Just promise that you will just stay with me out of pity while yearning for a child should the time come.” I said to him.

This situation is hard for me and I need him to understand that he doesn't have to be here if he doesn't want to be. As much as what he said moved me, I just can't seem to get over my past experiences.

"I want to be with you Nqobile and I doubt that I'll ever leave you because of this. Yes I'd walk away if things just weren't working out between us but never because of something you had no control over Melokuhle."

"I'm just really scared of the disappointment." I said.

"Your exes left because of them and not

because of you. Jonga sthandwa sami ndimdala and I know what I want in life. I want to build an empire and create jobs and change a few lives in the process. I give you my word baby that you will not cry ngale ndaba because of me.”

“You promise?”

“I promise.”

And that is how I ended up naked and smashed against the counter. I think I’m going to enjoy this kind of sex with him. He pulls out and I wince a bit. I feel empty. He wraps his arms around my waist pulling me closer. The feel of his shaft on my bare

back feels weird.

“The bedroom is upstairs.” I say faintly.

“Do I carry you there?” He responds in a whisper.

“Yes.”

He picks me up bridal style and makes his way to my bedroom with me directing him. He gently drops me on the bed before making his way to the bathroom. He comes out with a towel and wipes me clean before getting on the bed and cuddling me from behind.

“I love the feel of your skin against mine.”

He says.

I giggle as I snuggle closer to him. I love the feel of his skin against mine as well. This moment is so perfect. I wish I could wrap it up and keep some of it for later.

“Can I ask you something?” I say.

“Sure.”

“When you first started threatening me, why did you do it?” I ask.

He heaves a sigh and pulls me closer.

“I had a girlfriend that I did love and I was willing to do anything for and when she told me she wanted your publication I was ready to go the extra mile for her. I didn’t do any research when I requested that first meeting with you and when I got there and realised that it was you my heart fluttered just a little bit and I knew that I couldn’t take it away from you. Also seeing the fire in your eye when you told me that you weren’t selling just moved me a little bit.

So I told her that I couldn’t buy it for her because you weren’t selling and she understood but I just couldn’t stop myself from thinking about you so I did my

research and I found out everything I possibly could about you. I was intrigued and I wanted you. That's why I kept coming. Yes I was a bit harsh but that was because I realised something that I don't want to talk about.

With my threats I was never going to carry them out and I am sorry that I had you living in fear for those months. I realise that I did some damage and from the bottom of my heart I apologise.”

“Why couldn't you just ask me out?”

“Because Nqobile.” He heaves a sigh. “We'll touch on that someday but right now I just

want to make love to you all night long.” He says licking my shoulder.

It’s still literally the first day and there’s no need to rush into those deep conversations. Yeah right says the girl that discloses her womb diaries before she gets into a relationship. Argh. He said something about all night long and I am down for that.

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I open my eyes and wait for my mind to come into full function. I am so tired. Sfiso and I spent the night talking and fucking and talking some more. The feeling of cracking up at 2AM in the morning was the best however I regret it now because I have

to get to work. I roll out of bed and head to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. Actually where is this man?

I find him in the kitchen making breakfast in his briefs. I lean against the door and bite my lip while admiring this creation. The height? So damn perfect! I watch for a little while before I decide to make my grand entrance. I rest my head on his back then wrap my arms around his waist.

“Hey, I thought you were still sleeping.”

“I have to get to the studio.” I say.

“Okay well I hope you don’t mind that I made myself comfortable in your kitchen.”

“As long as you’re making something tasty then I don’t mind.”

He chuckles lightly before turning around and placing a sweet kiss on my lips. He picks me up and sets me on the countertop then gets in between my legs.

“I feel like I’m dreaming.” He murmurs against my lips.

“Why?”

“You’re like a dream.” He says before deepening the kiss.

He’s the dream that I don’t think I’m ready for. I could spend my entire day having my way with him but I have to get ready for work. I pull back, jump off the counter and smack his butt before running off. Sigh. Oh happy day.

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After breakfast Sfiso and I went our separate ways with me promising to spend the night at his place. I even gave him my overnight bag just so he can see that I mean business. Today the studio is buzzing, given, because it’s a Saturday. I’m already

working on next seasons designs and I'm excited. Fashion truly is my passion man.

Aunty walks in with my two angels and they both run towards me. Oh they're so cute in their matching outfits. I love how rich and thick Khanyi's hair is and it makes her face look so innocent. We head into my office and they make themselves comfortable on the couch. Just as we settle lume walks in pushing a stroller. The entire family is here.

"Weeah Melokuhle remember how I used to scold you for leaving your material everywhere?" He says laughing.

"Mina? Haai never." I deny.

“Hmm anyway I’m proud of you. This is a beautiful little shop you have here.”

“Little shop lume?” I ask.

“Ya like small you know.” He says laughing.

“You’re so dumb Langelihle.” Aunty says shaking her head.

“Ungithanda nginje.” He says.

“Unfortunately.” She responds.

I love the playful relationship that these two share. The love that they have for each other is so beautiful and you can help but wish to have something like this. My parents along with these two have been the greatest influence when it comes to love. Watching their interactions and how they show each other love has been an honour for me.

“Mina I just came to drop the ladies and gent off. I’ll see you later.” He says.

He kisses aunty on the forehead before heading out.

“I don’t know why he’s running away

because I just came to check up on you kodwa he probably thinks we want to gossip.” She says laughing.

“Can we gossip vele.” I say settling next to her.

I need to tell someone about this man and as much as I can tell mom I know that she’s going to bring dad into the conversation and I don’t want that. I fill aunty in on everything making sure not to leave anything out.

“So this man makes you lose your marbles? Well then he’s keeper. Look the manner in which he made an entrance into your life is

questionable however he has since proven that he isn't the monster that he had portrayed himself to be. Now I understand that the kid issue is always going to linger at the back of your mind but baby you need to give yourself a chance at love. You can't make him pay for the mistakes that those other two made.

It's scary I know but look at it this way. When you started this business you were scared however you gave your all and look at it, it's blossoming. You will never know unless you try. So don't hold back on him. Who knows he might just be your happily ever after."

"You deserve to be happy Melo." Khanyi

says.

This child was listening kanti? Wow but I do hear what aunty is saying and I do hope that as time goes on I will learn to give all of me without reservation.

[05/10, 13:37] Mca: SEVENTY FOUR

Unedited

Take a leap Melo and leaping is exactly what I am doing. I j have consciously made a decision to walk into this relationship with the intention of giving my all to this man. Yes I might end up with cake in my face but I would have zero regrets because I know I would've tried my absolute best to make the relationship work.

Right now Sfiso and I are in the kitchen cooking our first meal together as a couple. Just some southern fried chicken and garlicky buttery mash potatoes with some gravy. We've been spending a

lot, okay most, of our time at his place. I'm enjoying this phase of our relationship and I wish things could stay this way forever. The laughter, the kisses, the quickies in the morning, the slow and long love making at night, the showers, all of it.

I'm learning that Sfiso is a really playful soul, No wonder he is aging so gracefully. I'm also learning that there is an extremely sensitive side to him which I'm not quite sure how to handle as of yet. It breaks my

heart to see him like that, so all I do is hold him in my arms and hum an off key melody but he doesn't mind.

So it's his birthday next week and I am at my wits ends trying to figure out what to get for this man. Now I'm not about to break my bank balance trying to get him a Rolex. I'm also not about to take him on a trip. I have been playing with the idea of sentimental gifts in my head however I'm just not sure how to go about it. I need to have a clear plan by the end of tomorrow so that I can plan everything. He's told me how difficult birthdays have been for him over the past few years so I want to make this one very special.

“More butter baby.” He whispers.

I roll my eyes before adding more butter into the mash. A little salt and pepper and it's ready.

“Uzofa wena. Don't you know butter isn't good for you?” I say.

“Sizofa sonke so angina ndaba.” He says laughing.

Of course he doesn't care about dying, argh. I wait for him to finish frying his chicken before dishing up. We move to the living room where we have our dinner while

watching TWD. Do you know how awesome it is to have someone to watch all these ridiculous shows with me? He was a few seasons behind so I have to catch up with him, now I have to watch Rick and the gang being tormented by Negan all over again.

I moan in appreciation as I bite into this chicken. It's nice and crispy on the outside and juicy on the inside. I know for sure that I'm having more than two pieces. He's so invested in what were watching that he can't even hear his phone ringing. I grab and shove it in his face and I guess that catches his attention.

“Sho boy.”

So I know that there are about three friends if I'm not mistaken.

"Nah I'm spending the night with my woman, some other time maybe."

Ah now I'm going to be known as the girl that has him wrapped tightly around the pinkie now that he's declining invites. He hangs up and turns to look at me with a smile on his face.

"You can go if you want to, I really don't mind." I say.

“I want to spend my time with you.” He says kissing me.

Well that’s that. We have an evening filled with zombies and vile human beings. Is it too early to say I could get used to this?

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Today I’m spending the day at the workshop with the seamstresses. We have a different location where all the sewing gets done and we have one seamstress at the studio just in case something needs to be altered before it is sold.

I wanted to go speak to dad about my relationship with Sfiso before thing get to

the point where I want him to meet the family. I want to gradually ease him into this whole set up because I know that he is not for it. Honestly I'm not even confident enough to say that I know he'll accept him because my happiness comes first to him. He hates the guy and that's all he knows right now and no matter what I may say about him, his initial thought will always be just how much he hates him.

I just hope that he will give our relationship and Sfiso a chance. Speaking of that one, I've put together ideas for his birthday and I hope he enjoys it. It all starts with a picnic and well I don't know how it's going to end. I'm so excited, mainly because I just want to make his day and make him feel loved and

not so alone on his special day.

My phone rings and it's Rea.

"Babe."

"Come tell your God-child to vacate my womb tuu." She says then grunts.

Oh my friend is having this pregnancy so much. Not the child but the pregnancy. From the mood swings, to the cravings and the constant peeing. D says she's worse than she was as a kid and according to him she was a monster child.

“Haai let him bake in there just a little bit more please.”

She’s almost six months pregnant and I know that the last three months are going to be the worst.

“Between you and Kabelo I don’t know who is annoying me the most yeses man. Anyway let’s talk about that hunk of yours. When do I meet him?” She asks.

She’s been nagging me to meet Sfiso and just feel it’s too soon. Yes I want to tell everyone about him however meeting him is a different story.

“I told you I don’t want to introduce my baby to outside vibes so the second he has baked sufficiently enough and has welcomed the cold of this world then and only then will you meet him.” I say laughing.

“I don’t like you much right now. Argh D is calling me let me go feed his grandchild. I love you.”

“I love you both. Bye.”

Oh Rea, you gotta love her. I have two months to put together her killer baby shower and I can’t wait. It’s going to be a grand affair although I’m not ready to see all some of those stuck up models who

think they shit flavoured air.

The day moves along swiftly and before we know it, it is home time. I'm not spending the night at Sfiso's, I am however seeing him for a quick kiss before making my way home.

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He's listening to some old school soul while sipping on some whiskey. I straddle him and cup his face gazing deep into his eyes. He's not okay. His eyes are bloodshot red.

"What's wrong?" I ask softly.

“I didn’t think you we’re coming.”

“Well I’m here so what’s wrong?”

“I just have these moments where I can’t help but think about how different things would be if my mother and grandmother were still alive. I would kill to have a meal prepared by one of them right now. I’d also like to tell them about this wonderful woman I met. A woman I see myself with for the rest of my life. There’s just so much that I would like to share with them but they’re not here so ya whatever.” He gets me off of his lap and gets up.

I watch him down his drink as he

disappears into the kitchen. I don't know how to help him. Do I give him space or do I attempt to comfort him? These are the parts in a relationship that have no manual and all you have to go on is trial and error. Just as I'm about to get up he walks out with his whiskey and a glass of wine in his hands. He hands me my glass, settles next to me then rests his head on my shoulder.

Sigh.

The only deaths I've ever had to deal with were mkhulu's and Siyanda's and as much as they left a gaping hole in my heart, I don't think it comes anywhere what he's had to go through. Losing your mom to abuse then later your grandmother to life thereafter

having no one to look out for you. My heart bleeds for him and all I want to do is shield him from the cold of this world. He might've only had himself to rely on for years but I'm here now and I don't plan on going anywhere.

[05/10, 13:37] Mca: SEVENTY FIVE

Unedited

Every time my mind drifts back to the night of vulnerability Sfiso and I shared I get chills down my spine. I remember how each stroke of passion held meaning. This man looked me deep in the eye with tears shining in his while passionately making love to me. I held him closely as his tears fell out of his eyes while he expressed how much he missed feeling a mother's love. As

much as I didn't know what to do I appreciate the fact that he trusted me enough to allow me to see him that vulnerable.

Our conversations have been deeper and more meaningful since that night. I believe that he realised in some way that I am here for him wholeheartedly.

Today is his birthday and I have decided to take the day off and set up the perfect picnic. I just got back from the store and I have everything that I need to get started on this meal. This man is a carnivore so I definitely have meat on the menu. I throw my ribs as well as wings in a dish along with some homemade marinade and put

that in the fridge.

I'm chopping my strawberries for my 'salad in a jar'. I have some feta, walnuts, rocket and cheese going into the jar. I already have the dressing in the jar and that helps to eliminate the chance of soggy greens. I'm not expecting him to have this though ngoba he might just decide to go all Zulu on me on some 'Indoda, isalad nywe nywe'.

Once I'm done with the salad I put them in the fridge and get started on my lamb for my pulled lamb mini burgers. I rub some spices on my lamb before throwing it in the oven to cook. I'm also making two kinds of mojitos for our date. They're really easy to make, all you need are some raspberries, a

few mint leaves, some sugar, lime, crushed ice, soda water and some rum. That's it! I'm also making a mango flavour just in case raspberries aren't his thing.

For dessert I'm making a peppermint crisp cake. He better like this because it's my own recipe – having a brother for a chef will have you experimenting just to prove points.

It's four in the afternoon and I am done in the kitchen and now I have to transform the living room into a picnic space. I use my man power to push the coffee table to the side and set up in the centre. I have candles and rose petals all over the room. I got covers for my cushions and I place those all over. Okay this is done, time to make

myself look cute.

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I've taken a shower. I have shaved and I look sexy in my plum bustier and matching thong. I throw a robe on top and rush to the kitchen to take the platters out of the warmer and place them in the living room. I told him to get here around six and that one is very punctual so he should be here any second now. The drinks are chilled and the room dimmed, all that is missing is the birthday boy.

A knock comes through the door and I practically leap into his arms the second I see him. We share a short passionate kiss

before he puts me down.

“Hello baby.”

“Hello birthday boy. Unjani?”

“Better now that I am in your presence and you?”

“Me too.” I say smiling.

I lead him into the living room and the second he sees the set up his jaw drops. I’ve placed everything on the floor so the entire setup is complete. I must admit, I am ready proud of myself.

“This is really beautiful.” He says kissing my head.

I love how tall he is yeses!

“I’m glad you think so. Kick off your shoes and make yourself comfy.” I say.

He’s already tucking into his ribs as expected.

“Baby why ufake ama strawberry ku salad mara?” He says.

See what I said about the salad? Typical

Zulu man! He can leave my salad it's fine.

“Because they're supposed to be in there but you won't get it so just eat your meat.”

“These ribs are good so are the wings and the burgers, actually everything is really great.” He says taking a bite of the burger.

Seeing him smiling and enjoying himself like this warms my heart.

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I watched him gobble down that peppermint crisp cake like it was the best thing since sliced bread. I'm glad he enjoyed it. Now I

am looking at him as he goes through the envelope I just handed to him. Inside it are cards with twelve random destinations and he gets to pick each months where we go to for the month. I can't decipher the look on his face right now. Shocked? Elated? Angazi.

"Yazi in the times that I have ever had a girlfriend on my birthday I've always been the one to pay for things. They'd take me out for dinner with my own money, hehehe. This is the best birthday I have ever had in years and this gift is one that I will cherish for the rest of my life.

Okay so if I understand this correctly then it means we're going on vacation every month

for the next twelve months?”

“Even if we’re not talking and we want to murder each other. If we set a date then your sulking or angry moment can wait.” I say.

“Why are you so amazing?” He asks.

“Because I just am yazi.” I shrug.

“Well I appreciate your amazing self so much and I promise that I am going to spend all my days showing you just how much.” He says.

My big baby!

He hasn't seen what is under my gown and I hope that he will appreciate the effort that I have put into this. I get up from the floor and drop the gown to the floor. Yep! He likes it, I can tell by that jaw on the floor. The initial plan was to dance for him but I am suddenly feeling a bit shy so that won't be happening. In a split second he is up on his feet and has me in his arms. He's standing in the middle of the room with me in his arms while we passionately pour our all into the kiss.

His tight grip on my ass is everything right now. All I want to do is spend the night showering him with love and not

necessarily sex yazi. Our moment is interrupted by Bomgwe shouting my name at the top of his lungs. Shit!

“Eyo Melo why is it all dark in her... Shit!” He says loudly.

I’m still in Sfiso’s arms who, thankfully, is still fully draped. Bongwe rushes upstairs and I can’t help but burst into laughter. My brother is probably going to roll a joint right now just to erase this memory out of his head. How many times have I told him to stop coming here unannounced but he doesn’t listen angithi.

“Was that your brother?” He asks.

“Yeah the youngest one. Let me go check on him.”

“Okay baby but I guess I’m going home tonight.” He says sulking.

He still has me in his arms and I honestly don’t want him to put me down. Argh damn you Bongwe! I wiggle myself out of his hold and grab my gown before going to my brother. I find him chilling on the bed with his face in his hands. Is he traumatised? He can’t possibly say what he saw was too much for him.

“Hey buddy.” I greet settling next to him.

He heaves a sigh before looking up.

“Is that your new man?” He asks.

“Yes.”

“So vele there is no hope for you and Lindo.”

“I thought you understood that things didn’t work out between us.” I say frowning.

“I just thought that maybe you know but anyway as long as you’re happy Melo then I’m good. So who is he?”

“You want to meet him?” I ask.

“Yeah.”

“It’s Sfiso by the way.” I say getting up from the bed.

“Whooooo wait that guy? The one that dad... whooooooah hey rebel Melo.” He says laughing.

Idiot! I’m glad he finds this amusing. I know that he simply cannot wait for the day that dad finds out and takes on one of Zobuhle’s dramatic personalities. Well too bad for him

ngoba he won't e there when I break the news, or maybe he should so that he can guilt trip his father? Hmmmm.

"Be nice to him."

"I'm always nice." He says chortling.

Oh this boy mara!

[05/10, 13:37] Mca: SEVENTY SIX

Unedited

Today is one of those days where I woke up feeling blue. I don't feel like doing anything, all I want to do is sleep the entire day and hopefully wake up feeling much better later.

Plus I have a date with my man.

So the night that Bongwe gate crashed our evening, he and Sfiso got chatting and I was soon forgotten just like that. I ended up having to cook an actual meal because Malibongwe Simphiwe Mkhize actually came to my house for food. Apparently he didn't feel like take outs and he didn't want to cook so he remember that he has a sister who loves him dearly. After I dished up for them I went up to my room where I watched TV while they got to know each other.

I was woken up by Sfiso getting in bed and cuddling me from behind. When I checked the time it was 2:38AM. I didn't even have

the energy to ask where Bongwe was, I just fell right back to sleep trusting that he decided to sleepover but I also knew that Sfiso wouldn't allow him to drive at that time of the night.

When I woke up in the morning, the two of them were already having breakfast. It turned out they spent the night getting to know each other and they get along. The one thing that I love about Bongwe is that he would never ever do anything that would jeopardise my happiness. When we had a conversation later during the day he said that he saw just how widely I smiled for Sfiso and to him that's all that mattered – my smile. He wouldn't tell me what he and Sfiso spoke about but apparently they have

an understanding so heey. I'm just glad I have someone in my corner.

I send a text to the studio letting them know that I won't be coming through before popping a sleeping pill and drifting off to lala land.

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I'm woken up by the annoying sound of my phone ringing. I reach over to grab it and answer.

"Ya."

"Baby are you okay? I was just at the studio

and they said you didn't come in today."

"I just needed to sleep but I'm okay." I say softly.

"I'm not convinced." He responds.

"I'm okay love. I swear."

"Why are you lying to me Melokuhle?"

"I'm not." I say with tears threatening to fall out my eyes.

Why is he turning me into such a baby?

“Can I come hold you or do you want your space?” He asks.

You see what I mean? Now my tears are rolling down my face. The truth is I would love to be in his arms right now however I don't know how I am going to feel once he is here so I'd rather he doesn't.

“Go to work baby I'll see you later.”

“Call me if you need anything, and I mean anything at all okay.”

“Sharp.” I say then hang up.

Sigh these random moments of sadness are really hard more especially when I don't know what the cause is. Like right now I feel like curling up into a ball and crying my lungs out. They say crying cleanses the soul right? Maybe it's time for my monthly cleanse. I just really hope that I can drag myself out of bed later on.

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I've been sitting on the couch in the closet for a good thirty minutes now trying to decide on what to wear. I'm not necessarily the cheerful person in the room right now but I can still whip out a faint smile. I settle on a black dress and sandals. My outfit feels the exact same way as I am – bleah! I

grab my phone and head down to wait for him.

While I'm waiting I help myself to a glass of wine. A knock comes through the door and I rush over to go open for him. Dapper as always! He pulls me into his arms and I sink into warm embrace. I absolutely love how I fit into his arms. He kisses my forehead before cupping my face and making me look at him.

"Why were you crying?" He asks softly,

"I was just feeling sad but I'm fine now." I say.

“Let’s just order in.”

“No let’s go.”

“I insist Nqobile futhi I want to hold you in my arms without any stares from the public.” He says chuckling.

To be quite honest I am grateful that he insisted on that because I wasn’t exactly up to being in a crowd. He orders some pizza while I make him his coffee. I’m glad that he isn’t probing me further on that the issue is ngoba I also still won’t be able to answer him.

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“Amiable.” He says.

“Adventurous.”

“Affectionate.”

“Alluring.” I say with a smirk on my face.

“Hmmmm, ambitious.”

“Aphrodisiacal.” I say.

“Haibo Melokuhle you just ended the game.
A whole Brandy term baby haai.” He says

laughing.

“You’re my aphrodisiac.” I sing.

So Sfiso came up with this bright idea to have us describe each other however we could only use words that began with an A. That was very challenging for my limited vocabulary but I admit it was fun and I can’t wait for B day.

“I appreciate what the lyrics are saying but baby please don’t ever sing again.” He says laughing.

Mxm oho!

“Whatever anyway when are you going home?” I ask.

He spoke about getting new tombstones for his mom and grandmother meaning he'd have to be in the Eastern Cape the one weekend and KZN the other. So I finally understand how he is Xhosa. His mom was Xhosa and she met his dad while she was working in Natal, they fell in love, got married and later on had him. Unfortunately his father passed away when he was still a toddler and his mom moved back to the Eastern Cape where she met his stepfather who made their lives hell. When his mom died his paternal grandmother took him in and raised him in KZN.

“I don’t talk to anyone from mom’s side so I don’t know how everything is going to be done. Angazi I think I might have to consult nomuntu just so that I can know what to do.”

“How did you erect them the last time?”

“I went to my mother’s family and told them what my intentions were.” He says.

“So can’t you do the same thing this time around?”

“Hai Nqobile.”

“I’m here for you baby futhi remember this is for your mom and not her family angithi.”

“Uzohamba name?” He asks sulking.

Oh hell no!

“Haha funny! Mina last time I checked I was a Mkhize so I cannot assist you there. Nope. Sorry.” I say making my way to the kitchen.

I’ll drive him to the airport though!

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I'm at home visiting my parents, well more like I'm here to tell them about my relationship. Things between Sfiso and I have gotten to the point where I feel like I want to be open about our relationship and in my life that means letting my family know about this development. I've had the conversation with aunty and she has promised to put lume in his box. Now to deal with the most stubborn man I know – dad.

“Summoned for a meeting in my own home?” He says laughing.

“Ai its not a meeting dad I just wanted to talk hawu.”

Mom settles next to him and they both stare at me like it is their first time seeing me. Okay Melo you can do this!

“Please keep an open mind about this.” I say.

“Okay.”

“Sfiso and I are dating.” I say quickly.

A wave of silence passes by before dad starts chuckling. I look at mom who just shrugs. She’s not going to hold her husband?

“You see what I said about her being stupid.” He says looking at mom.

[05/10, 13:38] Mca: SEVENTY SEVEN

Unedited

“You see what I said about her being stupid.” He says looking at mom.

I am fuming! This man knows just how much I hate being called stupid yet he does it, AGAIN. I understand that he might not understand nor agree with my decision however that does not give him the right to utter that word in my direction.

“Do not call me stupid.” I say calmly.

“You will not tell me what to do or say in my house Nqobile.”

“Calm down you two. Let’s talk about this calmly and rationally.”

“Rationally Zobuhle? She chose to go her stupid route and choose that man, the very same man who made her life hell.”

“YOU DON’T EVEN KNOW HIM.” I yell.

“YOU’RE GOING TO ADDRESS ME IN THIS MANNER BECAUSE OF A MAN NQOBILE?”
He roars back.

I'm up on my feet fuming with tears threatening my eyes. I'm not on the verge of tears because of what he said about Sfiso. I am on the verge of tears because of that word – stupid. Everyone knows just how much I hate that word. When I was violated back in varsity one of the guys uttered the word stupid in my direction and I have loathed that word ever since. Sure people say it jokingly and in that manner I can take it but kanje? And coming from my own father? I can't.

“He makes me happy dad.” I say dropping my head.

“And at some point he made you anxious.”

“He apologised, I forgave him and we moved on. Can’t you try and do the same?” I ask.

“I will never EVER accept that relationship uyangizwa.”

“Mom.” I say looking at her hoping she’ll jump in.

She heaves a sigh while shaking her head.

“Love please just hear Melo out.”

“I can hear her perfectly and I am saying no. I will never accept that relationship. He threatened your livelihood Nqobile. I will not forgive him.”

“Yet you forgave Lindo. If you knew half the things Lindo put me through we would be singing a different song right now.”

“But I don’t know any of those things that he put you through so I don’t care.” He says sternly.

“So because you don’t know the shit that Lindo put me through, it make it okay for me to have gone through them.” I say chuckling.

“UKHULUMA NAMI KANJALO?”

“Love please. Nawe Melokuhle just stop it.”

I grab my keys and phone. Clearly there is no reasoning with him right now. So I'll give him time and space to digest what I have just thrown at him.

“IPIPI NQOBILE. UKHULUMA NAMI KANJE NGENXA YE PIPI.”

“Wow. Mom I'll see you. Sharp.” I say walking away.

“Melokuhle baby wait, Lwandle please calm down.”

“Haai makahambe.” He says clicking his tongue. “Ungrateful that is what she is.” He adds on.

Yes I didn't expect him to sing and dance but I didn't anticipate what transpired in there. My dad has always been the one who put my happiness first and yes I understand where he is coming from but some of the things he said were uncalled for. This is one of the very rare occasions where my father has been the cause of my pain.

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I ended up driving to Bandile's house and right now I am lying on the couch with Kayise sleeping on my chest. Lwandile, Khanyi and Ndalo are making a noise running around in the backyard. I feel sorry for Ndalo because she doesn't have a playmate her own age but I'm glad that the two musketeers aren't shutting her out.

Bandile walks in with a tray in his hands. I see a whole lot of baked assortments and my heart flutters. I'm definitely stuffing my face today. He takes Kayise from me and puts her in her bed then covers her with a blanket. Amanda is sleeping because shame apparently they didn't sleep a wink last night because this cutie wasn't well.

“So uthe your dad threw a fit.” He says laughing.

I join in and we share a laugh.

“It’s not funny Ndile. He hurt me man.”

“I’m sorry sis and I also can’t promise that he’ll come around because he really is protective of you and what that guy put you through was hectic.”

“That’s in the past though.”

“Yes for you but remember dad was always worried about the posibilitly of losing you

because of this guy and his threats. Give him time but don't get your hopes too high because he's a stubborn man."

"This guy really is good to me though Ndile. Like our chemistry is just effortless and I'm not worried about him throwing a gasket because of his jealousy. He makes me smile and I know it's still early days but I feel like I won't receive any pressure from him in terms of the whole child situation. His response to the entire thing was somewhat positive. I'm just happy Ndile."

"Oh Melo I want to say that as long as you're happy then I'm happy but it's so hard in this situation. Yes you say he's a great guy and he treats you well and makes you

happy but at the end of the day he is the ass that had you confined in your own space for weeks fearing for your life. Now I don't promise to be nice and I don't promise to like him in the end but I will meet him just for peace sake. Also don't expect me to have a conversation with dad about this because it is not my place."

"You're willing to meet him?"

"Yes I want to see this man that has you ready to punch Lwandle. Now when you get home later on call dad and apologise then leave it at that. Don't ask him or tell him about Sfiso. Just say sorry and hang up and once he is ready he will initiate this conversation."

“But.”

“But nothing. It’s not like you two are in a rush to get married or anything. Just one step at a time Nqobile.”

“Okay Manqoba.”

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“You just had to fall for him huh?”

Argh. I couldn’t help but fall for him. It was unexpected and I couldn’t stop the process and the more I spend time with him. The

deeper I fall for him. Sigh. It's not the most ideal situation but it is happening and I am loving every moment of it!

Ndile and I spend the afternoon stuffing our faces and gossiping. Gossip sessions with my brother are always fire. Apparently mkhulu Zweli is planning on making a trip to Jozi but I didn't hear that from him. He he I can't wait to see mom in her fight mode because that man sure does bring it out of her.

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I'm with Sfiso now because I just couldn't have but drive to his place. He is in the process of giving me a mouthful because of

what transpired between dad and I. I didn't expect him to be so worked up.

“I get that you want your parents to bless our relationship but fighting with your father isn't the way to go about it. Look he is justified in feeling the way that he does about me because at the end of the day I didn't just have you feeling threatened but your entire family as well. So baby next time you talk to him please humble yourself and whatever punches he wants to throw at me I am willing to take.” He says.

I don't have a response for that. I guess he's right.

“Hey I’m not trying to make you feel back. Okay.” He says pulling me into his arms.

“I love you.” I say without thinking.

[05/10, 13:38] Mca: SEVENTY EIGHT

Unedited

The words ‘I love you’ slid off of my tongue with so much ease that it frightened me. How was I so comfortable in letting that man know that I loved him and in what most would say was such a short amount of time. Is there a timeframe though, to how soon is actually too soon before declaring your love to your partner? I don’t know but all I know is that subconsciously I regret saying it and which is why I have been

avoiding Sfiso like a plague over the past few days.

After my tongue decided to grow a mind of its own, I couldn't wait to get out of there. So I told him that I had a headache and that I needed to get home and sleep. I think the fact that he didn't utter the three magic words back immediately also got to me. Yes what I said was unexpected but still. He has been trying to get hold of me and I have been 'too busy' to talk and 'too exhausted' to go see him. I think I'm just embarrassed I don't know.

Right now I am busy packing because I have a flight to catch. I received a call from the organisers of Miss SA pageant

requesting a meeting with me. I'm dying a little inside because I know that it obviously has everything to do with possibly getting involved with the show. I pray that that is what the meeting is about.

My phone rings and I rush to go and answer.

"Hello."

"Miss Mkhize, we have a Mr Mavundla at the gate for you." He says.

I heave a sigh.

"Okay please let him in."

“Okay ma’am please press 9 on your keypad.”

I press 9 before hanging up and rushing to go open the door for him. He’ll let himself in. I make my way back upstairs and continue packing. My heart is beating against my chest so hard that I actually feel like it is about to burst. I can actually hear his footsteps coming down the hallway. He walks in and suddenly the room becomes small. Too small.

“Uyaphi?” He asks.

No hello Nqobile. Nothing?

“Cape Town. I have a meeting.” I say.

“Hmmm when were you going to tell me about this meeting?”

“I was going to call you when I had the chance.” I lie through my teeth.

I wasn't planning on telling him about this trip honestly.

“So mina I'm an afterthought kuwe Nqobile?”

“What?”

“Ngithi I thought that we were growing and in my eyes that meant you actually letting me in on such trips. So I was going to find out nini, later tonight that you are in a different part of the country?”

I’m having a hard time trying to make out just how he sounds exactly. I can hear a hint of sadness in his tone but he has masked it very well in anger.

I heave a sigh and settle on the bed.

“It was honestly a last minute thing Sfiso, like I haven’t even told my mom about it. I’m sorry if you feel like I am pushing you aside

kodwa really I'm not."

"Then uyibiza ngantoni lento oyiyenzayo? I have been trying to get hold of you for the past few days and all I get from you are excuses. Kuqhubeka ntoni Nqobile?"

If this man didn't sound so angry I would jump him right now ngoba he sounds so damn sexy! Sigh but on a serious note though, how do I let him know that I am somewhat embarrassed.

"I told you I loved you and you said nothing."
I say softly.

He settles next to me and heaves a sigh.

“After you told me you loved me you ran out of there ngathi I kicked you out Nqobile. You didn’t even give me a chance to say anything at all bese you behaved like a school kid thereafter. Sibadala Nqobile and communication should be what sustains our relationship. Andiyo mind reader mna so you are going to have to use your words when something is bothering you.

Now with that said I find it cute that you had to bolt out of there because I didn’t actually utter those words back. I thought my actions showed you just how much you meant to me Nqobile. Do I not show you how much I care? Do I not show you how

much I actually love you? Do you actually believe that I would still be around if I didn't just see more than just ass in you? Come on Nqobile." He says sounding clearly frustrated.

I have no come back. None. Look I know that he wants to be with me and and and however for some reason I feel the need to hear him say those words to me.

"You just feel too good to be true sometimes and I'm scared. I never thought I'd admit this kodwa I am slightly insecure. There I said it." I say throwing my hands in the air.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“You have this really cute dramatic side that enjoys appearing at the most odd times. You have nothing to worry about Melokuhle because I love you and I see a future with you.” He says then laughs.

“Now why are you laughing?” I ask in confusion.

“Because you are the cutest thing when you sulk kodwa as cute as it is next time if there is something bothering you please talk to me okay? I’m your man not some random guy nje.” He says pulling me into his arms.

I can't believe that I was that dramatic vele.
SMH.

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My meeting was one of the best I have ever had in my career. I have been chosen as one of the designers for the evening wear segment. Gratitude doesn't even begin to express just how I feel. For me this is a really grand stage and as much as ii have showcased on different runways all over the world, THIS is my biggest stage yet. I literally cannot wait to get home and scream at the top of my lungs.

The flight home was longer than usual, maybe because I'm in a rush to get home.

We land and I catch a cab straight to Kelisiwe Holdings. I've never set foot in this building before and I'm excited to see what actually goes down here. I feel like such an idiot dragging this bag through these doors and the stares that I am getting? Lord! The fact that I'm wearing a tracksuit also doesn't help. I get to reception and this lady gives me so much attitude. Sigh why must they be like this?

"Hi I'm here for Mr Mavundla." I say.

I probably have to go through five receptionists to get to him but it's fine. I want to surprise him so I must do what I must.

“Do you have an appointment?”

“No I don’t.”

“Then you’ll have to make an appointment and come back when you have one.” She says before going back to her laptop.

Sigh. Do I beg or do I tell him that I’m here?

“Please just check if he’s available. Please.”

“Sorry sisi I can’t do that.” She’s not even looking at me.

I settle on the couch and dig in my bag for my phone. Well there goes my surprise. You know I would almost be impressed with her conduct had she actually not been rude. I know that she's the company receptionist, so what was supposed to happen was she was supposed to call his PA and find out from her if he is available. Argh but whatever. I dial this man and it rings unanswered. He might be in a meeting. Do I wait? Do I go? Hai I'll see him later.

My slice of caramel cake walks through the doors looking clearly frustrated. I watch on as this receptionist gets up and makes her way around the table to greet him.

“Afternoon sir.”

“Morning.” He says and continues walking.

Yep. He’s having a pretty bad day and it’s not even two in the afternoon.

“Sir you have someone here to see you but I told her to make an appointment.” She says.

“Who?”

She points at me and the second his eyes land on me his whole face lights up. He strides towards me and pulls me up and into his arms. It’s only been two days

kodwa he's been behaving like I have been gone for months on end.

"When did you get here?" He whispers in my ear.

"Landed about an hour ago. I wanted to surprise you." I respond.

He places a kiss on my forehead before taking my bag in his one hand and mine in the other. I can see the stares from everyone around but he doesn't seem to care. We step into the elevator with three other people, who are I believe shocked. Is this man so bad that they believe he doesn't have a woman in his life? Thankfully the

only office on this floor is his and his personal boardroom so no stares well except from his PA.

The second we step into his office he has me pinned against the door and kissing the living day lights out of me. He has an obsession with my ass because that is the first place his hands find whenever I am in his arms. He pulls back, locks the door and closes the blinds before picking me up in his arms and laying me on the table.

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“I’m so proud of you.” He says kissing my head.

We're lying on the couch, naked after a hectic session of pounding. I've just told him about the Miss SA deal and he hasn't stopped uttering the words 'I'm proud of you.'

"Thank you." I say softly. "Oh yeah why was your team looking at us like that?" I ask chuckling.

"Because I keep my private life extremely private. They've never seen me with a woman in this building so that's why. I guess now they better get used to seeing your gorgeous face around ngoba uwuyindawo!"

Angiyindawo vele!

I believe that I have found my forever in this guy. I pray that I have because man he makes me so happy!

[05/10, 13:38] Mca: SEVENTY NINE

Unedited

Some might say that it is a bit too soon to say but I think not. I thought I knew how great and powerful love could be but being in a relationship with Sfiso has shown me that I wasn't getting the fullness of it. The past few months have been the most beautiful, intense and testing months but I wouldn't trade that for anything.

Sfiso and I's relationship is growing each and every day and I am grateful for that. We have obviously experienced our bumps as any couple does but we always manage to sit and chat it out before moving on from it. I'm learning that this man isn't as strong and manly as he first posed to be. He has this beautiful soft and fragile side that at times I never know how to handle. The biggest issue that he has is the fact that he hasn't had a mother's love for so many years. That is my biggest struggle as well, I don't know what to do to not necessarily fill that void but to let him know that he isn't alone anymore.

All I keep do is keep showing him love until it sinks in that I'm here to stay. I've been a

frequent visitor at his office much to the annoyance of some of his female staff members. I don't understand how he hadn't noticed that most of them had a crush on him. Idiot I tell you.

Right now I am shopping for my babysitting weekend. I decided to give the all the parents a break and take the kids. Mom and dad have Zizwe with them because lume wanted to take aunty out on a date. I have Khanyi, Lwandile and Ndalo. Amanda's parents have Kayise so literally all the mama's are getting their groove back.

I throw a lot of snacks in the trolley before getting some fruits. I plan on pumping them with fresh fruit juice this weekend. I pay for

everything then make my way to lume's to pick them up. I opted for there because things between dad and I aren't so friendly. It's been months but whenever I bring Sfiso's name up he walks out of the room. I've apologised, I've begged but still nothing. Mom says to give him time but how long is he going to stay mad at me for? I didn't choose to fall in love with this man. It just happened and I can't be persecuted for that.

I just hope that he comes around soon.

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The kids are already running around the house while I get cracking on dinner. Their snacks are on the table and the cartoons

that they made so much noise for are watching themselves. Mxm. I feel arms circling around me and I almost jump but quickly relax when I realise who it is. I forgot that he has a special code for the gate.

I wasn't expecting him until tomorrow. He had gone home to the Eastern Cape to speak to the elders about the tombstone for his mother. I hope that went well. He turns me around and smashes his lips on mine. Oh how my lips have missed his. I quickly pull back because I don't want the kids walking in on us.

"Hi." He says softly while looking in my eyes.

“Hey. I missed you.”

“I missed you too.” He responds.

Something shatters in the living room and I heave a sigh. They better not have broken anything expensive.

“The kids are here.” I say after seeing his facial expression.

I make my way in and I find all three of them trying to pick up the broken glass fragments from the floor.

“Stop what you’re doing.” I say.

They all jump up and stand there looking at me with their most innocent faces on. I’m not having that! Nope.

“Did I not tell you guys to stop running around?” I ask.

“You did.” Khanyisile the spokesperson responds.

“And why didn’t you listen?”

“We’re sorry.” They chorus back.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. I guess they rehearsed that way before this little accident.

“Just go play outside please.” I say walking away.

Is it too late to ship them back to their parents? I find Sfiso checking on my pots which I had forgotten about because of these kids.

“Thank you.” I say.

“Melo Lwandile doesn’t want to play netball with us.” Khanyi says walking in.

She pauses when she realises that it's not just the two of us in here. Introductions, right. Erm how do I do this? Sfiso is also looking at Khanyi with a smile on his face.

“Khanyi this is Sfiso my friend. Sfiso this is Khanyi my baby sister.” I say.

“Hello Khanyi.” He greets as he drops to her level.

She looks at me then back at Sfiso before smiling and giving him a hug. I can see that Sfiso is taken aback a bit but he quickly comes back to his senses and gives her a tight squeeze.

“Daddy said I can’t ever address adults with their names, so...” She turns to look at me.

Haibo! Well miss smarty pants and her daddy must find a title for Sfiso. I look at her and shrug before taking a broom to go and clean the mess they made. When I get back in the kitchen Sfiso has Khanyi on the kitchen counter while he’s busy with the pots.

“Your mama is sorry for leaving you but she’s proud of you and everything that you’ve achieved. Your granny says you must never stop praying.” She says before jumping down from the counter and running

out.

Well then he's just had an encounter with Khanyi the gifted!

"Khanyisile has a heavenly gift. She senses pain and joy and misery and everything else. She also receives these messages at times." I say.

"So she saw my mother?"

"I don't know how it works. Maybe maybe not, I don't know."

"How is she able to handle such

responsibility at such a young age?”

“It freaks us out but my grandmother knows more about what to do or say so she helps her a bit.”

“Wow.” That’s all he says.

I can understand how he feels right now. He didn’t come here for messages phela.

“Why did your grandmother mention prayer?” I ask.

“It’s something we used to do together. When I first moved in with her I was a

troubled child and I caused havoc but she prayed for me until I got to the point where I'd pray with her. I still do but sometimes your faith gets rocked and you somewhat abandon it along the way." He say.

Boy do I know about lost faith. When you've been praying and praying but it seems like God has shut his ears to your pleas. Sigh. We finish up cooking in silence then dish up. The kids are having a ball watching their cartoons.

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We dropped by and decided that we should have a braai. Sfiso didn't sleep over last night because he didn't want to disturb

the kids, who absolutely love him by the way. He had to tuck them in before he left and he was the first thing they asked about when they woke up. I've lost my kids to this man! Arghhh.

"So mom says she want to host something next week." Wewe says.

We're in the kitchen marinating the meat.

"Oh that's nice."

"And she wants you to invite Sfiso."

"Huh? She hasn't said anything to me." I say

frowning.

“Ya that’s because her husband promised to beat the living crap out of your man.” He says laughing.

I actually do believe that dad can do that. I mean he is a regular at the gym so he is quite fresh. I mean early 60’s is quite young!

“What did mom say?”

“Look as much as she’s trying to get dad to agree she’s having a hard time because you know Lwandle. Just brace yourself should he agree ngoba it’s going to be a tough

meeting.”

[05/10, 13:38] Mca: EIGHTY

Unedited

I thought I has seen it all kodwa a freaking out Sfiso is beyond me! He has been like this since mom called last night to invite us over for dinner on Friday night. Today is Wednesday and I have no idea how he is going to survive the next two days at work. I thought he was ready to take the punches so I don't understand why he is suddenly feeling scared. Maybe it might be because of how Bongwe portrayed dad to be. On Sunday during our braai with the kids Bongwe mentioned to him just how dad and lume have been putting in extra hours at the gym just for him.

Did I not laugh?

Also the fact that Malibongwe was so serious about the entire thing was world class. He also went on to talk about how mom is always on dad's side so should dad refuse then ahhh it's over. I don't understand why Sfiso took everything Malibongwe fed him but ya. By the time we received the invitation he was already freaking out. After mom's call last night I tried to initiate sex but he totally shut me down.

I don't know how we're going to survive the next two and a half days but we'll see. Right

now I'm in the kitchen making breakfast for us. We're spending the week at his house and I asked that he give mam'Gcina the week off. Apparently the fact that I don't have a helper and that none of the females in my family have one I still kind of shocking to him. I roll my eyes each time he makes that statement.

He walks in and makes himself comfortable on the high chairs. I pour him a cup of coffee then hand him his plate.

"I'm going to be home late tonight." I say.

"Why?" He asks looking up from his plate.

“I’m working on a new line so I have to focus on that.”

“Can’t you work from home?”

“Our rule?” I ask.

We have this rule that we don’t bring work home unless we absolutely have to. I don’t have to bring my designs home but I know that I want to push them as much as I can. I need this new line to be ready on a couple of months.

“I don’t want you driving home late though Nqobile.”

“I’ll be fine baby.” I say.

“Hayi Nqobile accidents happen every day.”

“Sfiso man.”

“Let me drop you off then I’ll come fetch you later.” He says.

Is this man sulking? Such a cute sight!

“Okay that’s also fine baby.”

“Good.”

“Are you still worrying about dad?”

“I would be lying if I said I wasn’t, I mean that man hates the living daylights out of me and I understand him though I mean I threatened his little girl for a while. I also wouldn’t take it lightly if someone threatened my daughter. I regret it Nqobile, I truly do regret it Nqobile and I will forever feel like shit because of that.”

“Sfiso I forgave you.” I say cupping his face.
“I love you and I forgive you. Forgive yourself as well. My dad will come around baby.”

“I hear you baby.”

“Calm down ne.” I say placing a kiss on his lips.

I hope that dad comes around on Friday.

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Sfiso called to tell me that he's on his way to the studio. I'm the only one left at the studio and I'm sitting at the back working on my designs. He calls to let me know that he is at the door and I rush to go open for him. I lock up and we make our way to the back.

“I have dinner.” He says putting the paper bag on the table.

I just want to finish this sketch first then maybe I’ll have something to eat. My juices are flowing right now and I can slowly see this design coming to life. I love the pop of pink that I have on this skirt. This is definitely going to be my favourite.

“This is gorgeous.” He whispers in my ear.

“Thank you.”

“Watching you in action is such a turn on.”
He places a kiss on my neck and my breath

hitches.

Sfiso must wait kancane because he is distracting me and I can't afford to have that. His hands find my breasts and settle there. A gentle squeeze is all it takes for me to say 'I want you'. He picks me up and puts me on the table before attacking my lips. Mavundla's kisses always leave me feeling high and drunk. I feel him working on my panty before he slides a finger in.

"You're so wet baby." He murmurs on my lips.

"Do something." I whisper back.

Before I can even say anything else, his mouth greets my cookie and I lose it. Now Sfiso's tongue game is probably one of the greatest I've ever had. How he gets his tongue to reach up is beyond me and don't get me started on when he focuses on my clit like he is doing right now. He is sucking and licking and gently biting. I squeeze my thighs together probably suffocating him but I don't care. Just as I'm about to reach my high he stops but quickly replaces his tongue with his pulsing mate.

He is giving it to me hard and fast just the way I want it. I can feel his balls knocking against me! He leans down and captures my lips in his, driving me crazy. He knows that I have a thing for tasting myself on his

lips. He continues pounding me and I feel myself build up again. A few more thrusts and I explode all over his cock and he follows shortly after.

“We’ve just christened your office.” He says laughing.

“Yeah and we’ve just ruined my designs.” I say breathlessly.

“I’ll piece them back together wena baby.” He kisses my head.

“Sfiso.” I whisper softly.

“Yes?”

“I love you.”

“I love you so much more Melokuhle.”

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Today is the day of mom’s dinner and Sfiso decided to skip work. Bongwe called to tell us that even gogo would be there which had this man shitting on himself. He wanted to chicken out but I am having none of it. Aunty is looking forward to meeting him and so is Amanda, mom not so much because of where dad stands on this matter. I pray that daddy doesn’t do anything drastic nje.

We've been sitting in the car for about five minutes because the nerves are too much. Now that it's here I am scared and I know he is too.

"No matter the outcome, I choose you." I say.

"I hope it doesn't have to come to that. Let's go."

We head inside and Khanyi comes charging towards Sfiso and throws herself in his arms. He catches her and places sweet kisses all over her face.

“Are we going to make smores again?” She asks innocently.

“If you want smores then we will makes smores.” He responds with a smile on his face.

“You’re the best.” She yells before running off.

I pull him into the kitchen where all the ladies are. They all stop talking and just stare at him.

“He’s tall.” Amanda says not so softly.

“Sanibonani.” He greets.

“Yebo.” They chorus back.

“This is Sfiso. Sfiso these are the women in my life. My gran, mom, aunt and sister.” I say.

“Pleasure to meet all of you.” He says.

Why are they not saying anything?

“It’s lovely to meet you Sfiso.” Mom says.

I pull him out of there and head to the living room.

“Are you okay?”

“Yeah.” He shrugs.

Sigh.

“Hi guys.” I greet.

The look on dad’s face is one I have never seen before. He is angry. Too angry at that!

“Dad this is Sfiso.” I say softly.

“Hmmm please go tell your mother to bring us more drinks.” He says.

“Daddy.”

“Manje Melokuhle.”

“It’s okay baby I’ll be fine.” Sfiso whispers.

I heave a sigh and make my way to the kitchen.

“Mom your husband.” I say on verge of tears.

Before she can even respond there is commotion coming from the living room. We all rush out and I feel like losing it when I see Sfiso pinned against the wall by dad.

[05/10, 13:38] Mca: EIGHTY ONE

Unedited

The look on Sfiso's face is hard and angry but he is trying with all his might to mask it. Daddy is angry and he can't even hide it. I'm looking at mom pleadingly and shame she also looks defeated.

“Lwandle Mkhize you let that boy go this instance!” Gogo says sternly.

Dad doesn't budge, instead his face goes angrier. I have never seen my father like this. EVER.

“Love let the boy go please. Ngyakucela.”

Dad let him go and steps back. I can tell that is taking everything in him not to beat the living hell out of Sfiso.

“All of you are standing here defending this man when you don't know the hell that he put us through! None of you knew about his

threats but I did. I HAD TO GO TO BED EVERYNIGHT HOPING AND PRAYING THAT MY DAUGHTER WILL MAKE IT THROUGH TO THE NEXT DAY. You all have no right, niyangizwa, no right to stand there and judge me when you don't know how I felt during that period." He says then walks out.

I want to rush after him but I also want to tend to Sfiso. 'It's okay. Go.' Sfiso mouths to me. I nod lightly and make my way out. He's sitting on the couch at the far side of the house. I settle next to him and slowly slide my hand in his. I heave a sigh when he gives it a tight squeeze. I'm glad he didn't reject me. I hate it when my dad is feeling any sort of emotion especially because of me.

“Remember when Lerato and I got divorced and you would cuddle me until I fell asleep?” I ask.

“Yeah.”

“You used to whisper in my ear just how much I deserve to be happy and how you would go to the end of the earth just so that I could be happy. You held me in your arms while I cried to the point of vomiting. You saw how much weight I lost because of my broken heart dad.”

“Don’t try and guilt trip me Melokuhle ngoba it will not work. If we want to reverse time

and talk about such events to justify our actions then let me tell you how I felt from the top. When I found out about you while your mother was in a coma and I had no hope that you would make it, do you know how hard that was for me? Do you understand the amount of pain I was in? And when you made it I vowed to protect you with everything in me.

When Lerato broke your heart I felt like such a failure because I gave you away. I was supposed to protect you but I couldn't. When this Sfiso of yours started threatening you I didn't know what to do. I was at my wits end with worry. I was so scared Nqobile that I was going to lose you. So you cannot come here and expect me to roll out

a red carpet for the man who had me living in fear of losing you.”

I hear him and I understand him fully but all I want him to do is try and hear Sfiso out. That’s all I ask.

“I understand you daddy, believe me I do but at the end of the day this man makes me happy. We spoke and he apologised and I understood, please try and hear him out. I know it’s hard but please.” I say pleadingly.

“You like him that much?”

“I love him daddy. After the whole Lindo

situation I was so scared to let go but he came in and made me realise that there's more to life and love than misery. You know my biggest challenge is the baby issue but since we've been together he has never tried to bring it up. As much as Lerato and Lindo tried they just knew that in the end they wanted children. Sfiso is so different dad. He's patient with me. He actively and intentionally supports my dreams. He hugs me when I'm sad and doesn't ask questions until I'm ready to talk about it, just like you.

Yes he was an ass, a big one at that, in the beginning but doesn't he deserve a second chance? Doesn't he deserve a chance to redeem himself? Your anger and fears are justified but dad I'm happy. I'm so so happy

and it's because of that man."

"Melokuhle."

"I'm happier with him than I was with Lindo so that should tell you something. I'm not disregarding your feelings on the matter, I'm simply just asking you to try and hear him out. I'm not saying forgive him, just talk to him, the two of you alone and see the kind of person he is." I say.

"You're asking the impossible of me yazi Melokuhle. I will never accept your relationship."

“I know daddy but you want me happy angithi.” I say resting my head on his shoulder.

“I liked you better when you were still in diapers.”

I chortle! Such a mean old man!

“You’re mean.”

“I just love you.” He says kissing my head.

“I just love you too Lwandle and I am grateful for everything you have done for me.”

I know how hard this is for him but I am grateful for the fact that he is willing to try and talk to him. It means more to me than he can ever imagine.

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The second we stepped back into the house, dad called Sfiso into his office and they've been in there for some time now. Right now I'm sitting with gogo in her room trying to calm my nerves.

"That boy loves you." She says calmly.

"Gogo?"

“When you and your father were outside I had a chat with him and he loves you more than you will understand. He regrets how he came into your life but he will never forgive himself until your father forgives him. Now uLwandle has a hard head and I doubt he will forgive him anytime soon, if at all.”

“Your son gogo.” I say chuckling.

“He’s a father and you’re his first surviving child so you need to understand where he is coming from. You were his first everything and the fact that you are a girl just heightens everything. Ngapha you have been through so much my little blip. Just

give him time, he'll eventually come around."

"And if he doesn't?"

"Then lo mfana waka Mavundla will have to buy him a cow until he actually forgives him." She says laughing.

I join in the laughter. A whole damn cow!

"He'll be broke by the time dad actually forgives him."

"But it'll all be worth it. So do you really see yourself getting married to this man?" She

enquires.

I heave a sigh.

“I see a life with him, marriage? Angazi gogo. I don’t know if I’m scared of being a divorcee again or what kodwa I just want to enjoy what we have right now and have it grow before I can even utter the words marriage in his direction.”

“I hear you my baby.”

Amanda walks in and tells us that dinner is ready and that dad and Sfiso are done chatting. Gogo and I make our way out to

go join the family.

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“So Sfiso do you have family this side?”

Aunty asks.

I squeeze his thigh and he gives me a faint smile.

“No it’s just me here.” He responds.

“Oh your parents?”

“My father passed away when I was young and my mother when I was in high school, ugogo yena wangishiya ngina twenty eight.”

He says.

He takes my hand in his and gives it a gentle squeeze. I know how difficult it is for him to talk about his people.

“I’m so sorry for your loss.” Mom says.

“Thank you.”

The tension between Sfiso and dad can be felt but everyone is trying their best to cut through it. Khanyi comes running in and stands next to Sfiso.

“Yini Khanyisile?” Lume asks.

She shakes her head and gets on her toes to whisper something in Sfiso's ear. He chuckles lightly as he continuously nods. We're all fascinated by this interaction. She eventually finishes whispering in his ear then runs off. Sfiso has this goofy smile on his face. I know we're all curious as to what that was about but I know that none of us will actually ask him.

Dinner goes on with general conversation between us and a few personal questions directed at Sfiso. Dad said nothing throughout the entire dinner which was expected but I'm glad he didn't throw a fit.

The night ends with a generous amount of malva pudding and warm custard served. Overall it wasn't as bad as I expected it to be.

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Sfiso and I are driving home with the radio keeping us company.

“Your dad can throw a punch.” He says chuckling.

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. I don't get why he thinks that it's funny.

“Do you see yourself getting married to

me?" I blurt out.

I think my conversation with gogo had me asking myself some questions.

"Do I love you? Yes. Do I see myself getting married to you? Not right now."

[05/10, 13:39] Mca: EIGHTY TWO

Unedited

"Do I love you? Yes. Do I see myself getting married to you? Not right now."

"What do you mean?" I ask softly.

“Can we chat when we get home.” He says.

We drive home in silence with the city lights keeping us company. I feel a bit better when he slides his hand on top of my thigh and rests it there. Comfortable silence. Should I be freaking out at the conversation that we’re about to have? I don’t think so given the fact that I feel the exact same way. It’s still early days to even be talking about marriage, well for me anyway. I feel like this fear that I have will be a hindrance of some sort. I’m scared of being a two time divorcee so I would much rather grow in our relationship for a few years before jumping into marriage.

We drive in and I make my way to the

kitchen to get myself a glass of wine. I spent the entire evening sipping on some juice because I wanted to be sober for everything. I take a sip and a certain calm washes over me the second the bitterness hits my tongue. He walks in and I watch on as he makes his way to the fridge and grabs a beer. He gulps some of it down in one go before stretching out his hand for me. I place mine in his and he leads us to the living room where we settle on the couch.

“Your question.” He says.

I turn to look at him with anticipation written all over my face. I can't decipher the look on his and for some reason that makes me nervous.

“I love you Nqobile, no doubt about that and I definitely do see a future with you. My statement in the car was simply that – not right now. Not because I don’t see you as a potential wife in this moment but because there is simply so much going on.

Your father hates me which in turn means that the rest of your family can’t fully accept me. Nami ngapha I don’t exactly have a family so I’d have to sort that out before I can commit. Then there’s you, you’re not ready for marriage. You think you hide it well but you don’t. I know you think about how your marriage failed because the infertility issue. I know you think about how your previous relationship failed because of

the same reason and somehow you can't help but think that the same will happen to us.

Jonga, I'm not going anywhere and I mean it. When the time is right we will have the marriage talk but until each of us get through this maze we're facing then that word shouldn't even be a priority."

How does one respond to that? Am I that insecure that it shows?

"I hear you." I say.

"I'd rather we wait a million years and do

things right than to just rush into something for the sake of doing it. I mean we've still got a lot of years ahead of us and we're still getting to know each other so there is no rush."

"I love you." I say with a smile on my face.

He chuckles lightly as he slides closer to me.

"So you're not going to add onto what I've just said?" He asks with a chuckle.

I have my head. He has said everything and more and I agree with him. I'm not ready for

marriage and I'm enjoying the pace at which our relationship is growing.

"I concur with everything you have said." I say giggling.

"Ooh listen to that, she concurs. Au maMkhize." He says laughing.

I love how idiotic he can get at times – it's refreshing!

"What did you and dad talk about?" I really want to know.

I know that they didn't walk out of that

study as best friends because dad was grumpy throughout the entire dinner and after our conversation I believe that mine and Sfiso's journey is going to be hard. I just hope that mom can get through to her husband.

"You don't have to worry yourself about that."

"I know I don't but I just want to know."

"Well let's just say he hates my guts and will never accept me." The smile on his face isn't genuine.

My heart sinks.

“Did he say that?”

“I mean I threatened his only princess so yeah I deserved every physical and verbal punch he threw at me. As much as I would like for him to give us his blessing, I don’t see it happening anytime soon.” He says nonchalantly.

Sigh. I watch him down his beer before getting up and making his way to the kitchen. I don’t know what to do to get dad to see this great side of Sfiso. I wish he would realise just how happy I am. I make my way to the kitchen where I find him

leaning against the counter lost in thought. I place my hands on his chest and snuggle closer as he wraps his hands around my waist.

“What’s wrong?”

“I haven’t had a family dinner in years. Yes it was awkward but just being around the table surrounded by the warm females in your family, it was special for me. Your grandmother reminded me a bit of my grandmother. Her warm hugs and her soft spoken nature. For a night I felt at peace. I knew there was something missing in my life and tonight I found it.”

Sigh. I will never get used to this. How do I comfort him? Dad would be the right person to speak to about this because he had to be mom's rock from the time her parents passed away.

"My family is now your family baby. The love that you deserve you will receive from each of them and gogo will be available everyday to give you those squeezes you so deserve."

"You are one of the most incredible women I have ever met. I love you so much and each day I am grateful for your presence in my life." He kisses my head.

Each day I am grateful for him. He doesn't realise just how great HE is.

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“Hi pumpkin.” I say with tears burning my eyes.

Rea gave birth to an healthy baby boy – Karabo. I haven't had the chance to see them because she had moved in with Kabelo's mother temporarily so that she could help her out with the baby. D went crazy at first and apparently he was there each day from 7AM until 9PM. I would've paid big bucks to see that!

“I'm Melo you other mama.” I say placing a

gentle kiss on his cheek.

He smiles and I swear my whole entire world is at peace. Shame he doesn't know he was a she at some point but I love him as a he. I love him so much.

"I'm going to spoil you rotten."

"You better bring him designer clothes."
Rea says walking into the room.

"Oh he is definitely getting all that and more. I know I keep saying this but gosh Rea he is so beautiful."

“And he’s yours.” She says settling next to me. “When you’re ready my womb is ready to host your precious cargo Melo.” She says resting her head on my shoulder.

I shake my head lightly. I can’t accept that and she knows it. She once offered and we laughed it off but I guess after having her own child she realises just how amazing it would be for me to hold my own.

“Like you said Karabo is mine as well and he is enough.”

“Well I’m just saying, I am here Melo. I know how hard this entire situation is for you and I wish I could do something about it. This is

all I can offer to you, my love and support as well as my womb.”

“Well I appreciate you for that. Anyway how is Kabelo finding fatherhood?” I try changing the subject.

“I see you but he’s really a natural at this. He loves this little guy and you can’t question that. Yena le D are always clashing because each of them want to hog the little guy.” She laughs.

I can just hear D telling Kabelo to get out of his house and bring his grandson. Oh priceless! I spend my day showing my son with love and kisses much to Rea’s

annoyance. She must just be strong shame!

[05/10, 13:39] Mca: EIGHTY THREE

Unedited

-SFISO

I clench my jaws tightly as the car approaches the house. It's been years but each time I take a trip down here my mind goes back to that place that I would rather keep closed for as long as I breathe. I get out of the car and take a deep breath before making my way into the yard. Well the house is still standing which is a good thing. Last year I decided to fix my mother's house after years of it being in the condition that it was for as long as I can remember.

When my mother was killed her cousin took over the house and she has been looking after it. Sure it wasn't the greatest looking of houses but she tried to ensure that it stayed clean and since I've extended it, it looks decent. I might not spend any time here but it is my mother's house and I need to look after it.

I knock and she opens the door with a mug in her hand.

“Yhuuu Sfiso nguwe lomntu?” She exclaims.

She always does this whenever I come by here. I was here a few months ago and she did the exact same thing. I walk in and

settle on the couch.

“Hello Andiswa how are you?”

“I’m okay and you? Yhoo you look like your mother right now.” She says dramatically.

I nod lightly. I don’t know how to respond to that. I don’t want to respond to it.

“Wait here.” She says rushing out of the room.

Sitting in this living room is bringing back so many bad memories. I remember the first time my stepfather punched me across

the face because I was trying to defend my mother. Her deafening screams as she pleaded for him to have mercy on her as he repeatedly punched and kicked her ring in my ears. The repainted white walls were once covered in her blood. Her favourite couch that I had fixed up was once her 'hospital' seat.

I never understood why she always refused to go to the clinic or the hospital after he'd bashed her. I had to nurse her back to health at some point only for him to do it all over again the second she started feeling better. I clench my jaw and try to do my breathing exercises as Dr. B taught me. Andiswa walks back in carrying files and a box in her hands and settles next to me.

“Joe brought these here a while back. They belonged to Akhona.” She says handing everything to me.

I open the file first and inside are pictures. Pictures of my parents. They looked so in love. I page through it and my heart swells. There’s a picture of dad carrying mom in his arms while she has a wide smile on her face. I don’t remember ever seeing that happy. The next file contains letters. There’s one addressed to dad and I am assuming that it was written after he passed away because the first few words read as follows ‘My heart is shattered at the fact that I have to walk this road without you by my side anymore’. I’ll read this at

home.

Inside the box is some of her jewellery along with a few envelopes. I pack everything away and put it on the table. I heave a sigh while brushing my head. This is I don't know. I miss my mother every day. As much as I hate her, I miss her. Yes I hate my mother because she chose to stay with that bastard! She chose him over me and now she's gone and I'm all alone.

"Are you okay?" She asks.

I clear my throat and get up.

“Yeah ndiright. I just came by to let you know that the unveiling will be in a month’s time. I already chose the tombstone and I’ll have the caterers come by closer to the date so that you can discuss the menu.”

“She’s proud of you, you know.”

“I know. Anyway I have to go.” I say picking up the files and box.

We head out and make our way to the car. I put everything in the boot and close it.

“Utshata nini?’ She asks with a smile on her face.

“You’ll receive an invitation when it happens.
Bye bye Andiswa.”

“Take care.” She says waving.

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When I landed I drove straight home because I wanted to go through my mother’s things. Reading the letter she wrote for my dad after he departed has me shattered. A part of her was buried with him.

My phone rings snapping my out of my misery. It’s my queen.

“Hey baby.”

“Hey unjani?”

“I’m okay and you?”

“How was your trip? Uhambe kahle?” She asks softly.

Sigh. Melokuhle ne. The first time I saw her my heart danced to the tune of an unknown tune. I swear I had never seen such beauty in my entire existence and the way she carried herself even though she was in a tough position left me yearning. When I heard her cry I vowed to protect her for as

long as I had the will to.

Imagine my disappointment when learnt that she was married. Although a part of me was glad because I knew that I wouldn't be man enough for her. I was still dealing with my own demons and working on myself. When I meet her months later while I was trying to acquire her company I fell head over heels for her all over again and this time I knew I was doomed. Each time she told me to fuck off I fell until I got to the point where I had to fight myself to back off.

I never meant her any harm with my threats. In my fucked up head I was trying to keep both myself and her from falling, well mostly me. I needed to repulse her to a

point where she would literally vomit when she saw me. You see during that time I was in a place where I felt like I was losing it. I was excelling in every aspect of my life except for my mental and emotional wellbeing. I felt like I was my stepfather. There was a point where all I heard in my head were my mother's screams.

It's not my proudest moments but in those moments I became the man that I hated the most. I became abusive and I hated it. I committed to therapy and I am grateful for that decision. So my moments of threatening Melo were me trying to get her to hate me but at the same time it was my dominant side showing up. My stepfather always showed us who was boss with his

fists and I guess I used my position.

Again I reiterate- I am not proud of my actions.

When I first saw her in P.E and we spent some time together I knew that I wanted her in my life. I was in a much better place and I knew that I wanted to love her the way that my mother wasn't loved but I had to keep my distance because she was in a relationship. Fast forward to when we finally became one. I swear that was one of the best days of my life.

To have a woman who is ambitious caring, loving and every other positive word you

can think of is just amazing. I love her and I am not ashamed to stand in front of the entire world and shout just how much! I want to give her the world. I want to see her happy all the time. I want so much for her. Sigh!

“Yeah I did baby but we’ll chat later. Are you still coming?”

“Yeah, I’m about to leave the studio then I make my way there.”

“Okay see you in a bit.”

“Sharp.” She hangs up.

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“Something smells good.” She says walking into the kitchen.

She wraps her hands around my waist and places a kiss on my back. My short stuff! I love how small and cuddly she is. She was literally made for me. I turn around and capture her lips in mine. We share a heated kiss before she pulls out and giggles. She’s so cute.

“You look good.” I say.

“Thank you. So what are you making there?”

“Just fried rice with roast chicken and vege.”

“Yum, I’m famished.”

“You’re always hungry baby.”

“Because your food is that great Sfiso. Imagine how hungry I would be if I were to live with you yhuuu.” She says dramatically.

“You’re so dramatic Melo.”

“Mina? Ngeke! My mother is dramatic not me.” She says walking out of the room.

He he, she doesn't realise that she is her mother. Her grandmother did say that they don't realise how dramatic they are. Oh how I love her gran. When we spoke on the night of that awkward dinner, she gave me her blessings to marry her grandchild. I am grateful for her blessings and I will cherish that moment forever. Now to slowly win over her father, Yeer that man packs a punch both physically and verbally.

His tongue lashing when we were behind closed doors left me cringing with my head hanging low. I deserve it and I will take it. I just hope that he will eventually come around for Nqobile's sake because I would hate for her to find herself in a situation

where she would have to chose between the two of us.

If it were to come down to that, I would rather walk away from her than have her turn her back on her family. The pain of having no one is indescribable and is one that I would never want her to experience.

I love her that much.

She walks back in and gets on her toes while cupping my face.

“Do you want to talk about it?” She whispers.

I shake my head lightly. Apparently she is able to take one look at me and tell when I am not fine.

“Well when you’re ready I’ll be right here.”

“I know baby, thank you.” I give her a soft peck.

“I love you.”

“I love you too Nqobile.”

[05/10, 13:39] Mca: EIGHTY FOUR

Unedited

Waking up in his arms is the best feeling there is out there even when I have the most excruciating hangover known to mankind. Last night this man and I along with my brother hit the club and I don't even know how I am going to get through this Saturday. Sfiso grunts as he pulls me closer. This one and using me as his snuggle buddy though. I sink into his warm embrace and shut my eyes.

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I'm woken up by Sfiso arguing with someone on the phone. He sounds pretty riled up. I sit up and watch as he paces around the room.

“Ei you don’t come to me with that shit you hear me? None of it.” He roars.

I wonder!

“I don’t have time for this shit.” He says before hanging up.

My head is still pounding so I don’t think I want to hear what that conversation was about. Nope. We’ll talk later actually. I sink back into the blankets and he slides back in and pulls me closer.

“My ex.” He whispers.

That has my attention. My heart begins to beat uncontrollably. What does she want? And which ex is that? Look I know that he has obviously been with other women but we have never touched on that and other things.

“Ufunani?” I ask.

“Money.”

“Huh?”

“For a while I took care of everything for her and made sure that he account was good looking and now she has run out and she

wants a refill.” He says calmly.

Do I have the right to react to that? Do I have the right to go berserk over that fact that his ex girlfriend is calling him and asking for money?

“Oh I see.”

“No I’m not going to give her money. It’s not my duty anymore. Yes when I was with her enjoyed doing all of this for her because she was my girlfriend and as I have said before there is nothing I wouldn’t do for you if you’re in a relationship with me. Now I’m not about to disrespect our relationship by giving some girl money and attention. I told

you Nqobile I'm old. I don't have time for games."

"I hear you baby and FYI I know you wouldn't. I trust you Sfiso."

"I'm glad you know me baby. Okay I'm hungover and I still need some sleep so let's get some shut eyes." He says placing a kiss on my neck.

See why I love him so much? I hope that this girl won't become a problem in our relationship. Sigh. For the first time since we began our relationship I feel somehow, like a tad scared but I think I'm too scared to admit it. I am legit scared of losing him. I

hope I never have to go my days without him.

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So Sfiso and Bongwe decided to cook up a storm to help us get rid of this hangover. Yes Bongwe slept over because Sfiso didn't want him to be alone while he was totally out of it so the three of us came back to Sfiso's. I love the relationship that these two have going on. I feel like Sfiso will be such a positive influence on Malibongwe which is what he needs sometimes.

“How are you two old people still able to get it down like that?” Bongwe asks laughing.

“Ai mina I’m young buza this 50 year old how he does it.” I respond in laughter as well.

Sfiso chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“This old man still gives it to you good.” He whispers in my ear.

He isn’t lying though, he does give it to me good. All the damn time!

“And to answer your question Bongwe, I drink imbiza.” He says laughing.

We all chortle loudly. These two are dumb and they belong in the same zoo. I watch on as they create this fiery meal in anticipation. I know that chicken is going to blow my head off but I can't wait to bite into it. They eventually finish up and we decide to have our meal outside by the poolside. Have I mentioned just how amazing Sfiso's yard is? My goodness I have never. Don't get me wrong it doesn't come anywhere close to my yard but it's up there somewhere nayo.

"Anybody want to hit a strip joint later tonight?" Bongwe asks.

"Where did you find a strip joint child of Zobuhle?" I ask.

“It popped up on my newsfeed and it looks interesting so I want to check it out.” He responds.

“I’m game. Babe you game?” Sfiso asks.

“Nah you guys can go, just don’t get a lap dance please Mavundla I’m begging you.” I say.

“I’ll make sure that he doesn’t. I promise you.” Bongwe says.

Yeah right like I’ll trust a stoner to keep my man away from big bootied women. I know

that he's going to be too focused on getting ass and he won't have time for anything else BUT I trust Sfiso to not do anything stupid.

"Yeah right Malibongwe like I trust you." I say laughing. "Anyway y'all enjoy mina I will be snuggled up in bed with a good read or maybe I'll treat myself to a movie and dinner."

Sfiso is looking at me with an eyebrow raised. Konje he doesn't want me driving late at night but I refuse to take a cab when I have a car. Sigh he'll just have to get over it.

“Don’t give me that look please. I promise I’ll be safe and that’s if I actually do go out.”
I say.

I’m learning that he is too overprotective. It’s cute at times but he needs to let go and allow me to be me.

“I just don’t want anything happening to you. If I could I’d be your designated driver but that would be too much. Ei being in love is stressful.” He says breaking into a laugh.

Am I allowed to blush right now? Especially at that last line.

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I decided to doll up and take myself out. The boys are at the strip club and I must admit as chilled as I sounded about it earlier, I am mad jealous. I don't want anyone dancing on MY Sfiso! I don't want anyone else touching him. Heck I don't want him looking at anyone else's ass but I don't want to come across as controlling and bossy.

Sfiso has been texting me every five minutes talking about he wants to be in my arms cuddling. Shame I find it cute but I'm enjoying myself and he should too with his big booty girls! If he's this mushy and needy right now wait until I tell him that I have to be in the big apple for a show. I bet he's

going to lose it.

“Miss Mkhize.” I turn around.

“Mr Dos Santos.”

“Looking gorgeous as always.” He says hugging me.

“Flattery, unfortunately you don’t deal with me anymore so that will not guarantee you more ad space.” I say.

We chortle. Mr Dos Santos is one of my favourite clients. His company has had a few of their ads in our publication. He is

probably one of the biggest names in marketing at the moment. Yes he's made a few advances at me but he knows where he stands with me.

"I was actually hoping for a drink."

"Unfortunately I have to dash." I say.

"Very well then. Bye Miss Mkhize."

"Bye."

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I got home changed out of my outfit and decided to catch up on some TV. The boys

aren't back yet but that's fine by me because the second they set foot in this house there will be no peace. My phone pings indicating a text message.

“Hey, I hope you don't mind me texting you. I was wondering if we could meet up.”

[05/10, 13:39] Mca: EIGHTY FIVE

Unedited

The sound of the sewing machine running will always be my favourite. For me that sound signifies a new beginning – for a piece of material that is. I believe that each piece of fabric has a story to tell and an owner to make happy and that is why I love it when a piece comes together. Today I'm

working with our seamstresses who are by far the most pleasurable individuals to work with. Their talent, passion and dedication are unmatched.

People think that seamstresses have an easy job but for me that is the toughest part of the entire design process. I mean it is their job to actually bring what I have on paper to life, that is pressure, so I have a lot of respect for the ladies. I finish up then head out after letting the team know that I will be back with lunch later.

I'm meeting with my ex husband and I have no bloody idea why. He sent the text asking if he could see me and I ignored it for about three days before he started calling and

asking the same thing until I eventually got annoyed and gave in. This man used to be my everything at some point and I think he is using that to his advantage. I obviously haven't told Sfiso about it because I wanted to hear what that prick had to say before causing unnecessary issues.

I get to the restaurant and as usual he's punctual. I walk towards the table, he gets up when he sees me and attempts to hug me but I step back. I'm not about that right now. We settle and place our orders before sitting in awkward silence for a good minute or so. Once upon a time we could sit and literally run out mouths without running out of things to say. I remember the night before our wedding, we spent a better part

of the night on the phone. I was so nervous but he did such a great job with calming my raging thoughts. By the time the clock struck 3AM I was calm and ready to walk down the aisle.

“You look good Melo.” He says snapping me out of my thoughts.

“Oh thank you.”

You know after a breakup and you get the chance to see other fish and you realise that the other fish are way better than the first initial fish you had caught? That’s how I feel right now and it’s not just look wise. Sitting here with Lerato, the energy is not

the same. I can honestly say that I can be around Sfiso and totally feel calm and like I belong. Like it doesn't feel awkward at all.

“Thank you for agreeing to meet up with me.”

“What can I do for you?” I ask.

He pauses and heaves a sigh before rubbing his face in. He usually did that when he was nervous or frustrated. He looks up and his eyes are blood shot red. He looks like he is trying so hard to keep himself from crying. In the past I'd be the first to wrap my arms around him but that's not my task anymore.

“Ho etsa halang?” I ask.

“My mom is sick. She’s dying Melo.” He says a barely audible tone but I am able to catch what he says.

Shame man. No wonder he looks so distraught right now phela his mom is his everything.

“I’m so sorry Lerato. Kuthiwa inkinga yini?” I ask.

“I don’t know, all the tests come out as inconclusive or clear. Aketsebe Melo. We’re

waiting on some specialist, he's coming in tomorrow and hopefully he'll be able to help with her case."

"I'll keep her in my prayers." I say giving his hand a tight squeeze.

He gives me a tight smile while squeezing it back.

"Actually the reason I asked to meet with you is because mom would like to see you."

I look at him with an eye brow raised before chuckling lowly. His mother? See me? HE HE! Wonders of this world never cease.

That woman hated me from the second she meet me. To her I wasn't right for her son and when it was proven that I wasn't 'woman enough' she rejoiced so much and I bet she even threw her son a 'good riddance' party after our divorce. So for her to ask to see me now is plain shocking!

"What for?"

"She's dying akere Melo."

"So?"

"Please sweetheart please just do this for me. I'm begging you."

“I don’t have to do anything for you Lerato because you are nothing to me. So don’t sit here calling me sweetheart and expect me to jump, that ship has long sailed. Why should I go see your evil mother? Yes I said evil! That woman hated me and now that she’s on her death bed I must put everything aside and go see her? For what good reason?” I’m worked up right now.

‘Just do this for me’ tshini! The nerve of the Mphahlele’s! Actually I’m getting out of here. I stand up and grab my bag while he jumps on his feet.

“Okay sweetheart, I’m sorry please don’t

go.” Before I can say anything he has his arms wrapped around me.

I quickly pull back and look at him.

“She just wants to make things right with you Melo. She realises that she didn’t treat you well and that she needs to ask for forgiveness.”

“And what does your fiancé say about this?”

“Melo.”

“Does she know that you are here begging me to go see her future mother in-law?”

Actually I shouldn't even have come here."

"I'm sorry I hurt you Melokuhle. I am so sorry that I didn't stick with you when you needed me the most. Not a single day goes by without me regretting my decision and if I could I would turn back time and do things differently but I can't. I also don't want to be selfish and ask for another chance because I saw how happy he makes you when we bumped into each other at the mall. You deserve happiness Melo and nothing else. All I ask right now is for you to hear my mother out then I promise I will stay away from you afterwards. Please sweetheart."

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I'm at work not even trying to work because Lerato's words keep ringing in my head. Why should I be the bigger person after everything that that woman put me through? Why should I grant her her dying wish? Argh. I pack up and let everyone know that I'm on my way because I'm suddenly not feeling well.

Again I'm spending the week at Sfiso's and I wish I was at my house right now. I get home and whip up a quick meal for dinner then make my way to the bedroom to calm my thoughts by getting some sleep in.

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I slowly open my eyes and roll out of bed

then make my way to the bathroom. I rinse my mouth then make my way to the living room where I find him in nothing but his joggers. He's watching some documentary and he looks invested in it. I place a kiss on his cheek before heading to the kitchen to get myself a glass of juice. He walks in as I'm pouring some into a glass and leans against the counter.

"Unjani?" He asks.

"I'm okay and you?"

"Hmmm. Why were you sleeping are you not feeling well?"

“Just a bit tired but I’m good now.” I respond.

“Nqobile.”

“Yes baby?” I look up and the look on his face is confusing me.

“Do you love me?”

I’m taken aback by that question. Where does that come from?

“Of course I do Sfiso. You know that I do.”

“Hmm and do you value me? Ngithi when you look at me do you feel the need to be truthful.”

“Of course.”

“Huh? Then please tell me why you were spotted at a restaurant in the arms of a man that wasn’t me or your brothers.” He says calmly.

My heart is in my stomach right. How? I was going to tell him.

“Wait are you having me followed again?” I yell.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“Why are you with me if you don’t trust me?
And FYI a friend of mine spotted you.”

“Baby.” I say stepping towards him.

“Yini?”

“I was going to tell you.”

“Tell me what?”

“Lerato called and asked to meet with me

athi his mom is dying and she wants to see me.”

“I don’t care about your conversation, I do however care about the fact that I wasn’t told that he called, let alone that you’re meeting with him. I thought we were transparent with each other.”

He sounds so hurt in this moment and I can’t help but feel like an absolute jerk. He’s right, I should’ve communicated with him about this before actually going to meet with him.

“I’m sorry.” I say faintly.

“Had it been me who pulled that shit, your fathers and brothers would be ready to have my balls before hearing what I had to say. I’m not angry that you went to go see your EX-HUSBAND, I’m disappointed at the fact that you didn’t let me know that he had reached out. When my EX did the same I let you know immediately so why couldn’t I receive the same courtesy? Or yini uzothi it’s not the same?”

“Sfiso I-”

“It’s okay Nqobile.” He says then walks out.

“But I’m sorry.” I say faintly.

[05/10, 13:39] Mca: EIGHTY SIX

Unedited

I heave a sigh and go on the search for my man. He's not in the living room so I assume he's in the bedroom. Indeed he is. He's lying flat on his stomach and he has earphones on. I gently lie on his back and rest my head on his back. He doesn't even react to my presence. Sigh. I take his earphones off before kissing his back.

"I'm sorry." I say.

Nothing.

"Mavundla wami khuluma nami please."

“My problem is not that you went to hear your ex husband out, the issue is that you didn’t communicate with me. He called and you kept quiet about that. How would you have felt were you in my shoes?” He says.

“I realise now that I should’ve come to you the second he sent the message-”

“I thought you said he called?” He interrupts me.

I heave a sigh and get off of his back. I lie next to him and caress his face. He has his eyes shut but you can see the emotions clearly plastered on his face.

“He sent an SMS then started calling when I didn’t respond to it. I know that it was wrong of me to keep it from you and I have no excuse as to why I did it. It was wrong and I am sorry. I promise that I will share everything with you from now on.” I say still caressing his face.

“Were you going to tell me if I didn’t bring it up?”

“Baby please look at me.” I say gently.

I need him to open his eyes. I need him to look into my eyes and see just how deeply I regret not telling him about this. He opens

them and they're so red which causes my heart to sink. I told myself that I never wanted to be the cause of his tears because he has already cried so much in this lifetime but here I am doing the very thing that I promised that I would never.

"I was wrong and I realise that. Yes I was going to tell you about it because you are my man and my future. I am sorry Mavundla that I behaved ngathi I'm not in a relationship with anyone. Believe me when I say that it will never happen again."

"You hurt me Nqobile. You made me feel like I didn't matter. Like I said if I had pulled the same stunt I probably would be in the dog house now kodwa mina I'm not allowed

to react because I'm going to be told that I am overreacting. I thought we were open with each other."

"And we are baby, we really are."

"I don't want to come across as an insecure man but it really hurt me. I've told you before that I feel as if though I don't deserve you and you meeting with your ex husband behind my back kind of brought those feelings back."

"Why?"

"Because that man knows you and at some

point was your world.”

“Correction, he knew me but he doesn’t know this Melo futhi you are my world now. You are my Sfiso and I love you so so much baby. I’m sorry okay.”

“Okay Melokuhle.”

I slide closer and place my lips on his. It takes him a minute to return the gesture but he does and he even pulls me closer grabbing my ass.

“I’m sorry.” I murmur against his lips.

“I know Nqobile.” He murmurs back.

I need to do better. For this man and our relationship.

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“So what does his mother want?” He asks.

We’re in bed having our dinner. After our makeup session he decided that he was hungry so I dished up for us and we decided to have his meal in bed. Speaking of our makeup session, I swear it was like he was trying to prove some point. There was nothing delicate about it and he knows it.

“She wants to see me because apparently she’s dying and she wants to apologise.”

“For what?”

“Well she wasn’t the world’s most pleasant mother in law.” I say shrugging.

“How did she handle the whole infertility issues?”

I heave a sigh.

“She rejoiced and encouraged her son to leave me.”

“Well I’m not mad her for doing that.” He says smiling.

“Hawu why?” I’m baffled.

“No don’t get me wrong there is nothing to rejoice about there, however I wouldn’t be here with you had she not done that. So yeah I’m grateful to her.”

“You are weird.” I say laughing.

See why I love him so much?

“So are you going to go?” He asks.

“I don’t know, I’ll have a chat with mom first but I don’t owe that woman anything so I don’t think I want to go.”

“Maybe you should go hear her out baby.”
He says softly.

“Are you going to some with me?”

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“If we were married I would lead the way kodwa ke we’re not so I can’t do that unfortunately.”

“But you can.” I say sulking.

“In what capacity?”

“As my man hawu.”

He bursts into laughter. Have I ever said just how infectious his laugh is? He has an amazing laugh this one, I could listen to him the entire day.

“You’re too cute but no.” He kisses the side of my head.

Oh well I tried.

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I share a hug with mom before settling on the couch. Her husband is nowhere in sight. I haven't spoken to dad about Sfiso since the dinner. Yes we talk but never about my relationship. Gogo said I should let him be and soon he will come around but I don't believe that he will which will leave me in a shitty situation.

“So uthi what is happening?” Mom asks.

I called to tell her about Lerato and his mother's request. She obviously laughed long and hard until she couldn't even breathe. When she finally caught her breathe she told me to come and see her and well here I am.

“Long story short, Lerato ask to meet with me to tell me that his mother would like to see me to apologise ngoba she’s dying.”

“Manje wena ungenaphi?” She asks with a bored expression on her face

I can’t help but laugh. Mom hates that woman with a passion. I can safely say that she shares a spot with mkhulu Zweli. When we got divorced mom was obviously hurt but she was happy about the fact that I wouldn’t be ‘mothered’ by that woman anymore.

“Hawu mama.”

“Hai Nqobile that woman doesn’t deserve your forgiveness if anything she deserves to die with her guilt or whatever. Don’t go there.”

“I agree with your mom but if you do want to go then I will gladly go with you.” Dad says.

He kisses my head then settles next to me. He smells like sweat. Must’ve been working out.

“Mina I don’t want her to go.” Mom says.

“I know honey but Nqobile needs to do this and rid herself of that family for good.”

“As long as you go with her ke.” Mom says shrugging.

“I will. So how are things with that man of yours?” Dad asks.

Both mom and I have our jaws on the ground. Is this a test? What is happening?

“Errm they’re good.” I respond hesitantly.

“Hmmm you two must come have dinner with us soon.” He says shocking mom and I.

He gets up and walks out leaving us to digest what he has just said. Could this be dad coming around or him wanting to beat Sfiso again? Well either way I'm glad he is taking an interest.

"What just happened?" I ask mom.

"Child you better thank me ngoba I have been backing it up for you." She says giggling.

Eww eww ew!! TMI! Mom really has no filter.
Argh

[05/10, 13:40] Mca: EIGHTY SEVEN

Unedited

A LITTLE something to celebrate the 10 000 mark!!! Here is to 10 000 MORE!!

“The last time I saw him I obviously couldn’t comment of his features and anything else because things were tense but now.” She pauses and takes a sip of her wine. “Firstly he’s taller than your father. Where did he get all that height?” Mom says dramatically.

We’re in the kitchen getting dinner ready while dad and Sfiso ‘catch up’. When I extended the dinner invite to him, he was obviously shocked but he gladly accepted it. I think he felt a bit relaxed because it was

just going to be us and my parents. He bought flowers for mom and a bottle of whiskey for dad. When we walked in and he handed them their respective gifts I could see that daddy appreciated his gift but he wasn't going to show it.

Mom whisked me away to the kitchen and left the men in awkward silence. Shame my poor baby.

“Hai mom is that even a question?” I ask laughing.

“I mean you're not that short but he definitely makes you look like a muffin. Anyway so how's the sex?”

“No mother no! I am not doing this with you. I refuse.” I say shaking my head.

“Oh come on you’re not a virgin and I know that you two are getting it down. I just want to know whether or not he’s giving it to you good or not.”

“He’s giving it to me incredibly good and that is where the conversation will end. Thank you!”

“Mxm oho!” She says downing her glass.

I laugh loudly. My mom is a special case I

tell you but I appreciate how open she is with us.

“So your dad knows how happy you are with Sfiso and he acknowledges that which is a good thing. Now the hard part is having to convince him to actually forgive Sfiso.”

“Hai mama what your husband decides is on him. Mina all I know is that I love that man and I don’t want to be with anyone else other than him. So if dad doesn’t bless our relationship then I guess I’m going to have to rebel and disown you guys.”

“Melokuhle.” She says softly.

“I just really love him and I wish that dad could see that he isn’t such a bad person.”

A lone tear rolls down my cheek and I quickly wipe it. For such a long time I have been acting like this situation with dad isn’t affecting me but it is. I just want him to try a bit that’s all I ask for. Yes Sfiso hurt us but how long are we going to stay angry about that situation?

“Don’t cry baby.” She pulls me into her arms and rubs my back.

“It just hurts that I can’t talk to dad about this relationship. I’m genuinely at my happiest and my parents can’t share in on

that happiness.”

“You have to realise that you are your dad’s princess and he will never allow just anyone to waltz in here and do as they please but chin up baby, the fact that you guys are here tonight is a good thing.” Mom says softly.

“Okay mommy.” I pull out of her embrace and wipe my face.

We finish getting the food into the serving dishes and move everything into the dining room. Mom goes to call the men while I bring the last salad bowls. We settle around the table and mom blesses the food then grabs dad’s plate and dishes up for him

then herself. I do the same for Sfiso and I and we all dig in in silence.

“So Sfiso what exactly does your company do?” Mom asks.

“It’s actually divided up into multiple divisions, so we have the advertising and design which is one of my favourites. We also have a TEC division which deals with everything in technology. We’re currently setting up our beauty division which will see us producing our own cosmetics and everything that has to do with beauty but that is still in the early stages of conception.

“Hmmm that’s very impressive. You must

be so proud of everything that you have accomplished.” Mom says beaming.

I look at dad and he has a much softer look on his face than he did the last time we were sitting around this table.

“I am. I’ve worked really hard and it would be ridiculous of me not to celebrate that. I look back at where I started and then look at myself in this moment and I can’t help but be proud.”

“Where did you start?” She asks.

“At the taxi rank. After high school I got a

job at the taxi rank washing taxis. It wasn't a lot but at the time it ensured that my grandmother and I had something to eat and as time went on, it funded my start-up."

"You should be proud of where you come from and where you are going." Dad says.

"Yes he should."

"Thank you." Sfiso says softly.

I know what he's thinking. I squeeze his hand and he returns it.

"Do you truly love my daughter Sfiso?" Dad

asks.

“More than anything in this world Mr Mkhize.”

“Aww that’s sweet. Love you say the same thing about me.” Mom says smiling.

I see what she is trying to do and I am grateful for that. I can see that dad has softened a bit which is a bloody good thing.

“Mr and Mrs Mkhize I can never apologise enough for the distress that I put you through during my jerk moment with Melo. I realise that my actions not only had Melo

living in fear but you too. Not a day goes by where I don't regret it but I truly do love her and I see a future with her." He says.

Dad nods lightly and continues with his meal. Well at least he didn't go crazy.

Overall dinner was great and at least there was no punching this time around. Dad didn't exactly give us his blessings but he did sit and watch soccer with Sfiso and for me that is a huge deal. I just hope that we can only progress from here on out.

[05/10, 13:40] Mca: EIGHTY EIGHT

Unedited

“You will never be good enough for my son!”

I remember Lerato’s mother spitting out those words in my face. That was on the day of our traditional wedding. She was helping me get dressed when she said those words so you can imagine just how hard the rest of the day was for me. To this day I have no idea why she hated me so much but hopefully she will let me know today.

Dad and I are on our way to Lerato’s place and my heart is in my stomach. I’m not ready for this conversation. I actually want to go back home.

“Dad I don’t want to see her. Can we go home please?”

“What’s wrong?” I can hear the panic in his voice.

He pulls over and turns to look at me. My dad has always had the power to make me breakdown even when I don’t want to. He takes my hand in his and gives it a gently squeeze before kissing it.

“Khuluma nami blip ka mkhulu.”

I chuckle lightly while shaking my head. Its been years since mkhulu left us but I swear

each time someone mentions him in a conversation my heart sinks. I miss him so much. I miss his hugs and I miss his laugh. Sigh.

“That woman hurt me so much dad and I don’t understand why I have to do this for her.” I say faintly.

Gogo said that denying a person’s dying wish is inviting bad luck for yourself in future. I find it ridiculous how a person can make your life a living hell on earth and suddenly when it is time for them to go then you have to forgive because not forgiving might result in a miserable life for you once they’re gone.

“I know that you don’t want to do this Nqobile wam but look at it this way. You get to look her in the eye and see how everything she has done has caught up with her. You’re doing this for you and not for her.” He says.

I heave a sigh. I guess he is right. I nod lightly before giving him a smile. My papa bear. I love this man so much and I definitely wouldn’t trade him for anything.

“Okay. Let’s get this over with.” I say reaching over and placing a kiss on his cheek.

We drive the rest of the way in silence. I hope that I will not regret this. We drive into the yard and I see Lerato standing at the door. This is it Melo!

“You ready?” Dad asks.

I nod and draw a deep breath then release it. We step out of the car and make our way in. Lerato shakes hands with dad while I just give him a light nod. This is the house he bought after our divorce. It's nice and cosy. It definitely is his kind of place. He leads us into the bedroom and the state that his mother is in is heartbreaking.

She looks so frail. Her feet are so swollen

that I feel so bad for her. We settle on the couch and daddy takes my hand in his.

“Melokuhle thank you for coming.” She says softly. “Mr Mkhize realeboga.”

Dad nods light. I just want to get this over and done with. Lerato walks back in with a jug of juice and four glasses. He serves all of us and we sit in silence for a little while. This ex husband of mine keeps stealing glances at me but I am deciding to ignore him. I’m not here for him but for his mother who must just say her piece so that we can get out of here.

“So has the specialist been able to make a

diagnosis?” I ask.

“We’re still waiting on the results, hopefully we’ll have them by the end of the week.” Lerato responds.

“Melokuhle I would like to apologise for the way that I treated you before you got married to my son and even during your marriage. I know that I was supposed to be your mother away from your mother and I failed at that.”

“Why did you treat me like that?” I ask in a slightly shaking voice.

“I felt that my son deserved better. You weren’t the type of woman that I had imagined he would settle down with and when he started speaking about marriage I lost it. I’m sorry for that and I hope that you can find it in your heart to forgive me.” She says coughing.

You can actually see the discomfort in her face as she coughs. I look at Lerato and in the time that I had known him I had never seen him that distressed. You can tell that he feels powerless and that if he could he would trade places with his mother immediately.

“I see, and for your hand in our divorce?” I ask

She sits up with a little bit of struggle but manages to. The look in her eyes, that is the woman I know.

“I will not apologise for having my son divorce you. Yes I made him leave you. You see he wanted to stay with you but I couldn’t let him stay with a barren woman. As much as he loved you and it hurt him to let go of you I would’ve rather that than him staying in a childless marriage.” She spits out.

Dad’s grip on my hand has gotten tighter and I feel like he is going to squeeze my hand off. Lerato also looks disappointed in

his mother but then again what did we expect.

“I’m actually glad that he left you because now he has a child and a wonderful wife. I will die knowing that my son has an heir. So I am sorry for how I treated you as my daughter in-law but I am not sorry for encouraging him to divorce you.” She continues.

I get up and walk out of the room without saying anything. The second I step out my tears roll down my cheeks and I can’t control my sobs. I lean against the car and let it all out. I think this woman is the main reason that I have such deep issues with my infertility. My family has always been

supportive and assured and reassured me that not being able to carry my own child doesn't change anything but that woman, that woman God I hate her.

I feel arms circling around me and at first I think it's dad but then I realise that it's Lerato. I step out of his hold and wipe my tears.

"I'm sorry. I had no idea that she was going to say that. I'm sorry."

"It's okay."

"No it's not. I hadn't realised until now that

my mother had manipulated me so much.
I'm sorry that you had to be on the receiving
end of everything.”

“How's your child?” I ask.

I know that he is going to divert and talk
about how he loves me and I can't have that.

“He's good. He looks so much like me.” He
says with a broad smile on his face.

“That's nice. Congratulations.”

“Thank you and thank you for coming to see
my mom.”

“Sure.” I say.

My phone rings and I quickly answer it.

“Baby.” I say softly.

“What’s wrong baby?” hearing his voice is triggering my tears again.

“Dad and I are about to leave.” I say wiping my tears.

“Send me a code.”

“Sfi-”

“Code Nqobile.” He says sternly.

“Okay.”

I hang up and send him a code immediately. Lerato is looking at me in an inquisitive manner but I don't care right now. Dad walks out with fire coming out of her ears. He opens the car and bangs the door after sliding in. I bid Lerato farewell and for good this time. I get in the car and dad drives off.

“Are you okay?” I ask him.

“I just need my wife’s warm hug right now. I’m sorry that you had to endure that woman for so long but I’m glad you are rid of her for good now.”

“I hear you dad.”

Sfiso is parked outside and is leaning against his car as we drive into my drive way. In as much as dad needs his wife’s embrace, I need Sfiso’s. I jump out of the car and run into his arms and he holds onto me so tightly that I feel right at home.

“I’ve got you baby. I’ve got you.” He whispers in my ear softly.

I know he does and I love him for it.

[05/10, 13:40] Mca: EIGHTY NINE

Unedited

ONE YEAR LATER

“Melo.” She whispers softly in my ear.

“Go away!” I say changing positions.

I didn't sleep a wink last night helping her with her design project. I said we could do it today but because miss thing here has a birthday party to attend today, we had to do it last night. Now I don't mind helping her with her project kodwa when it has me up

the entire night then she comes and wakes me up when I'm trying to get some shut eye in then that is the problem.

"Bhuti is here Melo vuka."

"Tell him to also go away." I say.

"But he's going to drive me to the party and he wants to see you."

"Jesus Khanyisile where do you get the energy heh? We just went to bed now at 5AM and you're already up now. Haai man!" I say angrily getting out of bed.

I drag my half dead body to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. I look so horrible my goodness. My eyes are puffy! Too puffy at that. I finish up then head to the kitchen where I find Khanyisile and her bhuti making breakfast.

“Hey baby.” He struts his way towards me and pulls me into his arms.

Sigh. A lot has happened in the past year.

Let’s see, Lerato’s mom eventually passed away and mom and dad went to the funeral but I wasn’t having any of it. She was nothing to me so why was I supposed to drag myself to the cemetery to get burnt by

the sun just for her? Nope.

Let's see what else, oh yes. Bongwe had a pregnancy scare and Zobuhle Zulu Mkhize lost it!

When I say mama bear went crazy I am not exaggerating. She was angry at everyone for an entire week. Dad had it rough because he was on the receiving end of her punches. Bongwe had to move in with me for a little while because he honestly wasn't dealing. On top of it this girl was just a one night stand, it was a mess. Eventually this girl confessed that she was trying to pin the baby on Bongwe and all was alright in the Mkhize household.

Mina on the other hand moved to a new house. Sfiso and I had a conversation about the sentimental value of that house and I realised that I was holding onto the memories that Lerato and I had created in that property. So I decided to let it go and start afresh. It was hard letting go of my garden but the new property has an even bigger and better garden and it is already my favourite spot plus gogo and Khanyi have also found their own favourite spots within the garden. Yes it's that big. Sfiso and I still live in separate houses because we both enjoy our own space. As much as we spend most of our time together, that two nyana day break is highly appreciated.

“Did your perfect princess tell you that I am exhausted and that you woke me up?” I ask.

“She did and I am sorry baby okay.”

“Your sorry isn’t going to bring back my sleep.” I whine.

“I’m sorry baby. Look we’re making you a great breakfast and maybe I’ll give you the D afterwards, you know that puts you right back to sleep.” He whispers.

I want to smile right now but I am too tired. I can’t even hold him back.

“Coffee please.” I say softly.

“Khanyisile coffee for your sister please.”
He yells.

“Okay bhuti.”

“We’re still having dinner at your parents?”
He asks.

“That’s what dad said.” I respond.

That is another development, dad accepted Sfiso as my partner. It happened a few months back and I could not be any happier. Yes he still has his reservations but he’s

trying to give this relationship a chance. Just last week all the men in my life – dad, lume, Ndile, Bongwe and Sfiso flew to Cape Town to go watch soccer. These little family moments mean so much to my man and each time he comes back from a boys day with any of the guys or random date with gogo, mom or aunty, my heart swells.

Gogo literally forces him to come and visit her every Friday. So on Fridays he doesn't go to the office at all. He gets her goodies each time before making his way to her. I love that he has now relaxed into the family structure and is comfortable in accepting their love. It has been so beautiful to watch him open himself up like this. I thought I had seen him at his best but no I hadn't

seen anything yet. Plus he decided to go back to therapy – I think that’s another reason why dad was okay with our relationship. He said he respects a man who can admit that he has a problem and work on it.

I remember the one therapy session I went to with him. Seeing him that vulnerable and open just made me fall deeper for him and also led to a new found respect for him. I knew that his childhood affected him but I just didn’t realise the extent of it all. My big bear was a broken man but I am so proud of the progress that he has been throughout this year.

“I can’t wait for mom’s dumpling.” He says

kissing my head.

I chuckle lightly as I untangle myself from him. I guess he has spoken to mom and they have created the menu for tonight. Khanyi hands me my coffee and a moan of appreciation leaves my mouth the second it hits my mouth.

“Where is this party again?” I enquire.

“It’s at Brittany’s home.”

“Are you excited?” I ask.

She shrugs and tends to her pots. I look at

Sfiso and he nods lightly then makes his way towards her. They have such a cute and cool relationship. It's really heart warming.

"Kwenzekantoni Langalam?" he asks softly.

She heaves a sigh and drops her shoulders.

"I've never been invited to a party before and I don't know what to expect. Brittany is the only one at school who doesn't think that I'm a freak because I see chains and her people's cries. What if all the other kids there decide they don't want me there because of my gift then Brittany has to chase me away?"

Oh my Khanyi. Sigh. The pressure thrown at her is just too much. I sometimes ask God why he couldn't reveal this gift to her when she was a bit older. Now she can't even enjoy her childhood as much because she is dealing with everyone else's issues.

"Look at me." Sfiso says pulling her into his embrace.

She looks up at him and he places a kiss on her forehead.

"You are special, I always tell you this. You possess a precious gift because God saw you fit enough to be one of his warriors on

earth. Now people won't always understand and that's okay kodwa it doesn't mean you have to shrink yourself and what you possess to accommodate them. The ones who are meant to stay will stay and the ones who aren't won't. It's as simple as that. Brittany likes you as a friend because if she didn't she wouldn't want you to be at her party. Now I doubt that should your scenario play out she would actually kick you out because obviously she knows that those other ones don't want you but she still wants you at her party."

"So you're saying Brittany is the one meant to stay?"

"I'm saying in this moment she is."

“Can I call you if I’m not comfortable and you’ll fetch me?” She asks softly.

“I will be there in a flash princess.”

I’m so happy that Khanyi finds it so easy to confide in Sfiso because at least I know that she won’t keep certain things to herself because she knows that I freak out and get ready to fight. I will hunt down whoever is mean or rude to her and I will deal with them but he keeps calm and he makes a whole ‘learn a lesson out of it’ speech.

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“I love you.” He says gazing deep into my soul.

“I love you.” I respond.

He responds with his lazy strokes. Khanyi is gone and we are having our lazy Saturday sex. I love it when he moves so gently ngathi he’s scared of breaking me. Also he takes longer to come when we have these sweet sessions so you know I love it.

“You’re so beautiful.” He whispers before capturing my lips in his.

He makes me feel beautiful even when I

feel like crap. He is truly is a blessing in my life.

“How do you feel about us moving in together? Do you think you could handle spending all your days and nights with me?” He asks.

I cup his face and look into his eyes.

“I’d kill you most of the time but I’d be the first one to piece you back together afterwards. Spending all my days and nights with you would be the best thing ever.”

“You going to let me eat your ass out everywhere?”

Silly man!

“Everywhere baby.”

“Even in the pool.”

“Even in the pool Mavundla wam.” I say chuckling.

He is a special breed indeed.

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“You look so good.” Aunty yells when I step into the kitchen.

I give them a twirl and a mini twerk while laughing before sharing a hug with each of them. It’s always guaranteed to be a great time with all my favourite ladies in the same space.

“You’re glowing.” Mom says smiling.

“Must be getting it good.” Amanda comments.

We all share a laugh. Bayaphapha laba! I head outside to greet my favourite men.

“Meloooooooooooo.” Bongwe screams when he sees me.

Definitely high and that bottle of beer in his hand is making it worse. He picks me up and spins me around while dad protests about how he’s going to drop me. He eventually puts me down and kisses my face.

“I am blessed to have you as a sister. I love you yezwa.”

“I love you to freak.” I say laughing.

Daddy pulls me into his arms and places a kiss on my head. Our relationship is in a much better place than it has ever been. The mini vacation we took helped strength our bond. I got to learn so many things about my dad that I never knew. He truly is my one time hero!

“Are you okay?”

“I am and you?” I ask.

“I’m hungry. Feed me.” He says laughing.

I hug lume and Ndile before heading back to the kitchen to let the wife know that the

husband is hungry.

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Dinner went down really well. As expected mom cooked all of Sfiso's favourites. My man chopped that meal like it was his last. Right now we're all sitting in the living room having a conversation about some conspiracy theory. Sfiso's hands are shaking which is worrying me.

"Are you okay?" I ask.

"Are you sure you love me?" He blurts out.

And then?

“Of course I do.”

He nods lightly, let's go of my hand and drops to his knee. Wewe hands him a box and it hits me. I shake my head continuously will tears threatening my eyes.

“Melokuhle Nqobile Mkhize. You know how I feel about you. I love you and there is no question about that. You are my best friend, the sister that I never had and the mother that left me too quickly. You play all those roles in my life so effortlessly and I appreciate you for that.

I had this entire speech written down but

now the words are failing me so I'm going to ask you the question before I lose the plot.

Melokuhle will you do me the honour of spending the rest of your life with me? Will you marry me?"

I'm stunned. I didn't expect this. Not at all.

"Say yes Melo." Gogo shouts.

I chuckle while shaking my head.

"Yes you silly man."

He heaves a sigh of relief and cups my face placing a deep kiss on my lips.

Mrs Mavundla me? Yes!

[05/10, 13:40] Mca: NINETY

Unedited

“All things come together for our good Melokuhle. The tough road you’re walking will all make sense in the end.”

My grandmother once said that to me whilst I was in her arms crying my lungs out because nothing made sense. I remember thinking that I will never be alright ever again and that I will never heal again but

years later and I am at my happiest and most positive. Often times we think that whenever we get thrown into the fiery inferno it is to punish us however it is quite the opposite. If you have ever watched 'Forged in Fire' then you know the process of making a strong and lethal knife. They place the material in fire before taking it out and beating it then return it back into the flames and repeating the process until getting the desired shape before moving onto sharpening it.

That's been my life.

I have been beat down but I walked out of that fire stronger and shaper than ever. Everything I have ever been through has

lead to this very moment. It has lead to me being this strong and strong willed individual. I am proud of the person that I have grown into and I know that I am going to be proud of the person that I am still to grow into.

“Baby do you know where I placed my other laptop?” He yells from somewhere within the house.

Sigh this one has become an even bigger baby since our engagement. We’ve been engaged for a month and we’re getting married in three months because mom is a bored housewife who has too much time on her hands. Sfiso’s family is coming next weekend for the lobola negotiations and we

are hoping and praying that they go smoothly. I met his family when we went to the unveiling and not everyone was happy about our relationship except for Andiswa, she is just amazing.

Okay so let me take it back a little to the day when dad and I went to go meet with Lerato and his mother. Remember we found Sfiso waiting for me and the second I saw him I launched myself into his arms. Well I think that was the day that dad realised that Sfiso might just be the one for me. I remember pulling back from Sfiso's embrace and seeing dad looking on with a little twinkle in his eye. I made my way to him and invited him inside but he declined my invitation because he needed to get home and he

knew that I was in capable hands, his words not mine. From that day on he started relaxing a bit, just a little bit, when it came to Sfiso.

When Sfiso and I went to the Eastern Cape for the unveiling, my parents insisted that my siblings come along with us for support. Between you and I, I think it was more so my safety than it was anything else but I appreciate it nonetheless. I love how my siblings put my happiness before anything else as hard as it is at times.

The journey to hasn't been an easy one but we promised to hold onto each other and fight through it all.

“Nqobile.” He shouts.

I roll my eyes as I drag myself out of the room. I always tell him the same thing ‘keep your work things in the study’ but no Sfiso has to have his work all over the house. He’s turning the living room upside down looking for this laptop. Literally, all the cushions are on the ground. Sigh. I make my way to the guestroom because that’s his hide out whenever he feels like he can’t get anything done in the study.

Behold! The laptop, sitting perfectly on the bed. I take it and make my way to the living room. He looks really frustrated and it is

beautiful to watch, in a weird way.

“Babe nayi.” I say.

He makes his way towards me and places a kiss on my lips before taking it out of my hands.

“What would I do without you?” He says lightly.

“Angaz but you’re going to find out ngoba I’m going back to my place later and I’ll only be back la after the negotiations.” I say.

He’s frowning but he’ll just have to be

strong yazi. This is one thing we're always going back and forth about, my not wanting to move in with him. I mean I just bought a new house and I'm enjoying that space, futhi I don't think I want to start a new life with him in a house that has seen other booty. I know I sound a bit jealous but so be it. Also we had said we'd find a suitable place for us or probably built something suitable for both our personalities.

"Can't you leave on Friday?"

"But today is a Friday mos." I say innocently.

He chuckles lightly while shaking his head.

“Don’t be smart with me.”

“Look in less than four months I am going to be annoying you day in and day out so take these peaceful days that I am offering you ngoba you’re not going to have a lot if those once I’m Mrs Mavundla.” I say before placing a soft peck on his lips.

“I want you to annoy me now though.” He’s sulking.

“Haai Sfiso go to work. I’ll see you Sunday lunch.” I say walking away.

He’s laughing! Well at least he’s not sulking

ngoba yey umuntu can sulk for days. I go take a quick shower, finish up, get dressed then head out. I have an appointment with my designer and to say I am a confused bride would be an understatement. I don't know what I want. I want a ball gown, I want pockets, I want ruching, I want silk, I want I want I want! Mom says I should just wear a plastic bag and at this rate I feel like that is where I am headed.

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My appointment went well and we managed to sketch two dresses. I know that the timeframe is tight but I trust her to do the things. Right now I'm on my way to my grandmother because she asked me to come through. She has been so amazing

when it comes to Sfiso. I swear it feels like she has been his gran since forever.

“Blip.” She says with a smile on her face.

We share a warm hug before she tells me to go get a pair of gloves and join her in the garden. She’s the reason I love my garden so much.

“So are you ready for next weekend?” She asks.

“I am. I really am gogo.”

“So you’re ready to stand before God and all

of us and commit yourself to this man?”

“I am.” I say without hesitating.

“I know that you love him and he loves you too. I’ve seen how you interact with each other and you seem to have a great understanding of one another. Now have you spoken about the child issue?”

“We have and we agreed to go the surrogate or adoption route only when the time is right. I was willing to try treatment one last time but he flat out refused to have me go through that again. He knows how hard it was for me both times and he says he accepts me as I am.”

“And how do you feel about that?”

“I honestly feel like I don’t deserve him at times because I want to give him kids you know but obviously the situation doesn’t permit and the more he says he understands, the more I feel unworthy. Yes there isn’t anything that I can do about the hand that God dealt me but it doesn’t mean that I can’t react to it.”

“That man wouldn’t be with you if he didn’t see you as worthy.” She says smiling.

“I know.”

“I want you to walk into this marriage without the ‘what ifs’ and the ‘I’m not worthy of your love’. That Mavundla boy seems to know what he wants and that is you. I’ve had this conversation with him and I believe that he will take care of you and love you for you and not the children you can or can’t bare for him. Allow yourself to take in all the love he has for you and watch your marriage grow from strength to strength.”

I hear her and I will definitely take her advice on this. We spend the rest of the afternoon with her telling me about how nervous she was when her and mkhulu got married.

I always say to myself that if I could have a marriage as real and as authentic as gogo and mkhulu's then I will be good. My parents have also set the bar really high as well as my aunt and uncle. Growing up surrounded by such beautiful marriages you can't help but want to have something like that.

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Lobola has been paid. It's official. I am his!

The week wasn't so tough actually because I have the greatest support system around me, they made sure that everything ran smoothly and that I didn't even have to lift a finger. This morning my brother came

through to cook lunch and I'm certain everyone is shocked at what they're having. I told him basic stew and sides but Bandile had to go full on chef and create a gourmet menu. I mean what the heck is couscous? But hey it's a really great menu.

I'm sitting outside with my soon-to-be husband. Being here in my childhood home with him by my side, everything feels like it was meant to be. Like he was the final frog that I had to kiss vele.

"So you're mine now." He whispers in my ear.

I nod shyly while giggling.

“All yours.”

“I love you so much Melo.”

“You are everything that I had ever prayed for Sfiso wam and I promise that I will be the best partner to you as we ride this life thing together.”

“And I promise that the only tears you will ever cry are tears of joy and tears of pleasure when I am hitting it from all angles.” He bites my earlobe.

I’m a giggling mess right now. This man will

be the death of me.

“You and sex.”

“Mina? It’s all you baby. All you.” He responds laughing.

“I can’t wait to begin the rest of my life with you.”

“We’re going to make it the best ride ever maMkhize wam.”

*****THE END*****