

*STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI

CHAPTER ONE*

"I want a divorce."

Divorce? What is that? And why would he even want a divorce? Did I do something wrong? Did he fall out of love with me? Am I not attractive to him anymore? Am I that bad now and he cannot stand me anymore? Those are the questions I kept asking myself from the day my soon to be ex husband asked for a divorce. It kept ringing in my head. I couldn't make out why he would want to divorce me. We've been married for seven years and we were so happy together. Or so I thought. Marry your best friend they said. I married my best friend and today I find myself in the middle of a divorce. The same best friend that I grew up with. We were friends since our primary school days. I never thought a day would come where I would find myself here. But today I've decided to say enough is enough. I'm

letting go. I'm letting go of everything. I'm signing the papers today. I'm letting go of a part of my life that I loved my entire life. Firstly when he mentioned the divorce I was scared. Scared of what people are going to say. Thinking that they will judge me. Judge me for not being able to stay in my marriage. But when I realized that I have been made a fool I said enough is enough. I've been a fool all our married life. When we got married we had dreams. Very big dreams. We wanted to achieve a lot and we did that. For young people we have done very well for ourselves. So when we got married my soon to be ex husband said I must tie my tubes. We had to be stable first before even thinking of having babies. And stupid me believed him because I was so in love to even notice anything. I had my tubes tied and he did a vasectomy. Or so I thought. But a surprise was waiting for me. He has two kids with another woman. Two kids! Lucky him. While I had my tubes tied he made a fool out of me and made me think that indeed he did vasectomy. The kids are 6 years old. This means that they came into this world a year after our marriage. I have a few

questions that I would like to ask him. He walks through the door and is about to ascend the stairs when I ask him that we should talk. He says he is going to change then we will talk. Minutes later he's sitting on the couch opposite the one I'm sitting on. I take time and study him. Where's my sweet Rapula that I knew? He has changed. He is a monster. He might not be abusive but he is a monster.

Me:I'm ready to sign the papers.

Rapula:oh.

Me:oh? that's all you are going to say?

Rapula: what do you want me to say? Please do it quickly. There's somewhere I have to be.

Me:oh you're going to your little family? Yes. I know. I saw the birth certificates of your children.

Rapula: Keatlaretsi I'm sorry.

Me: what are you sorry for? You made a fool out of me. Told me to tie my tubes because we are not ready for children while you knew you were planning a family out there.

Rapula: I'm really sorry.

Me: your sorry is not going to help. I want you to tell me the truth.

Rapula: kea I don't want to hurt you.

Me: as hurtful as it may be, please tell me. I deserve to know.

Rapula: It started a year before we got married.

Me: oh. So you've been cheating on me for long. Go on.

Rapula: I still loved you and couldn't let you go. The idea of you being with another man haunted me. My love for you was, still is too much to let you be with someone.

Me: but still you're divorcing me. Rapula I left someone who truly loved and appreciated me for you and this is how you do me?

Rapula: your relationship was never going to survive. We both know that. You were a student and he was your lecturer!

Me: is that supposed to make me feel better?

Rapula: I don't want us to get divorced anymore. I'm getting a second wife.

Me: I really thought you loved me. But now I see how you've made a fool out of me.

I got up and went upstairs to our room. I started packing my suitcases. By the time I was done it was late. I pushed my suitcases downstairs and went for the last one. Tears couldn't stop falling. I got to where he was and took the pen to sign. He grabbed the papers.

Rapula: babe I love you. Please let's not do this.

Me: you've hurt me and it's enough. You wanted this divorce and now I'm granting you your wish. You can finally go and be with your real family with no Keatlaretsi to disturb you.

A knock disturbs us and he rushes to the door. He comes back with a woman with two kids. They have suitcases with them. I'm moving out and they are moving in. It must be nice being them. I worked very hard for everything in this house and this is how he does me.

Me: I see they are even moving in.

I turned to the woman who has broken my marriage. I looked at her carefully. She's beautiful. That I can give her. Then there's me a darkie. She's light in complexion. Maybe that's what attracted him to her. He was tired of seeing this dark face of mine.

Me: do you love him? Please answer me honestly.

Her: I'm sorry but I love him. It wasn't my intention to hurt you.

Me: you knew that he had someone in his life but that didn't stop you. Let me tell you something. I hate women like you. They are the reason other women live miserable lives. You've broken my marriage. I hope you are happy now. I'm leaving. I hope you take care of him. Take good care of him. Don't do to him what he did to me. Love him like he deserves to be loved. Be good to him. May God bless you all. And I wish you the best in your marriage.

I turned to Rapula. He had a surprised face mixed with hurt. It's like he doesn't believe what I just said.

I meant it. I wish them the best. I'm not going to hold grudges and hope for karma to visit them. No. I don't believe in that. If God wanted things to be this way then let it be.

Me:God knows I loved you. I still do,so much. But I will learn to live without you. J ust as you learnt to love someone,I will also learn to love someone. I wish you all the happiness in the world. Take care of her. Don't lie to her like you did to me. And don't worry about me. I will survive. I will rise up from this. I will rise to the top again. I always do. No matter what I face I will be fine. Be good. Have a wonderful life. I love you.

I gently took the papers from him and signed them. I had already had my lawyer,well our lawyer read them so I know what's in there.

Me:I will come back for the rest of my stuff or let someone to come and fetch them. Thank you for everything. I choose to believe that at some point you loved me. So thank you for loving me.

I kissed his cheek and pushed out my suitcases.

I got inside my car and drove off. I left the suburbs of Irene and drove to Mamelodi. I have a house there. Two bedrooms house. I bought that house before getting married and that's the only property that's in my name. The others I own them with Rapula. I wonder how are we gonna divide them because they are three including the house we were staying in. But I choose not to worry about that and focus on the road. When I reach Hatfield i stop at a garage that is just a few minutes after the springbok park. Springbok park. I used to come here a lot with my friends during our varsity years. It was our favorite place to come to. Especially on weekends. I fill my tank and drive a bit then stop. I start crying. It hurts. I may act tough but it hurts. It starts sinking in that I'm now a divorcee. I wipe my tears and go on with my journey.

After almost an hour I reach my destination. I have the keys so I open the gate and get in. I wave at the neighbors. They know me. I used to stay here

before I got married. I park my car by the pavement and lock it. I unlock the house, but it's not locked...and what I find surprises me. My cousin is sitting on the couch with a man. I can't even see the man's face properly because of the smoke in this house. They are smoking. Bonolo is smoking here while my aunt thinks she's here working. What is this now?

Me: Bonolo what's going on? Aren't you supposed to be at work?

Bonolo: cuz I don't work there anymore. I got fired. But don't worry I have a new job offer.

Me: that's better. But can you please tell your friend to leave?

Bonolo: what are you doing with those suitcases? Are you and Rapula moving in here?

Me: we will talk later. Now I want to settle in.

I went to my room and everything was as I had left it. I lay down on my back and just let tears fall.

[07/06, 18:56] : *STORY OF MY

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CHAPTER 2

"Keatlaretsi wake up and take control of your life. You've been sulking for the whole two months. It's not going to change anything. That ungrateful ex of yours is moving on with his life and you're here as if you're in mourning. Get up. You're a strong person but now I'm not seeing that person. Get up and dust yourself. We are not going to let your life go to ruins because of him."

That's my cousin/sister knocking some sense into me. She's right though. I have been sulking and not doing anything for the past two months. Now it's time I get up and go on with my life. I fix the bed and go to the bathroom to take a bath then get ready for the day. I go to the kitchen and my breakfast has already been made. I take it and go join Bonolo.

Me:hey sis. I thought you would've left for work by

now.

Nolo: hao I told you I resigned there. It shows that you're really stressed. I'm having an interview on Friday at another restaurant. Hold thumbs for me.

Me: you're the best chef ever. You're going to get this job. It's already yours .

Nolo:mmh so what are you doing today?

Me: well,me and you are going to hunt for a house. Then I'm going home to talk to my father. He doesn't know what's going on in my life yet.

Nolo: don't you have a house already?

Me:I let Rapula get the house we were staying in. The apartments that we own together are rented out and their leases won't end anytime soon.

Nolo: that's more money for you. And never say you iwn them together, that's your hard work.

Me: but I'm worried about how we're going to handle our company. Maybe I should sell him my 70% share.

Nolo:babe you put all your sweat for that company

to be a success. You actually made that man what he is while he was backstabbing you. So you think you're just going to give him everything and let the other woman eat your hard work? That's not happening. You're not the one who messed up. You're going to stay in that company and everything will go on as usual. You don't owe anyone sympathy.

Me: but it doesn't matter anyway. I don't work there. I have a job. I just pray I still have that job. I've been absent for two months.

Nolo: I applied for three months leave for you. You will get a doctor's letter and then you're good to go.

Me: what would I do without you? Thank you for being here for me.

After we finished eating we left. I drove us to Pretoria West. And my cousin being her crazy self asked what we were doing there instead of going to Pretoria East.

Me: I don't have money to waste. Those houses are expensive.

That was my excuse. I just don't want to face my demons there so I'd rather not go there. After viewing the houses I bought a 4 bedroom house that has a pool and a play area. What I like is that there's a basketball court and a tennis ball court so whenever I feel like it I will just play. Even though it won't be the same because Rapula won't be here. I won't lie. I still miss that man but I'm working on forgetting him.

Bonolo: now that we got your beautiful house, it's time to let go of the past. And we are starting by taking off that ring. Rapula will never be yours alone, erase everything that has to do with him. There is someone for you out there and how will men approach you with that ring on your finger?

I laugh in between my tears. My sister though. Sometimes she's crazy and sometimes she is wise.

Me: you're right. This ring has to go. I will give it back when I fetch the rest of my things. And I have a present for you.

Nolo: it's not my birthday yet but I'm getting a

present. God is good.

She said that dancing.

Me:I'm giving you the house in Mamelodi. I will change the title deeds once I'm done with fixing everything here. It's yours now.

Nolo: Lerato that's good but that's your house. You've done a lot for me already.

Me:and you've been a good sister and great support system. So take it. And you also have a room here. You can come whenever you want.

Nolo:oh my God sis. Thank you so much. I'll be here every weekend!

After that I drove off home. Now this is the hardest thing I'll ever have to do. Rapula's father and my father are friends. And us getting married made them so happy. They never forced us to be in a relationship or anything. We grew up together,did everything together and went everywhere with our fathers. That's how close we were. I don't know how our divorce is going to be on my father. As I'm close to getting home i start having thoughts run in my

head. What will my father say? Is he going to support me or be against me? That's what I kept asking myself.

I got out of my car and found my father watching soccer. They were together with Rapula's father. I don't know how this is going to go. I stood on the door watching them.

R.father:my daughter,why are you standing there? come in.

Me:dumelang mo gae.

Dad:dumela ngwanake. How are you?

Me:I'm fine and you dad?

Dad:I'm good. It's been long since you came home.

Me:I know dad.

Dad: you can go and rest. There's food in the fridge.

Me:I'm driving back in the evening. I just missed you so I thought I should visit.

R.father: your husband came this past weekend. He

said you couldn't come because you were busy.

Me: did he say anything else?

R.father: no, was there something he was supposed to say?

It's obvious he didn't tell them. I thought he would do it and explain everything to them.

Me: me and Rapula are getting a divorce. It's been three months since we separated.

R.father:eng?

Dad:and you didn't care to let us know?

Me: I thought he would since he's the one who initiated the divorce.

Dad: what did you do?

Me: dad why would you assume that I did something? Why don't you ask why the divorce is happening?

R.father:we can't talk about this now. I'm calling your husband so he can come here and we will hear all the sides of the stories.

Me: I have to go back today.

Dad: you will leave tomorrow. We have to fix this.

Me: there's nothing to fix. We are already divorced.

R.father: our ancestors don't know anything about you two divorcing. Our ancestors accepted you and approved your marriage. There's no other woman they will approve in Rapula's life. It's only you.

Me:I hope you will still say that after you hear what he will say. I don't want to stay in this marriage. Surely you will understand.

.....

"Aaaaahhh!"

I woke up screaming because I was scared. I went to sleep alone and woke up to a person hugging me from behind.

Voice:hey, keep quiet it's me.

Me: what are you doing in here?

Rapula: this is our room

Oh I forgot that I'm not home. I'm at his parents place. My father said I'm a married woman and I must sleep at my marital home.

Me: and who gave you permission to hold me?

Rapula: can't I hold my wife? Go back to sleep. It's still early.

Me: I cannot sleep with you here. Get out.

Rapula:oh I see I still have that effect on you. I'm not going anywhere. Let's go back to sleep.

I checked the time and it was 3am. I ignored him and tried to sleep. Eventually I fell asleep.

In the morning I went to make breakfast and the Meeting was about to begin. His mother came to the kitchen and greeted me.

R.mom: I hope that whatever you and Rapula are going through will be fixed. But just remember that no one can force you into anything you don't want. Not your father in law, not even your father. You must take a decision that is better for you. Think of

your life.

Me: thanks mama.

I took food to the dining room and served everyone. After they were done eating we all went to sit in the lounge.

Dad: we all know what we are here for. So we'd like you two to tell us what you're divorcing for.

Me:dad we are already divorced.

R.father: Rapula what is the reason you wanted to divorce your wife? Don't you love her anymore?

Rapula: I love her.

Dad:so why ask for a divorce?

Rapula:I want a second wife.

Me: you already stay with her in our house.

R.father: second wife? Isn't the one that you have enough for you?

Rapula: Keatlaretsi it was never my intention to hurt you. I never intended to fall for her. It just happened.

R.father:so now you expect her to stay with you after you've brought another woman in her house? What wrong did she do to push you to another woman? I think I've heard enough. You are such an idiot! You find a good woman and this is what you do?

Rapula: Keatlaretsi I still love you. I've teared up the divorce papers. You and Basetsana can live in separate houses. It doesn't matter. As long as I have you in my life.

Me: I will have the lawyer draft new papers. I've been made a fool for a long time and I deserve better. I won't act like a fool and stay with you. Do you know what he did? He told me that we were not ready for children. We had to build our lives first. Then we will have kids later when we are financially stable. We had my tubes tied and he supposedly did a vasectomy. But no. He was lying to me the entire time. He got his new wife pregnant and they have two kids. Where does that leave me? It shows that he didn't want to be tied to me. He didn't want to have kids with me. I was just a fool. I was alone in

this marriage. What I regret is what I've done for him. Everything he has I helped him achieve it but it doesn't matter. I will achieve my own things. I don't want to stay in a loveless marriage. Rapula you may think that you love me but you don't really love me and I've accepted that. You just like the idea of me. You don't want to see me with someone else. That's not how it works. You can't have your bread buttered on both sides.

R.father: you have kids that we know nothing about? And how heartless can you be to do such a thing to your wife?

Rapula: my wife I'm sorry. Can we please fix things? I promise you I'm never going to hurt you again.

Dad: I believe you can still fix things. You two are meant to be together. Your marriage was approved...

Me:and blessed by the ancestors,I hear that but I don't think you heard me. I'm done with this sham of a marriage. I don't care what the ancestors do. I'm leaving him.

R.father: do you still love him?

Me:i don't know.

Dad:then it's simple. You all love each other so it's still possible to fix things. No divorce will be happening here.

Me:dad is that you talking?

Dad: you're going to fix things with your husband. You're still young. You will still have kids.

R.father:we are going to go to the woman's home and pay for damages and that's all. You are not leaving your husband.

Rapula: but I...

R.father:what I've said is final.

Me: dad,mom would be disappointed in you. I hope you're happy with yourself knowing that your only child is not happy at all.

Dad:where are you going?

Me:I'm leaving. And I'm certainly getting a divorce.

I got up and went back home. I didn't wait for my

father to come back. I just drove back to Pretoria same time. I can't believe my father did that. I thought he had my best interest at heart. But I've been fooling myself. He doesn't care about me and my well-being. My father! This is not my father. I don't know him anymore. My father the one who raised me, took care of me and did everything for me. After my mother passed on it has always been the two of us. He never remarried. He said he doesn't want any woman to mistreat his child but here he is doing the same thing that he doesn't want people to do to me.

I am not going back to Rapula. I am done with him. I know my place is not ready yet but I just want to go there and just be alone. I just cry myself to sleep if possible. I don't know how I'm going to go on but I know I will. The look I saw on my father's face is enough for me to conclude that he might even disown me. If he does that then it means I'm alone in this world. I will just be a loner with no one to turn to when things go south. I have so much in my

mind that I didn't even hear car screeches. Ke maketsi ke le mo gare ga tsila. Robots were red. How did I not see the red robots. It was a mess and I started panicking. I don't know what happened. But everything went blank.

I heard sounds when I tried to get my head up. I realized that I was in hospital. What happened to me? I pressed that button thing. Soon a doctor came in.

Dr:oh thank God you are awake.

I couldn't say anything. After looking at the doctor I looked down.

Dr: Kea is everything alright? Are you feeling any pain?

Me:no I'm fine.

My mind is not here. I'm busy thinking about how he still knows me. It's been like 10 or 11 years.

Me:um how do you know my name? I don't think we've met before.

Dr: stop playing. I know you remember me. What were you thinking crossing while the robot is red?

Me: I don't know what happened. Please let's not talk about it. Talking about it makes me scared. What if I had died there?

I started crying. My heart beating so fast.

Dr: calm down please.

Me: did anyone get hurt or die?

Dr: fortunately no. Just one car that screeched yours. The robot had just turned green on the other side and I guess other drivers noticed quickly. I think you panicked then fainted.

Me: thank God. What was I going to do? Who brought me here?

Dr: a man who witnessed what happened. He left his number so you can contact him if you want to talk. Is there anyone I can call? Maybe you can give me your husband's number and I will call him?

Me: no!

I started crying all over again. Crying for what

Happened and everything that is going on in my life.

Me: you know maybe if I died in that accident it would have been better. I have no one and nothing to live for.

Dr: Kea it's a blessing that you're here. You are fine, everything else you will handle as you go on.

There's a reason why you made it alive. It was a miracle that nothing happened to you. Be thankful for that.

Me: thank you for everything. When am I leaving this place?

Dr: it's late now, tomorrow morning.

He went out and I just couldn't stop crying. I was involved in an accident and I can't even tell my father. He hasn't even tried calling since I left home. It shows that he doesn't care. And what can I do? Nothing.

After I got discharged I called Bonolo to come.

Dr:I'm sure you're happy you're going home.

Me: yeah I am.

Dr:where were you going? I thought you stay in Irene.

Me: not anymore. I was going to my new place. Anyway thanks for everything.

Dr:I was just doing my work.

Me: please don't tell anyone that you saw me.

Dr: I wouldn't do that. Do you have someone to take you to your place?

Me:my sister is coming. Thanks anyway.

I bid my goodbyes and went to the parking lot. I wonder what happened to my car. I will ask that man who brought me here. He might know something. Bonolo came with an Uber and asked the driver to take us back to Mams.

We were quiet all quiet the whole way. When we got home I went to my room and changed into my

tracksuits and went to watch TV.

Nolo: what happened?

Me:I drove without checking the robots

Nolo: that's not like you. You are always careful.

What's going on?

Me: your uncle doesn't want me to get a divorce.
That's what's going on.

Nolo:what!?

Me:yes,and I kept thinking so much about it that I
even forgot that it's not only me on the road.i don't
know how i got here from Rustenburg.

Nolo:at least you're fine.

Me: yeah. Now I'm just going to focus on me only,I
don't care what dad says.

[07/06, 18:56] : *STORY OF MY
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CHAPTER 3

Today is Friday and my cousin has a job interview. I woke up so early and made breakfast for us and got ready for the day. I went to check on her in her room and she was getting ready.

Me: good morning cuz breakfast is ready.

Nolo:I'm so nervous.

Me:cuz you've got this. This is your job. You will get it.

Nolo: thank you. You've always been my big supporter.

Me: now let's go and eat. Before that where's your man? I haven't been seeing him.

Nolo: that's not my man. He's just a friend partly the reason I got fired from my previous job. So I decided to cut ties with him.

Me: okay dont forget dinner at my place tonight.

Nolo:kana wa tsamaya gompieno. I will miss you.

Me: you know you have a room in my house right?

Let's go and eat.

We eat our breakfast and pray for nolo after that.

She drops me at Rapula's place and leaves for her interview. I gather my things and wait for the moving company to arrive. I go to the garage to check on my car. I have two cars so the one I got into an accident with it's at service. I'm surprised my car is not in the garage. I call Rapula.

Me:hey I'm at your place and I can't find my car.

Rapula: what are you doing there? I'm at work.

Me: I'm here to fetch my things. And I can't see my car.

Rapula:Basetsana is using it at the moment.

Me:wa re Base... Did you give your so called wife to be my car? Rapula I'm warning you right now. I bought that car with my hard earned cash! I want my car right now! If it's not here in 30 minutes there'll be trouble. I'm telling you.

Rapula: relax. It's not like she stole it. And I told you not to move out. Basetsana will move out.

Me: and you better sign those papers I sent you. I don't want to fight with you.

I cut his call. Isn't it enough that he made me a fool? Now he takes my things and gives them to his mistress! I feel someone Pat me on my shoulder. I look back and this guy just smiles at me.

Me:hi.

Guy:sawubona sisi.

Me:hey. how are you?

Guy:ngiya phila. I've been calling you for the past ten minutes.

Me: sorry. I didnt hear you.

Guy:kulungile. Are you Keatlaretsi Bogatsu?

He was saying something i didn't even understand.

Me:yes can we please use English? I don't understand Zulu.

Guy: for you I can even polish my English.

He just stares into my eyes for a good two minutes.

Guy:oh sorry. The name is Mpendulo. We are here to fetch your things.

Me:oh the moving company. You can get started.This is everything.

I show them the boxes and they start moving.Mpendulo walks into a box and almost falls. His colleagues laugh. I shake my head and go upstairs. I look for the other car keys I can find and I can't find them. I go back frustrated.

Mpendulo: what's wrong?Are you alright?

Me:ll m fine. Someone just took my car without my permission and I don't know how im going to leave this place.

My phone rings again and it's Rapula.

Rapula: Babe I said don't move out. Now why am I hearing about a moving truck being in our yard?

Me: I've already told you I'm moving out. Where did your woman take my car?

Rapula: she went to Northern cape she'll be back next month. Calm down you can still use your other car.

Me: oh my God! Rapula how can you allow her to take my car? How Will I get to work? She's busy gallivanting with my car a ikgantsha ka yone? Am I that stupid to work for another woman? You've hurt me it's enough. Bring back my car please.

Rapula: your car will be back. I'm coming home we will talk

I just cut his call and slid onto the couch.

Mpendulo: are you fine?

Me: just stop talking! Wa nthas etsa tthe motho wa modimo!

He huffed and went on with his work.

I just sat down there just sat there thinking about

Basetsana going up and down with my car. What if something happens to my car? As if it's not enough that he's flaunting his relationship with her in front of me he now takes my things and give them to her. Mpendulo:we are done packing your things. Can you give us your address?

Me:oh okay

Mpendulo:I can give you a lift...I heard you on the phone.

Me: thanks.

He led me to the passenger seat of the truck and opened the door for me. Ke maketsi motho a nkoka fela a ntsenya mo gare. Tsela yotlhe go ntsi go didimetsino one saying anything. We arrived in

Pretoria West and they unloaded everything. I thanked them and they left. I packed my things and after I was done I called an Uber and went to

Menlyn mall. I shopped for the house things and after I was done I bought groceries then went back home.

It was a month later and I still haven't gotten my car back. On the other hand my other car that I took for service hasn't been returned. I woke up did my hygiene process then got ready for work. My father's call came through before I could even request an Uber.

Me:dumela papa

Dad:my child. Why haven't you called me?

Me:papa you know why.

Dad:I hear you. How are you?

Me:im fine and you?

Dad:I'm fine. I wanted to find out how you are. I'm happy that you are fine.

Me: thanks Dad.

Dad: have a good day. I love you.

Me:I love you too Dad.

I smile after talking to my father. At least we are talking now. I didnt feel good not talking to my father. He's the only person I have in this world. So

I'm happy that at least we are talking it's something. I hear a knock as I take by work things about to leave. I will request an Uber standing outside or else I'll be late. I open the door only to find someone I wasn't expecting. What's he doing here?

Me:hi what brings you here?

Mpendulo: I heard you say you're going back to work today and I know you don't have transport so I'm here to take you to work.

Me: I thought I told you to leave me alone.

Mpendulo: and I thought I already told you it won't be possible?

Me: leave and never come back. If I were to call your boss and tell him you are harrasing me what would he say?

Mpendulo:I'm not harrasing you. Or you can't hold yourself when I'm next to you?

Me: don't flatter yourself.

Mpendulo: well I'm not going anywhere. Let's goor you will be late. I'm helping you save money.

I kept quiet because I know that talking to him doesn't help. We walked to his car and I couldn't believe it. The BMW x6 1 always saw parked around here is his.

Me: have you been spying on me? Are you stalking me?

Mpendulo:why?

Me: I've seen this car around here. What's it going to take for you to leave me alone? I even regret calling that moving company that day! I have many things stressing me and you are adding to that.

Mpendulo: until your surname is Khoza even then I will never leave you.

Yoh! Thank God I'm getting my car today. Or else I would be annoyed every day. Any way good luck to him Changing my surname to his. It's not gonna happen.

Me: you're just fooling yourself

Mpendulo: I don't give up. I will remind you of this on our wedding day.

Me: just drive!

He drove off. All the way he kept making small talks and I ignored him. Even at work he took my workcase and went inside the building with me until we reached my office. People were looking at us and he was smiling. I started doing my work. I actually regret taking that leave. I found a pile of work waiting for me. I didn't even go to lunch because I wanted to finish the work.

"Knock knock. I brought food for you." He says with his stupid smile. What am I going to do with this guy?

Me: I see you don't take no for an answer.

Mpendulo: you know me. How's your day so far?

Me: good.

He takes out the takeaways and I see it's pap and beef stew. It looks delicious.

Mpendulo: I know you are hungry. It won't hurt you to eat.

Me: okay

Sponsored

he took my workcase and went inside the building with me until we reached my office. People were looking at us and he was smiling. I started doing my work. I actually regret taking that leave. I found a pile of work waiting for me. I didn't even go to lunch because I wanted to finish the work.

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Mpendulo: I know you are hungry. It won't hurt you to eat.

Me: okay I must admit I am hungry. Thanks for bringing the food. But let it be the last time.

Mpendulo: you could have just left that last

statement.

A knock disturbs us.

Me: come in.

The Devil must be trying me. What does Rapula want here?

Me:nka go thusa?

Rapula:I brought you lunch.

Me: I already have food.

Mpendulo:who is this?

Me: no one.

Mpendulo:yoh I will leave you two to talk. I'm going back home tonighttake care. I will call you.

Rapula:who is this?

Mpendulo:her man

My eyes popped out and I looked at him and he was smiling. He came to where I was standing and hugged me.

Mpendulo: call if you need anything.

Me: leave and never come back.

I whispered that to him. To make this situation we're faced with worse he cupped my face and kissed me. God! What is this guy doing to me?

Mpendulo: I love you. A car will be waiting for you outside. You will use it until your car is back. Bye. He kissed my cheek and left whistling. My my! What just happened? Am I dreaming?

Rapula: is this the reason you wanted to move out? so you can see your boyfriend easily?

Me: Rapula what I do is non of your business.

Rapula: I won't allow my wife to go around kissing other man. In my presence. Do you know how disrespectful that is?

Me: please leave. I still have a lot of work to do here.

Rapula: I can't believe I came here thinking of fixing things between us.

Me: there's nothing to fix here. Admit it. You never loved me. You only married me to make money out of me and you are hoping to still make more. Sign

those papers. I'm not coming back. Tell your woman to have my car ready by this afternoon. Someone will come and fetch it.

Rapula: Keatlaretsi I love you.

Me: no you don't. Okay if you did then why did you tell me to have my tubes tied and went and had children with her? It's because you didn't want to be linked to me forever. Why did you cheat on me if you loved me? If you loved me we wouldn't be here. It's clear that I was just a fool to think you love me. I never thought I would say this but I regret the day I said I do. It was the worst mistake of my life. A mistake I will never repeat. Do me a favor and sign those papers. Now if you can please leave have a lot of work waiting for me.

Rapula: we can still fix things. I can leave her if that's what you want.

Me: it's too late for that. Good bye.

Rapula: this is not good bye. Married people go through bad times and this is it for us and we will fix things.

He left the food he came with and got out of my office. I opened the lunch bag and it was a home cooked meal. I will have it in the evening. He just saved me from cooking. I ate the food that

mpendulo came with. Speaking of him how am I going to get rid of him? He even left his car for me?

Does he trust me that much? What if I damage it?

Sitting in your house after work having a drink with no worry in the world is therapeutic. I'm just sitting here waiting for Nolo to finish taking a shower. She came here after work with an excuse of wanting to check on me. But I think she's bored because she's off for two days. She doesn't have friends. I'm her only friend. And im happy to have a best friend like her. All my friends from varsity left me after I got married to Rapula. They were team 'Tim.' Tim is the lecturer that I was dating back in varsity. That man loved me so much and I was stupid and left him for Rapula. Now the same Rapula showed me flames. I really wish Tim was still alive. Maybe just maybe. We would get back together and be happy. I dont think I will ever love anyone like I loved him. Even

when I got married to Rapula I still carried his love in my heart. I remember we started dating when I was 17 and doing first year in UP. He was 24 and a junior lecturer. We dated for 3 years until I got married. So from there on I saw no need to have more friends. Those can be fake. I just have acquaintances. But I

will never completely let them into my life. Like tell them about what's going on in my life let them in on my private life. That I will never do.

"Cuz why so serious? I swear someone can break in and take you and you would still not hear anything."

Me: you are crazy you know that?

Nolo: for real though what's bothering you?

Me: Rapula was at my work today.

Nolo: and that's bothering you? I thought you've deleted him from your life and he's a no factor.

Me: yes but what I'm worried about is that he found Mpendulo there.

Nolo: I thought you said you told this Mpendulo guy to leave you alone and you haven't spoken for a

long time.

Me:yes but today he just showed up here and offered to take me to work. He introduced himself as my man and even kissed me in Rapula's presence.

Nolo: I like him!

Me: this is a serious matter. What if Rapula does something to him?

Nolo:oh my God. You like him. You really like this guy. That's why you are worried!

Me: it's too soon. I don't see him like that. Rapula was so angry. What if he tells my father?

Nolo:he won't. He's trying to get you back so he'll try to act righteous to you. So don't worry.

Me: Mpendulo even left his car with me so that I can use it to get around because he's going home. Who does that?

Nolo: that machine outside is his? Cuz this guy loves you. Hold on tight onto him. I'd say go for him.

Me: I don't want no relationship stress in my life.

I've had my fair share. Men are complicated. You think you're the only one in their life only to find out it's a

different story.

Nolo: not all man are like your ex. Give love a chance. Anyway we don't want you embarrassing the Bogatsu family. So chef Bogatsu is here to teach you how to make traditional food. I know you can't cook some food so I'm here to help. We don't want you feeling embarrassed when Mpendulo introduces you to his family and they ask you to cook for them.

Me:wa tsenwa waitsi? When he comes back I'm giving him his car and cut ties with him.

Nolo: but I'm still going to teach you how to cook. But know this One day you're going to be head over heels in love with him. I'm telling you. This

Mpendulo guy is slowly making his way into your heart you just haven't noticed. Or you're in denial. Mxm. She starts singing going to the kitchen. What

am I going with this crazy cousin of mine?

[07/06, 18:57] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 4

My day with Bonolo was very good. At least she kept me company. I got ready to go to work. I took my stuff and i sighed looking at the X6. I got in and drove off to work.

Me:good morning. Do i have any messages?

Pa:no mam. You don't have any meetings also. Your husband is waiting for you in your office. My phone rang on cue.

Me:Keatlaretsi Bogatsu speaking.

Voice:MaKhoza. Ulale kanjani sthandwa sami?

Me:oh it's you.

Mpe:yes. It's me. How did you sleep?

Me:good. Thank you for the car. It'sreally helping.

Mpe:that's good. You can take it then.

Me:bathong! Arr you for real? I can't take your car.

Mpe:well i don't want it.

Me: i see you're full of jokes.

I went into the office and Rapula was sitting on the chair.

Mpe:I'm serious. I've sent someone to bring you breakfast.

Me:stop bothering people. I can buy my own breakfast.

Rapula:hello Keatlaretsi. Can we talk?

Mpendulo:who's that?

Me:no one.

Mpe:can we have lunch together?

Me:i thought you went home.

Mpe: I will leave tonight. I will send a driver to fetch you.

Me:you borrowed me your car mos

Mpe:i gave it to you. Anyway give the driver the keys and he'll drive the car to your place. Then someone will come and fetch you.

Me:Mpendulo I'mreally busy. I can't have lunch with you.

Mpe:have a good day.

He dropped the call. This guy doesn't give up.

Rapula: you now talk to men in front of me? I thought we would fix things!

Me:i have work to do here.

Rapula:do you love him?

Me:...

I don't know what's going on with me. I feel something but i don't know what it is. This guy wa nloya!

Rapula:wow. I'm here making myself a fool kanti someone has already taken you.

Me:Rapula i ...

He left angry. I felt bad actually. He looked so hurt.

Pa:maam someone brought you breakfast. They said it's from Mr Khoza.

Me:thank you.

I took it and she left. I thought he would just order but it looks like he made it himself. I smiled as i took a first bite on the toasted bread.

Voice:mmh. That smile.

Me:hey sis. How are you?

Nolo:ke shap. Looks like i came on the right time. You cooked.

Me:Mpendulo sent someone with it. Oh there's a note. "I wanted to order for you but decided against it. I woke up early than usual so i can cook for my beautiful lady. Enjoy."

Nolo:aah. So romantic!

She ran to my side to hug me.

Nolo:i told you this man loves you. He makes sure

you arrive to work safely, cooks for you and cares about you. And i know you love him.

Me:i don't know. This is all too much. Rapula was here. He was so hurt when he heard me talking on the phone with him.

Nolo:and who's fault is it? He brought this to himself. I hate to say this but Rapula never loved you.

Me:i just felt sorry for him. Maybe if i can go and talk to him...

Nolo:o tlabá shap. Let him be.

Me:Mpendulo wants us to go for lunch.

Nolo:oh my. You should go and enjoy yourself. Give me your phone.

I gave her and she started typing. Then gave it.

Nolo:I'll see you in an hour.

She took two toasted bread slices and rushed out.

Mxm. I ate then after started working. I wanted to finish my work before leaving. Bonolo did come back after an hour. She came with a floral summer

dress and sandals. I was confused but she said i must just trust her. At lunch time a driver came to fetch me and drove to the lunch destination. I read and it said the blyde crystal lagoon.i once came here with Bonolo. Tim had paid for everything and i asked Bonolo to come with me. But What am I doing here?

Driver:we've arrived. Go straight to the restaurant. He's waiting for you there.

Now i see why Bonolo bought this dress. I walked to the restaurant and i saw him. He smiled and met me halfway.

Mpe:thank you for coming. I thought you changed your mind.

Me:this place is beautiful.

Mpe:and peaceful. You are so beautiful.

Me:thank you. You don't look bad yourself.

He kissed me and opened a chair for me. We started eating.

Me:you know...i don't usually do this. Dates and all that. But because it's you I'd do it over and over again.

Me:I'm impressed.

After eating we went to sit by the beach on the chairs. He even asked someone to take us pictures. He said he'll look at them when he misses me. I can say he has jokes. I've been laughing most of the time since i got here.

Me:i enjoyed myself. Thank you.

We were now leaving the beach. It was bo ma past 5. He stretched his hand out for me. I put mine on his. I thought we were going home but no. He led me to those apartments. We went into the lift and he couldn't stop looking at me. All i could do was smile and look down. We finally reached the room.

He opened and proceeded to the bedroom. Wow.it's so beautiful.

Me:it's so beautiful.

I wanted to say something but he put his finger on my lips. My heart started beating fast.

Mpe:i booked this room for us. Relax we won't do anything. I just wanted to be alone with you. Talk and get to know each other.

He pressed something and music started playing.

Mpe:again. I don't do this but this is a very special day. Come.

I gave him my hand and we lie on the bed. We look at each other and smile. He kisses me. I kiss back. I smile.

Mpe:you have a beautiful smile.

Me:thank you. So tell me about yourself.

Mpe:so what would you like to know?

Me:anything. I'm just interested in knowing about you. Who is Mpendulo?

Mpe:I'm just a simple person. If you are around me a lot then you will know who i am.

Me:oh i see. That's your way of saying you want me around you.

Mpe:i need you around me.

That's very deep.

Mpe:and I'm going to make that wish come true. I will not stop trying.

I don't know what it is but something pushes me to this man. I feel comfortable with him. Even though

it hasn't been long since we met.

The following morning i woke up when he was shaking me.

Mpe:go and take a shower.

Mpe:good morning.

Mpe:good morning my love. How did you sleep?

Me:good and you?

Mpe:very good.

He smiled revealing his teeth. I smiled back and he opened his eyes wide and attacked me with a hug.

Mpe:she smiled!

Me:you're weird man. Let me go and bath.

Mpe:do you want me to order wine for you?

Me:i don't drink.

Mpe:wow. Good.

What's the meaning of that? Does it mean it would be a problem if i drink alcohol? Anyway I got up and went to the bathroom. It was a bubble bath. There was even petals in the bubble bath. He's romantic! I enjoy my time with him. After i finished bathing i put on a gown that he put on the bed.

Me:you knew we were going to spend the night here
hmm?

Mpe:yes. Even though I knew there was a possibility that you might say no. I had to take my chance.

Me:so what time are we leaving?

Mpe:can we please spend our day here? I'm leaving tonight and I'd like to spend as much time with you.

Me:you are leaving?

Mpe:yes. Don't be sad. I'll call you every day until i come back.

I don't even know why I'm sad that he's leaving. I sat on top of him and looked into his eyes. Beautiful blue eyes.

Mpe:what?

Me:you have beautiful eyes.

Mpe:you love them?

Me:yeah.

Mpe:i love you.

I looked at him studying him. He smiled revealing his perfect teeth.

Mpe:we will spend our time in here. I want to hold you in my arms all day long.

Me:i hope that's just it.

Mpe:i can't promise. What would you like to have?

Me:chocolate cake.

Mpe:you love cake neh? The other i came to your office i saw a container of cake.

Me:yes. It's my favourite. Especially when I'm with dad. We eat it together in the same plate. Ice cream is his favourite though.

Mpe:you love your dad

Me:yeah. He's the best. He's my best friend.

Mpe:that's nice. Come and lie on top of me.

Me:won't i tire you? I'm a big girl.

Mpe:argg you're my big girl then. Come here.

He picks me up and i sleep on top of him. We are looking at each other. I looked to the other side. He brushes my back with his hand.

Mpe:thank you for being here.

NARRATED

The flight to Durban finally landed. He took his luggage and went to where his brother was waiting for him.

Mpe:Mkhathini.

Muzi:bafo. We were expecting you yesterday but you never showed up.

Mpe:eish something came up. Drive.

Muzi:something?

Mpe:yes.

Muzi:what's going on?

Mpe:i finally talked to her.

Muzi:who?

Mpe: MaKhoza.

Muzi:are you obsessed with this woman? She's too young for you.

Mpe:age doesn't matter when it comes to love. I love her so much. But she hasn't said anything about us being together. When i go back i will make it official. But she's mine now.

Muzi:eh this seems serious. Your age...

Mpe:that doesn't matter. We love each other. That's what matters.

Muzi:then you should go for it. Who knows? This might be your wife.

Mpe:she is. I'm going to marry her. But problem is she's holding back. Doesn't want to let me in. But i will not give up. I can already see us being a family.

This one im not giving up on her. She's the one.
Talking about her i have to call her. I know she will
not call unless i do.

He dialed and she picked up.

Kea:Mpendulo I'm busy.

Mpe:not even my love?

Kea:how are you?

Mpe:I'm good. I've landed.

Kea:that's good.

Mpe:i will call you before you sleep. I love you.

Kea:okay. I'll be waiting for your call.

He cut the call and put the phone down.

Muzi:huh...This is surprising. You in love? This
woman must be good hey.

Mpe:she's perfect.

Muzi:but you have to tell her everything about you.
Even your age!

Mpe:i will tell her. We've just started so i don't want to overwhelm her.

Muzi:okay then. But you better pray that it does n't come out before you tell her.

Mpe:that won't happen.

.....

Today I'm going out with Bonolo. She said it's a girls night out. We haven't done that in a long time. Actually since I got married we haven't done that. I just finished taking a shower. I get dressed in my dress. I love dresses a lot. I let my hair down. I don't put on weaves or things like that. I have natural long hair. Some mistaken it to be a weave. I took after my mother. She had long hair. Long curly hair just like mine. I take my handbag and as i thought, Bonolo is already here. She has a key to this house. I thought why not give her a key since she's always here when she's off?

Nolo:finally. You take so long to get ready. I end up getting hungry.

Me:no. You're lying. Let's go. I can't wait to see what this night has for us.

My phone starts ringing and i see it's Mpendulo. I'm angry at him and i don't know why i should be angry. It's not like me and him are dating. I give the car keys to Bonolo.

Nolo:finally i drive this beast of a car.

I lock the house and we go to the car. Mpendulo calls again and i answer.

Me:hello.

Mpe:hey. How are you?

Me:I'm good and you?

Mpe:i can hear that you're not good. Is it because i took so long to call you?

Me:wa re long? It's been a month!

Mpe:calm down. I just had a lot to do. But now I'm all yours.

Me:not even a text? But it's fine. I understand

Mpe:I know that's not true. I'm coming back in a few days. So stop sulking.

Me:i wasn't sulking. Why would i?

Mpe:are you driving?where are you going at this time?

Me:my sister is driving. We are going out.

Mpe:send me your location. It's not safe out there.

Me:why must i send you my location?

Mpe:so i can know where you are in case something happens.

Me:aow nothing will happen. Bye.

I cut the call. Bonolo looked at me.

Me: focus on driving please. Or you might cause us an accident.

Bonolo: why are you angry? It's not like you guys are dating.

Me: mxm you won't understand.

Bonolo: make me understand.

My phone rings again. It's him.

Me: what do you want?

Mpe: is that how you talk to me now? Did you call me?

Me: no.

Mpe: then why did you drop the call?

Me: ...

Mpe: just because i didn't call you in a long time

you're angry? Why don't you call me if you want to talk to me?

Me:but you said you'd call.

Mpe:enjoy yourself. And be safe. Don't forget to send me the location. I love you.

This time I didn't cut it. He did that himself. I sent the location then put my phone in my handbag.

Bonolo:i never knew love can make a person so angry.

Me:I'm not angry.

Bonolo:but you love him hey. It's visible in your eyes. Just give him a chance. And don't tell me that men are all the same.

Me:i wasn't going to say that. I will think about it.

Bonolo:I'm happy for you.

Me:wa semolla. Happy for what?

My phone beeped and i checked. R10 000 just deposited into my account. Soon a text follows. "Enjoy yourself. Use that money."

Bonolo:keng okare o bone spoko?

Me:he sent me R10 000. Who does that?

Bonolo:a man in love.

Me:it's too much. What if me and him don't date? I won't use this money.

Bonolo:yes this is not something that someone can just do. But don't call and shout at the poor guy.

"Thanks. But you didn't have to send so much money. " After that i thought of switching my d but decided against it.

[07/06, 18:57] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 5

It has been a few days. Today mpendulo is coming back. I must admit that i missed him. I don't know what it is that im feeling right now. I should be getting over my failed marriage but here i am fantasizing about some men that I've known for about three months or so. "You're in love with the man but you're in denial." That's what Bonolo always tells me. Im going through a divorce for heavens sake. I should focus on that. A knock on the door brings me back to reality. My heart starts beating fast as I go to the door. I breathe out loud then open the door. No one is saying anything. We are just looking at each other. Smiling.

Me:erh come in. Yeah come in.

He chuckles and makes his way to the lounge. I follow behind him. He passes and goes straight to the fridge and I sit down.

Mpe:don't you have a beer?

Me:i told you that i don't drink.

Mpe:so what can one drink here?

Me:there's juice and cream soda

Mpe:hay i rather drink water. Next time buy beer for me.

Is he planning on coming back here again? He comes and sits next to me and in a few minutes he makes me sit on his lap.

Mpe:so how have you been?

Me:good.

Mpe:I thought you would say you missed me.

I giggle. I did miss him but i wont tell him. He looks straight into my eyes. This time I don't break the eye contact.

Mpe:can i kiss you?

Since when does he ask for permission? I nod. He holds my waist tight and soon his lips meet with mine. We go on kissing for a while and then his Hands go into my dress and I quickly get off him. I clear my throat

Mpe:what's wrong?

Me:um nothing.

He smiles shaking his head.

Mpe:go and pack a bag for tomorrow.

Me:tomorrow?

Mpe:yes. We're going to my place. Well it's our place now. Who do you stay with here?

Me:alone. Why?

Mpe:it's not safe for you here. I'd understand if you were staying with someone.

Me:it's safe. Sometimes my sister visits.

Mpe:if i had my way you'd move in with me.

He went back to the kitchen after saying that. As if he didn't just drop that bomb on me. My heart is beating fast. I see him sit down on the couch. I didn't hear him come back. I looked at him then went to pack an overnight bag. I locked the house and followed him to his car. He opened for me and i got in. Then he drove off. I was amazed when we

entered Silverlake golf estate. I looked at him. He took my hand and kissed it.

Mpe:i love you.

After that he kept quiet. We got to his place and went in.

Mpe:welcome home. When we get married we will get a bigger house. Kids will be all over and they need space.

He has a tendency of saying something as if he's joking.

Mpe: I've ordered pizza. We can eat it tonight. Tomorrow you will cook. Go and put your bag in our room. The one on the left side. I really don't know what's going on here.

Mpe:I'll be back just now.

He kissed my forehead and took his car keys and left. I decided to call Bonolo.

Nolo:so how's everything there? What is s bari doing there?

Me:don't start. I'm confused. I don't know what to do. He's already calling his house our home! Isn't it too early for that?

Nolo:I've seen how you talk about this man. You love him. Do what will make you happy. You're not doing anything wrong.

Me:okay bye.

I took my bag and went upstairs. I put my bag in his closet and went to take a shower. Hehe look at me acting like im in my house. After that i lotioned and wore ny undergarments then put on a gown on top. I felt hands on my breasts. I almost jumped but stopped when i realised its him. I turned and looked at him. He untied my gown and then it fell down.

Mpe:you're so beautiful.

I smiled. He holds my waist tight and soon his lips meet with mine. We go on kissing for a while and then his Hands go on my bare back and I quickly get off him. I clear my throat as what was about to

happen registers in my mind.

Mpe: what is it?

Me:its nothing.

He laughs and hold my waist again. Now i regret coming here. He lowers his head to me and again we kiss. He's so tall that i look so small compared to him. His hands are all over carresing my body.

He picks me up and goes to the bed. I don't know how he was able to pick me up. I have a bit of weight. Size 38. He takes off his clothes and sinks down to my level on the bed.

He makes love to me and to be honest I've never felt like this. I don't want to compare him with rapula but i havenever felt this good in a long time. The way he touches my body. How careful he is with it. Soon we get our happy ending and he collapse kn me making me feel his heavy weight. He moves my hair to the back and just stares at me with his charming smile.

Mpe:I love you Keatlaretsi.

I smile. He kisses my forehead.

Mpe:and im going to marry you.

Me:what just happened?

Mpe:we made love. Did you feel the chemistry between us? Don't deny it. I know you did. Even that time we spent the day together.You felt it. Tou are just scared. Why are you holding back? Me and you are made for each other. And you better tell that boy who was in your office that day to play far away.

If only he knew that that "boy" is my husband.

Mpe:stop over thinking. Now,can you please give me a chance to love you? To make you happy?

Me:im scared.

Mpe:why?

Me:I've been hurt and i wouldn't want to go through that again.

Mpe:im not going to make promises. I will just be honest with you. I love you and i will not intentionally do something to hurt you. I will treat you like the queen that you are. J ust give me a

chance. J ust say yes.

Me:yes. But....

Mpe:no buts. Now that we are in a relationship,i expect respect from you and loyalty. And honesty is important.

Me:there's something I'd like to tell you.

Mpe:we'll talk later. Now i want to use this little time I have with you. Im going back home soo.

Me:but you just came back.

Mpe:yes i know. I just have to fix something then I will come back. I wasn't even supposed to be here but i couldn't spend another day without seeing you. If it was up to me I'd be with you every second of the day.

Is he obsessed with me or something? But it's sweet though that he came all the way from kzn just to see me.

Mpe:you're so beautiful.

Me:thank you.

Well,true to his word we spent the whole day making love and cuddling. I loved spending time with him.

The following day i woke up and he was still sleeping. I took a shower and he was up when I came back to the room.

Mpe:MaBogatsu. Ulale kanjani?

Me:ke robetsi sentle. Please use English. I don't understand some of the things you say.

Mpe:don't worry. Soon you will be mamkhoza and speaking isizulu like you were born zulu.

There he goes again. He just speaks what comes to his mind.

Me:let me go make breakfast.

Mpe:i love you. And thanks for agreeing to spend time with me.

I smiled and left before he said something randomly.

I took things that i will use out and started making breakfast. Luckily he had bread. I heard people talking. My heart started beating fast. I switched off the stove and decided to go back to the bedroom.

Voice:awu makoti. Uyaphi manjhe?

I proceeded to the bedroom.

Me:Mpendulo there are people here.

Mle:oh they are already here. It's my brothers. They are here to fetch something. Let's go.

The one with a bald heafd laughed. I found that his name is Bongani and the other one is Siyabonga.

Bonga:she's shy. We are pleased to meet you
MaBogatsu.

Siya:now we can finally rest. Our brother won't be stressing about people snatching you.

Mpe: you can serve breakfast now.

I fetch the food and just put it on the dining table then serve them. They are talking and laughing.

Sometimes they include me in their conversation. I think it's because these men forced me to sit with

them.

...

The following day i woke up to a note and delicious breakfast. He had left. He went back home to take care of something. After eating i drove off to BM construction. He left his car keys for me. As usual everyone was busy and doing their work. I went straight to Rapula's office and lucky for me he was in.

Me:good morning.

Rapula:good morning. Good to see you. How have you been?

Me:good. Very good.

Rapula:it's good to see you happy.

What?did he think i would spend my time crying over him?

Me:I wanted to ask if you've signed the papers and to see how things are going here.

Rapula:everything is good. When are you coming home?

Me:that's not why im here. Rapula you made me a fool all these years. The least you could have done is tell me the truth. Did you really love me or just the idea of me?

Rapula:babe you know i love you

Me:that's not true. For all i know it could be that she's been there even before we started dating. Were you using me?

He looks down and I suddenly feel a pain on my chest. He made me his fool.

"Babe i need your signature on something here....."

I turn around and i can't believe this. His woman is here. In my company. Does she work here?

Me:what is she doing here?

Basetsana:sorry I didn't know you were busy here.

She says leaving the office

Me:and where do you think you are going?

Rapula:you can go i will sign the docs later

Me:she is not going anywhere. I want you to tell me what is she doing in my company. I don't remember hiring her.

Rapula:our company.

Me:i started this company. All my hard work kanti im working for another woman. I bet you even built her a house and took her to school with my money. Ausi ke kopa o tswe. Go and pack whatever belongs to you here and get out of my building.

Basetsana:you can't do that. My husband has shares here.

Me:your husband?

Basetsana:yes my husband. I see you don't know. Me and him are married,have been married even before you two thought of getting married. Argg you are not even married. This was all a sham. Even at home affairs your marriage is not recognized.

Rapula:Basetsana!

Basetsana:im tired of pretending.

Me:i can't believe you did this to me. The person i grew up with and called my best friend. But rest assured. You are not getting away with this. And as of now you are dead to me. I don't ever want anything to do with you.And wena better not set your foot here again. You will all hear from my lawyer.

I left and decided to drive back to my place. On my phone rang and i connected to the Bluetooth and answered. I just found tears falling.

Mpe:s thandwa saam where are you ?i thought you said you were not going to work today.

Me:how did you know that i went to work?

Mpe:i had bought something for you and the delivery guy said there was no one. What's wrong? You sound like you were crying.

Me:its nothing

Mpe:im just about to leave but i can't leave you like this.

Me:go im sure you have something important to do.

Mpe:you are more important to me.

Me:it fine really. Go,i will be fine.

After finally convincing him he ended the call. I got home and just lay on the couch with the tv watching me while im supposed to be watching it. I really thought i was going to just let everything go but im really hurt. Im going to fight with everything i have. This guy literally used me. He is actually a gold digger. He was doing this for his family,not because he loves me. He just made me to hate him.

..

I don't know how i fell asleep but i wake up to a knock on the door. I go and open. Mpendulo attacks me with a hug.

Mpe:i thought something happened to you.

Me:aren't you supposed to be on your way home?

Mpe:im here to fetch you. Go and get dressed in tracksuits and pack a bag for a week. You are taking a sick leave and coming kkk me.

Me:so we won't talk about it?

Mpe:we will talk about it at home. Im worried about you. Look at your eyes. They are so red. You've been crying.

Talking about this is going to make me cry again so i look to the other side.

Mpe:whatever it is,you are going to be fine.

Those words. Somehow they make me believe that i really am going to be fine. Maybe its because they are coming from him.

Mpe:don't cry. It hurts me to see you crying. Go and pack i will wait for you here.

I went upstairs and packed a few dresses and tracksuits in case it gets more cold. I saw that even the weather is changing. I push my suitcase downstairs and find him standing where I left him.

Mpe:I've closed all the windows. We can go now.

He says taking my suitcase. Mpe:women!i say pack for a week but you pack for a month.

Me:that's not true!

We laugh going to his car. He opens the door for me and before I get in he pins me against the car.

Mpe:i know that you are going through something. You don't have to tell me if you are not ready. But just know im here for you. I will help you go through whatever it is.

Me:thank you.

He kisses my cheek and i get in as he goes to put my suitcase at the back . He goes to his side and drives off. Music starts playing

. I notice that it's Oliver Mutukudzi. My uncle loves his songs.

Me:you listen to this type of songs?

Mpe:yes. They are my favourite. After maskandi of course.

Me:are you Zimbabwean?

Mpe:are you American?

Me:no.

I laugh and he joins.

Mpe:you see? J ust because eyou listen to abo Beyonce it doesn't mean you are American. Same as me. Anyway what's wrong with being a Zimbabwean anyway?

Me:nothing. Don't take it wrong though. Im not judging.

Mpe:okay sthandwa sam.

Me:my mom was from Zimbabwe. So that's how I know these songs. My uncle always plays them. I even got tired of them every time he would fetch me. He would play them from North West to Bulawayo.

We laugh. Im serious. My uncle is like that.

Mpe:i can picture you dancing to these songs.

Me:I don't know how to dance.

Mpe:i have a feeling you are lying to me. But anyway, the reason I listen to this type oof songs is because I once stayed in Zimbabwe. My dad worked there sometime for five years and we had to go with him.

Me:wow. My mother's family stays in Bulawayo. But

some of my uncles stay in Harare.

Mpe:you used past tense speaking about your mother. What happened to her?

Me:she passed away. When i was 6.

Mpe:oh im sorry.

Me:im fine now. It's been a long time.

We reach the airport and just sit in his car talking. He missed the flight that he was supposed to take but there was another one that leaves at 1 so we are waiting for it. His phone rings and he puts it on loudspeaker.

Mpe:bafo

Voice:ukuphi? Dad is fuming here. We're all waiting for you!

Mpe:im waiting for a flight. I will be there maybe 2 or so.

Voice:okay. Uphi u makoti? Is she fine now?

He looks at me and smiles. Did he tell his brothers about me?

Mpe:she will be fine.

He laughs.

Voice:u hlekani ke manje?You left here in a hurry just because you had a feeling that she's not fine. We were dealing with important things but you left regardless of that. I salute this woman for taming that cold heart of yours.

Mpe:bafo,she is more important than anything. I had to go.

Voice:now i believe you are in love. I've never heard you talking like this. Say hi to her.

Mpe:she's here. You can talk to her.

I shake my head no but all he does is laugh.

Voice:you let me go on talking about her kanti ukhona lapho. Unjani Makoti?

I look at this one next to me and sigh. How could he put me on the spotlight like that?

Mpe:talk to him s thandwa sam. A ka lumi lo muntu. Bafo unga khulumi isizulu. She wont understand you.

Voice:.....

He said something in deep zulu that i didn't even understand even a single word and they laughed .
Batho ba ka go seba o ntsi le bone.

Voice:makoti,how are you?

Mpendulo looked at me and i could see he was stifling a laugh.

Me:im fine and you?

Voice:im good. Whatever you are feeding to my brother keep doing it. You are making that hard headed brother of mine happy. We can't wait to meet you. Anyway travel safe okay?

Me:thank you.

Voice:bafo sizo khuluma.

Mpe:kulungile bafo.

The call went off and he started laughing.

Me:why are you laughing? Did you have to tell your brothers about me?

Mpe:you're important to me so i had to tell them.

They had to know about the woman im going to marry. If only he knew what you were feeding me.

I ignore him and keep myself busy chatting to Bonolo. I tell her that im going to kzn and soon her call comes in.

Me: Bonolo call me later not now.

Nolo:put me on loudspeaker. I want to talk to sbali

Me:mxm wa m'bora tuu

Nolo:loudspeaker madam speaker.

Mpe:put her on loudspeaker

I put the phone on loudspeaker and she laughs.

Whyis she laughing so loud at that? She's a crazy person.

Nolo:sbali sam. How are you?

Me:sbali Bonolo,really?

Mpe:im fine. Your sister is mad at me.

Nolo:leave that one. I heard your going home with her. Thank god i taught her how to cook.

Me:did you have to say that?

Nolo:i told you you are falling in love with him but you kept denying it.Now you are meeting the family! Sbali take care of my sister. She must come back in one piece.

Mpe:i will make sure of that.

Nolo:don't break my sister's heart. She loves you and if you hurt her you will have me to deal with.

Mpe:you have my word. I love her and i don't plan on hurting her.

Nolo:did you feed her a love portion? You should hear the way she talks about you. Mpendulo this mpendulo that. Hay sbali i salute you!

Mpe:really?

Nolo:yes.

Me: Bonolo you are exaggerating. Bye.

I cut the call. Did she have to say all those things mara?

Mpe:so are you going to tell me what you were

saying to her about me?

Me:leave me alone. Go and ask your sbali.

He laughs and I put on my headsets. He takes them off.

Mpe:im sorry babe. I won't laugh at you again.

I didn't answer him. I will ignore him until we get where we are going. Our flight got called and we boarded. He kept poking me but i would just keep quiet. When the plane landed my heart started racing.

Mpe:babe you are still going to ignore me?

I said nothing. I don't want to talk to him. I can ignore him until tomorrow if i want to.

Mpe:do you want me to kneel down here and bring attention to us or shout?

Me:go on making me mad and I will go back home!

Mpe:finally you talk to me. I love you

Even though things are moving too fast i love him

too and im going to show it. I will not hide how i feel.

Me:i love you too.

Mpe:did you hear that!? She said she loves me! She loves me!

He shouted that. The people were looking at us some smiling and laughing. He picked me up and pinned me around.

Mpe:you just made me the happiest man in the whole world.

He put me down and we went to the car that was waiting for us.

Guy:ndoda

Mpe:zweli meet my woman. Sthandwa sami u zweli lona. My very good friend.

Me:nice to meet you.

Zweli:nice to finally meet the woman that my friend loves. You make this guy crazy.

Me:really?i didn't know i can make an old man crazy

I say laughing at him.

Mpe:but you love this old man.baby who told you im an old man? Do you know my age?

Me:se se salang you're an old man.

Zweli:where must i drop you? Your place?

Mpe:home.

My heart! Why did i agree to come with him?

Me:please take me to your place. I can't go to your parents place.

Mpe:I'll be home for the whole week and I can't leave you on your own. They are going to love you

We drove in silence and I got scared as we got to this beautiful house. We got out and i followed behind mpendulo. We entered the house and everyone was seated in the lounge. Mpendulo greeted and they all answered. I sat on the couch next to him. Having all these eyes looking at me was making me nervous. I recognize one guy. He

came to move my things with mpendulo.

Mpe:greetings

They all answered like a choir. I was so scared. What if his father hates me? He's been looking at me and not saying something.

Mpe:ma no baba. This is the woman that has stolen my heart. Keatlaresi. She's the woman that i would like to marry and build a family with.

M.dad:is she the one that made you to leave everything here and go back to Gauteng?

Mpe:yes

M.dad:are you sure she is the one?

Mpe:yes she is. I love her.

M.dad:does she love you?

Mpe:yes.

M.dad:can't she speak for herself?

It became quiet.

M.dad:so where do you come from Keatlaretsi?

Me:North West sir.

M.dad:do you you know what you are doing here?
Why you are here?

Me:no.

M.dad:so why did you come here?

Me: Mpendulo insisted that i come with him
because he didn't want to leave me on my own.

M.dad:this question is very important to me. Do
you love my son?

I lookedat Mpendulo and he was looking down. I
smiled and answered the old man.

Me:yes sir. I love him.

M.dad:that is good and I hope it will stay like that. I
hope he told you what it means for him to introduce
you here. You're the first woman to be introduced
here. Even the mothers of his kids he never
introduced them to us as his women.And stop
calling me sir. Call me dad. Welcome to our family.
Talk to your father. And you boys prepare

yourselves. Next weekend we are leaving.

After saying that he got up and went out. Mpendulo and his brothers followed him. His mother got up and opened her arms. I assumed that she wants to hug me. I went and hugged her. She has a beautiful smile.

M.mom:welcome my daughter. This is now your home. You are welcome to come here anytime you want to and we will welcome you. We are now your family and we love you. Anything you need don't hesitate to ask. Feel free. Khanyo show her to her room and take her luggage. That stupid man of yours should have taken it to your room already.

We laughed. To be honest i was just faking laugh. I was really not fine at all. I followed Khanyo to my supposed room. She opened my luggage and started unpacking things.

Me:no its fine. I will do it. Anyway I will leave it in there seeing as im leaving on the weekend.

She laughed at me. Like really hard.

Khanyo:the weekend you say? you are not leaving.

You will leave next week then come back on the weekend..

Me:Mpendulo said we are just here for this week.

Khanyo:well not anymore. Do you know why my father said talk to your father?

Me:no

Khanyo:he meant that you must let him know that he will have guests soon. They are going to pay for your lobola next weekend. They will send the letter during the week.

Me:lobola?

Khanyo:that's what i said. My brother wants to marry you. Don't be sad. Everything will be fine.

I was no longer there. My heart was beating so fast. I regretted ever saying yes to him. What if they find out about me having been married? Even though Rapula fooled me into thinking we are married he did pay lobola for me and we had a traditional ceremony. After Khanyo left i called Bonolo and

told her about what was happening. She was happy and said if this is i want then i should do it and that no one will do anything to me if i were to say no. The decision is all up to me. But i should be honest with Mpendulo and tell him everything about me. Im just thankful that she will ask aunty to talk to my dad. But

I keep asking myself if I am doing the right thing. The door opens and I can already tell by the scent that it's him.

Mpe:s thandwa sami. U right?

Me:how can i be with everything that is going on here? You don't even know me that much and already you want to marry me.

Mpe:i don't need to know you for a year for me to know that i want to marry you. I love you. I see a future with you. When i look at you i see the mother of my children. My life partner. Someone I can grow with. Someone I can build a life with. You're not just a passing phase to me. You're my life. Even

if i marry you next year it won't change anything.

Me:i do want to get married to you and grow old together but let's get to know each other first.

Mpe:i know enough about you to want want to marry you.

Me:no you don't. Do you know that im married? I asked to talk but you dismissed it.

Mpe:yes. Don't ever say you are married because you are not. That fool you called a husband made sure to tell me all about your relationship. But i also know that he has been making you a fool. I know everything. But i am not him. Don't crucify me for his sins.

Me:i didn't say i will do that. Mpendulo you don't know me. We just started our relationship just yesterday and already you're talking marriage. I know I've known you for a few months but we haven't been dating even for a week.

Mpe:ngyakthanda Kea. And ngifuna ube umkami. I want to spend the rest of my life with you.

Me:don't you think we're moving too fast now?

Mpe:i know what i feel. And I'm very sure about it.

Me:i don't know.

Mpe:i promise you everything will work out. I promise.

Me:my dad is going to freak out. I'm so scared of what he's going to say.

Mpe:everything will go fine. Don't worry.

Me:please don't hurt me. I'm already going through a lot as it is.

Mpe:let me help you go through whatever it is. Let me hold your hand.

Me:please promise me you will tell me if you don't want me anymore. Even though it will hurt but i will accept it.

Mpe:so tell me what happened between you and him?

Me:we grew up together. His and my father are friends . Then we got married or so i thought. All

this time he has been making me a fool. He is married and has kids. Made me to have my tubes tied just so i won't have kids. Said we are not ready for children knowing very well what he was doing. All this time he has been making money out of me. I started a company and i gave him 30% of my shares. I took all my money my mother left for me and put it into that company. She would be disappointed in me. He took his wife to school with my money. Built her a house and even hired her in my company without me even knowing. He made me waste 7 years of my life. The signs were there. I just ignored them. I found out that he's been married even before our relationship. He was the one who initiated the divorce but then changed his mind. I then filed for divorce myself and he's been making it hard for me to leave him. Everything he has is all because of me. I hope you are not going to do the same to me.

Mpe:i would never do that... there is someone i want you to meet. Look at me. Im not going to do what he did. Im going to love you like never before.

He went out for a few minutes and came back with a child. The other one was following behind him. The younger one was sucking on her thumb. They jumped on the bed laughing.

Mpe:Mnqobi stop that. Lisa .

Lisa:no.

Mpe:you two will give me grey hair.

He got hold of them and came to stand with them near me.

Mpe: this is Mnqobi my son. He's 7. And this is my little girl Lisakhanya. She's 5. And guys this is mommy. Say hi.

Lisa just climbed the couch and sat on top of me and put her hand around my neck. Im not against kids or that i don't love his kids. But he could have told me before hand.

Me:nice to meet you guys.

Lisa:will you bath me and go with me to the mall?

I looked at Mpendulo and he looked so happy and all smiles.

Me:yes. And i will buy you anything you want.

She jumped off screaming and ran out.

Mpe:she's going to tell her gogo that her mommy is going to buy her things.

Mnqobi:now i can finally get that bicycle i wanted.

Mpe:no.

Mnqobi:yes dad.

He went out laughing.

Me:you have beautiful kids.

Mpe:and I can't wait for us to have more beautiful babies running around our house. Come.

We went and lay on the bed.

Mpe:i wish Lisa's mother was around to see her grow up into this happy child that she is.

Okay. I feel jealous that he still thinks of his ex.

Me:where's she?

Mpe:she passed on.

Me:im sorry.

Mpe:but I know you are going to be a good mother to her.

Me:and Mngobi,where's his mother?

Mpe:she's around. We share custody of Mngobi. He comes here on some weekends and holidays.

Me:okay.

.....

I don't know how i fell asleep but i woke up to Mpendulo telling me to go and shower so we can go and have dinner. Wow i slept that long.

Me:why didn't you wake me up so that i can help with cooking ?

Mpe:Makoti your time will come. Now just enjoy having others do things for you.

Me:makoti? Not yet

Mpe:just a few days. Now let's go and shower.

Me:together?

Mpe:something wrong with that that?

Me:no.

We took off our clothes then went and took a shower. After we were done we got dressed and he took my dress off.

Mpe:you will die of coldt. Wear tracksuits. No one will tell you anything.

I did as he said. He pulled me to him and smiled. I looked into his eyes andi actually blushed. I can't believe me ugly Betty scored this man for myself. Even back in high school i was always bullied for being too dark and fat. That's how it has always been.

Mpe:it's good to see you happy.

Me:you make mehappy.

He holds my hand and we go to join the others. We all sit around the table and after saying grace we start eating.

Lisa:mkhulu you see her? She's my mom and she's going to buy me anything i want.

Mpendulo:she doesn't have money to waste

Mngobi:dad it's her money. She will buy anything for us with her money not yours okay

M.mom:okay now we can eat. And stop talking.

All i can say is i enjoyed spending time with this family. And im happy that soon I'll be part of this family.

The following day i woke up and the bed was empty. I take a shower and get dressed in a summer dress and sandals. It's hot today. The door opens and Lisa gets in running.

Lisa:good morning mommy.

Me:good morning baby. How did you sleep?

Lisa:good. We are going to the beach.

Me:okay. You want me to come with you?

Lisa:daddy said you're coming with us.

Me:okay let's go and help make breakfast.

Lisa:okay. I love you mama

Me:i love you too.

Aah. She's a sweet child. And so cute. She's still holding my hand as we leave the room. We get to the kitchen and the helper is busy making breakfast.

Me:good morning ma. How can I help you?

Helper:good morning. You can just go and sit down and relax. I'm almost done.

Me:okay ma.

We went to the lounge and the others were already up. I was so embarrassed.

Me:good morning everyone.

Lisa ran to the other kids. Now I was left with the brothers and their wives. Now they are all looking at me. Where is Mpendulo when you need him?

Muzi:excuse us ladies.

They left and now it was just me and Mpumi and Ntombi.

Ntombi:so Kea where are you from?

Me:Rustenburg.

Mpumi:you're so beautiful. Don't be scared maan. Feel free. As mama said this is your family.

I just nodded.

Ntombi:but prepare yourself. You're still to meet some family members. Some are rude.

Me:I'm sure I'll be fine. So you all stay here?

Mpumi:no. We stay in Pretoria but we have houses here. Most of the time when we are in Durban we all stay here.

Me:okay.

Ntombi:you know i could swear i know you from somewhere. Maybe a magazine.

I didn't think they were going to catch so fast. What if they know about Rapula? The only magazines covers I've been on were with him and it was for our business.

Me:maybe you read about me on magazines. Sometimes i do interviews on business.

Ntombi:yeah now that I remember it it was on a magazine. I liked where you were helping schools

with sanitary pads and stationary.

Me:i help where i can.

Mpumi:that's good. So when and how did you and bhuti omdala meet?

Me:who's that?

Ntombi:your husband to be.

Me:why is he bhuti omdala?

They laughed. I looked at them.

Mpumi:he's the first born. So we call him like that to show respect.

Me:oh. We met four months ago. I was moving to a new place and he was part of the people who came to move my things. From there on he never stopped following me. That's how we got close. But we haven't been dating for long.

Ntombi:it doesn't matter how long you dated. You will know when you meet the one that you want to spend the rest of your life with them. And you make him happy. He's been smiling all week kanti it's you. When he came back here he was all smiles.

Oh it must be after our day at the Blyde. We were called to have breakfast and after that me, Mpendulo, Lisa and Mngobi left for the beach. I've never seen a happy child like Lisa. And that made her father smile.

Me: she's so happy.

Mpe: that's because you're here. She's having a mother for the first time so believe me she will be like this the whole time. When I told her about you she kept asking when you were coming. She even made a gift for you.

[07/06, 18:57] : *STORY OF MY LIFE: KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 6

I really didn't stay the whole week as Mpendulo said. My father called saying I should come home. I left on Thursday and I, as expected, he wasn't pleased with what was going on. After I told him the whole

story about what Rapula did he calmed down. And i thought Rapula's family would refuse the lobola but they agreed for the Khoza family to come. Today is Saturday. The day of the lobola. I woke up early and showered and got ready. Today us a big day for me. My aunts were busy running around doing God knows what. We have been waiting but no sign of the Khoza family. No call from Mpendulo. Nothing . I tried his call and it rang without being answered. I've never cried like i did today. Im hurt. Im hurt beyond words. Nothing can explain how im feeling right now. "I knew that it was too good to be true. Ne nka makala! You got divorced not so long ago and in less than a year you were about to marry another man. I knew it wasnt going to happen."_that's Rakgadi Moipone. One of my father's sisters. How can she talk like this? Im going to be a laughing stock in this community! Most importantly im hurt. She should be comforting me not adding salt to the wound. But shes right. I may have known Mpendulo for a few months but we only started dating nit so long ago. And already i was about to marry him. Im such a fool. I should have known that this was too

good to be true. I go into the bathroom and wash off the makeup. I dont even know why i let Bonolo put it on me. Im not a makeup pers on.

Two months passed and nothing from him or his family. I wished that it could be a dream and i would wake up from it. Now im in the kitchen making breakfast. I must say this lobola thing made me to spend a lot of time with my father. He refused for me to go back to work. I had to call Bontle and ask her to look for someone in the company who would hold the fort. I finish spreading rama on my bread along with peanut butter. I even eat peanut butter on its own. It's my favourite. I take the eggs and make them for my father. I know dad will want them.

Papa: morning my babby.

Me: morning papa. I'll be done soon. Go and sit down.

I continue then take everything to the sitting room. I give him his plate and fetch the coffee. We start

eating. I finish my rama and peanut butter sandwich then start with the eggs. I feel something coming up from my throat. i run to the bathroom and empty everything that I've just eaten. I rinse my mouth and go back.

Papa: Keatlaretsi a gonale sengwe o batlang go mpolella?

Me:no dad. Im fine. I've just been throwing up these past few days. But I'll be fine.

Papa: are you pregnant?

Me:dad no. I'd know.

Papa:you said Rapula had you tie your tubes.

Me:i untied them after we separated...

Papa:then im right. You're pregnant.

Me:my God! How could i be so careless? Now im pregnant and papa ngwana o tshabile. Ne ke nagana eng? J ust after dating him for less than a month he would marry me?

Papa:this too shall pass.

Me:now i have to think about what im going to do.

Papa:you want to terminate? No.im here. I will help you raise this baby. If he wants nothing to do with you i will help you. You're my child and i love you.

Me:i love you too papa.

I put my head on his shoulder and cried. My dad is the only man who will never disappoint me. I can always count on him.

Seeing as i have nothing to do i decided to just take a walk around the neighbourhood. I ended up at mma Moeketsi place. I ordered a burger and chips and just sit by the chairs and watch people going up and down. That's what i always do. Come here,buy something and watch people. "Here's your order."_that's her bringing my food.

"O bonala o le kgakala. A o siame?"

Her question exhausts me.

"Ke siame. Ke nagala fela ka bophelo."_i say looking down

"Sengwe le swmgwe se nale mako ya sone. Things will be alright. I heard about your lobola negotiations and i know people are talking. Se ba tseele tlhogong batho ba motse oo. Akere wa itse gore batho ba jwang." She doesn't understand what im going through

"People look at me on the street. I hear them saying ke palletswe ke lenyalo. That ka opona. Im not even like that. " i can feel the tears falling. Im starting to be emotional.

"Go tla siama ngwanake. O se ke wa belaela."

I wipe my tears and focus on my food. This baby is making me eat a lot. Im always in the kitchen or this place. And now he's making me cry. I even miss the bastard who made me pregnant and ran away. Why didn't he just tell me to my face that he doesn't care. I would move on peacefully not wondering about anything. I try his phone again thinking I'll get a different answer but it's the same. Voicemail. I always send messages but no replies. I even attempted to go to his home but dad refused.

After finishing my meal i go back home. People's stares will never stop. I can't stand them! I get home and go to my room then pack a bag. Im going to Durban. He will tell me exactly why he decided not to show up on the lobola day. He owes me some explaining. I look for my dad and i find him behind the house.

Me:papa i want to ask you something.

Papa:okay.

Me:can i please go to Durban? I have to know why he made me a fool. I have to get closure.

Papa:ve careful. Have a safe trip and don't forget to call me when you get there.

Me:thank you papa.

I hug him and get into my car and drive to J oburg. As soon as i reach there my flight is ready. I got a flight. I was lucky because this was the next one available. All the time i kept thinking about the worst possible scenario of what could happen. As

soon as the dlight landed i requested an ubber and it drove me to his home. My heart starts beating fast as i talk to the man qho opens the gate.

Man:Mrs Khoza. Come in. Welcome.

Me:um thank you.

I smile and push my bag inside the yard. I contemplated whether to go in or not. I ring the bell at the door and someone opens. I look up and Khanyo is staring at me.

Khanyo:come in.

She takes my bag with her. I follow her and go to the lounge. His parents are sitting watching the news.

Me:hello.

They all turn and look at me. They are really surprised to see me.

Ma:oh my child! You're here.

She gets up and comes to hug me. She's even crying now.

Baba:please don't cry. You're going to make her cry too.

Khanyo:i brought someone here. She's been crying for you everyday .

Lisa:mommy.

I pick her and she's crying. Is it a crying day today? I sit down. Lisa has her head on my shoulder having hiccups. I brush her back.

Dad:how are you?

Me:i am fine and you?

Dad:nothing is good here. I am sure you are asking yourself why we didn't show up.

Me:yes baba. I even tried his phone and it's not working. What is going on?

Baba:hey it's bad. We have been looking for you. Siya went to your workplace and they gave him a wrong number. We checked your place and there was no one. Now they went to look for your cousin hoping that they will find her.

Me:why?what is going on?

Baba: Mpendulo is in hospital. The day we were coming to your home he got into an accident while driving to the airport. He's in a coma. We just came back from the hospital. There's still no change. We are even thinking of switching off the machines.

I dont know what happened but i woke up in a hospital room. I looked around and i saw worried faces.

Me:is my baby okay?

Ma:yes. Relax,you were just shocked. Everything will be fine.

Me:how is..

Ma: Focus on this baby. Mpendulo will be fine.

Me:okay ma. Can i see him?

Ma:yes. The doctor is about to discharge you.

Me:okay. Can you please change your mind about switching the machines off? I believe he will make it.

Mama:i will talk to his father.

Me:thank you.

After the doctor discharged me i went to his ward. He was just sleeping there lifeless. But i was not giving up on him. I know he will wake up. When we went back home I called my dad and told him what was going on. He said i can take all the time i need and be here for Mpendulo. I was happy to hear him talking like that because at first he was not a fan of my relationship with him. I've been here for three days and there's still no change. Even though my mind is not here im watching tv. I've been sitting here after having lunch. Ma has been looking at me and i was just acting like i don't notice. But i ended up asking if something is wrong.

Ma:nothing is wrong. Im just amazed about how good you are with Lisa. And how you love my son. Im really happy he met you. You're a blessing to this family. We are grateful for you. We love you.

Me:thank you ma.

"Sanibonani ekhaya."

Ma:Mabutho. How are you

Mabutho:im good ma. Is baba here?

Ma: no.

Mabutho:okay. Get ready. We are going to the hospital. Mpendulo just woke up.

I said a silent prayer.

We waited for ma as she went upstairs.

Mabutho: u right?

Me:yeah.

Mabutho:thank you for being here. My brother asked for you when he woke up.

Me:is he alright?

Mabutho:he's up. That's all that matters. He'll be fine.

Me:okay.

I wiped a tear that fell. We left and he was lying on the bed with his leg dangling. They had told us to get in together. He looked at the door and smiled.

Mpendulo:come babe.

I thought he forgot me. I went next to the bed and held his hand. We stayed a bit and the others left.

Mpendulo:how are you? Come and lie on the bed with me.

Me:i don't want to hurt you.

Mpendulo:im fine. And soon I'll be out of here and back at home with you.

Me:that's good news. But you have to heal first. I thought you changed your mind about us

Mpendulo:why

Me:you had an accident on the day of the lobola negotiations and you didn't pitch. I spent two months thinking you don't want me anymore.

Mpendulo:don't cry. Im here now.

Me:i missed you.

Mpendulo:i missed you more. You look so beautiful. And you gained a bit for someone who was stressed.

Me:don't say that. It's your baby doing that.

Mpendulo: huh..you..?You're pregnant!

Me:yes...

Mpendulo:come here! I woke up to such good news and my wife to be is here.

Me:you still want us to get married?

Mpendulo:yes. And this time no accident will stop us. I love you

Me:i love you more.

After staying a week i went back to my place. I haven't been here in a while. If walls could speak they'd say how much they missed me. Im in the kitchen cooking a new recipe that i just discovered. Im always trying new recipes and i can't believe im this perfect. Indeed practice makes perfect. My phone rings then i wipe my hands. A smile automatically finds itself on my face.

Me:hey babe.

Mpendulo:my love. How are you?

Me:im good thanks and you?

Mpendulo:im good. What are you doing?

Mpendulo:im cooking.

Mpendulo:i see im in good hands. My wife will always cook for me.

Me:be glad cooking is my new hobby or else you'd have takeaways for lunch and dinner.

Mpendulo:no no. I'd teach you how to cook. Im getting discharged today.

Me:good news babe. I wish i was there

Mpendulo:im coming back this week.

Me:i can't wait to see you..oh before I forget,i think we have to stop the lobola negotiations for now.

Mpendulo:why?You're changing your mind?

Me:of course not. Dad wants to meet you first. Get to know you then decide from there.

Mpendulo:okay. I understand where he's coming

from. He can't just give his child away to people he doesn't know.

Me:yes. And there's no need to panick. My father likes you.

Mpendulo:let's be honest here. Your father prefers your ex over me.

Me:that's not true.

Mpendulo:okay. I will see you tomorrow.

Me:i thought you were going to rest first.

Mpendulo:i won't be doing anything. Mabutho will drive me to the airport and you will fetch me. I want to sleep next to you. I can't spend a week without seeing you. I will call you just before i leave tomorrow.

Me:that's a lie. I know you're going to call before you sleep.

Mpendulo:i can't help it. I keep falling in love with you and when I don't see or talk to you i don't feel good.

Me:babe...

Mpendulo:enjoy your day.

Me:you too.

I went back to my cooking.

MPENDULO

Hearing her voice made him calm down. He was feeling down and knew that talking to her will calm him down. This is a foreign feeling for him. He has been in relationships but none made him feel like this. Even though people talk he's not going to let them get to him. His conversation with his aunty earlier on upset him. How can she think that he is taking advantage of her? She's old enough to know if she's being taken advantage of or not. They make each other happy. They love each other. That's all that matters. He was never interested in marriage but with her he wants it. He wants forever with her. For his aunt to say the marriage is not happening is bullshit. He felt relieved after Keatlaretsi told him that her father said they have to put negotiations on

hold. He didn't know how to tell her that his uncles and aunties are against the marriage and want it to be stopped. This is the first woman he's ever really loved for God's sake! Then what do they suggest he does because he cannot live without her? Growing up he witnessed his father loving his mother and wished to have that kind of love. Now that he finds it they interfere. Since when did they start controlling him? He's a grown man who knows right and wrong! They can't tell him what to do. That is not going to happen. They will not dictate to his life. If they disown him that's their problem. And who told them the accident was because the ancestors didn't want the lobola negotiations to proceed? Did the ancestors themselves tell them?

Mabutho came to fetch him during the day. He was relieved that he is going home. The place was already getting to him. He couldn't stand all those doctors and nurses giving him instructions as if he's their child. He's older than most of them anyway! The drive home was quiet and he could

sense that something was off. Mabutho was too quiet and that's unusual. They got home and he walked in with his crutches. His daughter ran to him and he hugged her.

"Daddy I missed you." - Lisa.

"I missed you too baby. Go and tell aunty to pack your bag. We are going to mommy tomorrow." - Mpendulo

The little girl ran out of the lounge screaming happy. She was going to see her mother. Why can't they see the kind of effect she has on him and his children? They love her!

"Mpendulo it's good that you're back. There's something we have to talk about." -that was his aunty talking to him. What else is there to talk about? She already said what she wanted to say.

"What is it? I have to get ready for my flight tomorrow." -Mpendulo

"What flight when your wife to be is already here? You can't leave. We have guests." -aunty

"I don't remember asking you to help me look for a wife. Take your guests and leave. Or maybe your son can take that bride. Not me. Im an adult and i can make my own decisions. Im not leaving the mother of my child. "Mpendulo

"Nkosiyam! She's already pregnant! This is a mess."
-aunty

"There's no mess here."-Mpendulo

He left her standing there and got to his room and packed his bag.

"Bafo..What are you doing? I thought we are leaving tomorrow. "-Mabutho

"I can't be here. Does mom and dad know about this?"-Mpendulo

"They would have put a stop to this. That woman is taking advantage because she knows the parents are not around. "-Mabutho

"Can you get the jet ready?I don't want to be in one roof with that witch."

Mabutho:i will get to it.

[07/06, 18:58] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 7

MPENDULO

Mabutho went back home as soon as the jet boarded.

He organized for transportation to take Mpendulo to his place. After about 2 hours or so the jet finally landed and he got out and held his daughter's hand and walked to the car that was waiting for them. He sent a text to Keatlaretsi telling her to pack a bag he's on his way to her. After a long drive they finally reached Pretoria West. They drove to her place and parked outside. He walked inside the yard and knocked .As soon as she saw him a big smile formed on her face and she hugged him forgetting that he's hurt. And his aunty and uncles want him to

leave this lovely woman for someone he doesn't even know? How can he leave the woman he loves for something that is not worth it?

Kea:i missed you baby.

Mpendulo:i missed you more. Are you ready to go? I want us to do groceries first.

Kea:okay. Let me grab my bag and then we can go.

She ran upstairs

Mpendulo:babe don't run on the stairs please.

She giggled and came back with her bag. He held her hand and went back to the car. But not before holding her close to him and kissed her. They got into the car and he told the driver to drive to the mall.

Lisa:mommy i want a burger. And a milkshake. Please.

Kea: I'm going to buy you anything you want.

Lisa:i love you mom and dad.

KEATLARETSI

Mpendulo surprised me when he said i must pack my bag and be ready for him. I thought he said he's coming tomorrow. But im happy he's here. We did our groceries then went to his place. It's my first time being in this place. He bought a new house. It's bigger than the last one. But

Mpendulo: welcome to your new home MamKhoza.

Me:MamKhoza?

I smiled at him.

Mpendulo:yes. Soon it will be official but in my heart you're already my wife. And no one can change anything about it.

No one? Is there something going on?

Me:well,it's also just like that. So im going to cook. What should I make for us? I will cook more and put it in containers so that you can have something to eat when im not around.

Mpendulo:can you please stay here for this week?

Me:i only packed for the weekend.

Mpendulo: i will take care of that.

Me:okay. So what should I make?

Mpendulo:surprise your man.

Me:while im cooking please sit down and relax. I will bring you a drink. We don't want you putting more pressure on your feet. And i will keep on checking on you to make sure that you are sitting still.

Mpendulo:yes maam. Me and my baby girl will be just sitting here and watching her favourite cartoon.

Lisa:yes daddy. Mommy don't forget to also bring me some ice cream please. I love you mom

Yoh this child! She's really manipulative just like her dad. I bring his beer and her ice cream. I went to the kitchen and took out tripe. I know he's going to love it. I'd make it with dumplings but i would finish late. I make it with pap. The tripe takes a bit long but soon im done before it gets dark. I dish and take the food to the table. I make juice as well and take it to the table.

Me:food is ready.

Mpendulo:thanks babe. Im so happy you are here.

We went to sit down and Lisa prayed for the food.

Lisa:God,thank you for this food. Thank you for providing it for us. Thank you for my dad and for healing him. Thank you for giving me my mother that i love somuch. I promise i will be a good sister to my little champ.Amen.

Mpendulo:beautiful prayer. Now we can eat.

I looked at Mpendulo. He looked like he is troubled. I thought of asking but not tonight. We are celebrating him recovering. We ate and Mr Khoza was busy complementing my cooking skills. You should have seen a sister blushing. I must thank Bonolo for this.

Mpendulo:babe. Thank you. For everything. You've been so supportive since you found out that im in hospital. Someone would have run away. But you stayed. You're still here. You're my dream woman. A

woman I'd love to spend the rest of my life with. A beautiful, caring and loving. I'd love to have that woman around me forever. Wake up and see your face first thing in the morning. Love, will you make me the happiest man in the world, be my wife.

Will you marry me? Be Mrs Khoza?

Me: yes. Yes. Oh my God. Yes I will marry you.

Mpendulo: thank you baby.

I didn't care that he didn't book the whole restaurant and got on his knee. I'm a happy woman just like he is a happy man.

Me: babe I love my ring. It's so beautiful.

Mpendulo: I love you.

You can go so long while I put Lisa to sleep.

I picked up a heavy Lisa and went to her room. After dinner we watched TV and she fell asleep. I put her on bed and kissed her forehead then left. I heard a fall and screaming in the bathroom. I ran there and my fiancée fell in the bathtub.

Me: babe! Did you hurt yourself?

Mpendulo: just my leg. It's fine you can leave. Be careful not to fall on that water.

I could see that he was embarrassed. I got out and closed the bathroom door. I went to fetch a mop and when I came back he was just sitting in the bathtub and thinking. He looked at me as I mopped the floor. After I was done I went close to him and took the washing towel and bathed him.

Mpendulo: Keatlaretsi please d...

Me: babe you don't have to be ashamed. You're hurt and I know you would do the same for me. I would do anything for you. This is nothing. Please if you struggle with something call me instead of putting pressure on your leg. I hurt when you hurt. Please. Can we please move to the room downstairs until you fully recover? I don't want you falling on the stairs.

Mpendulo: okay sthandwa sami. I'm so lucky to have you. Imagine mine, indoda endala being bathed by someone. You have a good heart. That's why I love you MaKhoza.

Me:now let's help you get up.

I helped him stand up and dried him then went back to the bedroom. I left him lotioning and took a quick shower and went to bed. But not before giving him his medication.

The following day i woke up and went to do my hygiene process then made breakfast with Lisa asking me endless questions. After i was done i went back to the bedroom and Mpendulo was already done bathing. I smiled and took out an outfit for him.

Mpendulo:thanks. How are you?

Me:im good and you?

Mpendulo:im great. With you by my side i can overcome anything. What is your size? I want to buy something for you to wear.

Me:36. But you don't have to. I can drive to my place and fetch my clothes.

Mpendulo:i want you to be by side today. I don't

feel really good. Like something bad is about to happen. I don't want you far from me.

Me: okay. Breakfast is ready. Can you also get someone to buy you a wheelchair? Your brother said you're supposed to be on a wheelchair.

Mpendulo: even though there's no need I will do it.

We went to eat breakfast and after Mpendulo went back to bed. I think the pills were making him drowsy. Me and my baby girl went to the salon.

NARRATED

Keatlaretsi and Lisa did their hair and went back home. When they arrived there were visitors. They greeted and Keatlaretsi went upstairs leaving Lisa with the visitor.

Kea: babe we are back.

Mpendulo: you are so beautiful. Did you see someone downstairs

Kea:yeah. A woman.

Mpendulo:she doesn't listen. I told her to leave. It's my aunty.

Kea: you don't want her here?

Mpendulo:don't eat anything she makes for you. She might kill our baby.

Kea:why would she do that?

Mpendulo:she's evil. I suspect she has something to do with my accident. She doesn't want me marrying you. Anything that is open in the fridge get rid of it.

Kea:that's scary.

Mpendulo:and she's refusing to leave. I've already called her husband to fetch her.

Kea:okay.

Mpendulo:if you are hungry order food. Im dead serious. I don't want you to eat anything in this house.

Kea:do you think she put anything in the food she's

cooking?

Mpendulo what!?

Kea:yes. She's cooking.

Mpendulo:please go abd take all the food in the fridge out. Put it in the trash.

Kea:you just bought it yesterday.

Mpendulo:you don't know her. I swear if anything happens to my babybecause you don't want to listen we will have problems. Throw everything away!

Kea:okay.

Mpendulo:im going to try and get her out of here again.

Kea went to the kitchen and took a black trash bag and started taking out the food.

Aunty:what are you doing?

Kea:oh aunty...Im taking out the food. It's not in good condition. Some has expired

She just lied through her teeth.

Aunty:you don't have to lie for him. He thinks i poisoned all this food. Do you think i would poison my brother's son? If i wanted to do something to him don't you think i would have already done it?

Kea:i d...

Aunty:you're just a girlfriend so you don't have anything to say. Does your parents know that you're living with a man that hasn't even married you?

Kea:my father knows that i am here.

Aunty:did he tell you the reason he doesn't want me here?

Voice:yes. I told her. You want to kill my baby so that she distances herself from me so that i can marry the woman you got for me? Your plans won't work. Im a grown man and i can make my own decisions. Even if sje decides to leave,im not marrying that woman. It's her that i want. I need her in my life.

Aunty:what does she have that's making you so crazy ?

Mpendulo: she's got everything. She makes me happy and i love her.

Aunty:she's a child. You're too old for her! You're taking advantage of her.

Mpendulo:aunty stop trying to make excuses. Your husband is thirteen years older than you.isnt he taking advantage of you? Im booking you a ticket now and dad will find out about this. I thought i would let it go but not anymore. Stop interfering in my life. Im fine with the way things are. Abd until you change your ways you're not welcome in this house.

Aunty:i will leave. But don't come crying when this tswana girl breaks you. You should get married to a zulu girl but when it happens that she shows her true colours don't say I didn't tell you.

Mpendulo:oh. Now i see what's happening here. It's because she's not zulu.

Aunty:anyway what did i expect from you? Your mother is white. Of course she would allow this.

Mpendulo:my mother's colour has nothing to do

with this. She may be white but she's real. Not like you. Now I've booked your ticket you can leave in the next hour.

Keatlaretsi took the trash plastic out and went back inside. She went to sit in the bedroom.

KEATLARETSI

What that aunty said hurt my feelings. Just because im tswana it doesn't mean im less worthy of being Mpendulo wife. I know im not zulu but she didn't have to say it in front of me. Mpendulo's mother is white and her husband loves her just the way she is. Im tswana and Mpendulo loves me. If he didn't he wouldn't have approached me. Now i believe she's a witch. Mpendulo is right. She caused that accident. She went as far as to find a zulu wife for him. Who does that in this age? Will i have peace and joy marrying into this family? How will i survive? I didn't even realize that i was crying. I just felt a hand wiping my tears

Mpendulo: please stop crying. She left and will never come back here. Siya came to fetch Lisa. I didn't want her to see you like this.

Me: why does she hate me? She doesn't even know me.

Mpendulo: she's a bitter old woman. Even with my mother she did the same thing but dad didn't allow it. With mom it was worse because at first her family didn't want her to get married to my father. But look at them today. My aunt's opinion does not matter.

Me: did she really get a wife for you?

Mpendulo: yes. When I came from the hospital I found her there and she said she found a wife and I just decided to leave. I didn't even wait to meet the woman she came with. That's why she came here. To convince me to marry that woman instead of you.

Me: will you leave me for her?

Mpendulo: and be miserable for the rest of my life?

You and i are meant to be. Im not leaving you.

Me:okay. I missed you.

Mpendulo:woman! Im right next to you.

Me:your aunt is scary. I couldn't even talk to you.

We couldn't even celebrate our engagement.

Mpendulo:well now she's gone and we can celebrate.

Me:i sent my dad a picture of my ring. He's so happy for me. He called just after i sent the picture.

Mpendulo:really? You and him are so close.

Me:yes. It's always been like that. Im happy he's accepted our relationship. It means a lot to me.

Mpendulo:well im happy that he's giving us his blessings.

Me:and when you've recovered you two can meet. Then we will get married.

Mpendulo:that i cannot wait for.

After almost a month Mpendulo recovered. Now we are at home and my father is in the sitting room talking with Mpendulo. I wish I could go sit with them but my uncle said no. He's also here. Said he wants to know the person that is marrying his niece. They've been in there for a while now.

'Keatlaretsi is the food ready now? Are we ever going to eat?

That's my uncle. Thank God they are done interrogating him. I take the food to the table and call everyone to come and eat. The meeting went well and I'm happy with that. I wanted us to leave the following day but Mpendulo refused. Saying he will not sleep in my father's house. He hasn't paid lobola so he can't sleep in my father's house. We drove back to Pretoria.

When we arrived Lisa was in the room talking and laughing. We went further in and Mngobi was busy explaining what the movie is about.

Mngobi: mommy!

He hugged me and Lisa did the same. I kissed

their foreheads and sat on the couch with them.

Me:i missed you my baby. When did you get here?

Mnqobi:in the morning. Was Lisa taking care of you? She said she is the one doing things for you.

M:um yes.she is.

Mnqobi:good girl.

Lisa:mommy im going to fetch your pillow. You see im doing my work?

Mnqobi:good girl. We must take care of our little champ.

Me:who are you with here?

Mnqobi:gogo and mkhulu.

Mpendulo:babe let me go and look for them.

The following day Mpendulo couldn't stop smiling. I asked what's going on and all he said is "life is good mawakhe." I stopped asking. He even said we are eating out. It's a date. Our first official date since we started dating. He's taking me to a restaurant for a

change. He likes his traditional food so he says these people in restaurants don't know how to cook. So im surprised that today we are going to a restaurant. I can't stop looking at him. A sexy man driving. He also keeps smiling when I look at him.

Mpendulo:iyakuthanda indoda yakho Mawakhe.

Me:okay. Now tell me what's making you smile like this.

Mpendulo:your father gave us a date for lobola negotiations. Next weekend we are taking our cows to him. Uzoba owami na baphantsi bazo yazi. Izinto ziya hlangana.

Me:i knew it had to be something making you smile. Well im also happy. I love you baby.

Mpendulo: phinda futhi Sthandwa sami

Me:i love you

Mpendulo:ah madoda inhlanhlayonke ngathandwa tintombazane enhle kanjhe.

I blushed. God thank you for this man. I love him so much.

Mpendulo:we are here. I love this place. They make the best food.

He got out and came to open my door. I got out and we went in. We were showed to a table and a waitress came.

Waitress:good day. Welcome to Rose's restaurant. What would you like to have?

I looked at her. I don't know where I've seen her but she's familiar.

Mpendulo:Mawakhe should I order for you?

Me:oh sorry. It's just that...Do i know you from somewhere?

Waitress: maybe you forgot me. My restaurant once catered at some event at your company. And i could swear i saw you yesterday at my neighbor's house. In Pretoria East. Im Lerato. This place is named after my name,Rose. My husband gave me that name.

I laughed.

Mpendulo:she's Chris's wife. The man Baby you

s should greet your neighbors hey.

Me:oh please! You said this is your favourite restaurant but you didn't know your neighbor owns it.

We laughed.

Lerato:here's my business card. Call me and we'll meet one of these days.

Me:okay.

Lerato:so what will you have?

I looked at the menu and laughed. I shake my head and look up.

Lerato:is something wrong?

Me:no. Nothing is wrong. Im laughing because of this man.

Mpendulo:and what did i do?

Me:babe you said you're giving me a break from cooking and that no traditional food today. Now i see why we are here. They have all the things you love!

Mpendulo:that was my way of bringing you here.
How's that for our first date? And i was tired of not
spending time with you. Ever since mama came
you're inseparable. She's stealing you from me.

Me:good! Whenever im lazy to cook i will just order
here. This place will be a lifesaver.

Lerato:first date?

Me:yes. Can you believe we're getting married and
this is our first date?

Mpendulo:i must up my shoes then.

Me:i will have beef stew and pap.

Mpendulo:same. With a beer.

Me:put juice on mine.

Lerato:coming right up.

She left and i looked at this man opposite me.

Me: you never cease to amaze me. I thought you
were taking me somewhere like seafood place.

Mpendulo:you will never feed my champ those
things.

Me:i was just joking.i don't eat those things.

"It's nice being you. Answer your calls ausi. We are running a business and not a playhouse. There are important things to be taken care of. "

Me:yoh. Please stop disturbing us. Me and ny fiancé are having our fun time so please excuse us. I left people in charge of MY COMPANY. There's a reason for that. You don't even own 1% in that company so dont bore me.

Basetsana:my husband owns 30%

Me:and i want it back. So if you don't mind excuse us.

Basetsana:that's not going to happen. We will take you to court.

Me:be my guest. And you must tell your husband to move out of my house. Well siim sure you will start over and make your own money. My money took you to school,built your parents a house and bought you a car. Oh,and raised your kids. And that was the last of it. Even the house that you're staying in i want it. Your husband has nothing to his name.

Just the money that he got from me and that qualification he got by my money. And not to forget that he wanted to scam me. Now leave us in peace. I was happy to not have to see your face these past months but now I'm bored. Leave us alone.

She left after dramatically clicking her tongue.

Mpendulo: are you alright?

Me: I'm fine. I know your brother will help me get my properties and shares. I thought I would let him keep the properties but that woman was a nana. She'll be bragging about my things as if she worked for them.

Mpendulo: but don't allow this to stress you. You will get everything back.

Lerato brought our food and we started eating. After we were done we left. My husband took us back home. Said we are going out again tomorrow. Wow I'm being taken on so many dates. When we got home there were so many people in the house. Most of them I didn't know. Thank God I was wearing a dress. I would suggest that I go back to

my place but mama blatantly refused. She said she enjoys being with me here. She gives me that motherly love. She's slowly closing that gap i had of not having a mother.

Mpendulo:babe the whole family is here.

Me:okay. Is there another way i can go and put on a doek without them seeing me?

Mpendulo:do you someone with a doek there? Let's go.

He held my hand and went in.

Mpendulo:s anibonani ekhaya..

They greeted back.

Old Woman:is that our makoti?

Mpendulo:yebo. Uye lo. Sthandwa sami this is my family. We are a very big family. This is not everyone. Some will be here tomorrow.

Old Woman:she looks too young but i can see she loves you and looks like a good person. You did good by waiting. Look now you found a good woman. I can hear by how the kids and your

brothers talk about her that you've found a good woman. Treat her right. Don't listen to what others say. This relationship is between you and her. No one else. And wena Zinzile you should stop trying to arrange wives for him. You've tried before and failed. My kids, love each other and cherish your love.

We were now seated.

His gogo was now giving us advice about marriage.

Gogo: Mpendulo, you don't hit your wife. There's a way you reprimand her. Learn to talk to her in a good manner. No sleeping out. This is a big step you're taking. Meaning you must leave your old ways behind and live like a husband. Sisi, your husband must be respected just as he must respect you. This is now your family. You don't talk about your marriage affairs with your friends. Your friends might turn out to be your enemies and talk about everything that you told them. You solve things with your husband. And if you can't, your mother in law is

here for that. And finally. I want grandkids. You see how big this family is? I want more great grandkids. We love you and we welcome you kwa Khoza. All these people you see here are your aunties and uncles. Your mothers and fathers. Feel free and at home.

Me:thank you.

Mpendulo:gogo thank you for your beautiful words. We appreciate it.

Later we found out that all these people are here for Mpendulo's birthday. I didn't even know it was his birthday in two days. Luckily Bonolo's workplace can make the cake and Lerato's restaurant will do catering. I cracked my head thinking of what im going to get him as his present. But i ended up getting it.

[07/06, 18:58] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 8

NARRATED

Today is Mpendulo's birthday and more family members have arrived. Everyone is busy moving around getting things ready. The catering people are already here and some are decorating the backyard where they are going to have the party. Muzi came to fetch Mpendulo in the morning so that he won't know what is going on. After they were done with renovations and putting things in place they all gathered around and waited for the man of the moment. They all got ready as Muzi told them that they are coming. Muzi and Mpendulo arrived and they all shouted "surprise!"

Muzi: happy birthday bafo. We know you don't usually celebrate your birthdays but today we had to do this. To show our love and appreciation to you. We love you and we are thankful for everything that you do for this family. Enjoy.

Mpendulo:thank you. Thank you for this. Even though it's unusual but im happy.

Khanyo:bhuti come and cut your cake.

His eyes wandered around and landed on Keatlaretsi. He went to where Keatlaretsi was and took her hand.

Mpendulo:i missed you.

Kea:i missed you too.

He kissed her forehead then went to where the cake was. They sang for him and he cut the cake and took a very big portion and went to sit on his chair. People said their speeches thanking him.

Aunty Zinzile: i just thought i should also say something. Happy birthday to you my brother's son. Indeed this had to be done. We know how you are a big help to our family and we did this to show you that we love you. 50 years is not child's play. Happy 50th birthday.

KEATLARETSI

"Happy 50th birthday. " i will never forget the smirk on aunty Zinzile's face. It's like she knew that i don't know his age. How could he not tell me his age? I thought maybe he's in his 30s or early 40s. He looks young. 21 years! Such a huge gap! He's almost my uncle and dad's age! I felt a hold on my hand tighten. It's like he could see or feel what im feeling right now. How could he just keep quiet about such an important matter? I tried pushing it to the back of my head and focus on his party. I didn't want to show everyone that his age has somehow affected me. Aunty Zinzile kept looking at me and i didn't want to give her the satisfaction. I know she doesn't like me at all. All in all the day was fun and wonderful. The other relatives left to his brothers places and some remained.

Gogo:my child come here. I would like to talk to you. She's making me late. I have to go with Bonolo but i can't just go without talking to her.

Me:okay gogo.

My phone beeped and it was Bonolo. "I know you want to run away but that won't solve anything. Stay and talk to him. I'm sure he had his reasons for not telling you.

I went to sit with Gogo.

Gogo: how are you?

Me: I'm good.

Gogo: I know you're not. Discovering his age might have come as a shock. I know it's too much but please don't leave him. Ever since you came into his life he's only been happy. It's good to see him smiling. I knew he had found his wife when he told me about you.

Me: yes his age came as shock but I will not leave him. I love him and that will not change. It's just that this shocked me.

Gogo: I understand. Do you have siblings?

Me: no.

Gogo: you're an only child?

Me: yes. My mother always lost her children and I'm

the only one that survived.

Gogo:sorry about that. Don't overthink. Take it easy and talk to him. You can leave now.

I know i promised gogo that i will talk to him but this is too much. I feel like he manipulated me into being with him. Why didn't he tell me about his age before we could start dating? I had to find out from his auntie. The look on her face!

I take my cellphone and went inside the house. I bump into aunty Zinzile on my way out.

Zinzile:where are you going? Are you planning on running away?

Me:auntie I know that's what you want. Did you think what you said will make me leave? I won't do that. He already told me his age. Excuse me.

I move aside and go to the bedroom and take a shower. To be honest this age thing got to me. I lied

to her and said he told me because I didn't want her to think she won. I finish taking a shower and lotion and get into my night dress and gown before Mpendulo comes in. I feel like this is a dream. I leave the bedroom and go to the spare room to sleep there. But i really can't sleep. He's 21 years older than me! I never thought I would find myself in a situation like this. How could i fall in love with someone who's almost my father's age? My father is 63! What is he going to say? Will he really allow it? But what about what i want? My heart wants him but my head says otherwise. All these thoughts in my head are giving me a headache. I get up and put on my gown and go back to our bedroom. I touch the door handle and debate with myself whether to go in or not. I finally open the door and get in. He was sitting on the bed with his elbows on his knees and hands on his head. I could see that he was thinking hard. I went to the closet and took his presents.

Me:hey babe. I have your present here.

Mpendulo:come.

I went to sit next to him. I gave him his presents.

Mpendulo:thank you baby...im sorry. I know i should have told you about my age. I was going to tell you.

I smiled and kissed him.

Me:it's fine. I love you and i will love you even now after knowing your age. I loved you before before knowing your age so that must tell you something. What i love about you is that you care for me. You leave everything that you are doing when you see that im not fine. You always make sure that im fine. You put me first and you have good intentions with me. When im with you i can be myself. You are just so good to me and i keep falling in love with you every moment.

Mpendulo: you have no idea how happy that makes me. And i promise im going to love you for as long as we live. I'll be back just now.

I got under the covers as he went out of the room. He came back with a plate on his hand and juice.

Mpendulo:i saw that you didn't touch your cake and i know how you love it so i fetched some for you.

Me:thank you. I couldn't eat with aunty Zinzile's stares. The way she was looking at me it's as if she expected me to run away. I don't know. It's like she expected me to react differently.

Mpendulo:don't mind that witch. Can you believe she tempered with my car to prevent the lobolo from happening? She caused the accident only because she didn't want me to marry you.

Wow. She even put his life in danger just because she doesn't want him to marry me? Am i that bad? Why go to that extent?

Me:oh my God. What if something worse Happened? I didn't think she'd go that far.

Mpendulo:but you don't have to worry about her. She won't try anything again. How's my little champ?

Me:he's been so good today.

Mpendulo:tell me if you're hungry. I know you don't eat much when there are a lot of people.

Me:im fine. I will have this cake though.

He opened his gifts while i ate. His smile was everything. It showed that he loved all his presents. I got him a keyholder,a watch and a customized wallet written MM Khoza.

Mpendulo:i love this keyholder. Whenever I miss my family i will look at it. Thank you.

It has a picture of us and the kids.

Me:i didn't know what to get you. What do you get for someone who has everything?

Mpendulo:you're my everything.

He watched me eating the cake until i finished. He took the plate back. He took off his clothes and put

on pajamas and we slept.

Me:babe,between you and Muzi who's the older one?

Mpendulo: im the older one, followed by Mzwakhe then Muzi,Mabutho,Bongani,Siyabonga and Nokukhanya.

Me:where's Mzwakhe?

Mpendulo: he's in Swaziland. He only comes home once in a while. Reason being aunty Zinzile's doings. She did the same thing she did to me his bride to be. From there on he moved to Swaziland. She hated the poor woman just because she was Swati.

Me:wow.

Mpendulo:but we've made peace with it.

I could see that this matter hit home.

The following day i woke up and went to take a shower then went to the kitchen to make breakfast.

Voice:leave everything as it is. You're not yet married into this family. You're not our bride yet. You can't be cooking for us!

Where did she get that? Is it their zulu tradition? This woman hate me a lot shame. I switch off the stove and go to the sitting room.

Khanyo:hey Kea.

Ma:good morning my child.

Me:good morning ma. Hiw did you sleep?

Ma:good and you?

Me:good. Hkw are you Khanyo?

Khanyo:I'm good.

Ma:how is the baby?

Me:good. He's growing.

Ma:that's good.

Everyone came into the sitting room and we all sat

and waited for auntie. She came and sat down.

Auntie:so we are not having breakfast today? Kea didn't you say you were going to cook?

Me:auntie i was cooking and you said i must stop because I'm not yet a bride to this family so I'm not allowed to cook.

Auntie:i don't remember telling you that.

Mpe:Keatla retsi let's go. She will cook for everyone here.

I got up and followed him. He opened the car door for me then went to his side.

Mpe:are you going to cry about everything she says about you?

Me:everyone's eyes were on me! She embarrassed me.

Mpe:i told you to ignore that witch. Can you please stop crying? I will buy breakfast for us and she's leaving today. You won't have to deal with her.

I cry more thinking about how embarrassed i was.

Mpe:crying will not help you. She will always have something to say. If this is how you behave then you're going to cry your whole life.

Me:I'm hungry. And it's her fault.

Mpe:i will buy you anything you want. J ust stop crying.

Me:i can't wait to eat. This baby eats a lot.

Mpe:but you're the one eating a lot. But I'm not complaining. My baby is growing.

Me:what about me?

Mpe:what about you?

Me:never mind.

He drove to Lerato's restaurant and got our food then ate in the car. I finished my food so fast. It was

so delicious.

Mpe:why are you looking at me now?

Me:I'm not full.

Mpe:here. You can have half of mine.

Me:thank you.

I kissedhis cheek.

Mpe:i fear pregnant women.

Me:just say if you don't want me to have your food.

Mpe:you can have it all.

Me:i love you.

Mpe:me or my food?

Me:your food. J ust for now.

I look at him laughing and he joins.

[07/06, 18:58] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 9

A week later

I came home on Friday and i couldn't help but worry. What if aunty Zinzile does something again and the lobolo negotiations don't happen?i don't know how i fell asleep last night thinking about this. I woke up in the morning and took a bath. I kept going to the window to check if they have arrived. When I saw my grandmother I couldn't hold myself. I didn't care that they said i must not get out of this room before they call me. I ran out and met her by the door. I cried. I missed my grandmother. But most importantly i was crying because i was happy that she made it.

Grandma:let's go in. You're not supposed to be out

here.

We went in with me holding her hand. When Rapula and i got married or what i thought was us getting married my grandmother didn't come. She said she was busy. But i knew she wasn't and it hurt me.

Me:thank you for coming koko.

Grandma:your father sent someone to fetch me. When he told me your bride price will be paid i had to be here. My daughter's only child is getting married.

Me:I'm happy you're here.

Grandma:now don't leave this room until they ask for you. And don't stress. Everything will go well.

She left the room and i went back to the window and Luckily they arrived and were asking to be let in and saying our clan names. Now i can finally relax. I know they haven't started yet but im happy that

they arrived and nothing wrong happened.

"Babe,i just wanted you to know that we have arrived safely. I can't wait to see you as my wife. See you later. "

I smiled after reading the text.

"Im happy that nothing happened this time. Where are you?"

"Im at that favourite place of yours. I had to get something to eat. Will talk later."

I put my phone down and just sat down and waited to be called. It looks like my phone is busy today. It keeps beeping.

"Keatlaretsi please meet me at home. I really wanna talk to you. Ke Rapula. "

What does he want now? I blocked his number but he keeps changing them. I deleted the text and breathe out loud. It beeps again.

Bonolo: why are you ignoring that phone?

Me:ke Rapula. I don't want to talk to him.

Bonolo:i thought you cut all ties with him! This is an important day for you he better not ruin it.

Me:he keeps changing his numbers after i block them. He says i must come kwa bone he wants us to talk.

Bonolo:im going to him before they let the khozas in. He must not dare ruin this beautiful day!

Me:im moving on with my life. He must just focus on his wife and leave me alone.

Bonolo:I'll make sure of that.

She got out and i was left with Dipuo, Rego and Mannono my cousins.

Rego:to be honest I think you're making a mistake. Raps wa go rata.

Me:well I don't love him.

Rego:and you've come to that decision in what? Eight months? Better the devil you know than the one dont know. Men cheat and that wont change. When this one cheats you will leave him too?

Apparently all men cheat besides her husband.

Me:if you know so much about that Raps of yours why don't you take him for yourself? Please don't ruin my day.

Dipuo:don't mind her. This is going to be a successful day and just be happy and ignore her.

Mannono:but im with Rego on this one. You go from thaka ts a gago and go for a grandpa. I don't even know what you're looking for cos it can't be money. You have lots of that. He will die soon. The guy is too old.

Dipuo:what matters is their love and not age.

Mannono:be careful of these old men. Why is he only getting married now!

Me:please! You are making noise. Stop talking about things you know nothing about!

My phone rings and i answer.

Mpendulo: s thandwa sami hiw are things going there.

Me:um fine.

Mpendulo:don't lie to me. You know you can never lie to me.

Me:okay. I don't know how it's going. Your family is still at the gate.

Mpendulo:okay. Babe...You wouldn't change your mind about us right?

Me:no,why?

Mpendulo:i just saw your ex. He looked angry.

Me:babe i wouldn't let your family come all the way here just to embarrass them. I love you and that's not going to change. No one will stop us from being together. I chose you and i will always choose you. There's nothing to worry about.

Mpendulo:okay. Ngiyak'thanda Mawakhe.

Me:i love you too and i can't wait to see you. Bye.

"Im back. They've just let the khozas in now."

I released a big breathe.

Mannono: i just saw a man with white hair! Is that your fiance?

She laughed. Like really hard. This is one of the reasons I don't get along with her. I don't know what's funny?

Me: Bonolo did you see Mpendulo?

Nolo:no. But i saw his car.

After a while my aunty came to call me so that we can go to where the negotiations were held.

Me,Mannono,Bonolo and Dipuo went to there. We sat down.

Uncle:which one of our three flowers did you come to pick?

M.uncle:the one in the middle.

Uncle: Keatlaretsi do you know these people?

I nodded as a sign of agreeing.

Uncle:you can leave.

We got up then went back to my room. I could now breathe. I was really holding my breath for a while yoh.

Nolo: please excuse us.

They left sulking.

Nolo: it's done down. You're traditionally his wife. You don't have to cry.

Me: it's just tears of happiness. You saw that man with black jacket? Their aunt caused an accident to stop him from getting married and his bride got into an accident and that's the reason he doesn't stay in sa. She was also responsible for Mpendulo's accident. So I was holding my breath that nothing happens this time.

Nolo: and nothing happened. You can relax. I'm so happy for you. And don't worry about Rapula. I talked to him and I'm sure he will not do something stupid. So makoti wa kwa Khoza how do you feel?

Me: happy! I can't believe this is happening.

The aunties came and gave me advice. They were

telling me how to behave and what to expect in marriage. After that i was told to take Mpendulo's food to him. They showed me which room he was in.

Aunty:don't forget to kneel down. Show them you were raised well.

Me:rakgadi I'm pregnant. What if i fall?

Aunty:you won't.

I took the tray with his food and took it to him. He was with other men from his family. They were eating but not him. I kneel down and put his food on the table then get the water and help him wash his hands. He was all smiles.

Mpendulo:thank you my wife.

I smiled and went out. That felt like i was in there for hours. After i fetched the plates when they were done. He sent me a text that i must come to the car.

Mpendulo: i have something for you.

He reached the plastic and gave me a sphaltlo. Aaaah! It's like he could feel how im craving for

Mme Moeketsi s phatlo.

Me:thank you for this .

Mpendulo:how are you?

Me:im good. I just missed you. I haven't seen you in a whole week.

Mpendulo: now im here. You're my wife. Finally! Even though your uncle was making things hard for my family and also my uncle being stubborn. But im glad everything went well.

Me:i have to go back. They must be looking for me.

Mpendulo:can you please stay a bit? Maybe 10 minutes?

Me:babe you'll have me all to yourself. We're leaving together.

Mpendulo:okay.

I took my kota and went back. I ate it and went to my room to take a nap. I was woken after a while and they were singing outside.

Aunty:it's now time to leave. They've requested to

leave with you.

Me:did i sleep for a long?

Aunty:it must be the baby making you sleep like this.
Le ts amaye sentle. O its hware sentle.

Me:eya rakgadi.

I hugged her and took my handbag and went to look for dad. I found him in the lounge.

Me:papa

Dad:ngwanake.

I went to hug him.

Dad:im proud of you and how far you have come.
Your in-laws have requested to leave with you. Don't forget about me. Call. I love you and if there's anything you need call me. Getting married doesn't mean you should forget about us.

Me:dad you know you come first to me. If it was up to me you would move to Pretoria to be close to me. but you don't want to.

Dad:i built this place with your mother and i will die

here. Go well.

Me:i will call as soon as I arrive.

We hugged for some time and left.

Mpendulo

I looked at the woman in front of me and in that instant i knew that God is good. He gave me this beautiful woman. Im blessed. I have everything a man can ask for.what more can i ask for?

Kea:do you want some cake?

Me:no i want you.

She blushed looking down. I still got it. This old man can still make a woman blush.

Kea:babe our families are here. Be serious tuu.

Me:im serious. I can even kick them out.

She laughed.

Kea:that's taking it too far. They are leaving in the evening and we will have the house to ourselves.

Me:okay i guess a man can only be patient.

Our families are at my place in Durban. They were here for the traditional wedding. Firstly the wedding took place back at my grandmother's place then came here. We then went to sign then had a celebration. It's now official. Im married to my sweetheart. The love of my life. Even though things went quick, i believe this is permanent. I love my wife. I would go crazy if she left me. Before meeting her i wasn't even sure if i would ever get married. But she came and changed everything.

The following day

Everyone had left and now my wife's father,uncles and grandfather were on their way. My wife was sulking because her father was leaving.

K.dad:please take care of my daughter. I'm trusting you with my little girl . I hope that you will treat her well.

Me:i promise to treat her well. She's in good hands.

K.dad:that's good.

Kea:papa i don't want you to go. At least stay for a week.

K.dad: i will call everyday. Ga o sale ngwana akre? You have to learn to live without me always being by your side. I don't have much time in this world. But i know you will be taken care of.

Kea:papa don't talk like that. Please.

K.dad:sorry. We will talk everyday.

Kea:papa are you sick? You're suddenly talking about death!

K.dad:im not sick. Papa wa go rata wa utlwe?

Kea:le nna ka go rata papa.

She hugged her father sniffing. Then moved to her grandfather. After that the driver drove them to the airport.

Me:babe your father is alright.

Kea:he's suddenly talking about death. What do you

want me to think?

Me:we can always drive to Rustenburg when you miss him. You will be fine. And he will be back for the white wedding soon.

Kea:im not getting married while pregnant.

Me:Khanyisile we talked and agreed on this.

My family gave her the name Khanyisile. She brought light to my life. She's the only one who was given a name. My grandmother specifically gave her this name.

Kea:I'll be big.

Me:you won't be big. And you're not showing yet. We are getting married in two months time.

Kea: I'll be five months! Besides, we've already signed.

Me:and i want us to have a wedding. I know you want this too. And you being pregnant will not stop us from having this wedding.

Kea:okay.

I hugged her. I know she doesn't agree with this but I hope i was able to get through to her.

[07/06, 18:58] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER10

Today im doing my last day at work then i will go back to my company. Leaving this place is so emotional. I've been working here for four years. The owner of this company is my mentor. She saw potential in me when I joined this place and decided that she will mentor me. I've learnt a lot from her. I will apply that knowledge in my company. Yesterday they did a farewell party for me and im blessed to have people who love me like my colleagues do. I will always cherish them.

"Kea i swear i told her you are busy but she insisted on coming here."

That is Bontle my assistant. She's actually my

right hand woman. I do everything work related with her. Me and her are very close but not on a personal level. She's also going to work with me in my company. I already asked the boss and she agreed.

Me:its fine Bontle. You can leave us.

She got out and closed the door.

Me: Khanyo what are you doing here? Does your brother know you are here?

Khanyo:yes. Im still on recess so its not a problem.

Me:of course not. How are you?

Khanyo:very good!

Me:you look happy.

Khanyo:i am happy. I wont be spending my holidays with mom and dad so i am happy.

Me:wow. So how did you get here?

Khanyo:uber. I actually ran away. Do you know how your daughter wanted to come here? She said you left her. She was crying.

Me:she cries everyday i leave home. So today I have

to knock off early so we can go to the mall and buy her anything she wants.

We laughed. A knock disturbed us and God! What does he want here? I thought me and him are done.

Me:Rapula dumela

Rap:hey. Long time. Have you been ignoring me?

Me:and why would I do that?

He shrugs his shoulders.

Khanyo:im going to get us food. Im leaving when you leave or your husband will make me babysit your kids. And that's a big no!

Me: wont you get bored here? Or you want to learn simething about finances?

She laughed. She has a really loud laugh.

Khanyo: no thanks. Im fine doing medicine. Soon i will be treating you for free.

She rushed out laughing.

Rap:husband?who's that?

Me: thats nokukhanya my sister in law.

Rap:you are really married. What does that fool have that made you marry him so fast?

Me:my husband is not a fool.

Rap: Keatlaretsi that wedding wont happen. I might have let the stupid traditional wedding happen but rest assured there will be no white wedding happening!

Me:that's not up to you. And dont even try to stop my wedding. If you ever considered me your friend just like i did you will not try anything.

Rap:did you ever love me?it's not even a year but already you got married.

Me:you know i did. I cared about you and you took my feelings for granted.

Rap:we can still fix things. Its not too late

Me:im sorry. Its too late for that. I love my husband. You know? I never thought I'd ever recover from what you did to me. But here i am. I never thought i would love another man again. But my husband

changed that. He showed me theres still pure true love out there. He showed me what true love is. He cares for my happiness more than his own. He loves me without any condition. He doesnt love me for what i have. He loves me for me. He cares about me and not my money. Something i expected from you my best friend. My brother. But what you did is crush my spirit and he's doing a good job at fixing that. Thats why i love him. I love him because he loves me. Because he makes me happy. Im happy when i am with him. More than i ever thought i could be. I never thought i would be this happy and in love. Im sorry but theres no way i can let go of all of that. As i said before. I wish you the best. I hope you find that one pers on that makes you happy like he does to me. Not someone who will tell you to plot on you can rob someone. That pers on doesnt love you. They are only destroying you. You can still change that. Good luck with your life.

"Mommy you're here.why did you leave me?"

And now? Why is he bringing the kids to work?

Mpe:we missed you and we are taking you out. It's

your knock off time.

Me:i was just waiting for Khanyo. Why did you come with them?im at work.

Mnqobi:s thandwa daddy is going to do whatever we want. Who knows?I might get my bicycle.

I didn't see Rapula leave. I just heard the door bang. Well im happy i told him what was in my chest. I just hope he listened and will choose the right path for his life.

Khanyo comes back and i take my stuff and we all leave but not before saying goodbye to my boss. We spend the day in Brooklyn mall buying things for the kids. I swear Mpendulo wastes money.

Whatever Lisa asks for he would tell her to take it. Even mnqobi he got him a bicycle and new games. What I've noticed is he loves his children. He does anything for them. Well,me on the other hand i did furniture shopping for our house with Khanyo while the kids were with their father. I even did some shopping for my husband. I hope he loves what i bought for him. After we were done we went back

home and i got down to the pots. One thing for sure is i married a man who doesnt like takeaways. So i have to cook real food for him as he calls it. I thank God for Bonolo teaching me how to coom. Or else i don't know. I cooked mogodu and pap and put spinach on the side. His favourite. After i was done it was already dinner time. Khanyo had left. She's at Siyabonga's place. I took the food to the table and went to call everyone to eat.

Mpe:smells nice in here. Mmh i cant wait to taste.

Me:sit down. I hope you enjoy.

Mpe:come here first....i love you. Never forget that.

I kissed him. Im blessed to have him as my husband and i cant wait to say i do. The kids came too and we had a group hug.

Lisa and Mngqobi:we love you mom.

Me:i love you too.

Mpe:what about me?

Mngqobi:the food is getting cold.

We laughed and sit down. We started eating. Not to

blow my own horn but ke di gatile. I outdid myself.

Mpe: this food is delicious. Can I have another plate?
Mmh.

Me: okay.

I gave him another one and I could see that he was enjoying himself. After we were done I went to give the kids a shower then read a bedtime story. Lisa's idea. After they were falling asleep I left and went to our bedroom. I took off my clothes and went to shower. I went and showered then dried myself and went back.

Mpe: why didn't you wait for me?

Me: you should have told me.

He took off his clothes and I just lotion then got into my night dress and got under the covers. I took my phone and just checked my emails until my husband came back. He also joined me in bed.

Mpe: os sthandwa sami. How far are you with the wedding planning?

Me: I'm still looking for a venue. I haven't found one

that i love.

Mpe:im sure you will find it this week since you are not going to work.

Me:yeah. And Bonolo will help me since shes not working this week.

Mpe:you look excited.

Me:this is my first white wedding and it's with the man love. So im bound to be excited.

Mpe:i heard your conversation with Rapula.

Me:whatever you heard just know that i meant it.

Mpe:i know. And i love you.

Me:and i love you more ntatemogolo.

Mpe:am i a grandpa?

Me: Mannonno my cousin said so. Said you're too old for me. That i could do better.

We laughed.

Mpe:well what did you say?

Me:that i love this grandpa of mime. It doesn't

matter what anyone says.

Mpe:and this grandpa doesnt care. As long as his wife is happy. Shes happy right?

Me:very happy.

Mpe:if my wife is happy then im happy.

We stayed talking and laughing until we fell asleep.

.....

The next day I went out to look for a venue with Bonolo. We've been looking i havent found a place that i like. Now we are currently on our way to look at another venue. And im already tired.

Nolo:have you found bridesmaids?

Me:yeah. You're my maid of honour.

Nolo:i already know that

Me:then khanyo and Bontle my assistant.

Nolo:you should atleast have 5 hle. Don't your husband have cousins?

Me:i don't like their family.

Nolo: Kea e ketle pele hle mma. You don't like your husband's family?

Me:they are polygamous and they might influence my husband.

Nolo:i hope it's the first and last time you say that! If your husband wants a second wife it wont be because of them. It will be his choice. Since when have you started judging? I dont know you like that.

Me:im just scared he will change on me and want a second wife just like Rapula wanted. His uncle has two wives and his two son also have two wives. Whats that?

Nolo:they are not your husband. Stop those negative thoughts. If you are then whats the use of finding a venue? You can't get married. You have to be sure. We dont want you regretting it later.

Me:i wont regret anything. Im sure.

Nolo:then thats good. You should ask two girls from your husbands cousins then you'll be fine. Now after this we'll focus on catering. It would be good if the owners of the venue also do catering.

Me:the place you work at can do catering and things like those.

Nolo:wow that's good. Then we have to look for your dress.

Me:the dresses are sorted. Bongani's wife is a designer.

Nolo:we have to see her designs first. You cant wear shit just because its done by family. If you don't find a dress that you love we can consider other designers.

Me:im happy to have you by my side.

Nolo:thats what family is for.

....

Im happy that i found a venue. My dress is ready and everything is almost over. What im mostly happy for is Rapula giving me back my house and company. After our talk he said he had time to think about everything and decided to do what is right. Im in my room sitting with Lisa. Mpendulo took Mngobi back home because school holidays are

over. Lisa cried not wanting to go back and it broke my heart. We decided that she should stay. I've been trying to call Mpendulo but he's not picking up his calls. Since yesterday. I try him again and this time Mngobi answered and quickly cut the call. Soon he was video calling.

Me:hey baby

Mngobi:mommy i miss you. How are you

Me:im good. Wheres daddy?

Mngobi:im taking the phone to him.

He was going up the stairs then got inside a room. He went to a bed and there he was sleeping. He was cuddled up to a woman who i assumed is Mngobis mother. The way he was holding her. I felt my heart beat fast. I couldn't believe that this is happening to me again. I wiped a tear and just cut the video call.i joined Lisa in bed. I've been feeling sick and I thought I should let him know but what i saw just made me more sick. I put the light off and slept heartbroken.

.....

In the morning i woke up to whispering. I opened my eyes and there he was whispering with Lisa. I got off the bed and went to the bathroom. He attempted to get in but i shut the door and locked it.i took a very long shower. When i went back to my room there was no one. I lotioned and got dress then took my handbag. I went downstairs and they were watching.

Mpendulo:morning my love

Lisa:mommy can i come come with you?

Me:did you take a bath?

Lisa:yes.

Me:okay. Let's go.

Mpendulo:where are going to?

Me:im going to the doctor.

Mpendulo:are you alright?

Me:if you picked your calls you would have known.

I took Lisa's hand amd we left. I drove to the hospital first. When it was our turn the doctor

attended to me.

Dr:please stop stressing. You're putting starin on the babies.

Me:babies?

Dr:yes you're carrying twins.

Me:my previous doctor didn't say.

Dr:now you must take it easy and take care of yourself. For your kids sake.

Lisa:mommy are okay?

Me:im fine baby.

I drove us back home and Mpendulo was still seated on the same spot i left him. I went straight to the kitchen and i warmed my food. I haven't had anything to eat today. I take it amd go to the lounge.

Mpendulo: Lisa says you went to the hospital. Are you sick?

Me:no im fine.

Lisa:daddy the doctor said...

Me:Lisa.

Mpendulo:can we talk?

Me:can i eat my food in peace?

Mpendulo:why are you like this

Me:im postponing the wedding.

Mpendulo:when did you decide that? And don't i have a say in this?

Me:i don't think we are ready to do this. Let's just wait and when we are sure we can go on with x.

Mpendulo:? We are already married

Me:. I don't want to repeat the same mistake twice. I want to be sure when I say I do.

Mpendulo:what are you talking about?

Me:quit playing Mpendulo! I called and you didn't pick up your calls. I was sick and wanted to know when you were coming back. Mngobi videocalled and there you were in bed with his mother. Holding her as if she was going to run. Do you still love her

and regret being with me? Im used to being rejected. You can tell me.

Mpendulo:what are you talking about!?

Me:you're still denying it. I see you are not ready to talk.

Mpendulo:and where are you going?

Me:somewhere peaceful. Where i won't have to overthink things.

I took my handbag and went to my car and drove wherever the road would take me.

NARRATED

Mpendulo has been calling Keatlaretsi but she was not picking his calls. He was even panicking because he even called Bonolo and she said she hasn't seen her. He heard a knock and rushed to the door.

Mpendulo:baby thank god you're back.

Bongani:hay what's with you calling me baby?

Mpendulo:i thought it's Khanyis ile.

Mabutho:where's she?

Mpendulo:we had a misunderstanding and she left.

Mabutho:just like that? What did you do?

Me:she's stopping the wedding. I ruined a good thing. Im so stupid. When i find a good woman i ruon it.

Bongani:what happened?

Mpendulo:she saw me and Snenhlanhla in bed. It's not what you think. Her husband was involved in an accident and I happened to be there and Mngqobi video called and she saw us.

Mabutho:Bhuti! Cant you see what that woman is doing?

Bongani:you left her and now she wants to ruin things for you. There could be no accident. This is all her plans. She doesn't want you to be happy and you fell right into her trap.

Mabutho:find her before it's too late and fix things.
Would you have smiled if you found her in bed
with her ex?

Mpendulo:no!

Bongani:you see. I don't blame her.

Kea got in and they looked at the door.

Mpendulo:im sorry. Please forgive me.

Keatlalets:i:im going home.

Mabutho: Khanyisile don't take it too far. Sit down
and talk. We are leaving.

The two brothers got up and left.

Mpendulo:im sorry. I swear nothing happened
between me and Snenhlanhla. She said she was
scared of being alone. Her husband got into an

accident and she was heartbroken. I didn't mean to hurt you.

Keatlaretsi:and i wasn't scared of being alone here? I was alone and sick. What if something happened?

Mpendulo:I'm sorry. Please don't stop the wedding.

Keatlaretsi:do you know how it hurt to see you two in bed?

Mpendulo:it will never happen again.

Keatlaretsi:and the fool that i am im just going to forgive you.

Mpendulo:i...

Keatlaretsi:if there's something you're still hiding you better tell me before we get married.

Mpendulo:the wedding is not postponed?

Keatlaretsi:if you still want to...

Mpendulo:of course. Of course. Thank you. I swear i will never do anything to hurt you again. Thank you. I was scared i was going to lose you.

Keatlaretsi:I'm going to make something to eat. Im

hungry.

Mpendulo:sit down. I will make it for you.

Keatlaretsi:it's fine.

Mpendulo:sit down and let me cook for you.

Keatlaretsi:im just making a sandwich.

Mpendulo:okay.

She went to the kitchen to make a sandwich then came to the lounge.

Mpendulo:your phone was ringing.

Keatlaretsi:who is it?

Mpendulo:no name.

It rings again and she answers.

Keatlaretsi:hi.

Voice:Rudo. How are you

Keatlaretsi:what do you think? Im fine.

Voice:im back and wanted to know how tou are doing.

Keatlaretsi:you've heard that im fine. So what now?

Voice:give me your address. I'll come there tomorrow.

Keatlaretsi:after 10 years Farai! I thought you were dead.

Farai:im alive. So your address?

Keatlaretsi: Farai im going through something right now. Come next week .

Farai:you're mad. Anyway see you tomorrow.

Kea:you're the one who's mad. Don't come here!....he cut the call!

Mpendulo:who's that?

Keatlaretsi:no one important.

Mpendulo:you wouldn't be that mad if he wasn't important.

Keatlaretsi:it's my cousin. He's been in the UK for ten years and he just got back.

Mpendulo:so why are you mad?

Keatlaretsi:he forgot that i exist. Even changed his number. Now he wants to see me? He stressed grandma so he must just leave me alone. I don't want him to make her sick again. He must go back to where he's coming from.

Mpendulo:maybe he's back for good.

Keatlaretsi:well he must wait. I think im going home if my dad doesn't come here. I miss him so much. I haven't seen him in a while.

Mpendulo:hay stop. It has n't been a month and already you want to go home. Even your father will agree with me when I say you must get used to not seeing him in a long time. You're married now.

Keatlaretsi:this is my dad we're talking about. You always see your father. Rapula used t....

Mpendulo:do you see Rapula here? Nxaa im out of here.

Keatlaretsi:im sorry. I didn't mean to mention his name.

Mpendulo:don't wait for me.

Keatlaretsi:come on. Let's talk about this.

Mpendulo:do you want me to listen to you talking about your ex?

Keatlaretsi:it won't happen again. Please.

She went to him and stood on her toes so that she can reach his height but she was still short. He bent down and kissed her.

Mpendulo :in this house we don't talk about that name.

Keatlaretsi:no more. Im sorry.

Mpendulo:wanna show me how sorry you are?mmh

Keatlaretsi:yeah?

He scooped her off the floor and off they went to their room.

....

Mpendulo:where do you think you are going?

She was getting out of bed but he held her back.

Keatlaretsi:im going to check on Lisa.

Mpendulo:don't worry about her. she's at Bongani's.
It's just me and you here.

He flipped her over and was now on top of her.

Mpendulo:ngyakthanda khanyisile.

Keatlaretsi:nami nyakthanda.

Mpendulo:where did you learn that?

Keatlaretsi:what do you think i do when we're alone
with Lisa here? Angithi wena uyanghleka so she
teaches me. Did i get it right?

Mpendulo:yes. But you sound funny but you will get
there.

Keatlaretsi:but you're laughing.

Mpendulo:im sorry.

Kea:how will i learn when you laugh?

He laughed kissing her.

[07/06, 18:59] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 11

Mpendulo was brushing my tummy.

Mpendulo:thank you for this beautiful gift. How's she treating you?

Me:who said it's a girl?

Mpendulo:me her father. I know she's going to be my beautiful princess.

Me:the doctor said it's twins,and they are making me sick. And lazy.

Mpendulo:babies please stop making mommy sick. Yes you can make her eat a lot but stop making her sick neh

He kissed my tummy.

Me:ke ja thata Mpendulo? Is that what you're saying?

Mpendulo:but babe you just ate a sandwich.

Me:that was hours ago.

Mpendulo:okay I will order food for us.

Me:no it's mine only. Akere ke ja thata

Mpendulo:okay im sorry. Baby tell mommy im sorry.
Please.

Me:order my food before ke ngala.

Mpendulo:women!you don't know what want.

Me:what is that supposed to mean? Mxm don't even
bother with the food anymore .

Mpendulo:babe i was joking. You have to eat okay?
So that the babies can grow

Me:what about me?

Mpendulo:do you want me to order food for you or
not?

Me :i told you i want food.

Mpendulo:okay. You don't have to cry. I will order
your food.

I woke up the following day feeling tired and weak. I

went and took a bath hoping to be better. After i was done i went downstairs and found breakfast in the oven. Mpendulo left for work. It's just me since Lisa is not here. I took my food and started eating. After i was done i went to take my work things and drove off to work. I had nothing to do at home. Everyone was busy as usual when I arrived. I got down to business.

Bontle:are you alright Keatlaresi?

Me:im fine. J ust alright tired of these morning sicknesses.

Bontle:but it will all be worth it when the baby arrives. J ust hang in there.

Me:yeah. Im thinking of taking leave until i give birth. I just have to find someone who is capable of running my company.

Bontle:okay I will get on to it. Someone from outside or around here?

Me:someone from this company. Do you think you could be in charge while im away?I'll pop in now and then. You did well last time.

Bontle:we both know im not qualified for that. Even though I've learnt a lot from you. Know what? I will talk to HR and they will look at people who are capable of this then you will do the interviews.

Me:okay. But you will have to work besides that person.

Bontle:okay then.

She left and I went back to my work.

....

Lunch time came and my husband came to pick me up. This time he didn't bring lunch. J ust said we are going to a week away. I wouldn't call it a weekend away because we'll spend the whole week there.

Lisa already left with his brothers. He said it's a family thing.

Me:babe can we please fetch Bonolo? I miss her.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile you see her almost everyday. She'll be bored there.

Me:she can come with her partner. I will miss her. Imagine i won't see her the whole week.

Mpendulo:you will call each other. Please. Me and my brothers just want our wives to get to know each other. You can invite her to your ladies get together.

Me:okay.

Mpendulo:you know i love you? You are my life. I'd kill for you.

Me:let's stop talking about killing.

Mpendulo:im serious.

Me:i never asked you. What do you really do? Beside moving peoples things.

Mpendulo:you think i move people things? That's my brother's company. I only came for your things because i wanted to see you. The first day i saw you enquiring about moving your things you took my breath away. I knew i had to have you in my life.

Me:so you spent two months before approaching me?

Mpendulo:yes. I followed you around. You were always so beautiful i had to hold myself from

coming to you.

Me:weird. So what do you do?

Mpendulo:would you believe me if i said im a soldier? Well i was a soldier then quit.

Me:really?

Mpendulo:yeah so now im into transport. But i specialise with trucks. Transporting goods outside south Africa and buses as well.

Me:wow.

Mpendulo:please answer my phone for me

It was written Snenhlanhla and i knew we were going to argue.

Me:it's your baby mama.

Mpendulo:talk to her. Im driving.

I answered and put it on loudspeaker.

Sne: Mpendulo.

Me:hi Snenhlanhla. It's Khanyisile.

Mpendulo smiled. He loves this name.

Sne:who's that? Anyway. I have been waiting for his call.

Me:forget it sne. He won't be calling you. Anything regarding Mngobi you want to talk about you can call me.

Sne:oh it's the woman who thinks just because she's getting married to the father of my son she can be my son's mother. Well i can ruin that marriage of yours before you even get married.

Me:well we're already married. But you're welcome to come to the white wedding. I can send you an invite. So what do you want?

Sne:give Mpendulo the phone.

Me:Snenhlanhla stay away from my husband. Or you won't like it when I come there. Maybe you've tried your stunts on his past relationships but not on me. Im not going to let you do that. This is your first and last warning.

Sne:you won't tell me what to do.

Me:we are done talking about. Bye.

I cut the call and took my phone out sending a text to Farai that we'll meet next week.

Mpendulo:i didn't know you were so feisty. I can't believe that was you talking

Me:she must keep to her lane. You're mine. Her time has passed.

Mpendulo:okay. I love that you stand up for yourself but please don't change. Remain as my sweet wife.

Me:and don't entertain her please. I love you so much to lose you. I myself can't believe that I've fallen hard in love in such a short time.

Mpendulo:i love you. If i was not driving i was going to kiss you. But we'll be there soon and I can't wait to hold my wife.

Me:i can't wait to see Lisa. I missed her.

Mpendulo:this child is taking my space now. And i don't want to hear anything about her sleeping with us.

Me:it's like you read my mind. I was gonna say she

will sleep with us.

Mpendulo:not happening.

Me:im joking.

I kept looking at him while he's driving. My man is handsome. No explanation needed. He just is. After a while we drove into the lodge that they had booked into. He parked and we got out then went to where they had booked. I could hear with the noise that everyone is already here. The first person I saw is Lisa running to me. I picked her up and she kissed my face.

Lisa:i missed you mommy.

Me:i missed you too.

Lisa:are you angry with me?i thought you left me.

Me:no im not.

Lisa:okay i was sad

Me:sorry. I love you.

Lisa:i love you too mommy.

Mpendulo:Lisa come to daddy You will hurt the

baby.

Lisa:which baby

Mpendulo:the one in mommy's tummy. Mommy is going to have a baby.

Lisa:okay. Take me.

I gave her to her father and we went in.

Mpendulo:s anibonani.

Siya:bafo you're here. I thought you were not coming. Khanyisile uya phila

Me:yebo.

He laughed

Me:hey im learning here.

Bongani:it's a good thing that you're learning. How are you and little Mkhathini?

Mpendulo:i can't believe i scored on the first day.

Mabutho:i trust you.

Me: Mpendulo im still angry at you.

Mpendulo:but babe i thought we were fine.

Me:well we were but not anymore. Lisa baby you're sleeping with us tonigh

Lisa:yaay. I love sleeping with you.

Mpendulo:s thandwa sami ngiya xolis a.

They laughed. Mxm.

Muzi: your sisters are by the pool. You can join them.

I went out and there they were. All five of them. I didn't know who the other one is. I greeted and sat on the empty chair.

Lisa:mommy im playing there. Don't leave without me okay?

Me:baby im not going anywhere. You can go and play.

I kissed her cheek and she ran to the other kids.

I went and sat down greeting the ladies.

Ntombi: i really didn't think you were coming.

Me:why would you think so?

Ntombi:don't get me wrong. But you always keep to yourself. Even when we're in Durban you keep to yourself.

Me:well im just not used to having friends. Friends are backstabbers

Bongi:well we are all sisters so you don't have to worry about that. Here we are a family. So feel free to join us any time.

Me:okay.

Ndoni:so tell us about yourself. Who is Keatlaretsi,what you do

Ntombi:Khanyisile.

Ndoni:yeah Khanyisile

Me:well what you see is what you get. Im just a girl from Rustenburg trying to make it in this world. Im an only child. Im a businesswoman.

Siza:what kind of business do you do?

Me:I'm into construction but I'm a chartered

accountant. I have a construction company. Ever heard of BM construction?

Phumla:yes. Owned by Rapula Moletsane.

Me:that's my company. He doesn't own it. I gave him 30% shares in the company when we got married but now he gave it back.

Ntombi:you were married!?

Me: i thought i was. It's a long story.

Ndoni:we have time.

I started telling them about my story. It was nice getting to know them. I actually enjoyed their company.

At night we went to have dinner. Everyone gathered around and the food was brought to us. Something didn't smell good.it smelt bad so i ran to the bathroom and vomited. I felt my husband touching my hair.

Mpendulo:where is your medication?

Me:i didn't bring it.

Mpendulo:you didn't bring it? You know you have to take it everyday!

Me:stop shouting tuu.

Mpendulo:so now what will we do?

Me: you're shouting again. Im going to eat.

I got out with him following me.

Mpendulo:if something happens to the baby...

Me:yoh nothing will happen. Can you please stop?

Mpendulo:you should have told me to get the medine for you.

Me:im going to sleep!

I went to our bedroom and shut the door. I could still hear him talking.

Muzi:bafo you shouldn't have shouted at her.

Mpendulo:she left her medication now i have to

drive back!

Bongani: aint you taking something for her to eat?

Mpendulo: she'll be fine. I don't think the medication is the only thing making her act like that. She wanted her cousin to come with us. And now she's angry at me.

Siya: her hormones must be causing this. Just don't forget to take her food when you go to sleep.

Mpendulo: let's eat. When she's hungry she will come out. Or else she will eat when I go to sleep.

Nxa! What does my hormones have to do with him shouting at me? I slept without waiting for him.

Next morning i woke up and took a shower and went outside. I sat there just enjoying my nature. It was so peaceful. I wish i was back in Pretoria. I'd just cook or order food. I'm so hungry right now.

Voice: Khanyisile breakfast is ready.

Me:thank God! I was so hungry.

I followed behind Ndoni and sat around the table with everyone.

Me:where's everyone?

Mpumi:they took the kids out. It's just us ladies here.

Me:okay.

Sethu:are you fine? I heard you and your husband arguing. Is it true you wanted your sister to come qith?

Me:yeah and according to Mpendulo I'm overreacting. What's wrong with my sister coming here?

Ntombi:nothing wrong. But i understand him. He just wanted you to get to know us as a family.

Me:my sister is my family.

Ntombi:you know what i mean.

Sethu:the way you trust this sister of yours...be careful.

Me:why are you saying that?

Sethu:I'm just saying that you trust her a lot. But you must have some limits.

Me:limits to what? If Mpendulo can be here with his brothers why can't i be with my sister?

Mpumi:your sister is not married to this family. Surely you understand.

Sethu:do you have friends?

Me:no. Bonolo is my only friend.

Sethu:i hope you don't tell her everything. Especially about your marriage. What if she snatches your husband from you?

Me:we must be talking about a different person here. She'd never do that.

Sethu:things happen. I'm just giving you free advice. She must stop being too comfortable with your husband. I see her. Sballi this and that? One day you're going to cry.

Ndoni:let's just leave this topic.

Me:let me tell you something. I don't stand with cheating. If you mean that Mpendulo would cheat

on me with my sister then you're mistaken. But if he were to cheat I'd leave him. If he can have the courage to cheat then he doesn't love me. He promised not to cheat. Not that I'm saying he won't. But if he does then i leave.

Bongi:as simple as that?

Me:yes. If he cheats then it means I'm not enough for him. If he cheats he's still going to do it again. Why stay? So i must just wait for him to bring diseases home? No thank you. That's not me.

Ndoni:i wish i was just like you. I would have left already.

Bongi:why?

Ndoni: shaka is the only man I've ever been with. I don't think i can love someone else. Maybe one day i will have the courage to leave and never come back.

I look at her and i see pain. She's really in pain. I know I've been through a lot and all that but what i

see in her is a broken person. If someone claims that they love you then how come they hurt you like this? This is one of the reasons many people give up on love. Being hurt by the one you love.

Sethu:if you couldn't leave a year ago then you will never leave. I don't think you will leave. Shaka will always make a fool out of you.

Ndoni:are you saying I'm a fool Siphosethu?

Sethu:i didn't say that.

Ndoni:mxm. Excuse me.

Ntombi:you haven't touched your food.

Ndoni:i lost my appetite.

She got up and went out.

Mpumi:Sethu you are too much. Was that necessary?

Sethu:i don't sugarcoat things. That's not who i am.

Me:I'll eat outside.

I took my plate with Ndoni's. I looked for her and found her where i was sitting.

Me:hey. Here's your food.

Ndoni:I'm not hungry.

Me:I'm not going to let you starve because of Sethu. Eat. I'll sit here with you.

Ndoni:thanks.

Me:you'll be fine. Don't take what she said to your mind.

Ndoni:agg. I don't care about that one. That's how she is. She doesn't watch what she says. Thanks for being here. You're the only one who took it upon themselves to make sure that I'm alright. The moment you arrived you could see that something is wrong. Something i cannot say about my so called sisters. One day you will know about this. This family preach about standing with each other

no matter what. But just wait until it's one of their own in the wrong. They will show their true colours.

Me:I'm sorry you're going through this. I wish there was something i could do to help.

Ndoni:don't worry about me. I will be fine.

After my talk with Ndoni i went to take a nap. i woke up to big eyes looking at me.

I turned to the other side contemplating whether i should wake up or not.

Mpendulo:are we going to talk about last night

Me:what is there to talk about?

Mpendulo:you really want your cousin here?is that it?

Me:no. We talked about that and i understood that you want me to know your borthers wives and get used to them. It's not like i will die when Bonolo is not here. The issue is you shouting at me like im a child. Even my father wouldn't shout at me like that when im wrong. You should have just called me and told me that we're going away or asked where i put

the medicine. But you just shout at me in front of all your brothers and their wives. Do you know how embarrassed I felt? You could have maybe waited and talked to me in here. Not gone to Ntshenyetshe matlho bathong. Ke nale maikutlo le nna aw.

Mpendulo: I'm sorry. I didn't know you felt like that. Please forgive me.

Me: it's fine.

Mpendulo: can you get ready for breakfast? I fetched your medication.

Me: you drove back to Pretoria? I already had breakfast.

Mpendulo: I had to. Now go and take a bath.

Me: thanks. Can I get a hug now? I don't like it when you're angry at me.

Mpendulo: I'm not angry. Come here.

I sat on his lap and hugged him.

Me: I love you.

Mpendulo: I love you more and I promise not to

shout at you again.

He picked me up and put me back on the bed.

Me:go and have breakfast.

Mpendulo:it can wait. My wife still needs my attention.

.....

Our stay in Mpumalanga was good. We did a lot of things and visited many places. It's a pity i couldn't do some because im pregnant. But all in all i had an amazing time and i got to be close to my sisters in law.

Mpendulo:babe stop pretending. Wake up. I miss you.

Me:don't you have work to do?

Mpendulo:im not going to work.

Me:okay. So you will stay here with me?

Mpendulo:yes. We are also going to the hospital so i can see my princesses. Get up. Lisa is already up

Me:why do you like waking her up so early?She's a

child

Mpendulo:im teaching her discipline. By the time she starts school she'll be used to it.

Me:okay. I'll go shower and make breakfast.

Mpendulo:you don't have to worry about it. I've cooked already and we're getting a helper. We will do interviews together tomorrow.

Me:okay.

I got up and went to shower. Got dressed in tracksuits. The weather in pta keeps changing. I went downstairs and father and daughter were watching cartoons and eating.

Lisa:where are you going daddy?

Mpendulo:im going to take mommy's food. I'll be back.

Lisa:okay hurry.

God. Im blessed with the best man. Even though sometimes I doubt if this is real or one day i will end up disappointed. He came back with my food and tablets.

Mpendulo:good morning mami

Me:good morning my love.

He closed Lisa's eyes and kissed me

Mpendulo:now my day can start.

Lisa:daddy stop touching my eyes. I want to watch the tv.

Mpendulo:stop shouting. Or i won't cook for you anymore.

Lisa:okay. I love your food because you don't give me veges. Gogo gives me veges every time.

Me:you have to eat them so that you can be healthy and strong.

Lisa:my daddy doesn't eat veges. You too mom.

Me:i do.

Mpendulo:so have you bought your dad a present?

Me:yeah. He's going to be surprised! I can't wait to see him smile. I've been wanting to do this for him.

Mpendulo:you're a good person you know that?And

im happy you're mine. And I'd have to die first or kill someone before they take you from me.

Me:fortunately for you you wont have to kill anyone because i am not going anywhere.

Mpendulo:and im going to make sure of that. Less than a month to our wedding. I cant wait for you to be Mrs Khoza. Keatlalets i Rudo Khanyisile Khoza.

Me:Bogatsu.

Mpendulo:we will see Mrs Khoza.

Lisa:daddy am i Mrs Khoza too because i am Lisa Khoza?

We laughed. She looked so cute.

Mpendulo:u miss Khoza wena. u Mrs u mama wakho.

Lisa:thanda ne mama?

Me:thanda nami Lisa. My beautiful baby.

Lisa:daddy said im beautiful.

Me:he's right.

Lisa:and aunty Khanyo said im cute.

Me:very cute.

Mpendulo:now can i get a hug from my girls?

We hugged him. This. A beautiful family,being happy. It's what I always longed for. I always thought i had it but no. I thought I was happy with Rapula. I had everything planned out. That we would have kids and live together forever. I never noticed that he doesn't really love me because all i concentrated on was the fact that this is the person i grew up with and he will never hurt me. I grew up with this person and he protected me so being married to him is a bonus. I knew him in and out. I knew he wouldn't hurt me. But that was me fooling myself. But now i know better. You can know someone all your life and they will betray you. You can build a man,make plans together. Lifetime plans and he can still leave you. You can build a man and he will still leave you . You can promise each other the world but still break up. Same as women. They can still leave you. Leave room for disappointment. Even if things do not work out we

get up and dust ourselves. We do not let go of ourselves. We move. But never forget your worth. Know your worth. You are worth everything you could ever think of. Never let someone tell you otherwise.

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The drive to Rustenburg was short. We arrived there when it was still during the day. My aunt was there. Even Farai came. We all started with the cooking for my father's birthday celebration. Me, my aunt my mother's sister, and Bonolo and her mother. The man were outside seated with their beers. After we were done we set the table outside. We took the food there and everyone sat around the table and started eating. It was a good time enjoying ourselves. Most importantly I was happy to see my father enjoying himself. He was all smiles and laughing. The best thing was when I gave him his present. I've never seen my father cry but today he did. He gave me a tight hug. I couldn't help but also cry. I was so emotional.

Dad: my child you bought this machine for me. How

am i even going to drive it?

Me:i can get you a driver.

Dad:no need for that. I'll drive myself. God bless you my child. May he bless you with a good life and all that you wish.

Me:i love you papa

Dad:i love you too ngwanake um...there's something i have to tell you.

Me:are you sick?

Dad:no. Im fine. There's someone i want you to meet.

Me:okay who's that?

Dad:she's coming just now.

Soon a car parked by the gate. Dad's car. I haven't even noticed that his car is not here. A woman got out with a little boy. She walked to where we were sitting. I looked at the boy and he looked exactly like me and my father. My heart started racing.

Me:dad who's this?

Boy:happy birthday papa.

The boy smiled hugging my dad. Papa ? Wow. He has a child and i don't even know.

Dad:im getting married to her. And this is Oratile your little brother. Big Boy here's your sister. Say hello to her.

I don't know what was happening. My dad getting married? I didn't even pay attention to the boy speaking to me.

Me:papa wa nyala gape? What happened to you saying you don't see yourself getting married again? You don't love my mother anymore? Is that it?

Dad: Keatlaretsi i didn't want to hurt you with this. Im sorry okay? But I'd love my daughter's support on this.

Me:my support? Now you want my support but you spend all these years making me a fool. You lied to me. How old is he?

Dad:12

Me:all these years thinking it's just us. Wow. Why

didn't you tell me?

Dad:i really did want to tell you but i didn't know how you will react.

Me:babe i think we should leave.

Farai: Rudo you can't be angry at your father moving on. You cant expect him go live his life alone.

Me:it's not about that. The thing is he lied to me all these years. Mpendulo are we leaving or not?

Lisa:mommy can i stay please?

Me:Lisa we are going home.

Mpendulo:stop shouting at the child. Now sit down and talk calmly. You're upsetting the babies.

Me:i want to go home.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile sit down.

He said that with a deep voice.

Mpendulo:now you're going to listen to your father and not act like a little child.

I got off the chair and left. They called me and i didn't listen. I walked until i found myself at Mme Moeketsi's fast food shop. I ordered sphatlo and sat down. I just started thinking about everything. Why didn't he tell me instead of lying? Whole 12 years he's been lying to me saying it's just us only. He has another child. He's getting married. It's not going to be just the two of us anymore. He's going to forget about my mother. I can't believe i was even talking to my lawyer about giving him my house in Pretoria East and the 30% shares that i had given to Rapula. Well not anymore. Imagine having another woman eating my mother's hard labor. I can't have that. They called my order and i sat down and started eating.

Ma Moeketsi:wow. It's been long since i last saw you.

Me:eya mama. Lekae?

Ma Moeketsi:re thotsi hantle ngwanake. Kana i never thought you'd come here and buy sphatlo again. I heard you're now a successful business woman with your own company. O

berekile ngwanake.

Me:ka leboga mama. Being successful doesn't mean i must forget where i come from. I grew up buying sphatlo here and everytime i come home i will buy.

Ma Moeketsi:i remember you and Rapula coming back from school and having your lunch here. Kana ne lele stout gore.

Me:dilo ts a kgale yana mama.

We laughed.

Ma Moeketsi: Rapula was here telling me about hiw he messed things up between you. I really thought you would spend the rest of your life together. You looked so good.

Me:it's life mama. Re tlareng

Ma Moeketsi:are you fine mara?

Me:ke siame hela mama.

Ma Moeketsi:God has really blessed you. You look beautiful

Me:ke a leboga.

Ma Moeketsi:and i heard you are getting married.
Your mother would be so proud of you.

Me:yeah...

Voice:fancy seeing you here.

Me: Rapula o batlang ha?

Rapula: i always come here whenever im home.
How are you?

I shrugged my shoulders.

Rapula:i guess you found out about your
stepmother and you're not happy.

Me:you knew! Why didn't you tell me!?

Rapula:it was not my place. Can we share your
food?

Me:o bua hela o setsi o tsenya letsogo.

We laughed. Mmh! I actually missed this. We used
to share our soft drinks and sphaltos here after
school.

Rapula:i missed this. I nwver thought i would see us sitting together and laughig after what i did.

Me:argh im moving on from that.

Rapula:can we atleast be friends? I cant bear not having you in my life. I ruined a good thing. Ireally loved you and i still do. But i know there's no chance for us anymore.

Me:you really hurt me you know?

Rapula:and im sorry. I'll spend the rest of my life apologising.

Me:it's fine.

Rapula:so you're really marrying this idiot? Do you love him more than you ever loved me?

Me:I loved you. I put my all in our relationship and you disappointed me. So yes im marrying him. I never thought i was going to move on from what you did but here i am. Im in love again and im happy okay? What we shared was amazing and I'd like to keep those memories. I'll never compare how i loved you and how i love him. We grew up together.

That's something im not going to forget. As much as you've hurt me i wont forget the things you did for me. You were that big brother i never had. I actually think we ruined our friends hip with this relationship. We shouldn't have been together in the first place.

Rapula:don't! I don't regret our time together. If there was anything i could do to get you back i would. I love you Keatlaresi.

Voice:unfortunately there's nothing you can do now.

I looked down. I knew that voice without even looking at him.

Mpendulo: Khanyisile go to the car.

Me:im not done with my food.

Mpendulo:i won't repeat myself. Go to the car.

Me:let me go and take my last order.

Mpendulo:hey ngithe hamba. Go to the car i will take the order.

I left the food that i was eating with Rapula.

Rapula:don't worry about it. I will pay

Me:ok..

Mpendulo:hey. Go and wait for me in the car.

I went to the car and just sat waiting for him. I looked through the window and I could see that they were arguing. After a while he came back with a plastic.

Lisa:mommy are you sad?

I didn't even notice she's here. She's been quiet all this time.

Me:im not sad baby. Im fine okay?

Lisa:okay. I made a new friend. Dad said he's my uncle but he's my friend because he's not big like my other uncles

Me:that's good.

Ora:are you angry at me?

Me:no im not.

Ora:okay. I don't like making my sister angry. Dad showed me your pictures.

Me:oh that's good.

Ora:I'm happy to have a sister. I only had brothers.

Lisa:but i can be your sister. Do you know im my brother's sister? Mngqobi. He's big just like you.

Ora:you're my friend. Is she your mother?

Lisa:yes. She's my mother. Me and Mngqobi and our little champs.

I felt irritated and decided not to listen anymore.
Lisa can talk. She never get tired.

We arrived at home and he took out two kotas and gave them to Lisa and Oratile. I went to my room and he came with my food. He stood by the door looking at me.

Me:can i have my food please?

Mpendulo:Khanyisile why do you like making me a fool in front of that boy?

Me:i di...

Mpendulo:you what? You were catching up with your lover? Is that why you ran from here?

Me:that's not true.

Mpendulo:we will talk at home. Now go out there and apologise to your father.

Me:what did i do?

Mpendulo:don't piss me off!You don't raise your voice to your parents no matter what. I won't have my wife behaving like a hoodrat. Go to him and apologise,talk to him. Listen to what he has to say.

Me:but

Mpendulo:i was not asking you. This food wont run. You will find it here when you're done.

He sat on the bed looking pissed off. I got out and went to talk to my father.

..

At 5pm we left north west and drove back to pretoria. The drive was qquiet with only Lisa talking until she fell asleep. When we got home Mpendulo left. He just took our things upstairs and left in a hurry. I took a shower and got into my pjs. I put Lisa to bed after bathing her. I took a novel and read it.

When i heard footsteps i put the book away and slept. I felt him get into bed and hold me. I didn't even wake up to talk to him.

Mpendulo: can you stop this and wake up? We have to talk

Me:....

Mpendulo:i know you're not sleeping. So you will listen to me and listen carefully. That thing of sitting with your ex and talking ends today. Im not going to let my wife be friends with an ex. An ex that still wants her. I hope it's not going to happen again or believe me you im going to kill him. I will kill him and there is nothing you will do about it. We will go on with our lives as normal even after I've killed him . I hope the warning i gave him is enough to stop trying to get close to you. I love you baby. And no one will come between us. So please work with me here. Help me to make this work. Let's not bring ex's into our marriage. I know you love me and i don't doubt it. It's that idiot i don't like. He has this impression that you're all going to get back together. But we both know it's not going to happen..

I sniffed. Tears were falling.

Mpendulo:i didn't mean to make you cry. Look at me please.

Me:should I be scared of you? You're talking about killing and it's not the first time. It's scaring me.

Mpendulo:im sorry. I promise i wont talk about killings anymore. J ust promise to play away from him

Me:can you play away from your ex too?

Mpendulo:i promise. Everything about Mngobi she will call you. I love you okay? You only.

Me: i love you too. And i promise you i don't love Rapula. I just care. But im going to stay away from him.

Mpendulo:that's good then.

Me:what did you do to him?

Mpendulo:nothing to worry about. I just told him that i don't want him near you or he will regret it.

Me:mmh. What is it?

Mpendulo:has anyone ever told you how beautiful you are? And im happy that you're mine.

Me:ireally don't believe that. I grew up being called a fat ugly because I'm dark and i have a bit of weight.

Mpendulo:you're beautiful. Your beauty is the first thing that pushed to you. Then i got to know you and how kind you are. Your skin colour doesn't define you. And as for your weight i don't know what theg meant. I love you as thick just like this. Tomorrow don't make any plans. I want to spend the day with you.

Me:okay. Good night

Mpendulo:babe...

Me:i know what you want but we wait for my appointment with the doctor first and hear what he says?

Mpendulo:okay my love. Sleep...

[07/06, 18:59] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 12

Time flies. Today is our wedding day and my bridesmaids are here with me and the makeup artist is doing last touch ups. I looked beautiful.

Mpendulo made sure to tell me each and everyday that im beautiful and i ended up believing it.

Ma:and voila. Done.

Nolo:oh my God. You look so beautiful. Look at that dress. It was made for you.

Me:thank you. My aunt came and asked the others to excuse us.

Aunt:my sister is surely smiling down on you. You look absolutely beautiful. I know you are goibg to be a good wife. God bless you abd your husband. Be fruitful and multiply. May you have many children that will fill your house with laughter. Happiness and peace will follow you everywhere you go. I love you my child

Me:i love you too auntie.

Dad:and im here to take my girl.

Aunt:don't keep my son in law waiting. He might think you're running away.

She left after saying that.

Dad:i brought your grandmother with.

Tears fell. My grandmother is really here. I thought she wasn't going to come. She's here. When I got married to Rapula she didn't come,said she's busy. Turns out she wasn't busy. She wasn't happy with me getting married to Rapula. Turns out that she wasn't in support of it happening.

Me:granny you're here.

Granny:of course. My child is getting married so i have to be here. Your husband fetched me and your uncle.

She kisses my cheek.

Granny:be a good wife to your husband. Respect him. Take care of him. I love you and i am proud of you.

Me: i love you too.

She went out.

Dad:i cant believe my only daughter is getting married. Now you will be far from me.

Me: papa you'll make me cry.

Even though he had lied to me i could never hate him. I still love him as i did if not more.

Dad:im happy for you. And i know you're going to be a good mother and wife. J ust know no one will take your place in my heart. You're still my little girl. Anytime you miss papa come home. I will be there. I know you will build your home to be beautiful. Take care of yourself. I love you and your mother is proud of you. Dont lose yourself in this marriage okay? And know you can still talk to papa about anything. Come here.

I hugged my dad. It brought tears hearing his speech. After he got out the makeup artist came back again to fix me as I've been crying. After she was done we prayed with my bridesmaids. Mpendulo can worry all he likes. This is my day and im

allowed to be late.

NARRATED

Mpendulo stood there his eyes wandering around the venue. He was starting to get worried. What if she decided that she can't go through with the wedding? He couldn't keep still. It's his first wedding and the bride is not showing up. Him and his brothers made sure that nothing must disturb this day so what must be keeping her this long?

Mzwakhe:bafo calm down. You know women are always late. She's coming.

Mpendulo:what if she doesn't love me anymore and decided to run back to that idiot?

Mzwakhe:i told you to stop torturing yourself with that. She loves you and she'll be here. You see? Her grandmother just entered smiling. She's coming.

He looked at the entrance and saw Lisa throwing flowers coming down to where they were as the song Two Becoming One by Jonathan and Emily

Martin played. Behind Lisa followed Oratile and Mngobi. He smiled as he saw them.

The moment he saw his wife in her beautiful wedding gown it's like everything else didn't matter. All he could see was her. Her father walked her down the aisle holding her hand. She smiled as they were nearing where the groom was standing. As for Mpendulo, when she was near him he turned to the other side. He couldn't hold himself. He started silently crying. It was a beautiful sight to see. Mzwakhe his brother and best man offered him a handkerchief to wipe his tears. The brothers laughed as they had never seen him cry like that. Even the bride shed a few tears as she was approaching. He then looked at the front before she could get where he was standing.

Pastor: who gives away the bride?

K.dad: i do. Khoza please take care of my child. I'm trusting you with her.

Mpendulo: i will.

He took hold of her hand they looked at each other.

Pastor: Before we can continue. Is there anyone here who thinks these two should not get married? Talk now or forever hold your piece.

It was quiet in the venue then he continued. Then it was time for the bride and groom to say their own VOWS.

Mpendulo: firstly my love I'd like to say you're so beautiful. You're the most beautiful person in here. And im happy that you're mine. I never thought one day I'd find myself standing in front of many people saying vows. I never thought marriage was for me. But, one day you appeared and changed all of that. You made me believe that i can change. I loved immediately when i laid my eyes on you. I knew then that you were going to be my wife. And from there i had to work hard for it to happen. You gave me a bit of a hard time but it was all worth it in the end. Because I got my dream girl. My entire life i never got married because i wanted to be sure first of the person that im going to spend the rest of my life with. And after seeing you i was sure cor the

first time. You're my forever. I will love you like it's my last day on earth. I will protect and provide for you. I promise to be a good husband to you my queen. I will love and cherish you. I love you so much Khanyisile.

He wiped a tear that fell on her face. He wanted to kiss her.

Pastor: not yet not yet. I know you cannot wait but now it's her turn to say her vows.

Laughter erupted in the hall.

Keatlaretsi: firstly thank you my love for loving me. Thank you for showing me that true love really exist. In such a short time i found myself falling in love with you and everyday i fall more in love with you. To me, you are someone i know i can count on. Someone i find comfort in. Someone i wish to see everyday i wake up and when i go to sleep. You're the man i prayed to God for. And i thank God that he blessed me with you. I love that you care and love me. And every time you say you are going to be okay i feel comfort in that. Because I know it's from

you and i know that you will be there for me. I promise to be there for you just as you have always been there for me. I will love and cherish you. I will be your love,sister and friend. I love you so much and everytime i thank God for you.

Pastor:wow. Such beautiful and powerful vows. May God bless your union. I pronounce you Mr and Mrs Khoza. You may now kiss your bride.

He held her close to him and bent down. He kissed her and they kissed passionately while others clapped their hands for them. The family came and hugged them. They had the reception and it was good and wonderful. People were enjoying themselves.

Mpendulo

Kea:babe i didn't know you can dance like that.

Me:you haven't seen anything. You look beautiful and i can't wait to to take that dress off.

Kea:aah my love. I can't believe we're married.

I smile at her. Seeing that she's pregnant i decided that we won't go to our honeymoon now. We will just travel around South Africa for three weeks. Away from everyone. J ust me and her. The first time I met my wife i knew she was the one. I knew i wanted to marry her. She had a beautiful smile that day,even though I could see the pain in her eyes. Her smile was contagious. I found myself falling in love. At that moment i only could see her. My heart was at peace. I made it my intention to know everything about her. Even though she was hard to get at first but my charm worked on her. I found my way to her heart. And now we are here. And i couldn't have it any other way. She's my life. I now have a reason to be called a husband. Im someone's husband. Seeing her walk down the aisle was the most beautiful thing. It was confirmation that she's really mine.

Me: Mrs Khoza.

Her:Keatlaretsi Rudo Khoza. I love it.

Me:i thought you were not changing your surname

Her: this is not funny. Why are you laughing? I'm only changing my surname because it doesn't matter anymore. Dad has someone to carry his name forward. So yeah

Me: but you don't have to be sad about it okay. Let's stop talking about this. It's upsetting you and I don't like it.

Her: I'd rather we focus on us and just enjoy our vacation. How's that?

Me: I love that. And please. No talking about Lisa. This is our time. We will see her when we go back.

Her: but I miss her..

Me: ha a.

I brushed her tummy. She was now showing and she looked so beautiful in her wedding dress. I love that she loves my children. She's a good mother to them.

Chapter 10

Keatlaretsi

It's been almost a year. A lot has happened. Now the twins are 10 months and they can stand on their own. Their first words were dada. You should have seen their dad smiling. These two are loved.

Mnqobi and Lisa are always with them. They love playing with their siblings. Mnqobi stays with us now because his mother is in Scotland with her husband. Mnqobi goes there during holidays. I even went back to work. I wasn't used to staying at home. When the twins turned 6 months we got a nanny and i went back to work. Life has been good. The twins crawl to the main door and i know their father is back. Everyday when he comes back from work they do that. Luyanda tries standing and falls and starts crying. His father doesn't move from the door until he gets to him. Then he picks them both. And they start smiling. These moments are so precious. He kisses my forehead and passes upstairs. I set the table so that we can have dinner. After im done i go to the kids playroom to check

how those two are coming with their homeworks.

Me:how is it going here?

Mngobi:im done mama. Lisa doesn't want me to help her.

Me:baby let your brother help you.

Lisa:i know these things.

Me:let me see your homework.

I take it and i see she's getting the numbers wrong.

Me:let your brother show you how it's done. And if it's still not right then i will help you.

Lisa:why must he help me?

Me:you see,there are things that we don't know. Just like you love moving the twins around your brother loves helping you. You must let him help you then you will go to big grade.

Lisa:i want to go to his school.

Me:you will if you let him help you.

Lisa:okay i will let my brother help me with all my

homeworks.

Me:that's good. Now come dinner is ready. He will help you tomorrow.

Mnqobi:okay mama.

I wait for them to get out and i follow behind them. Mpendulo is already sitting waiting for us.

Mpendulo:yoh kunini ngilindile.

His tone was different. O kare o tinegile.

Me:the kids were finishing their homeworks.

Lisa:but baba i didn't finish mine.

Me:you will finish tomorrow baby. Pray for us so we can eat.

My baby loves saying grace.

Mpendulo:morning baby. You were not on your side when I woke up.

Me: i woke up early. How are you?

Mpendulo:im good baby. I will try and come back

early.

Me:it's fine really. You do your work and finish.

Mpendulo:i know this is our family day. I'm sorry but i will make it up to you.

He finished dressing and packed his things.

Me:your breakfast is in the microwave. Dont forget your lunchbox.

Mpendulo:thank you baby. I love you.

Me: i love you too.

Mpendulo:come here.

Me:im sleeping please.

Mpendulo:you want me to go to work without kissing my wife? That's not happening.

He crouched next to the bed and we kissed.

Mpendulo:i love you so much.

Me:have a good day.

Mpendulo:take care of our girl

Me:bathong ga ka ima tuu. You heard what the

doctor said.

Mpendulo:mmh.

He took his bag and left. I went back to sleep.

After work he came back looking sad. I wanted to ask what's wrong but decided against it.

Mpendulo:tomorrow im leaving. Im going to Mozambique.

Me:what!?

Mpendulo:one of our trucks has been hijacked and i have to go and take care of everything there. As soon as im done im coming back.

Me:okay.

Mpendulo:please behave when im not here.

Me:what is that supposed to mean?

Mpendulo:don't do something i wouldn't do.

Me:is there something you want to say?

Mpendulo:your ex is always calling you. What do you want me to think?

Me:is it my fault? I told him im not interested and you were there. You always check my phone. When he calls you answer him. And you come here and accuse me of sh...

I stopped before i could finish the sentence.

Mpendulo:you're talking to me like that?

Me:you're accusing me of cheating. Have i ever cheated on you?

Mpendulo:it's the last time you use that word. When did you start swearing Khanyisile ?Anyway you must stop working and focus on the children. I make enough money for the both of us. You should relax and take care of the children. That's what you should be doing. J ust until the twins are 3.

Me:mxm.

I turned to the other side.

Mpendulo :uthi mxm kimi? Us uya delela wena.

Me:i told you i won't stop working now why are we

back to this topic?

Mpendulo: Be home and take care of our family. Im leaving tomorrow and i don't know when i will come back. We shouldn't be fighting.

Me:im not fighting you are.

Mpendulo: you're just stubborn for no reason.

I ignored him and pretended to sleep until I finally slept. Early in the morning i woke up to him holding so tight unto me. No one said anything. I wanted to talk but he didn't want to have that. Instead he turned me to look at him. We made love just before he left. I cried when he left. It was as if someone died. He left while we we were not in good terms. I got up and just went to the shower and took a long needed shower

It was lonely being home without him. A month passed and he wasn't back. I did what i did every morning. Wake up and get the kids ready for school and the driver was waiting for them. I was not the one fetching them anymore. Second month came

and passed. The thirrd month came and also passed. He missed the twins first birthday. I was no longer sure when he would come back. His phone was not going through anymore. I was even starting to lose weight. Bonolo left for Turkey with Amir. I had no one that i could really talk to. I didn't entirely trust the ladies. We were close but i kept my marriage affairs to myself. Today i woke up earlier than usual and got ready for work. This was the last meeting i was going to have. If i got this big contract then i would quit work for a while. I went to my meeting with Bob the guy i had left in charge before. The meeting went well and we got the contract. We signed the contract and everything. I couldn't be more happier. Now i was left with Bob.

Me:thank you so much for everything. This wouldn't have happened without you.

Bob:boss you do everything. It's your brains that got us this contract.

Me:and you contributed. Which brings me to our next topic. I'll be on leave for a while. I don't know how long but i trust you to hold the fort. Im putting

you in charge again.

Bob:thank you so much Keatlaretsi. You wont regret it.

Me:i hope so

Voice:Khanyisile.

I didn't expect to see him here. It's Shaka,my husband's brother/ cousin.

Me:hello.

Shaka:who is this? Is this what happens happens when your husband is not around?

Me:this is Bob. He works in my company. We just had a meeting with some company. It's not what you think.

Shaka:i hope for your sake you are right.

After that he left.

Bob:and that?

Me:my brother in law. Don't mind him. We can leave now.

After i got my things from work i drove straight home. I went to bed. I was so tired. I slept throughout the day. When I woke up i found my husband's brothers sitting in the lounge. It was Mabutho, Shaka and Siyabonga. I greeted and sat down. Mzwakhe took the kids to his place for the weekend.

Me:hello.

Mabutho: Khanyisile i believe you know why we are here. I heard you've been seen going around with men.

Me:it was just a meeting.

Siya:didn't your husband tell you to stop working.

Me:i stopped today.

Shaka:not because he asked. Because you're pregnant.

Yeah. I'm pregnant again and the father is missing.

Mabutho:i trusted you and believed that you would be a good wife for my brother but i see i was wrong.

Who's the father of this child.?

Me:what kind of question is that?

Shaka:we are busy looking for your husband and there's a possibility of him being dead wena uyamitha lana. Did you even love him?

Me:im not going to listen to you talk things you know nothing about. I suggest you leave.

Mabutho:angithi you decided to cheat and have a child outside your marriage? So now you will leave this house.

Me:this is my house.

Shaka: Mpendulos house. Pack your things. By tomorrow you must be out. We don't tolerate cheating in this family.

Mabutho:are you that cheap that you couldn't even wait for a year?

Me:don't call me cheap.

Siya: i don't know what he saw in you. I knew you weren't fit to be a Khoza wife. Now get ready to leave ke sisi.

Me:im not going anywhere. Only my husband can kick me out of here.

Mabutho:and that is what he would have done. You can go back to your father's house or buy yourself a house. You can afford it right? And before I forget, the children are not going anywhere. Leave alone.

Shaka:and i will come and make sure that you leave.

And with that they left. I never thought I would find myself in this situation. That night i packed my stuff and the kids things. I didn't sleep. I kept thinking about Mpendulo. Where is he when I need him the most? He knew i was pregnant. I would never cheat on my husband. I don't know what gave them the idea that i was cheating. Morning came and true to his word Shaka came to check. He took the house keys. Im glad i didn't sell my house in Pretoria West and i didn't rent it out. J ust that Farai stays there whenever he's in town. But one thing for sure i was not going to leave my children. Im taking them with me or we can even go to court. I took my bags and loaded them in the car and drove off. On sunday night Mzwakhe brought the kids. He was so

pissed off.

Mzwakhe:and you just agreed to leave your house? I told them not to tell you that your husband is missing and they didn't listen. What if something happened to the baby?

Me:...you know im pregnant?

Mzwakhe:of course. He told me before he left. I don't know what got into their heads i will talk to them.

Me:do you also think he's dead?

Mzwakhe:no. Im going to look for him myself and bring him home. Don't stress yourself. Your husband will be back.

Me:thank you.

After Mzwakhe brought the kids he told me that he'll be leaving in two days time and wouldn't come back without his brother. I believed him. I didn't believe that my husband is dead. Those three bastards treated me like dirt. Came to my house and shouted. Saying they are there for the kids. I

shut the door on their face. Since that day i stopped talking to any of them. A month passed and a meeting was called. I don't even know what it was for. I got ready and drove to Silverlake. That's where the meeting was going to be. Cars were parked outside so i parked mine and went in. I had missed my house. The first people I saw were mama and baba. Mama was putting food on the table.

Mama:welcome my daughter. How are you?

Me:im good and you ma?

Mama: Khanyisile you've lost weight. What's going on? You don't even call anymore and said nothing about the baby.

Baba:sit down and let's eat. We will talk after.

Me:im not hungry.

Mama:sit down and eat.

I sat down and all eyes were on me. Mama said grace and we started eating. After we were done i took the plates to the kitchen and came back.

Muzi: i leave for a month and i find everything a

mess! Are you incapable of taking care of the family?

Shaka: we took care of things.

Muzi:you mean kicking Khanyisile out of her house e taking care of the family? What would our brother say about that?

Mabutho:we did what is good for him.

Muzi:do you know how angry he will be when he comes back and finds that you kicked his wife out of her home? Did you think of the baby?

Siya:it's not his baby. She cant fool us. It's not his baby.

Muzi:thula wena! did he tell you that? Cos he told me to look after his wife because she's pregnant! Why didn't you talk to me first?

Siya:what about the men she's always seen with?

Me:so i can't do business with men? Those were clients for my company.

Muzi: and how did you lose Mpendulo cos you three were supposed to be monitoring him? Now you let Mzwakhe go there. What if something happened to

him too? Ay you never think before you do things.

It was quiet in the room. No one was saying anything.

Muzi: Khanyisile why did you leave?

Me:i didn't leave they kicked me out.

Muzi:out of your own house? And what's this i hear about you going to work? I thought you talked with your husband that you will leave work.

Me:i was working before he married me. Why do i have to quit?

Muzi: you're not going to work again until the kids are old enough!

Baba:i hope i will never be called for meetings like these again. Nina nixolis e ku Khanyisile. You did her wrong.

Me:there's no need.

Baba:sicela ubuye ekhaya makoti . We apologize for what these fools did. Come back to your home.

Me:not to be disrespectful or anything, but i can't

come back. I was kicked out of here like a dog. I was insulted. Even had my kids threatened to be taken from me. Even my own father has never talked to me like that. Yes he does reprimand me but not like that. I told your sons i would never cheat on my husband but they continued insulting me. It hurt to hear people i consider family talking like that about me. So im fine where i am.

Mama:isn't there another way i can change your mind? Please. J ust do this for your husband and children.

Me:i don't think that'll be possible. Im not ready to come back here.

Baba:makoti buya ekhaya. These three will apologize and we move forward and focus on bringing your husband back. I would like to see you back in your house today. And nina, who gave you permission to make decisions in this family? Sometimes you act without thinking.

After that meeting i went back to my house and packed my stuff and took the kids and moved back

to Silverlake same day. To be honest i was starting to get tired. Being told what to do whenever someone feels like it.

I was watching tv when Mngqobi showed up. He sat next to me and lay his head on my lap. The kids missed their father. And every time they asked me i did not even have an answer anymore. Months went by and he was not even coming back. I even believed that he's dead. My due date came. Luckily we had Mme Maggie with us. She helped me get ready to go to the hospital. And also we still had the driver. Thank God for that. I was in labour for hours . The pain that i went through! But i was grateful when i heard that little cry.

Dr:it's a girl.

I smiled at that. My little girl. I passed out after that and only woke up late. The nurse helped me bath and they brought my girl.

Nurse:so what's her name?

Me: Onalerona Khoza.

We heard some noise and the family came in. It was the brothers together with their wives. Why would they allow such a crowd in here?

Muzi: MaKhoza siyabonga for le nkosazana yakwa Khoza. Have you named her?

Me:yes. Ke Onalerona.

Mabutho:and a zulu name?

Me:She doesn't have one.

The three brothers apologised but i just choose not to associate myself with them that much. That's good for my soul.

Siya: she looks exactly like Lisa.Thank you for this beautiful gift.

Me:oh? I thought this was not a Khoza child.

Nxa! I wish i clicked my tounge out loud but i couldn't do it. Didn't want to seem disrespectful.

Muzi:so she's only going to have one name?

Me:her father will name her when he comes back.
And her grandmother said she has a name.

They looked at each other sad.

Me:if you're going to feel pity for me then leave. I know my husband is not dead. He is out there and will come home.

Bongani:um can i hold her?

I gave her to him and he was smiling. Out of all these people in here he also believes that Mpendulo is alive. Even though I was also starting to believe that he's dead now i believe he's alive. He has to come back for me and our children.

[07/06, 19:00] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 13

Sitting everyday for something that you're not even sure will happen is useless. It's been two months since I left the hospital. No sign of my husband. I'm even starting to doubt that he'll ever come back. Now i just told myself to learn to live without him. It's hard yes but I'll manage.

Mme Maggie:don't worry about cooking. You just stay here and i will do everything. You must res. You're always up at night looking after her.

Me:ka leboga mama. I will be in the sitting room if you need me

Mme Maggie:okay.

I'm grateful for this woman. I grew up with some of her kids. She's from my kasi. When they say it takes a village to raise a child i put her in that. I can say that she also contributed to me growing up. And now she's helping me raise my children. So we take

her as family here. I took my laptop and some snacks and juice and went to sit down. Before i can even start eating my snacks there's a knock. Will i ever get a break? I got up and went to open the door

Me:oh it's you.

Bongani:is that how you welcome us?

Me:i thought i made it clear that you all are not welcome here.

Mabutho:until when are you going to stop us from seeing the kids?

Me:you can see your brother's kids. But play far away from my baby. She's not even three months yet. So you're not allowed to get into her room.

Shaka:is that why you even shut the door on us?

Uyas angana yini?

Me:youcan't come to my house to tell me that. I thought you said she's not a Khoza baby. So why do you want to see her?

Siya:we apologized for that.

Me:oh please Siya. That was a lame excuse. Okay

so tell me. If your brother dies wherever he is what are you going to do to me? Kick me out again?

Siya: we are not here about that.

Me:Siya let me tell you something. Stop letting these two put you into their unnecessary feud that they have with me. Just because they think I'm not fit for this family you are going to follow suit? The first time I met you you were so nice. I don't know what happened to you. Now if you'll excuse me. I need some air.

Bonga:so you won't let us see her?

Me:you'll see her after providing that she's your brother's baby. Or when you find him and he allows you to see her. But now i don't care. You won't see her.

Bongani:Khabyisile i thought we had already resolved this as a famy.

Me:Bongani i don't have a problem with anyone here. These three have a problem with me. If you or your other brothers want to see Onalerona you're welcome but not these three. If you come with them

then you won't see her.

I'm tired of these people playing all over my head. I'm already stressed but they are adding to it. They don't know what I'm going through. They have their wives with them. I'm the one who has to think about whether my husband will ever be found or not. This thing is eating me inside. I try to hide how broken I am from the kids. But I'm not an iron. I break. And today is one of those days. Now I'm crying. I wipe my tears quickly when mme Maggie comes.

Mme:it's fine to cry my child. Don't keep it inside.

Me:i don'tknow what to do anymore. It's hard.

Mme:your husband will be found. J ust be strong.

Me:I'vebeen strongfor almost a year. Why is he not coming or contacting us?

I leave the sitting room as i feel my tears about to fall

NDONI

Marrying young is good but also has its bad side. Shaka's mother doesn't like me. I can't say anything about his father because he's a man. And even if he doesn't like me he doesn't say it. I've been through hell in this marriage that I even thought of leaving. My mother-in-law has been pestering me about when I would give them grandkids. I remember the day I got shot three years ago. She shouted even when she could see that I was in pain. Called me useless because I couldn't do a simple thing like giving birth to a child. As if it's that simple. That is one of the reasons why I never set foot in the villages again. If Shaka wants to go he knows that he will have to go alone and not with me. Now we are waiting for him to come back so we can all leave. It's my graduation day. I'm sure that woman is the reason he's late. That woman is pure evil. She's the definition of a devil. But that's a story for another day. Now I'm finally a CA(SA). I am proud of myself. I don't know how I managed to pass with what I was

going through. We decide to leave because Shaka is not coming. We get to Hilcrest campus and it's filled with graduates. The ceremony starts and they start calling names. Just as they call my name Shaka comes into the hall. At least he made it. I would have really been hurt if he didn't come. I accept my degree with happiness written over my face. I graduated with distinctions. I smile when I see my husband cheering for me. That's what I love most about him. His support. He's supportive. After the ceremony we all go to our place. They've prepared something. We are going to celebrate. He even took a day off just so he could be here.

Dad: I'm proud of you my baby. You made your old man really proud. This degree no one can take it from you. Anything can to an end but your education will never disappear. My money was not wasted. You knew exactly what you wanted and went for it. That's how it is. Us Zulus we don't give up. That's why we always finish what we start.

Everyone said their speech and it was so good. After everyone left I cleaned the house and put

plates in the dishwasher. I went to shower and then came and dressed into my night dress. My husband's phone started ringing. He must have forgotten it when he went to the study. Let me take it to him. It stops ringing then a message pops in. "Pick up your phone. Or you want me to come to your place and talk to your wife?"

Who's this? It rings again. This time I answer.

Voice:why did you leave me on my own knowing that your kids are sick!? I can't do this on my own. You're also my husband!

My body became cold same time. It was like i died and woke up.

Voice:i didn't make these kids on my own. If you don't come back i will dump them at your wife's house.

I decided i heard enough. I put the phone on the table without cutting off the call. When i raised my

head Shaka was locking the door.

Me:please open the door.

Shaka:where are you going this late?

Me:please open the door.

Shaka:baby i was going to tell you

Me:tell me what? That you're married? That you have kids?When were you going to tell me?

Shaka:i was just waiting for the right time.

Me:when is the right time? When did it happen? Was it the time you'd go to the village and come back after a week? Were you with her?

Shaka:I'm sorry.

Me:how long have you been married?

Shaka:we got married yesterday.

Me:oh that's why you were late for my graduation today. You should have just stayed with your family. What are you doing here with this barren useless woman?

Shaka:my love don't talk like that. I'm sorry. Please forgive me.

Me:when did this start? I thought we were happy. You said if we can't have children we'd addopt. What happened to that?

Shaka:we can still adopt. I only slept once with her and she fell pregnant with twins then my dad said i had to marry her.

Me:stupid me. I believed you when you said their opinion doesn't matter. Your parents put me through a lot. Your mother made sure to tell anyone who cared to listen that i can't give you kids. And this is how you do me? You said there would be no third party in our marriage.

Shaka:I'm sorry about this. We can still have our baby. We can adopt. Even the twins can visit here.

Me:argg. Nxa. Uyangijwayela wena.

Shaka:Ndoniyamanzi ukhuluma nami kanjalo? You're disrespectful now.

Me:just get out of this room. Go to the village. Your

kids are Sick. And leave me alone.

Shaka:i can't leave you alone.

Me:you've been leaving me alone for weeks. What's changed now? I hope she makes you happy.

I got under the blankets and slept with a broken heart.

....

When I woke up i found his side of the bed empty. I made breakfast then went to shower. After i went to eat.

Me:who gave you the right to eat my food?

Shaka:I'm not supposed to eat in this house?

Me:don't you have another wife who will cook for you? It's the last time you eat food made by me. Your wife will cook for you.

Shaka:i just married her because of the kids. I don't love her.

Me:we could have talked about this and maybe tried surrogacy.

Shaka:i didn't think about that.

Me:good for you. I hope she was worth it.

Shaka:I'm going to the village. I want to find out how the kids are .

Me:you don't have to tell me anything. You don't have to ask for my permission.

I let him leave then took my car keys and left. I drove off to the only friend i knew. The others that I was friends with left this country. Lynique and Karen are in China. They are living their best lives. I drive into J ohan's driveway and park my car. I knock and he opens for me. I throw myself at him. He doesn't ask questions. He just hugs me.

Then we went inside his house.

Me:please hold me.

J ohan:why are you crying?

Me:he cheated and had kids. He has twins and has married the woman.

J ohan:I'm so sorry. But he seemed like a good guy.

Me:that's what i also thought. He promised that he would not hurt me.

J ohan:it will pass.

Me:please...Please help me forget.

J ohan: Ndoni you're hurting and I can't take advantage of that. I can only offer you a shoulder to cry on.

Me:I'm sorry i asked that. I have to go.

I can't believe i asked J ohan that. Oh my God what would have happened if he didn't turn me down? What if he took advantage of me? Damn! I got home and parked my car. I see Shaka's car. I thought he left. I get into the house and I'm welcomed by cries of a baby.

Shaka:where did you go?

Me:i have a life outside this house. Whose baby is that crying?

Shaka:it's the twins.

Me:awungi boni struu. I want a divorce.

Shaka:get that rubbish out of your mind.

Me:you think I'm playing? Get this woman and her kids out of here or i will be the one getting out of here.

Shaka:you're not leaving me. We said vows that we'll be together till the end of time.

Me:who broke the vows?

I left him there and went to our room and started packing my stuff. I was not going to stay in the same house as a side chick. I'd be dammed.

Shaka:please forgive me. I didn't consider your feelings. I shouldn't have brought them here. I shouldn't have done it without talking to you first. I promise i will take care of this.

Me:it's too late for that. I'm leaving. I'm going home. You've opened our home to a stranger. I'd understand if it was just the kids. You disrespected me. Goodbye.

From the day i left home my husband has been calling me and i ended up blocking his number. I asked ky father's lawyer to file for divorce. The papers are ready and I'm taking them to him. I knock on the door and he comes to open with a kid on his arms.

Me:hello.

Shaka:come in. Let me put him to sleep. I'll be with you just now.

I didn't even want to sit. I just stood at the same place.

Shaka:I'm back. You have no idea how happy i am to see you. I came to your parents place and you didn't want to see me.

Me:i think we both know the reason for that. I

brought these papers.

Shaka:what are they for?

Me:it's been two months. I think we both know that this was the next stage.

"Shaka where did you put....Oh my child you're back."
"

Me:hello mom. I just came to give...

Shaka:yes mom. She's back and we are fixing our marriage.

Mom:you should be grateful that she's willing to come back. You find a good woman and you cheat. You will never be lucky more than once. I hope this time you will never repeat the same mistake. She should have punished you for the entire year. Come my daughter. Come and help me.

Shuu! What gave her the idea that I'm back? She didn't even give me a chance to speak. She held my hand and went with me to the kitchen.

Mom:you see my child, men and being ungrateful. Sometimes they just don't think about how their actions hurt others. But i commend you for coming back. It shows how much you love your husband but don't let it be a regular thing. If this happens again just don't take his nonsense. Stand your ground. As for that homewrecker don't worry about her. She will never come back here. I made sure of that.

Me:so the twins stay here?

Mom:no. They just visit.

Me:okay.

We cooked and took everything to the table and i went to call Shaka and dad to come and eat f.

Dad:thank you for coming back makoti. Now me and my wife can leave. We've been here for a while now.

I smiled.

Shaka:thanks for coming. I know i can always count on you.

After eating we went to bed. I showered and got into bed quickly.

Shaka: i know you're not sleeping. Can you help me with the babies?

Me:i didn't come here for babies. As soon as mom and dad leave I'm leaving.

Shaka:i lost you once. Not again. I will fix things. Come here.

Me:i have to call my mom. She must be worried.

Shaka:but you've already called her. I heard you.

Arrg. I take off the blankets and went to the cot. Their big eyes were all open. I don't think they are ever going to sleep anytime soon.

Shaka:remember how good you were with Mngqobi. You're born to be a good mother.

Me:to other people's children right?

Shaka:I'm sorry.

Me:don't be. It's not your fault I'm barren.

Shaka:you're not barren.

I bend and took one of the babies. He looked in my eyes. I sat with him on the bed. He looks exactly like his father. All of them.

Me:they look like you.

He smiled. I fed the baby until he slept then took the other. I did the same. Then after that we went to the main bedroom.

Shaka:you know this bed was so cold without you. I missed you.

Me:i...

Shaka:shh. Sshh. Don't say anything.

We let the silence overtake us. It was a comfortable silence. Why is there this strong desire forcing me to him? This is not why i came here. I don't know how i found myself under him but it happened. I found myself panting under him. He filled me with his seeds and rammed hard into me. He got off and pulled my head on his chest. I fell asleep listening

to his heartbeat.

"Breakfast in bed for my wife."

Me:I'm still sleeping.

Shaka:wake up beautiful.

Me:I'm up. Now stop with that face. Let me take a quick shower. I feel hot.

Shaka:mmh.

I took a quick shower and had my breakfast.

Me:why are you looking at me like that?

Shaka:were you really going to divorce me?

Me:yes. As soon as you signed i was going to take my bags and leave.

Shaka:go where?

Me:Taiwan. Everything of mine is packed and ready. I found a job there. I just have to sign on the dotted lines of the contract then leave.

Shaka:i really hurt you neh?

Me:a lot.

Shaka:ngiya xolis a.

Me:don't say sorry. J ust let your actions show how sorry you are. Did the twins eat?

Shaka:they are still sleeping. But i made them food. Mnqobi is here.

Me:really?

Shaka:yes. He came with Lisa. Anyway after bhuti is found we are moving to Silverlake golf estate.

Me:with the mother òf your kids?

Shaka:I'm trying here. Why would I move into a house that was bought for us with her!?

Me:when we got that house it was just you and me! It was just going to be our family. We were going to adopt but you had other plans for yourself!

Shaka:Ndoni.

Me:no Shaka. I'm allowed to be angry! You betrayed me! Hurt me in the worst way ever! So you don't get to tell me anything!

Shaka:that's not what....

Me:you hurt me so much. What you did just proved your parents right. That you don't love me a lot like you say. If you did you wouldn't have hurt me. I ask myself questions if I'll ever be enough for you if i come back here. Will there be other women? That's how it starts. What if the one you have now can't give you kids anymore are you going to take a thrid wife and so on?

Tell me! You've changed me into someone I'm not. I always think badly of people. I almost slept with someone else because of you. I almost did what i told myself i would never do!

I wiped my tears but they kept falling.

Shaka:what do you mean you almost slept with someone else!? Did he touch you!? Tell me!

Me:in everything i said you only heard that?

Shaka:ngizo bulala umuntu! Not with my wife!

He banged the door as he left. I continued eating my food.

Voice: mommy are you crying?

Lisa: where is mommy?

Mnqobi: look on the bed.

They ran and threw themselves on the bed.

Lisa: why are you crying?

Me: i have something in my eyes.

Lisa: my daddy says that when he cries. You left. Did you leave with my daddy? Do you know where he is? Did you come and take him? i want my daddy.

Mnqobi: you heard gogo. He'll come next week.

Lisa: okay. I'm not going to cry again.

These kids really miss their dad. I hope they find him.

After a while of Shaka not coming back i even gave up on leaving. My mom called and asked how Shaka took the divorce. I told her we were not going through with it and she was angry. There was more to how angry she sounded. My dad took the phone and told me about how i would go back home in a bodybag. I didn't understand what he meant because my husband doesn't abuse me. I tried to call again but they never picked my calls. Ma and baba left with Lisa and Mngqobi. It was just me and the twins left. I bath them and feed them. I'm startled when Nkanyezi is snatched from me. It was their mother. Where did she even come from?

Sihle:what do you think you are doing?

Me:you don't have to be like this. These are my husband's kids. What will i do to them?

Sihle:i don't want you next to my kids you witch!

Me:take your kids and leave!

Sihle:you don't get to...

Me:get out of my house! I also don't ever want to see you here! You may have given him kids but you

will never get even a piece of him. After all you're just a stranger that carried his babies. That's all you'll ever be.

Sihle:I'm also his wife!

Me:i won't argue with you. Where's your ring?

Sihle:he's still going to buy it.

Me:with what money? Mine? Good luck.

Sihle:you don't work so what money are you talking about?

Me:oh i see you don't know. His money is my money and I'm going to make sure he divorces you. And your dearest mother in law will do nothing about it. And I'm going to make sure you leave with nothing but your clothes. Now leave my house.

Sihle:I'm not going anywhere. I will sit here and wait for my husband. You leave for two months and think life will stop?

Me:okay sit here and wait for him. Wait for your husband.

I left her sitting on the couch. The babies moved around the house playing and making noise. I cooked and put Shaka's food in the microwave.

Voice:what's the noise that I'm hearing from the gate?.

Me:talk to your wife. Put her in her place. I didn't come back to be disrespected.

Shaka:Wena what are you doing here?

Sihle:I'm here for my kids or else this barren useless woman might kill them.

Oh I've herad enough of that.

Shaka:you want me to stop you from having access to the twins? If that's what you want then keep on doing that. And sign the divorce papers. I won't repeat myself. Now get out of here!

After she left i followed behind Shaka.

Me:let me warm your food for you before I leave.

Shaka:leave?

Me:yes. I'm going back to PMB.

Shaka:kwenzenjani manjhe?

Me:I'm going to fetch my clothes. Or what will i wear here?

He hugged me tightly.

Shaka:i thought you were leaving me again.

Me:I'm not going anywhere.

Shaka:I'm sorry for barging out earlier on.

Me:it's fine. Let's sit down and talk.

Shaka:who did you almost sleep with? Did something happen between you?

Me:nothing happened. He said no. He said he couldn't take advantage of my pain. So don't stress about it.

Shaka:I'm sorry. It's my fault. If i didn't hurt you that wouldn't have happened. Now I'm making a promise to you. I will never put you through what i did again.

Me: promise me one thing. That that woman will never set foot in our house again. And that nothing will happen between you whenever you go to fetch the kids. I don't want to have to interact with her. And that you will divorce her. I won't be second best. I can't and won't be a someone's sister wife. That i won't stand for. When i come back here you must be divorced from her.

.....

I got home and mom and dad were sitting in the tv room. My dad has retired from his job so they are always home.

Mom: You're back. How are you?

Me: I'm good mom how are you?

Mom: good. Did he sign?

Dad: why do i feel like you're forcing her to get a divorce? Let her decide for herself.

Mom: I'm the one who had to deal with her suicide

attempts while you slept. I had to go through everything on my own for two months. You don't know the pain i felt with her these past two months. They even call her a witch there. What if one day we wake up and our baby has been burnt to death? Do you want us to go through that?

Dad:i understand where you are coming from but let her do this on her own.

Mom:i know you love that boy for our daughter but don't let it make you blind and not see what's going on. I don't want anyone mistreating my daughter.

Dad:i also want her to leave that boy but it must be on her own terms. Let's not influence her please my wife. Let's give her time to deal with this herself.

I went to my room and cried myself. How can I go back to him when my mom is hurting like this? How will i be happy when my mom is not? I take my phone and call him. Someone answers but it's not him. It hasn't even been five hours since I left but already he's with her.

Me:what are you doing with my husband's phone?

Sihle:our husband. Anyway he came to visit his family.

"What are you doing with my phone!?"

Shaka:babe did you arrive well?

Me:you're with her

Shaka:she's lying. I didn't come to visit her. I'm not even at her place.

Me:but you're together.

Shaka:the twins are sick again. We are at the hospital.

Me:what's wrong with them?

Shaka:they were vomiting and they had blood coming out of their nose. Now we're waiting for a plane. We are going to kzn

Me:do you want me to come?

Shaka:please.

Me:tell me when you land.

Shaka:i love you.

Me:i love you too.

I took my suitcases and left the room. I hadn't unpacked. I pushed them out and my parents looked at me.

Mom:where are you going?

Me:i have to go back mama.

Dad:you have a dark cloud hanging over you. That family has bewitched you! You're 23. You still have a lot to achieve. You can still get married again. You're too young. My only problem was allowing you to get married while young. Now look what's happening.

Me:dad no one has bewitched me. I'm going back on my own accord.

Dad:if you leave through that door don't ever come back. When that mother in law of yours kills you tell them not to bring your body here. You're no longer part of this family.

Me:dad you can't say that.

Mom:he's right. Don't come back here. We've accepted that our daughter is dead. We only have one daughter.

I pushed my bags and leave the place I've always been welcome at. Now I'm no longer considered part of. I cried the whole way until i couldn't. When we arrived at home i took my bags to my room. We didn't go to our house as my husband will come here first. I passed the lounge so fast. I sat on the bed. There was a knock by the door. The person on came in.

Me:who is it?

Kea:oh sorry for just barging into your room. It's Kea.

Me:oh.how are you?

Kea:I'll be fine. How are you? I saw how hurt you looked when you walked past the lounge.

Me:it's nothing.

Kea:you can talk to me. I've had my fair share of problems.

Me:my husband cheated on me and had twins then married the mother. I wanted a divorce but now I've changed my mind. My parents want nothing to do with me. They say I'm no longer welcome at home. Imagine that.

Kea:believe me your parents are just hurt and angry. My father wanted nothing to do with Mpendulo at first. He wanted me to stay with my ex. But i didn't give up on him. I showed my dad how much i love Mpendulo and he accepted him. Things will work out just fine. Do not worry.

Me:i went against my parents for somebody I'm not even sure about.

Kea:if you love him enough then you will stand by his side.

Me:even if it's killing me inside?

Kea:talk to him and tell him what's inside you.

Me:talking to him is like talking to a pole that's just standing there. He listens and does his own thing. It's like I'm talking to a statue.

We laughed. Shaka really doesn't listen.

Kea:make him listen to you. Only you know how. Im going back to the others now. Don't be here alone. Come and join us.

I followed behind her. There was noise in the lounge. Oh the brothers have arrived. I looked for my husband and he stood up after seeing me. He came and hugged me.

Shaka:have you been crying?

Me:I'll be fine.

Shaka:come and sit down.

Me:how are the kids?

Shaka:they'll be fine. We are waiting for Mzwakhe then we can leave.

Me:can't i stay here?

Shaka:i want you next to me. I'll be able to focus.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:00] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 14

NDONIYAMANZI

Mzwakhe arrived and we had to leave. It took a lot for us to leave. Whenever the car was started Nkanyezi or Nkazimulo would cry. On the other side i was starting to get irritated. Sihle couldn't stop talking. When we got there a traditional healer had already been called. I know i don't like this woman Sihle but i sympathise with her. She has been crying a lot today. I'm sure it's very hard seeing your children sick.

Shaka:go and rest in our room.

Me:no. I'll just stay outside here.

Shaka:it's hot here.

Me:I'll stay under the shade. We're leaving today right?

Shaka:yes. I will buy food for you.

Me:thanks.

Shaka:here. You can go and stay in the car.

Me: I'll be fine. Okay you can leave the key.

I took the key and he kissed me. I cleared my throat as people were looking at us. He went to the hut.

Voice:hi.

Me:hi. How can i help you?

These village women like bullying me just because I'm young. But now i don't care. I don't know what this one wants here

MaCele:sisi unjani?

Me:ngiya phila nina?

MaCele :siya phila sisi. Uya bizwa ekhishini?

Me:for yini?

MaCele:haybo sisi kuyaphekwa ekhishini.

Me:i don't cook here.

"Yoh obhuti Shaka nokuzibizela amaindiya la ekhaya." She mumbled that.

Me:Maindiya ayenzeni manje bo?

MaCele:uzodlani umyeni wakho sisi?

Me:angithi I'm not alone in his life. Weren't you celebrating when they had their marriage while I was in the dark? Even now you must just leave me alone. Go and tell her to help you cook.

MaCele:her kids are sick. Come and work with us.

Me:I did not have a traditional wedding here. And the parents did not come to my wedding. They Don't recognize me as one of you here. So when it comes to cooking i must slave?

MaCele:you will not eat here if you don't work.

Me:i can buy my own food.

She left furious. I sat alone under the shade until they were done. They got out of the hut happy and cheerful. I had a pain in my heart. I felt like i don't belong.

Shaka:they are done. The twins will stay here with their mother. I will just visit them as i can't stay here.

Me:they wanted you to stay here?

Shaka:yes. If the kids leave the village they will always be sick. But i can't stay here because i have a job in Pretoria and you. I don't want these people mistreating you.

I just nodded.

Me:are we leaving?

Shaka:yes. Let's go.

NARRATED

Sihle:ma you said this would work. I even signed the divorce papers. J ust like you said. I lost my husband to that barren thing!

Ma:that's my plan. Everything will work out just fine. J ust wait and see.

Sihle:if it doesn't work out I'll cause trouble for you. I

know your big secret. Don't forget that.

Ma:do you think I'd forget when you threaten me every chance you get? I have a lot to lose!

Sihle:it's good that you know. Or I'd show you what I'm made of.

Shaka:babe your phone is ringing.

Ndoni:answer it. I have flour on my hands.

He pressed the yes button and put it on loudspeaker.

Voice:hey Ndoni

Ndoni:um hi. How are you?

J ohan:not good. I've been thinking about you.

Ndoni:thinking about me?

J ohan:i regret turning you down that day. You know I've always loved you. I just respected the fact that you're in a relationship. Now that you are getting a divorce maybe we can try something out.

Ndoni:um i don't think that will be possible. I love my husband and we're back together.

J ohan:how long again before he hurts you again?
What about Taiwan? I bet he doesnt want you to go.

Nandi: it's my decision not to go.

J ohan:i can relocate with you. This is a good
opportunity that you're letting go of.

Shaka went to his wife and kissed her.

J ohan:Ndoni are you still there?

Ndoni:aah

J ohan:are you alright?

Ndoni:uhm stop doing that im on the phone! J ohan
can we talk some time later? I'm busy baking here.

J ohan:okay call me.

Shaka:do you like what I'm doing to you? I think we
should take this to the bedroom. There are kids here.

Ndoni:stop.

She started laughing. The call got dropped.

Shaka:and that's how you deal with small boys.

Ndoni:did you have to? I'm sure he's hurt right now.

Shaka:it's not my problem. Mind giving your husband some loving my Usain Bolt?

Ndoni:if you don't stop using that name i won't be responsible for my actions.

Shaka:you should have joined athletics. You used to run back then. But i just couldn't let you go.

Ndoni:you didn't like it when i used to run.

Shaka:because you'd fall every time and it hurt me seeing you like that.

Ndoni:well i liked it when you danced for me. I don't know what was going on with you that day. You danced so much for me. Be uphethwe yini vele?

Shaka:uthando MaZulu. Uthando.

Ndoni:i miss Ndu so much. Do you think i should call his father and maybe he can come during holidays?

Ndoni:babe go and receive the things i ordered outside. Please.

Shaka:talk to your brother. He won't say no.

Shaka:uyangi thuma manjhe?

Ndoni:I'm busy. I'll be done aoon

Shaka:what is it?

Me:it's beds for the kids and Ndumis o. I'm going to decorate their rooms.

Shaka:you'd do that for my boys?

Ndoni:our boys. I've accepted my fate tyat i wont have kids so you don't have to walk in eggs hells when the twins are here. They will heal and vis it.

Shaka:you have a beatiful heart. Thank you.

"Hey babe look what i brought? Your favorite "

Ndoni:wow she even know your favorite.It hasn't even been a week since you divorced and already she's here to win you back. Will i ever have peace here?

Shaka:babe...

Sihle:here have a taste.

Ndoni:you're taking it?

Shaka:I'm very hungry and you're not done yet.

Ndoni:nxa! Stay with her!

Shaka:Ndoni!

Ndoni:I'm done fooling myself. Please sign the divorce papers.

Sihle:you don't have to leave. We can co-exist.

Shaka:babe we can talk about this. I didn't say i want her back here. J ust eating the cake she brought doesn't mean anything.

Ndoni:i saw how you looked at her. I hope when the muti they served you stops working it won't be too late.

NDONI

I pushed my bags looking at this place i called home for six years. I book the next available flight and leave. He signed the divorce papers. I thought he would fight for our love. I always put a lot of work in our relationship. It's time i put myself first. The uber drives me to the airport and tears can't stop falling. I reach there and wait for my flight.

When they call it i leave. There's not even an ounce telling me to get out or regret getting in the plane. I've had enough. Instead of going to Taiwan i opted for J apan. I will just work there with no one knowing where i am. I've always put everyone before me. Now it's time i put myself first. Even my parents want nothing to do with me because of a man. I don't know for how long i will stay in J apan but whatever happens happens. Getting married at a young age had it's good and bad. I was really happy in my marriage for the first four years. I did everything i ever dreamt of. But most importantly i was loved. No one ever loved me like Shaka did. He stood up for me. Put me first in everything. I think him wanting kids changed. It put strain on our marriage. And i think blaming him won't be fair. I couldn't give him what he wanted. Maybe we were really not destined to be together. Now here's to my new life in J apan. I hope J apan has something good for me.

KEATLARETSI

My baby turned 5 months last week and i decided to visit home. I haven't been there in a while.I woke up and got ready and bathed Karmen. That's the name her grandma gave her. I dressed her in her clothes and took my things. I kissed the twins goodbye and waited waited for the driver.They were gonna be left with their nanny. The door opened

Me:we can go if you are ready.

He said nothing.

Me:I...

Words left my mouth. There stood my husband. Looking so thin. He had lost so much weight. I looked properly and it was him. I put Karmen on the couch and ran to him. I held him so tight. I felt like if i let go it would be a dream and he would disappear. Tears were falling on my eyes.

Mpendulo:shshh

He brushed my back while I cried. The nanny took Karmen and left with her. I cried. Cried for a while.

My husband was back. Hes alive. That's all that matters.

Mpendulo:im sorry.

We stayed just like that no one moving. I was even shaking with the way i was. He picked me up and went to our room. He layed me on the bed and lay beside me. The only thing you could hear were my sniffing. I cried until i even had a headache. I don't know how i fell asleep but i woke up to tiny hands touching me. I knew the twins were in my bedroom. I opened my eyes and looked around. There he was holding our daughter walking around the room. I sat down and looked at him.

Ayanda:mama

Luyanda:baba

He smiled and kissed their foreheads. They didn't forget him.

Mpendulo:uvukile mama

I smiled. I was happy that he was home.

Mpendulo:she's falling asleep. Let me take her to

the nursery.

I waited for him and he came back and sat on the bed. The twins were so into him and didn't want to let go.

Me:does your family know you're back?

Mpendulo:this is the first stop i made.Mzwakhe dropped me and left.

His phone rang and he dropped it.

Mpendulo:i just want to be with you today without people crowding me. Let's just spend our day in here.

Me:okay. Are you alright? Should I make you food?

Mpendulo: I've already eaten. I cooked while you were sleeping.

Me:okay. What happened?

Mpendulo: things went wrong. The people that hijacked the truck came after me. I was alone and they were a lot. There was nothing i could have done. They attached me and left me to die. I only woke up in some man's house. He nursed me back

to health. I didn't remember who i was. Didn't know where i am from. Knew nothing about myself and the old man said he will keep me until I remember.

Me:so you didn't remember anything this whole time?

Mpendulo:that's what the man said.

Me:im just happy you're home. Nothing else matters.

Mpendulo:you've lost weight.

Me:i was stressed with everything that was going on. I couldn't cope.

Mpendulo: Mzwakhe told me. Im not going to leave you again.

We stayed there in bed and i preferred it like that. Just be quiet and forget about everything we both went through.

THREE MONTHS LATER

SIHLE

It's been three months since that little Indian girl Ndoniyamanzi left. They looked everywhere for her and couldn't find her. It's good that she left. Now it's my time to enjoy my life and get what i want. The life that I've always wanted. Dreamt of. She's still young. She will meet someone and fall in love. I've moved in with Shaka. We even took our babies to stay with us. That stunt of the twins falling sick when they leave the village? That was all his mother's doings. The twins are perfectly fine. She was the one making them sick and i had to go with her plan to get what i want. Now i have everything that I've always needed. Now me and Shaka are in bed after our hot steamy session. I've never met a man as romantic as him. He planned a romantic dinner for us last night. It was so beautiful. I think that's one of the reasons Ndoni fell for him. He might even manage to distract me from my mission. But Things seem to be working out. I look at him and smile.

Shaka:i love you so much Ndoniyami.

Is this what my life is going to be like? Does he see Ndoni in me? He knows I'm not her but whenever we have sex he calls me Ndoni. This girl is giving problems from wherever she is without even trying. I think it's time i go back to using the muti that his mother gave me. I had stopped using it. Now i will use it again. There's a knock on the door. Shaka gets up and rushes to the door then i go to shower. When im done i find him getting out of the other shower. He gets dressed quickly and goes to the lounge.

Shaka:we can talk now

Mpe:where is MaZulu?

Shaka:i don't know.

Mpe:you don't know where your wife is?

Shaka:i signed the divorce papers and she left. I tried to look for her and i can't find her. Even her parents don't know where she is.

Mpe:why did you sign them damnit!?

Shaka:i don't know what came over me. It was like something was pushing me to do it.

Mpe:so who was that you were talking to?

Shaka:It's Sihle.

Mpe:oh now i see why your wife left you. What then if she moves on? Do you want to die alone and miserable?

Shaka:i proposed to Sihle last night. We are getting married.

Mpe:there's no marriage that is happening here. We only will accept MaZulu and no one else. Look for her and find her.

Shaka:she doesn't want to be found. So i should stop living my life?

Mpe:so you're just going to stay with someone you don't love?

Shaka:she loves me. I will learn to love her. She's mature unlike Ndoni. She wont complain at everything.

Mpe:you made her complain. You were happy when

you got married and everything was going well the first few years. Then you cheated. That's where the problem started. You made her insecure.

Shaka:i love Ndoni and i will never completely give my heart to someone else. She left with my heart. She's the only woman I've ever truly loved. No one deserves to be loved like i loved her. And she's the first one who loved me without any conditions. She gave me true love and i was happy with her. I will always keep those memories with me. I will try to move on and love someone else. And Sihle can be that someone.

Mpe:okay. Do whatever you want. But know that you will never set foot in that house in Silverlake. We bought that house as a gift for your wedding with MaZulu and it'll stay like that. I will rent it out and open an account for the twins.

Shaka:but i can stay there!

Mpe:not with someone else but MaZulu. When you've found her then you can move in there. With her. Not some spineless harlot.

He said that after he saw me. Me? Is febe?
Uyangijwayela.

Me:am i the harlot?

Mpe:if the shoe fits.

Me:says someone who is married to someone 21
years younger than them.

Mpe:you will never be a Khoza bride. I will make
sure of it.

Me:go to your little bitch and leave us alone. You're
no longer welcome here.

I didn't see it coming but Shaka stood up and
clapped me twice. My cheek hurt.

Me:you slapped me.

Shaka:and i will do it again if you don't pack your
things and leave my house. The engagement is off.
You can sell that ring.

Mpendulo was fuming.

Shaka:you're still here?

Me:just because i said what i said? It's the truth.

What does that Kea have that has everyone so overprotective of her? First it was your little wife now it's her!

Shaka:leave! I don't ever want to see here again! I will communicate with my mother about the kids. And don't do anything stupid because i have full custody of the twins and i can take them any time i want. So trade carefully.

Me:so you were using me to release your stress? I hope your Ndoni never comes back then you can die miserable and alone nxa!

Shaka:at least i won't be with some stupid bitch. Why don't you use the money that i give you to do something valuable? Like go to school and stop running after men? Cos that's all you'll ever be good at. Do something for a change man!

Wow! The look he gave me after saying that. I sat on the couch and cried as he went to the bedroom. So that's how he sees me? Stupid and useless? Now I'm determined to make this mission I'm on work. I'm going to feed him that muti. Why did I stop

using that muti!?

TO BE CONTINUED...

[07/06, 19:00] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 16

On s unday morning i woke up and got ready for my trip to Rustenburg. I am taking Oratile back. He didn't leave with our parents. The time dad was here i had a long week having to pretend that everything was fine. They were here to meet with Amir's family and when they left i was so relieved.

I took a quick shower and went to check on Oratile. He was already up and dressed.

Me:o feditse boy?

Oratile:eya ke fedits e.

Me:okay. You can go and have breakfast. Then we'll leave after that.

I went to the helpers room. We got a helper because there's a lot to do with both of us working.

Me:mama ke ya gae. O ka rata go ya go tlhola kwa gae kgotsa go siame?

Mme: nka na ka tsamaya le wena.

Me:okay. O ka nna wa ipaakanya. We will leave after breakfast.

Ayanda:mama

Me:come my boy.

I found Mpendulo talking on tye phone and i just waited by the door and listened.

Mpendulo:hey wena! I told you that what we had was nothing and it's over. I told you i have a wife that i love! And i didn't know what was happening there. I lost my memory! I didn't even know who i

was.

....

Mpendulo:so what do you want me to do about that?
Get it into your head. It's over.

I went in as Ayanda was making sounds. I went to
the closet and took my handbag.

Mpendulo: Khanyisile uyaphi?

Me:it's still early for your questions.

Mpendulo:i have to know where you are so that i
can protect you.

Me:protect me from what? Pity you can't protect me
from you.

Mpendulo:where are you going?

Me:not that it's any of your business but im going to
Rustenburg.

Mpendulo:are you coming back today?

Me:yes.

Mpendulo:leave the kids. I will look after them.

Me:it's not a problem. Im taking mme Mamiki with.

Mpendulo:you can leave the kids.

Me:if Thando cries please call me.

Mpendulo:okay.

We went downstairs to have breakfast and after that we left. Lisa wanted to come with and i had to take her because I knew she wasn't going to agree if i said no. I didn't take the driver with me. . I drove home after dropping the nanny off. I passed by mma Moeketsi and bought three kotas.

Lisa:are we sleeping here?

Me:yes. We will leave tomorrow.

Lisa:i miss dad.

Me:we can call him.

Lisa:okay. But now i want to eat.

I ate my kota and after that i went to sleep. I woke up after a while and went to the shisanyama and bought meat and pap. When we arrived dad was not around. I went back home and we ate our food.

Mpendulo couldn't stop calling. It was starting to irritate me.

Me:hello.

Mpendulo:ni right?

Me:yes

Mpendulo:are you on your way? Be careful driving on the rain.

Me:we are not coming back today. We will drive back tomorrow.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile ungang hlanyisi.

Me: i said i will come back tomorrow. I can't change now when ive already told the helper that we will drive back tomorrow.

Mpendulo:it's not like we need her. We can let her go.

Me:until you decide to leave again. She needs this job. We've just hired her!

Mpendulo: if you don't leave in the morning im coming for you there. How are we going to fix

things if you're not here?

Me:bye.

Mpendulo:ngis akhuluma nje. Kanti yini engaka uyi jagele? Ukhona yini u Rapula lapho?

Me:wow. Do you really think I would keep Rapula here?

Mpendulo:what do you want me to think? Angithi awfuni ukbuya ekhaya. Give Lisa the phone.

Me:baby here. Daddy wants to talk to you.

I gave her the phone and they talked and laughed. As they were talking i heard a hooter outside. I went out to check.

"I was passing and saw a car here and thought it's you."

Me: I can't believe that it's you. Where have you been all this time mlungu?

His name is Rickus. We called him mlungu. His family came to this village long ago and settled here. The first time we met him me,Bonolo and Farai were playing and he came kicking his soccer ball. It hit

me and i fell. Then Farai was like "hey wena mlungu. Why did you hit my sister?" I won't forget that day. He was so scared. Lol. After that we became friends. Then after matric he left.

Mlungu:you're still using that name?

Me:come in.

Lisa was still talking with her dad.

Me:how are you?

Rickus:im good. It's so good to see you.

Lisa:cha baba. Nghleli no ma no Oratile. Gogo akekho. Yeah and Mlungu. Mama says Mlungu is his name.

I laughed.

Rickus:that your child? O god is it's e ne.

Me:yeah. I have four back at my place.

Rickus:six kids!

Me:no. That one is my little brother.

Rickus:Farai o mpolelets i gore o nyetswi.

Lisa:baba umlungu u khuluma i setswana!

She shouted laughing. What do i tell this child about telling her dad things?

Lisa:mama baba ufunkhuluma nawe.

Me:excuse me. ... What's wrong?

Mpendulo:wenzani lapho Khanyisile? Do you want me to drive there right now?what does that white biy want?

Me:there's no need for that. He's just a friend i grew up with and he was passing and saw me.

Mpendulo:don't patronize me. Come home.

Me:im coming back tomorrow.

Mpendulo:i better not find that white boy when I get there. Nxa.

He cut the call

Rickus:so husband?

Me:he's in Pretoria.

Rickus:i heard you married that fool Rapula.

Me:actually we were not really married. I got married again. Lisa go to your room or go watch tv

Lisa:mommy im eating. Im sorry i won't tell dad things again.

Me:okay go to the tv room

Lisa:im waiting for dad here. He's coming to take us home.

Me:go and wait for him there.

She took her plate and left.

Rickus:your child is a snitch.

Me:and knowing her father o tla a fofile faa.

Rickus: so why did you leave Rapula?

Me:he was fooling me. He already had a wife and our marriage turned out to be fake. Imagine.

Rickus:ke ntja. Mara o shap nou? I also heard about your father having a wife.

Me:im fine. J ust taking it one day at a time.

Rickus:it's good to see you.

Me:you too.

Rickus:let me leave before shaka zulu gets here and kills me.

We laughed. We hugged and he left. He hooted and drove off. I went to sit in the tv room and watched what they were watching. I missed my babies.

Especially Thando. She must be crying for me now.

The rain had stopped. We watched tv until I even got bored. I thought of visiting uncle before leaving tomorrow. I heard a car outside. Is mlungu back? I peeped through the window and I couldn't believe what i saw. I unlocked the door and went back to my seat. He got in and said nothing.

Mpendulo: Lisa go and take your things and go to the car. We are going home. We will leave Oratile ko mme Moeketsi. Your Dad will find him there.

Me:did you really have to drive all the way here?
Dad will wonder why I left.

Mpendulo:you wanted me to stay home while my wife is busy with some white boy here? We are going home. Take your things.

Me:what about my car?

Mpendulo:i came with a driver.

Mxm. I fetched my handbag and followed after him.

I was angry all the way home. I only smiled when my boys ran to me. Khanyo was with them. When we arrived Mpendulo told her to go with all the kids to Muzi's.He drove them there. I was so angry at him. It was raining again a bit after they had just left. I closed the windows and went to take a shower. Then wrapped a towel and went to lotion.

"You like seeing me angry neh?"

Me: o nts hositse.

Mpendulo:was that white boy the reason you went to Rustenburg?

Me:i didn't know he was back. He's just a friend!

I took my night dress but he snatched it. I swallowed when he took the towel and also threw it off . In a swift moment i was in his arms.

Me:let go of me.

It fell in deaf ears. He put me on the bed and soon his clothes were off. I tried getting off him and he pinned my hands on my head. I couldn't move. I screamed when i felt him enter

Mpendulo:you can scream all you want the kids are not here.

He looked into my eyes and i looked down . He started moving and for a while he didn't let me rest. Only when we were done i got to breathe. Yes i also enjoyed it but I won't show him that. I was still angry at him.

Mpendulo:look at me.

I couldn't look at him. I didn't want to. But he forced me to look at him.

Mpendulo:ngiyak'thanda Khanyis ile. Kakhulu futhi. What happened in Mozambique meant nothing. You're my life. With you im complete. This is my home.

I sniffed and he wiped my tear.

Mpendulo:no matter how long it takes im goikng to fix things. I will earn your forgiveness. I won't stop until you forgive me.

Me:what did i do for you to hurt me like this? I thought i had found my happiness. Only for you to break my heart more. When I look at you i imagine you with her.

Mpendulo:please forgive me. Im really sorry.

Me:please be honest with me. Do you love her?

Mpendulo:i don't love her. I regret everything that happened.

Me:did you think of me and how hurt i would be?

Mpendulo:ngyaxolis a sthandwa sami. I promise it will never happen again.

Me:don't make promises you cant keep. I think we need time apart.

Mpendulo:time apart so you can see your white boy?

Me:so i can decide what i want.

Mpendulo:you want to leave. Is that it?

Me:you know my past relationship didn't work out because of lies and cheating. I told you i don't tolerate cheating in a relationship. I think i need time to decide what i want.

Mpendulo:you have everything you want here. I will show you that everything was a mistake. I won't let you leave. Im not letting some small boy take you. First it was your ex now it's this white boy. Did they give you something?

Me:mxm ka robala.

I turned around and held the cover to my body.

Mpendulo:can i ask one question and please tell me the truth? Do you still love me?

I kept quiet. I was just sniffing. I wiped a tear that fell.

Me:yes.

Mpendulo:then it's settled. We will work on things. We will fix our marriage. I love.

Me:i love you too but this is too much for me.

He pulled me to him and kissed my neck.

The following morning i woke up and he was staring at me. His eyes looked like he was crying. He looked sad.

Mpendulo:go and take a shower. I have a surprise for you.

Me:what is it?

Mpendulo:you will see.

I went to shower and he already took out clothes for me. I got dressed and we left. He drove to OR tambo and i was surprised what we were doing there.

Mpendulo:we're going to our honeymoon. We never had one so this is it.

Me:when did you plan this?

Mpendulo:last week.

Me:we have a small baby. What if she cries?

Mpendulo:mama will look after her. There's nothing to worry about.

Me:you cant buy me with a honeymoon. There's a reason why we didn't go. My baby is still young to be left on her own. You can go alone . Im not going anywhere.

I left him standing there and requested an ubber and went back home. I'm not going to give in to a person feeling guilty and trying to buy my forgiveness. He cheated and now i must just act like a fool and agree to everything he says? That's not going to happen. When I got home he was already there. He must have been driving fast.

Mpendulo:what is it going to take to make you see that i am sorry? What do i have to do?

Me:you cant buy my forgiveness. It's up to you what you do. I dont care. You left me for a year and months alone. I never cheated or thought of doing that. You cheated. What does that make you? You're just like any other man that cheat and i made a promise to myself that i wont stand that. I think divorce is the only way out. I thought I could forget

about you and her but i cant. Its hard for me. While you were out there enjoying yourself i was here going through a lot. You dont know what I've been through. I lost weight thinking about whether you are fine or not. I couldnt sleep well thinking something bad might have happened to you! I had to move up and down when your brothers were accusing me of cheating,something i did not do. Something you were busy doing. Now that you're the one in fault they say nothing. How do you think that makes me feel? Happy? Good? No! Im broken inside. Dont wait up for me. I'll be back later.

Mpendulo:where are you going?

Me:i want some fresh air. Away from you.

Narrated

Mpendulo was walking up and down looking through the window if his wife would show up. He didnt want to eat not knowing where she is. On the other hand his phone kept ringing and he knew who

it is so he couldn't really answer it. It ended up irritating him and he answered.

Mpendulo:voetsek man! Didn't i tell you not to call me again?

Farai:hey. Your wife is here drunk. Please come and fetch her. She's crying and screaming.

Mpendulo:what? Where are you?

Farai:Pretoria west at her place. She had a lot to drink.

He could hear her crying in the background and that broke his heart. He ran out of the house and drove to Pretoria West. Upon arriving Farai had managed to calm her down and she was now sleeping in her room.

Farai:she's in her room. What happened? I've never seen her like that. I even thought of calling her father.

Mpendulo: did she say anything to you?

Farai:nothing. She was just crying,screaming and saying some things i couldn't understand.

Something bad must have happened for her to do this. She doesn't drink!

Mpendulo:thank you for calling me.

He jogged upstairs to her room and got out with her.

Mpendulo:I'll fetch her car tomorrow.

Farai:sure.

He drove home and went with her to the bathroom. He prepared a bath for her and helped into the bathtub. As soon as the water made contact with her skin she opened her eyes. He took a water bottle and made her to drink. After he finished bathing her he took her to bed then went to make food for her. He tried to make her eat but she refused.

Mpendulo: you have to eat something. You can't sleep with an empty stomach.

Kea: i don't feel well. I want to sleep.

I will eat tomorrow .

Mpendulo:you have to eat now. So you can have some strength. I know i caused all of this and im sorry but can you please eat?

Kea:i just want to sleep. Is that so hard to understand?

Mpendulo:fine! Sleep.

Silence fell and no one was talking to anyone. They slept and in the morning Kea woke up and ran to the bathroom. She threw up and flushed the toilet then did her hygiene process. She wrapped a towel and went to dress up.

Mpendulo:morning sthandwa sami.

Kea:hey!don't touch me!

He let go of her and went to the bathroom. After she was done she made the bed and went downstairs. The kids were already up and eating.

Kea:good morning babies.

Mnqobi :good morning mom.

Kea:good morning Lisa.

Lisa:it's not a good morning. You didn't tuck me in and read me a bedtime story. I'm sad.

Kea:i promise tonight i will tuck you in.

Mngobi:but Lisa dad read the story for you.

Lisa:it's not the same.

Kea: i promise tonight i will be here.

Lisa:okay.

Sje went to the kitchen to warm her food.

Mpendulo:are you really going to ignore me?

Kea:please! Im already tired as it is. You're always following me around. Dont you have work to go to?

Mpendulo:i would like us to fix things.

Kea:do you think things will be easily fixed? Now i don't know how to feel. We slept together without protection. What if I've been infected? Did you ever think about that? What if you infected me with some sickness?

Mpendulo:i don't have any sickness.

Kea:it's always good and obedient wives who always get these stis. Their husbands go out there and bring it back. I wouldn't be surprised if im also infected.

She left him there defeated .

.....

I just came back from the doctor. Im just happy that i wasn't infected with anything. But i still have to tread carefully. I can't believe im going through this again. My husband cheated and i don't know what im going to do. Fo i leave or stay? Im conflicted. The ubber drop me in front of my house. I don't bother knocking. I just go through as the door was not locked. I freeze where I am standing.

Farai: Rudo!

Me:um hi. I didn't know you had company. I'll come back some other time.

Voice:you don't have to leave.

Me:Rickus?

Rickus:yeah it's me.

Farai:sit down so we can explain.

Me:there's no need. Im just surprised. That's all. Didn't know you two are dating. And that you are gay!

Farai:we are married.

Me:Farai!

Farai:..

Me:wow. You get married and don't even invite me. I thought we were tight.

Farai: i thought maybe you won't approve. A lot of people are not supporting this relationship.

Me:you know i would never judge you. Im not like that.

Farai:im sorry.

Me:but i never thought i would see this. You and

him? You two used to fight all the time!

Rickus:no! He's the one who picked those fights.

Me:but anyway im happy for you.

Farai:about yesterday. Why were you drunk? You were even crying.

Me:let's not talk about it. Please order pizza for me. Im going to my room. Call me when it gets here.

Rickus:okay

Me:buy four boxes.

Farai:four?

Me:i have a big family. wake me after an hour.

Mpendulo

We are busy putting things in the lounge for our family day. Khanyisile has been gone for a while now but Lisa won't stop. She's the one who said we must do this and wait for her mommy. She's really

sure that she will come.

Lisa:daddy,we always have a family day on sunday. You will see. Mommy will be here soon. Go and take drinks. I will fetch the snacks.

She ran out so happy. I'd hate for her to be disappointed. I really hope Khanyisile will come.

Lisa comes back running.

Lisa:daddy go and take the snacks. You see? Mommy's car is here.

I smile and fetch chips and biscuits that i found in the drawer.

Kea:babies im back.

They all ran to her and hugged. She kissed them all and Mngqobi took the boxes of pizza.

Lisa:mommy daddy said you were not coming.

Kea:you know i wouldn't miss our family day.

She kissed my cheek and went to sit down. I think she did that because the kids were looking at her. I don't hhope in our marriage anymore. With the way she's acting i dont think she will forgive me. But

there's no way i will allow that.

KEATLARETSI

A knock on the door and he goes to open the door. He takes time and i hear a commotion. Im tempted to go check but this food is too good for me to leave it. I was eating left overs from our family day. A woman comes in shouting.

Me:who are you? You can't just get into my house and start shouting.

She stopped and looked at me.

Me:what?

Mpendulo:babe i didn't know she would come here. I don't even know how she found out i stay here.

Me:who are you?

Mpendulo:it's..

Me:I'm talking to her.

Woman:im Liloca

I could hear from her accent that ke yena nyatsi ya teng.

Me:so what are you doing here? Are you here to gloat that you had him for a moment?

Liloca:im not here for that. Mpendulo can we talk in private? I promise I'll be out of here before your wife see me. Im not here to cause trouble for you.

Mpendulo:you've already caused enough trouble. I suggest you leave right now.

Me:ka thollwa golo faa.

Mpendulo:you're not welcome here.

Me:please leave.

Liloca:im not going anywhere before i speak to him.

Mpendulo:you heard my wife now leave.

Liloca:your wife? This thing!?

Me:i won't let you disrespect me in my own house.

Liloca:i just want to talk to him. I don't want any

trouble.

Me: weren't you looking for trouble when you slept with him?

Liloca:i didn't know he has a wife.

Me:is that ring on his finger for decorations? leave and never come back here. If you want your boyfriend let it not be here. Nxa!

Mpendulo:babe i...

Me: I'm tired of talking about this. I thought we would never come back to this topic. I thought we would move on and forget. But your skeletons are coming out to bother me.

Liloca:please Mpendulo i need your help. Dad is in hospital and they are not helping him. I have no money to pay for his medical bills.

She started crying.

Mpendulo:what!?

Agnes:yes that's why i came here. I had no other choice.

Me:why didn't you use the money you used to come here for the medical bills?

Mpendulo:please leave. I will call you and you can give me your banking details.

Me:wow you still have her number.

Agnes:thank you.

Mpendulo:if he doesn't get better i will try to have him moved this side.

Me:nxa!

I continued eating my food and she left. He tried talking to me but i ignored him and just focused on my food.

The whole evening i never talked to him.

TO BE CONTINUED!!!

[07/06, 19:00] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 17

If Mpendulo wanted to do whatever this woman wanted then i was going to let him be. It's his life and he can do whatever he wants. If she really needed help with her father she could have sent an sms if she saw that he was not answering her calls. And where did she even get his number cos he changed his number when he bought a new cellphone? All the time she used to come here something could happen to her father. I'm not saying he must let him die. The old man helped him. But it's his daughter that i do not like. I saw the way she looked at my husband. She still wants him and would do anything to have him. I didn't even cry. I've cried enough my whole life. P went to bake. I made dumpling and soup for the kids. After that i called the kids and the nanny to come and eat. I went to call Mpendulo said he was on a phone call. I listened through the door.

Mpendulo:i told you to never contact me again...i love my wife and now you've just taken me back to square one. She had forgiven me but now you came and ruin everything. I told you I will never love anyone besides my wife!what! Im not leaving my wife for you! I've sent the money and if it's nothing about your father don't ever call me again. Give me the hospital contacts and i will contact them directly...im warning you for the last time. Don't...

I decided i heard enough and left. I went to join the others . After i washed the plates and went to shower. After that i slept.

In the morning i woke up to my husband holding me. I tried to get out of his hold but he wasn't having it.

Mpendulo:good morning beautiful.

Me:morning

Mpendulo:how did you sleep?

Me:fine and you?

Mpendulo:not good. You were ignoring me. Are we

okay?

Me:yeah.

Mpendulo:gogo called. She wants us to visit.

Me:i don't know .

Mpendulo: It's been a while since we visited her.

Me:okay. You can go. I'll be busy

Mpendulo:i haven't even told you when. I want us to go with the kids.

Me:as long as it's not this week.

Mpendulo:next week.

Me:can you let go now?

Mpendulo:no.

He kissed my neck and didn't stop.

Mpendulo:i love this position that we are in. I hope you are not going anywhere today.

Me:no im not. I just have have to look for a catering company. The one i had found cancelled.

Mpendulo:that won't take time. Who's that

knocking? Come in.

Mnqobi:mama i brought the kids.

Mpendulo:you don't greet anymore?

Mnqobi:good morning mama and baba

Mpendulo:why did you bring them?

Mnqobi:they are crying for you. Can we swim today?
Please. We will use our small pool.

Me:okay. Your dad will take it out for you.

Mnqobi:yes! Can i have my friends come over?

Me:okay.

Mnqobi:thank you mom

He ran out and the twins got into bed. They kissed
my face and laughing.

Mpendulo:my boys and disturbing.

Days passed and things were just not good
between us. We would just fight or ignore each
other. Seeing my husband talking to his mistress in

my presence took its toll on me. I know she was updating him about her father's health but it didn't sit well with me. I felt like he feels something for her. What could one think in a situation like this? Your husband doesn't give you attention and gives it to the other woman? Sometimes i even think i made a mistake. Im feeling like im the only one putting effort in this marriage. I just think i deserve better than this. I cannot spend my life worrying about an old man misbehaving. Mpendulo:hey

Me:oh hi. I guess you've decided now. You're leaving.

Mpendulo:what do you want me to do? He needs me.

Me:you're not God. It's not like you will save him. You gave them money!

Mpendulo:we won't talk about this. We will talk when I come back.

Me:as soon as you get in that plane just know that its over between us. I thought i would forget about everything and work on our marriage but if you

leave then know its over.

I watched him walk out on me. I sank down when i heard the car leave. I waited and waited thinking he will come back. But no. He didn't come back. I lived as usual. Its not like this is the first time he did this. Leaving us.

I went and got the kids ready for school. Life wont stop just because their father left. I will take care of the kids. It's not like im incapable of doing that. I finished making their lunch boxes and put it into their back packs.

Mngobi:have a good day mom. We love you

Me:love you too.

They left and i went to check on the ones that are left here. They were still sleeping. I went to the room that's empty and looked if i can't make it my home office since i can't go to work. I decided to go to the internet and check out furniture for my home office. I ordered everything that i needed and it would be delivered in a week's time. I called the Rustenburg

office just to find out how everything is going.

Me:hello. Is that Rubben?

Rubben:yes. It's me. How are you?

Me:im fine and you?

Rubben:im good. I take it you called to ask about how things are going.

Me:yes. How's everything?

Rubben:good. New clients are coming in and everything is set for the launch. So there's nothing to worry about.

Me:okay. I hope you are running the way that i told you. And the list of cleaners and drivers i gave you. Did you look at it?

Rubben:already done that. They are hired. But as for the construction workers i don't think you should just pick anyone. For now we have the stuff that will run the company. But we will do interviews for the construction workers. We have to hire people with experience. We don't want the company to be in trouble because of incompetent people do we?

Me:you're right. Let's talk about Mannonno Bogatsu.

Rubben:i think you made a mistake. She acts like a boss here. According to her this is her family business. Her behavior is not good.

Me:that's not her family business. She can't do as.she pleases. I will talk to her when I come there. She's just an intern there. Don't let her walk all over you just because she's related to me. Give her a warning. This is a business.

Rubben:okay.

Me:have yourself a good day. Will see you at the launch.

After the call i called Mannonno.

Mannonno:cuz how are you?

Me:im good. This is not a social call. I heard you've been misbehaving at work.

Mannonno:who said that?

Me:your boss.

Mannonno:cuz i think that guy doesn't like the fact

that i work there. He should know that my family owns this business.

Me:your family does not own that company. It's mine. Stop acting like you have a share there. Don't forget how you got that job. You better change how you act.

Mannono:sorry. I hear you

She cut the call on me! What is this girl playing at? I gave her this job because my aunty asked. I did her a favor. Now she's putting my company under threat. I will fire her if she doesn't behave.

DAY OF THE LAUNCH

Narrated

The launch has started already and everyone was moving up and down doing their work.

Refreshments and snacks were served and others were mingling there.

"Hey."

Keatlaretsi turned around to the person calling her.

Kea: hi I didn't know you'd come here.

Rapula:and miss your launch?That can't happen.

Remember when growing up i promised to be in all your successes?I told you that i wont miss any of your achievements. We may not be together anymore but it doesn't mean i don't have to support you.

Kea:thank you for coming.

She hugged him.

Kea:it really means a lot to me. I appreciate it.

Nolo:oh Rapula I didn't know you were also invited.

Rapula:i couldn't miss this launch when I heard about it.

Kea:thank you for coming Rapula.I will see you around.

Rapula:you look so beautiful.

She smiled and left. Bonolo followed her after

giving Rapula a look.

Nolo: Keatlaretsi what does Rapula want here?

Kea:as you heard him he's here to support me.

Nolo:do you think your husband will love this? His family is here.

Kea:do you see him here?

Nolo:that doesn't mean you should invite your ex! You know what? This is an important day for you and we cant argue about this here. We will talk!

She left her. Kea went to where the Khoza family was.

Kea:thank you for coming. I appreciate it.

Ntombi:we had to come and support you. You've done so well for yourself.

Bongi:i saw Rapula Moletsane. Are you partnering with him again?

Kea:um..no. His plus one was invited. So that's why he's here.

Muzi:you invited his wife?

Kea:no. I didn't see that person and i can't just tell him to leave.

Mzwakhe: MaKhoza i hope you're not entertaining that boy. Remember you're married.

Kea: I know im married, can't say the same about your brother.

Phumla:guys we're here to enjoy ourselves and support our sister. Let's not talk about this.

Kea: i think i should go.

Mzwakhe:before you go, your HUSBAND would like to talk to you.

Kea:what...

Mzwakhe:here. Talk to him.

She took the phone and it was a video call.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile. Why aren't you taking my calls?

Kea: you've already made your decision.

Mpendulo:you know i had to do this. Please just be patient. I might be back by next week.

Kea:im always patient with you. But you don't see it. Did you have to call now? Do you want to ruin my day?

Mpendulo:we will talk later. Good luck with today. Ngiyak'thanda Khanyisile.

She gave the phone to Mzwakhe and left. Now it was time for her speech.

Kea:thank you everyone for coming. Your support means a lot. This launch wouldn't be a success if you all didn't come. Starting a business is really not a walk in the park. Even though this is not the first company that I've started but there are still obstacles to be faced. I wouldn't be able to overcome them without my team. Im grateful for the team that i have. They make all of this to be possible. Im lucky. This would fall apart. Thank you. To everyone who's here enjoy yourselves and feel free to have any food,refreshments and snack you like. Thank you.

She finished and got off the stage. She met Siya halfway.

Siya:we have to leave.

Kea:what's going on?

Siya:something happened at home and we're needed.

Kea:the launch is not over. You can leave.

Siya:this is no time to argue with me.

Kea:is Mpendulo fine?

Siya:he's trying to get a flight home. You don't have to worry about him.

Kea:let me give my car keys to Bonolo. She will take my car.

Mzwakhe :give me the keys. I'll quickly look for her. Go to my car. Here are my keys.

She took the keys and went to the car. After a while they drove back to Pretoria. It was a quiet drive with no one saying anything.

Mzwakhe: Khanyisile stay in here. Don't come out.

Kea:what's going on?

Mzwakhe:im going to find out.

Kea:no! Im going. What are these police doing here?
Did something happen?

Mzwakhe:the house was on fire.

She jumped out of the car and ran into the yard. The police were already busy with their work.

Police:mam you can't get in there. It's now a crime scene.

Kea:my kids! Where are they?

Police:the ambulance already left with them.

She ran back to the car

Kea:please take me to the hospital. I have to see my kids.

Mzwakhe:calm down. You can't be crying like this.
What will happen if something worse Happened?

Kea:don't talk like that! If something bad happened to them...

He drove in silence and when they got to the hospital she asked where her kids are.

Dr:the kids have been admitted. The other two are not that hurt. It's just the little one who is burnt on the side of her stomach. The others just inhaled smoke.

Kea:where are the other two?

Dr:only three kids were admitted. I don't know about the others.

Kea: what's going on? He said there's only three her. Where is Luyanda and Ayanda?

Mzwakhe:the twins are fine. They were not at the house when it caught fire.

She breathed in and out.

Kea:can i see the others?

Dr:visiting hours are over. You have nothing to worry about. The other two will be discharged soon and the little one we have to treat her wounds. They are in good hands.

Kea:i will wait for visiting hours. I have to see my children.

Mzwakhe:i will go back and check the house.

Kea:i don't care about the house! I just want my kids to be fine.

Dr:mam don't cry. Your kids will be fine.

Kea:you don't know how they must be feeling. So you don't have to tell me that! I will stay here. Who came with them?

Mzwakhe:your neighbors. They are the ones who called.

Dr:oh. It must be the man who's admitted here. There's also a woman who got burnt.

Mzwakhe:im leaving.

Kea:okay.

When Mpendulo arrived in SA it was already late. He had to go to the hospital because Keatlaretsi didn't want to leave the hospital.she did get a chance to see the kids but she didn't want to leave them alone. EspeciallyThando since she's still very young and cries at night When she doesn't see her mother. When she saw him enter she ran to him. He

embraced her in a hug.

Mpendulo:im sorry. Maybe if i was home this wouldn't have happened. But im here now. And im not leaving you again.

Kea: Thando is hurt. She's burnt.

Mpendulo:it will be fine.

He got close to the kids bed and looked at them. He was filled with guilt. He was blaming himself for what happened. Later he convinced his wife to leave. The following day she woke up very early and took a shower and prepared to go to the hospital.

Mpendulo: Khanyisile you've been crying since last night. Please. You don't even want to talk. Don't neglect the twins in all of this. They also need their mother.

Kea:it's just that...i feel like if i was not busy with the launch this wouldn't have happened.

Mpendulo:don't blame yourself. This could have happened to anyone.

Muzi:morning. Nilele kanjhani?

Mpendulo:not good. But we'll be fine.

Kea:thank you for letting us sleep here.

Muzi:you don't have to thank me. This is your home.

Bafo you will update us.

Mpendulo:yeah. We are leaving.

Muzi:have breakfast first then you can leave.

Mpendulo:sizo dla phambili. Let's go.

Arriving at the hospital they first went to check on the kids.

Dr:the other two are up. The little one is still sleeping. You can come in and see them.

Lisa and Mngqobi were up and talking.

Mpendulo:hello. Are you guys good?

Mngqobi:im fine.

Lisa:me too. Are you taking us home?

Kea:the doctor still has to treat you first. When

everything is fine then you can come home.

Mpendulo:we brought you food.

Mngobi:thank you. Are you leaving now?

Kea:no. We'll stay here until visiting hours are over. Now we are going to check on Thando. We will come back.

Lisa:okay mommy.

They left to Thando's ward. She was also awake and her parents were relieved.

Mpendulo:she will be fine. She's up and that's all that matters.

Kea:she's so young. I wish it was me in her place. Imagine how she cries when they change the bandage. I don't think i can do that. Hearing her cry will break me.

Mpendulo:we will see when we get there. For now let's hope that she's going to be alright.

They sat with her until she fell asleep. After that they left because visiting hours were over. They were going to come back and see the nanny and the

man who helped them.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile where is your ring?

Kea:it's in my car.

Mpendulo:what is it doing in your car? Isn't it supposed to be on your finger!?

Kea:i will put it on when Bonolo brings my car.

Mpendulo:why did you take it off in the first place?

Kea: i was angry okay? With your mistress arriving and disrespecting me and you leaving i just took it off. How do you think im feeling right now? You ran to your mistress and i was left alone here.

Mpendulo:i am sorry.

Kea:every time you are just going to say sorry and I just have to say fine i forgive you. You promised that we wont face these cheating things. In my first relationship i was fooled and hurt, even here i feel like im being fooled. You're always leaving and i have to remain behind and take care of the children. I stopped working because there would be no one at home. But you don't see my efforts. All the

promises you made before we got married im not seeing them. It was all just lies.

Mpendulo:please don't say that. I can still do those things. Im begging you. Let's not divorce please. Look, I've changed. I tell you all those things that happened will not happen again. Can we fix things?

Kea:I told you before we even got married that cheating is a no no for me. But you didn't think about that. Who knows? Something might have happened when you went back there. You can deny it all you want but i was not there. I will never know.

Mpendulo:i promise you nothing happened. Can you please give me this last change? I promise we will never come here again.

Kea:until she shows up again. You even do things without talking to me first. We are supposed to be a team. Even though Rapula lied to me about everything else we were a team. He included me in everything. I felt important. I know im not supposed to compare you but i have to. You must also treat me like a part in this marriage. Im not just someone

who's here to bare kids for you and take care of your family. I also have to feel loved. We must build each other. Instead of destroying each other. How are we going to do that when you dont see me as your partner.? The moment she got here you just told her that you will transfer the money without even talking to me about it. She talked to you as if i wasn't there. Called me a thing. And you let her. Who can stand all of that? I can also reach a certain stage where I can say it's enough. Yes i love you but i am not going to let you play all over my head.

Mpendulo:i hear you. And i promise things are going to change. I don't want to lose you. I love you so much. It may be hard for you to believe it because of what i did but never doubt my love for you. I love you only and it will remain like that. Can we work on our marriage?

Kea: I hope something like this won't happen again. Im not threatening you but if you ever cheat on me again i swear i will take the kids and leave you.

Mpendulo:i won't let that happen.

Kea:im going to check on the twins.

[07/06, 19:01] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 18

I stood near the friedge by the counter and took out ice cream and a bowel. I felt someone hug me from behind.

Mpendulo:hey baby. How was your night?

Me:fine. How are you

Mpendulo:im good. Are you sure you're fine with my brothers coming here?

Me:yeah. Why would i have a problem with that? They're your family.

Mpendulo:then why are you not joining us? Their wives will be with them.

Me: Farai is leaving tomorrow. So we're spending the day with him. I can't let him down.

Mpendulo: if you finish early you will come?

Me: yes. But it depends on what Bonolo wants us to do today. But it's not that much we will finish early.

Mpendulo: can't she do her things on her own?

Me: she was there for me on my wedding so i also want to be there for her. Im sure we will finish early. We are just going to fit the dresses.

Mpendulo: you can tell Sbongile to bring the dress here. Then you can all meet here.

Me: kore you're trying all you can for me to be here? Talk to Farai if he'll agree to come here.

Mpendulo: if these people were to move to another country would you survive?

Me: yes i would. Which is why i have to spend most of my time with them when they are here. Farai can go a long time without calling so i have to make most of it.

Mpendulo: okay. I will talk to him.

He said leaving. I took the ice cream and went to the sitting room. I gave everyone theirs. We had

our ice cream while I listened to them tell me about what happened when I wasn't around. We are now renting an apartment . Mpendulo refused when i said we can move in my house in Pretoria West. He said he can't stay with Farai. I don't know what's his problem with him. Our house in Silverlake is being rebuilt.

Our honeymoon! Well i had a great time. We went to Greece. Greece is so beautiful. But most importantly me and my husband. He literally told me that we wouldn't come back before things are good between us . Well it took time for us to get here. I can't say i fully trust him now. But it will get there. I know i told myself that if he cheats i will leave. But something in me just told me to give my marriage a second chance. If it doesn't work then it doesn't work.

Mpendulo: babe your cousin agreed to come here.

Me:oh. Then I will go with Bonolo to fit her dress then come back.

Mpendulo:okay. I'll be in the study. Come my girl.

He tried to take Thando but she started crying. My girl had a scar on the side of her stomach, from the fire. We still don't know how the fire happened because mme Maggie (the nanny.) Said she wasn't cooking and there was nothing that could have started the fire. The police haven't found anything so Lerato's brother the one who helped with getting the kids out of the fire said he will investigate himself because the police are not doing anything. Well Lerato turned out to be a very good friend of mine. It's hard for me to just trust anyone but with her it just natural. She's a good person and someone I can keep around.

Mnqobi:you see your dad is jealous? He wants to take you from me.

Mpendulo:why is she crying? Do you bribe her?

Mnqobi:she loves her brother.

Lisa:no she won't cry on me

They all tried to take her and she cried. Even on me.
Traiter.

Mpendulo: this child! Let's go boys.

The twins were already at his feet. We laughed. He took them and they disappeared through the passage. After I was done with what I was doing I drove to Hatfield. That's where S bongile's boutique is. I met Bonolo there. We started

Fitting the dress and it looked so good on her.

Sbo: it should be her crying but it's you

They laughed at me

Me: I just can't help it. You look so beautiful.

Remember saying you will never get married?

Bonolo: you had to go there. I didn't know I would fall in love one day. Now here I am.

Me: you're going to be the most beautiful bride.

Sbo: everyone will be looking at you.

She changed and came back.

Sbo: thank you for recommending me Khanyisile. So would you like to leave with it or what?

Bonolo: I don't want anything happening to it so ill

fetch it on Friday.

Sbo:okay.

Me:so where to now?

Bonolo:im going to Amir's place.

Me:okay. I'll see you.

Bonolo:i have a bone to pick with you. I will call.

Me:did i do something wrong?

Bonolo:no. Bye now. I love you.

Me: i love you too.

We hugged and went our separate ways. When I arrived i saw the cars outside. They must be here. I went in and there was no one. I changed my heals into sandals then went outside. I found everyone at the backyard.

Me:dumelang.

Them:yebo/ hi/ hello

I sat on one of the empty chairs. The kids were playing. And the men were doing a braai. I see

everything is ready. Just waiting for the meat.

Ntombi: so where were you?

Me: i went with Bonolo to fit her dress.

Ntombi: okay. So you never told us about your honeymoon.

Ndoni: and don't leave anything out.

Me: um who cooked?

Sethu: you're not getting out of this one.

Me: it was good. I had a great time.

Sethu: where did he take you?

Me: Greece. I had never been there before. The place is so beautiful!

Ndoni: it shows you had a great time. You're glowing.

My phone saved me from the questions.

Me: hello... yes at the backyard. You don't have to shout. Just come to the backyard you'll see us.

Ndoni: where is Sbongile?

Me:she said she had to fetch something at home first.

Farai appeared with Rickus . I looked at them and they looked at each other and laughed.

Me:and now? Rickus it's good to see you.

Rickus: i had to see you before I left. So i decided to tag along with your cousin.

Farai:are you fine? Is there someone i have to take care of?

Me:always ready to fight. Im good.

Farai:we could have just went with our plans for the day instead of telling your husband ro tell me to come here. Actually,order me. Your husband thinks he's God.

Me:sometimes he thinks he owns this world.

Sbongile arrived and took a seat

Me:guys this is Rickus my friend . And these are my sisters in law.

Rickus: not right. I'm her brother. Grew up together and used to fight bullies for her.

Me: you could have just stopped at grew up together.

Rickus: I had to get it out there.

Me: you can go and join the guys there. I'm sure they'll need your hand masterchef

Rickus: lil sis thank you. If you have a function in your chef.

He laughed and they went where the men were.

We chat until they were done with the meat and we went to seat around the table. The kids sat on their own. Thando cried and Mngqobi brought her.

Mngqobi: malome Mlungu.

I almost laughed. Lisa must have been talking about him. That little girl will never change.

Rickus: boy. How are you?

Mngqobi: I'm fine.

Lisa:you see? I told you his name is mlungu.

Me:you can go and eat now.

We all ate our food and after we were done we chilled outside. I even felt funny after eating. I went and threwup then came back. I found them interrogating Rickus.

Mpendulo:so this is the Mlungu. Why is your name mlungu?

Rickus:these two gave me the name and everyone in our neighborhood started using it.

Siya:so you're from the same neighborhood. Interesting.

Mabutho: Mlungu I hope you see that ring on her finger so no chance for you.

Mpendulo was quiet and just looking at him and Farai. What's his problem?

Rickus:you have nothing to worry about. She's my little sister.

Mabutho:talking about little sisters. Wena Farai what are you doing with our little sister? She's

always asking about you.

Farai:maybe you should ask her.

Mabutho:im asking you. I hope you're not dating her or there will be trouble.

Mpendulo:you're too old for her.

I looked at him like whaat? I laughed together with Farai.

Farai:you surprise me man. Im 8 years older than your sister and wena? 21 years older than my sister. So i don't know what you mean.

Mpendulo:are you dating my sister?if you are,stop that relationship. You'll distract her from her studies.

Farai:yoh Rudo. Your family. You don't know what you got yourself into.

Me:lol

Farai:im not a pervet even though there's nothing wrong with dating someone younger than you. Just like you and my sister. Im helping your sister with some of her modules since im a doctor. She has research that she's busy with so i help her. Im

married if you haven't seen this ring.

Mabutho:lucky for you. So mlungu ushadile?

Rickus:i don't understand your language.

They all looked at him. Zulus and their pride. He spoke zulu with him deliberately.

Me:a re o nyetsi na?

Rickus: goreng a batla go itse? Nyaa Keatlaretsi le itsenya mo dilong.

Rickus was really making me laugh. He was being funny now.

Mabutho:oh so uyazi istswana. You haven't answered my question.

Rickus:yes im married. So relax i won't take your brother's wife. As i said she's my sister. No need to worry.

Farai:thank you for inviting us. My husband and I have to leave now. Rudo take care of yourself.

Siya:he's your husband?

Rickus:that's what he said.

Me:le tsamaye sentle. Im going to miss you guys

Rickus:we will call or you can visit.

Me:okay.

I hugged them and they left.

Mpendulo:you never said anything about them being gay.

Me:ga wa botsa. You were busy thinking he's trying his luck with me. Excuse me

I got up and went to bathroom.

Mpendulo:are you alright? Did i say something to offend you?

Me:no. I was just throwing up. I don't feel good.

Mpendulo:okay. You can go and lie down

Me:it's fine. Let's go.

We went back to the others.

Ndoni:are you alright

Me:im fine. I was just feeling nauseous. Nothing much.

Bonga:mina im just happy ukuthi wena no bafo are alright. And you're working on your marriage

Siya:nami futhi.

Phumla: wow. That's surprising coming from you. You were the one kicking her out when you thought she was cheating but now that it's your brother you say nothing. Why haven't you kicked him out then?

Siya:people make mistakes okay. Anyway we apologized and she forgave us.

Bonga:yes so let's move on. Let's not let it ruin this beautiful day.

Mpendulo:u right sthandwa sami? Khanyisile.
Khanyisile!

I woke up to beeping machines and people in the ward.

Bonolo:oh thank God you're up. What happened? Did someone do something to you?

Me:calm down. No one did anything to me.

Nolo:i don't trust them

Mpendulo:how are you feeling?

Me:im fine. J ust dizzy.

Bonolo: the doctor is here

Dr:how is my patient?

Me:im fine.

Dr:you scared these people by fainting. Anyway i have your results here. You're 3 weeks pregnant.

Bonolo: Keatlaretsi!

Me:it's not possible. Im on contraceptives!

Dr:it does happen. Maybe there's a day where you forgot. Congratulations.

I looked at Mpendulo and he was smiling. I swear if he did something to my pills there'll be trouble.

Bonolo:Keatlaretsi your child is not even a year but you're pregnant again. How will you raise these kids?

Muzi:she has a husband. So it's not a problem

Bonolo:until he disappears again and she will have to raise the baby alone.

Mpendulo:im not going anywhere. Im happy im going to be a father again.

Dr:we can do a scan if you'd like to.

Mpendulo:yes.

The doctor did his things and we heard the heartbeat.

Dr:strong heartbeat. Congratulations.

I wiped a tear that fell.

Mpendulo:this is good news. Thank you babe.

He held my hand and looked at the scan. I was scared. Am i going to be fine? What if he leaves again? I don't know how i will cope with that.

Mpendulo: you've been so quiet.

Me:did you change my pills?

Mpendulo:wow. I didn't change them. Sometimes these things don't work. But im happy we're having more babies.

Me:you're not the one carrying them. It'sme who's going to be tired and fat. I will just sit in this house and do nothing.

Mpendulo:as i said, i will be here with you. It doesn't matter how you'll look. I'll still love you even if your body shape changes.

Me:Im going to sleep.

Mpendulo:eat first. I'll bring you something to eat.

He left and came back with a plate full of food.

Me:so much food.

Mpendulo:you must put on weight.

Me: i think i have to go back to work.

Mpendulo:hawu i thought you were not going back.

Me:i get bored around here.

Mpendulo:you can visit friends and anything but working

Me: i think i have to focus on the Rustenburg branch. I have to overlook things.

Mpendulo:okay. Here is what you can do. You can work from home. If there are meetings you can have zoom meetings. And they will keep you up to date with how things are going.

Me:that sounds better. Can i have atchar?

Mpendulo:that's not good for you. Eat this and you will be fine.

Running a business really is a big responsibility. I've been driving up and down between Rustenburg and Pretoria. Things are not going very well with the Rustenburg branch and i had to go there. Thank Good im done. The driving was beginning to get to me. The ringing of my phone disturbs me from what im doing . I've been cutting this call for ages and now i decide to completely switch it off.

Lerato:just answer the poor man

Me:he's going to disturb our peace.

Lerato:le wena mara ga o fair. Every time you go to Rustenburg you see Rapula. How do you think that

makes him feel?

Me: Rapula moved back to Rustenburg and there's nothing i can do about it. He's also my neighbor so how do i ignore him?

Lerato:i get why your husband is acting like this. I also stay in the same neighborhood as my ex but I don't associate myself with him. You don't have a child with this guy so it's easy to cut him out.

Me:you won't understand. Our fathers are frineds and they are always together. He's been my friend since childhood. We grew up together.

Lerato:Thabang was also my friend since high school but you don't see me meeting with him. Keatlaretsi o nyetswi. This guy o tlogo bakela mathata mo lenyalong la gago. Im telling you as your friend to stop this.

Me:okay fine! And i just met him once and suddenly he's angry. He doesnt have to know every place im at.

Lerato:this man loves you. Decide now if you want to be with him or not. If you do then play away from

your ex. From what you told me this guy hurt you. And if you don't stop this he's gonna hurt you again.

Me:i guess you're right. Now im going to switch off my phone or else he wont stop calling.

Lerato:ha a Kea. Call him and tell him that you're with me or else he will worry. J ust let him know where you are.

I dialed his number and it's as if he was ready for the call.

Me:hey babe.

Mpendulo:S thandwa sami. I've been calling you.

Me:babe there's nothing to worry about. Im with Lerato at her place. You don't have to call me every hour I'll be back soon.

Mpendulo:call me when you are done. I will fetch you.

Me:okay. I love you.

Mpendulo:i love you.

I cut the call.

Me:i didn't know a man cries. Maybe we should go on a weekend away and see how he will feel.

Lerato:don't give the poor man a heart attack.

Me: he's too strong for a heart attack.

Lerato:you're crazy.

Me:but for real though, he must know that I can spend the whole day without seeing him.

Lerato:who are you trying to convince? You are always thinking about him.

Me:ke nagana o njisitse...

Lerato:wa tsenwa straight.

Me:marake rata monna wame weitsi. Bonolo was right. She did say one day i would be head overheels in love with him and i denied it. It's actually funny how everything worked out.

Lerato:that's love for you.

NARRATED

mzwakhe:what was that!?

Mpendulo:leave me alone man .

Mzwakhe:we are running a business here. Do you want us to lose clients? Is that it? I didn't come back to deal with this! If this is how it's going to be like i will leave and never come back!

Mpendulo:don't exaggerate!

Mzwakhe:what's going on? Whatever's stressing you is affecting the business.

Mpendulo:you think I don't know tha!

Mzwakhe:then what is it?

Mpendulo: I feel like im losing my wife. This idiot is always following her around.

Mzwakhe: do you realize that you are the one pushing her to him? This thing of you running to Mozambique whenever that woman calls and say her father is sick is what's going to ruin your marriage. Don't you think that she meets this guy because she feels lonely? this woman loves you. She could have left when you hid your age,when you

cheated,whenyou ran off to Mozambique again. But she's still here. Doesn't that say something to you? You are hurting her. Change your ways if you don't want to lose her.

Mpendulo:im not cheating on her.

Mzwakhe:then you have nothing to worry about. You know what? Go homeand spend time with your wife. Do something nice for her. Stop acting like a guilty man. There's nothing to be guilty about. She forgave you and now move on. Leave the past where it belongs,in the past! You will come back tomorrow refreshed and good.

Mpendulo:let me leave. Thanks man. I will see you.

He drove home but first went and bought chocolates and flowers for his wife. Whenhe got home he found Zolani there waiting for him.

Mpendulo:hello. I didn't know you'd be here. I would have came earlier.

Zolani:worry not. I just arrived. My pi says that guy

has nothing to do with the fire here. Did you know that your mistress was in the country?

Mpendulo: What was she doing here?

Zolani: what else beside taking care of the problem standing in front of her? Which is your wife and children. She started this fire.

Mpendulo: she was in Mozambique!

Zolani: did you see her every day?

Mpendulo: i didn't see her the day i came back.

Zolani: and that's when the fire started. This woman must be arrested. Do you know what could have happened to your kids?

Mpendulo: if she is responsible then jail is where she is going.

Zolani: and you must be cleansed. Your wife too. You don't want your wife attracting those evil spirits. I will come back with everything. Evidence and all that.

Mpendulo: thank you.

He went to the bedroom after seeing him out.

Kea:are you listening to yourself?

.....

Kea: you should stop doing this. Do you know the problems that we're going to face? You don't want to come clean? I value my life. I don't want to die! Please. Do the right thing.

.....

Kea:im sure the person responsible can help. Before it's too late. Just stop this. Okay. When you've thought about everything you will call me. Yes i wont tell anyone.Yes even him.

She sat on the bed sighing.

Mpendulo:what's going on?

Kea:you're back! I didn't hear you come in.

Mpendulo:you were busy on your phone.

Kea:oh. Why areyou early today?

Mpendulo:can't i come home when i miss my wife?

Kea:that's not what I mean.

Mpendulo:what's going on? What secret are you keeping?

Kea:there's no secret.

Mpendulo:if you're in trouble tell me while it's still early. I might help.

Kea:it's Bonolo. I promised not to say anything so i can't tell you.

Mpendulo:when it's already too late and something bad happens will you still say this?

Kea:okay! But don't say this to anyone.

Mpendulo:i wont.

Kea: Bonolo is pregnant and it's not Amir's child. Now she's not sure about the wedding.

Mpendulo:what!?

Kea:yeah maybe that's one of the reasons the wedding was cancelled. Now she's saying she's in trouble. She thinks she's in danger. She wants to

tell Amir but his mother is threatening her saying that she must not say anything. Or if she can't keep the secret she must abort.

Mpendulo: did she say who the father is?

Kea:no. Now im also involved. The woman is also threatening me because I also know about it.

Mpendulo:she won't do anything to you. I will take care of it. Tell her not to agree to the abortion.

Kea:take care of it? Do you know something i don't?

Mpendulo:if it's not the fire at our house it's this!...I um kind of know who the father is.

Kea:you know the father?who is it?

Mpendulo:Mzwakhe.

Kea:Mzwakhe your brother? When did this happen?

Mpendulo:it hasn't been a year.

Kea:Bonolo!how can she let this happen?

Mpendulo:you can't stop love. It just happens.

Kea:you are happy about this. It's wrong! She

cheated on Amir. Amir is a good guy! She should have broke up with him first.

Mpendulo:let's not get involved in this. It's their problems.

Kea:im involved already! When this secret comes out and this woman comes after me?

He fiddled with his phone and put it on his ear.

Mpendulo:hey wena! Do you see now your problems are mine? Take care of this!

Mzwakhe:what's going on?

Mpendulo: umuntu wakho u khulelwe abd now my wife's in the middle.

Mzwakhe:she's pregnant?

Mpendulo:that's what I said! You better fix this now.

He cut the call and exhaled loudly.

Mpendulo:before I got disturbed,i have something for you.

Kea:what is it?

Mpendulo:here.

Kea:ah babe thank you. Let me put them in water.

[07/06, 19:01] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 19

LILOCA

I'm Liloca Pereira. I'm mozambican. That's where i met Mpendulo. He was badly injured when my father brought him home. I was attracted to him. No it was not what they call love at first sight. I fell for him as time went. Then i noticed the ring he had on hus hand and concluded that he's married. But that did not stop me from making him mine. His memory loss was just a bonus to me. It made things easier. Imagine a 40 years old woman

divorced. Who would marry me at such age? So i had to make sure that i get him. Things started going South when he remembered things bit by bit. Then he remembered that he had a wife and a family back in S.A. That did not sit well with me. I wanted to have him to myself. I nursed him back to health! Then that brother of his found him and took him home. That ruined all my plans. Yes after gaining his memory he started irritating me. Everything he said was about his lively and beautiful wife. It's all we heard. The day i visited his place i started understanding why he always talked about her. She's beautiful. Really beautiful. I've never really seen a dark beauty like her. It's my first time. What i picked up about her is that she's those weak women. Which will make my plans easy.

I arrived last night from Mozambique. I moved this side so that i can execute my plan easily. Right now I'm sitting in a restaurant waiting on some Lisa girl. I hate waiting. I've been here for some time.

"Luu! Come here."

I watch as the two little boys jump up and down laughing. They run to their dad. On his arms is a little girl. They all look the same. Just like their father. The little girl is holding on for dear life. Then the little wife comes with two kids. They are laughing and so happy. That's supposed to be me. If only. They take their seats as their father orders. After he's done he goes to their table with a full smile on his face. He doesn't care what anyone says. He kisses her even after she protests. All I see is love. I've never seen him smile like that even with my father. So who am I that he can smile like that with me? He talks to them and they laugh. Damn! I bang the table and the people next to me look at me. I look at the happy family as they leave. They really are a happy family. So how will he love me if he is like that with his little wife? I start being angry. That's my life!

"Sorry I'm late. Traffic. "

Me:did you see the time? I've been here for an hour. Let's go.

I take my handbag and lead the way. We arrive at my apartment and I see the happy family is moving out. I thought the fire would have helped me. That she'd die together with her children and then I'd take over. I rented this apartment specifically just to keep my eyes on them. It seems like all my work is in vain.

"Why did you call me here?"

Me: I was doing a research and I found that you were once Keatlalets'i Khoza's friend.

"Then?"

Me: Annie I would like you to help me. You know her and her husband accused me of burning their house? So I'll also need a lawyer. And that's where you enter.

Annie: so how can I help?

Me: tell me about her.

Annie: well she was my friend. But we stopped being friends with her after she left her lecturer boyfriend...

Me:lecturer?

Annie:yes. She left him for her childhood friend. That man loved her but she dropped him just like that. You see, that fake marriage with the childhood friend didn't work out.

Me:fake? How so?

Annie:the friend was fooling her. He was already married and had a family.

Me:I'm sure she was just there for money.

She laughed and i looked at her confused.

Annie:it's clear you don't know her. The guy was the one after her money. She owned companies. But she gave him a share on her biggest company. If you Google BM construction you will see what I'm talking about. The guy and his wife were trying to scam her. Then she left him. That's where her husband came in and rescued her.

Me:how do you know all of this?

Aanie: you don't have to know how i know this.

Me:okay go on.

Annie:she fell in love with that man. I'm very sure she didn't know his age. Imagine at 29 being in a relationship with a 50 years old man. But what i loved most is their love for each other. So beautiful. That man loves his wife. No one can come between them. And i think she has found the one.

Me:i didn't call you here for that.

Annie:oaky!

Me:so how is she? Is she maybe a gold digger or something? How did she start these companies?

Annie:not even a chance. That man is filthy rich but i don't think she knows. Or else she wouldn't be working. She built all those comlanies with her savings. She's smart. That's how she got to be this successful.

Me:you speak so highly of her yet you arent friends anymore.

Annie:she's a good pers on. If i could turn back the

time...

Me:tell me about the lecturer.

Annie:my husband was his best friend. When he passed on he left her everything. That's how much he loved her.

Me:i see. So she's always attracted to these rich men.

Annie:they just fall in love with her. It's easy to be around her. She has a good heart. I remember my husband told me that when the lecturer left everything to her she transferred everything to his parents. She didn't even take a cent. It was so sad reading on the news about her house being burnt. So tell me is it true that you burnt the house...did you do it?

Me:no. I didn't. Even the police let go of that case. There was no evidence at all.

Annie:i don't know what that person was trying to do really. Burning the house with kids inside!

Me:sad mmh. Anyway thanks for the information. I

need you to be my lawyer. This case might be reopened again.

Annie:im pretty sure they will find the culprit and you will be cleared of everything. After all her husband is friends with Zorro. So yeah.

Me:Zorro?

Annie:yeah.one of The most feared gangsters in the country. He's her husband's friend and her friend's brother. So just one word it's done for that criminal.

Me:thank you for everything.

Annie:you do know 8i charge per hour?

Me:sure. Send me your banking details.

I think i got what i was looking for. If i can just tweak it there and there. I will have my jackpot.

.....

Next day

I woke up and did my hygiene process. I'm going to meet Mpendulo so i have to look my best. I won't let a little child beat me on this game. I take my car keys and drive to the address i got on the internet. You might be asking yourself where i get this money. I have my own money. I may not be rich but I'm not poor either. That thing of my father being sick and not having hospital fees? Not true at all. He's on my medical aid. That was just a way to make Mpendulo and his wife fight. I drive to his company just listening to music. Hoping that i find him alone. I get there and go straight to reception. I ask for his office and the receptionist tells me where he is. I stop on my tracks when I see Kia locking lips with someone who's maybe Mpendulo's twin.

Her:what? Did you just see a ghost?

Man:babe not here please.

Her:she's starring at me! Do i owe you something?

I looked at her carefully and saw that this one is a bit light in complexion. But they look the same. Maybe they are twins.

Me:um sorry. You just look familiar.

Her:you don't have to look at me like that. It's creepy.

The man took her hand and exit the building. I got into the elevator and went to the office. This place is beautiful. No lies. I can imagine owning this one day. I knock and i hear a voice saying come in.

Kea:oh it's you.

Me:hey Kia.

Kea:it's Kea. What do you want here?

Me:I'm here to see Mpendulo.

Kea:it's Mr Khoza to you. What do you want with him?

Me:i need to talk to him.

Kea:you're not welcome here.

Me:oh you're afraid that he might just come back to me?

Kea:nothing like that. There's nothing to be afraid of. Now get out of here before I call the police.

"Is my beautiful CA winning here?"

He kissed her neck. He just came out of some door and didn't even see me.

Kea:yes. I'm almost done.

Mpe:it's good to have a wife as your CA. I don't have to pay.

Kea:nice being you. did you order my food? I'm so hungry.

Mpe:on it's way.

He raised his head and annoyance was written on his face.

Mpe:what are you doing here? Are you that stupid for you to come here?

Me:you're calling me stupid after everything I've done for you? I nursed you back to health and you tossed me like something dirty!

Mpe:your father nursed me. He'd be disappointed to hear that his daughter is busy burning people's houses with the intention to kill. You're a disgrace to women. Stop fooling yourself. I will never leave my wife for you. Or anyone else for that matter. Get it into your head. I will never love you. I love my wife and that's where it ends. Don't try your tricks again. This time you will never succeed. What did you think would happen after my wife died in that fire? That I'd marry you? Then you're crazy. This time if you try another stunt i will kill you with my bare hands. And that's a promise.

Me:is this the thanks i get from you?

Mpe:or you want me to pay you for your father's generosity? Nxa get out of here. You're such embarrassment to women. If you come back here

again i will call the police on you.

Me:okay. I will never bother you again.

Mpe:and stop calling me about your father. He will call me if he is sick or something. He has my number.

I left roughly closing that door. That woman looked so simple yet beautiful. You wouldn't really believe she owns such companies. I didn't sleep searching about her last night. But I'm not going to let that intimidate me. Her husband just declared a war with me. Fuck my feelings for him! This is now war.

.....

Chapter 16

Bonolo

Mzwakhe:so what do you say about my proposal?

Me:what proposal is that?

Mzwakhe:ukushada.

Me:can we take things slow? Im not saying I don't want to get married to you but let's get to know each other first. Date and then maybe we can see if we still want to get married next year. Be in a relationship first and just be sure about everything. I don't want us to have regrets.

Mzwakhe:okay i hear you. At least i know we will get married some day. I love you okay? And im not going anywhere. I will wait until you're ready because I know im ready.

Growing up i have always been that black sheep of the family and called irresponsible. After matric my parents expected me to do what they wanted me to. I always loved cooking and wanted to go to culinary school. I did not even apply to universities. Yes I was that bright student and top student in my school. But i didn't want to study anything that i

didn't love. I was really surprised the day of my results when my parents told me to pack and be ready to leave for university. They had applied for me in secret. They applied for llb and medicine. Unfortunately I was considered for medicine as it was the first choice. I was not happy leaving home to go and live in Pretoria. I attended in UP for 7 years. Staying in Acadia and travelling to Prinshof medical campus every morning was a lot of work. But surprisingly i did very well. I passed with distinctions. Keatlaretsi then joined me when I was doing 3rd year. I had already moved from Acadia to residence in medical campus. Keatlaretsi and I were always compared and we would just laugh about it. So after i finished at medical school i went to culinary school and did what I love. Eventually my parents accepted that cooking is what I loved doing. I did work as a doctor for a year and that's far as it goes. At least i had done something to make my parents happy. And when I introduced Amir to them they were so happy. But now that happiness is about to end. Im even surprised Amir hasn't called to talk about the break up text. I know this will hurt

him. But i can't turn back the time. I know what i did is heartless. I saw how hurt Keatlaretsi was after what Rapula did to her. I really didn't expect to fall in love with Mzwakhe. We started as just friends. I could be free around him and it was the case with him too. We are just so good together. He gets me. I started falling for him. The small things he did made me fall hard in love. Slowly i started to forget that im engaged to be married.

Me:thank you for coming.

Amir:you're pregnant and you didn't tell me anything. And that text? What's going on?

Me:that's what I want us to talk about. Im sorry that things had to end like this.

Amir: babe we are getting married soon.i thought you postponing the wedding was because you were not yet ready, not because you want out of the relationship!

Me:i wish i could say it was like that but it's not. Im very sorry.

Amir:i love you! We love each other. What's the reason for you to end this relationship?

Me:i met someone..

Amir:really!?! Have you been making me a fool? You know what...im happy i got to see the type of person you are before we even said i do! I hope you will not come back running to me when that someone hurt you. Believe me he will!

Me:im sorry Amir.

Amir:and the baby,how will everything work ? I want to be in my baby's life.

Me: it's not yours...

He stood up and banged the table and left. He looked so angry. I cried. Not because I was hurt but because i felt bad. I drove back to Mzwakhe's place. I could have went to my house but i know that as soon as Amir's mother hears that i told her son the truth she will retaliate and it will be over for me. I parked the car in the garage and went inside. Gogo saw me and waved for me to go to her. The parents left yesterday and she remained.

Gogo:how are you my child?

Me:im fine gogo.

Gogo:you are not fine. Is my grands on giving you a hard time? Is he doing something that you don't like?

Me:no. It's not him. It's just something personal that im going through and it's hard for me to handle.

Gogo:tell me. What is it? You don't have to tell exactly what it is but you can explain.

Me: I did something that i thought is right but now my family is in danger because of it. I don't know what im going to do because I just put my loved ones lives in danger. It's so hard for me.

Gogo:you know what? Life will not always be rosy. You will face hardships and it's up to you how you handle them. Whatever it is,you will get through it. As you said you thought it was the right thing to do. Be happy that you did it. If you didn't you would always have that weight on your shoulders.

Me:thank you for this gogo. Now I feel better.

Gogo:where's that big head? He must come and

make you something to eat.

Me:it's fine. I will make it.

Gogo:no no no. You must enjoy this time while it is here. After you give birth he won't cook again. I know him.

Me:then I must take advantage of this time.

Gogo:now that's the smile i want to see.

After eating the food that Mzwakhe made i went to lie down. I was woken up by a beep. My heart started racing.

"You've messed with the wrong family!"

I rushed to the study to show Mzwakhe the text.

Me:i shouldn't have told Amir the truth.

Mzwakhe:baby calm down. You did the right thing.

Me:this woman is dangerous! She's a Turkish gangster woman!

Mzwakhe:and you don't have to worry about her.

Focus on our baby and i will handle this. Me and you will leave with gogo tomorrow. We will go to Swaziland. We will leave everything behind. Our devices and everything that might make them track us. We will come back after everything has settled and taken care of.

Me:but i can't leave. My family?What about that?

Mzwakhe:i want you to be safe. My brother and his friend will take care of everything. We might be back sooner than we think. Please. We just have to lay low for a while. I'll be there with you.

Me:okay. At least i have to let Kea know where i am going.

Mzwakhe:no! My brother and his friend will take care of everything but even they also won't know where we are. I don't want anything going wrong. I will just tell them im going somewhere alone.

Me:okay.

Mzwakhe:don't resign at work. Just let it be like that or they'll be suspicious.

Me:i resigned long time ago. I got that job through Amir so his mother was making things hard for me.

Mzwakhe:im sorry.

I agreed to his plan and just hope i wont regret it.

KEATLARETSI

It's been a while since Bonolo went MIA. Mzwakhe even had to leave because this was affecting him. I couldn't believe that she could just disappear like that. I even called Amir and asked him. He said it's a good thing she's missing because this country is too small for them. He wasn't even worried! What if his mother did something to her? Now it has been about five months. She would have given birth. Now she's missing and i don't know what happened to her child. I had to even explain to my uncle about what happened. The Khoza family went to pay for damages. They believe that she will be back. Now all we do is hope that she will come back. My husband got a PI to look for her but he also didn't

find anything. This hit me very hard. I even lost weight again thinking about where she could be. Lerato always takes me out to her restaurant and orders more food for us. At least she eats with me. We got so close ever since Bonolo left. She's helping me get through everything. And it was easy for her because we moved back to our house after they finished rebuilding.

Lerato: that woman has been staring at us. Do you know her?

I looked where she pointed and i couldn't believe this. What is she doing here? Isn't she supposed to be in Mozambique?

Me: that's the woman my husband cheated on me with. The one i told you about.

Lerato: i know those types. I will go and talk to her. She can't keep staring at us like that.

I watched as she went to talk to her. I saw her protesting. I listened to their conversation.

Liloca: this is a restaurant and i can look wherever i want to.

Lerato: im not fighting with you. Im just saying that you should stop staring at us. It's making us uncomfortable.

Liloca: can you please leave me to eat my food in peace? Or else i will call the manager!

Lerato: there's no need for that. Just stop what you're doing and everything will be fine.

She raised her hand for the waiter.

Waiter: good day maam. How can i help you?

Liloca: can you call the manager for me? This lady here is disturbing my peace!

Waiter: maam...

Lerato: no it's fine.

Liloca: if you can't call the manager can you give me the owner's number so i can call him and let him know how unprofessional you people are here?

Waiter: maam this is the owner.

Lerato:you can leave us J ay.

Waiter.okay Lerato.

Lerato:anyway maam enjoy your day. Me and my friend are leaving.

She came back to our table and told the waiter to make our food a takeaway. We left the restaurant. She drove us home.

Me:i don't think she's going to leave me in peace. She's so irritating.

Lerato:don't let her get to you.

Me:she's doing it on purpose. She almost killed my kids. She's responsible for our house burning.

Mpendulo didn't even tell me! I overheard him and your brother speaking. My baby has a big scar all because of that witch!

Lerato:i hope you didn't fight with your husband when you found out...Kea!

Me:relax. We talked calmly. But why are all these things happening to me? Maybe im just destined for bad things.

Lerato:i used to be like that too. Let me tell you about what once happened to me. My father got sick and i went to a loan shark to borrow money because my mother couldn't afford to pay for his medical billis .

Me:i thought you were young when your parents died?

Lerato:yes,less than a year old.Then my aunt took me in. After that i couldn't pay back the money and the loan shark came after me. My husband who was still my boyfriend at that time paid him but hte loan shark was angry because I didn't pay in time. When I was about to get married he abducted me and took me to stay with his mother. I had to be their maid to repay my paying the debt late. The loan shark returned to Pretoria and at first he left me with his guys. Those two bastards raped me. They all had their turns with me.

Me:im so sorry.

Lerato:im fine now. I take it a day at a time. After that i stayed with his family and they abused me. I

did everything for them. Cleaned and cooked for them. Even washed their underwears. Imagine washed another girl's dirty underwear....Then someone i later found out to be my uncle rescued me.

Me:wow...

Lerato:and you know what hurt more? The loan shark turned out to be my brother. Yes, Zolani. He was the loan shark. But i forgave him. We didn't know we were siblings. And after that i found out that his mother took my father's frozen sperm and had it inserted into her. She had twins, the same twins who i was cleaning after. Those twins came here and again i had to do things for them. I talked to my husband to let them stay in our mansion that we were not using. One of them is a chef so they conspired to steal one of my restaurants and house. From thereon i cut ties with them. So me telling you about this is to make you see that what you're going through will not last forever. It shall pass.

Me:you're right. But i swear if this woman tries her scheming again.....

Lerato:don't let her make you a bad person.

The drive home was not that long with us talking all the way. She dropped me on my gate and went to her place. I got home to the twins crying.

Me:what's going on?

Mpendulo:they want to go with their sister. You know how they are. They always follow her around.

Me:no. They want to leave me on my own. Mngobi is in Scotland and Lisa is going to Durban.

Mpendulo :im here. We'll have time to ourselves. Just until 13 December then Lisa and the twins will come back and we go to Bulawayo.

Me:okay. I guess they can go. Please make them stop crying. Im going to check on Thando.

Mpendulo:tell Lisa to be ready. Siya will be here soon. He left her because these boys were crying.

Me:okay.

I went upstairs and Lisa and Lesedi were in the nursery. I stood at the door and looked at them. Lesedi was gently shaking Thando and after she

woke up they laughed and picked her. This is all Lesedi,s doing. Her mother said she does it with her siblings. She gets bored and wake them up so they can play. She turned and laughed.

Lesedi:sorry auntie. I wanted to play with her.

Me:okay. Let's go downstairs. You can play there with her.

We went back downstairs and sat with Lisa talking nonstop about what she's going to do with her grandma and her brothers.

Lesedi:don't forget me okay?

Lisa:i won't. You can come with me.

Lesedi:im going to Nigeria. My great grandmother stays there.

Lisa:mommy i want to go to Nigeria too. Or i can go to Mngobi in Scotland.

Mpendulo :and Luyanda and Ayanda will finish everything granny kept for you. She will spoil them and take them to the beach everyday.

Lisa:okay im going to granny.

Siya:my girl and boys ready?

Lisa:yes. Bye mommy. I will miss you.

Me:i will miss you too.

They waved and left. My boys have grown. They even leave without me. I cooked supper and got everything ready. We had released the helper and nanny just for the holidays. We finished eating and i took a shower then gave my baby girl a bath.

Mpendulo:hey. She's fine. Even if she has that scar she will live a normal life. You don't have to stress.

Me:this scar is a reminder of what that woman did. Do you know that she's now following me? She's everywhere i am. Today she wa at Lerao's restaurant and staring at me. When Lerato talked to her she was rude. Do you think that pers on will leave us alone?

Mpendulo:she will. If she does n't then ignore her.

Me:and she won't go to jail for what she did.No

evidence was found! And she's roaming the streets. Who knows what she might do next?

Mpendulo:we have a protection order against her. So she won't try anything. Let me go put her to her bed.

I got into my night dress and got into bed.

Mpendulo:she's sleeping. Finally.

Me:she plays a lot and at night sleeps. i think it's a good thing.

Mpendulo:yeah it is.

Me:do you think the twins are ready for daycare?

Mpendulo:they'll be five soon. So they'll be fine. Already they can sleep without mama so they'll be fine.

Me:i miss them already. They'd be all over us now.

Mpendulo:but at least I can have my wife all to myself. I mean what's the use of them having their own room when they sleep with us almost every night?

Me:we should blame Lisa. They follow her everywhere. So if she sleeps in here they also will sleep here.

Mpendulo:that bossy girl. Daddy's princess.

Me:yeah...imagine now she wants to go to Nigeria.

We laughed.

Mpendulo:i will never get that girl

Me:are you sure you weren't like that growing up?

Mpendulo:mmh hh are you saying i was bossy?

Me:well you still are. Remember that day you convinced me to go with you to your home?

Mpendulo:yeah I do..should i remind you some oof the things that happened that day?

Me:uh...

Mpendulo:you're so beautiful my wife and I can't believe you're mine.

Me:i ..ahh

He entered unexpectedly. He started moving back

and forth. His eyes not leaving mine. I ended up closing mine and i couldn't hold myself. My moans and his groans filled the house. I swear the way we were so loud Thando could have heard us. Making love with my husband is always different. Every time he surprises me. Our night was full of passionate love making. I woke up wrapped around my husband's body and i couldn't be happier.

Me:good morning

Mpendulo:it's a good one indeed. Love what was that yesterday? Please do it all the time. I love you MamKhoza.

Me:i love you more. Im so tired.

Mpendulo:let's go take a shower before princess wakes up.

I reached for my nighty but he snatched it.

Mpendulo:let's go.

I got up and he followed behind me whistling. We took a not so innocent shower then went to check

on our baby and made breakfast while she was sleeping.

Me:babe let go of me. Let's eat first or you'll be late for work.

Mpendulo:im the boss.

And with that he pinned me against the kitchen wall, pulled my dress up and held my other leg up. He entered and started moving. He was also whispering sweet nothings to me. After that he picked me and i wrapped my legs around his waist. We didn't even reach our bedroom. He opened the spare room and put me on the dressing table. His strokes were fast and then i came.

Mpendulo:good morning my love. I'd like to wake up to this every morning.

I smiled and turned to look at him.

Mpendulo:let's go take a shower again.

We showered then went to check on Thando again. She was up and playing with her toys in her cot.

Me:we're such bad parents! We couldn't even hear

that she's up.

We laughed and picked her up and went to eat.

Mpendulo:we should blame mommy. Baby it's your fault cos you're so good. Im already counting the hours to when I'll be back from work.

He spanked me and winked at me. What am i going to do with him? We had our breakfast and he kissed us goodbye and left singing. I cleaned the house but not the whole house. My phone rang

Mpendulo:s thandwa sami how's my baby now?

Me:she's resting. You know she loves moving things around.

Mpendulo:not that baby. You know which one...

Me:Are you flirting with me sir?

Mpendulo:if it's with my wife then there's nothing wrong. I left my lunchbox. Can you please bring it?

Me:okay babe. See you then.

I think he left it on purpose. I took it and called the

driver. We went to his company and i met Bongani at reception.

Bongani:Khanyisile unjhani?

Me:im good and you?

Bongani:im good. Give this princess here. You can get her tomorrow.

Me:won't she give you trouble?

Bongani:no. We will be just fine.

Me:okay but don't forget to...

Bongani:don't worry. We have all her things at home.

Me:okay.

I gave her to him and she was smiling. He kissed her all over the face and she couldn't stop laughing.

Me:i see someone is happy to leave mommy behind.

Bongani:bye mommy see you tomorrow.

They waved and left.

Receptionist:you have a cute baby.

Me:thank you. Is Mr Khoza in his office?

Receptionist:yes he's waiting for you.

I nodded and took the lift to his office. I knocked once and he opened. He had a stupid grin.

Mpendulo:uphi u Thando?

Me:Bongani took her with.

Mpendulo:mmh.

He took the luncbox and put it on the table and looked at me with his half opened eyes. He moved from the table and there his member was standing. I got an idea. I went and knelt next to him. This was a bit of a problem with my little big belly. I unbuckled his trousers and slid them down.

Mpendulo:babe uh

Me:relax.

It was my first time doing this. In our three years of marriage I've never given him a head. I did my works and this office was filled with his screams. He shouted my name just as he was about to come. I moved and it shot out. I've never seen an old man

so helpless. I was happy i made him feel like that. He sat on the couch catching his breath. I went to lock the door and went to stand between his legs and bent down and kissed him. He picked me up andwe were now against the wall. His hands found their way inside my dress. He was massaging my breasts and leaving wet kisses on my neck. Soon took off my dressed and underwear then picked me up. He went with me to his chair and i sat on his table while he was on his feet

looking at me. It's my first time making love in the office. I always thought about it but never thought I would do it. I just thought that it was not for me.

*TO BE CONTINUED *

[07/06, 19:01] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 20

After leaving his office we went out. We walked around the mall doing window shopping. Then he saw this beautiful baby sneakers and said let's get in. We got in and the baby clothes were so beautiful. We did baby shopping and this husband of mine took a lot of things.

Voice:wow. You keep popping them babies huh?

I could never forget that voice. It was even irritating me.

Me: yeah hey. At least i have a company that will make it possible for me to take care of them. And i love popping them for my husband. Not someone's husband.

Basetsana:oh that's good. You can now forget about my husband.

Me:i wouldn't think about yours while i have mine. He's too wonderful to me that i can't even think about other men.

Basetsana:enjoy it while it lasts.

Me: i will darling. I know you wish i could go back to

your husband so you can get my company. Keep dreaming. You will dream until you die. You see this man here? Even death won't separate us. So whatever plans you have forget about it. Baby, i saw a romper that i think will look good on our little boy.

Mpendulo:ngiyak'thanda MamKhoza.

Me:i love you even more mr Khoza.

I held his hand and we continued with our shopping for our boy. If Basetsana thought i

Was going to entertain her then she got it wrong. Im too happy to do that.

Mpendulo:you handled that very well.

We were now sitting in some restaurant having early supper. Im saying that because I know i will eat again at night.

Me: i decided that im not going to let people get to me.im just going to live my life and be happy.

Mpendulo:and I'll do anything to make you happy.

When we got home we video called my mother in law and talked to the kids.

Mpendulo:about what you said to that woman. That im wonderful to you

Me:i meant it. You're a good man.

Mpendulo:it made me feel guilty. Like after all i put you through. You still see me as this good man. I promise you you will never have to cry again because i hurt you. I promise to be a better man. A good husband to you.

Me:i know you will.

Mpendulo:you are beautiful inside out. And i will always thank God for you. When I met you i knew already that i had found my soulmate. Our love is greater than any I've ever seen.

I didn't say anything. I just cuddled up to him.

In the morning we woke up to banging on the door. It's not always that we have visitors. Mpendulo went to check and i finished getting dressed. We had just taken a shower. I finished then went downstairs.

Me:babe who was that?

Mpendulo:my love come and sit down.

Me:oh i didn't know we have guests. Dumelang bagolo.

They just looked at me like i said something wrong.

Me:um i will go and make breakfast.

Mpendulo:come and sit down. I will do that.

I sat next to him.

Mpendulo:so what brings you here?

Old woman:we were here yesterday but there was no one. We have brought your son.we are tired of him. He is a troublemaker and doesn't listen to

anyone. His mother got tired of him fighting with other kids in her marital home so she brought him to us. He has been staying with us for three years and we cant take it anymore.

Mpendulo:are you sure you're at the right house?

Old woman:yes. Aren't you Mpendulo Khoza?

Mpendulo:where's the boy? I don't know anything about a son.

Old woman:Phumzile hamba uyo biza uLindani.

After a few minutes Phumzile came back with a spitting image of my husband. There was no need for a dna.

Old woman:this is him. We are not going back with him.

Mpendulo:who's his mother?

Old woman:Nos ibulelo.

Mpendulo: i don't know anyone by that name so i suggest you call your daughter or show me her picture.

They gave him the picture and he laughed.

Mpendulo: this is Andiswa, not Nosibulelo. Or she just gave me a fake name.

Old woman: now that you know we are leaving. Your son will stay with you. You are his father. You will also feel what we feel.

Lindani: I already told you I'm not staying where I'm not wanted. I'd rather stay in the streets.

Mpendulo: I didn't know about you.

Lindani: you told my mother to abort me.

Mpendulo: she didn't tell me she is pregnant. We went our separate ways and I never contacted her again. How did I know about her being pregnant?

Lindani: you're just defending yourself because she's not here to speak for herself.

Mpendulo: give me her number so we can video call her and hear what she has to say.

They called her and she took very long to answer.

Old woman: Nosibulelo we are with Lindani's father

here and he says you didn't tell him about Lindani. But you said he told you to abort.

Nosi:um...

Mpendulo:you don't know what to say now? How can you lie to my son and say i told you to abort while you didn't even tell me you were pregnant? You hid him from me!

Nosi:im sorry. He was so persistent in knowing about you and i told him that story so that he can stop.

Mpendulo:and now that he's giving you problems you shift him to me!?

Nosi:he's your son!

Mpendulo:wasn't he my son when you told him lies about me?

Nosi:im sorry okay? Now you can have him. He has given me enough troubles. Do you know the amount of money I've been paying because of that evil child!? Do you know he once stabbed my husband? Now you will know what I had to deal with!

Mpendulo:she cut the call!

Old woman:we are leaving and leaving your evil child behind.

Mpendulo:don't call him evil! We don't know what made him to be like this! Leave my house right this instant!

He went to open the door for them. I got up and went to make breakfast. I could hear them talking. From what I could get this child has anger. I took the food to them and we ate.

Me:love i will call the driver and fetch Thando.

Mpendulo:Bongani is already on his way.

Me:okay.

Mpendulo:i know i haven't been in your life and i can't judge you based on what I don't know. So what makes you to be this troublemaker and evil child they say you are?

Lindani:im not evil! They are the evil ones.

Mpendulo:don't shout!we are talking here!

Me:okay let's all calm down and talk. Babe give him a chance to talk. So Lindani talk to your father and explain things to him. Then your father will know what to do going forward.

Mpendulo:what happened there?

Linda:they abused me. I always did most work there. When I want to rest I'd get shouted. When other kids hit me at school i fought back. One day my stepfather hit me because he said im ruining his reputation. He hit me like a dog and i stabbed him. Then they took me to my grandmother's. I stayed there for three years.

Mpendulo:but why didn't your mother tell me?

Lindani:every time I asked about you she'd dismiss the topic. Then she came with the abortion story.

Mpendulo:im sorry you went through that. I promise to make up for lost time.

Lindani:i don't want to stay here. I've been abused enough.

Me:we are not going to abuse you here. We will

treat you like our other kids.

He stood up and pulled his t-shirt up. I gasped in shock. His body is filled with bruises. What kind of parent allows this to be done to their child?

Mpendulo:he did that!?

Lindani:yes...and i don't want to go through it again.

Mpendulo:im sorry. If i knew about you this wouldn't have happened. We just met today but things are going to change. I will take care of you. You will stay here.

There was a knock and i went to open. It was Bongani. Thando was laughing that you couldn't even tell that she didn't even sleep with her parents.

Me:did she cry?

Bongani:no. She's a princess and they don't cry.

Me:are you sure

Bongani:okay. When her sisters took her she cried

but when I took her she was all smiles. When she looks at me she thinks im her dad.

We laughed.

As time went on Lindani was introduced to the family and all the required ceremonies were done for him. He was now attending therapy. But i still could see that something was bothering him. But we choseto have faith that he will open up in therapy and get help.

Me: you know,grandma must be counting down the hours until we get there. I can't wait to see her.

Mpendulo:about that...

Me:babe i hope you didn't forget my uncle's brandy hey. Anyway when will you pack things in the car?

Mpendulo: i was thinking that we postpone.

Me:postpone? My grandmother is happy and waiting for us.

Mpendulo:your grandmother can wait. This is my son's first Christmas with me. We are going home.

Me:and this is my grandmother's first Christmas with me in years.

Mpendulo:im the one who suggested we go there. You wouldn't have thought about it if i didn't.

Me:wow. Thank you for reminding me.

Mpendulo:don't be selfish man. We can still go to your grandmother's next year. This year everyone is going home and that's where we will spend our Christmas.

Me:oh. You're not asking me? You're just telling me. That sounds like it's final.

Mpendulo:that's because it is final.

Me:count me out then. Because I am not going anywhere with you. I am going to my grandmother's. I will spend Christmas and new year with her.

Mpendulo: Khanyisile I've said what I said. We are going home and it's final.

I looked at the other side and tried to sleep. He tried to hold me and i roughly took his hands off me.

Me:ska nts hwara!

Mpendulo:hey we are not fighting.

Me:can you leave me alone? Im trying to sleep here.

Mpendulo:not before we finish talking.

Me:nna ke feditse so o ka nna wa bua o le esi.

I pulled the cover my head and just kept quiet. In the morning i woke up to an empty bed and went to do my hygiene process. I got dressed and took my suitcase out. I pushed it to the lounge. I asked for a lift from Farai since he's also going home. I couldn't ask the driver since it's holidays and he has to be with his family. And i cant drive because of this pregnancy. I went to the kids room and all their suitcases wereunpacked and they were not around. Their father is responsible for this. I started packing their clothes and everything they will need. I looked for our documents and i couldn't find them. I went to Lindani's room.

Me:hey do you know where your father is?

Lindani:he said he's going out for breakfast.

Me:okay. So what are you doing there?

Lindani:nothing! Im just reading something...yeah that's it.

Me:you know i can see that you're lying. Give me that paper.

Lindani:it's nothing really.

Me:then let me see.

Lindani:no!

I went to him and took the paper. I read it and i couldn't believe it.

Me:Lindani how can you think like this!?! You know you can talk to me abd your father.

Lindani:ever since I came here you've been so good to me. Last night I heard you fighting. I feel like im the cause of that. Dad changed your plans because of me. Everywhere I go i ruin things. Also everything is weighing so heavy on me.

He was now crying.

Me:and why didn't you mention that your stepfather raped you? How do you think your father was going to feel reading it on a suicide note?

Lindani:my own mother did not believe me. How can i expect other people to believe me? She stood with him and said im an evil and lying child. She let him hurt me. That's the real reason why I stabbed him. He forced himself on me for a year.

Ne:oh my God! How can your mother allow this to happen?she should have protected you.

Lindani:i hate her and i never want to see her again. Maybe it will be better if i die.

Me:don't talk like that. Let's go make something to eat. We will deal with this. We will get through it together.

Lindani:why are you being so nice to me?

Me:you're my husband's son then that makes you my son. I love all my children that means I love you too. Im here for you whenever you want to talk. Please don't try to do anything stupid like killing yourself. It's not an answer. Im going to make breakfast. Take a shower and follow me.

I tried calling Mpendulo but he was not picking up. I tried calling multiple times but he just ignored my calls. I know he's ignoring them. I left him a message then called Farai and told him im not coming anymore. The hardest thing was calling and explain to my grandmother why im not coming anymore. All her grandchildren are going to be there and im the only one who won't be present. Lindani came and we made food. I was even starting to be scared by how he was taking so long. We took our food and went to eat.

Mpendulo:good morning family.

Lindani:morning dad.

Mpendulo:i brought you food but i see you've already cooked.

Me:did you expect us to die of hunger when you went to God knows where?

Lindani:I'll be in my room.

Lisa:im going with you.

Lindani:no.

Lisa:hay you're not a cool brother. Mngqobi let's me in his room and plays his games with me. I even ride his bicycle!

Lindani:i don't ride bicycles.

Lisa:i will play your games okay? You're my brother and you are going to play with me. Who do you think will play with me when Mngqobi is not here?

Me:baby go and play with Lesedi.

Lisa:she's going to Nigeria. I'm not her friend anymore.

Me:okay. Your brother will play with you tomorrow. Now come watch tv. Thando wants to play with her sister.

Lisa:okay Thando is my bew best friend. Everyone doesn't want me now.

Lindani rushed to his room. Lisa is so bossy. She's been on his hip ever since she came back. It's even funny.

Mpendulo:i see you didn't leave.

Me:ntlogele ka kagiso. Where would i go without my

passport? I never thought you'd act so low.

Mpendulo:your passport is in the car. You can leave now. But leave my children behind

Me:I've never seen a selfish person like you. How do you expect me to get there? Farai already left. Akere you left with my passport.

Mpendulo:oh sorry.

Me:you're not even sorry. All my grandmother's grandchildren will be there and I'll be the only one who won't be there. Im the only thing connecting her to her late daughter. Buy you don't understand that.

Mpendulo:i didn't know...

Me:you never know anything. I even called you and you ignored my calls. What if your son had killed himself? You don't even ask him what he's going through. You're just happy you have another son but you don't make an effort to talk to him and find out how he is doing. He was raped by his stepfather but you don't know that. Because he's scared of talking to you. I had to find out from a suicide note

that he was writing. What if i didn't find him writing it and it was too late? Talk to your child. Be a father to him. Show him you care and want to be there for him. Don't ever think im not leaving anymore because i promise your "child " that i will be there for him.

Mpendulo:what!? I talked to him and he was fine

Me:clearly he wasn't.

Mpendulo:i will talk to him.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:01] : ***STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 21

Narrated

Mpendulo: Zweli i love my wife so much. But i don't know what is wrong. I seem to be making all the wrong decisions..

Zweli: are you sure you did the right thing getting married? I mean all you do is hurt her. Ask yourself what it is that you want. You can't always treat her like this. Has she ever given you reason to do these things?

Mpendulo:no. I just find myself doing things for us without talking to her. Thats what im used to. Im not used to making decisions with someone.

Zweli:that's the problem. You have to change. You are married now. Things must change. Consult with your wife before you do things. It musnt be everything but if it concerns your family talk to her about it and hear what she says. Communicate. Be a team. It's all about teamwork. Respect her. Respect yourself also. Be a man she trusts. Every time you go out she must not worry about whether you are doing something wrong out there. You must appreciate her. I was so happy for you when you told me you have found the one. Now you want to

ruin it? No i wont let you do that. What kind of friend would i be? Fix things with that woman. You two love each other. You just have to change here and there. You will see everything will be good. Start by apologizing. Then take everything from there.

Mpendulo:i hear you. Thanks for the advice.

Zweli:good luck. I want to see you two smiling when you come here.

Mpendulo:okay. Will see you tomorrow.

He cut the call and went to his bedroom. He hugged his wife from behind.

Mpendulo:my love. Im sorry. Im sorry for treating you bad the past few days. I know i have been difficult to deal with. I will do things different now. I've seen my mistakes and i will fix them.

Kea:it's fine. But you can't always do things and expect me to just agree. We have to communicate. Not just drop a bombshell on me.

Mpendulo:i know.

Kea:and this thing of you always saying sorry and never change. It has to stop.

Mpendulo:i hear you. And thank you for accepting my son and for the support that you're giving him.

Kea:that's what a mother does...do you have other kids out there maybe from your past girlfriends or...

Mpendulo:no.

Kea:and Liloca ...won't she rock up here one day saying you two have a child...

Mpendulo:i thought we have moved on from that?

Kea:im just making sure. The way she's up in my back it's like she has something. It's good that you didn't impregnate her because I would pack all my things and leave.

Mpendulo:really now?

Kea:yes. I won't stay to raise a child that is the results of cheating. Rapula did that and i left. He was prepared to leave his wife for me but I couldn't stay there and raise his kids. You know i love you more than I've ever loved any man. That's why I

stayed after what happened with the Liloa saga. But im telling you if you keep doing things that hurt me i will say enough is enough and leave. Yes it will hurt because I love you so much but i will try to live without you.

Mpendulo:can we please stop talking about you leaving? That will never happen so let's just stop talking about it. Im going to be a good husband and treat you like a queen that you are. My queen.

Kea:ke a go rata ntate khoza

Mpendulo:nami ngiyak'thanda MamKhoza. So do you forgive me for changing our plans without talking to you first?

Kea:yes. As long as it wont happen again.

Mpendulo:now let's go before we miss our flight.

Kea: I wish I didn't have to go.

Mpendulo:why?

Kea:your aunt always brings me down. There's no way that she wont be calling me names or ill treating me.

Mpendulo:well then it's good because she won't be around. She will be with her family.

Me:okay that's better. I was raised to respect my elders. I don't hate your aunty but the way she treats me is not good. It doesn't suit someone of her age. I expected that to be done by maybe someone your brothers age or young. Not koko o mo tuna jaana.

Mpendulo: i promise she will never pick on you again. Not when om around.

The following day i got up and i was alone in our room. Three days before Christmas. My birthday. I took a shower and wore a dress and fixed my hair. The way it's so long i feel like cutting. I went downstairs and everyone looked beautiful.

Me:good morning.

Mpendulo:morning my queen.

Lisa:happy birthday mommy.

Me:thank you my love. Have you made breakfast?

Mpendulo:no We are celebrating your birthday at home.

Me:okay.

We drove to his parents place. Everyone had arrived then we all went to sit in the dining room.

Siya:happy birthday Kea. I can't believe you're almost my age.

Me:thank you.

Ma:happy birthday my child.

Mpendulo:we have a surprise for you.

Me:really?

They all turned to the door and there she was standing.

Nolo:aren't you going to give me a hug?

Me:i can't believe you're here. I missed you so much.

Nolo:i couldn't miss your birthday. Happy birthday.

Me:thank you. Where's your baby?

Nolo:he's sitting there with his father.

Me:oh my God..i didn't even see it's him.

Mzwakhe:how would you see me with this brother of mine holding your hand as if you are going to run?

Mpendulo:awungyeke wena.

Me:wow your baby is beautiful. Bonolo im so happy you're back.

Mpendulo:come sit.

Lu:baba i want meat. Please.

My baby looked so cute.

Baba:what did you do to my boy? His face is pink.

Mpendulo:He was crying for meat. And i told him he will eat here.

Baba:come my boy. Don't cry again okay? You can have lot of meat.

He nodded his head and sat on his lap. He was now laughig talking to his grandfather. What i like is that this man loves his grandchildren. That's why most of the time you will find them here.

Mpendulo:now that everyone is settled,i would like

to thank my wife. Thank you for being a good wife. A good mother to our kids. I wouldn't choose anyone else to do this life with. You're just perfect for me. I love you and i appreciate you. Your presence in my life and that of our children brings a difference. I pray that you grow to continue being the good person that you are. I couldn't have asked for a better life partner.

His words just found their way straight to my heart. I was even getting emotional. They started singing for me then we started eating. It was really a good day.

"Good morning family. "

Ma:hi. Who are you and how did you walk past the gate?

Liloca :im Liloca Pereira. Your son's baby mama.

Baba:Mpendulo what is she talking about?

Liloca:this child with me here is his son. I've brought him to his family.

I didn't know what to say. Just when we were starting to be happy.

Nolo:what is she talking about?

Mzwakhe:babe calm down.

Nolo:no! My sister's had enough. He disappeared to Mozambique kanti he was making a baby there. You deserve better Keatlaretsi. And i told you not to hurt my sister and you go and do this?

I couldn't stop the tears that were falling. I was now crying. I couldn't understand how this could happen to me. I looked at him.

Me:did you know about this?

Mpendulo:babe...

Me:answer me!

Mpendulo:i also just found out now. Do you think i wouldn't have told you if i knew?

Me:and wena? What did you think you were going to achieve by doing this? You thought you were going to come here on my birthday and ruin things?Will that make you happy? You thought I

was going to run away and you would stay here and be the new wife?is that it?does it make you happy to see me cey? An old woman like you doing this!

Muzi: Khanyisile calm down.

Me:no!im not going to calm down. Im tired. This woman has been following me around and im told to just let it go. Did you sleep with me for you to follow me everywhere i go? Why don't you follow him and leave me alone? Wasn't it enough that you burnt my house with my kids inside? My kids will always be traumatized because of that! My baby will live with a big scar because of an evil person. And you didn't go to jail for that. Were you hoping that I'll be in the house also and die with all my children so you can take over? Are you that heartless?

Ma:what!? Get out! Get out of here. Mpendulo you see what you're bringing into your family now!?

Liloca: was there any proof linking me to that? Don't make accusations. I didn't ask your dear innocent husband to sleep with me!

Baba:hey! You are not going to talk like that in my house. Here you show respect. Who are you to stand there and talk like that? Didn't your father teach you manners!?

I got up and took my handbag. I don't think i can be in the same house with this woman. The woman who tried to kill my kids.

Baba:Khanyisile sit down. This evil woman is leaving.

Liloca:and what about his son?

She pointed at my husband.

Mzwakhe:hai wena maan! Didn't you hear the man of the house say go and learn some manners? And while at ut we want a DNA test for that child. If he's not my brother's kid I'll definitely kill you myself. Even if he's his child i will make sure he gets full custody and you rot in jail where you belong for arson and attempted murder! Now get out.

She took her child and left. Mpendulo was still looking at the door.

Baba:do you want to follow them?

Mpendulo:baba ngimdala.... you don't have to speak to me like im a child!

Baba:hey! You're still a child to me. Talk to me like that again and these problems you're facing will be nothing compared to what i will do. Nxa!

Mpendulo got up and went out. His mother followed him. I also got up and went to the bathroom. All the anger i had in me came back and i just cried. I couldn't stop crying. What is it with me? All the men keep cheating on me. Am i perhaps the problem? Is this karma for leaving Tim? Maybe if he was still alive i would go and apologize to him for leaving him high and dry. Maybe things would work out for me. Tim was the only man who fully loved me. He never cheated on me or made me cry. He was the perfect gentleman and i ruined my chance at a happily ever after. I hate that i didn't love him enough to stay with him. I didn't have hope in our relationship. Just when I love a man with my all he goes and does this. I've never loved any man like i love Mpendulo. And he's taking that for granted. Is

this what happens when you love a person like your life depends on it? I feel like taking a lot of pills and drink them all! But what will be of my children? What am i going to do?

"Keatlaretsi please open the door!Don't do something stupid in there!"

I could hear with that voice that it's Bonolo. But i couldn't bring myself to open for her.

Bonolo:ka go kopa tlhe mma. A ko bole kgoro!

Me:im fine.

Nolo:i know you're not fine. Open this door or i will not stop shouting!

I went and opened. As soon as I opened she hugged me. And that just made me cry more.

Nolo:even this too shall pass. We are going to get through it like we always do. You will be fine.

Me:am i ever going to be happy?

Nolo:shhh shh. Let's go make sugar water for you.

We went to the kitchen and the ladies were washing

the dishes and cleaning the kitchen.

Ntombi: Khanyisile we are so sorry.

Bongi:that woman really ruined your birthday. Of all days she chose your birthday? And the nerve to show her face here after she almost killed your children? She should be in jail right now!

Me:um bye.

I was not going to stay here and just take everyone's pity. All these people feel sorry for me but it's not going to change anything. I took my handbag and exited the house. I requested an ubber to our place . I arrived and packed my suitcase and waited for Bonolo. She said she was going to come with the kids. I booked a flight back to Pretoria. I wish i could go to Rustenburg but i don't want my father to make me cry. When im around him and im hurting he tends to treat me like a glass and I'll wnd up crying and that's not what I want. I want to decided in peace what it is that i want. Bonolo arrived alone. I thought she was going to come with the kids.

Nolo:your mother in law said the kids can remain.

Me:im going back to Pretoria.

Nolo:are you sure about this? Why don't you leave after new year's?

Me:i want to be alone. I will be fine. Im not leaving for good. I just want to clear my head.

Nolo:i never thought you would go through this again.

Me:it's life. Maybe this is karma for leaving Tim. Anelisa and her friends were right. I will never be happy.

Nolo:no! We are nit going back there. Mpendulo loves you. You will be happy. I know he makes you happy. We all have our faults.

Me:he cheated. J ust like other men.

Nolo:you know when it happened he was n't hims elf. You even forgave him for that.

Me:but a child Bonolo? I accepted his other children because i found them there. How do i start to build a bond with this one while i know she's the cause of

my unhappiness? How do i do that?

Nolo:no one is forcing you to accept the child. It will happen in its own time.

Me:i don't even know what to think now. How do we move on from this? Such betrayal.

Nolo:i hope you don't make any drastic changes. Take your time.

Me: Enjoy your Christmas. I will see you when you come back to Pta.

Nolo:you can't go alone. I will go with you.

Me: no it's fine. I just want to be alone and i don't want to burden you with my problems.

Nolo:you know you can never be a burden to me.

Me:you cant go with me. What if that woman finds you there and there's no one to protect you?

Nolo:which is why you can't go alone. What if they do something to you?

Her phone disturbed her and she answered.

Nolo:yes...no i can't let her go alone. I have to be with her. No! She can't come there. Shap.

I looked at her as she looked at me.

Nolo:we have to go back. Baba wants us back at the house. That means you cant leave.

Me:I've already booked a flight.

Nolo:cancel it. And please Kea. Talk to your husband. Talk to him and see how you'll move forward from this. Im not going to say leave him pr forgive him and stay. That is all up to you. Do what is best for you. Now let me pack for the kids so we can go.

Me:why pack for the kids? We will come back here.

Nolo:everyone is staying at the Khoza residence until the holidays are over.

She packed then drove us back. When we got there Mpendulo was seated with his parents in the lounge.

Ma: Khanyisile you may sit.

Bonolo left and i sat down. I didn't even know what to say. I just kept quiet and looked down.

Baba: Khanyisile what did you say the first time you came here?

Me:you ask if i love my husband and i said yes.

Baba:and i also asked you if you knew what it means to be in this family and if you are really ready to spend the rest of your life with him right? You forgave him for cheating. Didn't you know that there might be a possibility of the other woman being pregnant? Now you're facing this problem and you want to run away.why can't you sit with your husband and talk? Hear his side of the story? Are you always going to run every time you face a problem?

Me:...

Mama:no. Answer him. How will you build your home if you don't sit down and talk?hear each other out? Do you really know what marriage is? In marriage it won't always be rosy. You will face obstacles. And sometimes you won't be happy. When you face those obstacles you fight them. Don't allow them to break you. You have to be

strong and talk before overreacting then you can decide a way forward. Now it's time to stand with your husband in this dilemma you are going through. It's not his child. Yes the tests haven't been done yet but i believe him when he says it's not his. Now you two go and talk sort things out. You can leave now.

Baba:i hope it's the last time we talk about something like this. Nawe Mpendulo learn to be faithful. Look what you're making your wife go through. Ever since you got married i haven't heard any complaints about her. It's always you. Don't make me think that you're not cut out for this marriage. You disappoint me. You are the one that i trust in. I trust you to take care of this family but how when you can't even do right by your own family? Khula man. Grow up and show that you're a family man. Women will always be a lot out there but once you lose a good woman you will never find another like her again. I hope you remember this whenever you're about to do something stupid. You can leave now.

I got up and went straight to our bedroom. I got into bed and sat thinking. What if he's the father?

Mpendulo:i brought you food. You didn't touch breakfast.

Me:im not hungry.

Mpendulo:im not asking you. You have to eat.

I got up and sat on the couch. I started eating.

Mpendulo:why don't you trust me? Just when I think we fixed things and are moving forward this happens. I thought you would stand by me. Just like i told you i didn't make her pregnant you should have believed me. Even though I lost my memory i would know if she fell pregnant. She would have given birth while i was still in Mozambique. But you acted fast before I could say anything. Do you know how i felt when my father talked to me like that?

That child is not mine and i know she's gonna try and say is mine. She doesn't want to see us happy together. She has this idea in her head that we belong together. She will go to any length to get what she wants. Now i want my wife to stand by me.

Support me in this. Im still working on her going to jail and now i have to deal with you not believing me. Please trust that i will sort this and she will be out of our lives for good. I love you. And no one else. And i have no other kids out there. J ust believe me please. Look at me. Do you think i would lie to you about this knowing how it would hurt you? If i knew i have a child with her i would have told you. I wouldn't want you to find out from someone else. Please trust me. Can you do that?

Mpendulo

My life is really cursed. When I fix this that goes wrong. Seeing my wife cry like that broke my heart. Im responsible for that. I know im not the father but i brought this woman into our lives. I have to get rid of her. Im going to make sure that she goes to jail. I will do anything it takes. She fell asleep after we were talking. Im just glad she ended up believing me. Now what is left is for me to get to the bottom

of this and find exactly what this woman wants. I kissed her forehead and took my car keys and walked out. I found mom feeding Thando and Naty, Siya's daughter.

Mom: where are you going? Is your wife alright?

Me: yes. She's sleeping now.

Mom: okay. I hope you two fix things.

Me: we've talked and everything is fine. I love her so much mom and i don't want to lose her.

Mom: you won't lose her. Everything will work out fine. You will see.

Me: you know you're the one who always believes in me. And your support means a lot to me.

Mom: that's what a mother does.

Me: im going somewhere. I'll be back a bit late.

Mom: okay. Be safe.

I didn't even make it to the door. My princess started crying for me. Natty followed suit.

Me: let me go and look for Natty's car seat. I'll have

to go with them.

I looked for Siya and he gave me his keys so i can take the car seat. I put it into my car and went to fetch the two girls. When I got in the twins were also there. It really is not my day. I picked the two girls and Luyanda and Ayanda were behind me. I put them into the car and strapped them. I kissed their cheeks and they giggled. I love my kids. They are my life. I drove past McDonald's and bought burgers and milkshakes for the twins. I drove to Zweli's place. I was going to ask him to help me with this thing that im facing.

Zweli:you have chubby babies.

Me:the other one is Siya's. You see this one is like her mother. Everything besides her looks and skin colour. She's chubby and she cries a lot.

Zweli:you're right. All your kids look like you.

Me:yeah. But this princess likes crying. Even coming here she cried for me. I even have to sneak out in order to go to work.

Zweli: that's what you get for having many kids. But

it's good because your house will be filled with laughter and they will take care of you.

Me:but im done hey. After Qhawe we are done.

Zweli:that's a lie and we both know it.

We laugh.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:02] : ***STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 22

My time with Zweli was constructive. He said he would get people he knows to keep tabs on Agnes. On the other hand Zorro has been trying to recover the footage of our house on the day it burnt. I can't say im happy though. We might not get anything. But im hopeful. Everyone has gone to sleep and im

just sitting here with the twins who have just fallen asleep. I pick them up and take them to Mngobis room. But now Lindani uses it. I find him fast asleep. I put the heavy boys next to him and kiss their foreheads.

Me:good night my boys.

I go back to switch off the tv but i find Mabutho seated on the couch.

Me:i didn't know you were here.

Mabutho:i couldn't sleep so i figured i must just come abd think here

Me:is everything alright?

Mabutho:no. I got a job outside the country and now i don't know whether to go or not.

Me:what do you think you should do? What does your wife say?

Mabutho:she thinks it's a good opportunity. It could open many doors for me and we can maybe relocate for 5 years.

Me:so what's the problem?

Mabutho:you know how your father is. He does nt want me to go. Even mom who's always understanding doesn't want me to go.

Me:this is your life. If this is what you want then i think you should go.

Mabutho:im not you. I can't go against his decision.

Me:for once just choose yourself and not what he says. You've worked in the family company for long and did very well. Now it's time to do what you want. You have my support. I will talk to the parents. Don't worry about it.

Mabutho:so how's hunting your alleged baby mama Down?

Me:i can't believe that woman thought I'd believe her lies. That child is not mine. She doesn't even look like me or her.

Mabutho:these things happen. But im sure she will rock up with her father here.

Me:let her come. She will be embarrassed. My wife might be asking herself where I am. Good night.

Mabutho:good night bafo.

I went to our room and she was awake pressing her phone.

Me:my queen. U right?

Kea:yeah ke shap. I was just waiting for little madam to fall asleep.

Me:she must be tired. Sje was moving around a lot at Zweli's place. Ukhathele ngempela.

Kea:at least o robetsi nou.

Me:yeah. You seem to be too far.

Kea:i was just thinking. When I give birth and the baby is six months im going back to work. I don't want to be bored doing nothing at home.

Me: i know it can be boring. You know what? How about i take leave from work and we raise our baby and when he's six months then we find a nanny and we both go back to work. But before going back to work me and you are going to travel the world. J ust get fresh air. Away from all the drama.

Kea:that sounds good. About Agnes..

Me:what about her

Kea:if the baby is yours what will you do?

Me:it's not mine. If it was mine i would take responsibility and support my child. But thankfully it's not mine.

Kea:okay. But know that if it's yours i..

Me:you will not leave me. As i said it's not mine.

Kea:keep that criminal woman away from me. I don't want to see her near me.

Me:you're so amazing. Let's sleep. Tomorrow is a very busy day.

Kea:good night.

Me:aren't you forgetting something?

Kea:mmh no.

Me:hay ithi uya dlala bo.

She laughed and moved her head to me. We kissed and smiled. My wife has a beautiful smile.

Me:now we can sleep.

We fell asleep in each others arms. And that was the most amazing thing.

In the morning i woke up and my wife was playing with our girl. She kept giggling and touching her mother's face.

Me:good morning daddy's girls.

Kea:morning love. How are you

Me:im good. Let me take a shower.

Kea:okay. I've already showered

Me:why didn't you wake me

Kea:i didn't want to disturb your sleep.

I went to shower then lotioned and got dressed.

Kea:mmh someone looks sexy.

Me:and who's that

Kea:some man i just saw on my phone

Me:well not sexier than me i hope

We laughed. It's good to hear her laugh.

Me:and then Thando? Why's she laughing?

Kea:she's laughing because her mommy's laughing.

Me:she likes things. It's Christmas. I see you are already dressed.

Kea:yes. This girl woke up very early.

Me:you look so beautiful. Let's go.

We went downstairs and the helpers were busy moving up and down. We joined the others.

Baba:how are you makoti?

Kea:im good thanks and you baba?

Baba:im good.

Mom:gather around and let's start with breakfast. Im so happy to have my sons and daughters under one roof. And my grandchildren. Thank you for making this Christmas very special. I love you so

much. All of you.

Baba:Lindani. This is your first Christmas with your family. Many are still to come. Enjoy yourself here. Be free. We love you and we are so happy to have you with us.

Lindani:thank you.

Baba:and stop isolating yourself. Be with your brothers. Hang out with them. These are your brothers whom you run to when you need something or advice. Be one with them. Stick with them.

Lindani nodded. It really made me happy to see my son being welcomed like this.

Khanyo:and now we can eat. Merry Christmas everyone.

All:merry Christmas.

Lisa:wait!

She looked at her mother's phone. She's had it since I got here.

Lisa:don't eat. Im coming.

She got off her chair and went to the door. She stood there and we had to wait for her.lol

Khanyo:your child is a drama queen.

Me: what's she doing there anyway?

Mzwakhe:she is just like you Khanyo.

We heard her cheering and she was moving up and down. She opened the door and screamed.

Mom:what's going on?

Baba:this child.

She came back smiling.

Lisa:surprise!!!

She moved aside and my boy was there. But how did he get here? His mother got up and hugged him.

Kea:i missed you so much my boy.

Mnqobi:i missed you too mommy.

Lisa:now we can eat. My brother is here.

Mnqobi:im hungry.

Lisa:i told them not to eat before you get here. Pray

for us.

We laughed. This girl is a bully. The twins stopped eating and went to stand next to Mngobi. They really missed him.

Me: Boys sit down and eat. He's not going anywhere.

We all started eating and chatting. Suddenly there was a cat in the house. We don't own any cats here. Just puppies. Amanda played with the cat and Sfundu hit that cat.

Amanda: why did you do that!?

Sfundu: don't you see it jumping on this table. You can take your food and go eat with it. And leave us.

Amanda: stop being mean. I love this cat.

We ignored their fights and continued eating. My mom started choking. She was even losing her breath.

Siya: mom what's wrong?

Mom: i can't breathe. I think something choked me.

She was starting to lose her breath. It was even

getting worse. I got up and took her to the car and drove to the hospital.

Mzwakhe

We followed behind Mpendulo as he drove mom to the hospital.

Nolo:babe don't worry. Your mother will be fine.

Mzwakhe:fine? Did you see how she was?

Nolo:stop driving like you want to kill us!

I didn't listen to her.i just drove until we got to the hospital. We waited for the doctor until he came and told us there was nothing that seemed to be wrong. They put oxygen mask on her and she was now breathing fine. We called ger brothers to let them know. She's the only girl from her family. They said they would be here soon. We took mom back home but the moment we got home it all started.

Nolo:can we talk? Without you shouting at me?

Me:im sorry. J ust that this thing with my mother stressed me.

Nolo:you saw how everything starts when we came back? I think a pastor should pray for her.

Me:not this again. What will a pastor do? Can you please stop this?

Nolo:im trying to help here. You should be thanking me for trying. I want mama to be fine and i will do it even if you don't!

She left me thinking about many things. I followed behind her and she talked with Khanyisile and then Khanyisile called someone.

Mpendulo:mom is not getting better. When we go to the hospital they say there's nothing wrong with her.

Baba:i would take her to an inyanga but she is refusing.

Nolo:um babe i would like to ask something. Kea called her friend and she gave her her mother in law's number who's a pastor. I think we should call her so she can pray for ma.

Me:i told you to stop with that.

Nolo:I'm just trying to help. These things happen. But if you're not comfortable with it then you shouldn't do it. People are evil out there and they will do evil things to get their way.

Mpendulo:you must be right. Call her. The pastor.

They called the pastor and talked to her. We all went to mom's room and when I touched her she was cold. She was shivering. The pastor was praying for her and she was even speaking in tongues. I've never heard someone pray like that.

When she was done she told us to let her sleep and she will be fine.

Me:mom how are you feeling?

Mom:i will be fine. I want to sleep now. Take off one blanket.

Me:i will sit with you here.

Baba:no! I will sit here with her. It's late anyway.
You all should go to sleep.

We closed the door on our way out. We went to sit
in the tv room.

Nolo:where's that cat?

Siya:Amanda left it in the garage.

Nolo:take that cat out of this yard or more is still
going to happen.

Me:what's up with you and this cat!?

Nolo:my child is also here. I have to protect him!
What if something happens to him?

Muzi:let's all just calm down. Siya take the cat and
throw it out.

Siya:i still value my life.

Me:im tired of this! And wena,why are you so hell
bent on this cat thing? Are you the one who brought
it here to harm my mother?

Nolo:wa reng nare?

Me:you heard me.

Nolo:o mpitsa moloi kana. Wa re ka loya Mzwakhe?
You better not mean it!

Me:what do you want me to think when you go on
like this?

Ntombi:can we not fight over this cat thing? I will
take it and throw it out.

Mabutho:you're not touching that cat.

Nolo:im not sleeping here with that cat. And
tomorrow morning im leaving. I can't stay where im
called a witch.

With that she got up and went to the garage.

Kea:did you have to call her a witch bathong?

Me:i didn't

Kea:well that's how it sounded. Did it ever occur to
you that someone's after this family? Did you think
about what will happen when she leaves tomorrow
and Amir's mother finds her? If something happens
to her...believe me you i won't forgive you. I know
my sister talks a lot but she's right. That cat will do
something worse. Mama will not recover for as long

as it's here. You should be finding ways of solving this instead of fighting. What if Liloa sent it?

Mpendulo:baby let's go to bed.

Kea: i have to check on Bonolo. She's not fine. She needs me.

Mpendulo: Mzwakhe will be with her.

I went to the garage and Bonolo was just coming out of it.

Me:im sorry.

Nolo:...

Me:are you going to ignore me? Did you find it?

Nolo:no. Where's Kea?

Me:she went to bed. Let's go to sleep.

She rushed to our room and checked the cot then came to sleep.

Me:are you going to ignore me?

Nolo:you called me a witch in front of your brothers and their wives!

Me: I'm sorry. Please forgive me. I'm just stressed by this thing. My mom is not getting better and on the other side you were busy about this cat thing. A mere cat. What can it do?

Nolo: I'm sorry that your mother is going through this and you don't know what to do but to be called a witch? You accused me and all I was trying to do was help! That cat is not normal. Kea might be right. Liloa must have sent that cat and it got the wrong person.

Me: so you're just going to cry because of that? I didn't really say you're a witch.

Nolo: oh I see.

With that she turned the other side and slept.

The following day I woke up and dad said we had to go somewhere. Me, him, Muzi and Mpendulo. We were also going with mom. I got up and went to shower. I finished then dressed.

Me: morning.

Nolo:hi. I'm going home today.

Me:didn't we agree that we will go together so that my uncles can explain what is going on to your father?

Nolo:i can't say where im not trusted. Something might go wrong and you will say it's me.

Me:ngiyaxolis a muntu wami. I know i was wrong for saying that and worst of all in front of everyone. Im sorry. I will do anything to make up for that. Please don't go.

Nolo:fine.

Me:i will see you when we come back. Im going somewhere with my father.

Nolo:okay. Le tsamaye sentle.

Me: Bonolo ican't leave while you're mad at me. Can you please smile for me?

Nolo:ba tla go siya kwa. Im not mad. Happy now?

Me:yes. Im happy you're smiling and not sad. Now i have to go. I love you.

Nolo:i love you too.

At least im still loved. Yoh you never know with her. Especially when she was pregnant. She would get mad even for the little things.

I kissed her even then left.

Mpendulo

Me:baby u right?

Kea:yeah just tired.

Me: February is just around the corner. Then you give birth.

Kea:i can't wait. This is the last baby. Im tired.

Me:one more?

Kea:no!!!!

Me:ngiya dlala. Usale kahle ne mama?

Kea:i love you

Me:i love you more.

I took my keys and left. They were waiting for me

downstairs. Even two of my uncles had arrived. It's not every time that our uncles visit us. They are those people who love traveling. Sometimes they travel around Africa or anywhere. So it's hard getting hold of them. We all got into our cars and drove off to the place dad said we should go to. It was a very long drive. I even had a missed call from my sister but where we were there was no reception. We arrived there at the place and there was a very long line. Many people were seated outside. This man or woman must really be trusted hey. For people to come and fill the yard like this.

Uncle Herman:where did you hear about this man?
Is he going to help my sister?

Dad:a friend of mine told me about him. He said this man will help us.

A boy came to where we were standing and told us to follow him. My mother looked so weak.

Dad:take off your shoes.

He ordered. We did that and went inside. The man

started on calling clan names and blowing that bag.

KEATLARETSI

Me:where's my husband?

Siya:i still can't get hold of him. But im sure they are on their way back.

Me:go bosigo but they are not even back.

Siya:don't worry. Focus on getting better. Stop thinking a lot. I have to go now. Visiting hours are over.

Me:okay.

He left. He was here with me all the time. J ust after my husband left i started havìng cramps and i was rushed to the hospital. They had to do a c-session and right now im in so much pain. I can't handle this pain. And i haven't seen my baby yet. A nurse comes and gives me pills.

Me:can you please tell me where my baby is?i haven't seen him since i woke up.

Nurse:don't worry. You will see him tomorrow.

Me:what's wrong with him?

Nurse:he's in good care. Focus on healing okay.

I don't know how i fell asleep. I woke up the following day to my husband brushing my hair.

Me:hey

Him:hey. How are you feeling?

Me:im better now. Have you seen our baby?

Him:im sorry.

Me:why? Did something happen?

Him:he didn't make it. Im sorry.

Me:no. My baby is fine. I want you to take me to my baby.

Him:....

Me:the nurse said he's in good care. Why would she

lie to me?

Him:they don't know what happened. He was doing well even though he was premature but then he suddenly stopped breathing.

Nurse:good morning. Im here to help you take a bath.

Me:what's good about it huh? Please tell me it's not true. My baby is still alive.

Nurse:im sorry...I have to help you take a bath.

I cried. I cried so hard. I had bonded with my baby only for him to die. I didn't even see him. I couldn't stop crying even when I was taking a bath.

Me:i want to see him.

Him:you have to eat first then you will see him.

Im going to just ignore him. I have a lot to say to him but i don't want to say it in front of this nurse.

Me:when am i going home?

Nurse:today. The doctor just has to check a few

things then you leave.

Going back home i saw a lot of pity faces. Being around them just made me cry. We burried our child. New Year came and passed and we had to go back home. It was hard. Very hard for me. My husband's mistress killed my baby. Yes i suspected her for that cat thing that almost killed my mother in law and it turned out right but i never thought she would do this. They caught her on camera at the hospital. The police looked for her and couldn't find her. Staying in my own house was scary for me. I ended up blaming my husband because he brought that woman in our lives. I decided that i go home and just grieve my child in peace. I took Thando with me because the twins had to go to creche. Being at home was peaceful. I even got along with my stepmother. She's not really as i had thought she is. She's been supportive. And for that im thankful for her.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:02] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 23

I have been home for two months now. Mpendulo comes with the kids every Friday and fetches them Sunday evenings. Being close to my father kept me sane. I love this man. He's always there for me and making sure that im alright. Even though sometimes I take him for granted. I remember one day he asked me who is taking care of my kids and husband when im here. I got angry and answered back at him. I've never done that before. I apologized and he forgave me. My phone rings and it's my husband. He's telling me that he's outside. I take my bags and push them out. He meets me by the door and gives me a hug. More like squeezing me.

Me:im sorry. Im sorry for blaming you for the death

of our baby. Please forgive me.

Him:shh. What matters is that you be well. Other things we'll go through them day by day. We will be fine okay? Let me go in and greet.

Me:it's only me bere. I already told them im leaving. Let me go and take Thando. She's sleeping.

Him:I'll take the bags to the car.

I took Thando and she didn't even wake up. This girl has weight for days. Moving with her up the stairs is a lot of work. I lock the house and leave the key under a mat there. We get into the car and i put her into her car seat.

Him: the kids can't wait to see you.

Me:i missed them.

Him:they were still at school when I left. Im sure they are at home waiting for you now. You should have seen the twins when I said im fetching mommy. They didn't want to go to school.

Me:who will be with them when they come back?

Him:they'll be at Chris. J ust until lindani comes

back from school.

I nodded and he drove to Pta.

Upon arriving Lindani had just come back and they were now watching cartoons. I greeted my kids and they were happy to have me back. The twins were telling me about what happened in school. They didn't want to hear anything. They just sat with me talking until they got tired. I decided to cook for my family. Im sure it's been a while since they ate food cooked by me. I made rice and salads. Then i did chicken stew and mashed potatoes. The aroma was there.

Mpendulo:it smells good in here.

He said holding me on my waist.

Me:i hope it tastes as good as it smells.

Him:im sure it does. It's good to have you home.

Me:im happy to be back.

Him:i love you Khanyisile my queen

I turned to look at him and smiled

Me: i love you too.

Him: i got a helper. She comes every morning but she doesn't come on weekends.

Me:why?i thought you said we don't need a helper anymore.

Him:you'll be going back to work so she'll help when we're not here.

Me:okay. Help me take the food to the table.

We took the food to the table and called everyone to eat.

Me:did you all do your homework?

They all responded and took their seats. As usual Lisa wanted to be the one praying for food. We then started eating.

Mnqobi:mom you're back for good right?

Me:yes boy.

Mnqobi:okay. That's good.

Lisa:yes. And me and you can go to girls outing.

Mnqobi:what about us?

Lisa:you left me on your boys outing. You said no girls allowed. Right daddy?

Me:really?why did you leave my baby?

Lindani:we went to buy groceries at the mall without her and as you know how she is she complained.

We laughed.

Me:me and you my girl are going to our girls outing tomorrow.

Lisa:so i won't go to school?

Me:you'regoing. We will go out after you comeback.

She was all smiles. After we finished eating we all went to our rooms. My boys were on my hip. Didn't want to leave my sight. We lay on bed talking with them until they fell asleep and we took them to their room. I took off my clothes and went to shower. I wrapped a towel after i was done and went back to

our room. I lotioned and wore my night dress. I got into bed and called Bonolo. Mpendulo was showering.

Me:hey. I hope im not disturbing.

Nolo:not at all. I just put Lwandle to sleep. How are you?

Me:im good and you? Can we go out tomorrow ?

Nolo:im good. You'reback?

Me:yes. I came back today.

Nolo:yes we can meet. Send me the details...are you alright mara? Like o shap?

Me:yes im fine.it might not be 100 %but I'll get there.

Nolo:that is good. I was worried about you.

Me:im fine now. We'll talk more tomorrow.

"Babe have you seen my lotion?"

Me:stop making me laugh. I just came back. What have you been using all this time?

Mpendulo:that's my way of asking you to come

lotion my back

Me:i knew it!

Him:you know your husband very well MamKhoza.
Now over here.

I went and lotioned him. He was making stupid sounds.

Me:s it still babe .

Him:your hands are making me like this. Come here.
He pulled me onto his lap.

Him:i really missed you.

Me:me too. Im not leaving you again. If i go somewhere i will go with you.

Him:was Rustenburg that boring?

We laughed. This guy!

Him:i know. You can say it. Im right.

Me:okay. You're right. I know i love my father but i missed you hey. Especially when you came with the

kids and you had to leave.

Him:well we're home now. Let's go to bed.

We cuddled on bed just talking and catching up.

"Thando vuka."

I heard whispers and by that time i still want to sleep. And Thando starts crying.

"Mom wake up."

I open my eyes and Luyanda is here with Lisa.
These kids!

Me:why did you wake me?

Lisa:i wanted to see before i go to school that you won't leave again.

Me:i won't leave okay?

Lisa:okay mom. Im leaving now.

She kiss my cheek and leave.

Me:Lu what did you do?

Lu:i want to play with her.

Me:sit on the bed.

I take Thando out of her cot. Ayanda comes in running.

Aya:we are not going to school.

He's happy. I think my son hates school. They both sit on the bed and talk with their sister.

Lu: you see she looks like us?

Aya:and she's going to be big like us.

Lu: and today we will play with her in our cars. And eat inyama with her. We missed her.

Luyanda and inyama are bestfriends. He takes after his father.

Me:you have cars?

Aya:yes. Daddy bought them for us. They can move.

Me:thats good.

Lu:and we will swim in our pool.

Me:did you bath?

Aya:yes. Daddy bath us every morning and night.

Me: okay

Mpendulo:breakfast in bed for a beautiful queen.

Aya:beautiful queen

Aya kisses my cheek after that. I love my kids!

Me:thank you. Let me brush my teeth.

Me:so i heard you bought them cars.

Him: I had to bribe them so that they can go to daycare.

Me:that's smart of you. But aren't they expensive?

Mpendulo:growing up i didn't have many things. I had to work very hard so that my kids can have everything. This food is delicious.

Lu:daddy why does Thando look like us and not mommy?

Him:cos daddy has very strong genes.

Aya:what is genes

Him:kkk. You look like daddy and mommy looks like grandfather,her daddy.

Aya:okay I want to eat with you mommy.

Me:eat.

Mpendulo:that's why i came with a lot of food. I knew they would want to eat. Come my princess

Thando threw herself in her father's arms. She was kissing his face.

Mpendulo:my baby missed me. Look at how big you are.

Me:i think she eats a lot. I should limit what i feed her.

Mpendulo: don't. This is a child. She's fine okay? She will lose this weight as she grows up. What are you doing today

Me:im going out with my sister and Lisa.

Mpendulo:okay. I wanted us to go out.

Me:how about Saturday?

Mpendulo:me and my brothers are taking our kids out. You can join your sisters in whatever they'll be doing.

Me:I'd rather stay at home.

Mpendulo:you have to go out. It will be good for you.
On Friday night im taking you on a date.

Me:mmh. I look forward to it.

Mpendulo:can we make a promise?(i nodded) Every Friday night we are going on a date. J ust to have an us time. Every weekend is for family and Monday to Friday we knock off from work no later than 4pm unless it's an emergency. Can we agree on that?

Me:okay. That sounds good. And now while I still have this time let me go shower and spend time with you before I leave.

Mpendulo:You will find me here waiting.

Me:so how is it going with your negotiations?

Im with Bonolo and she's just been telling me about her life.

Nolo:that...i even forgot it's happening.

Me:what? Is Mzwakhe having second thoughts?

Nolo:that one...he's so happy. On top of the world.
He acts like nothing is going on.

Me:what's going on?

Nolo:he accused me of witchcraft and he's happy
that we're traditionally getting married next
weekend.

Me:but he apologized.

Nolo:how can I get married to someone like that?
What will he accuse me of next?

Me:this man loves you.

Nolo:yes and i love him. But im just scared it won't
work.

Me:now it's time you use your advice. Follow your
heart. What makes you happy?

Nolo:he makes me happy. More than I've ever been.

Me:there you have your answer. You guys love each
other and anybody can see that. You just have to
sit him down and talk to him. Tell him your fears.

Nolo:you're right. Im just worried for nothing.

Me:well im happy my big sister is getting married.

Nolo:you are the maid of honor. Don't forget that.

Ne:i can't believe this is us. Living our dreams. You know we used to talk about how we are going to be each other's maid of honor? How we were going to live our best lives according to our own rules. No one telling us what to do?

Nolo:yes. Besides me who has to look over my shoulder wherever i go. Do you know that the Turkish gogo has blocked me everywhere? I can't get a job. She always gives bad references about me. I even resorted to going back to medicine.

Me: ausi i think that's a good thing. Work as a doctor and after you've saved enough money you can do your own thing. Open a restaurant and see how it goes. That woman won't win forever okay?

Nolo:you're right. I have this interview tomorrow. Im just not sure if i will get the job.

Me:you're getting that job. You're the best doctor ever.

Nolo:of course you were going to say that.

Me:im rooting for you. This year won't end without you starting that restaurant. Speak over it and believe it. What you say with your mouth shall happen. Don't doubt yourself.

Nolo:i see your neighbor is rubbing off good on you.

Me:she's a good person and friend. But you're the best.

Nolo:i love you sis.

Me:i love you more. And im blessed to have you as my sister. Im grateful. Your support means a lot to me.

Nolo:im your sister. It's my duty to look out for you.

Me:and don't hesitate to ask me for help. Or Mzwakhe.

Nolo:no. You've already done enough. I'll use my salary and the money i get from rent in mamelodi. And i don't want Mzwakhe's money.

Me:well he's going to be your husband.

Nolo:don't even tell your husband about this. He'll tell him and he'll want to do everything. So no.

Bonolo

After my day out with Keatlaretsi i drove back home. I found Mzwakhe watching tv talking to Lwandle.

Me:hey im back. How was your day?

Mzwakhe:good. Very good. But my boy was very lonely here. I think he needs a sister to play with.

Me:wa semolla akere. What's with this baby talk?

Him:i know what im talking about. Why don't we just do the test cos we both know you are pregnant?

Me:Lwandle is not even a year yet and im also looking for a job.

Him:what's wrong with that? We are getting married and we are good parents to Lwandle. So this baby will be fine.

Me:about getting married...can we talk?

Him:okay.

Me:can we talk about you accusing me? You never even apologised.

Mzwakhe:i thought we were over that

Me:no. I want us to talk about everything and start on a clean state.

Mzwakhe:okay im sorry. I shouldn't have accused you. I should have handled the whole thing differently. I promise you it will not happen again.

Me: And we are not going to have kids until the next five years.

Mpendulo:then i hope this time i scored two.

Me:i did a test. Im not pregnant. And im not going to be a stay home mom. I have an interview tomorrow and i hope i get the job.

Mzwakhe:you will get it. Everything doesn't matter. What matters is we are finally getting married and you be happy. I know you will be happy to get that job.

Me:thank you.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:02] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 24

When I got home the boys were watching tv.

Me:where's your father?

Mngobi:in the kitchen.

I went to the kitchen and there he was talking with Thando who didn't even understand a thing. I stood there and just looked at them in awe. My husband loves our children and that's what makes him more amazing. He does have his faults but he's a good person. Thando was laughing here and there and he'd check on the pot. She was sitting on her baby feeding chair drinking from her bottle. She has

grown so much. Soon she will be three. I think now im done with having children. God has blessed me when I didn't believe. And for that i thank him. Which is why i had my tubes tied again. I went back to the lounge. Lindani was now alone.

Me:hey. How are you?

Lindani:im fine and you?

Me:how's therapy? We haven't really talked since I came back.

Lindani:it's going well. The next session will be my last then i will only go once in a while until the therapist says im good.

Me:that's good. You will get there. You do know that im here for you right? Me and your father.

Lindani:yebo ma. And thank you for that.

Me:you're welcome. So are you going to the trip at your school or it's only the grade 9's?

Lindani:everyone is going.

Me:okay. Im sure you can't wait.

Lindani: i haven't paid...

Me:aow bathong. Didn't your father pay?

Lindani:i didn't tell him.

Me:you don't want to go?

Lindani:i do. I just didn't want to bother him.

Me:Lindani you can never bother him. He's your father and he will do anything for you. Your father loves you. If im not here you can tell your father if you need something. Don't ve scared of asking. You have to be free around us. You're not a visitor here. This is your home. Go and fetch the letter so i can pay for you. After that tomorrow you and your father will go and buy the things you need for your trip.

Lindani:you will do all that for me?

Me:yes. Go and take the letter.

Lindani:thank you.

He ran upstairs. A 15 year old does n't have to go through what he's going through. I feel bad when I think about what he's going through. Since he came

here his mother hasn't contacted him. I don't blame him when he says she's dead to him. She doesn't even try to make an effort to show that she cares for her son. I remember one day Mpendulo called her and wanted to talk about Lindani and having his surname changed and she was literally shouting and said she doesn't care what we do with him. What kind of mother does that?

Mpendulo:baby you're back.

Me:yes. Been back for long. Didn't want to disturb daddy and his princess. You were having a lot of fun cooking and chatting.

Lindani:mom here is there letter.

He just called me mom for the first time. Im emotional but im not going to cry.

Mpendulo:what is it about?

Lindani:we are going to a school trip. Cape town.

Mpendulo:that's good. Go and open that drawer. I have something for you.

He went to open the drawer and came with a big gift

bag.

Mpendulo:go on. Open it.

He opened it and jumped to hug his dad.

Lindani:thank you dad.

Mpendulo:i love you my boy.

Lindani:i love you too dad..

Mpendulo:a man never cries.

Me:don't listen to him. He also cries.

Lindani:lol...you know my mother never told me she loves me? Im happy to have parents who care.

Mpendulo:anything for you my boy. But me buying this doesn't mean you must neglect your school work.

He nodded. He bought a laptop and cellphone for him. He was so happy.

Mpendulo:i will set the laptop up for you.

Me:let me take this girl to bed.

I try to take her and she wakes up and starts crying.

"Papa"

Mpendulo:they are making you cry princess.

Me:these kids are in a crying mood today. Listen to the other one in the kitchen.

Mpendulo:it must be the veges making him cry. You know Lu and meat. Every food must have meat.

Me:you made him like this.

He came to where we were still crying.

Me:what's wrong Lu?

Lu:ayikho inyama.

Me:you don't have to eat it everyday. We are all going to eat the veges. We have to eat them so we can be healthy and grow big.

Lu:no!

He hit himself on the floor and rolled. Oh God. All this drama because of vegetables.

Me:baby come to mommy. I promise you we will have meat tomorrow.

Lu:i want it now.

Me:we didn't buy it. Stop crying please. Tomorrow i will make it for you.

Lu:you promise?

Me:i promise. Come.

He got up and came to me. I held him and he was still crying. I rubbed his back until he slept. I went to put him to bed and kissed his head and left.

Me:all that rolling for meat.

Mpendulo: he must know he can't eat meat everyday. He must know that. You will see him at dinner time he will cry again. When you weren't around he did that and i let him be. He would cry until he stopped. You should have let him be.

Me:i can't take him crying like that.

Mpendulo:he'll be fine.

The others came with their food and started eating. After they were done they went upstairs to do their homeworks and Ayanda was following them around. Thando was still glued to her father's arms. She

didn't want to hear anything. Mpendulo's phone rang and he put it on loudspeaker.

Mpendulo:Zolani. How are you?

Zolani:good. I have news for you.

Mpendulo:okay.

Zolani: i found her. The witch.

Mpendulo:really? That's good then.

Zolani:what should I do with her? Call the police or take care of her?

Me:what do you mean take care of her?

Zolani:i mean kill her. This witch killed your child and burnt your house which almost killed your children. She deserves to be killed.

Mpendulo:i don't care what you do to her. Call the police or kill her. As long as she pays for what she did.

I looked at him. He's unbelievable! How can he say that so calmly? He talks about killing as if it's something easy.

Mpendulo: okay don't kill her. My wife's looks could kill me. Make her suffer before you call the police.

Zolani:okay. I will keep you updated.

Mpendulo:why are you looking at me like that?

Me: you really would have let him kill her?

Mpendulo:yes. That woman has hurt us. First she wanted to kill you and our children. Then she killed our child. Qhawe would still be here if it wasn't for her. We would be happy with our boy but she killed him. So don't feel sorry for her.

Me:does Zolani do these killings on his own?

Mpendulo:he has people working for him.

Me:and you're okay being friends with him? Please don't let him influence you into joining him in doing these things.

Mpendulo:baby relax. He was a gangster back then but not anymore. He was just doing me this favor. He's a good person.

Me:i hope so.

Mpendulo: please don't worry about it.

At night me and Mpendulo were in bed just talking and laughing when we heard a knock.

Mpendulo:let me open.

He went and opened the door and Lu got in running to me. I opened my arms for him.

Lu:mommy can we sleep here?

Me:you don't want to sleep in your room?

Aya:we are scared.

He's here too.

Mpendulo:don't make noise. You will wake the baby.

Aya:we want to play with her.

Me:it's late now. You will play tomorrow. Come lets sleep.

Mpendulo:i will take them back to their room when they fall asleep.

Me:they are so cute.

Mpendulo:you give birth to cute babies. Look at their eyes. Mommy's eyes.

Me:but I don't have big eyes.

Mpendulo:you do. And that big forehead.

Me:and yourbig head.

Mpendulo:but you love this big head.

Me:so much.

We fell asleep with the twins talking nonstop. Their father even forgot to take them to their room. I woke up in the morning and went to make breakfast and their lunch boxes. After i was done i woke Aya and Lu and gave them a bath. Then went to bath Lisa and got her ready. They all came down for breakfast.

Aya:mommy we are not going to school?

Me:you are. Eat so mommy can drive you.

They were so happy. After they were done i drove them to school and went to my company to check how everything is going. When I arrived there the team was preparing for a meeting. They were in the boardroom preparing.

Me:good morning.

Bontle:boss lady. So good to see you today.

Me:good to see you too. I see everyone is busy here.

Bob:yes. We have a meeting today. This willbe our first biggest client for this year if we get it.

Me:that's very good. I think you guys deserve a bonus. You've been working so hard and done so well.

Bontle:thank you. I thought you were coming back next week.

Me:yes. I just thought i should come and see how things are going. And don't worry. Your jobs are safe. Things will remain as they are. I will just be in charge of the finance department.

Bob:okay then.

Me:let me go and have coffee. I will sit in on the meeting. J ust pretend im not there.

I got out and went to the kitchenand made coffee. I drank my coffee and after i finished i went to the bathroom. I did my business and finished then

washed my hands.

"Oh my God Kea! I can't believe this is you."

Me:oh hi.

Womam:don't say you've forgotten me?

Me:no. Im just surprised to see you. It's been so long. How are you Nomsa?

Nomsa:im very good and you?

Me:im good.

Nomsa:so how arethings with Rapula?

Me:oh we are not together anymore.

I knew she was going to fish for some info.

Nomsa:im so sorry. What happened?

Me:things just didn't work out.

Nomsa:i always knew that guy was not good for you.

She was right about that. I just nodded my head.

Nomsa:if only Tim was alive. The poor guy loved you.

Me:what would happen if he was alive?

Nomsa:im very sure you two would be together. Im sorry things ended with you and Rapula. You deserve better.

Me:so do you work here?

Nomsa:no dear. Im here for a meeting. It's starting in 20 minutes.

Me:let me not keep you then.

Nomsa:argh 10 minutes wont kill anyone. I see you have a ring on your finger. You don't waste time. You get divorced and already are married again.

Me:what can i say? When you fall in love you can't help it.

Nomsa:that's true. How long have you been married?

Me:it's going to be our fifth year year in three months.

Nomsa:mmh. My time is up. Im sure you have work to do. Let me not keep you. You might get in trouble with your boss.

I smiled and nodded. She went out modeling. This woman! She will never change. I got out and went to the boardroom. On my way there my phone rang. It's Mpendulo.

Me:hello baby.

Him:sthandwa sami. How's everything going?

Me:good. We are about to have a meeting.

Mpendulo:aren't you starting next week?

Me:i am. I just want to see how things are going. Is Thando alright?

Him:yes. I just finished giving her a bath. She's not even crying.

Me:that's good babe.

Him: i will come and fetch you after your meeting. We will take an uber. Leave the car keys with the receptionist.

Me:okay. I love you.

Him:i love you more. See you soon.

He dropped. I went to leave the keys with the

receptionist and went to the boardroom. They were about to start.

Bontle:you can welcome everyone if you like. Then me and the team will do the presentation.

Me:no. You do your thing. I will just sit here.

The clients started coming in and Nomsa was among those people. We all sat down and the meeting started. They did their representation and after that the clients asked their questions and everything was done. We only just had to wait for their answer. People started leaving.

Me:well done guys. That was a good presentation.

Bob:thank you. I have to go now. I have another meeting in town.

Me:good luck.

I left and found Nomsa at reception.

Me:hey. Did my husband fetch the car keys?

Receptionist:yes. He said he'll be waiting for you in the car.

Me:okay. Thank you.

I went out with Nomsa walking with me.

Nomsa:i didn't know you work here.

Me:so you didn't do research about the company you're going to be working with?

Nomsa:im only a coo. The ceo had someone do that.

Me:oh. I just came here to see how things are going. I've been on a break taking care of my kids.

Nomsa:okay. You're an accountant here? I last heard you were working at Nel.

Me:this is my company.

Nomsa:wow! The girls won't believe this. You've done so well for yourself. Where's your sister? Mmh uh! Bonolo.

Me:she's around.

"Mama"

My little girl comes to me running and falling. I laugh.

Nomsa:you have a cute baby.

Me:thank you

I pick her up and go to the car.

Nomsa:it was nice to see you.

Me:you too. Bye.

My husband opened the door for me and went to his side. He drove us.

Me:where are we going?

Him:breakfast. I know you didn't eat.

Me:did she eat?

Him:yes. So how was the meeting?

Me:good. I think they will get that tender. Im proud of my team.

Him:that's good bews.

We got to a restaurant and ordered breakfast and ate.

Me:this is a beautiful place. How did you find it?

Him: this is your friend's place. I once came here with Zolani.

Me: oh. I feel like a cake. Let me go and order. For everyone.

I went to the counter and ordered. I felt a presence behind me. I turned and looked at the person.

Man: sorry for startling you.

Me: are you following me? I saw you not so long ago.

Man: why would I do that?

Me: i don't know.

Man: im here for the same thing as you. To buy food.

Me: so why did you stand behind me when there are others here?

Man: i don't know.

Something quickly registered in my mind. I paid for my cake and asked to fetch it later.

Me: stop following me around. It's creepy.

I left before he could answer me.

Me:babe we can leave

Him:is something wrong?where js the cake?

Me:I'll get it later.

He got up and picked Thando and we wentto our car.

We weredriving home now.

Me:babe,did you see that guy that was standing behind me?

Him:yes. That's why you looked scared

Me:yes. He has been following me. I first saw him when i went to the company and now in the restaurant. I think Amir's mother sent him.

Him :no. Maybe you're just scared and now you'relooking for things to make sense.

Me:let's hope so.

Him:and the nanny is coming back today.

Me: okay.

Him:i don't want us to worry about the kids when we

are at work.

Me:yeah I agree.

We got home and it was very quiet. It's so different when the kids are at school. The helper was busy in the kitchen and we went to sit in the sitting room.

Mpendulo:you know it's so good just to spend time with my wife. J ust enjoying each other. I love you baby.

Me:i love you Khoza.

He moved his head to mine and we kissed. Thando cried hitting us. We laughed at her. He picked her up and kissed her. She started laughing. This child!

Thando:papa

Mpendulo:you see someone is jealous?

Thando:papa

Mpendulo:yes baby. You're jealous. Yes you are

She laughed. We were now all laughing. This was fun to her. We heard a knock.

Me:I'll go and open for that person. Mpendulo:tell them to go. They are disturbing us.

Me:lol...

Mpendulo

I heard three gun shots a moment after Khanyisile went to the door. My head started spinning. I ran to the door and she was lying in a pool of blood.

Me:babe wake up! Baby! Baby please!

She was not moving but the pulse was still there.

Helper:i heard guns ...

Me:please look after Thando. Im taking my wife to the hospital

I couldn't wait for an ambulance. It would be too late by the time it arrives. I drove to intercare silver lakes. When I got there they admitted her.

Me:please save her...

I sat and waited until the doctor came.

Me: any news?

Dr: she's critical but stable. We don't know what might happen in the next 24 hours. You have been here for hours. Go home and rest.

Me: after all these hours you have nothing to tell me?

Dr: sir we have managed to save your wife. We will call if something happens.

I left. It was useless staying there with that doctor telling me things i don't even understand. I got home and took a shower and burned the bloody clothes i was wearing. I called her father and let him know what was going on.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:02] : ***STORY OF MY
LIFE: KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 25

Mpendulo

I couldn't really sleep without just being worried about my wife. She hasn't made any progress and on the other side the kids are asking me when their mother is coming back. The twins are always crying thinking she left again and she won't come back. Her father is the one who is strong in this. The person who shot her really is a professional. No one saw anything and the securities didn't see him.

Mzwakhe:man you have to be strong for your wife.

Me:i should have believed her when she told me some guy was following her. And i thought it was just a coincidence that they were at the same place at the same time.

Mzwakhe:where last did she see this person? He might lead us to the shooter.

Me:at Lerato's restaurant in Pretoria North. She thought it was those Turkish people and i didn't

believe her!

Mzwakhe:it might be them. Even Bonolo has been receiving strange calls in the middle of the night. Maybe Khanyisile's shooting was just a warning.

Me:those people wanted to kill her. Three bullets!

Mzwakhe:we should get securities in her ward.

Mabutho:we all know what the problem is here. Bonolo is the problem. She's the one they are looking for. Why don't you let her go?

Mzwakhe:us oya hlanya? And why are you putting yourself in this?

Mabutho:Bonolo is just a girlfriend and Khanyisile is our brother's wife.

Mzwakhe:i thought she wasn't a Khoza wife material? Angithi that's what you said when you kicked her out of her house?

Me:can we please stop fighting? We are all worried here and no one is at fault. Bonolo is soon going to be married in this family and she's the mother of our little boy so Mabutho stop this man.

Mabutho:i knew she would be trouble when she slept with him before breaking up with the poor guy first. Who's to say she won't cheat on him too?

In a speed of a light Mzwakhe was already up and slapped Mabutho. I left them there. I don't have to deal with this. I drove to the hospital to see how everything is. Luckily when i got there it was still visiting hours. I went to her room and that boy was there talking. I listened to him talking about their childhood. Their life together and how much he loves her. It was really annoying me. I went in.

Rapula:oh i didn't see you there.

Me:now you've seen me. Get out. What do you think you are doing?

Rapula:im not here to fight with you. Im here as someone who cares for her. I love her and i won't ever stop. So i have to be here for her.

Me:your time in her life is up. Accept that.

Rapula: im not going anywhere. It's actually your fault that she's lying here. If it's not you cheating on her it's your mistress trying to kill her. Yes i know.

So don't act like you're a saint.

Me: get out.

Rapula: the truth hurts huh? You're worse than me. And if she dies now that it's your fault. Nxa!

After that he kissed her cheek and said "i love you " then left. Such disrespect! The doctor came and checked on her.

Me: how is she doing?

Dr: she's responding very well. She's breathing on her own now. We even took off the machines. Now we only wait for her to wake up.

Me: will she be fine when she wakes up?

Dr: with the way she's recovering im very sure she will be fine. You have nothing to worry about. By tomorrow she will be up.

Me: thank you.

I took a chair and sat there until visiting hours were over. I went back home and decided to go to Lerato's house. I found her with her husband.

Chris:hi. How's your wife doing?

Me:she's getting there. The doctor thinks she might wake up tomorrow.

Lerato:that's very good.

Me:yes. That's why im here. Lerato i wanted to ask if i can get the footage of your restaurant on the day my wife got shot.

Chris:why? Is my wife in trouble?

Me:no. Not at all. The person who might lead us to the shooter was following us. He started following her at her company. When we fot to the restaurant for breakfast she saw him and confronted him and he denied that he was following her. We think it's some Turkish people after her sister and they shot her as a warning. So we want to show the footage to the police.

Lerato:of course. Anything to help. Let me go and call the manager and let him know.

Chris:no. Don't do that. What if that guy got to him and bribed him into wiping it off when someone

starts suspecting? We must go there without anyone knowing. Then we might find something. I will go with him.

Lerato:okay. Be safe.

Chris:i love you.

Lerato:i love you.

We went to my car. I drove us and on the way we were talking.

Me: your relationship with your wife is so good. Hiw do you do it?

Chris:it's a lot of work man. We went through a lot to be where we are.

Me: maybe it's because I got married very late. I seem to be doing the wrong things. I've hurt that woman so much and she forgave me. She always believe in us.

Chris:you see that is love.

Me:in the four years we've been married she never

hurt me. Im the only one who's always doing that.

Chris:i hurt my wife beyond recognition. One of my ex came and said she's pregnant just after we'd gotten married. Before we got married Lerato got kidnapped and i had an affair with that woman. Turned out she got pregnant and said the child is mine. Lerato found out on the night of our wedding. She felt hurt. Wanted to leave me. All the bad things kept happening. But what scared me was when she really left. Two years. That was the most miserable time of my life. Then we fixed things. I promised myself i don't want any life without her anymore. I promised to change. I put work onto changing how i was. I changed. For my family. I had to or else i would have lost the love of my life. You have a good wife. Someone wouldn't have stayed with someone who has 3 kids but she's still here. Do right by her. Let your actions speak and not your words. Show her that you have changed.

Me:you know the time that the woman i had an affair with killed our son,s trangled him to death and switched off the machines...i was really sure she

was going to leave and never look back. But she showed me how much she loved me. And this happens.

Chris:it's good that you want the police to help. You should distance yourself from Zolani.

Me:don't you get along with him?

Chris:i tolerate his presence only for the sake of my wife. Who kidnaps their own sister and have her abused? Yes they didn't know each other but anyone can tell that they are of the same blood. They look alike. That man is dangerous. Be careful of him. Im not saying stop being friends with him. Yes i once worked for the most feared gangsters in the country but i was just a doctor there. Zolani kills people.

I thought about when he said he would kill Liloca.

Chris:i know he can find that guy in less than a week but be careful. All the things that he's doing for you one day he'll expect you to pay him back.

Me:thank you for telling me. My wife told me not to be too close to him or he might influence me and i

thought she was exaggerating.

Chris:she's right. I hope you listen to her.

We got to the restaurant but unfortunately there was no footage of that man. He might have tempered with the cameras before he went in. Drove back home and it was a chaos. I didn't leave the kids here but I know it's them because of the noise. I get in and find the twins sitting with Thando and Natty. Natty and Thando are crying abd the boys are eating.

Me:why are they crying?

Aya:they want our food.

Me:why don't you give them?

Lu:no. Gogo will give them their food.

My mom comes with a plate.

Me:mom i didn't know you are here.

Mom: i knew there's no one helping you here. So i had to come. How are you?

Me:im trying to live.

Lu:where's mommy?

He is the one who gives me trouble a lot crying for his mother. He's so attached to her.

Mom:she's in hospital.

Aya:she's sick?

Me:yes. But she'll be back soon. The doctor said that she's better.

Lu:can i go with you and see her?

Me:tomorrow. Now inish your food. Mom where are the others?

Mom:doing their homeworks. Im going back home tomorrow. I wanted to ask if i could take the twins and Thando with. So that you don't struggle with them.

Me:okay. Im going to lie down.

J ust as im about to close the door it's pushed. Two heads peak in.

Me:come in. What are you doing here?

Aya:we are here to lie down.

I laugh. These kids are something else. I get into bed with them.

Me:you want to watch tv?

Lu:yes. We want to sleep here.

Me:okay. Don't make noise.

Aya:you are sad baba? Don't be sad. Mommy will come home.

Me:im not sad.

Lu:you are. Look at your eyes. You have tears

Lu:daddy men don't cry.

Me:im not crying.

"Ko ko."

The door opened and Lisa came in.

Lisa:dad i missed you.

Me:i missed my girl too. Come and sleep with us.

Lisa:how is mom?

Me:she's getting better. Tomorrow we will visit her.

Lisa:i can't wait to see her.

BONOLO

Mpendulo just called and said Keatlaretsi woke up. I left everything that i was doing and drove to the hospital. Im happy she's awake. When I got there i found Rapula standing next to the door of her ward.

Me: Rapula o batlang fa?

Rap:ema nyana tlhe. Im just here to check on her.

Me:well as you can see her husband is in there.
How many times must i tell you to stay away from her?

Rap:only her can tell me that.

Me:she's already done that but you don't seem to get it.

Rap:Bonolo you don't get it okay? I love your sister and i know she loves me. There's no denying that.

Me:if that was six years back i would believe it.
Look at them. If what you said was true it would be
you in there laughing and smiling with their kids.
But because of your criminal ways you ruined it.
Now accept it and stop this. You see how happy she
is? I hope you don't ruin it for her. He leaves and i
get into the ward.

Me:dumelang.

Kea:hey. It's good to see you. It feels like I've been
gone for years.

Me: it really felt like it...Kea im really sorry that you
got...

Mpendulo:babe!would you like me to buy something
for you? Something to eat?

Rea:yes. I'm so hungry.

Mpendulo :okay. Bonolo can I talk to you?

Kea:babe you can talk to her here.

Mpendulo:okay. Bonolo the doctor said we must not
talk to her about what happened. She doesn't
remember..so she must remember what happened

on her own. It will happen. And you're not at fault okay? You have nothing to be sorry about. et me go get your food babe.

He took the kids with.

Me:im so happy you woke up. Im sure your dad will be happy to see you. He's been here ever since.

Kea: he is happy. He was here. He said ge will come back later.

It has been a week since Keatlaretsi was discharged. Things are not so well because she refuses to talk. So her and her husband haven't been exactly getting along. And what added to the fuel is the fact that Keatlaretsi wants to go to work even though she's not 100% recovered. Now her husband has taken her out just to clear her mind before they leave for their family vacation. He took her to the rooftop care.

Him:are you fine?

Her:yes im good. Thank you for taking me out. I

know I've been a nag. Im sorry.

Him:are you going to tell me what happened that day?

Her:okay I will tell you. The person who shot me isn't the one who was following me. It's That Turkish woman's goon. He said it's a warning for my sister to take them serious. Baby those people will kill my sister. That's why I didn't tell her. I don't want to stress her. I want her to focus on her wedding then she will decide what to do.

Him:im so sorry. If i knew what to do about this i would.

Her:do you think Zolani can help?

Him:don't talk about that name again. Chris warned me about him. He might make me pay for all the favors he does for me. Or force me to join his criminal activities. Turns out he hasn't quit.

Her:yeah you're right. We should stay away from him.

Him: i missed you so much my wife. You know

when you were fighting for your life i saw my life almost ending.i wouldn't survive without you. It showed me just how much you mean to me. I love you. Every day my love increases for you. You're my life Khanyisile. The love of my life.

Her:you'll make me cry. Thank you for choosing me. And i promise to be with you all the days of our lives. You showed me true love. And for that i will always love you baby.

He held her hands and kissed them.

Voice:fancy seeing you here.

Her:hi. It's good to see you again.

Nomsa:i heard about your shooting. So sorry.

Her:where did you hear about it?

Noma:hau! Emaphepheni. Phela wena you're a top business woman and married to a top business man.

Her:what?

Noma:we're happy you're alive friend. Kidwa why didn't you say ukuthi you got yourself a mkhuli bae?

Her: not that it's any of your business. But why would I tell you?

Nomsa: we're your friends.

Her: oh i didn't know. If you'll excuse us. Me and my Mkhulu bae are busy.

Noma: but he's not bad for a grandpa a hame. He looks 40 or something. You wouldn't mistaken him to be 55.

Nomsa: girl you better help us get contracts!

Him: ladies please excuse us. We are having lunch and you're disturbing us. You being here doesn't sit well with my wife and i don't like it when she's upset.

Noma: bye mkhulu bae.

Kea looked at them as they left.

Her: some things will never change.

Him: you know them?

Her: yeah. We were friends in varsity.

Him: oh the ones you told me about. Tell me babe. You really don't mind my age?

Her:your age doesn't bother me. People will always talk. Let's say it was a 55 year old woman dating a 34 year old man they would still talk. So it doesn't bother me. I love you and you love me so where's the problem? None.

Him:im so lucky to have you. But to be honest friends like those are not good.

Her:that's why i distanced myself. Some People are just not meant to be in your life. All they do is drag you down. They judge everything you do and nothing you do is ever right. They will make you feel like you're nothing without them. And that's not true at all.

After they were done with their lunch they went back home. Kea started to get things ready for tomorrow. The kids were on holiday so they were going with them.

Lisa:mommy where are we going? I hope you are not leaving us.

Kea:we are going on a vacation. It's school holidays

so we are all going together.

Lisa:really? Thank you mommy. You are the best! I hope we're not going to Nigeria.

Kea:lol why

Lisa:i don't want Lesedi to see me. Angithi yena she left me that time. We must go somewhere.

Kea:you're crazy you know that

Lisa:im serious mom. If we see her there she will want to follow us. She must also get bored without me like i did without her. She must pay for not going with me.

Kea:why must she go with you?

Lisa:she's my friend! She must go everywhere with me like you do with her mother.

Kea:o mmereko wena. Anyway daddy said we are going to Dubai.

Lindani:really ma? I've never been there. J ust read about it.

Kea:I've also never been there but it's beautiful. We

will enjoy ourselves. Then we go to the states. We can go to Disneyland and visit a lot of places.

Mnqobi:mom you're the best. I can't wait for us to leave!

Kea:you should thank dad. He's the one doing all this for us.

Mpendulo got in with Thando. The twins were not even listening. They were just playing their games.

Mpendulo:and what did daddy do?

Mnqobi:you're taking us on vacation. Thank you dad.

Mpendulo:twins are you happy for our vacation?

Twins:yes/no.

Mpendulo:why not Ayanda?

Aya:who will look after our house?

Mpendulo:gogo will be here. We are all going. Even mommy.

Aya:okay if mommy is going then im going.

Lindani:why are you two mommy's boys?

Lisa:what's wrong with that? Im also a mommy's girl...and a daddy's girl too.

Lindani:that's why we will leave you behind.

Lisa:my bag is already packed. Im going. Im not sleeping tonight or you might leave me. I don't trust you anymore.

Lu:can we take our toys with?

Mnqobi:you can buy new toys there.

Twins:yeesss!

Lu:do you think when we go to the parks snake will bite us?

Mnqobi:no. We have our big brother. He will protect us.

Aya:yoh i love having a big brother. He can protect us.

Lisa: i also love having a big brother. But i don't like it when you all go out and leave me.

Lindani:but Thando is here with you.

Lisa:no. She doesn't go out. She's boring.

Thando:Lisa no.

Lisa:she said my name.

They laughed at her.

Lu:Lu

Thando:Luuu. Papa lu

Mpendulo:my baby can talk. You know she's not boring.

Kea:babe they are so cute hle

Mpendulo:yeah. God blessed us with beautiful kids. Hey...don't cry. Qhawe is happy where he is. He's resting in peace.

Kea:you're right.

BONOLO

Me:babe look at Thando. She's so cute.

Mzwakhe:what's so cute about her crying? I wouldn't let my son walk there. What if that glass break and she falls?

Me:babe that glass floor is too strong.And Lisa is laughing.

Mzwakhe:that crazy girl. Im sure she was laughing at the baby crying. I don't know who she takes after. She's crazy.

Me:and funny too. And she talks a lot for someone her age.

Mzwakhe :actually she is on another level.

Me:they look happy and enjoying themselves.

Mzwakhe:yeah. Look at the twins. They are really happy. 2just hope nothing will ever end this happiness for them. They deserve this happiness.

Me:which is why im going to take care of the threat.

Mzwakhe:what do you mean?

Me:im meeting Amir and his mother. I want to put an end to this.

Mzwakhe:awuyi ndawo. Those people are dangerous.

Me:Amir is not like his entire family. His mother

doesn't know he's going to be present. Babe i know she's responsible for Kea's shooting.

Mzwakhe:i thought you don't talk to this Amir anymore?

Me:i called their company and scheduled a meeting with him and his mother altogether. They don't know it's me.

Mzwakhe:im going with you. I can't let you go alone.

Me:im the one who caused all this. I have to fix it.

Mzwakhe:okay but that Amir better keep his distance. I don't want him close to my wife. I hope he sees this ring.

Me:babe relax.

After our lobolo negotiations we went to sign in court and had the traditional wedding before Kea left. Now my husband can't stop talking about how we are now married. His phone rang.

Mzwakhe:hello. Yes. Aow that's good news nje? You know what!? I hope you didn't tell her that! What kind of person are you? For seven years

you've been trying and now you're like this? Calm down and just keep your cool. Im coming there. Now!

He hung up and sighed.

Me:what's wrong?

Mzwakhe:it's that idiot Mabutho.

Me:really babe?

Mzwakhe:what? What do you want me to say? He's an idiot.

Me:what did he do?

Mzwakhe:they've been married for 8 years and trying for a baby for seven years. Now that she's finally pregnant he thinks she cheated. Who does that? He should be happy but now he's freaking out.

Me: you should go there and talk to him before he says something stupid and lose his wife.

Mzwakhe:you still care about him? After what he said about you?

Me:he's family. And why would I hate him? He was

right. I was just a girlfriend to you.

Mzwakhe:if i get there and he acts stupid he will know me. I will teach him a lesson he will never forget in his life.

Me:you love your siblings hey? You're a good brother.

Mzwakhe:but some take that for granted. I would understand if it was Khanyo but Mabutho a grown man? He should grow up.

Me:babe maybe it stressed him. You see what this means? Mpendulo the one that they always run to is not here and the first person he calls is you. This means he looks up to you. It's a good thing that you all trust one another. Go and talk to him. He might be worried for nothing.

Mzwakhe:you're right. Look at Lwandle listening to us. This boy will gossip.

Me:i think he wants to get out of his cot but he doesn't know how to.

Mzwakhe:shame ingane yam.

Lwandle:mama

He raised his hands up and we laughed. I took him out and sat on the bed.

Me: he's so heavy.

Mzwakhe:he's growing. I never thought he would reach this stage.

Me:im just thankful that you were with me all the way. I wouldn't have survived alone. Him being sick and me panicking. Yiureally helped.

Mzwakhe: I love you Bonolo Khoza.

Me:i love you Mzwakhe Khoza.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:03] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 26

BONOLO

I drive to the place where i will be meeting Amir and his mother. I chose a public place. I can never trust that woman. I drive there and arrive just in time. But unfortunately I have to wait for those two to arrive. Finally they arrive and look around. They don't know it's me that they are meeting. I raise my hand and the mother is dumbstruck. She's surprised to see me. They come to where im sitting.

Amir: are you the one we are meeting?

Me:yes. I know you were thinking this is a business meeting.

A.mom:what did you call us here for?

Me:i think we both know why I called you. You can a seat.

Amir:it's good to see you. It's been long.

I smile and nod.

A.mom:you didn't call us here to smile at us right?

Me:you're right. Amir i know what i did to you is bad. And i am sorry. I was wrong.

Amir: i thought we've moved on from that?

Me:not at all. I may have moved on but it seems like your family hasn't.

Amir:what does my family have to do with this?

Me:your mother is still angry over what happened. Ma stay away from my family. Coming after my family will not make me come back to your son. Your threats will not work on me.

Amir:what threats?

Me:your mother threatened me saying i should lie to you and say the vaby that I was pregnant with is yours or she would kill me. I had to run and hide because she had people looking for me. As if that's not enough just a few weeks back she sent someone to shoot my sister.

A.mom:what!?

Me:oh yes i know it was you. Unfortunately for you she didn't die. She may have been in a coma but she's perfectly fine. Stop going after her and face me directly. Im not scared of you nkoko. Try your

stunts again and i swear there will be hell to pay.
You don't know me.

A.mom: you made my son a fool and thought you
are still going to pay for it. I won't stop until you and
your family pay.

Me:i feel so sorry for you Amir to have a mother like
this.

A.mom:oh man your dear Amir isn't as innocent as
you think.

Amir:mom!

A.mom:what? Did you tell her you had a woman at
home waiting for you while you were about to marry
her? Go on. Tell her.

I looked at him and he looked down.

A.mom:you better watch yourself. You have a cute
baby. Something might happen to him.

My phone rang.

Me:hello. Yes...thank you. I will definitely report for
duty on Monday. Thank you.

...

A.mom:and tell your sister to be careful. I might just pay her a visit and finish her this time.

Me:i don't have time to deal with this. I have to go and celebrate my new job.

A.mom:you got a job?

Me:oh yes. You thought giving a bad reference about me would work always? Not this time.

A.mom:enjoy this little happiness while it still lasts. You will never be happy for as long as im alive.

Me:believe me you don't wanna take me on. J ust try and you will know me.

Amir: Bonolo where's that sweet woman i know? When did you turn to this?

Me:i don't know. Maybe since your mother wanted to kill me and my sister. Anyway have a good day. And know this,don't try something that you're going to regret.

After that i went back home. When I arrived there were cars outside and i knew his brothers were here.

I got in and greeted them.

Mzwakhe:babe we were just waiting for you.

Me:oh okay.

Mzwakhe:we are going out so I wanted to wait so i can leave Lwandle.

Me:okay baby. Have fun.

Mabutho:MaKhoza did you hear that im going to be a father?

Me:yes. Congratulations.

Mabutho:man ican't believe it's happening.

Mzwakhe:we're leaving now baby. I will see you when i come back.

I clean around the house while Lwandle is still sleeping. I know he'll want my attention when he wakes up. I finish cleaning then start baking. My mother in law asked me to bake for her as she is coming on the weekend. She loves scones and i know i always have to bake for her when she visits.

While im still busy baking i feel hands touching me on my legs. How did he know where to find me? I left him sleeping in the lounge .

Me:my baby you are up. Did you miss mommy today? Cos i missed my boy.

I kiss him and he giggles

Me:oh you missed me? I love you my baby.mcaa

I put the pots on the stove and start cooking while i bake on the other side. I go with my boy to the lounge and take his feeding high chair. I give him his formula and continue with what i was doing. As im taking out the first batch of scones my phone rings. It's Mpendulo. What's going on?

Me:hello.

Mpe:hey. Sorry if im disturbing you.

Me:no you're not.

Mle:how are you?

Me:im good and you?

Mpe:good. I called about your sister. Can you please try and talk to her? She can't stop crying and i don't know what to do

Me:what happened?

Mpe:nothing bad. I've tried but she won't stop crying.

Me:okay. We can FaceTime and I'll try and talk to her. Are you back?

Mpe:yes. We arrived yesterday.

He cuts the call and we FaceTime.

Me:Keatlaretsi why are you crying?

Kea:im pregnant again.

Mpendulo:you're pregnant!?

Me:is that why you are crying? I thought someone died.

Kea:you don't understand. My life is over. I feel like im a baby making machine!

Me:oh sorry but don't feel like that. I mean you can afford to take care of that baby. You have your

husband to help and he'll take care of you and that baby.

Kea:how did this happen? I was on contraceptives!

Me:these things happen okay? You should be happy now.

Kea:but I always feel like crying.

Me:you know what? Come and visit me tomorrow. The others are also coming.

Kea:you always know how to calm me down. I love you okay? I love you so much.

Me:i love you too. Now stop crying.

Kea:im hurt okay? This means i won't go back to work anytime soon.

Me:your company wont run. It will always be there. You can go back after you give birth. It's not like someone will fire you.

Kea: i guess you are right.

Me:yes i am. See you tomorrow.

KEATLARETSI

We are now back from our holiday. I really had fun with my little family. I felt loved. My husband spoiled me so much. I can't even explain.

Mpendulo:babe I'll be in the study if you need me.

Me:please tell Oratile to hurry with that ice cream.

Mpendulo:it's the last time you're having ice cream

Me:it's not going to make the baby sick hawu.

Mpendulo:my baby will be cd.

Me:okay daddy. We hear you.

Mpendulo:ngiyak'thanda neh mami?

Me:nami ngiyak'thanda.

He leaves and Oratile arrives with our ice cream. He was with us on our vacation. I asked his mother if he could join us and she agreed. I love this boy. Ever since I met him my love for him keeps growing.

Ora:are you fine?

Me:yes. Im going to miss you.

Ora:i will miss you too. I had fun spending time with you.

Me:me too. But don't worry. Next holidays ka June i will fetch you. I can't believe you're leaving tomorrow.

Ora:i love you.

Ne:i love you too. And Thando will cry when you leave.

Ora:do you think i should go with her?

Me:and she will also cry if she doesn't see her mommy and daddy.

Ora:aah she doesn't know what she wants

Me:lol. Let's eat our ice cream before it melts.

After dinner we all went to our rooms. I went to take a shower and got ready for bed. The door opened. Mpendulo came in and proceeded to the bathroom. I heard the shower running so i concluded he's

showering. I finished putting lotion then put on my silk PJs. I got under the covers. Soon Mpendulo came back and started to put lotion on his body. I got up and went to stand behind him.

Me:babe im sorry.

Mpendulo:sorry?

Me:yeah. For blaming you for me being pregnant. I shouldn't have said that.

Mpendulo:i had forgotten about that. Come here.

I sat on his lap.

Mpendulo:what i didn't like is you crying. It was as if someone died. I don't like it when you cry. You scared me.

Me:im sorry. It's just that im scared. I don't know what will happen. What if this baby dies too?

Mpendulo:s thandwa sami our baby didn't die. There was nothing wrong with him. He was killed. This one will live. It's a good thing that murderer was denied bail. She's going to rot in jail. No one will do anything to our baby.

Me:what about the people who shot me?

Mpendulo:don't worry about that. It's taken care of.

Me:i hope you didn't ask for zolani's help.

Mpendulo:no. Can we go to bed now

Me:mmh.

Mpendulo:come lets sleep. We have a busy day tomorrow. We've been invited to a gala dinner.

Me:really? Where is it?

Mpendulo:around Pretoria West. Don't worry. You bought clothes on our vacation. I'm sure you will find something to wear. And pick something for me too.

Me:okay baby. But won't you be tired when you come back from Rustenburg?

Mpendulo:love i drive from here to kzn and still not feel tired. What's +-2 hours?

Me:if you say so.

Mpendulo:let me tell you something. I can see that you are still scared of something. Im promising you

now. Nothing will ever happen to you as long as im here. I will take care of you. I will protect you. I just want you to believe in me. I will protect you from anything. I won't let anyone touch you.

Me:well i believe that. But what happens when I go out without you?

Mpendulo:s thandwa sami asiyeke lento. You won't go anywhere without me knowing where you are.

Me:i love you so much. Good night.

Mpendulo:good night mami.

I snuggled closer to him as he held me.

The following day

When I woke up he was already gone. He left a note that he took the kids with. Which means im all alone here. I took a shower and cleaned my bedroom then drove to Nolo's place. I got there and the guardbat the gate opened for me.i went inside and i couldn't see her.

Me: Bonolo are you here?

"Yes! Im coming. "

Me:im hungry. What did you make?

Nolo:you're lucky i cooked a very big breakfast just before Mzwakhe left. Or else you'd start slaving in that kitchen now.

Me:thank God.

Nolo:you look so beautiful. I see you had a good time on the vacation.

Me:very good time. I enjoyed spending time with my husband and kids. It was so good. Sometimes I even think something bad will happen.

Nolo:enjoy your life and stop being negative. Nothing will happen. Your husband loves you.

Me:i know. Let me go get that food.

Nolo:don't touch the scones in the blue bucket. Take from the containers if you want.

Me:why not the ones in the bucket?

Nolo:they are for Ma. She's on her way here.

Me:okay.

I serve myself and go back to the lounge.

Nolo:so where's Thando?

Me:she's always with her father that one. They took Oratile home.

Nolo:why didn't you go with them?

Me:ne ke lapile.

Nolo:Keatlaretsi o bua maka. Go diragalang?

Me:okay i don't want to see my step mother. And people talk there. You know this.

Nolo:tlogela go itira ngwana kea. She's your father's wife and she's not going anywhere. Just put effort into your relationship with her.Leka tthe mma. O kase latlhegelwi ke sepe.

Me: i don't hate her but i just can't connect with her. I wish my mother was alive.

Nolo:and you think she's taking your mother's place.

Me:yeah. She's a good person but I can't come to terms with her being my mother's replacement.

Every time I try i feel like im betraying my mother.

Nolo:take it step by step. Im sure your mother would be happy that your father has found someone who makes him happy.

Me:maybe you are right.

Nolo: i know i am.

Me:okay I'll give her a chance. Why do you always have to be right?

Nolo:im your sister. Who willtell you right from wrong if i don't?

Me:mmh. This food is delicious!

Nolo:yesterday I went to meet Amir and his mother.

Me:really Bonolo? Aren't you scared of them?

Nolo:no. Her life is in my hands and she doesn't even know it. One wrong move from now on its overfor her. Let me show you something. I'll be back just now.

She went upstairs and came back with a file.

Nolo:i didn't even show my husband this. I'm

showing you because i trust you more with my life. I'll give you copies and you'll hide them where no one will find them. If something happens to me you take them to the police and the people involved.

Me:that sounds dangerous.

Nolo:im just saying just in case.

Me:huh! Bonolo where did you get this?

Nolo:i overheard thatwoman talking and i got the information in her office. She doesn't know i have it.

Me:o itlhokomele. You don't know when she will strike.

Nolo:anyways the other ladies are not coming anymore. So it's just me and you here.

At 2 my husband called and said i must get ready. Nolo said she was also going as Mzwakhe's date. We went to get ready at a hotel that my husband booked.

Me:wow. This dress is beautiful.

Nolo:e go tshwana gore.

Me:i know i don't like make up but look at this face!
And the hair.

Nolo:it's time to go now. The event is just here at
the hitel. Let's go.

"Surprise!" I looked back. It was Ndoni. I got up and
went to hug her. We went to where the event is said
to be. We opened the door and went in. Lights
went on. I stopped where i was. The place was
beautiful. Looked like a wedding venue. Lindani
appeared with flowers on his hands. He gave them
to me.

Linda:let's go mom.

I was now confused. I look behind me and Bonolo
wasn't tgere anymore. We went in and ny family was
there. Even Oratile. Isn't he supposed to be in
Rustenburg? I looked at front and my husband was
there looking handsome. I swear im gobna cry. He
approached us smiling. He really looked good. His
velvet lapel vert olive green tuxedo with a white shirt
fit him so perfectly. His head ahaved and a little bit

of big white beard. Making him more sexy. I love that he doesn't cut it.

Mpendulo:welcome to our vows renewals baby.

Oooh. My God. I love my husband! I look around and my father is here too with my stepmother.

Mpendulo holds my hands and goes with me to sit down. Mabutho is the mc. Trust them to give him the mc'ing job. But he's doing a great job. He's even more happy. I don't know. Different.

Mabutho:now it's time for the reason we are here. The real reason we are here.

He gives the mic to Mpendulo and he stands up holding my hand. We stand in front of the people. And im nervous as if it's my wedding day.

Mpendulo:firstly thank you everyone for coming to celebrate with us. Thank you for your support. We really appreciate it. And to my wife, i just want to say thank you. Five years later. A day before our anniversary. I stand here in front of you as a happy man. Im a happy man because of you. Because of everything that you are to me. You're everything i

ever wanted in a woman and more. You make me want to be a good man. You push me to be a good man. A good father to our kids. To be a good husband. I never thought we would be here. That we would reach this time. But we are here. And that's because you didn't give up on me. You believed in our love and put effort into us. We are all that we are because of you. I thank you for that. Thank you for loving me even when I didn't deserve to be loved. Thank you for giving me this beautiful family. You are the reason I'm loving. I love you so much my wife. No amount of words can explain how I'm feeling here inside my heart. You are a real gem. A precious diamond in my life. I promise that I will love you for as long as we live. I don't want to say till death do us apart because I want us to live long and experience this love that you give me more.

Mabutho: beautiful speech there. This is beautiful. You make us believe more in love. It's very rare to see my brother crying but I think it's safe to say he gets emotional when he talks about the love for his wife. Now it's time for MaKhoza to say something

also.

He hands the mic to me. I breathe in and out. I didn't expect this to be happening. I'm not even prepared. So I will just say whatever comes to my heart.

Me:uh...(I laugh. I really don't know what to say. A tear falls.) I wasn't expecting this. I didn't even know this was going to happen. It came as a surprise. But I'm really happy. Thank you everyone for coming to celebrate with us. It really means a lot. It shows we have people who love and support us. And to my husband. Thank you for this surprise. I'm amazed. I didn't expect this but here we are. I am happy. I am happy to be here. To be standing here with you. I'm happy to be doing this life thing with you. I wouldn't choose anyone else. I would choose you over and over. You making living worth it. The first time we met you showed that you care. I was in a bad space I didn't even think I would survive. But you didn't give up on me. You opened the door to your heart and waited patiently for me. You may not know it but you being there made it possible for me to get through everything. I remember one day I was going

through something and you said "whatever it is, you are going to be fine. " Right there i knew i was going to be fine. I made it here because of you. We may have had our problems, obstacles that we faced. But we survived because of the strength that we have together. Because of how strong our love is for each other. I love you Mr Khoza. You make life wonderful. You make it easy to love you. You make loving you easy. I love how you care for me and our family. Hiw you take care of us. I love that no matter what we go through you reassure me that we will be fine. I promise to be a good wife not try to be the best. Because to me you are the best husband ever. And i wouldn't change anything. I promise that i will always be by your side. I will love you forever.

I gave the mic back. My husband hugged me.

Mabutho:bafo we know you love your wife and all. But you will have your time to have her to yourself. But for now take your seats. These people you see here are here to celebrate with you and they have a lot to say.

The people laughed. We broke off the hug and

Mpendulo kissed me. God! I bet he blocked what Mabutho said out of his ears. My dad us here for God's sake!

Mpendulo:hay don't look at me like that. I heard you. He held my hand as we went back to our seats. People laughed. What a man i have!

Mabutho:now their friends would like to say something. Zweli bafo iskhathi sakho.

Zweli:greetings everyone. What a beautiful day this is. I can bet that everyone here agrees with me. Bafo,nawe MaKhoza. Congratulations kn getting to your 5th year of marriage. Not everyone gets here. What you are is an example of a marriage that works. You're setting an example to those who will come after you. Im happy that you're still going strong. I remember the first time you met her. I knew you had found your wife. You couldn't stop talking about her. You even took a day off from work and did aa job that was not yours just so you can see her again. I knew she had captured your heart. The way you talked about her showed that

you really loved her. She changed you. Now you're a husband because of her. I know there are hardships in marriages. We face things as we go. Don't let them break you. Take it as a lesson and learn from it. Let it build you. May your marriage be more stronger than before. I wish you well. May you be more happy and be fruitful and multiply in everything you do.

Mpendulo:babe this one should have been a pastor.

He whispered to me. I contained myself. I wasn't about to laugh. Our friends and family and our parents talked and gave us advice. The speech that made me shed tears was my grandmother. She reminds me so much of my mother. They look exactly the same. Whenever I look at my mom's pictures it's like grandmother in her young age....She got off her chair and came to the table we were sitting on with her walking stick. She signaled for me to stand next to her. I hugged her and she kissed me on my cheek. Oh how I love her.

Grandma:my granddaughter,I'm very proud of you . Your mother would be proud of you. I know you're

going to be good even from here. You were raised well. Your father did a good job with you. And im happy. A marriage is a good thing. But it also has it's problem. Pray. Pray for your marriage. You will never go wrong with God .Trust in God And everything will go well. And don't be scared to ask elders for advice. Your mother in law is there for you. Your mother is there for you. Talk to them if you are going through something. You have your sisters. Those are the people you talk to. don't let a third party in your marriage. It's between you and your husband. Yes you get advices but this marriage is between you two. Continue to respect and honor him as you have been. God will bless you all. The love that you two share will grow more than ever. My son please take care of her. You know that She's very important to me. I wouldn't want to hear complaints from her. I trusted you with her. Even now going forward i still trust you with her. I love you Rudo and wish you all the best.

We hugged. After that she went back to her seat.

Mabutho:thank you for all the speech. We believe

they are going to use those advices going forward. We hope that it will build and strengthen you. Now it's time to eat drink and be happy. You're welcome to eat anything that you want. You can have as much as you want. And thank you for coming to celebrate with us and the family.

Waiters started serving us food and drinks. My baby ran to where we were sitting. I missed her. I haven't seen her all day.

Thando:mommy I missed you.

Me:i missed you too. Come and eat.

Thando:food? Im hungry.

Me:okay. Sit here.

Thando:mmbaa.

She kissed my cheek then kissed her daddy and ate from his plate. It's official. My baby loves her daddy more than me.

Me:nana o sa kgotlhela papa neh

Thando:huh

Mpendulo:ungangcolisi ubaba.

Thando:yebo mommy.

Mmh.

Me:please feed her.

Thando:i can eat on my own.

This one ever since she started talking she's too much. My baby has grown.

Thando:baba when mommy get a new baby will you still pick me?

Me:where did you hear that?

She smiles pointing at her dad.

Mpendulo:I'll pick you all the time.

Thando:okay. You can pick me now.

Mpendulo:okay but sit still.

She smiled happy. After the ceremony we went to our rooms. My husband had booked for our guests and we will leave in the morning.

Mpendulo:babe would you like to adopt Lindani?

Me:you mean like have him legally as mine? Babe that would be good!

Mpendulo:i know his mother doesn't even care about him. And this will make him happy.

Me:have you talked to him about it?

Mpendulo:no. We will do it together.

Me:okay. I'd be honored to be his mother.

Mpendulo:i love you Khanyisile.

Me:i love you too.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:03] : ***STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 27

Ntombi

Mabutho:baby come lets talk.

Me:i thought we already talked?

Mabutho:i talk and you listened. I want us to talk.

Me:talk so that you can accuse me more? No thanks.

That's the thing with him. He's always the right one. Whenever there's a problem im the one who's wrong. It's always been like that. Even when we were dating. I met Mabutho when i was 13. His father was business partners with my father and his father would sometimes come with him at our house to meet with my father. That's how we got to know each other. We started dating when i was 16 and he was 21. We dated until I was 25 and got married at 26. Ever since we started dating they've never been issues of cheating. So i was somehow hurt when he said i cheated on him and fell pregnant. J ust because the doctor said his sperm count is low didn't mean that we wont fall pregnant. I believed that one day we were gonna have a child

of our own. And now that we have he accuse me of this. After four years of trying we agreed to addopt. We adopted a boy. He's four years old now. Even though we had adopted we still wished to have a child of our own blood.

Mabutho:then how are we going to solve things cos i can see that there's still problems here?

Me:you don't see it. You're the one who's wrong here. What made you to accuse me in the first place? The doctor didn't say that you're unable to have kids. He just said it would be difficult. But you then say i cheated.

Mabutho: what did you want me to think when men call you?

Me:that's the same reason you accused Khanyisile of cheating even though she was n't. Aren't women allowed to have business with men? So because you do business with women i have to say you are cheating?

Mabutho:you know I'd never cheat on you!

Me:and I'd cheat?have i ever given you anyreas on to

think so?

Mabutho:....

Me: yesterday you went and got drunk with your brothers saying you're celebrating. What were you celebrating if the child is not yours?

Mabutho: im sorry. I know i was wrong. I take responsibility for my actions. I know you'd never cheat on me. I was just overwhelmed and surprised. That's all. Im really sorry. Please forgive me.

Me: i forgive you. But i hope this is the last time we talk about this.

Mabutho: ngiyakthembis a sthandwa sami. Ngeke kwenzakale futhi. Ngiya funga.

Me: kulungile ke.

Mabutho: ngizokubona mangbuya okay? Unga sebenzi kakhulu. We should get a helper. Uzokusiza ngemsebenzi yalapha khaya. You still have your job and you can't come home to doing house chores. Don't be late. I'll send a driver to pick you up. Iyakthanda indoda yakho.

Me:uthandwa yimi.

He kissed my forehead and picked Sbanisethu up and left.

Khanyisile and Mpendulo's anniversary was a success. Everything went well. I admire their love. Their love is so beautiful and strong. I feel someone jumping on me and i knowSbanisethu is here.

Me:boy stop. Im still sleeping.

Sbani:i want to sleep here.

Mabutho:babe breakfast in bed.

Me:thank you baby.

Sbani:thank you daddy.

Mabutho:this boy. Get off mommy and eat.

He gets up and jumps on the bed. He's such a happy child. I get him to sit and we start eating. While eating i notice that Mabutho stopped eating.

Me:why aren't you eating?

Mabutho:im just thinking about how lucky I am to have you in my life. After everything that we've been through someone would have left. You knew it was going to be difficult to have children but you stayed. That shows just how much you love me. I promise i will love you and show appreciation to you for the rest of our lives.

Me:you're a good man. And i won't leave.

Mabutho:im happy to hear that. And don't worry about cooking.

Me:but your brothers are coming.

Mabutho:you're pregnant. Their wives are not disabled. They will cook. I don't want my wife slaving around.

Me:babe cooking won't kill me. I will just cook with them. It's not like i will pick heavy things.

Mabutho:i don't care. You should just sot and relax wena.

Now his brothers and their wives had started

arriving. It's now a full house. The kids are running around playing and the men are starting to braai. Us the women are in the kitchen cooking.

Mabutho:don't forget what i said. Don't lift heavy things.

Me:babe im just cooking. Nothing hectic.

Mabutho:you're pregnant. So we have to be careful.

Mpendulo shouted from outside.

Mpendulo:hey wena! We are waiting for that meat. My wife is also pregnant but she's cooking. And i also don't want anything happening to my babies but she's cooking. Leave the women and come with that meat.

Mabutho:shout when you need me.

Me:babe im fine.

He kissed my cheek and left.

Ndoni:you ladies are so secretive. You're pregnant and we didn't know.

Kea:no one knew. I only my sister.

Nolo:and i only got to find out because her husband called me as she was crying like someone died and he didn't know what to do. Or else I'd be in the dark.

Me:well your husbands knew cos you know how my husband is. He couldn't wait to tell them. He's so happy.

Sethu:you deserve this. But just be ready for labor pains.

Lisa:mommy what's labor pains?

Nolo:Lisa when did you get here?

Lisa:ma i came to drink water. But i can stay.

Kea:go and play with others. Elders are busy here.

Lisa:okay mommy. Can i also have ice cream?
Please.

Me:check in the fridge.

She took two containers and took several spoons. I know she was sent by her sibliogs here.

Lisa:thank you ma.

Me:who sent you?will you finish that?

Lisa:it's for me and Natty. We will finish it. It's hot today.

Me:hee Lisa. Le ngane. Go.

She left.

Kea:she's a lot of work. With Lesedi here you better pack away all the snacks and ice cream. Those two are trouble when they are together. See now she's lying about Natty.

Sethu:that's how she is.

Phumla:so Ntombi do you have cravings or morning sicknesses?

Me:not yet.

Bongi:you still have a lot to go through. Not to mention labor pains.

Kea:guys can we change the topic? Im already scared of labor pains.

Bongi:but you've done it before.

Kea:triplets are a lot. How will i push 3 babies out?

Bongi:good luck yoh.

Nolo:can we stop with this topic? You're scaring her.

Kea:I'll be fine.

Nolo:still. Let's cook or we will never finish.

Sethu:but the way you're giving birth...why so many kids? I know you can afford them but haa.

Ndoni:don't listen to her. Kids are a blessing.

Nolo:so wena Sethu how many kids do you have?

Sethu:3 and im done.

Nolo:Good for you.you have no right to judge. It's not her fault that she gives birth to not only one child.

Sethu:then what happens when her happens when her husband disappears again ?

Nolo:that's none of your business. Who told you he will disappear? Besides, She doesn't come crying to you. Who are you to judge?

Bongi:ladies lets not fight.

Nolo:i just wanted to put it out there that she don't do anything for Keatlaretsi. She don't buy pampers for her kids so she's not entitled to say anything about her being pregnant . She can get pregnant ten times and that's fine. So i won't stand here and watch you judge her.

Sethu: she has a mouth to speak for herself.

Nolo:i know that. Sethu you're judgemental. Ever since i met you you've been like that. You better change or you will know who i am when it comes to my sister. She may be quiet but i won't keep quiet. I don't want to hear anything about her always being pregnant unless you're the one who impregnated her.

Sethu: i was just voicing out my opinion.

Nolo:and your opinion doesn't matter. It's just an opinion.

Me:ladies let's close this topic and do what we are here for.

I could see that this topic was going too far. It would make people fight.Khanyisile is quiet. She

doesn't speak that much. Luckily Bonolo is here. She wouldn't let anyone speak against her sister. That's why she was defending her like that. I like their relationship. They are too close and look out for each other. I wish i had a relationship like that with my sisters. It's beautiful to watch. And Sethu...that's another case. She says whatever comes to mind. We are used to her. If you don't know her you'll always feel offended. I think Siya instilled this manner in her cos she wasn't like this at first. His manners are rubbing off on her. We cooked everything that we were supposed to and took it to the table. I could see that Khanyisile was hurt. Her mind wasn't here anymore.

Me: Khanyisile can i talk to you?

We went back to the kitchen.

Me:im sorry about what happened. Sethu doesn't watch what she says and sometimes she just speaks out of turn.

Kea: it's fine. Im sure she didn't mean to offend me.

Me:i know you're hurt. Im sorry. I will talk to her.

What she said wasn't right. Let's go join the others.

We went outside and everything was going well and
Were having a good time.

Narrated

As they were eating and laughing having a good
time.

Mpendulo: u right?

Kea:yeah.

Mpendulo:you're so quiet.

Kea:ah it's nothing.

Siya:oh Khanyo. I didn't know you were coming.

Khanyo:hello everyone. Im so hungry! I came at the
right time. Ramayan

Mabutho:take a seat.

Khanyo:everyone this is Wandile. And wandile these
are my brothers and their wives.

Siya:nice meeting you Wandile. So tell us,what is

Wandile to you?

Khanyo:my boyfriend.

Bongani:boy what? Angizwanga?

Khanyo:me and him are dating.

Mabutho: Mfana phuma la kwami.

Ntombi:babe that's a bit harsh.

Shaka:Wandile so what do you do?

Wandile:im a mineworker.

Siya:mineworker?

Mpendulo:will you be able to take care of our sister?

Muzi:if you love our sister you will wait for her until she is 30.

Mpendulo:yes.

Sethu:haybo! Your wife wasn't even 30. You're 21 years older than her. Let Khanyo date. She's 26 and has a degree. What more do you want?

Everyone kept quiet and looked down. Thing is they all respect Mpendulo as the older brother and their

leader. So Sethu speaking like that shocked them.

Siya:Sethu! Since when do you talk to my elder brother like that?

Sethu:im sorry. I didn't mean to.

Kea:Sethu...Ke lapile ka wena. If you have something against me just tell me and stop pretending to like me. What do i have to do with Khanyo dating? Did you have to make to make an example by me? I think I've been too quiet for too long. Let's solve this matter once and for all.

Sethu: i have nothing against you.

Kea:no. It's not the first time. When I was and my husband wasn't around you judged me and thought i wouldn't notice. And today you did it again. You said i always fall pregnant and said it as if it's a bad thing. What's wrong with you? And now it's my age. What have i done to you?

Sethu:Khanyisile im really sorry for saying all of that. Nawe baba omkhulu ngiya xolis a for uku khuluma nawe ngaley a ndlela. Kwa kungeyi nxos o yami.imreally sorry Khanyisile.

Kea:babe you'll find me in the car.

Mpendulo:hlala phansi Khanyisile. No one is going anywhere here.

Nolo: i see you forgot what we talked about Sethu. I..

Mzwakhe: Thandiwe that's enough!

Thandiwe is Bonolo's marital name.

Mpendulo: I see some of you've forgotten who i am. Now you think you can talk to me anyhow you like. I hope it's the first and the last time. And wena Khanyo i hope you haven't done anything stupid yet. Wandile what are your intentions with our sister?

Wandile:i love your sister. I see a future with her. Getting married and build a family together.

Mzwakhe:how much do you earn and are you an underground worker?

Wandile:i earn enough to take care of myself and my family. And no,im not an underground worker.

Mpendulo: I hope that money will be enough to take care of her. I don't want to see her crying or you abusing her. Treat my sister right. Im giving you the

benefit of the doubt here. Prove that you're right for her. One wrong move i will deal with you myself.

Khanyo:ngiyabonga buti. Thank you so much.

Mpendulo:now let's eat. And Wandile,go to school. Do a course related to

KEATLARETSI

We came back home from Ntombi's place and i was actually getting bored being there. That lame apology from Sethu...I know she didn't mean it. I don't know what is her problem with me. I don't care anyway.

Mpendulo:babe what are you doing?

He just came out of the shower.

Me:im just sending my grandmother's money.

Mpendulo:oh she asked for money? Why didn't you tell me? I would have sent it before we went to Mabutho's place.

Me:no. It's the money that I send for her monthly.

Mpendulo:taking care of your grandmother...not many do that. You're a good woman. Every month you send her groceries and money on top. I hope our kids take your good heart.

Me:im just doing what i can. Things are very expensive in Zim and i don't want her to struggle when she wants something.

Mpendulo:how many uncles do you have ?

Me:it's three. Then four aunties.

Mpendulo:and your cousins? Are they working?

Me:some are working . And some are still in school.

Mpendulo:that's nice.

Me:babe do you really agree with Wandile and Khanyo's relationship?

Mpendulo:yes.

Me:babe i know you.

Mpendulo:okay. I don't want her dating but what can i do?

Me:babe she's grown. She's working, she never

disappointed you and this is her first relationship. Just let her be. How will she learn if you are this strict with her? I'm sure Wandile is a good guy.

Mpendulo: okay. I will give them my blessings. But if he hurt her...

Me: let's not think like that.

Mpendulo: okay.

In the morning I woke up and did my hygiene process then went downstairs. I found Khanyo cooking.

Me: it smells nice in here and I'm so hungry.

Khanyo: you're right on time. I'm about to dish.

Me: how are you?

Khanyo: I'm good. I'm happy.

Me: I can see. Let me just go and sit down.

I took a seat at the table and Khanyo brought the food. Soon there was noise. Which means the kids were coming for breakfast.

Linda:good morning mom.

He kissed my cheek and took his seat.

Mnqobi and Lisa:good morning mommy.

Theykissed my cheek and hugged me.

Me:good morning.

I felt little hands on my eyes.

Me:Luyanda.

They laughed. He took off his hands and his dad was holding him.

Aya:i got you mommy. Yaay!

He sat on my lap.

Aya:good morning mommy.

Me:good morning my boy. Luu come here. How are you

Luu:im good mommy. We are going to school today.

Aya:when are we going to big school?

Mpendulo:well,soon you'll be going to big school.

Luu:you see sisi? We are joining you in big school soon.

Lisa:don't worry. I will look after you. Im your big sister.

Thando:daddy im hungry.

Me:tlaya kwano nana.

Thando:....

Me:woza Thando.

She came running. This child. She baby kissed me and hold onto my neck looking in my eyes.

Thando:i love you mommy.

Me:aaah..i love you too.

Mpendulo:good morning everyone. Let's eat before you're late for school.

Thando:i want to go to school mommy.

Me:and leave mommy alone?

Thando:i want to go with Lisa.

Me:sis Lisa will be back soon and play with you. Me

and you will play together okay?

Thando:okay. Daddy can i go with you to work?

Mpendulo:it's my last day at work today. Then i will take you everywhere with me.

Thando:i want to go with you.

Mpendulo:okay don't cry. I will go with you.

We finished eating and Mpendulo was taking the kids to school.

Me:have a good day guys.

Them:bye.

Mpendulo moved his head to me so he can kiss me.

Thando hit his face screaming.

Thando:mbaa mommy.

We laughed. I kissed her and they left. I cleaned my bedroom and the bathroom then went to sit in the lounge. I decided to call my stepmother. It rang a few times and she picked up.

Mom:dumela Keatlaretsi.

Me:dumelang mama. Lekae?

Mom:ke teng. O tsogile jwang le bana le mokgwenyana?

Me:re tsogile sentle.

Mom:rrago gayo. Le Oratile o setse a ile sekolong.

Me:no. I wanted to talk to you.

Mom:okay. I hope nothing is wrong?

Well i don't blame her for saying that. I've never really made an effort to call and call her.

Me:no. Everything is alright. I just wanted us to talk.

Mom:okay.

Me:im sorry for not accepting you as my mother and for not making things easy for you. I'd like us to start afresh.

Mom:it's alright. I'd also like that. I know i might not be your biological mother but just know im here as a mother if you need anything. Im not here to replace your mother and im not here to take your

father from you. Your father loves you and that will never change.

Me:i know. I hope we can still build a relationship.

Mom:I'd love that as well.

Me:that's good. Have a good day.

Mom:you too.

I cut the call and just continued watching tv as there was nothing to do. I decided to cook lunch. I finished cooking and put food in the containers for my husband. I went upstairs to take my car keys. I took them and went back to the kitchen. I found Mpendulo and Thando eating the food from the containers.

Me:i was about to bring that food to you at your work.

Mpendulo:i finished early finalising things. So i thought why not come and spend time with my wife? This food is delicious.

Me:let me take it to lounge so we can eat together.

Thando:no mommy. It's our food.

Me:i have mine. What did you do today nana?

Thando: I helped daddy with his work. Daddy said im a genius.

Me:genius yame bathong.

Thando:what are you saying mommy?

Me:i said you're my genius. Do you know what a genius is?

Thando:a clever person like me.

Me:mmh.

We took the food to the lounge and ate watching tv. My phone rang and it was an unknown number.

Me:hello.

Voice:hi. Is this Kea?

Me:yes. Ke bua le mang?

Voice:it's Defne.

Me:Defne? Who's that?

Voice: Amir's mother.I have a proposal for you.

Me:proposal? Leaveme alone hle. Never call me

again!

Defne: not so fast.. Did you know that Agnes is out on bail?

Me: stop saying things you know nothing about.

Defne: if you help me get something from your sister I will help you get a lawyer that will win the case for you.

I dropped the call and blocked her number.

Mpendulo: what's going on?

Me: Amir's mother said Agnes got bail. And we knew nothing about it.

Mpendulo: she's lying. We would know.

Me: she wants me to get her something from Bonolo then she will get me a good lawyer. Does she think I'm stupid? I already have a lawyer!

Mpendulo: Calm down. What does she want from Bonolo?

Me: I don't know.

Mpendulo: since when do we keep secrets from

each other?

Me:im not hiding anything.

Mpendulo:i can see that you are. What is it? I might help you.

Me:okay. I think she wants me to steal information from Bonolo. Im not selling my sister out. This information could get that woman in trouble. So Bonolo told her to leave her alone or she will give the information to the people who are looking for it.

Mpendulo:your sister is dangerous. How did she get it?

Me:in that woman's office. Don't tell anyone about this. If that woman finds out i know where the information is..

Mpendulo:Khanyisile! You're also involved in this?

Me:this is my sister we are talking about. If something happens to her i will give that information to the owner.

Mpendulo:where are you keeping it?

Me:somewhere safe.

Mpendulo:by that you mean in our house? Do you realize the danger you're putting our children!?

Me:don't shout.

Mpendulo go and take that information.

Me:ican't.

Mpendulo:hey! I wasn't asking you. Go and take it. If that woman's people come and shoot you again what do you think will happen to us? Our children? Me? How will we survive? Khanyisile if you knew how it was when you were shot you wouldn't be doing this. I couldn't sleep or eat. I was always sad. I love you Khanyisile and losing you will destroy me. I won't survive. What will be of our family? Did you think about the babies you're carrying? If you don't care about us then think about the babies.

Me:im sorry. But please don't tell Mzwakhe about it. I don't want him to fight with her. I promised to keep quiet about it.

Mpendulo:never mind. Don't bother with that information anymore.

Me:okay. I will go and get it.

I was hurt that i wasn't thinking about myself. The pained look on my husband's face. It hurt me. It broke my heart. Maybe i was selfish by not telling him about it. I opened the safe and took the documents. I went back to the lounge and gave them to him. He read them. I looked at him as he was sweating.

Me:what's wrong?

Mpendulo:do you really know what your sister put you into? Do you know how dangerous this family is?

Me:no. I didn't read them.

Mpendulo: k have to give this information to this man so he can deal with this woman once and for all.

Me:baby innocent people will be hurt here. Amir will...

Mpendulo:the same Amir who was making your sister a fool? He had a woman back in Turkey while

he wanted to marry Bonolo. They are all crooks. Im calling Chris so he can contact this man. He knows him.

Me:is this going to put me in trouble?

Mpendulo:i won'tdo anythingthatwillput you in trouble.

He calledChrisandhe saidhe'scoming.

Mpendulo:baby don't worry. Yoursisterwont havetodealwith thatfamilyanymore.she will be safe.

Chris appeared and sat on the couch.

Chris:i came as soon as you called. It sounded urgent.

Mpendulo:that gangster you were working for is he still in South Africa?

Chris:you called me for that? I told you I don't work for him anymore.

Mpendulo:i have information for him.

Chris: he's in London. He's always traveling around the world. Don't involve yourself with Mafias it won't

end well.

Mpendulo:my family is in danger so i have to do this.
So why were you working for him?

Chris:his wife was shot and they said she won't survive. He asked me to help save his wife. I did an operation on her and treated her until she survived. But their baby didn't make it. He's a good man. He saved my daughter when her biological father kidnapped her.

I remember that story. Lerato told me about it.

Chris:but those who double cross him don't live to tell the tale.

Mpendulo gave him the file and he started reading.

Chris:what!? Is this information legit?

Mpendulo:i don't know.

Me:it is. There's also a dvd video in the envelope but I didn't watch it.

Chris:these people are dangerous!where did you get this information?

Me:my sister told me to keep it safe for her and should anything happen to her i must take it to the person in question. Now Defne wants it.

Chris:how did your sister get involved with these people?

Mpendulo:she was going to marry that woman's son.

Chris:Amir?(i nodded) That guy is married. He must have been using her to get something.

Mpendulo:how do you know these people?

Chris:that family was Mr P's partners. They are also in the mafia world. Very dangerous. Look, i will call Mr p and ask to meet. They've been looking for the person who was responsible for this but never found him. Keep the information safe until he agrees for a meeting.

Me:i hope that if he agrees my husband won't have to go London.

Chris:i have to go with him. So that he can explain.

I breath out loud. I stood up. My tears were about to

fall. Mpendulo held my arm before I could leave.

Mpendulo:babe i have to do this for us. Nothing will happen to me.

Me:what will happen if something happens to you? Will i have to raise 9 kids alone? What if this time the worst happens?

Mpendulo: i have to do this for us to have peace in our lives. Sthandwa sami i promise nothing will happen. baby nothing will happen. Chris you will call me and tell me what the man says.

Chris:sure. Let me leave.

I went upstairs to our room and went to wash my face. I felt his hands around my waist.

Mpendulo:please don't stress.

Me:this always happens when im pregnant.

Mpendulo:this time it's different. Nothing will happen to me.

That day we made love like it was the last day. It was just like the last time he disappeared. But i chose to trust him. Trust that he will come back.

And that he was doing this for our family. I believed that he would come back.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:03] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 28

KEATLARETSI

It has been a week and he's not back yet. Even though he calls i still fear him not coming back. He said he's coming back today but he's still not saying anything. He was supposed to be here three hours ago.

Lisa:mommy daddy will come back today. Don't worry.

Me:yes. You're right.

Lisa:you know mama you are my best friend?

Me:baby i thought Lesedi is your best friend.

Lisa:he is. But not always. But you...you are my best friend all the time. That's why i love you more than everyone.

Me:even more than Luyanda and Ayanda?

Lisa:no mommy.. no! Those two are my best best friends. But i love you more.

Me:okay. You deserve a treat.

Lisa:can i have your ice cream and cake?

Me:mmh. Let's go and take it.

Lisa:i want a big slice.

Me:mmh wena...is it you eating my cake?

Lisa:okay mommy. Im sorry I won't eat it again without asking you.

Me:im just joking. You can take it any time. But don't tell the twins or they will finish it for you.

Lisa:i promise.

We took the cake and ice cream and went back to

the lounge.

Voice:what are my girls eating?

Lisa:daddy you're back! I missed you so much.

She ran upstairs. To call her siblings i think. I i went and hugged him.

Mpendulo:i told you i will come back.

Me:im very happy. I was counting the days until you come back home. I missed you.

Mpendulo:not as much as I missed you my wife.

Lu:dad is back.

Lu ,Lisa and aya ran to hug him.

Mpendulo:i missed you so much. Where are the others?

Lisa:the big boys are doing homeworks and Thando is sleeping.

Me:i hope no one will wake her up. Im tired of running after her.

Mpendulo:was she giving you problems?

Me:no. Im just tired of running after her. She's always running on the stairs i think we should put a gate or she will fall.

"Mommy"

Oh God she's up. I think im taking them to my mother in law these coming holidays. I can't deal anymore.

Me:daddy is back. Babe deal with her. I'll be in our room.

Mpendulo:i thought she was sleeping and i will have some time with my wife.

Thando:i missed you so much daddy.

She started walking/ running on the stairs and threw herself to her daddy.

Mpendulo:Lisa fo and call your brothers. Im taking you guys out.

Me:have a nice time.

Mpendulo:aren't you joining us?

Me:i want to sleep. I haven't been sleeping well.

Mpendulo:okay. See you later.

....

I woke up from my nap to my phone ringing. The house is quiet. That means that Mpendulo and the kids are not back yet. I answer my phone. It's Sne. What does she want?

Me:hello.

Sne:hi. How are you?

Me:im fine and you?

Me and her don't really talk unless it's about Mngqobi.

Sne:im good.

She sounds so happy.

Sne:i was wondering if Mngqobi could come this side maybe for a week.

Me:why? Schools just opened.

Sne:i thought maybe you'd have a lot to deal with. With what's going on and everything. I wouldn't

want my child exposed to such environment.

Me: no he's fine.

Sne:okay darling.

She cut the call. Since when am i darling to her?

What made her happy today?

I check my messages and there's a message from Sethu.

"Let's meet at Little star. The restaurant near Brooklyn mall. See you then."

I don't even know this restaurant. I search on the internet and im surprised it's Lerato's. Wow. These are the types of friends one should keep. She works and has a chain of restaurants. She's really doing well for herself. I wash my face and get ready to leave. I put the location on the gps. I drive there and look for her. The first one i see is Phumla. All of them are here. I greet and sit. Bonolo looks at me like she's analyzing me.

Me:why are you all looking at me?

Sethu:are you fine?

Her of all people asking if i am fine? I didn't take her as the caring type.

Me:yes. Why wouldn't I be?

Ndoni:have you been on Facebook or Twitter?

Me:you know i don't use those things most of the time . What's going on?

She gave me her phone.

Ndoni:even on Instagram.

BUSINESSWOMAN MARRIED TO A SUGERDADDY
IN A RELATIONSHIP A MAN OLD ENOUGH TO BE
HER FATHER

IS IT LOVE OR ABOUT MONEY?

These were the things they were saying about me.
Bonolo gave me a newspaper. It had a picture of me
with Mpendulo and also me with Rapula.

The caption was "Was she cheating on the poor guy

with the sugar daddy?"

Mpendulo Khoza, a 55 years old man married to a 34 year old woman. It's said that they've been married for 5 years. Going to six. Is it really about love or she married him for money? It is well-known that Khoza is a top business man who is filthy rich. Could it be that Keatlaretsi is in this for the money? This wouldn't be a surprise as we know that she was with Rapula Moletsane a businessman who also has his money. Also with the lecturer she dated back in University it was the same thing. After he died he left all his money and estate to her. A source close to them revealed this "This woman is after his money. Nothing else. I was in a relationship with him for 3 years but not once did he ever mention anything about marriage. But she came and in less than six months they got married. It's like she has a hold on him. Something you can never break free from. If it wasn't for her me, him and our baby would be living our happy life now? Keatlaretsi Khoza stop holding the poor man back.

It's only a matter of time before he leaves you."

The source did not want to be disclosed. Could it be that she's using witchcraft on the man?"

That's what the article said. There's only one person who could say this. This is why Sne called. But why did she sound so happy?

Me:after all these years they're only talking about the age thing now?

Nolo:leave them. They have nothing better to do.

Ndoni:they write anything just for a story.

Me:this is my name being damaged.

Sethu:i think you should say the side of your story.

Phumla:no. Let it cool down.

Ntombi:no ways. Her reputation is damaged im telling you. She must do somethingabout this.

Me:i only have one person in mind. I can't he lied to me. Did she haveto paint me like a bad person? Im not a witch. In fact she's a witch!

Bongi:if it's that woman of the cat then she's really dangerous. None of what she said is true.

Me:i needsomething strong.

Nolo: Keatlaretsi you don't drink. And you're pregnant!

Me:right now i wish i was n't.

I feel like crying right now. Im cursed. J ust when we were finally happy this happens. Also the Tim thing,i didn't take his money. I transferred everything to his parents. I didn't even order anything to eat. That's just how hurt i felt. I drove back home and i found him in the lounge.

Me:where are the kids?

Mpendulo:they are at Mabutho's place.

He grabbed my hand as i was about to leave.

Me:what?

Mpendulo:sit down and let's talk.

Me:im tired of talking.

Mpendulo:im sorry.

Me:for how long are you going to be sorry?

Mpendulo: I'm sorry that this woman is coming back to be a thorn in our lives. But as for the baby thing she's lying. I didn't have a baby with her.

Me:and that's supposed to make me happy?

Mpendulo:im sorry.

Me:you lied to me.yòu knew her. You were in a relationship with her. 3 years. Why didn't you just tell me? And when you were in Mozambique,how did they find you?

Mpendulo:Khany..

Me:no.i don't want to hear any excuses. I want the truth.

Mpendulo:ireally don't know what you want me to say. Are we going to fight because of this woman again? Im really trying to get rid of obstacles on our way but you're taking me back. This is what she wants. I was never in a relationship with her. I first met her the time i was lost!

Me:once again I'vebeen made a fool.

Mpendulo:you're not a fool.

Me:i am. Now im being called a witch. My face is all over the tabloids. Newspapers are having a field day with me. Not to talk about social media. Im this witch that came between a man and his family. I'm seen as a gold digger. Me a gold digger? I've never even asked you for money. I have my own. Anything that yiu buy fir me it's from your own accord. I work for my money.

Mpendulo:this thing willblow over.

Me:don't tell me that it will blow over. I might lose clients because of this.

Mpendulo:i will take care of this.

Me:like you took care of it when she tried to kill me and my kids or when she killed my son?

My phone has been ringing nonstop. J ournalists are asking for my side of the story. Muzi said i must not comment on any story. I chose to believe in him as my lawyer.

Mpendulo:are we going back there?

Me:when I was with Rapula i never went through drama like this. He might have made me a fool but i didn't face any drama.

Mpendulo:i don't want to hear that name in this house.!

He looked pissed. Angry. I don't care. He must know how i feel right now.

Me:i actually regret getting married to you. I don't know what i was thinking. You lied to me from the start of things. I should have seen that as a sign.

Mpendulo:do you really regret getting married to me?

Me:what more are you hiding?

Mpendulo:im not hiding anything.

I can't stand him right now. I left him where he was and went back to my car. I drove around until i found myself at my company. I got stares as i went in but i didn't care. This is my company and no one can tell me anything. I sat on my chair. I was

supposed to use this office before I discovered i am pregnant. I sat there and thought about where i started. How far I've come. All tge hard work I've put for this company to be a success. And now some jealous woman wants to ruin it all. Im not going to allow it. I switch off my phone and just sit in silence. By the time i leave it's dark outside and everyone has already left. I got into my car and drove home. When i arrived i found Mpendulo sitting in our bedroom.

Mpendulo:is this the time to come home? The kids even fell asleep waiting for you.

Me:please give me a break. Im tired.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile im tired of you dis respecting me. Me being gentle with you does not mean i am stupid. Show me respect. When i say sit down and lets talk d'o exactly that. Now it's like ican't lead my family. Im always the wrong one in this house. Yes i do make mistakes and im working on fixing that butgive me the respect that i deserve as your husband. J ust like i respect you.

Me:...

Mpendulo:i told you i don't want to hear your ex's name in this house but every time when something goes wrong you compare me with him. Do you still want him? Why don't you pack your things and go to him? You're always talking about him it's starting to get in my nerves! Nxa! If you regret being married to me why are you still here?

All this time I didn't say anything. I just looked at him saying all these things that hurt me.

Mpendulo:if you really regret being here with me you know the way out. Im tired of living as if im forcing you to be here. If you want to leave you're welcome to leave. If you not leaving you will join me in bed.

I put the car keys on the dressing table and went to the bathroom. I got under the shower and just let the hot water hit me. I cried inside the shower. I cried for everything that I've been going through. After i was done i went to bed. I thought he'd be

asleep by now. I got under the covers and put my head on his chest.

Me:im slrry. Im sorry for dis respecting you. Im sprry. I promise im not going to mention his name again. Im really sorry.

He ignored me. I ended up giving up trying to talk to him. In the morning he was already up when I woke up. I got ready for work. After i went downstairs for breakfast. Mme Maggie pur helper was already up.

Me:morning mme.

Maggie:morning my child. Your breakfast is in the oven. Your husband has already taken the kids to school.

Me:okay. Thank you mme.

I ate my breakfast then drove off to work. J ust like yesterday people were looking at me. I stopped and looked at everyone.

Me:is something wrong?

No one said anything.

Me:then get to work instead of staring at me. Do what i pay you for.

I proceeded to my office. I started getting things ready for the meetings that i have today. Im losing clients and that's very bad for business. My team that is in charge of the company really did a great job but just this one scandal has turned things upside down. My first meeting came and it didn't go really well. The client is terminating their contract. The same goes for the second one. Now im in my third meeting for the day.

Client:this scandal has painted this company badly.

Me:exactly. It's just a scandal. Not something that's true. I assure you this will be over soon. This is just someone trying to ruin me because of their own agenda. My lawyers have adviced me not to comment on what's going on until further notice. Everything will be explained then. I promise you this will not nterfere with anything. Im on top of it. And you know what this company is capable of.

Client:i will get back to you.

Me:thank you.

I shake his hand and he leaves. Usually getting back to you means quiet the opposite. There's no guarantee for a positive outcome. First day back and im already tired. If im not having zoom meetings with the Rustenburg branch it's this side. I didn't even get time to order lunch. After my last zoom meeting i drove to Pretoria North. After the long day I've had i deserve a full plate of pap and beef stew. Or maybe dumplings and chicken stew. I don't know. But i get to Rose's restaurant and order pap and beef stew. I start eating. I was really hungry. I hear a click and i know someone just took a picture and im going to be the story of the day. I pay and leave. I wish i could just tell the side of my story but i cannot do that. My dad called while i was on my way.

Dad:how are you?

Me:dad things are falling apart.

Dad:are you driving?

Me:yes but we can talk. Im connected to Bluetooth.

Dad:i know you must be crying now. Don't worry. Things will work out. I will also go and check on things on your company this side.

Me:dad i don't want to bother you.

Dad:you're my child and i want to do this for you. I know i know nothing about running a business like yours but i willgo and see how everything is going. I knowyou'renotcopingwith this. J usttakea deep breath and relax.

Me:thankbyou dad. You know how to calm me down.

Dad:that'swhat fathersarefor.

Me:okaydad. Haveagoodday.

Dad:youtoo.

I got home and just sat a bit in the car. I didn't even realize that i ended up falling asleep in the car. I was even surprised to find myself in my bedroom when i heardna knock.

Lindani:mom are you alright?

Me:im fine.

Lindani:we are about to have supper. We are waiting for you.

Me:wow. Did i sleep that long?

Lindani:dad has already cooked. He said i must come and call you.

Me:im coming.

I washed my face and went to join them. Mpendulo stood up and opened the chair for me.

Me:hey guys.

They all answered cheerfully. We ate and after we were done I went back to my room while the others remained watching tv. It wasn't yet 8,which is the kids bedtime. I was on Facebook checking what they were saying about me. I saw that picture when i was in Pretoria North. Now it's about how i eat and my weigght. Really now?

"Stop torturing yourself with what peoples ay about you on social media. They won't stop talking. You just have to ignore them "

Me: i don't know what i ever did to her to deserve

this. Today i lost three of my biggest clients. Not to mention yesterday. She's destroying everything i worked hard for. Why did she have to tarnish my name like this?

Mpendulo: her trial starts soon. Then after that we can have a press conference and tell our side of the story.

Me:what hurts is that I'm the one who's losing here. None of what she said is true. I didn't know about all the businesses you have. I didn't date you because of what you have. As for Tim's things i transferred everything he gave to me to his parents. I don't even know where she gets all of this information.

Mpendulo:come here.

I got off bed and went to him. He hugged me. He held me tightly.

Me:im sorry about what happened yesterday.

Mpendulo:it must not happen again. Do you know how it sounds for me to hear you talking about your ex like that? It's like im second choice to you.are

you going to compare us all the time? Please. It must stop.

Me:it won't happen again

Mpendulo:that's what you said last time.

Me:I've learnt my lesson. It hurts having you mad at me. You didn't even hold me last night and when I tried talking to you you ignored me. I cried myself to sleep.

Mpendulo:i forgive you. Im sorry that you were hurt.

Me:thank you. Did you get me out of the car?

Mpendulo:yes. I heard your car driving in and was surprised when you were not coming out. When i went to check you had already fallen asleep.

Me: I feel like digging a hole and bury myself. Now everywhere i go people take pictures of ne. Can you believe someone took a picture of me and is busy body shaming me on social media? What has my weight got to do with anything?

Mpendulo:nothing is wrong with your body. J ealous people do that.

Me:but..

Mpendulo:no. Shh.

He cut me off with a kiss. He picked ne and put me on tge bed.

Mpendulo:i missed you.

Me:aah i missed you so much.

He was trailingkisses from my neck to my face.

Mpendulo:hey baby. You're so beautiful.

He kept doing that whispering sweet nothings. After that we made love. We connected. For a moment it was just the two of us and no worries. I can say that i managed to sleep peacefully.

Mpendulo:hey.

Me:hi.

Mpendulo:how are you beautiful?

Me:good. Very good. And how are you?

Mpendulo:im with the love of my life and she's

smiling at me,im happy. Someone did something for you to smile like this. Who's that person?

Me:you know exactly who that person is. And he made me happy.

Mpendulo:mmh. More than your husband makes you happy?

Me:yes...

Mpendulo:huh! He wena...mmh..

He started tickling me.i got up and ran from the bed. He ran after me until i got tired and ran to the bathroom where he got me. I was laughing so hard.

Mpendulo:it's good to see you laughing.

Me:you make me laugh.

Mpendulo:let's take a shower. Im taking you to work today.

I nodded. He held my hand and we got into the shower. After we finished showering we got ready for work. I went to the kids room and the twins were not in the room. Thando just finished being bathed and is getting dressed. I missed her. I didn't see her

yesterday. My baby.

Me:hello baby.

Thando:alo mama

Me:mme you can rest today. Im taking her with me to work.

Maggie:won't she give you trouble?

Me:no. Her father will be there. You can just have a day off.

Maggie:thank you.

I dressed her and went out. Her father was done. We drove to my workplace. People don't get tired. Today i chose to ignore them and just mind my own business.

Mpendulo:you see? Don't pay attention to them and you will be fine. Today i will handle all your meetings and you my girls will sit in here and have fun. Then after that i will come and fetch you. Im taking my girls out for some fresh air.

Me:okay. Thank you for doing this for ne.

Mpendulo:now im going to the first meeting. I will send breakfast for you.

Me:good luck. He's everything that you need to know about the clients.

Mpendulo:don't worry. Everything will be fine.

He left and i git through some work with Thando playing with her toys. The delivery guy came with our breakfast and i lay a fleece down and me and my baby started eating. Then another delivery with flowers and chocolates. Mmh."Relax and just rest. I will handle everything. Don't worry. Have a good day with my babies there. I love you "

Aahh. What did i do to deserve a man like this?

I spent my day going through paperwork and just seeing what it is that can be done. I was on a call when Bontle came in with a newspaper. I finished with the call and attended to her.

Me:Thando stop that.

She was climbing on Bontle.

Bontle:agg it's fine. She's grown hey.

Me:and giving me hell. Ngwana o ga utlwe. She moves around the house and the stairs. One day she's going to fall.

Bontle:that's how kids are. I brought you this newspaper.

Me:ah leave it here.

Bontle:don't worry. It's good news. Let me leave you to read.

I read the article after she left. Wow. I never thought Rapula would do this.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:03] : ***STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 29

after i finished reading the newspaper Bongani came into my office. The door was not close.

Bongani:MamKhoza how are you?

Me:im good and you?

Bongani:im good. Im here to fetch you. Come Thandolwethu.

She ran to him. I don't know why she always think Bongani is her father. His voice is different. But i know if her father were to come in here she would run to him. Siyabonga and Bongani are the ones who look exactly like my husband. The difference is their body size.

Me:why are you fetching me?

Bongani:the media is all over this place. Bafo sent me to fetch you cos he's not done with his meetings.

Me:i thought that article about Rapula helped.

Bongani:Rapula! Rapula futhi? When are you going to stop talking about this guy? Stop talking about him. If i hear his name again....Let's go.

We got out of the building and indeed the media was all over.

Me: can we please go past Hatfield festival street? I want to buy something.

Bongani: okay.

We got out through the back and went to his car. I got to breathe when we left. We got to festival and I went to buy what I wanted to buy.

Bongani: is that what you were buying?

Me: yeah. She's the only one I know who sells around here. I was craving it.

He took the two pockets of the brown soil that I bought and threw them outside the window.

Bongani: nxa!

Me: why..

Bongani: give birth first then you can eat your things in peace. I won't sit and watch while you cause damage to my brother's babies.

Mnx. I was really craving that soil. Anyway we drove

to his place first and i waite until he came back. He came back with a baby girl and stripped her in the car seat at the back. I didn't even notice that there were two car seats. We got to my place and he took the kids in with him. The twins were watching tv with Lisa. These three are inseparable.

Bongani:Lisa take your siblings and go watch tv in your room.

Lisa:baba who's this baby?

Bongani:your little sister. Take her too.

They went up the stairs and i just stood there surprised.

Me:whose baby is that?

Bongani: Khanyisile i am..

Me:what?

Bongani : she has nowhere to go. Her mother is dead and you will have to take her in.

Me:why me?

Bongani: i think we both know what's going on here.

I will see you.

Me:you're not going anywhere. Take that baby with you. I don't want her here!

Bongani:so you want her to stay out in the streets?

Me:i don't know what you will do with her but i want her out of here!

NARRATED.

Mpendulo came back home as soon as he finished with the meetings. He found Bongani gone so he had to call him to know what was happening.

Mpendulo:where did you get the baby?

Bongani:at your lover's place. That woman is dangerous. She fooled us by that baby she brought that time knowing that she was really hiding your baby. She wanted you to fight with your wife. She called me to fetch her. Just as i was about leave some white man came in and shot her. I just took the baby and the documents she gave me and left.

She knew that she was going to jail and she'd have no one to take care of the baby. The documents are in her backpack.

Mpendulo: this is a mess! This time Khanyisile will really leave me!

Bongani: bafo you're the head of your family. Don't allow her to leave. Don't let her to even entertain that idea. If she leaves it'll be the end of your family. Your family will come crumbling down. So do whatever it takes for her to stay. Do whatever but don't let her leave.

Mpendulo: I've never been scared like I am right now.

Bongani: talk to her. She might understand

Mpendulo: shap.

He went upstairs and heard the kids crying. He started there. The baby and Thando were crying.

Lisa: they were fighting for toys.

Mpendulo: come Thando.

Thando: she took my toys.

Mpendulo:i told you you should learn to share okay?

She nodded.

Mpendulo:stop crying.

He got out and went to his room.

Mpendulo:Khanyis ile!what are you doing!?

He shouted hitting her hand. The pills fell on the floor.

Mpendulo:do you think killing yourself will change things!? Why are you doing this?

Kea

I don't know what i was thinking. I just found myself taking all those pills. I don't know what would have happened if he didn't come in time. I wipe my tears and get into bed.

Mpendulo:im sorry. I didn't know about the child. Bongani called me and told me what was happening.

I couldn't answer him. I looked at him and his eyes

were red. I saw the kid. She's almost Thando's age. She looks exactly like her. If you don't know you could say they are twins.

Mpendulo:let's talk about this.

Me:i know for sure if i cheated i would be out of here already. I would be humiliated. You wouldn't forgive me. Now i must accept your child? I don't want to lie. I don't want that child here.

Mpendulo:i can't abandon my child. Her mother is dead. Who will take care of her?

Me:thank God she's dead. I will rest. Her mother terrorised me and now you're rubbing it in that you were busy sleeping around out there while i waited? You even brought a child. This is beyond me.

Mpendulo: i didn't mean for this to happen.

Me:im sorry but I can't accept your baby. Take care of her yourself. And please give me space. I have to clear my head and decide what i want.

Mpendulo:are you going to divorce me?

Me:is that what you want?

Mpendulo:of course not.

Me:im leaving.

Mpendulo:you're not going anywhere. We will stay here and find a solution on how we will raise our kids and our family. In this marriage we said in good and bad times. Now that we're facing problems you want to leave? That is not happening. I love you and im not going to let you leave.

Me:so you're going to force me to stay here.

Mpendulo:if i have to.

He went out after saying that. I changed from the clothes i was wearing. I went downstairs to cook. I made pap and chicken feet and mala. After i was done i went to check on the kids and they were fine. I gave them their food and ate mine. I left for the others in the microwave. After i decided to do my work. I focused on that. I had a lot of work to do. I couldn't let my team do it alone. Im just grateful Mpendulo managed to convince those clients to stay. After that i checked on how everything is going with my properties. Everything was going well

and i was happy about that. After i gave the kids a bath. I don't know where Mpendulo went. He left with Thando and his other child. For dinner i ordered pizza and after that i went straight to bed. I woke up when someone was shaking me.

Me:ke eng?

Mpendulo:you were not waking up and i thought...

Me:that i killed myself? I won't do that. I don't even know what i was thinking. I would have killed myself and what would that solve?

Mpendulo:that's good.

I went back to sleep. I didn't want to have chitchats. The following day i woke up late. I took a shower and went to have breakfast. After i looked for my baby and she was not in the house. The others already left for school so i thought she went somewhere with her father.

"I have to run to the office. Can you please look after her?"

Me:

Mpendulo:i promise i wont be late.

He took his keys and rushed out. I looked at these two and they were wet. Were they playing with water? I picked them and went to give them a bath. After i was done i drove to The Grove. There was nothing i could do. The baby had no clothes. It was a lot of work walking from shop to shop with two babies. I bought clothes for her and things that babies use. When we got home i put everything in its place then went to sit at the back. It was a very hot day. I sat there until the babies fell asleep tired from playing. I placed them on a fleece and did my work on my laptop. I thought about what im going to do. Am i really going to take care of this baby? I hate its mother. Im angry at the father. So what am i going to do? Her mother and father hurt me a lot. Every time I see her i will think of what they did. I don't think im really destined for a peaceful life. It's problem after problem. When i try to fix this something else happens. It's like im cursed.

.....

Me: I need space.

Mpendulo:what space?

Me: i need time to think. Im going home tomorrow.

Mpendulo:why are you going home?

Me:aow bathong. Im just visiting. It's dad's birthday on Thursday.

Mpendulo:how long will you be gone?

Me: i don't know. I would take the kids with but they have school so i will go with Thando and the twins.

Mpendulo: Sphe ihle yena? You're leaving her?

Me: of course not. Who will she be with here? . Uou didn't even tell me her name. You just dumped her with me without even telling me her name.

Mpendulo:sorry. I know this is a lot to take in but please find in your heart to forgive me. I did not know things would turn out like this. I hurt you and that's not something that you can just heal from.

Every time you try to move on something comes back to refresh that wound. I am really sorry. If i could i would make all of this go away. But i can't. I can only tell you that im sorry and try to make things right.

Me:it's too late for that. A child is already here and there's no way you can make her disappear. And i can't make you choose between me and your child. J ust like i would never expect someone to do that to me cos I'd choose my child any day. Good night.

Mpendulo

Tge weekend came and he called his wife asking if he could fetch her and the kids. She told him that she would drive back in the afternoon. So in the afternoon he waited fir her and there was no signof her coming back. He tried calling and she was not picking up. He even resorted to calling his father in law. That's when he heard that she wouldn't be able to come back.

Fil:it's raining badly here so she wont be coming back today. She'll wait for the rain to stop maybe she might come tomorrow or Tuesday.

He was defeated. In his mind that was her way of leaving. He knew that it was a possibility. He started panicking when a car arrived on Monday with the twin and Sphesihle.

"Mama is sick and gogo is taking care of her."

That's what they said when he asked them. A month and she did not come back. He handled everything at her company. Juggling three companies at once,you will never know how he did that with the way he was stressed. He even called his father to help him go to tge Bogatsu's and apologise for what happened. His uncles came and they took a trip to the North West province. They arrived there and stated what they were there for.

Mr Bogatsu:what do you mean my daughter is not at her marital house?She left here with her children a month ago! And you're only coming now?

Khoza uncle:we are very sorry. Theywere having problems in their marriage. We thought maybe she was just clearing her head.

Mr Bogatsu:she hasn't called me in a week. Problems you mean the child that he made outside his marriage?I gave you mychild with hopes that you would do better by her but you hurt her. So what are you going to do now that things are like this?

Muzi:we will for her. We apologize for everything that happened. It was never my brother's intention for this to happen.

Mr Bogatsu:doesn't he have a mouth to speak for himself? I thought you were a good man but I was fooling myself. Another thing,if you don't find my child never set your foot here. Don't call us. Only my grandchildren can but wena i don't want to see you until you find my child.

Since that day they didn't stop looking. They looked all over the country but couldn't find her.

Months later there was still no sign of her.

Lisa:daddy what would you name the babbies when mommy gives birth?

Mpendulo:do you miss her?

Lisa:yes. When is she coming back? You said after she has given birth but it's been a long time now. Today is Christmas and she's not here.

Mpendulo:she will come.

Lisa:i bought her a present. I will give her when she comes back. I have two presents for her.

Mpendulo:come. It's time for lunch.

Lisa:but we went to church every Christmas with mama.

Mpendulo:we will go tomorrow.

They went where the others were sitting.

Mpendulo:where is your wife Mzwakhe?

Mzwakhe:she had errands to run before coming here. She's on her way. Let me call her again.

Mpendulo:okay.

Siya:kanti sidla nini?

Mzwakhe:i just called my wife. She said she'll come back tomorrow.

Mabutho:after we waited all this time?

Mzwakhe:i told her to come back. She sounded off and couldn't wait to cut the call.so she's on her way.

Siya:why would she have errands to run on Christmas? She's up to something.

Mzwakhe:stop being crazy.

Siya:okay. Look at it like this. Khanyisile and Bonolo can't go a day without talking to each other and today she has errands? Why didn't she do them yesterday?

Mzwakhe:hay wena. Stop talking nonsense. We postponed our wedding because she left.

"Daddy!"

They all looked at the passage and saw Thando. She ran to her father and he caught her. Everyone was stunned at this. Even the other came out of the kitchen.

Mpendulo:where's mommy?

She pointed at the passage. Bonolo appeared holding two babies and Keatlaretsi another one.

Mzwakhe:you knew about this?

Nolo:no. She called me last night to bring the kids to see her and i couldn't so i had to go and convince her to come back.

Mabutho:where were you all this time?

Mpendulo:please stop with this interrogation. Let's eat. I will talk to my wife later.

Kea:I'll go put the kids down.

Nolo:let's go.

Mpendulo:I'll go with her. Give them to me.

Kea left first and put the baby that she had on bed.

Kea:you can put them on bed and go back. I'll be

here.

Mpendulo:come and join us.

Kea:i don't feel like a crowd.

Mpendulo:this is your family,not a crowd. Let's go.

Keatlaretsi

I went to join the others for lunch. They all kept looking at me and tried making small talks but i wasn't there.

Bongani:so where were you?

I exhaled first.

Me:i was in limpopo with Rap..

Shaka:Rapula again?

Siya:you ran back to that idiot!?

Me:bathong. Stop interrogating me. You're not my husbands so leave me alone. Not that it's any of your business but I was staying with Rapelang my

cousin's ex wife. I knew that no one would look there so that's why I went to her. Every time I go somewhere y'all are going to assume im with Rapula. Can you just for once stop talking about him !?

Mabutho:you just disappeared without telling anyone so what do you want us to think about that?

Me:you surprise me you know that? Your brother disappeared for a whole year and you did not interrogate him. Instead you accused me of cheating. He went back again to the same woman he was cheating on me with and you said nothing. Now there's a child but i don't see you interrogating him. I leave just to clear my head and the first thing you say is Rapula this and that. The mother of the child who is here almost killed my kids by burning the house with them inside and strangled my son to death and no one said anything about that. Do you even know what I went through? How i am right niw? All you care about is your brother. So let me be. I didn't want to come back here. I came here because i thought of what my kids must be going through.

Im not hungry anymore!

I wiped my hands and stood up.

Bongani:we are sorry for not being considerate. We are sorry for everything that you're going through.

Me:you see me crying here and think this is a joke. It's not. You're all always right and im the wrong one. Okay let's do this. Tour

Siya:Khanyisile siyacolis a

Me:it's too late for that.

Mpendulo: Khanyisile sit down and eat. Sit down.

I took two steps and he talked again.

Mpendulo:Khanyisile! Comeback here!

I went back slowly.

Mpendulo:sit down and let's eat.

I took my seat and ate with them. They were all chatting and laughing and eating while I was just eating quietly. After we finished i wanted to help

with the dishes but Phumla said i should just relax. I went to look for my boys. I found the twins playing with other kids.

Me:Ayanda.

Luu:Aya mommy is calling us. Let's go.

They ran to me. My boys have grown.

Aya:mommy why do you always leave us and go with Thando only? You don't love us?

Me: i love you all so much. Mommy was sick and had to go stay at the hospital so that she can get well. And i had to take Thando because she's young and she would cry everyday.

Luu:you see daddy was right.

Aya:but Sphesihle is young too and she cries everyday.

Me:i couldn't take care of her and Thando with the other babies.

Aya:okay mommy. I'm happy you're back. Don't leave again.

Me:i won't.

Luu:let's go take her present.

Aya:we have two presents for you. One for Christmas and for your birthday.

Me:you will give me later. Let's go see your little brothers.

They ran and left me behind. I went to the room the babies are in and Lisa was also there. Thando was also on the bed with Sphesihle. Thando loves to sleep with the babies.

Lisa:mommy the babies are beautiful. I hope you are not leaving again. Thando get off. You know these babies.

Thando:they love sleeping with me. They don't cry until i leave them.

Me:im not leaving.

I let them be. I went to sit by the balcony of my bedroom. I opened the sliding door and let the air hit me. I sat there the whole day. Bonolo sent me a

message that they are leaving. When the babies woke up i had to breastfeed them. It's a lot of work when it comes to this. The other one will be crying while I feedthe other.

Mpendulo:we fixed their cots. Is it fine if they sleep in the nursery or you want them here?

Me:it's fine. They can sleep in the nursery.

Mpendulo:sit here. I will go and put them to sleep.

He took them and i went to the bathroom. I got into the shower. Everything was still the same. No change whatsoever. While I was showering i felt a hand touch me. I turned and looked. I didn't know what to say.

Mpendulo :shh.

He put his finger on my lips and took the washing towel. He started bathing me. He kissed my forehead then hugged me.

Mpendulo:please don't ever leave again. Nothing was ever the same without you.

Me:i have to go back to the...

Mpendulo:please.

Me:I'm just going to the hotel to get my stuff and sign out.

Mpendulo:i will drive you.

We finished showering and went to get dressed. I took my handbag and went downstairs.

Luu:you're leaving again.

He started crying. I went and hugged him.

Me:boy im not leaving. Im just going to fetch the babies stuff and their clothes.

Luu:i want to go with you.

Me:i left the babies sleeping so i wont leave okay? I will be back.

Luu:okay. I will give you your gift when I come back.

Me:i love you.

Luu:i love you too

I left. I found Mpendulo in the car. He drove off. I put the gps to the hotel. I got there and took my

stuff. I hadn't unpacked it. We drove back home. The twins were happy to see me. They gave me my gifts and slept after i read the bedtime story for them.

Me:babe...um where's Lindani and Mngqobi?

Mpendulo:they're in Durban. All the kids went there. Lisa,Sphesihle and the twins remained because i didn't want to be left alone on Christmas. They'll be back on the 30th.

Me:okay.

It was suddenly silent. No one talking. J ust us looking at each other. I moved my head closer to his. I pecked his lips. They still smelled the same. J ust as we first met. I wanted to move back but he captured my lips. We started kissing as if we were hungry for one another. I missed him. His touch. His gentleness. His breath. Everything about him. I smiled after our kiss.

Mpendulo:how old are the triplets?

Me:three months. They're premature. . I encountered some problems. I almost lost them but

by God's grace they made it.

Mpendulo:why didn't you come home?

Me:i wanted to clear my head. In a different environment. Where i would not have stress. And Qhawe dying also contributed to it. I didn't want what happened the last time to happen again.

Mpendulo:but you could have told me where you were going. Do you hate Sphesihle?

Me:i don't hate her. It's just that what her mother did still comes back to me and i fear for my kids.i would never hate a child who has no sin. She didn't choose to come in this world the way she did.

Mpendulo:but to leave?You could have stayed and we would have dealt with everything together.

Me:im sorry okay? But being here was overwhelming and suffocating me.

Mpendulo:the important thing is you're back now and you will never leave.

He said it as if he wanted me to verify that.

Mpendulo:No talks about separations or divorce. We will fix things. We will be fine. I know we will.

Me:did i say anything about that?

Mpendulo:with the way your father is angry at me anything is possible. Did you call him?

Me:no. I will call him tomorrow. Im sorry for speaking like that in front of your brothers.

Mpendulo:it's fine. You were just saying what's in your heart. Bottling it up would cause more damage. It's good that you said it. They understand. And they apologise for everything. For all the heartache they caused.

Me:i wasn't trying to disrespect them. It's just that every time everything goes wrong im to blame. Especially Mabutho and Shaka. They're always expecting me to do something wrong. You lwft me and the kids alone. They accused me of cheating,kicked me out of here like a dog. Threatened to take my kids from me. Being told that they knew that i wasn't a Khoza wife material. That's like saying I'm not good enough for you. Now

that you cheated and brought a child home they are quiet as if you did a good thing. I don't see anyone coming here to shout at you like I was shouted at. Why are they not kicking you out? Is it because this is your house?

Mpe: you know this is our house.

Me: well I was told to leave because this is your house. Does the rule only apply to me because I'm a woman? I was told that they don't tolerate cheating in this family but because it's done by one of their own they can tolerate it. I felt like an outsider. It showed that here I will never really be accepted. And I'm fine with that. It's life. I will just have to be strong. That's what I always do anyway. I'm strong. Always have been. Even this I will survive it. So yeah. I guess that's part of my life.

Mpe: sthandwa sami i...

Me: what happened has happened. We cannot change it.

Mpendulo: I will talk to them. I promise it won't happen again. I will make sure of it.

Me:mmh. Good night.

Mpe:uyaphi?

Me:I'll be sleeping in the room next to the nursery.

Mpe:what's wrong now? Why not sleep in our bedroom?

Me:I just want to think. I just be alone for a moment.

Mpe:you've been alone all these months. Come to bed. How will we fix things with you sleeping in a different room?

Me:do you really think things will ever be the same?

Mpe:yes. We've been here before. And we survived every problem we've faced. We will be fine.

Me:i don't believe that anymore. I've been through a lot. All the problems we always face I'm the one who always gets hurt. What is it with me? Am i ever going to catch a break?

Mpe:I'm really sorry. I know i caused all of this.

Me:good night.

I got in bed and looked at the other side.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:04] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 30

In the morning i woke up and freshen up then went to make breakfast. While I was still cooking Mpendulo came and held me from the back.

Me:morning babe.

Mpendulo:good morning. This place feels different today. It shows that mommy is home.

"Good morning mommy and daddy. "

Me:good morning. Did you guys sleep well?

Aya:yes.

Me:good. I'm making breakfast. Go and sit down. I will bring the food when im done.

They all left but Thando didn't want to leave and Sphehile was on her tail meaning she wasn't leaving either.

Me:come big girl.

I picked Thando up and kissed her.

Me:sit there.

I showed her the bunk stool and gave her a muffin. I picked Sphehile and did the same. She vomited on me.

Me:oh my God!

Mpendulo: I'll go clean her up.

Me:it's fine. I will take care of it. You can clean the tiles

I went to bath her and she was splashing the water.

Me:don't do that.

Sphe:are you my mom?

Me:i can be your mom.

Sphe:i want you to be my mom.

Me:okay im your mom then. Where does it hurt?

She touched her stomach. I brushed her stomach while she looked at me. I finished and dressed her.

Mpendulo:you're done.

Me:yeah. I think she has a stomachache. She says her stomach hurt.

Mpendulo:i have to take her to the hospital.

Me:relax. I gave her medicine and warm water will also help. She'll be fine and running around soon.

Mpendulo:i have to make sure. What if she gets worse?

Me:i know these things. Even Thando experience it sometimes.

Mpendulo:still. I have to make sure. What if my child gets worse while i could have done something.

Me:okay. You can take your "child" to the hospital.

Mpendulo:i didn't mean it like that.

Me:it's fine.Take her to the hospital.

I finished with the breakfast and went to call the others and we ate.

Me:dumelang papa.

He kept quiet. I finally found the courage to call him. I heard some shuffling on his side.

Me:papa can you hear me?

Dad:yes. Where have you been all this time? Not even a phone call to let me know that you're fine.

Me:i was in limpopo with Rapelang. Im sorry for not telling you.

Dad:it's been almost a year without seeing you. Do i have to die so that you can come and see me?

Me:papa sa bua yaalo hle. Wa lwala?

Dad:im not sick. But why o ntatlhetsi yana ngwanake?

Me:dad stop worrying. Kamoso ke tla go le bona.

Dad:re tla bona ka wena.

Me:papa tthe.

Dad:a o siame yanong? Is that man mistreating you?
I told you you can always come back. You have a home and a father who loves you.

Me:he's not mistreating me. Everything is good.

Dad:that's good then. Come with my grandkids. It's been a while since I saw them.

Me:okay papa. I will come with them. Im sure they also miss you. Bye. Re tla buwa kamoso.

After talking to dad i felt bad. He's the one person who is always there for me no matter what.

Me:Lisa go and open the door.

Lisa:mama Im tired. What if they kidnap me?

Me:you're just lazy. Go and open. And tomorrow we are going to Rustenburg.

Lisa:yes!

She went to open the door dancing. She loves going to Rustenburg because they play on the streets.

"And then? Why are you sitting alone?"bonolo

"It's nothing. "Me

She takes a seat next to me.

"He acts as if i don't like his child. As if i will kill her."me

She looks at me as if to say i must continue.

"This morning she vomited on me when I picked her up. I went to bath her and i asked if she was fine. She had a stomachache. I gave her medicine. I told him she will be fine.You should have seen the way he looked at me. He even called her his "child ". What am i doing here?"me

"I'm sure it's not that deep. "Bonolo

"You can't say that. You're not the one he was looking at. He looked at me like i had done something wrong. "Me

"Talk to him. Tell him to talk about his fears and what he expects of you."bonolo

"Where will i talk to him from? He left in the morning and he's not back yet. What is taking so long at the

hospital?"me

"Don't start suspecting him. There's no one else.

"Bonolo

"I wasn't even there. Anyway tomorrow im going home. "Me

"You should. Your dad was worried about you. Im getting married end of J anuary. "

"Didn't you get married ka September?"me

"Without my maid of honour? I couldn't get married until we found you."bonolo

I nod and just looked at my phone.

"Anyway... Things are going well with your properties and the companies. It's going well even after that scandal with the media."bonolo

"Huh? Mpendulo told you?"

"No. I don't trust anyone with your assets and everything you own okay? After what happened with Rapula i will always look out for you. I know Mpendulo is not like Rapula but please...don't ever give a man shares from your company. Even if it's

not a man. That's why I didn't take the 10% you wanted to give me. Your mother worked very hard for you to just give things out for free. These businesses will sustain you in future even when you're no longer working. "Bonolo

"Thank you so much. You know, you are the only person I trust so much in my life. Most people have betrayed me but not you. You've only been fighting my battles with me. You are an angel in my life. "Me

"You are my little sister and as a big sister i have to look after you."bonolo

I hugged her. I even shed some tears. I don't know where i would be without her.

"Stop crying. I would like to see my babies now."

We got up and went to the nursery.

"These two were here all this time?"

Me:they can't get enough of the babies. They even wanted to sleep here last night.

Bonolo:im taking one with me.

Aya:no! Mommy you can keep Lwandle please.

We laughed. We spent our day with Bonolo. My day was good and amazing. Mpendulo came back at 6pm.

Mpendulo:sawubona.

Me:hi. How did it go at the hospital?

Mpendulo:good. They just gave me medicines then after that we went to visit Zweli. He moved this side two months ago.

Me:okay. Seems like you had a good time. How was Thando?

Mpendulo:she was fine.

Me:okay. Thing is she used to cry when Rapelangs kids took her with when they went to play. She was always on my hip. It's good that she didn't crh.

Mpendulo:she wouldn't cry with her daddy. How are the boys?

Me:they are good. They were sleeping the whole day. I won't sleep tonight

Mpendulo:unga khathazeki. If they wake up i will look after them. You have to rest. Get enough sleep.

Me:so where are Sphe's medicines?

Mpendulo:here.

I nodded and just looked at him.

Me: I'd like to ask you something and please be honest. Do you think I hate Sphe?

Mpendulo:where is that coming from?

Me:just be honest please. The look you gave me in the morning said something. As if i wanted to kill her. Like poison her.

Mpendulo:i know you would never do that.

Me:the medicine i gave her,it's the same as the one in your hand. But after i had given her it was like i was trying to do something bad to her. You looked at me like im guilty. I know she's your child but did you have to do that? If i wanted to kill her don't you think I would have first killed Lisa,Mnqobi and? I've only been good to them.

Mpendulo:this is different. I cheated and i had her. You hated her mother. It's only natural that i behave like that.

Me:you also hated her mother.

Mpendulo:it's different. She's my child.

Me:what am i even doing here if you don't trust me? Don't worry. I will never touch your child again. For all we know you might be thinking it's my fault that she was vomiting. How will she stay here if you

Mpendulo:you know it's not like that! Where are you going now?

Me:im going to check on our children. The ones you don't even know their names? Your food is in the oven.

....

Early morning i woke up got ready to leave. I bathed the kids and packed clothes for them. I went back to my room to take my bag.

Mpendulo:you're all packed. Where are you going?

Me:im going to Rustenburg

Mpendulo:so every time we have an argument

you're going to go to Rustenburg?

Me:im visitmy dad. Is it okay if I go with your child?

Mpendulo:why are you saying it like that?

Me:im just saying what you said. I wouldn't want to impose.

Mpendulo:you can go with her. Is it fine if i go with you?

Me:im not running away. Don't you have to be at work?

Mpendulo:no. I will drive with you. Let me just get ready.

After he was done we drove to Rustenburg. The journey seemed a bit long with only the kids talk. When we got to Rustenburg town we stopped there. Mpendulo went to buy something. The twins wanted to go with him.

Me:boys be careful on the road.

"Keatlaretsi ke wena o?"

Me:yeah...ke wena mang? Oh! Karabo! Ke leng ke sa go bone?

Karabo:o iphitlhile akere.

Me:Cashane e le tshwere sentle neh? Ke gore i don't even know whenlast i saw you.

Karabo:what can i say? So wena o nna kae? I once read something about you being a gold digger of some sort. And i was like no. That's not how i know you like. As you know your cousin. She said it's Satan's agents trying to drag you down.

What i like about my cousin is she may judge but she's a good person. She loves it when she sees someone doing well for themselves.

Me:these journalists write anything just for a story. Ke nna ko Silverlakes golf estate.

Karabo:In Pretoria? You're doing good for yourself. Your cousin never tells me about these things.

Me:you know how she is. I will send her my address.

You guys should visit with your kids.

Karabo:i will have to drag her.

We laughed.

Karabo:are those your kids?

Me:yeah. There's two at the back then these little three and missy on the front.

Lisa:mama it's miss Lisa Khoza.

Karabo:nice to meet you miss Khoza.

Lisa:and my mom is Mrs khoza.

We laughed. Did she have to say that mara?

Karabo:you have talkative one here. I will tell Regomoditswe that i saw you. Have a good day.

Me:you too. It was nice seeing you after such a long time.

He left. Mpendulo came back with the boys.

Mpendulo:let's drive to Waterfall mall. I didn't find any shop i was looking for here.

Me:oh which shop did you want?

Mpendulo:i wanted to buy clothes since we'll be here for three days and i didn't pack anything.

Me:you don't have to stay if you don't want to. I will come back

Mpendulo:no. This way i will be able to spend time with you.

Me:okay.

Mpendulo:and im sorry about everything.

Me:we'll talk later.

When we got to waterfall mall they all got out leaving me with the triplets.

We got home and dad was busy with his garden. He's very old now but he will never stop watering his flowers. He didn't even see us arrive the way he was focused on his flowers. He only noticed when Ayanda ran to him. We went in and ut was a full house. Some faces i didn't know them. I went to hug my father. I really missed him. I've never gone such a long time without seeing him.

Dad:my baby is home.

Farai:uncle that's not a baby. She's a grown woman.

Laughter erupted.

Lisa: mkhulu where's Oratile?

Dad:you'll find him in his room.

Lisa:i missed you mkhulu.

Dad:come here.

He hugged them all and they went to look for Oratile. I was introduced to the people that i didn't know. My step brothers. They were visiting just for today. Dad said me and him should take a drive. He drove around the neighbourhood

Dad:how are you?

Me:im fine papa. There's nothing to worry about.

Dad:is your husband treating you right? Did you run away because of his other child?

Me:no dad. Everything was just too much for me. Seeing that child brought back everything. Her mother burning our house and her strangling

Qhawe to death...

The car screeched and stopped. I saw that we arrived at home.

Dad: she did all that?

Me: yes. she even wanted to kill my mother in law but failed.

Dad: i don't like what this man is making you go through. I think it's time i have a talk with him. If he's just going to play with you then you should come home.

Me: dad i love him and he's a good man.

Dad: but he should know that he can't just play my baby and get away with it.

Me: dad please.

Dad: no more running away.

Mpendulo

Mr Bogatsu. This man. I've never seen angry. Today is the first time I've seen angry. After he came back from his drive with my wife he asked to talk to me. He talked about how i was bad to his child and that i should change my ways before I lose her. He's right. If i don't stop hurting her one day she will leave and never come back. Which is why from now on im burying the old me that did things without thinking about her.

Me:my love. Are you sleeping already?

Kea:no. I was just waiting for you

Me:since we came back you've been so happy.

Kea:im just happy that you and papa talked and fixed things you know?

Me:mmh. And thank you for forgiving me for everything I've put you through. Come here. I want us to pray. To thank God that we are here. To pray that he protects and guide us. Come.

I closedmy eyes and held her hands.

Me:God thank you. Thank you for everything. I know

i don't usually pray. I don't know when last i prayed. But today I come to thank you for everything. Thank you for life. For protection and the blessings. Father i pray for my family. My marriage. I am sorry that i have put my wife through a lot of pain. Forgive me. Help me to be a changed person. May you strengthen me and my wife. Thank you for this wonderful wife you've given me. I know it's not always going to be good. I pray that you be with us throughout the obstacles and also the good times. May you give us peace. I pray that our house be filled with love and joy. And laugh. Protect us as we are about to sleep in Jesus name amen.

Kea:amen

I caught her wiping her tears after prayer. She was smiling at the same time.

Me:come and sleep.

Kea:o sure gore o shap? Siya...

Me:can we not talk about that idiot? I will deal with him tomorrow. Now i just want to cuddle with my wife.

After a very long time today i fell asleep in peace. My wife has forgiven me and my family is happy. What more could a man ask for? The following day i woke up and took a shower. I went to check on my little boys. Samkelo has Lungelo's hand in his and they are cooing. Sabelo is sleeping with his mouth a bit open. I smile. Again,my boys took after me. But Sabelo has his mother's big eyes and Lungelo her nose. I play with them until their nanny comes to take them . I leave immediately. Siya has been blowing up my cellphone since last night that I even had to switch off my phone. When i got there i found him sleeping on the sofa.

Me:what's going on?

Siya:Sethu left.

Me:left? What do you mean?

Siya:packed everything that belongs to her and the kids and left. I found divorce papers on top of the bed.

Me:what happened? Haveyou called her?

Siya:yes. She told me to contact her lawyer. If it's about the kids then we'll work out a schedule. Here.

He gave me a note.

"Siyabonga,if you are reading this then it means I'm gone. Don't even try to call me because I won't answer your calls. We will communicate through our lawyers. I tried. Believe me I really tried. But i saw that im just forcing things. I don't want us to lie to each other. Things were not working out between us. I hope you will be able to love her just like i loved you. Now you're free to go and be with her. I wish you the best.

Sethu."

Me:who is she?

Siya: Isabella.

Me:again? The same Isabella who broke your heart and left you for another man? Left you at the altar?

Siya:yes. I tried apologizing but it didn't work.

Me:and you expect her to forgive you? Don't you

learn? Didn't you learn from me,hiw i almost lost Khanyisile?

Siya:i know. Isabella gets me.

Me:your wife?

Siya: I love her more than I've ever loved any woman. But Isabella gets me. She knows me really well. We are just friends.

Me:don't let your wife leave just because of something stupid. Talk to her and see if you can't fix things.

Siya:i don't think she will agree to come back. I know I've messed up. Please call her for me. She still has to comeand fetch her remaining things. So i called you here to beg her for me so i can apologise. Im willing to stop what I'm doing with Isabella.

Me:you had a perfect marriage but just ruined it for a silly friendship . This is the last time I help you. I can't keep helping you about the same thing.

Siya:that's her car.

Me:let's hope she will listen.

"Hi."

Me:MaSibiya. It's good to see you. Please sit down and lets talk...i heard that you left.

Sethu:your brother is still in love with his ex. What was i supposed to do?

Siya:my love imreally sorry. I will stop this friends hip i havewith Isabella. I can't lose you. I love you more than anything in this world.

Sethu:but you didn't stop all this time. Most of the time when you're with her she would answer your phone. She called me stupid because apparently you're going to leave me for her.

Siya:s thandwa sam you know i would never leave you. Ngiyakthanda.

Sethu:nami futhi ngiyak'thanda but I feel like im alone in this relationship.

Me:you cant leave your home just because of some idiot. Your husband wants you with him and your kids. I know you will face problems on the way but solve them instead of running. Communication. It's

very important. Be transparent. Siya talk to that woman and put her in her place. Cut her off your life. Your wife should be your best friend. How do you become friends with an ex that disrespects your wife? Don't you see that by letting her answer your phone you're letting her humiliate your wife? If the tables were turned you know you would freak out here. So please stop this. Im going to leave you to talk. Where are the kids?

Sethu:in the car.

Me:i will take them with me so you can talk.

SETHU

Growing up i always had to beg for what i wanted or needed. I had to watch my mother love my siblings more than she loves me. I ended up giving up because it wasn't working at all. Not that she didn't love me,she did but not like she loved my siblings. Whenever I brought it up she'd say im exaggerating. That she loves us all. Reason for my mother to not

love me like my siblings i think maybe it's because i was not an obedient child maybe. Now that im 30 i still have to fight to be loved? Not anymore. I've decided to love myself more. If i don't love myself first then who will?

Siya:have you had anything to eat? Can i cook for you? Here's some water.

Me:i said im fine.

Siya:i have to take you to the doctor.

Me:no!

Siya:oh. Please come home. I promise you no more Isabella.

Me:until when? Whenever your ex comes back you push me to the back. Im tired of us fighting because of her.

Siya:then come home and we can fix things. Im really sorry. I will apologise everyday if that's what it takes.

Me:let's say i come back but there's no change.

What then?

Siya:you know,in all things im scared of losing you. My life would not be the same without you. With you here my life is complete.

I really thought Siya would be my sanctuary. I actually felt completely love for the first time by him. He made me happy. But ever since this woman returned from wherever she was things started crumbling. I know he said they are just friends but anything can happen. Then he started coming home late and her answering his phone. It just made everything worse.

Siya:i know you doubt my intentions. I will let my actions speak for themselves.

Me: just tell me if you're in love with her. You're free to be with her. I won't stop you. I wont settle for second best.

I got up and went to the toilet. I peed. I've been peeing a lot. I noticed blood spots on my underwear. I panicked. I've already gone on my periods. I put on a pad just in case. I exited the bathroom. I was even crying.

Me:take me to the doctor.

Siya:you're crying. What's wrong?

Me:i don't know. Im bleeding. But it's not too much.

Suya:are you sure it's not your period?

Me:no.

Siya:let's go. Do you feel any pain?

Me:no. But im scared.

Siya:let's go.

We got into his car and he drove to the hospital. We waited for our turn then went in. I held Siya's hand tight.

Siya:I'm not going anywhere. Im here with you.

We went in and i just stood by the door.

Me:let's wait for another doctor or go to another hospital.

Siya:why?what if you get worse?

I looked at him

Me:you want your ex to know my private matters?
Why didn't you tell me she's a doctor here!?

Siya:baby calm down. I didn't even know she's a doctor. Please. Let's hear what's wrong with you and that's it. We'll leave and go on with our lives with you fine andhealthy.

Ne: Bonolo works here. Can't we call her?

Isabella:you mean doctor Khoza? She's off today.
You can take your seats.

We sat down and i just looked at her. She had a sly smirk.

Siya:my love. Calm down.

Isabella:mmh. So what seems to be the problem?

I kept quiet and my husband gave me a look.

Me:im bleeding. I don't know what's wrong because e I've already gone on my periods.

Isabella:when last?

Me:let me check.

I looked at the calendar app i didn't tick for last month.

Me:i don't know what's happening. I didn't get my periods last month...

Isabella:you should be careful with these things.

Me:are you saying im careless? Do you see why i didn't want to be here?

Siya:dr what do you think is wrong with her?

Isabella:well,it could be spotting. Or maybe it's pregnancy. That's possible also. Lie down on that bed and lets see.

Im can't be pregnant. I don't want another baby. She did her things.

Isabella:you're six months pregnant. I was right.

Siya:she's pregnant!?! Aah. Thank you so much my love. You've just made me a happy man in the world.

Soon he was kissing. I think he forgot that we're in a doctor's. She cleared her throat. He stopped. I smiled.

Siya:so the bleeding won't affect her and the baby?

Isabella:We call this implantation bleeding.

Implantation bleeding is a common cause of spotting early on in pregnancy. Implantation bleeding happens when the fertilized egg attaches to the uterine lining. This can trigger a few days of light bleeding or spotting.

Siya:so you can treat it?

Isabella:im sure she has a gynae. You can consult with them. But don't lift heavy things. Get enough rest. That's very important.

Siya:thank you.

Isabella:it's my job.

Me:you may be a doctor here but please. It doesn't give you the right to insult me. Don't ever answer

my husband's phone. And stop flirting with him in my presence. Good bye.

I left the office in a hurry. I didn't want to be there anymore. I waited outside at the parking lot for my husband. He came back after a while. He unlocked the car and we got in and he drove off.

Me:what were you doing there?

Siya:i was telling her that our friendship is over. I don't want to do things that hurt you. Siphosethu i love you so much. I'd do anything to make you happy. When you are happy i am happy.

Me:okay. Can we go past home? I want to fetch my bags.

He looked at me and smiled. I returned the smile. Home is in Mamelodi but our house is in Silverlake golf estate. All his brothers stay there. I don't know why they decided to stay at the same place.

Siya:next time you leave i will fetch you in an instant. Do you know you were torturing me because I didn't sleep next to you? You're like a drug that im addicted to.

I love this man. And i know he loves me too. I will work on getting these doubts i have out of my mind. That's what I have to do. We pack outside the gate at home and i see kids running around. This means my siblings are home.

Siya:what did you tell your mom?

Me:i told her you're going away on business es and i couldn't stay alone all that time.

Siya:lol. Come here.

We laughed. He kissed me like it's been a while.

Siya:don't ever leave me...

He was speaking through the kiss. I moved back and looked at him. I can see that he didn't sleep. His eyes are red. Must be from crying. We got out the car and went into the yard. We got inside the house and greeted. I went up the stairs but my mom stopped me.

Mom:i thought my son in law was going away on business and you were going to stay with us for a

while.

Me:mom you know he can't stay without me for a while so he decided to cancel his meetings just until i can be able to go with him.

Mom:that's great.

Siya:i will wait in the car.

Mom:no. Sit down. Siphosethu come here. We have something important to talk about. I've been calling you all morning.

Me:my battery died.

J abu:so as mom said. There's something important we have to talk about.

I looked around the room and everyone had this serious faces. I saw a man who kept looking at me. I sat down.

Me:mom are you remarrying?

Mom:baby you remember i told you your father went missing before you were born?(i nodded) well he's back now.

Me:oh this is him. How did they find him after 30 years?

I've always suspected that my mother lied and i wanted the truth today.

Mom:i lied.

J abu: mama you didn't lie! You just wanted to protect her from being hurt. There's no use sugarcoating the truth. She must know whatreally happened today.

I looked at the man called my father and he looked down.

Me:what's going on?

Phindile:dad tell her what happened. Mom you have nothing to say. He's the cause of this.

Dad:i am sorry that you grewup without me. I should have been there for you...

J abu:you're not saying what we want to hear. Why did you leave?

Mom:seeing as he doesn't want to talk i will. I didn't want to tell you this because you'd think im lying

because there are always two sides to a story. Me and your father were good. Everything was good. We were a happy family. But things suddenly changed. I fell pregnant with you Sethu. And we were happy about it. We even agreed to give you the name Siphosethu. Our gift. The doctors had said i won't have anymore kids but you came along and we were having about it. Your father came to joburg for work. That's what he always said. Then after twos months he came back. I will never forget that day. When he got home we fought. He said he doesn't want anymore kids. That two was enough. He told me to abort you. I cried a lot that day. We fought about it. I refused to have an abortion. I know you always say i love your brother and sister more than you. But i love all ny children the same. I was strict with you because i wanted you to turn out to be this woman you are. After i said i don't want an abortion he said it's better that he leaves. The following day when i woke up he was gone. I waited and waited and two years passed. We were struggling. That's when i decided to move from PE to mamelodi. I built a shack from the money i got

from working as a domestic worker. I worked for some white woman. Every day I would take the train. One day I bumped into your father and he asked me if I had an abortion or not. I told him no. I asked when he was planning on coming back home. A woman with two children appeared. One about your age and another younger. There I saw that telling me to abort was an excuse. He wanted to go and be with his lover in peace. I told him that he is welcome to come and see his children but in front of that woman he told me straight that he doesn't know me. And left. Then you started being sick. I looked for him again and didn't find him. We went back home and his family did a ceremony for you. We came back here. Since then I've never seen this man until today.

Me: why? All this time I thought you were missing and hoping you would be found. Kanti you left because of me. You didn't want me. Why did you not want me?

Dad: I am sorry. It was stupid of me to behave like that.

Me:you're right. That was stupid of you.

Siya:babe you don't speak to your father like that.
Calm down.

Me:no! He's not my father. He told mom to kill me.
He doesn't deserve to be called a father. Where was he when my mother was struggling? Where was he when my mother had to work hard so we can eat? While he was busy with his other family. My mother was a mother and a father to me.

Dad: i know i was wrong and I'd like to rectify my mistakes. I would like to fix things.

J abu:by that you mean we must forgive you and you come back here?

Dad:....

Phindile:that is not happening. You have no place here.

Dad: i didn't say i want to come back here. I want to apologise and have a relationship with my children.

J abu:you knew where we were. Why now? 30 years later?

Dad: im really sorry my children. I'd like to ask for forgiveness from you and your mother.

Phindile: we struggled without you. Our mother took us to school with her hard work while you should have been helping her. I hope you are not planning on coming back here because this house was built with her sweat. She saw it fit to take us to school and we built it for her not you. We don't want you here.

Dad:I'm dying. And I'd like all my children to know each other. I have cancer.

Me: i hope that cancer doesn't spread to us.

Siya:Siphosethu!

Me:mama i can't be here with this man around. I'm leaving.

I went to take my bags and pushed them to the car. I went back to the house.

Me:mama i will call you. We have to talk about something.

Mom:what's wrong?

Me:im fine. We will talk. I love you mom.

Mom:i love you too.

Siya:have a good day.

Me:i can't believe my father wanted my mother to abort me. He really didn't want me. All this time I prayed for him to come back. Siya what's wrong?

Siya:i know your father.

Me:he's not my...wait. you know him?

Siya:he's Isabella's father.

Me:you mean your ex?

Siya:yes.

Me:it gets worse! I don't want to meet any of his children. Im fine with my brother and sister. It's always been us.

Siya:i know he's wrong but why don't you give him a chance? This cancer might kill him. What then? Won't you regret not giving him a chance?

Me:no! He didn't want me. I don't want him too. I will live. Why does he want me now? He's not even sorry. He came back because he's dying.

Siya:you have to forgive him.

Me:you don't know what im feeling. You grew up with both your parents and they loved you. So please. I don't want to talk about him. And please don't force me to meet him and his children.

I went to sleep. I can't be stressing about my baby and an old man who decided to abandon his children.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:04] : *STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 31

Mpendulo

I'm on my way back from fetching the kids. They just landed from Durban.

Me:i have a surprise for you.

Mngobi:what is it dad?

Lindani:is mom back?

Me:why are you saying that?

Mngobi:because that would be the best gift ever!

Lindani:and you're smiling.

Me:okay. She's back. With your little brothers.

Mngobi: and you said nothing. I would have come back long time ago!

Me:she can't wait to see you two. She missed you.

Lindani:we missed her too.

I drove home and when we got there Siya was there. I wonder how things went with him and his wife.

Siya:what do you feed these kids? They're so

chubby. All of them.

Me:it must be all the porridge their mother feeds them. How did it go with your wife?

Siya:we fixed things. But problems follow me everywhere i go.

Me:yini manje?

Siya: Sethu was not feeling well. When we got to the hospital we found that Isabella is a doctor there and she had to attend to us. That too was a problem for my wife. Then we went to Mamelodi to fetch her things. Then when we got there her father who left her mother when she was pregnant with her was there. He wants to fix things with his children. Turns out he didn't want Sethu. He told her mother to abort her. Just because he was leaving her for another woman.

Me:this man is a lot of work mos.

Siya:guess who the father is? Mr Memela. Isabella's father.

Me: I thought Siphosethu is a Sibiya?

Siya:that's her mother's surname. Her father is Mr Memela. Now because I knew him she's mad at me. Why? I don't know.

Me:she'll be fine. We don't want anything happening to our baby.

Every child in the family belongs to all of us.

Me:you must be happy to be a father once again. It's going to be a long nine months.

Siya:she's six months now. I don't know how we didn't notice. She gained weight but she doesn't look pregnant.

"You don't say that to a pregnant woman. "

Siya:pretend like you didn't hear me. And please. Don't tell her.

Kea:im here to take these three for their bath.

Siya:I'm also leaving. I left my wife alone.

Kea:I'll get the kids for you. Lindani come and take

Sabelo.

After Siya leaves i follow behind my wife. Mngqobi is sitting next to the boys basins. He's smiling when we ebter the nursery.

Mngqobi:mommy they are beautiful.

Kea:just like you.

Mngqobi:im going to sit here while aunty bathes them.

By aunty he means the nanny. We now have three nannies. We have a lot of children and need all the help we can get.

Me:babe there's something i want to talk to you about.

Kea:okay. Im coming.

I sat on the bed in our room.

Kea:im here.

Me: i have to go to cape town on business. I Was wondering if you could come with me.

Kea:what about the kids? I've never been away from them.

Me:they will be fine. I just want to spend time with you. Just the two of us. I've missed you. And I'd like to spend each chance i get with you.

Kea:okay. I'd love that too. When are we leaving?

Me:second week of January. Take this card. Buy whatever you think we will need.

Kea:okay.

Me:use that money. Don't just say okay.

She's those i can take care of myself women. The independent ones. It's good but I'd love to see her spending this money. It's ours. I wake up in the morning to work so i can take care of her and the children.

Kea:i promise i will use it.

Me: don't forget to buy swimsuits neh?

Kea:ah babe i gained a lot of weight. I think i should join a gym.

Me:you're very beautiful. If you lose this weight how will i touch you like this mhh...

I pull her to me. She tried moving away but I held her tightly.

Kea:ah baby i have to cook.

Me:the helper will cook. Right now i need my wife.

We just lay on bed talking. I really did miss her. I must admit that sometimes I'd get scared thinking that she'd never come back. But now she's back. And i will do my all to treat ger right this time.

It's now at night and we're ready to leave. Another thing, i wasn't used to these date things but with her I'm learning.

Lindani:mama where are you going? You look beautiful.

Me:I'm going out with dad.

Lindani:that's why he's looking this good. Let me

take pictures. Dad come on.

Lol. We posed for a few pictures then got ready to leave.

Aya:mommy you're leaving again.

Me:no. I promise you i will be back.

Luu:no! You're leaving us.

Me:no. Okay look. Me and daddy are going out. Daddy will make sure that i don't leave okay?i promise.

Luu:okay daddy will make sure then. You will read us bedtime story?

Me:tomorrow. I love you and I'm never leaving you again.

Aya:okay.

They hug me and i picked and kissed them. My kids are hurt. They thought im leaving again. But im happy that in the end they calmed down.

The following day when we woke up it was so cold.

We took a shower and came back to bed.

Mpendulo:let me switch on the heater.

"Knock knock"

I went to open and the creche came in running. So early. It's the twins and Thando and Sphe. I went back to bed.

Luu:mommy you came back.

Me:i told youim not going anywhere. Come give me a kiss.

They all came to the bed and kissed me.

Mpendulo:make space for me. Come big girl.

Thando went toher dad. He was no longer sleeping. His head was leaning on the head board. I was holding Sphe. She looked sleepy.

Me:who woke these two up?

Twins:it's us.

Me:no. Don't do that again. Look now they are

sleeping again.

Thando:not me mommy.

Luu:mom we wake up early all the time. So we can watch cartoons before going to school.

Me:okay.

They looked at each other and laughed.

Twins:we love you mommy.

Me:i love you too. You still haven't given me my presents.

Lu:you make us forget. Let me fetch them.

Aya:im coming too.

Mpendulo:they are so happy. I haven't seen them like this in a long time. Thank you for being here. And for giving me all these kids. I was just a lonely soul staying alone in a big house but the moment I got you it all changed.

Thando:daddy what is lonely?

Mpendulo:it's when you have no one to talk to and you're always bored.

I laughed at his explanation.

Thando:mommy were you lonely were we were staying?

Me:no. But i missed daddy and everyone here. Why?

Thando:malome Tshireletsu always said you're lonely so you must go out with him. But i know you were not lonely because you said no i have my baby to keep me company. That means im the one who was making sure you're not bored.

Me:wa bua tlhe

She's exactly like Lisa. Telling her father everything. She's saying all these things looking at him.

Mpendulo:then what else?

Tgando:i said no. My mommy always play with me. And malome said he can join us. Daddy do you love mommy?

I felt like putting a selotape on her mouth cos i knew where she was going.

Mpendulo:yes. A lot.

Thando:malome Tshirelets o naye uthe I love you
Kea.

Me:who's Kea?

Thando:it's you mommy!

Mpendulo:and what did mommy say?

Thando:she said i don't love you. But she told him
she loves you only daddy. So she doesn't love me?

Mpendulo:she loves you.

Thando:you want me to to tell you something again?

Mpendulo:yes big girl.

The twins came back smiling.

Aya:close your eyes. Nawe Thando.

We closed them.

Lu:open.

We looked at them. They gave us our gifts. They
gave me our family picture and a t-shirt with that
picture on. Then i had necklaces with their faces.

Thando had a set of dolls and tea set and a house.

Me:who helped you choose this?

Lu:daddy and aunty Khanyo.

Me:thank you. It's beautiful.

Thando:thanks. I love it. Daddy you're going to drink tea with me neh?

Mpendulo:you will drink with Sphe.

Thando:you too daddy.

Mpendulo:okay.

Thando:i wanted to say something.

Mpendulo:what is it?

Thando:the aunty where i stayed bought me toys so i played with mommy. When i cried and didn't want to go play with the others malome Tshirelets o said im a brat. He didn't want me to stay with mommy. I don't like him. My mommy refused. She said im her best friend so she will play with me every time.

Then aunty told him to stay away from mommy.

Mpendulo:oh that's good. You're a good girl. Don't

you want to sleep?

Thando:no. I want to play with my house and dolls.

She got off and sat on the carpet and started playing. We laughed. This one is something else.

Narrated

Mabutho:and wena...what are you doing?

Siya:i was just checking if my wife has n't sent any message.

They laughed at him.

Siya:what?

Bongani:you are whipped. You will find her at home. Stop doing that.

Siya:what if she needs me?

Mpendulo:stop that. She's fine. Wena just enjoy our time here.

Siya:do you know she threw away the pills she got

from the hospital just because Isabella was the doctor?

Mzwakhe:i would do the same. Your ex could poison her.

Mpendulo:not just an ex. Her sister

Muzi:what!? How?

Siya:the father cheated and left his family back emakhaya. Turns out Isabella's father is her father. Now she's even blaming me. Ay women.

Bongani:but what matters is you're all happy.

Mabutho:and everything is going well.

Mpendulo:yah for a change. Excuse me.

He answered his phone.

Mpendulo:baby. U right?

....

Mpendulo:yah you know how they are. They'll always be idiots.

.....

Mpendulo:don't forget. No giving the guards a hard time. It's for your safety.

...

Mpendulo:okay. You love the flowers?

...

Mpendulo:that's good ke. Enjoy your day. I love you ne?

....

Siya:and what did you say about me?

Mpendulo:phuma kim wena. When my wife calls i answer.

Zweli:I've never seen you this happy.

Mpendulo:my wife makes me happy. Even though there's some idiots who try their luck on her.

Zweli:idiots?

Mpendulo:yes. Some fool in polokwane was trying his luck with her.

Mzwakhe:how do you know?

Mpendulo:Thando. She told me everything that was happening there.

They laughed.

Siya: she's exactly like Lisa.

Mpendulo:you know what she said? She said she was making sure her mommy is not bored. Then that boy said he loves my wife. My wife!

Mabutho:he must be kicked that one.

Mpendulo:then he had the nerve to say my child is a brat. He was trying all things to get rid of her so he could try his moves. But yami ingane yala.

Sometimes I don't believe it's her talking. Tye things she says! She was asking ne why her mother doesn't love her.

Zweli:your child is funny. Why would she ask that?

Mpendulo:Khanyisile told that idiot that she only loves me and i think my baby became jealous.

Mabutho:i can picture her asking all these questions. Be careful of her. One wrong move it'strouble for you.

Mpendulo:im just happy theyare back. I had missed them.

Muzi:i know you're older than me but I have to say this. You put her through a lot. You hurt her.

Mpendulo:i know. She's the most understanding woman I've ever met. If it was someone she would have left. But she forgave me.

Muzi:i hope you are not going to put her through that again.

Zweli: Muzi is right. Treat your wife right. Yes no one is perfect but just try.

Mpendulo:yeah. I will spend the rest of my life trying to be a better man. And you guys, thank you for not giving up on me. I love you guys.

Siya:you are starting now. Hayi hayi. Dad must hear about this.

They all looked at him. He was laughing so hard..

Zweli:what's wrong with this clown kanti? One day you'll die of laughing.

Bongani:we love you too. What? Im answering for

you all because you don't want to say it. You should be thanking me.

Mzwakhe:another cloud madoda.

Mpendulo:he could be a clown but not like this one. Siya you're a real clown.

KEATLARETSI

My husband got two bodyguards for me. I don't know why though because there's no one who is after me. I mean Mr P took care of the Turkish family and Liloca is dead. So no one would be of danger to me. In every shop that i go to they are always behind me. But they do not make it obvious that they are following me. So no one can notice. I was buying clothes for the kids. These three grow as if someone is watering them. At least Lisa is with me and she can help me carry some things. I had to beg the twins to stay behind because I know they would be running all over. Now we are done with the kids clothes and i start buying for my husband. If i

don't do it who will? Sometimes i must do it even though he does it himself. I buy him a few t shirts and shirts. I know what he prefers so it's easy. I even put some jeans and tracksuits. Pretoria weather is unpredictable. So you always have to be prepared. After our shopping we go to rocco mamas to eat something. It has been a long day.

Me:what would you like to have?

Lisa: i want a bicycle mom. J ust like Mngobi.

Me:why didn't you tell me while we were still shopping?

Lisa:i forgot.

Me:we will get it before we go home. Now what are you going to order?

Lisa:i want a burger and fries. The others can have pizza at home. I promise i wont say anything.

Me:ha a Lisa you know you're lying. The moment we enter the gate you'll be screaming that you had a burger.

Lisa: i don't know why i do that. Okay i have to eat

but you will buy more and i will eat again at home with the others.

Me:i knew it.

Lisa:i love you mommy. I'm happy you're back. I'll always do shopping with you. Bhuti Lindani and Mngobi always leave me. Now i will always go out with you.

Me:i love you too.

"Wow. I can't believe I'm seeing you after all this time!"

I finished ordering and looked at this one taking a chair without being invited.

Me:hi Anelisa. It's been long indeed.

Ane:you have beautiful kids. Is this yours too?

Me:who else's? Yeah she's mine.

Ane:but if i count correctly you've been married for over 5 if not almost six years. So this one looks way too older than that.

Me:that doesn't concern you.

Lisa:bhuti Lindani is calling mommy.

The moment i answered the twins screamed on the phone. I couldn't even hear what they were saying.

Me:hey what's going on?

Twins:we miss you.

Me:im coming home okay?

Mnqobi:where are you mama?

Me:im at the mall. I thought...

Lindani:he meant which shop?

Me:we're at Rocco mama.

Lindani:okay.

I gave the phone back to Lisa.

Me:do you mind? We were about to have lunch.

Lisa:let me join you. Oh God i can't get over how beautiful your babies are.

Lisa:they are beautiful like me.

"Mommy we are here!"

That's Luyanda screaming.

Me:why did you follow us?

Luu: sies Lisa you were going to rob us. You eat here and at home also.

Mngqobi:i knew you would do this! Now we can all eat together.

Me:where is dad?

Mngqobi:he didn't come back. We came with the driver. Bhuti Lindani is ordering for us.

Ane: yoh friend! You have a lot of childre. 10! If it was me i wouldn't stay for that shame.

Me:thank God im not you. I love my kids just as they are.

Ane:but I can't judge you. I mean you gave birth like three or four times. And the other are your husband's. So it's understandable.

Me: Anelisa you know too much. Did your client update you on my life? Because I know she was envious of me. She would have loved to be the one in my place.

Ane:what client are you talking about?

Me: Liloca. What were you trying to do? I see you're an enemy of happiness. You don't love seeing people happy huh? You're exactly like those friends of yours.

Ane:i wanted to tell you. But i didn't know where to start. She's dead anyway.

Me:so must i sympathize with you that you lost money? You're a good lawyer. Im sure you will get more clients.

Ane:mmh. So how's your sister? I heard you are married to brothers.

Me:thank you for joining us but please excuse us now. It was nice seeing you.

Ane:likewise.

We got the food. We didn't eat there anymore. We took it home. But not after buying the bicycle. When we got home my husband was back. He was watching tv with Thando and Sphe.

Mpendulo:baby you're back. How was your shopping?

Me:it was good. Im just tired.why are these two lying down?

Mpendulo:they said they want to watch tv properly. I even have to watch cartoons. When i change the channel Sphe says im disturbing them. Now they ended up sleeping here.

I heard a tiny laugh.

Me:are they really sleeping? Someone is laughing.

Mpendulo: Lisa is finishing the food in the kitchen.

Them:no no no.

They got up and ran to the kitchen. We laughed.

Me:these two are naughty.

Mpendulo: mama and baba have arrived. They'll be staying with Siya but they are on their way here.

They can't wait to see these three champs.

Me:oh my God! Did you tell them im back. They are going to hate me.

Mpendulo:haibo why would they hate you?

Me:i ran away. I think...

Mpendulo:that must be them. Go and open for them.

Me:please tell them im not here! I'll be in our room.

Mpendulo: Khanyisile go and open for them. They are not mad at you. In fact they are mad at me cos i caused all this mess. So now go and open.

I was even shaking when i went to the door. I counted from 1 to 3 then opened. I welcomed them in and followed behind them. I really wanted to leave but that would be rude of me. We greeted and welcomed them.

Ma:it's good to see you my daughter. Im glad that you're back.

Dad:yes. Now all that's left is for us is to go ekhaya and do a ceremony for lezingane.

They talked until ma asked to be excused and asked me to follow her. What a life saver.

Narrated

Dad: how is everything? Have you two talked?

Mpendulo: everything is well baba. We've talked and she forgave me.

Dad: she forgave you? So what are you going to do about what happened to make sure it doesn't happen again?

Mpendulo: dad you know I'd never cheat on my wife. Everything that happened in Angola was a mistake. I was not myself. I wasn't in the right state of mind.

Dad: yes but there's a child as a result of that. Do you know that she will always suspect you?

28 cont

Mpendulo: then how do i reassure her that i will never put her through that again? I've done all that i can. I just want us to be happy.

Baba: then show her with your actions. Do you hear

the noise coming from the kitchen? What does that mean?

Mpendulo:the kids are happy

Bava:exactly. The last time I was here it wasn't like this. It was very quiet. But now suddenly your wife came back and things changed. There's peace and happiness. Do you see what this woman is capable of? She brings happiness into this house. And that's very rare. If you find a woman like that hold on to her. Treat her like a queen. Give her the same happiness that she gives you. Be grateful. It makes me happy to see you smiling like this. And I'm proud of the man that you are.

Mpendulo:thank you baba.

Luu:daddy where are the boys?

Mpendulo:with mommy.

Luu:i wanted to eat my burger with them.

They laughed.

Dad:Luyanda they are too young to eat burgers. Go and eat.

Luu:oh okay. Do you want to eat Mkhulu? We bought a lot of food.

Mpendulo:and what about me?

Luu:daddy you don't give me meat everyday okay? Mkhulu gives me his meat all the time. But today I will give you meat because you're not telling me to eat vegetables.

The little boy looked so serious. He went back to where the other kids were.

Kea's phone rang and Mpendulo took it as she had left it on the table. He went to answer it away from where his father was. He pressed yes and listened.

Voice: Keatlaretsi finally! I got your number from Rapelang.

Mpendulo:.

Voice:okay. Since you don't want to answer let me talk. I know you already said there's no other man for you besides your husband but come on. You know i love you and can make you more happy than

he does. Just give me a chance to prove myself. I'm in Pretoria. Can we meet tomorrow? I'll send a message with the details. Please answer me. It doesn't matter what you say. I'm not even scared of that husband of yours. Just answer me.

He cut the call and went upstairs. When he was about to enter his room the phone beeped. "Come to the hotel. I will send the location. I have to see you."

He sent the location to his phone and deleted the message and phone call. He gave the phone to Lisa to give her mother. He took his car keys and drove off. The way his car was speeding on the road it was like he has an emergency to attend. He got to that hotel and went straight to the room. He knocked roughly until Tshireletsu opened for him.

Mpendulo:boy where do you get the nerve to call my wife?

Tshire:what are you talking about?

Mpendulo:Keatlaretsi. Ring a bell? I'm here to warn you for the last time. Leave her alone.

Tshire:or what? Are you afraid that she's going to fall for me? Is that why you are here to threaten me? Do i intimidate you that much?

Mpendulo:boy listen here. Im not scared of anything. I know my wife and trust her. She will never fall for someone as stupid as you. I know she already rejected you. I'm not here cos im intimidated or anything. Im here to stop this disrespectful manner you have of calling someone's wife and telling her how you feel and demanding to meet her. I'm going to teach you a lesson that you'll never set foot in Pretoria again. What kind of a fool are you to drive all the way from Limpopo to gauteng for someone you will never have?

Tshire:dare touch me and I'll have you arrested.

Mpendulo slapped him that he even fell on the bed. He started hitting him and every time Tshire tried to block fists he would hit him on other places. Then he picked him and hit against the wall then picked him again and strangled him.

Mpendulo: this is nothing! Next time I won't be this easy on you nxa! Now delete my wife's numbers and never call her.

After that he drove back home.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:04] : *STORY OF MY LIFE: KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 32

BONOLO

It's here. My big day. My wedding day. I never thought this would be me. I thought the same thing that happened with Amir would happen. Postponing the wedding when it's just a few days away. I know we've already signed at home affairs and had the

traditional wedding but this feels good.

Mama:oh my child. Im so proud of you. I'm proud to be called your mother. My daughter is getting married. We thank God for this.

Kea:bride to be. I have a message for you from the groom! Aag you are so beautiful!

Me:thank you. What did he say?

Kea:he sent you a video. Here.

Mama: Keatlaretsi i told you to keep her phone off.

Kea:mama my husband called and asked me to give Bonolo her phone cos her groom sent a message for her.

I took it and watched the video.

"My love. My eternal love. This is it. Today is our moment. Thank you for choosing me. Thank you for agreeing to marry me. Our lives,our forever begin today. I can't wait to see you. I love you. And im happy that today we will say i do. I can't wait for all the moments that we will create together. Don't be

late. Or i will be worried. I love you Mrs Khoza.
Forever and always. "

Ah. This video! I see it's his intention to make me cry.

Kea:you're the most beautiful bride. Your dad is waiting for you outside. Let's go.

Me:is this really happening or I'm dreaming?

Kea:no it's real.

Mama:let's go.

Well i have five brides maids. It was really a big fight when I chose brides maids because my cousins wanted to be brides maids too. My husband blatantly told me that my bridemaids will be his brothers wives because his brothers are his groomsmen. The wedding was held at my place. We have a beautiful backyard that is just opposite the lake. So i said why waste money when we can have the wedding there. Music started playing and my dad hugged me. I was so emotional. My father

looked very happy. I remember i was a disobedient child growing up. Now im grown and changed. And i can see how proud he is of me.

Papa:I'm proud of you. I know I've already said this on your traditional wedding but don't forget. Getting married to this man does not mean we have abandoned you. O nale gae. Don't feel like you're no longer a Bogatsu. You always will be. You will always be my little baby girl. Take care of yourself and your family. I love you.

He kissed my forehead and took out his handkerchief and wiped a tear that fell. Oh how I love my father. I wouldn't ask for a better father. He is the best. We started walking to the wedding reception and the kids appeared. Natty, Sphe, Thando and my little boy. Lwandle was in front and walking so fast. He looked so handsome in his beautiful tailor made suit. My little man. With his curly hair falling on each side of his face. He reached where his father and uncles were standing and opened his arms. Siya picked him up and he put his head on his shoulder. The girls were

throwing petals on the way going to where the pastor was standing. I felt so emotional. I felt like I would cry. I'm happy. This is what I've always wanted. And today I'm doing it.

NARRATED

As the bride appeared the groom started to relax.

Pastor: who gives away the bride?

Mr Bogatsu: I do. Khoza tlhokomela ngwanake monna. I'm trusting you with her.

Mzwakhe nodded and Mr Bogatsu went to sit down. The pastor officiated the wedding and the bride and groom said their vows.

Bonolo: babe...my love, I really can't believe this is us. But I'm happy that I'm doing this with no one else but you. I promise to love you like you always do. I will be a good wife to you and mother to our child. I will love and care for you. May God bless us to see even more years that we can ever imagine. May he

give us strength to overcome anything that will try to stand on our way. You taught me that with love we can overcome anything. You've showed me that it's possible. And I'm grateful for you. To have you as my life partner. Someone who will always be by my side. Someone who will care and look out for me. Someone who will be there always. I promise to be there in health and in sickness. In good times and even in bad times. Until death do us apart.

She put the ring on his finger.

Mzwakhe: My beautiful woman. The most beautiful woman in the world. The love of my life. I can't contain myself today. I am so happy. More happy than words can ever explain. Seeing you walk down the aisle just showed me that this is it. The beginning of our forever. The beginning of something beautiful that will come out of our union. Something moved in me. I got to see an angel coming towards me. An angel that is you. I'm happy that we are standing here in front of everyone to officiate our love. The love that you give me. I had long given up in finding the one that my heart beats

for. I had no hope. But that one day. Just that day I met you I knew that I had found my eternal love. I knew that I had found my missing rib. I promise to love you like you've never been loved. I will love and cherish you and all our memories. I will take care of you and our kids. I will be with you always. Even in our afterlife. I promise to be there in health and in sickness. In good times and even in bad times. In every single thing that we will face I will be by your side.

Then he put the ring on her finger.

Pastor: beautiful vows. I now pronounce you husband and wife. Everyone Mrs and Mrs Khoza! You may now kiss your bride.

They kissed and cheered for them.

The wedding went well and everyone was happy.

SETHU

Ever been in a situation where you are happy and

all of a sudden someone disrupt your peace? That's the life I'm currently living right now. Last night I gave birth to our little sunshine Musawenkosi. My husband doesn't even want to leave the house. He's so happy.

Siya:baby. I can't believe our boy is here.

Me:me too. I'm done having kids. 3 is enough.

Siya:two left then we'll be done.

"Good morning. I heard you gave birth "

Me:mama really? Did you have to come with him?

Mama: i didn't come with him. I met him on the corridor. He said his daughter works here and he's doing his treatments here.

Me:please stay away from me. I don't want you here. Leave. I've been fine without you for 30 years.

Mr:can't we talk like adults? Without shouting?

Me:babe please tell this man to leave. I don't want to see him.

I turned to the other side and just closed my eyes

and cried. The anger that i had of growing up without my father came back. I had no father. While he was out there playing father to others. I don't think i will ever forgive him. He hurt me. My mother is the only parent i have. No one else.

Siya: sir i think you should leave. You're upsetting her and that's not good.

Mr. what's is it with you and my daughters? You jump from one to another!

Mama: Funani hamba. You have no right to say that. Whose fault is it that he's dated sisters? If you had been a good father like you put yourself to be you wouldn't have run from your children. If it's me that you did not want then you would have done all you could to have a relationship with your children. And now you want to blame my son in law? It's too late for that. Now please leave us in peace. L

I heard footsteps and he was no longer in the room.

Me:that man must stay away from me. I don't want him anywhere near me or my family.

Siya:calm down.

KEATLARETSI

I'm back at work and i can say i am enjoying it. I am really thankful for my husband and00 Bonolo. They made sure that all my businesses don't fall apart. Today i knocked off early because i am going out with Lerato. Its her best friend/sister in law baby shower. I know most of the time i am with Bonolo or the wives but Lerato is also one of my closest friend. With her i can just be free and i know she will not judge me. When i get home it's a chaos. Toys all over in the lounge and the triplets are on the floor. Ever since they started crawling it's more work. They crawl to me and i smile and kiss them. I missed my babies.

Me:Ayanda go and call your brother and pack your toys.

Aya:how was work?

Me:it was good. How was school?

Aya: i don't like school.

Me:what's wrong my boy? Someone bullying you?

Aya:mommy it's boring. I'mNot in the same class as Luyanda. I want to be in his class.

Me:I'm sorry okay? I will talk to your teacher and ask if they can put you in the same class.

He nodded happy. I went upstairs and took a shower. I dressed in a long white summer dress and sandals. I went and knocked on the sruddy.

Mpendulo:come in. You look beautiful my wife. Where are you going?

Me:babe i told you I'm going to a baby shower with Lerato.

Mpendulo:oh. Have fun. Don't worry about the kids. I will look after them.

Me:you're the vest. I love you.

Mpendulo:i love you more. Come and give me my kiss.

I kissed him and hugged him.

Me:don't miss me too much.

Mpendulo:no. Don't miss me too much.

He's right. I'm so clingy to him these days.

Me:ah don't start. I won't miss you.

Mpendulo:mmh. Go now. Im going to switch off my phone.

Me:okay. Okay. I miss you already.

Mpendulo:Tomorrows after work I will take you out. Then we can spend more time together.

Me:okay let me go before Im late.

I took my things and went to Lerato's house. We were going to use her car.

MPENDULO

my wife went out and it's my night with the two little girls. Thando and Sphe. Lisa is sleeping over at Chris. I finished putting their snacks in the plate then head to the bedroom. They are in my bedroom watching cartoons on their mother's laptop. It's around 6 so yeah that's the reason they are not sleeping. I do my work while they are playing and eating. Most of the time i work from home. As I'm doing my work these two fall asleep. I close my laptop and take them all to their room. I close it and leave. The reason I'm working even after work is because soon I'll be retiring. I just want to stay at home. Rest and have a good time with my family. No I'm not dieng. I don't have some chronic diseases. It's just that i have worked hard all my life. I can afford anything i want. So that my family can be taken care of. So that my children will not beg for anything. I take the plate back to the kitchen then go and check on the others. The twins are sleeping with their heads on top of Mngobi. The three of them share a room. Then Lisa shares with the girls and Lindani has his own room. The twins prefer sharing a bed with Mngobi rather than having

bunked beds. I take a picture and send it to my wife. She loves taking pictures of the kids. I'm sure she'll be smiling when she sees it. I knock and get into Lindani's room. He's playing his games.

Me: are you done with your homeworks?

Lindani:yes baba. I'm even done studying. I know that's why you're here.

I laugh. I always check on his school work. He's in matric so i want him to do well so he can go to any university of his choice.

Me:so how are you?

Lindani:I'm good.

Me:really good?

Lindani:yes baba. I know you worry about me. But I'm fine. Therapy helped me and I'm good now.

It's been a year since he finished his sessions.

Me:so do you miss your mother...your grandparents?

Lindani:why are you asking? Do you want to take me back?

Me:take you back? No! I'm happy with having all my children under one roof.

Lindani:baba my mother is here. Khanyisile. She may not be my biological mother but these few years I've been here she's been more of a mother than i can say about my biological mother. She loves me like I'm her own. She doesn't treat us differently. To her we are equal. We are all her children. My biological mother would treat her step children like her own and treat me like a stranger. So i will never miss anyone like that.

Me:okay. I hear you. So what do you want to study next year and which university do you want to go to?

Lindani:I'm still deciding which university i want but I'll study architecture.

Me:you can take a gap year until you're sure.

Lindani:there's still time to decide on universities. So you are not angry that I want to do architecture?

Me:why would I be?

Lindani:my friend's father is angry because my

friend doesn't want to study business.

Me:I'm not angry. You have to do what makes you happy or else you might fail. If it's architecture then you can do it. Just study hard and make me and your mother proud. But mostly do it for yourself. Have a good night neh?

Lindani:good night dad.

I went to the triplets room and they were sound asleep. I closed the door and went back to my room. I stopped on my tracks. There stood the most beautiful angel I've ever met. With her smooth skin. I know she always complain that she has gained weight. From size 38 to 40. Yes i listen to these things when she tells me these things. But she's so beautiful. Even looking at her right now i feel my blood running. Why did I meet her late?

Kea:love i didn't see you there.

Me:I was admiring what God me.

Kea:and what is that?

Me:an angel standing in front of me.

She wanted to put in a night dress but I got hold of it and threw it away. I held her from behind. She smelt of her shower gel. She just finished showering.

Me:how was your night out?

Kea:it was good. I had fun.

Me:i missed you.

Kea:and now im back.

Me:mmh

Kea:aah aah

I'm kissing her neck. It's her sensitive spot. She turns to look at me and kisses me. I'm happy at how she has changed from that shy woman i net years back. Whoa! I love it when she's like this. When she initiate our love making. I'm not the only one who's in control. Here's something: i never thought sex

would ever make a grown man like me cry. But my wife here does that to me. In a swift my t shirt is off. Then i feel her unbuckle my belt. Then my trouser fall down. I'm already hard. I get out of them and pick her to the bed and we make love. Love making with her is always different. I feel renewed every time.

Waking up in the morning i take a shower then go out. Judging by the noise i can tell they are all in the nursery.

Me:guys get ready.

Lu:daddy today we are not going to school. And we are having a party.

He starts dancing with his twin. I know the only reason they are this happy it's because of cake and nyama. Those are their favorite.

Me:yes we are having a party. Im going to fetch the

cake and i want my two boys to go with me.

Aya:yeeesss!

They jumped up and down.

Kea:good morning babe.

Me:good morning. Are you managing alone?

Kea:mme Maggie was helping me. Now I'm just dressing them.

Me:do you want something from town?

Kea:no. I think we have everything.

I pick up Sabelo. He giggles when I start playing with him.

Kea:babe why diid you take him? You know he'll cry when you leave and these two will also cry.

I try to put him down and he doesn't want to sit. I make him lie down on the bed and run out. I can hear him crying as i exit the door. I open the car and the twins and Thando and Sphe get in. I drive to Pretoria North to fetch the cake. Today the twins

are 6 years so we are having a mini party for them.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:04] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 33

Keatlaretsi

My husband has been gone for a few hours now. He is not coming back. I try to call him but he doesn't answer my calls. I'm starting to get worried now. I decide to just wait. Everything is ready for the triplets party even the photographer is here and the family is here.

Nolo: don't worry. He might be on his way. You know how ques are.

Me:there's nothing about a queue here. I can feel it.

He was just going to fetch the cake and come back.
But it's been a few hours. What if something
happened?

Mzwakhe:which shop did they go to so i can go and
check on them?

Me:they we..

Nolo:they are here.

Me:finally. I was getting worried. Baby I was
starting to get worried now.

He just sat on the couch and kept quiet.

Me:what's going on? Where's Thando? What
happened to your hand?

Mpendulo:something happened while we were
fetching the cake?

Me: Thando o kae? Where's my baby!?

Mpendulo:she's at the hospital. Muzi is with her.

Me:that's why he left...But what happened to my
baby?

Mpendulo:calm down. She'll be fine.

Me:which hospital is she in? I need to see my baby.

Mpendulo:calm down please? That's why i came back. J ust to make sure first that you don't freak out.

I sit down. My baby is in hospital! I'm shaking. I can't sit still.

Mpendulo:some man wanted to kidnap her. Luckily i was walking closwly with them. I noticed what was happening in time. He sprayed something on her face and grabbed her. I was fast enough to catch up with him before he reached the car. So i took her from him. That's whenhe stabbed me on my arm and ran away. But i got the number plate. The police are looking for him as we speak.

Me:how's she?

Mpendulo:she passed out after what happened. The doctors were busy with her. But she's fine. Let's go.

I followed behind him. We got into the car and he drove to the hospital.

Me:is she really fine?

Mpendulo:I'm sorry.

Me:for what?

Mpendulo:for all of this . I don't know what i would have done if that man succeeded in taking her.

Me:he didn't. That's what matters . Now we focus on her getting well.

Mpendulo: those few minutes she passed out I felt like everything around me was spinning. I don't know what would have happened.

Me:she's already been through so much. Now this . I wish i could just hide her from the troubles of this world. Can one person have such bad luck?Maybe I should cleanse myself at the ocean. All these bad things keep happening to my family.

Mpendulo:don't talk like that. Our baby will be fine. You will see. The doctor was just waiting for her to wake up. And if she's not under any danger we can leave with her.

The drive was quiet with only my sniffs . When we arrived we went to her ward and she was bup. She

was talking with Muzi. I wiped my tears. I didn't want her to see that i was crying.

Thando:mommy. You are here to take me,

Muzi:the doctor said we can leave with her. He'll be back with the docs to sign.

Me:how are you my love?

Thando:I'm fine mommy. Take me.

She opened her arms. I picked her and just wrapped my hands around her. I couldn't help but cry. We almost lost her.

Me:mommy loves you okay?

Thando:i love you too.

The doctor came and we signed then left.

Thando:is the bad man gobe?

Me:yes. he won't come back. The police will get him.

My baby must have been scared. I can't imagine what she was going through.

Muzi: i can't believe this happened again. It can't be a coincidence. These people want something.

Me:um what do you mean again? Did it happen before?

Mpendulo:yeerr Muzi nawe! I said we are not going to talk about this ever but now look.

Mui:i was n't thinking.

Me:this is not the first time something like this happened?

Mpendulo:no. At first when you were missing they kidnapped Khanyo. And we had to look for her and you as well. I even thought they took you.

Me:what do these people want?

Mpendulo:we'll see you at home Muzi.

Just like that! He ignored me. We got in the car and left.

Me:what do they want?

Mpendulo:i will take care of this. Don't stress

yours elf.

Me:i deserve to know if my family's life is danger.
What if something happens to you? What will be of me and the kids?

Mpendulo:this is beyond my control! They want my child. So what do i do with that? I can't give anyone my child.

Me:they want your child?

Mpendulo:yes. I think that guy thought Thando is Sphehile. She's my child and she's not going anywhere.

Me:at least the police will look for that person.

Mpendulo:aboutthat. I didn'tinvolve the police.

Me:aow. Didn'tyou say the policeare workingonthis?

Mpendulo:i didn'twant to worryyou. I'mhandlingit myself.

What now? He's also a liar? And why do these people want Sphe? I decided toletit go. My baby is

safe now. When we got home he was the first to jump out of the car and ran inside.

Me: do you think we should stop this party?

Mpendulo: no. The kids are happy. Let's go on with it.

We went in and everyone was just sitting maybe waiting for us.

Muzi: everything is fine now. We can all cheer up.

The party went on even though I had a lot on my mind. The kids had fun and that's all that matters. We cleared everything and cleaned before everyone left. After we all got ready for bed I went to take a shower and got into my sleepwear. I went to check if all the doors were locked and Windows closed.

Mpendulo: everything is locked. No one is going to enter in here.

Me: do you think I'm paranoid for thinking that something will happen again?

Mpendulo:you're not. As i said I'm going to take care of this. Let's go to the bedroom. I want us to talk.

I sighed. This is proving to be hard for me. I thought i was going to take Sphe and Thando to daycare but not anymore. What if my babies get abducted? I'd die. We got into bed.

Mpendulo:tomorrow I'm going home. I have to fix this problem.

Me:why are you going home?

Mpendulo :to talk to my father so that we can go to Mozambique and pay damages for Sphe and do all the rituals so that all of this can stop.

Me:i thought her mother gave you parental rights.

Mpendulo:s he did but her family would still want me to do right by her.

Me:what does that mean?

Mpendulo:it means that since me and her mother were not married i have to do some rituals for Sphe and i will hear what they say about how they do

things when I get there. Then we can all live peacefully.

Me: this feels like history is repeating itself. I feel like im losing you to her again. Even from the grave she's still troubling me.

Mpendulo: s thandwa sami don't take it like that. I'm just going there to do what I'm supposed to do for our baby then come back. I promise.

Me: what if ...

Mpendulo: nothing will happen. Come here. You know I'd go with you if you didn't have to be here with the kids.

Me: agg. I wouldn't go even if there were no kids.

I turn the other side and shut my eyes.

Mpendulo: ngis akhuluma nawe nje s thandwa.

I didn't reply. I just kept quiet until i fell asleep. When I woke up the sun was out and on my face. I tried getting up but i couldn't.

Mpendulo: morning.

Me: morning.

Mpendulo: we didn't finish talking.

Me: i thought we did.

Mpendulo: can we spend the day together? I'm leaving at 2 and i won't come back here. I will go straight to Mozambique.

Me: oh.

Mpendulo: yes. And i don't know how many days i will take there.

Me: i have to go to work.

I got off the bed and went to the bathroom. When i was about to close he touched the door. I let go and went to shower. He just stood by the door looking at me. I was even starting to get irritated. We are always doing this. Every time he leaves me here and i have to take it all. I didn't hear him moving i just felt him hug me.

Mpendulo: baby i promise you i will be back soon. It won't even be a whole week. Just trust me. I would

never lie to you.

Me:okay. If you say so.

Mpendulo:please take a day off. I'd love to spend time with my wife.

Me:okay.

Mpendulo:look at me. I know you're not convinced that I'm not coming back but have faith in me.

Me:what if she's not dead and this is her way of luring you to her? When you get there she does something to you?

Mpendulo:babe let's say she's alive. If she tries something she will never win. It's you. It will always be you. No one else. You're the love of my life. I love you so much.

Me:i love you too. Losing you would break me. I hope nothing will happen to you.

Mpendulo:nothing will happen.

After our shower we spent the day together. The

kids went to school so it was only me and him and the triplets, Sphe and Thando. At two he had to leave.

Mpendulo:and don't be stubborn. Don't give the guards a hard time.

Me:am i s stubborn?

Mpendulo:you know how you are. Wherever you go out,go with them. They are here to protect you and the kids.

Me:okay. O ts amaye sente.

Mpendulo:don't be sad. I'm coming back.

I hugged him. I watched as he disappeared through the airport. It was painful for me to watch him go but I had to take it like an adult.

NARRATED

It's been three days and Mpendulo always called the family just to let them know how everything is

going. Keatlaretsi would always check her phone whenever she hears a sound thinking maybe it's her husband. She's sitting in a restaurant waiting for her order. She came to get lunch. She's on a lunchbreak and this is the time that she gets to rest.

Voice:it's nice to see you here.

Kea:oh hi. I didn't know you come this side.

Tshire:just business that brought me here. So how are you?

Kea:I'm good.

Tshire:that's better. I thought maybe the white guy would have killed you by now.

Me:what white guy?

Tshire:your husband.

Me:who said he's white? And why would he kill me?

Tshire:a re tswe mo yona.so what are you doing after you leave this place?

Me:I'm going back to my office.

Tshire: i was hoping we canspend a bit of time

together.

Kea: Tshirelets o I have a man. I thought you had already accepted that.

Tshirelets o: that man is not good for you. What if one day he hits you? He's violent.

Kea: i don't know what you're talking about.

Tshire: i once sent you a message asking to meet and he got your phone and saw it. He came to my hotel room and attacked me. Left me with a broken arm. I had to put a cast on it. But tell him that next time he won't be so lucky.

Kea: bye Tshire. It was nice seeing you.

Tshire: i won't give up on you.

She got up and took her order. People were staring. She didn't like the attention. When she got to her office she called her husband.

Mpendulo: I've been trying to call you.

Kea: my phone was on silent. I was in a meeting.

Mpendulo:oh. With that boy? Bathi ubani...Tshirelets o.

Kea:how..oh the guards. Do they report everything i do now?

Mpendulo:they have to. I'm doing this for your safety.

Kea:did you really attack him?

Mpendulo:he deserved every beating he got. He'll learn to leave you alone. I have good news.

Tomorrow I'm coming back.

Kea:that's great news! The kids were asking when you would be back.

Mpendulo:i know that's not true. You just missed me.

Kea: oh please.

Mpendulo:have a good day. I will call when you get home.

Me:okay.

Today my husband is coming back and i cannot wait to knock off at work. I am counting down the hours even though now it's lunch time. I know there's still more time to go but i can't wait. I hear a knock at the door so i ahout for that pers on to come in.

Voice: I brought you lunch. Akere you refused to go out with me so i thought we can have our date in here.

Me:what date are you talking about? I'm a married woman!

Tshire:so i would have a chance if you were not married?

Me: Tshirelets o I don't love you. When will you get that? Even if i were single me and you were not going to date. I don't love you. Now please leave. I have work to do.

Tshire: go on. Do your work. I will just watch tou.

Me:bathong ba modimo. Keng okare o ntsi ka ditsebe yana? Ga ke go rati. Ntswele ka monyako!

He started walking to where i was sitting and i was starting to get scared. He was now closer to me.

Tshire:you mean you don't feel this? I know you can feel this connection we have.

Me:there's no connection here.

My phone rang and i quickly answered.

Me:please come to my...

He grabbed my phone.

Tshire:there's no need for that. We are just going to have lunch. Is it that hard?

Me:Get away from me.

Tshire:I'm not going to harm you babe. I just can't control this love i have for you.

Ne:my husband is on his way. If finds you here

He held my wrist and it hurt a bit.

Me:stop touching me!

It fell on deaf ears. I was now beyond scared. He

pinned my hands to my back.

NARRATED

"Help!"

She was shouting asking for help because she no longer had the strength to fight him. He pushed her on the desk and started kissing her.

Kea: please...do...don't do this...

Tshire: you're mine! You belong to me. I promise it will not hurt. It will be over soon.

He continued kissing her and just as he was about to put up her dress she kicked him and managed to get out of his hold. She ran to the door but he was fast enough to catch her.

Kea: please im begging you. Don't do this.

Tshire: there's no need to fight this. We both want this. I promise i won't hurt you.

"Mrs Khoza is everything alright?"

Kea:help!

He put his hand on her mouth.

The door was kicked down and he ran out. The securities ran after him while the guards attended to Kea.

Guars:are you alright? Are you hurt?

Kea:i want to go home.

Guard:you can take her to the car while I pack her things.

He helped her balance with his shower and walked her to the car. She was crying and now everyone was out of their offices watching. When they reached the parking lot they waited for the other guard. He came with her handbag running. He took the car keys and unlocked the car then drove off to her place.

Guard:good day sir. Mr Khoza said we must call you if there's something urgent.

Mzwakhe:yes. He's on his way back. Is there

something you wanted?

Guard:something happened. Mrs Khoza..

Mzwakhe:what is it? Is something wrong?

Guard:someone tried to force themself on her.
Luckily we were around the building so we were
able to get to her phone before he could...

Mzwakhe:where are you now? How's she?

Guard:she's crying. We are taking her home. That
bustard was caught. So i wanted to know if we have
to call the police or what?

Mzwakhe:don't call the police. I will send you an
address and he must be taken there. I will meet you
at Mr Khoza's place.

They cut the call. Mzwakhe thought of his wife but
he couldn't call her because she was at work. He
drove to his brother's house and went inside. He
found Kea staring at space with Mam Aggie rubbing
her back.

Mzwakhe:ma how is she?

Mam:she's been zoned out. I think she's still in shock. I made her sugar water.

Mzwakhe:it's okay ma. Khanyisile.

She didn't respond. She just stared at space with tears falling on her face.

Mzwakhe: your husband will be here soon. He has landed and he's driving here now. We are going to take care of this. That bastard will never mess with any woman ever again. He will wish he was dead.

The door opened and Mabutho and Shaka came in.

Bongani:bafo why did you call us here? Is there something wrong?

Mzwakhe:let's go and talk outside. Mama please make sure she's alright.

They went outside to where the guards were.

Mzwakhe:did you do what i told you?

Guard 1:yes sir. He's at that place.

Mzwakhe:okay.

Shaka:what's going on?

Mzwakhe:some bastard tried to force himself on Khanyisile.

Mabutho:what!?

Mzwakhe:yes. Now I want us to deal with him. When I'm done with him he'll know not to mess with any woman in this world. This world doesn't need men like him.

Guard2:another thing...he was following her yesterday also. She told him to stay away but he was persistent until we told him to leave.

Shaka:this bastard messed with the wrong family. Let's go and teach him a lesson now! Nxa. What kind of man doesn't know that no means no?

Mzwakhe:drive behind the guards. I'm coming now.

They left after that. He waited just until Mpendulo arrived and he filled him in on what was going on. After that he left.

Mpendulo:baby.

She looked at him and got off the bed and ran to him. She held him tight and started crying.

Mpendulo:s hhh. I'm here. Everything will be alright. We will get through this. Im here. Come and lie down.

Kea:please don't leave me.

Mpendulo:i promise you. Sleep. I'll be here when you wake up.

She got into bed with him snuggled to him. She held on tight until she fell asleep. But it was a different story for Mpendulo. He didn't sleep. He was up thinking the whole night. Until the wee hours. Matter of fact is that he couldn't really sleep. His wife kept on having nightmares because of what happened. He had to stay up and watch after her. In the morning he woke up and went to prepare a bath for her. He woke her up and she went to the bathroom.

Mpendulo:let me help you.

Kea:I'll manage. Can i be alone?

Mpendulo:I'm not going anywhere. I'm here for you. Remember when I said i will always be here? This is me showing that to you. I will help you go through this. We are in this together.

Kea:do you think it's my fault? If i didn't let him into my office...

Mpendulo:it's nobody's fault but his. What he did was his conniving ways.

They showered and finished then got dressed and after some convincing she finally went to join the others for breakfast.

Sphe:mommy I missed you. Why you didn't eat with us last night?

Kea:mommy was sick. But she's better now.

Sphe:you don't want to eat?

Kea:i will eat.

Mpendulo:continue eating. Mommy is not feeling

well. She will eat in her room okay?

Lisa:okay mom get well.

She nodded and went back to her room.

Mpendulo:here's your food. Please eat so you can be strong. I called Bonolo to come. She's on her way.

Kea:he painted you as this monster and even said one day you will hit me.

Mpendulo:bastard. That's what he is.

Kea:i was so scared. I thought he was going to... he changed. I didn't know that person. He was different.

Mpendulo:hey hey. It's alright.

Kea:did they arrest him?

Mpendulo:no. Jail is too easy for people like him. He'll go to jail today and tomorrow they release him. People like him deserve way more than jail. He's going to wish he never met you.

After that he went out the room and He made a call.

Mpendulo:Mzwakhe.

Mzwakhe:yebo Mkhathini.

Mpendulo:kuhamba njhani lapho.

Mzwakhe:bafo ungayi faki kule nkinga. Ngizo bhekana nayo mina, Shaka no Mabutho.

Mpendulo:ngingayfaki? Usangene wena? Umkami lo ophathekeyo kabi lana manjhe wena uthi ngingayfaki!

Mzwakhe:ngyaxolis a bafo. Erh sizo hlangana khona kwa Ngcobo ke. Lomgulukudu ulapho.

Mpendulo: kulungile ke.

He cut the call and went back inside.

Mpendulo:baby...baby

Kea:mmh

Mpendulo:ngyokbona mangbuya neh? Usendleleni u siswakho uzo hlala nawe.

Kea:mmh.

Mpendulo:ngiyak'thanda.

Kea:i love you too.

Mpendulo:call if you need something.

He bent down and kissed her. He took his jacket and car keys and left. He drove to Mamelodi and upon his arrival he found his brothers waiting for him.

Mpendulo:what are you doing here?

Siya:i heard what happened...

Mpendulo:ngithe u funani lana? Who did you leave your wife and newborn baby with? You know i don't want you getting involved in these things.

Siya:yebo bafo.

Mpendulo:this is the last time you come here. Uphi u Ngcobo?

Mzwakhe:kune nkinga bafo.

Mpendulo:yini manje?

Shaka:lomgulukudu akekho lana. U Ngcobo wamyekela ahamba.

Mpendulo:Ngcobo! Ngcobo!

Ngcobo:yini umsindo kangaka.

Mpendulo:uphi loya mfana?

Ngcobo:he escaped.

Mabutho :kanjalo nje? That bastard was tortured. He couldn't have escaped on his own! Do you know that he's a danger to women out there?

Ngcobo:i left you guys with the keys and everything. It was your responsibility to make sure he doesn't escape. Why didn't you put guards around here?

Mpendulo:Ngcobo we've been working together for a very long time. I'd hate to think that you'd double cross me.

Ngcobo:Mina nawe siphuma kude Mkhathini. I'd never do that to you. I'll have my boys look out for him. Nginawe.

Mpendulo:s ure.

They all get into their cars and drive off.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:05] : ***STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 34

At Keatlaretsi's house

Bonolo:let me go and cook. You've been sleeping the whole time.

Kea:I'm fine.

Bonolo:okay. At least come and sit in the lounge while I cook. Come.

She got up and almost fell.

Bonolo:have you had anything to eat?

She touched her forehead.

Bonolo:you're burning up and your eyes are red.

Kea:i have a headache.

Bonolo:sorry. I will bring grandpa for you. Let's go.

They went to the lounge and Bonolo made a sandwich for her.

Bonolo:eat first then you can drink the grandpa.

Kea:thanks.

Bonolo:so tell me. Where did you meet that guy?
Why was he at your office?

Kea:you think i called him?

Bonolo:of course not. I just want to understand this.

Kea:he's Rapelangs cousin. I met him while i was there. Ne a mpatla ka mo gana. I could see gore something ga se right kayena. I mean every time i told him i love my husband and I am married he

would change. He would be angry. Even shouted at my child when she didn't want to go playing with other kids.

Bonolo:he's crazy. Who does that?

Kea:I'm just happy that i was always with my baby. Who knows what he could have done?

Bonolo:I'm just happy you left that place in time. Before he could show his true colours. Don't worry. He'll rot in jail.

Kea:they didn't call the police.

Bonolo:what!? They just let him go?

Kea: Mpendulo said yena and your husband will take care of it.

Bonolo:have you noticed something about your husband?

Kea:like what?

Bonolo:i don't know man. Something off maybe. Sometimes Mzwakhe acts somehow. Do you think their work is legit? I know they own companies and the family business but I don't know man. I don't

think it's that only. And now they don't involve the police in this.

Kea:gwa tshwana. The police would have just said he didn't do anything so they can't arrest him.

Bonolo:yeah so they decided to take the law into their hands.

Kea:you think they are criminals?

Bonolo:i didn't say this so that you can start fighting with your husband. I know you.

Kea:i won't do that. Tshirelets o said something. A re Mpendulo is a monster and one day he's going to hit me. A re he attacked him until he broke his hand.

Bonolo:i hope you don't believe that. Mpendulo would never do something like that to you. That guy would say anything just to get you.

Kea:i don't believe him.

Bonolo:it doesn't look like you mean it...your husband would never hit you okay?...um let me go and check on the pots. Yeah!

Mpendulo:sawubona Bonolo..

Bonolo:hi.

She went to the kitchen.

Mpendulo:it's good to see that you're out of bed.

Kea:um yeah.

Mpendulo:so what was your sister talking about?

Kea:oh that. She was just assuring me not to believe what Tshirelets o said about you. Not that I believe him. I know you're not like that.

Mpendulo:mmh. He escaped from where they had kept him.

Kea:as in you don't know where he is? Oh my! This person is dangerous than I thought. What if he goes after the kids at school?

Mpendulo :he won't do that. We have people looking for him.

Me: I have to ask my cousin to help.

Mpendulo:your cousin?

Kea:yes. Pule. He will help look for him.

Bonolo:did i hear you correctly? Don't do that. You know he will want something in return. Besides yena le Rapelang are back together. Do you think Rapelang will let him help you against her cousin?

Kea:what do you want me to do?

Mpendulo:don't worry yourself about this.

Bonolo:and don't try and call Pule. He might tell Rapelang and she warns him.

Mpendulo:she's right. Right now we are looking for information about him.

Kea:what are you going to do when you find him?

Mpendulo:tell Mzwakhe to come to the study when he arrives.

Kea:he didn't answer me. What if he's going to kill him?

Bonolo:it doesn't matter. He deserves it. Stop worrying about this.

Kea:what if he gets arrested?

Bonolo:stop crying about this. You have to be strong and not this cry baby. Yes. If i don't tell you who will? I'm sorry but it's the truth. And no leaving! If it happens that they do something to him i don't want to hear you say you're leaving. Because i know thats what you're going to do. You can't just leave every time something that you don't agree with happens. You sit down with your husband and talk it out. Everything he does is for you. For your safety. So don't question him on how he's going to handle this. I hope you are listening to what I'm saying.

Kea:i hear you. Do you think I'm a bad wife? Every time something happens i react quickly and feel like judging him.

Bonolo:it's good that you noticed it yourself. Now you know you have to fix it.

She just nodded.

Mzwakhe :hi Khanyis ile. Unjani?

Kea:I'm fine and you?

Mzwakhe:hay siyazama.

Kea:why? Is something wrong?

Mzwakhe:angazi.

Kea:oh...your brother said you must join him in the study.

After that he rushed out.

Kea: o shap?

BONOLO:yeah.

Kea:what did he do?

Bonolo:he's freaking me out with baby talks. He says Im pregnant and i can't have that now.

Kea:why?

Bonolo:it hasn't even been a year since i started working.

Kea:I'm sure you will manage.

Mpendulo comes down looking as if something bad happened.

Mpendulo:s thandwa sami there's something i need

to tell you.

Kea:what's going on?

Mpendulo:i just received a call from your uncle. It's your father...

Kea:what is it?

Mpendulo:he passed on. With your stepmother. They were in an accident.

MPENDULO

Things are really not working at all. When I try to fix this something else happens. Now I'm driving to North West. Khanyisile hasn't cried ever since I told her what's happening. She just stares into space. But I can see that she's broken. Her and her father were very close. The bond that she had with her father was very strong. When we arrive she's the first to get out of the car. I get the kids out.

Me:Lindani make sure they don't go too far.

Lindani:okay baba

I could hear a cry when I got in. I looked everywhere and i couldn't find my wife. I went upstairs and she was in Oratile's room.

Me:baby please. You'll make him cry more.

Kea:my dad is gone. Who do i have in this world?
My dad was always there for me.

Me:you still have me. Your family. Your uncles and aunties. Baby your brother needs you to be strong for him. Be strong for your brother. If you cry like this what do you think he will do? He's so young and you're the one he looks up to.

Kea:this hurt. My father didn't have to die just yet. His son is still young.

"If not him then who? Who did you want to die? It was his time. I'm sorry but what you're saying is not making sense. God decides who to take on his own time. We do not question that. "

That's the stupid cousin who has no filter.

Me:wena phuma la. If you have nothing better to

say just shut your mouth. Can't you see that she's hurt?

Mannono:iketle pele rra. This is not your house. You won't kick me out.

Is she drunk perhaps? Who talks like this at a funeral? I've never seen someone who's so stupid like her.

Me:if i ever hear you talking that rubbish again i will kick you out of here. Can you get out of here and go do something with your time? Like helping with cooking or something?

Mannono:i wasn't here for you. I'm here to call Oratile. His brothers have arrived.

She left after clicking her tongue.

Me:baby go and lie down in your room. Your aunty is coming and she will be with you while I help around here.

I held her hand and went to her room with her.

Me:i will let your aunt know you're here when she

arrives. And your sisters are on the way so you won't be alone here okay? I love you.

I kissed her forehead and went out. I hate to leave her alone but i have to. Nothing is happening here. So i have to start doing something or there'll be a delay. I haven't seen any family member arriving because apparently they leave far from here and still have to maybe look for transport. The only one who lives around here is Bonolo's father and naye he's not around at the moment. Only her mother is the one who's around and on her way here. Bonolo's father was in Limpopo when he called me. So Bonolo and Mzwakhe went to fetch him. I see Bonolo's mother as i exit the room.

Me:good day ma. She's in her room.

B.mom:ka leboga mokgwenyana.

I proceeded to the lounge and i find Oratile sitting with some men i assume are his brothers.

Me:sanibonani.

Guy:dumela. These are my brothers. Vuyo, Themhani and Mogomotsi. Nna ke Nare.

Me:okay. We can leave now and fetch them from the hospital. But let me just get something quickly.

I went back to my wife's room. She was just sitting on the bed with her aunt.

Me:babe we are going to the hospital to fetch your parents. Please give me the details about their funeral cover.

Kea: i don't know where he kept everything.

Aunty:as soon as her uncle gets here he will give them to you. He knows where everything is.

Me:okay. What do we do now? Do i wait for your uncle?

Aunty:Keatlaretsi a ga o itsi pin ya safe? O ka nna wa lebella mo yona.

She nodded and went to some room which is like a study. She came back with the papers. I took them and left.

Me: Oratile you can go to the cottage. Lindani is there with the others.

Nare: will you be fine with them?

He nodded.

Me:he'll be fine. He's used to them.

We left the yard. People were starting to arrive. Rapula's father asked to go with us. I couldn't say no. The old man was his best friend.

Me:about your mother,is she also going to be buried around here or you'd prefer to take her to her home?

Nare:we'll bury her here. It will save us a lot of work.

R.father:he would have loved for his wife to be buried here so you're doing a good thing.

Me:i don't know where this hospital is so when we get to town please direct me. While at it please call these funeral palour people. So that they can fetch the bodies.

We arrived at Job Shimankane Tabane hospital. That's where they passed on. Did every paper work and the funeral palour people came. I drove behind them just so i can finalise everything and just wait for the day of the funeral. Doing this is a lot of work. Moving up and down going places. But I'd do

anything for my wife. We got there and went inside to do everything.

Man:the funeral plan that he was paying for is a package of a coffin that costs R10 000, food and an amount of R20 000. Also transport.

Me:oh. Can we see the caskets?

They showed us the booklet.

Me:okay. We'd like this casket. For both of them.

Vuyo:that's very expensive.

Man:sir you will have to pay a lot of money for that, let alone two.

Me:no problem. Get them those two. I will pay. Thank you for everything. We will let you know about everything else.

R.dad: what you're doing is very good. You're a good man. I'm sure my friend will rest in peace knowing that he left his daughter in good hands.

I looked at him. I thought maybe he'd hate me.

Me:I'm just doing what i have to. My wife is really

not coping so i have to make sure everything runs smoothly.

R.dad:hold onto her. She's a very good woman. And she's lucky to have you.

When we got to the Bogatsu residence the yard was full. It was full of people and some of them i didn't know them. But it is expected for the yard to be full because it's a funeral of two families. So both families are here. Proceeding in i find my brothers sitting with other men. I greet them and go to the cottage. I have to check on the kids. I can't just let Lindani take care of them alone.

Me:where are the kids?

Lindani:Maka Sbani took them.

Me:okay. Ni right nina?

Lindani:yebo baba.

Me:call me if you need anything.

Ayanda:where's mommy? I want to see her.

Me:mommy is not feeling fine. She's sleeping now.
Don't cry. Come.

Ayanda has become so attached to his mother.
Luyanda was the one who was more close to her.
But now all of them are attached to her. Ever since
she came back if they don't see her they start
thinking she left again.

Me:don't cry okay? When mommy wakes up i will
come and call you.

He nodded and i went out.

NARRATED

DAY BEFORE THE FUNERAL

it was in the evening when they called to let them
know that they are about to reach. People started

singing with each person holding a lit candle.
MaKhoza has been by Keatlaretsi's side as she
couldn't stop crying.

Bonolo:the here is here.

Mannono:Keatlaretsi go to the other room and stay
there.

Nolo:why?

Mannono:she's pregnant and she's not supposed to
see the coffin. Even tomorrow she's not supposed
to go to the cemetery.

Nolo:who told you that rubbish you're spewing out of
your mouth?

Mannono:I'm helping her here. Ga re batle a tshole
serathane.

Nolo:who told you she's pregnant?

Mannono:the way she gives birth i wouldn't be
surprised if she's pregnant. That man is making her
a baby making machine for sure.

Nolo:firstly stop talking rubbish before I make you. If
someone must not be here it should be you. If i hear

you talk shit again i will deal with you. Serathane ke bana ba gago ba ba se nang le bo rre. Deal with that before coming here to judge Keatlaretsi. She can take care of her kids unlike you. Now get out of here!

B.mom:Bonolo! Ako emenyana tlhe mma. This is a funeral. Don't do this.

Nolo:mama Kea is hurting and Mannonno is taking advantage of that. She knows that she wont answer her. That's why she's acting like this.

B.mom:just let her be.

Mannonno left furious. People gathered as two caskets were being brought in.

DAY OF THE FUNERAL

KEATLARETSI

i never thought this would be me. Burying my father.

My tears can't stop falling. People keep on going to the front to talk about him. I'm paying attention to that. I'm just asking myself how i am going to go on with life.

Farai:Rudo let's go. It's time to say your last words to him.

Me:go without me.

Farai:you have to do this.

Aunt:come Keatlaretsi.

I get up and follow her. I feel numb. They give me a mic but every time i open my mouth no word comes out. I give the mic to Farai and go back to my seat.

It sinks in that my father is gone the moment we get in the cars to go to the cemetery. I'm an orphan. I have no parents. We get there and they do everything and after that we go back home. It's busy as they are serving people. I go to my room and lay on my bed.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:05] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 35

KEATLARETSI

I woke up under my husband's arms. I stared at him. I'm grateful for this man. If it was not for him i don't think i would have been able to go through my father's death. It was very hard but he made everything bearable. I'm blessed with a good one. I took his hand off and he opened his eyes.

Mpe:where are you going so early?

Me:bathroom.

Mpe:come back fast. I want to cuddle with you.

I kissed his cheek and went to the bathroom. I did my business then run water for my shower. The door opened.

Mpe:why didn't you tell me you were going to take a shower?

He took off his clothes and went in. I sighed and joined. We took a shower then went to get dressed.

Mpe:why shower so early?

Me:don't tell me you forgot? Today Lindani is getting his results. So i want to be there when he gets them.

He hugged me.

Mpe:with everything you've been going through you still remembered this day. You're a good mother. I appreciate everything you do for our family.

Me:i love you.

Mpe:i love you Mrs Khoza.

I held his hand and we went to Lindani's room. We knocked and he opened for us. He looked tired.

Mpe:did you sleep?

He shook his head.

Mpe:i told you that they can even send the sms at 5am. We could have gone to get a newspaper for you.

Lindani:no it's almost 5 now. I'll wait for the sms.

Shame. My poor baby was panicking. He was moving around the house. When his phone beeped he ran to it. He smiled. I knew he'd do well.

Me:and?

Lindani:i got 5 As.

Mpe:that's good! We are proud of you.

Me:congratulations.

Lindani:im happy but i wanted 8As.

Me:I'm very proud of you. Your hard work paid off.

Mpe:yes. And with those results you can go to any

university you want.

Me:you and your dad will go and fetch your statement and i will cook a feast for you. We are celebrating today.

He hugged me. I saw him wiping his tears after the hug. He started crying. His father hugged him and rubbed his back.

Lindani:thank you for everything. If it wasn't for you two maybe I wouldn't be here. You're the reason i turned out to be this person that I am. I love you.

Mpe:we love you too okay? Now go and take a shower then we'll fetch your statement.

Me:you know what? I think i will not cook. We are going to eat out. Choose any place of your choice and we'll go there. This is your day. You can have anything.

He went to the bathroom. Mpendulo hugged me.

Mpe:thank you.

There was no need to explain. I know why he was

thanking me. After they left i bathed Sphe and Thando while Lisa was taking a shower . The nannies were busy with the triplets. Then i went to Oratile and Mngobis room. Oratile will stay with us and attend school here. He'll be in grade 11. My brother has grown. He chose to stay with me. Nare wanted to take him but he chose to stay here.

Me:boys wake up. Time to bath.

Oratile:it's still early.

Mngobi:mommy just 30 minutes please.

Me:i didn't tell you to play games all night. do you want to stay while everyone is going out?

Mngobi:we are going out!?

Oratile:okay we are up now.

They ran to the shower. These boys. I went to the twins. They sleep alone now. But most of the time when we wake up we find them in either of their brothers room. Or in the girls room. They change these rooms.

Twins:good morning mommy.

Me:morning. Come here. How are you?

Twins:we are good.

Mxm. I laughed.

Me:let's go bath. We are going out.

Twins:love you mommy.

Me:love you too. Now give me my kisses.

They kiss me and i follow them to the bathroom. I started bathing them and finished. We all got ready and waited. I heard a car park and they came in. Lindani gave me his statement.

Lindani:mom don't you think they robbed me? I mean look at Geography i got 79. Then 77 for Afrikaans and 76 for life sciences. I could have gotten As in everything.

Me:especially on that 79. But still. You did exceptionally well.

Mpe:we've booked where he wants us to go. At 11 we are leaving. We are still waiting for Sphamandla. They haven't started handing out statements at his school.

He went upstairs. I followed him.

Mpe:sthandwa saam u right ngempela? Like really really good?

Me:yes im fine.

Mpe:okay. It's just that you've been distant. I can get a psychologist for you if you want.

Me:I'm fine. Yes i still miss my father a lot but im fine. It is what it is.

He bent down to kiss me. I put my arms around his neck.

Mpe:can i make love to my wife?

I smiled nodding. We haven't been intimate since last year when my father passed away. He's been so patient with me since then. I felt my dress fall to the floor.

Mpe:you're so beautiful.

His hands were all over my body caressing my body. He unclipped my bra and it followed the dress. He picked me up and put me on the bed. He took off his clothes and boxer. I swallowed hard. He came in

between my legs. He continued to kiss me then i felt his hands take off my underwear.

Mpe:look at me.

I opened my eyes and looked at him. His eyes were full of love and there i knew that he is my life. I flinched when i felt him get in.

Mpe:I'll be gentle.

He said that still going in. It's been a while so i felt some pain. And it doesn't help that he's big.

Mpe:relax okay? I will move slowly until you adjust.

He started moving slowly but i could still feel the pain. He continued with his thrusts until i started feeling the pleasure. He put his arms underneath me then upped his pace. I made sure not to make noise even though jt was hard.

Mpe:you are so perfect!

After a few thrusts i came hard and he followed suit. We went for another round and this time he was fast. I couldn't contain my moans anymore.

Thankfully our room is soundproof. I was calling his name and saying something that i didn't even understand. I came hard but he didn't stop. After i felt his seeds coming into me.

Mpe: i missed you so much my wife.

Me:i missed you too.

Mpe:and I'm still going to show you how much i missed you. We still have 2 hours to go.

Me:mmh.

When we came back home i went straight to bed. Mpendulo took Sphamandla home. That's Muzi's son. I was sleeping with my three baby boys when my phone rang. They were even up and playing with each other.

Me:hello.

Voice:hello. Kea please can you do something for

me?

It was Rapelang

Me:okay. How can i help you?

Rapelang:please tell your husband to let my cousin go. He called me scared saying they are going to kill him.

She sounded like she was crying.

Me:i don't know anything about that. My husband was looking for him but he vanished into thin air. Do you know why he was looking for him? Your cousin tried to rape me.

Rapelang:please Keatlaretsi! He didn't do it did he? He called me scared today and said they found him! If you ever cared...i helped you with a place to stay. Please do this for me.

Wow. I didn't know I'd have to repay that.

Me:my husband is not a killer. But you know what? If they really found him then he's going to jail. What if he comes back and this time he succeeds?

Rapelang:but he didn't rape you! Please I'm begging

you.

Me:im sorry.

I cut the call. Hiw dare she say that? He should go to jail and I'm not going to spare him just because he's her cousin!

Lisa:mom can i sleep with you?I promise i will be quiet.

Me:okay.

She looked at me. I knew something was coming. There's no way this child can keep quiet.

Lisa:why does...

Me:you said tou will keep quiet.

Lisa:i just want to chat with my mommy. You have to chat with me.

Me:okay Lisakhanya. What do you want?

Lisa:when am i going to University like bhuti Lindani?

Me:when you're done with high school. If you study hard you will go to university.

Lisa:when am i getting a laptop?

Me:when you're in high school.

Lisa:i want it now please.

Me:you'll get it next year. Sleep and stop making noise.

She kissed me and smiled.

Lisa:i love you.

Me:i love you too.

Kids! But this one is too much. It was now at night. My husband wasn't coming back. We even had dinner and went to sleep. I woke up from someone touching me.

Mpe:go back to sleep.

Me:what time is it?

Mpe:11pm

Me:where were you?

Mpe:sleep. We'll talk tomorrow.

Me:did you kill Him?

Mpe:sleep. We will talk tomorrow. Who are you even talking about?

Me:Tshireletso. Rapelang called crying asking me to stop you from killing him. I know you're not a killer. But I just want you to tell me.

Mpe:i didn't kill Him but I taught him a lesson. He's in police custody now.

I turned and attacked him with a hug.

Mpe:hey. He won't ever try anything. You're safe.

Me:i just...if you had killed him and you go to jail i wouldn't take it. I would be left alone. You're all i have. I love you so much.

Mpe:you're my life. I wouldn't want to leave you. Ngiyak'thanda. I wouldn't do something that would make you and our children to be left alone.

NARRATED

Muzi: i hope we won't have to come back to this

issue. Your wife has been through a lot.

Mpe:yeah. And if she were to find out that i almost killed that bastard she'd be angry with me. Imagine if i had killed him. She'd leave me for real this time.

Muzi:no. J ust be glad you came back to your senses. Now your wife can live peacefully.

Kea:good morning.

She said wiping her tears. She took a bottle of water and left.

Muzi:what did you do?

Mpe:does it mean I'm responsible every time she cries?

Muzi:what's wrong with her?

Mpe: that bastards cousin...the one who helped her with a place to stay. She's been calling and shouting and blaming her for what's happening.

Muzi:what are you doing to solve this?

Mpe:i told her to block her number. But kuyafana. They might meet and she starts swearing at her.

Muzi: i will take care of it.

Mpe:can you believe she told her to get over it because nothing happened?

Muzi:don't stress about this. I will sort it out. Go and talk to your wife. You will find me in the study. I want us to discuss something.

Mpe:babe why were you crying?

Kea:she told Pule and now he's angry and says i must drop the charges.

Mpe:that's not happening.

Kea:i can't believe i even thought of asking for his help. I have to go home.

Mpe:why? Did something happen?

Kea:Pule has made himself a boss in my father's house. He has moved in. Pule is manipulative. He might change the title deed to his name. I didn't work hard just for him to come and get everything. My father left that house for Oratile.

Mpe:who gave him the key? Why would they let him move in when they know the type of person he is?

Kea: I don't know. My uncle called asking me if i told Pule and his wife to move in to my father's house.

Mpe: this guy is starting to be too much work. We will go tomorrow.

Kea:you don't have to come with me.

Mpe:i am going with you. I told you i will be with you in everything you go through.

Kea:the thing is i don't know who will look after the house. There'll be no one staying there. And criminals might break in and steal things. I would rent it out but where will i put everything?

Mpe:isn't there someone that you trust who can stay there?

Kea:my aunts have their own homes and i only trust my uncles. And they can't just leave their houses so that they can look after my father's house.

Mpe:don't you maybe have cousins you trust?

Kea:no. I don't trust any of my cousins from my

father's side.

Mpe:don't stress about this. We will see what to do.

At Rustenburg

The following day

When they arrived they found cars parked outside.

Kea:what are these cars doing here?

Mpe:let's get in and find out.

They went in and there were man sitting in the lounge talking loudly. Rapelang was cooking in the kitchen.

Mpe:gentlemen.

Pule:you don't knock. You just get in like you're getting into a toilet.

Mpe:I'm not here to fight. I come peacefully.

Pule:so what do you want?

Mpe:i should be asking you that question. And who

are these people?

Pule:that's none of your business.

Mpe:it's my business when it involves my wife. Who gave you the right to do as you please in this house?

Pule:just because you're married to that naive cousin of mine it doesn't mean you have a say here.

Mpe: and I'm here to tell you to get out of here.

Where did you get the house keys? And what's with the car outside? What is it doing outside?

Pule: monna tlhe a ke o eme pele. A o waga Bogatsu wena?

Mpe:I'm not going to let you do as you please here. Don't you have your own house? I had to leave my work to come here because you're stressing my wife. Now i want you to be out of here by tomorrow. This is not your house. My wife didn't work hard just for you to come and take everything just like that! She built this house for her father.

Pule:this is a family house and you have no say.

Mpe:can't you work for your own things? Now

here's what is going to happen. You're going to kick these people out and start packing your things. You're not welcome here.

Pule:i am not going anywhere.

Guy: my man you will find us at the company. Then we will view it when you come.

Mpe:um what company are you talking about?

Guy: BM construction. It's on sale and we're interested in buying.

Mpe:who's selling it?

Guy:Mr Bogatsu here is representing Mrs Khoza. So we are interested in buying. That's what we were negotiating.

Mpe:oh. I am Mr Khoza. And i didn't know my wife was selling her company.

Pule: man me and you are going to have problems if you interfere with my plans. I'm warning you.

Mpe:and I'm warning you to stop all this rubbish. My wife is not selling anything. Gentlemen you may leave. This scammer doesn't own BM construction

and he's not representing my wife. She's not selling the company.

Guy:but we...

Mpe:that's all. You can leave now.

They got up and took their stuff and left.

"Babe everything has been...."

Pule:what are you doing here?

Kea:bathong! Ke fo gae fa. I should be asking you the same thing.

Pule:there's no one staying here so why can't i stay here?

Mpe:did you tell him to sell your company? Those men who just left were here to sign the deal of buying BM construction.

Pule: this man will take everything and leave you broke. Rapula was way more better than him!

Kea:yoh! What does Rapula have to do with this!?
Who told you I'm selling my company? Even if i was selling why would I ask tsotsi ya go tshwana le

wena to represent me? Stop trying to control everything! Get out of my father's house! Who gave you the keys?

Pule:your uncle. Your father's things are in the storeroom.

Kea:you're lying man! You lied to him and said i told you to stay here! You've been staying here for months and i knew nothing!

Pule:are you turning on me because of this stupid man of yours?

Kea:I'm not turning on anyone. I just don't want you here. Leave! You took all the pictures down and changed how everything was. Get out of here!

Mpe:a truck is waiting outside to move your things. Pack your things.

Pule:you are going to regret this Keatlalets! You're not a Bogatsu anymore but you're fighting for Bogatsu things!

Kea:i would understand if it was Oratile fighting for this house but you!?! You're not staying here!

Pule:we will see. And stop shouting. I'm trying to concentrate here.

Kea:I'm not leaving this place until he's out.

Mpe:I'll be back.

He went out the house and left the two cousins arguing.

Pule: are we going to let an outsider make us fight?

Kea:he's my husband,not an outsider. Ha se nna ke rileng o be mahlalela nna.

She didn't see him but he slapped her.

Pule:i won't be disrespected by you. Get out of here! This is not your mother's house.

Mpe:pack everything into the boxes and take them out. Don't leave anything that belongs to this dog.

Pule:are you talking about me?

Mpe:yebo mgodoyi. I see you think you can walk all over her head because she's a woman. That's not going to happen. You're leaving this place!

Rapelang:Keatlaretsi i gave you a place to stay when he was showing you flames and now you do this?

Kea:if i knew you would hold it against me i wouldn't have bothered coming to you. You two didn't even care to let me know that you're staying here. My father wouldn't allow this if he was alive!

Rapelang:so where do you expect us to go?

Mpe:doesn't he have a house?

Kea:did you know he was conniving behind my back to sell my company?

Rapelang:....

Kea:wow

Mpe:your uncle is coming. He'll see what to do with this situation.

Kea:you like acting as if you're in charge of everything. First it was your sister saying my company is a family company and she can do anything she wants now it's you. I hope you're happy about this. I'm going to fire her because i

know you're in this together.

Mpe:u right Khanyis ile?

Kea:i have a headache.

Mpe:hlala phantsi ngiku thathele amanzi.

Pule:that's what you're good at. Running around for her. Why do you think Rapula left her? She ordered him around.

Kea:did you see me doing that? You have a lot to say about him.were you two in cahoots to steal from me?

Pule:nxa. Stop being stupid.

Kea: you're the stupid one. Did you think you were going to getaway with this?

He raised his hand but Mpendulo saw him quickly.

Mpe:not with my wife. You've gone too far now. Get out.

He dragged him out even though he was fighting.

Mpe:wait for your things there.

KEATLARETSI

After uncle arrived he talked to us and also told Pule not to do what he did. I just hope he's not going to try his tricks again. Now we are only left with the trouble of looking for someone to look after the house. My uncle will keep on checking. Ntate Moletsane too. Even in my company i had to tell Rubben to never let Pule inside the premises again. And that they must keep an eye on Mannonno.

BONOLO

Now we are in KZN. It's gogo's birthday so we had to go to Her village. The way they love her! The yard is full and it's only family. I didn't believe it when I Mzwakhe told me that she's not his father's mother, but his grandmother's young sister. She raised his father and their siblings after her sister

died. After the biological grandmother passed she volunteered to take care of them. That's why they love her like this. She does have children of her own and grandchildren. That's why this yard is full. We have been cooking since morning. Cooking for hundreds of people here. I'm even starting to feel dizzy.

Kea: sit down. We will finish here or else you will fall.

Me:I've been standing since morning. Even my feet hurt.

Kea:is the baby alright?

Me:yeah.

Bongi:talk while it's still early if something is wrong.

Me:no. I'm fine.

Voice:greetings ladies.

We replied to him and he asked for more traditional beer for the men outside.

Man: so who's this?

Sethu: Thandiwe.

Man:Thandiwe wakuphi? Oh usisi wakho Khanyisile?

Kea:yeah.

I could see Kea doesn't like this man. I wonder what's the story.

Ndoni:yoh Sizwe uThandiwe is Mzwakhe's wife. I hope you get rid of that smile.

Sizwe: ngenzeni manjhe?

Mpumi:she's off limits. First it was Khanyisile now it's Thandiwe. Hayibo. Stop what you're doing. It won't end well for you.

Sizwe:hay angihambe ke. Kwakuhle ukuk bona Thandiwe omuhle.

Ndoni: Sizwe you better stop before I call Shaka here.

Sizwe:bye.

He left.

Ndoni:make sure he's away from you. What's he even thinking? You're his sister in law!

Me:calm down Ndoni.

Ndoni:no. I had to tell him off. Or he wouldn't stop chasing after you. That's how he is.

Me:I'm going to lie down. Wake me up when you're done.

I went to my room and i was surprised when Sizwe was walking besides me. What's wrong with this man?

Me:why are you following me?

Sizwe:relax. I won't do anything to you. I just want to talk.

Me:you better leave if you know what's good for you. Before i call my husband.

I got into my room and locked it. I called my husband then lay on the bed. I unlocked when i heard a knock.

Mzwakhe:are you alright?

Me:I'm fine. I'm just feeling dizzy and tired.

Mzwakhe:did you eat?

I shook my head.

Me:i will eat when everyone eat. I just want to sleep.
But I'm scared of being alone.

32 cont

Mzwakhe:scared of what?

Me: Sizwe was asking me questions and when I came here he was following me. I don't know why.

Mzwakhe:that idiot! Lay down. I will bring you food then talk to him.

Me:i wasn't telling you this so you can fight though.

Mzwakhe:Thandiwe ngiyalwa lana? I have to protect you from that lunatic. This is all aunt Zinzile's doing. She has started again.

Me:why does she always do this?

Mzwakhe:she's bitter. I will solve this. Don't worry.

Me:is something wrong with him? He doesn't look fine. I know he scared me but maybe you should reach out to him. Find out what's going on?

Mzwakhe:and you see why i fell in love with you? You're a kind person. Beautiful inside out.

I smiled.

Mzwakhe:lala ke. When we are about to eat i will send someone to call you.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:05] : ***STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 36

Keatlaretsi

Me:babe look at how they are talking as if they

make sense.

Mpe:they understand each other. But i love their bond. We make beautiful babies huh?

Me:mmh. But do they all have to look like you? Not even one looking like me?

Mpe:well the next one will look like you.

Me:that's if we have another one. I almost died with these three. And i can't believe they are a year and a few months old.

Mpe:yeah. And they are good. There's nothing to worry about. They've grown to be so strong for premature babies.

Me:put the nanny cam down. These days you're always watching them. I even end up thinking there's something wrong.

Mpe:yes there's something. But don't freak out. There's someone after this family but don't worry. Im taking care of it.

Me:i trust you. You always take care of us.

Mpe:in that case please don't go out if I'm not there.

It's risky.

Me:today I'm going to Lisa's dance. So you will also come?

Mpe:the twins have soccer. The driver and a guard will go with you.

Me:okay. Do you think maybe Pule sent people to come and terrorize us? Don't forget he's angry that we interfered with his plans.

Mpe:no it's not him. Please don't go anywhere without the guard. I don't want to lose you again.

Me:i don't want to lose you too. And i promise to never leave you.

Mpe:I'm happy to hear that.

I kissed him.

Me:i love you Mkhathini.

He smiled. Why does it make him happy to be called by his clan name? I don't know. He was smiling from ear. I was even getting shy.

Me:what?

Mpe:nothing. I'm just admiring my beautiful wife.
Umuhle yezwa?

Me:ngiya bonga.

Mpe:i have a surprise for you. But you'll get it later.

Me:these days I'm getting surprised.

Mpe:go before Lisa comes.

I know how impatient that girl is. She's already waiting in the lounge. Thando and Sphe are with her.

Me:and these two?

Sphe:we are going dancing.

I laugh.

Lisa:they are going to cheer for me.

Me:yoh let's go.

We all go to the car and drive to her dance classes. I see the other kids already dressed and ready. Even their parents are here. Lisa goes where she's supposed to dress up and the guard follows her. I hold the other two as they want to follow her.

Thando:mommy we want to go.

Me:she's coming back.

Voice:hi. Is this seat taken?

Me:no.

Guy:ah let me sit here. How are you? I'm J ohn.

Me:I'm good and you? I'm Keatlaretsi. Nice to meet you J ohn.

J ohn:I'm good. Nice to meet you too. I take it you're here for your daughter?

Me:yeah. She just went to change.

J ohn:okay.

This J ohn can talk .he kept on asking questions.

Lisa came back to us.

Lisa:mommy cheer for me and take videos.

Me:okay go. They will start before you.

Lisa:you two. I'm counting on you.

This child is crazy. Really crazy. She ran back to the stage.

John:so that's your daughter.

Me:mm.

The guard was sitting next to me and he looked at me.

Me:which one is your daughter there?

John:the one in yellow. She doesn't like it when I come here but i do it anyway. Just to show her my support. Me and her mother separated so she's badmouthing me to her.

Me:oh. Sorry about that.

The girls started cheering. Wow. These kids dance so well. They do it with passion. I took videos as madam wanted. John took out chips and wanted to give to Thando and Sphe.

Simon:Here.

Simon is our driver. He gave them chips before they could accept John's. I smiled at John and concentrated on the dancers. After they were done we clapped for them. In a swift speed Thando already had Sphe and running to the stage. Oh God.

I never thought this would happen.

Simon:s it. I will fetch them.

He followed them.

J ohn:you have beautiful kids.

Me:thanks .

They came back laughing.

Me:baby you don't go to the stage okay?

Sphe:i want to dance.

Me:you must join first then you can be allowed. Sit down.

We waited for Lisa and left when she arrived. As we were leaving i saw someone pass and my eyes itched for a moment.

Simon:Kea you don't just talk with anyone. Your life is in danger.

Me:i was just making a conversation.

Simon :that man had no daughter there. He was just lying to get your attention.

Guard:take everything out of your handbag. Just do as i say.

I did that and he took it.

Guard:you see this? He bugged it and he's listening to everything we're saying now.

He broke the little device and threw it away with the handbag.

Me:why did you throw the bag then.

Simon:maybe there are still more. People are dangerous. Don't just be friendly to everyone.

Yoh. Now I'm thankful my kids did not take those chips. We drove to the mall

Simon:go to any shop and buy clothes and ask to change there and get rid of the ones you're wearing.

I did not ask anything. I did as he said then drove home.

Me:dumelang mama.

Mme Maggie:dumela ngwanake. O thotsi sentle?

Me:eya mama. Ne ba le yang bashimane?

Mme Maggie:ne ba siame. Ntse ba tshameka. Mme yanong ba robetsi ge ba fetsa go ja.

Me:okay mama. O ka nna wa ikhutsa kamoso.

Maybe o ye gae for beke. O sa tshwenyega. O tla fitlhela mmereko wago o le teng.

Mme Maggie:go siame ge.

Me:you do a lot for us. We wouldn't survive all these kids without you.

She smiled.

Me:the driver will drive you tomorrow.

We are going home tomorrow so it's only fair that

she goes home and be with her family. I'll always be grateful for her. From my first kids until now she's been here and there haven't been any problems. And i will keep her until she feels that she's ready for retirement.

.....

The following day everyone left for Durban. I don't know why we were going but my husband just said everyone has to be there. But i know most of the time if we are all going then it means something serious must be going on. We arrived and there was chaos when we got there. Shaka was ready to kill his mother. I don't even know what to call her cos it turned out that she isn't his mother. I even went to our house because i couldn't deal with all the noise that was going on there. And even if i stayed i know i would be nursing my feelings right now. Aunty Zinzile is also there at the house. So i decided to come here with the triplets and just spend my time

alone. I even ordered a pizza and watched tv. But that did not last long. The door opened and my husband bugged in. He looked angry. He took the remote and switched off the tv and stood in front of me.

Mpe:why did you come here without telling me?

Me:i didn't know i had to report first before coming here.

Mpe:don't give me that! I told you there's someone out baying for us but you leaving without the guard. And when my parents ask where my wife is and i don't know where she is? How do you think they'll see me like?

Me:I'm sorry.

Mpe:how's your sorry going to help? Sometimes you don't think! What if those people knew you are here and came for you? Can you just for once stop doing something without thinking?

Me:so now i do things without thinking?

Mpe:what do you want me to think when you just up

and come here without letting me know?

Me:oh I'm sorry i came without asking. You don't know what i go through at home. Your aunt is always on my case telling me how I'm not good for you. She's even recruited your other aunts to be against me. So you want me to stay there and take all her insults? I have feelings. I feel hurt.

Mpe:your sister is there nje. Why didn't you just go and stay with her and leave them?

Me:what happens when she's not there? I have to stand for myself!

Me:then why didn't you call me and tell me? You should have waited until i got back.

Me:oh i should have waited and took all their comments about me and how bad i am for you? Let them compare me to the wife that they wanted you to have? I couldn't just stay there and let them have fun insulting me and laughing at me while body shaming me. In fact I'm not going back. I'll stay here. Here i don't have to listen to people telling me how fat i am. I had enough of that when i was young. So

just let me be. You can go back. I will stay here until it's afternoon. You can call the guard here.

Mpe:and why didn't you tell me all of that?

Me:i can't tell you everything that your aunt does because i know you will fight and she'll blame me. Then I'll be the wrong one and seem like I'm trying to set you apart.

Mpe:lock up. I'll take the kids to the car.

He took the kids to the car. I took a container and put the remaining pizza then disposed the box and left.

Me:how did you know I'm here?

Mpe:i used the app.

I kept quiet until we got home. We got inside the house and we passed to our room.

Me:I'm taking a nap.

Mpe:during the day?

Me:i have nothing to do.

Mpe:you can help with cooking or go and sit with

your sisters.

Me:i don't feel like going outside.

Mpe: Khanyisile i wont have you staying here all depressed just because of some stupid woman. Come. I'm not going to let Zindile ruin your week. You will enjoy yourself just like you always do when we come here. She has her house where she can do her nonsense. Not here.

Me:okay.

He opened his arms. I went and hugged him.

Mpe:i love you so much and it's my duty to make make sure that you're always safe. Even from my family. Im going to take care of this Zinzile thing. You won't isolate yourself in your home. This is your home and Zinzile has her house so she wont act like the woman of this house.

Me:i love you too. A lot.

Mpe:i know. Every day you show me how much you love me. You're a wonderful person and people try to take advantage of that. And that wife they found

for me, she can go hang herself. I have only one person worthy of being my wife and she's standing in front of me.

He bent his head and we kissed. He deepened the kiss and i moaned then we stopped.

Mpe:let's go.

Me:where are the kids? I haven't seen them since morning.

Mpe:you will see them later. They went to the village with Bongani to fetch gogo.

Me:all of them?

Mpe:no. Just the twins. Thando and Sphe you know how they are. They are playing somewhere around this yard. Lisa and Mngqobi are with the neighbors kids.

Me:i wonder how Lindani is settling in in a different place.

Mpe:stop worrying about an old man. He'll be fine. You'll see him tomorrow.

Me:wont he miss classes?

Mpe:no. This week is just for orientation. So he'll be fine.

Me:okay.

Mpe:babe are you pregnant?

Me:please don't start. I don't want anymore kids.

Mpe:but what would you do if you were pregnant?

Me:let's not talk about that. I'm not pregnant. I'm on contraceptives you know that.

Mpe:but it didn't work with Thando.

Me:babe i swear if I'm pregnant i will not talk to you forntye whole year. Pray that it's not true. Why do you want so many children?

Mpe:why not? My grandmother had 12.

Me:and you have ten!

Mpe:i would like us to try for the last time you know? Please stop using the contraceptive? Please.

Me:you're stressing me now. Lets just go.

Mpe:but we are going to have that baby.

Me:I'm not saying anything.

Mpe:and please don't pick heavy things. We wouldn't want our baby hurt would we?

Me:do you know something i don't?

Mpe:this baby I'm going to spoil it. Don't worry. I'll be here the whole way. We got this.

Me:you're getting me worried. I don't want to be pregnant.

I left him on the stairs. I went outside to check where the others were. God why me? Aunt Zinzile was there. I can't stand this woman. I don't want to lie. I took a seat that was next to Phumla.

Zinzile:there's someone sitting there.

Me:oh i didn't know.

Ma:come and sit here.

Zinzile:that's Yibanathi's seat.

Ma:take your Yibanathi and leave with her. What's she doing here? Where do you want my daughter in Law to sit? Sit down Khanyisile.

If looks can kill I'd be dead now.

Mpe:Zinzile who gave you the right to insult my wife?

Zinzile:did she say i did that?

Mpe:and what does her body have to do with you? Why are you body shaming her and insulting her? I'll say this for the last time. If you don't want to be here continue doing what you're doing. I won't have my wife feel bad for coming to her home. Now you better atch what you say to her because you will get on my wrong side. You have your own house. Why don'tyou be bosy there to your children? And take this stupid Yibanathi of yours out of this yard. I already have a wife that i love. I thought this was supposed to be family only! What's she doing here? I better find her gone when I come back. Nxa!

After that he left. I could feel Zinzile's eyes on me. I looked at her and she was angry.

Zinzile: Yibanathi let's go. Wena you are not suitable

for this family. All you know is giving birth to a lot of children. That's all you'll ever be good at. You'll never be good enough for Mpendulo. That's why he'll always cheat on you. I don't even know what you're doing with a man old enough to be your father! If i were you i would be ashamed of myself.

Ma:Zinzile leave. Take your things and never come back. I can't believe i stood up for you when your brother said you must never set foot here until you learn some manners. Now leave my yard.

I've seen ma so angry. She was beyond angry. Aunt Zinzile went to the house then came back with her luggage. She took Yibanathi and they left. I don't hate her but she hates me. I don't know what I've done to her.

Nolo:Kea.

Me:mmh. You are crying. What's wrong?

Nolo:my babies. I have cramps.

Me:okay. Relax. We'll take you to the hospital.

Ma:go and call Mzwakhe. We must take her to the hospital.

Me:I'm here. Everything will be fine.

Ma:let's go to the car.

I got up and helped her to walk. She was crying and shaking. Mzwakhe was already starting the car. He opened and we got in. She was screaming all the way to the hospital. Ne a ntlhomola pelo. It reminded me of the pain i went through with the triplets. I don't want to go through that again. Thank God I'm on a five years contraceptive or i would be pregnant with the way my husband wants another child. The nurses came to fetch her and went to the ward with her. We could hear her screaming at the nurses. I saw the nurse get out of her ward. She was passing without saying anything.

Me:nurse please tell us something.

Nurse:it's not time yet. And the doctor will come check her.

Me:where's the doctor?

Nurse: don't ask me that. The doctor wont stop everything and attend to your sister. J ust be patient.

Me:you don't have to be this rude. I just wanted to know!

Nurse:relax like everyone else and stop being stupid.

She left after saying that. Was it necessary? I went to the ward and Bonolo was moving around the ward.

Nolo:Kea please tell them to take these babies out. I'm in lain.

Me:everything will be fine.

Nolo:i don't want anymore kids. I'm dying here.

Mzwakhe:babe calm down.

Did he just say that? Does he even know the pain she's going through? I looked at him.

Mzwakhe:okay sorry. Tell her to lie down on the bed. Maybe she'll be fine.

Nolo:get out! Don't come back here without the

doctor!

He ran out of the ward and we were now alone.

Me:lie on the bed.

Nolo:if i die please take care of my kids. Please. I know you'll be a good mother to them.

Me:don't talk like that. You're going to be fine. You've done this before. You can do it again. You will see. The doctor's coming.

Nolo:please stay. I want you to hold my hand. Please.

Me:I'm not going anywhere.

Dr:she's close.

Me:I'm coming okay? I'll be here all the way with you.

I went out to the waiting room.

Me:um did you bring the baby bag?

Mzwakhe:no. She gave birthalready!?

Me:no. But the doctor said she'salmost ready. Please fetch it.

He nodded and left. I didn't know Mzwakhe is this scared. I could laugh at him.

Ma:how is she?

Me:she's in pain. But she'll be fine. I'm going back in.

Dr:she's ready now. Ma'am please step out.

Me:she wants me here. I'll stay.

Dr:are you sure..

Me:yes.

The screaming that she was doing. I even shed some tears. After a while the first baby came and we heard a little cry. Then the second one came. They did everything and the dr smiled. The nurse went to bath the babies then brought them back. The doctor went out. My tears couldn't stop falling.

Me:you're fine. You see?

Nolo:where are my babies?

Me:they are here. They are fine and healthy too. Beautiful girls.

"Congratulations mommy."

I looked at the door and the family was here. I gave 1 baby to Bonolo and the other to Mzwakhe. He couldn't stop smiling.

Mzwakhe:babe look at their little hands.

Nolo:they are beautiful. Thank you for being here Kea.

Me:it's nothing. I'm just happy that you're all fine.

Dr:what are their names?

Mzwakhe:dad will name them. I have to ask him.

Dr:okay. I'll come back later.

After the family left Nolo took a nap. When she woke up she called me.

Nolo:hey.

Me:oh you're up. How are you feeling now?

Nolo:I'm fine. Just a little pain.

Me:okay. Your husband went to buy you food.

Nolo:o shap?

Me:i should be asking you that.

Nolo:mosadi ole o mborile thata. If i was not in pain i would have shown her flames.

Me:let's not talk about her. We should just be happy that the babies are here. Mother of three.

Nolo:I'm not having kids again.

Me:you scared me. The way you were saying you're going to die.

Nolo:i felt like it. That pain! I'm good with three. How did you do manage?

Me: what could i have done?

Nolo:you're strong.

Me:i called dad. They wanted to come but they currently not at home. But as soon as they are back they will vis it.

Nolo:okay. Did the doctor say when he'll discharge me?

Me:no. But I'm sure he'll tell you.

Mzwakhe:i brought food.

Mpe:bave you've been here all day. Let's leave now.

Me:okay. O robale sebtle okay?

I took my phone and we left.

Mpe:aren't you tired?

Me:i am.

Mpe:they have beautiful babies ne?

Me:yeah.

Mpe:aren't you happy?

Me:i know where this is going. We'll visit the babies topic in 5 years.

Mpe:I'll be a madala then.

Me:babe you're turning 60 this year but if i took a 60 years old man and put him here they would say you're yonger.

Mpe:is that a compliment my wife?

Me:somethinglike that. I've never seen a sexy handsome 60 years old like you.

I looked at him and the smile on his face couldn't be missed. He held my hand and kissed it.

Mpe: i can't believe im this old. Other 60 years olds are great grandfathers now.

Me: your turn will come.

Mpe: you're going to be a good grandma.

I laughed. I'm too young to be a grandmother bathong.

When we got home i took a shower and then did what I've been dreading to do. Ever since Mpendulo started his pregnancy talk i started being nervous. So i bought a hpt. I waited a few minutes for the test.

"What's going on?"

Me: um what are you doing here?

Mpe: this is our room. Why are you moving around?

Me: it's nothing.

I looked at the time and stared at the stick. I don't believe this!

Mpe:u right?

He came to stand behind me and took the stick.

Mpe:we'll be fine.

Me:we'll be fine? Do you think i am going to be fine? Thr triplets are not even two and already I'm pregnant? I'm on a contraceptive for God's sake! How did this happen? How did you know I'm pregnant?

Mpe:that doesn't matter. What matters is this baby.

Me:I'm going to be a laughing stock. So many children.

I wiped a tear.

Me:no wonder aunt Zinzile said I'm fat and giving birth is all I'll ever be good at.

Oh God! I don't know what I'm going to do. I don't think i will even get out of this room. I feel like everyone knows and i was the only one in the dark.

Mpe:let's go. It's dinner time.

Me:i feel like everyone knows.

Mpe:they don't know. Even if they did there's nothing wrong with that.

Me:please don't tell anyone. I still have to decide what I'm going to do.

Mpe:yini leyo? What decision are you talking about?

Me:how I'm going to do this. Oh God they are going to judge me. Remember how Sethu judged me when i was pregnant with the triplets?

Mpe:no one will judge you.

Me:i don't think I'll stay in Pretoria. Many people know me there.

Mpe:you want to run away again? Is that it?

Me:no. i was thinking i can stay here. At our place. No one knows me here.

Mpe:I'm not going to spend 9 months without you again. Let's go. Gogo was looking for you.

I could see that i wont win. I put on a doek and we went to join everyone.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:05] : ***STORY OF MY LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 37

Gogo:hello my child. I did not see you when I arrived.

Me:dumela koko. I was at the hospital.

Gogo:okay kulungile ke. Wamuhle ngane yami.

Me:ngiyabonga gogo.

Gogo:ikuphathe njani ingane?

Me:angzwanga gogo?

Gogo:awu ngisho ingane.

Everyone looked at me. Looks like they know.

Me:kahle gogo.

Ma:sit down dear. Let the others bring the food here.
You must not pick heavy things.

I smiled and sat down. Thank got it was not
everyone around the table. The other wives went to
fetch the food.

Ma:how far are you?

Me:i don't know. I haven't been to the doctor.

Ma:tomorrow we will go together.

Mpe:mama I'm taking her myself.

Ma:I'm also going with you.

Baba:you can all go together. We can't wait to meet
our grandchild. I'm happy that all my children are
here under the same roof and all happy.

They came with the food then we started eating.
Everyone was happy and chatting. After we finished
eating i took the kids and went to give them a bath. I
started with the triplets and then put them in their

cots. Then went to bath Sphe,Natty and Thando.

Me:Sphe what is this?

Sphe:it's my feet.

Me:i know that. Why is it dirty?

Natty:we were playing outside.

Thando:mommy Natty said we must take our shoes off.

Me:all of you must never take your shoes off when you're outside okay?

Sphe:yes mommy. You will give us sweets?

Me:tomorrow.

Natty:okay. But i want ice cream.

Me:anything you want. As long as you wear your shoes.

They started playing with the water. I know once they start they won't stop. I took them out and got them ready for bed. After i took them to bed. I then went to our bedroom.

Mpe:let me give you a massage.

Me:okay. While at that can you tell me how gogo, mama and baba know about the pregnancy?

Mpe:mom suspected and told me then i told gogo.

Me:then why did she say it's a boy?

mpe: i told her I'd like the baby to be a girl but she wants it to be a boy.

Me: i feel like I'm not destined to work. Every time I go back to work i fall pregnant.

Mpe:you have people who work for you. I've also retired. I'm always around you. So that's better.

Me:okay. Good night.

Mpe:good night sthandwa sami.

The week went by very fast. Now we were back in Pretoria. Being back was good. I loved that i could be in my own house without thinking that someone will judge me. I didn't quit at work but i was going to. Only after I'd finished with my contracts that i was

responsible for. This other day when I was working John showed up. I was scared but i didn't want to show it. I remained calm.

Me:hi.

John:hello. I didn't know you work here.

Me:quit playing John. What are you doing here?

John:okay. You got me. I'm here for you.

Me:why? So you can abduct me or something?

John: I know your guards saw that bug i put on you. Which is why I'm here to explain.

I took my phone and dialed the guard's number. He snatched it and switched it off.

John:I'm not here to hurt you. You're too precious to me to do that.

Me:precious? Please leave before my husband gets here. He's on his way.

John:oh you're married. Anyway that doesn't matter. About that that bug. Pule Bogatsu sent me. He

wanted me to follow you around and get information he can use against you.

John:but when I saw you i changed my mind after i started talking with you and i had already put the bug on you.

Me:okay now go and tell Pule that he can come and ask for that information himself. I'll be waiting for him.

"Khanyisile you called."

Me:yeah. Please get him out. Don't come back here again John. You ca go and tell Pule to stop whatever plan he has.

The guard told him to leave. I know he was lying. He wasn't sent by Pule. He's up to something. He wants to destruct me with the Pule thing. So that when I let my guard down he strikes. I pack my things and go home.

Me:hey babe. How was your day?

Mpe:so so. How was yours?

Me:it started very well. Then J ohn came to my office.

Mpe:J ohn?

Me:yes. The man from Lisa's dance.

Mpe:oh yeah.

Me:he said Pule sent him. But i could see he's lying. He's up to something.

Mpe: Tshirelets o was released. They said there's not enough evidence.

Me:i knew that would happen. That's how it is with SA justice system. They want to see a dead body before they take action.

Mpe: let's go to the police station and make a restraining order.

Thinking about that bastard being out was getting to me. What if this time he really rapes someone?

NDONI

Ever since we came back I've been isolating myself. I don't want to see people who are going to just feel sorry for me. What that woman did to me will always be in my mind. I will never forget it. She changed my life forever. I don't know what to do. I feel like I'm useless and it's all because of her. She played God with my life. Shaka did everything and threatened her but it didn't work. She said she doesn't know where the sangoma put that cloth with my blood. What if my blood is working for someone now? I've never hated a person like I hate her.

Shaka:hello babe. How was your day?

Me:fine.

Shaka:you're not up even now? You've been sleeping all day?

Me:please leave. I want to be alone.

Shaka:you will lose your job if you continue like this.

Me:isn't that what you want? Angithi you don't want me to work.

Shaka:that's not true. Anyway are the kids back? Did you have anything to eat?

Me:I'm not hungry. The kids are in the tv room.

Shaka:did they eat?

Me:Yoh! I cooked for your kids! Now can you stop making noise? I'm trying to think here.

Shaka:my kids....Ndoni where's that coming from now?

Me:yes. I will never be the same. And it's that woman's fault. I don't know what i was thinking staying in that yard because since the first time i set foot there i could see that she's evil.

Shaka:ngiya xolisa. I know I'm also to blame for this. I've caused you pain. I cheated and even brohght the kids here. I don't know how you must be feeling.

Me:of course. That's why you went out there and paid another woman to sleep with you. I don't blame you. You wanted kids and i couldn't give you. That's

fate. You can't change it. I've accepted it.

Shaka:sthandwa sami unga khulumi kanjalo.

Me:what else can i say? It's true. I'm cursed.

Shaka:i won't rest until we find a solution..

I didn't answer him. I turned to the other side. I felt the blanket being taken off.

Shaka:you're burning up. Let me fix a cold shower for you.

Me:I've already showered.

Shaka:i want you to cool down. Did you realize how hot you're? The cold shower will help you.

He went to the shower then came back and carried me to the bathroom. He open the shower tap then left me. After i finished i got dressed in a dress and flops. I went downstairs and he was warming up the food. I sat on the high chair by the counter and just looked at him. He came to stand in front of me and held my waist.

Shaka:i love you Ndoni yami.

Me:i love you more.

He kissed me and went back to the food. He took it out and gave me mine.

Me:thanks.

Shaka:we're not getting out of here until you finish that food. You lost weight.

Me:is it bad?

Shaka:yes. But you still look so beautiful. And that smile is still there.

I smiled.

Shaka:you are going to be fine okay? If you need me I'll be in the study.

Me:okay. Don't forget tomorrow's my friend's wedding.

Shaka:friend? You didn't tell me about that.

Me:i thought i did.

Shaka:and i didn't even know you have friends

outside the family.

Me:she was my only friend since high school but she moved to overseas but we never lost contact. Now she's getting married in Joburg. But I'll understand if you can't make it.

Shaka:no. We'll go together.

The following day I got ready for the wedding. After I was done I went to the boys room and their father was helping them get dressed.

Nkazimulo:mama where are we going?

Me:to a wedding.

Nkanyezi:you and daddy are getting married?

Me:me and daddy are already married. We are going to my friend's wedding.

Nkanyezi:oh I wanted to be a flower boy.

Shaka:you will be a flower boy when your aunty gets married.

Nkanyezi:okay. I can't wait to eat cake at the

wedding.

Me:behave when we get there okay? Don't be all over the place. We don't want you to get lost.

Nkazimulo:i don't want to get lost because i wont see you again.

Me:mmh. I love you all.

Nkanyezi:we love you too.

After they were done we left to J oburg. The venue was so beautiful. Even the people there.

Me:it's beautiful neh?

Shaka:mmh.

He didn't show any interest. I could see he just came because i wanted to come. We were shown to our seats.

Lady:other kids are sitting there. Your boys can go and sit there.

Shaka:they'll be fine here.

The lady nodded and left. The wedding started and it was a beautiful ceremony. My friend looked so

beautiful in her dress. Even their vows were beautiful.

Shaka:when is this wedding ending? We could be at home spending our time doing something productive.

Me:i promise we will leave after i talk to the bride.

Shaka:we are not eating here. The kids will eat the cake that is at home. We can afford it.

Me:can you please keep quiet? People are staring at us.

The wedding proceeded and after they were done the bride thanked people for coming then i went to greet her.

Me:it's been a while. Congratulations.

Anele:thank you. And thanks for coming. I appreciate it. And I'm sorry i couldn't make it to your wedding.

Me:i understand. It was a beautiful wedding and you looking so beautiful.

Anele:thank you.

Me:i just came to say bye. We are leaving now.

Anele:can't you stay and eat please?

Me:my mother in law just called to say she's just landed so we have to go.

Anele:thank you for coming.

The groom came to where we were. I knew him from school.

Zuko:hey where are you running to? Oh is that the idiot who bought Sihles children?

I looked at this guy confused..

Zuko:it was nice seeing you anyways. Tell that guy we want our sister's children back or hell will break loose.

I didn't answer him. I went to Shaka abd we left. When we got hone i went upstairs to change. I went downstairs to warm the food.

Shaka:u right?

Me:do you know the groom?

Shaka:no i don't know those people.

Me:oh. He said he wants his sister's children that you bought. If i knew she's related to them i wouldn't have bothered going there. I was so embarrassed.

Shaka:he must just go to hell. There's no child that he will get here. I have full custody of the twins. There's no proof that i paid her.

Me:now I'm involved.

Shaka:i didn't buy these kids. I won custody of them. Where did that friend of yours get your number? After almost 20 years she resurfaces and wants to be your friend again? You must stay away from her.

Me:you don't have to ask me. I could see by the way she wanted me to stay and eat that something was off. She wanted to keep me until her husband got there.

Shaka:if she calls again you must give me your phone. I will tell her off. She clearly doesn't know

me. Actually give me her number.

Me:why?

Shaka:i want her to give me her husband's number.
I want to solve this once and for all.

Me:I'm not going to involve myself in this. You will handle it as you said.

Keatlaretsi

This thing with Tshirelets o was really getting to me.
I think i was even starting to lose my mind. Every time i would always be jumpy.

Mpe:are you fine?

Me:I'm fine. J ust tired.

Mpe:do you still think you see Tshirelets o?

Me:I'm not crazy man. I saw him. Do you think i would make that up? Do i look crazy to you?

Mpe:no. I'm sorry. Thandiwe is here?

Me:oh? You brought her here so that she can convince me that I'm crazy and need help? I'm not going to any psychiatric hospital.

Bonolo:Kea you need help. We don't want you to lose this baby. Don't forget that you almost fell on the stairs just the other day. You see things that are not there.

Me:I'm 4 months pregnant for God's sake. I'm not going to crazy people hospital!

Bonolo: i think you've been through a lot. You need to talk to a psychologist and get help. An ambulance is outside waiting for you.

Me:did you even have to call an ambulance? Bonolo i thought me and you were tight. I thought you could do anything for me. It's always been you and me. But now you're letting other people get between us. I hope you will be able to live knowing that you broke our bond. I swear Bonolo if i go out that door you will never see me. All of you.

Mpe:don't talk like that. We are doing this for you. You walk around with a knife! What if one day you

hurt the kids? Do you think it makes me happy to see you like this!? You will thank me one day.

Me:i hope you will be able to live with yourselves.. If Tshirelets comes for me just know that it's y'all fault. I will never forget this. You're just going to let me go and be treated like I'm crazy?

Mpe:this is for the best. We want you to be fine. Even the children fear you because of what is happening.

Me:it's fine. I hear you.

Mpendulo came to hug me. I didn't return the hug. I was hurt. How can they believe that I'm crazy? Do i look crazy to them? Dad. Where are you when I need you? Why did you leave me in this world alone?

Mpe:let's go.

Me:i want to talk to my brother first.

Mpe:you'll make this hard. Do you want him to cry?

Me:please. I have to talk to him. Just do this one thing for me.

Mpe:okay. Let's go.

We went to his room.. There he was writing his homework.

Me:Oratile.

He looked at me and put his pen down.

Me:i came to say bye to you.

Ora:is it true you're going to crazy people hospital because you're crazy?

It must have been Mngqobi who told him that. Because he overheard me and his dad talking once.

Me:no. But im going somewhere for a while. I will come back for you. You know i will never leave you right?

Ora:yes.

Me:i love you. Take care of yourself.

Ora:i love you too. I'm going to miss you.

He was even crying. I brushed his back until he

calmed down. I went out and i looked back at the house. I was going to miss my children. Going a day without seeing them was bad. I thought about hiw the triplets were going to cope. I looked at Bonolo and Mpendulo. They had this pity on their faces.l

Mpe:we will always visit you until you're fit enough to come home.

Me:so now I'm unfit?

Mxm. He wanted to say something but i got into the car and kept quiet. Im even treated like a sick person. I watched as the car disappeared and i couldn't see a place i once called a home anymore.

I don't know how i fell asleep but i was surprised when i woke up in a bed. I looked around and there was no window. Inside was a bed and a table and a cupboard for clothes. I got up and went to check. My clothes were already put there.

Voice:it's time for dinner now. They will tell you how everything works around here. Follow me.

I put on my big hoodie and followed her. She introduced me to all the people there. Most of them you could see that they are crazy. There was no need to even ask. I stood on the line to get food. A tear fell. Not so long ago I could eat anything that i wanted. Now i can't even eat what i crave. I never thought life could turn out like this. I regret going to Polokwane. That's where all of this started.

Tshirelets'o's obsession. Now he followed me everywhere and those around me ended up thinking I'm crazy. I don't have a phone to even call and hear how my children are. The following day when I wake up they tell me that i won't have visitors for two weeks so that i can settle in. I won't even talk to my kids. I couldn't even get a chance to call my children. The psychiatric facility was creepy. It was somehow scary to me. After getting my food I went to sit by myself. I didn't want to be with people. I just wanted to sit on my own and reflect on whats happening.

Voice:hi. Can I join you?

Me:I would like to be alone.

Lady:I promise I will not bother you. I will just keep quiet.

Me:okay you can sit.

She looked at me as she was eating. I couldn't help but just analyse her. She didn't look crazy to me. She looked like someone who was going through a lot. Like something was going on with her.

Me:im Keatlaretsi.

Lady: Melody. What are you doing here?

Me:apparently im crazy.

Mel:crazy? You don't look crazy to me.

Me:im not crazy. But my family thinks I am. Worst of it all my husband believes that im crazy. And why are you here?

Mel:well, my uncle killed my grandfather and I witnessed it and was traumatized after that. When I told the family about it they didn't believe me. The trauma started getting worse and I couldn't cope anymore. Then I started therapy. I was about to get married. Then my uncle paid my psychologist to

say that I have to go to a psychiatrist because I was not myself and have to get help. I have been here for almost a year. But luckily im leaving next month. My fiancé made sure that I get out of here.

Whatever happens in here just hang in there. If you are not strong you will not survive. These people who are really crazy will traumatize you. Just be careful and not get on anyone's bad side.

Me:why is it that they don't allow visitors for the first two weeks?

Mel:that's why I said you have to be strong. For your child that you are carrying. You will only get visitors the first two weeks then after that they will say no more visitors because they will disturb your healing process and you will never see anyone until you leave this place.

Me:that's not good. Is this place legal or its those fly by nights?

Mel:I have already said a lot. Someone could be listening or maybe there is a camera here.

I nodded and continued eating. At least their food

tasted good.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:06] : ***STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI***

CHAPTER 38

Narrated

Zweli:so how is your wife doing?

Mpe: I don't know man. They said she is fine. I couldn't see her. They said for the first two weeks visiting is not allowed.

Zweli:whats that? Patients should be allowed visitors so that they can see familiar faces and recover quickly.

Mpe:two weeks will move by very fast. What

worries me is the fact that she was so sad. She was broken man. I don't think she will ever forgive me for this.

Zweli:you were doing what is good for her. She will soon realize it.

Mpe:I hope you are right man. I cant live without her. I just hope that was only hurt talking. Because I wont survive it.

Zweli:stop stressing about this. Your wife will be fine and come home soon.

Mpe:yeah. Thanks for the call. Theres another call coming.

He cut the call then answered the one that was coming.

Mpe:hello.

Voice:hello. Its Farai.

Mpe:oh. How are you?

Farai:im not good. Why did you take my sister to that hell hole?

Mpe:how did you know about...

Farai:she called me from someone's phone. She sounded scared. You know she is not crazy man. Please go and fetch her. Go with the police. She is not safe in that place. When she saw things did you even try to look for other solutions?

Mpe:this was the better solution.

Farai:it has been a week and you haven't visited her.

Mpe:they said visitors will be allowed after two weeks.

Farai:then why was John allowed there?how did he manipulate his way in there because she says he got in there disguised as a doctor? Do you see how she is not safe?

Mpe: John!

Farai:that's what I said. Please go and fetch her. Im taking the next plane. When I get there we are going to Zim. Gogo wants her home. She says there is someone who will help her.

Mpe:im going to fetch her right now.

He took his car keys and ran to his car. He drove off while calling the police. He was panicking because that place is too far and anything might happen while he's driving there. He was like flying on the road. When he got there it did not take long until the police arrive.

Mpe:im here to fetch my wife. Keatlaretsi khoza.

Man:Keatlaretsi khoza? Let me check her for you. Oh here. Didn't her husband fetch her? Here it says Mpendulo khoza fetched her.

Mpe:would I be here if I were the one who fetched her?

Man:sir I don't know who let her go but that's what it says here.

Mpe:im not leaving this place without my wife. You let a man get in here to take her but you said I cant see her before two weeks is over. Is this how you work? Something fishy is going on here.

Police:lets turn this place upside down. We are not leaving without her. Others go and check down the road and around the yard. Go around this area.

Mpe:did John pay you so that he can get her? Is that it?

Man:I don't know what you are talking about.

Mpe:let me tell you something. I worked as a soldier. I had a position. A high position in the army. I know people from high places I know people who can destroy this place of yours in a minute. As for that John of yours I already have him. That's how I know that my wife is still here. You better give her to me right this instant if you value this place!

The man started shaking.

Man:I just work in the admin I don't know anything. Ask the doctors.

Mpe:if I don't find her here...you better pray that I do.

He left the reception and went to check room by room. He couldn't find her.

Mpe:khanyis ile!khanyis ile!

Woman:sir you are making noise. This is a..

Mpe:hey!i want my wife and you are telling me shit!

Police:there is a door that wont open here. Over here.

He ran to where the police officer was. He didn't wait. He just kicked the door and it opened.

Mpe:khanyisile! Khanyisile vuka. Ngiyaxolisa.

Kea:you came...

Mpe:yes. Im here to take you home. Im sorry about everything. We are going home.

He picked her up and left the room. He went straight to his car and put his wife inside the car.

Mpe:here. Have some water.

Kea:...

Mpe:pleas e.

He helped her drink water then drove off. On his way he made a call.

Mpe:I want john dead. But after he talks. And I want that place burnt down. This is the last favor I will ever ask you.

Then he cut the call and looked at his wife. In just a

week she has lost a bit of weight. He blamed himself for all of this. He blamed himself because if he didn't suggest that she goes to that loony bin this wouldn't have happened. He got home and parked the car then helped her to get out. They went inside and everyone was there.

Bonolo: Kea im sorry. I didn't know this would happen.

She kept quiet not answering.

Mpe:would you like something to eat?

She looked at them all and went to their room. She took off her clothes and went to shower. After she was done she took out her suitcase and started packing her clothes. She finished and went to the kids room. She packed the triplets clothes then pushed the bag to her room. In all of this they were looking at her. She then went downstairs.

Kea:um where are the kids?

Mpe:they are at school. O samkelo baya dlala e playroom.

She turned around.

Mpe:why were you packing?

Kea:im sure Farai already called you. Im going to Zimbabwe.

Bonolo:can I atleast go with you? J ust so I will know that you are safe.

Kea:I will will be more safe with my grandmother than I am here where I am not wanted. As for wena Bonolo. My own sister. I thought you'd have my back. But no. I told you Tshirelets o was following me. I told you I was seeing him. He came in that place. Tonight they were going to kidnap me. I hope you two are happy with what is happening.

She went to look for the triplets.

Muzi:ubukeka azwile buhlungu.

Mpe:you think I didn't see that? And im the one who caused all of that. She pleaded with me not to send her to that place but I insisted. And now im losing her.

Shaka:I think you should give her time. She will not

leave you. She's just hurt.

Mpe:what was I going to do if I arrived there late and they took her?

He sighed holding his head.

KEA

When Farai arrived he slept a bit then he said we could leave.

Me:will you be able to drive to the airport ?

Farai:your husband will drive. Kea stop this thing of always ignoring your husband when you go through things. In marriage you sit down and talk.

Me:its his fault I went to that place.

Farai:anyone would have done what he did. You cant blame him for wanting to help. You have to talk to him and fix things. I wont go with people who are cross with each other. I don't want tension on our way. Please.

Me:what is she doing here with a bag?

Farai: she's going with us. You know you will need her. Your sister loves you so stop being hard on her.

I put my handbag on the sit then went back inside. I first went to check on the kids. They were watching tv.

Me: babies. Come here. I want to talk to you...mom is going somewhere. I promise i will be back okay?

Lu: you're leaving again. I want to go with you.

Me: you can't. You have to go to school. I promise next week I'm coming back. Mommy is not feeling well so she has to go to a doctor who will help her. I will call everyday.

Thando: why are you leaving me?

Me: i would go with you all but you have to go to school.

Thando: i will miss you mom.

Sphe: me too.

Me: i love you all.

Lisa: we will miss you mom.

I hugged them all. I wiped Aya's tears. I knew he would cry. He grew more close to me and always wants to be with me.

Me:i promise i will call you. I'm not leaving for a long time. I will be back soon.

Aya:okay.

He hugged me again.

Aya:i love you.

Me:i love you too.

I got up and found Mpendulo waiting for me in the lounge.

Mpe:how did they take it?

Me:they are sad. Ayanda was crying.

Mpe:they will be fine. We'll be back soon.

Me:yeah. I'm sorry for blaming you for what happened. It's just that I thought you of all people would stand by me. But it's fine. You thought you were doing the right thing.

Mpe:I'm really sorry. I should have believed you.

Me:it's fine. Let's just leave it behind us and move on.

He let go of his luggage and hugged me.

Mpe:i love you. And i promise this will never happen again.

Me:let's go.

Mpe:i love you Khanyisile.

Me:i love you Khoza.

Mpe: Let's go before we miss our flight.

We went to the car and i got into the backseat.

Me:hi.

Bonolo:hello. O shap?

Me:yeah

Bonolo:I'm sorry.

Me:it's fine. I understand you were worried.

Bonolo:now do i have my sister back?

Me:of course.

She attacked me with a hug.

Bonolo:thank you.

SETHU

I've just come back from fetching my kids from school. If my husband comes back from work late im the one who fetches them after work. As i drive in I see another car. I don't know who this car belongs to. I park and the kids run insode. I open the door and go in. I find Isabella holding my baby. I'm really being tested. I rush to her and take my baby.

Me:who gave you permission to hold my baby!?
Who let you in here?

Isabella:you don't have to be like that. I wont harm my nephew. The nanny let me in.

Me:what do you want here?

Isabella:i came to talk to you. Our father wants to talk to you.

Me:our father? Oh now he's our father. He's been your father for 30 years. Not mine. He never even bought me one thing. He told my mother to abort me. So don't tell me about that bastard.

Isabella:this is your father and he's sick for God's sake!

Me:all this time he was fine but now that he's sick he wants to be a father. Go back and tell him that i said no. I don't care what happens to him. I've been fine with my siblings and my mother for 30 years. So him being in my life will not make a difference.

Isabella:so you don't care what happens to him?
He's your father!

Me:he didn't care what would happen to me. He told my mother in front of your mother that he doesn't us. So now he does? I don't know him too. I don't have a father.

Isabella:Sethu you will regret this. When it's too late and you need your father...

Me:i didn't need him for 30 years. Why would I start now? Leave my house.

Isabella:I hope you change your mind. Your husband has my number. You will call me when you're ready to talk to our father. Maybe it won't be too late by then.

Me:Isabella stay away from my husband. Are you using your father to get close to him?

Isabella:sis your husband loves me. If i want him i can have him just like that. So don't think it's over.

Me:i don't fight for a man. You can ask him. I told him he can come to you if that's what he wants. And what did he do? He stayed here. So what love are you talking about?

Isabella:anyway I'm leaving. Think about what i said.

She strut her way out. I couldn't help but just stare at her. She's a doctor. I'm just a mere self taught fashion designer at Bong'i's shop. Her father took her to a medical school while i didn't go to school. I didn't qualify for a bursary. I don't know why since i had good results. If that so called father had been

there for me maybe he would have taken me to school. And now she comes here and talks as if i owe them. I don't owe them anything. It doesn't make a difference whether he's alive or dead. My life will still go on. With or without him.

Siya:babe I'm home. How was your day?

Me:fine.

Siya:what's wrong my love?

Me:nothing.

Siya:it doesn't look like that.

Me:Isabella was here.

Siya:what did she want?

Me:she was asking me to talk to her father. She was actually demanding that i talk to him as if it's my fault that he's sick. After all these years. He only remembers that he has a child when he's sick. That means if he wasn't sick I would have never known about him. It hurts. I always thought about the day he would come back. Only to find out he didn't want me. He denied my mother in front of his lover. We

suffered without him. While he was living comfortably. She's a doctor and what am i?

Siya:kodwa Sethu you applied at school and next year you will be studying.

Me:it's not about that. It's about him taking care of me and my siblings like he did with his other family. Do you know how it feels to go bed without eating? How it is to not go to school because your mother didn't come back from work with washing powder to wash your uniform? Do you know how it feels to beg from your neighbors while your father is alive and living his best life? This is why i don't want him in my life. I will still live without him and make it. It's not like him being in my life will make a difference.

Siya:I'm sorry. I didn't know you felt like that. Come here.

I didn't even feel my tears falling. He wiped them and hugged me.

Siya: no one will force you to talk to him. If you don't want to it's your decision. No one will force you. Not even Isabella.

Me:do you love her?

Siya:look, i thought i loved her back then. And i was even ready to marry her. We were young back then. But you know what i realized? I realized that it wouldn't have worked out. I am grateful that she left me at the altar because that would have been the biggest mistake of my life. You're the one i love and i promise you that will never change.

Me:then why did she say she can get you at any time she wants? Please. If it's her that you want just tell me now.

Siya:you don't have to worry yourself about her. It's you that i want. I need you in my life. My life is complete with you.

Me:i love you.

Siya:how did she know where you stay?

Me:i found her holding Musa when I arrived here. She said the nanny let her in.

Siya:where did she get the address? She's going too far now.

Me:i just want to live my life in peace without them bothering me. Is that too much to ask?

Siya:you should not worry yourself about this. If you don't want to talk to that man you just ignore them.

Me: you're right. Thinking about this will just give me a headache.

KEATLARETSI

Finally we arrived at my grandma's place. The moment my grandmother saw the car she smiled. Her smile made me to also smile. I hugged her.

Granny:don't run or you will fall and harm the baby.

Me:i missed you koko.

Granny:thank you God. My granddaughter is home after a very long time. Who did you come with?

Me:Farai,my husband and my sister.

Granny:and the kids?

Me:i came with the young ones. The older ones have school.

Granny:okay. Come and sit with your grandmother.

Nolo:hello koko.

Granny:my grandchild. Welcome. You and your sister don't come here anymore. Hiw long has it been?

She says hugging her.

Nolo:we are here now koko.

Granny:Tendai!

A little boy came running after she called.

Granny:go and bring chairs. You see your cousins are here? After you come back you must go and call your mother. Tell her they are here.

I know koko told everyone that I'm coming. Now this yard will be full of people. But I'm not complaining. It's all love.

Granny:your uncle is on his way from Harare. The others will also come. Sit down.

By that she means we must sit on the reed mat. Women don't sit on chairs. We sit down. Chairs are for men. That's what my granny always tell me. My husband and Farai come with the kids. Samkelo is wiggling. He wants to walk on his own. His father puts him down and he runs to koko and fall on her. She picks him. He looks at her and laughs. Then kiss her. Ncooah.

Gogo: these boys have grown. Where are your kids Bonolo? Why didn't you bring them with?

Nolo: mama took them. So who do you stay with here?

Granny: your uncle and his wife. Tendai's mother. She went to the farm. She will be back soon. Tendai will go fetch her.

Tendai comes back with a kid and the chairs. He leaves the kid and run out of the yard. Maybe he's going to the farm.

Me: Samkelo no.

He's busy pushing the poor boy. He doesn't want him to sit on his granny's lap. Lungelo and Sabelo

sit next to her. Lungelo takes the little baby's hand
sit next to him. Samkelo can't stop touching koko
and looking at her.

Me:Samkelo.

He starts laughing.

Me:Samkelo. Look at how he is laughing.

Gogo:he's happy to be here. Next time you should
all come with all of your children.

I smile as the babies are playing with koko. My
aunty came back from the farm and cooked a storm.
She forced me to serve my husband. According to
her i should do it everyday.

Mpe:thank you for the food baby. You can go and
eat.

Me:I'm sorry. My grandmother is watching me. She
won't allow me to eat with you.

Mpe:i understand. It's just a few days.

I went back to sit with the women. We spent our

time together after eating then went to sleep. In the middle of the night I wike up panting.

Mpe:babe what's wrong?

Me: J ohn was here. I saw him while i was sleeping.

Mpe:J ohn is not here. Tomorrow is Sunday. I'm sure we will get help on whatever is happening. Come here.

I moved to him and hugged him. He held me and kissed my forehead. He looked at me.

Mpe:you will be fine. This will pass.

I looked at him. I thought it was only me going through this. But him also. His face had pain. His eyes showed those of someone who felt my pain. A tear fell on his eye. I wiped it and kissed him.

Me:i love you.

Mpe: I love you more. How's our baby?

Me:he's fine. Do you think it's a boy again? I want a girl.

Mpe:i also want a baby girl. Daddy's girl.

Me:what do you think we should name her?

Mpe:if it's a girl it will be Gabriella.

Me:you want her to be named after you?

Mpe:yes. This is our last baby. Daddy's girl.

Me:i see she's going to be spoiled.

Mpe:i will take her everywhere i go. I will do anything for my kids. And there'll be no exception to this girl.

Me: you're the best father in the whole world.

We stayed up talking. That helped with the nightmares. I don't even know how i fell asleep. I woke up in the morning to whispers. It was my husband and our three boys.

Me:what are you boys planning?

Mpe:should we tell mommy? Yeah i think not. It's our secret.

Me:mmh. How are you?

Mpe:we are good baby. Go and shower then we can go join the family.

I took a shower and got ready. I put on my dress and a doek then we went to join everyone. As i said the dining room was full. They all greeted me and talked about how happy they were to see me. Even recited clan names. Even said my mother was happy that I'm home. But i was never ready for what happened next.

Vimbai:it's good to have everyone home. Finally. Rudo you came home. You almost killed our grandmother with stress.

Me:granny always visits me at my place.

Vimbai:must be nice hey. Only her,your favorite uncle and the beloved Farai know where you stay.

What's she trying to do with this?

Me:i invited everyone to my wedding and vow renewal. Even provided transport but you didn't come. It's not my fault.

Vimbai:how could we come? You act like you have it all. You're mighty.

Me:actually what's your problem with me?

Vimbai: i have no problem with you. The only thing i have a problem with is this brother of yours. So since he's your brother it involves you automatically.

Farai: Vimbai stop with your nonsense.

Vimbai:it's not nonsense. My mother loved you more than she loved me. She tossed me to be raised by granny because of you. A stolen bastard!

Aunty:Vimbai!

Vimbai:yes mom. You thought your lies would not get out? Well today I'm telling it all. My mother here was pregnant at the same time as your mother Rudo. She gave birth a day before your mother.

They were both in S.A. Your mother was kind hearted so she had her sister moved to South Africa so she can have proper treatment. My mother gave her baby away for adoption after your mother gave birth. She gave birth to twins and my evil mother stole one. The baby boy. Yes that's you Farai. Luckily you looked like your mother so that was a bonus cos they looked like each other. That's why you two are inseparable when together. You shared a womb. This woman is evil. She gave her baby away because he had albinism. Who does that? So yeah. Your parents are dead dear brother. It's a pity you missed out on a relationship with your father. He was a good man. May his soul rest in peace.

Wow. Drama follows me everywhere I go. Now what's this? Am I going to ever leave a peaceful life. I don't think there's a family like mine. Mine is full of drama and surprises.

TO BE CONTINUED

[07/06, 19:06] : *STORY OF MY
LIFE:KEATLARETSI*

CHAPTER 39

After the confession from Vimbai my grandmother fainted. She was rushed to the hospital. I couldn't stop crying. I went to my room and cried there.

Farai:can i talk to her?

I didn't notice that he was also here.

Mpe:I'll be outside with the kids.

Farai:I'm sorry.

Me:you have nothing to be sorry about. You didn't do anything.

Farai:i can't believe you're my twin. It feels surreal.

Me:how are you feeling?

Farai:hurt. Angry. Why did she do this? I could have had a chance to have a relationship with our father.

Yes he raised me for a little while but i would have felt different knowing that i had a father. And now he's no more. What am i supposed to do now?

Me:aunty is so evil. And now grandma is in hospital because of her.

Farai:she will be fine.

He looked at me and wiped a tear that fell on my eyes. I hugged him.

Farai:stop crying please. I'll be fine.

Me:can we go and check on koko?

Farai:stay and look after the kids. I'll be fine okay?

He kissed my forehead smiling. I hugged him again. I felt like not letting go.

.....

My grandmother recovered from her fainting. But she was not in a good state at all. Finding out about what aunty did really broke her. Why would a sister

do that to her sister? But she will get there. What she was more worried about is where her grandchild is. I promised to help look for him. I've already started with the process. Also, Farai is helping. Well the person that koko said can help me is a pastor. I thought it was going to be those people who tell you what happens in your life and who's responsible for all the suffering in your life and how your future is looking but that's not it. The man just prayed for me and told me that all will be well. My grandmother really trusted him so i was at ease. Those nightmares, i no longer have them. I don't even see Tshireletso anymore. But I'm still scared whenever I go out. I closed my laptop and went out of my room. I've been working from home since we came back. There was a lot to do so i decided to help. I hear some voices in the lounge talking. I guess the brothers have arrived and they are having one of their endless meetings. I hear a car driving off. That must be Farai.

Mabutho:and what does he have to do with this meeting? Sibonga baphantsi la ndoda yakhe

yamfounela.

Muzi: this has to do with his sister so i understand why he wants to be involved.

Shaka: istabane? Does he know how to hold a gun? He's a doctor. He must focus on that.

Mabutho: uqinisile bafo.

After that Shaka and Mabutho laugh.

Wow. I've always known Shaka is homophobic. He's always showed it. I mean he even made fun of Farai about how he will not have kids. Not Mabutho too.

Siya: but i like that guy. Une nqondo and uhlakaniphile. Did you hear his ideas?

Bonga: there's nothing wrong about being gay.

Mabutho: he's rubbing off on you too?

Mzwakhe: do you know how many times the same gay you're making fun of made sure that his sister does not leave your brother? Would we be here if it

wasn't for him? Ubafo ngabe afa yidepression manje umfazi wakhe amshiyile. The same Farai helped Khanyo with her studies. But you're making fun of him.

Shaka:wa qala ke umotivational speaker bafethu.

Muzi:can we talk about why we are here? Wena Siya we are counting you out of this one. You know you're not supposed to be holding guns. You'll see to it that the kids and our wives are safe. No guns for you and Bongani. The guards will be with you.

Mabutho:i haven't done this in a while. I'll have fun doing this.

Mzwakhe:and don't have too much fun and end up forgetting what your job is.

I felt a hand grab me from the back. I looked behind and saw my husband. I was tongue tied. I didn't know what to say. We went all the way to our bedroom.

Mpe:since when do you eaves drop on people's

conversations?

Me:erh...

Mped:Khuluma phela.

Me:i didn't mean to. I was just passing and i heard them talking about Farai.

Mpe:and you decided to listen?

Me:i said i didn't mean to. Your brothers are homophobic. Why do they make fun of gays? They always make Farai uncomfortable whenever he's here.

Mpe:I will talk to them.

Me: i don't like it. Gays are also people just like them.

Mpe:ngithe bgizo khuluma nabo. Now I'm going somewhere. Want me to bring you something?

Me:you can bring me a carrot cake.

Mpe:we have cake in the fridge.

Me:the kids finished it.

Mpe:okay. Ngiyak'thanda.

Me:nami ngiyak'thanda.

Mpe:uyabona manje ungenzani?

Me:babe your brothers are waiting for you.

Mpe:let them wait. I need my wife.

Soon our clothes were flying and he had me on the bed panting under him. He groaned as he came.

Mpe:ngiyabonga maka Lindani.

He kissed my sweaty forehead and rushed to the bathroom. I heard the shower running and after that he came back and lotioned then dressed in a black jean, leopard print t shirt and a panama hat.

Mpe:ngizokbona mang'buya.

Just like that? He's going to leave me like this?

Me:you're leaving me like this?

Mpe:I'll make it up to you tonight. Bye.

Me:wow.

He closed the door. I couldn't believe that he left. I went to take a shower and made the bed. If he thinks I'll let it go just like that then he has another thing coming. I go to the kitchen and Lindani is cooking. Wow that's a first.

Me:you're cooking today.

Lindani:yes. I'm here just for this weekend so i have to spoil my mother.

Me:mmh. I can't wait to taste that food.

NARRATED

Farai got into the house after a car dropped him.

Rickus:what's going on? You didn't fetch me from the airport and now you're shot.

Farai:it's a long story.

Rickus:we have time.

Farai:i went with my brothers in law to have that place where Kea was at closed down. Me and Muzi got shot. The place had some criminals involved but it's shut down now.

Rickus:you also had a gun!?

Farai:no. I was their driver. Someone is coming to treat me.

Rickus:you're losing so much blood.

Voice:hello. I'm here to treat his wound.

Rickus got up and went to the kitchen. He only came back when the man said he's done.

Man:I've taken out the bullet. Just make sure that he takes his meds.

Rickus:thank you.

He walked him out and closed the door.

Rickus:so what happened in Zimbabwe? You asked me to come here because you're going to be long.

Farai:you know i wanted us to go together but you refused.

Rickus:and deal with your homophobic parents?

Farai:you don't have to worry about them anymore.

He told him everything that happened in Zimbabwe.

Rickus:thinking about how you two were close it makes sense that you're twins.

Farai:come here. I've missed you.

Rickus:i missed you too.

He held him.

Farai:don't tell Kea that I'm shot.

Rickus:well just make sure the twins and Lisa don't see you. They are here.

Farai:when did they get here?

Rickus:the driver dropped them. Luu has been asking where you are.

Farai:don't let them into our bedroom. I'm going to sleep. Lisa might tell her mom if she sees me.

Rickus: I'll bring your food when I'm done cooking.

Farai:okay

He got up and went to his room. He found the twins sleeping in his bed. He made space for himself and slept. He woke up when he heard laughing.

Farai:why are you not sleeping?

Aya:we want to play with you malume.

Farai:let me sleep. Go and play with uncle Rickus or Lisa. When I wake up i will take you home.

Lu:no. We are sleeping here.

Farai:okay. When I wake up i will play with you.

Lu:okay.

Aya:malume why is your arm like that? Did you hurt yourself?

Lu:did they hit you?

Farai:i fell.

They laughed.

Lu:malume you are not strong. That's why you fell?

Farai:i am strong. I was just sick.

Aya:okay. You will be fine okay?

They kissed him and ran out of the room.

.....

Lindani cooked very delicious food for me. I really didn't trust him but i found myself going back to dish up. I spent the day with him telling me how everything is going and catching up.

Mpe:mawakhe ngibuyile.

Me:oh that's great hey.

Mpe: i thought you'd be happy.

Me:yeah I am happy.

Mpe:remember i said I'd make it up to you before I

left?

Me:oh that. It can wait. I'm spending time with Lindani. He went to fetch our drinks.

Mpe:I'm sure you can ditch him.

Me:he's only home for the weekend so i have to use this time with him.

Mpe:how is he fetching the drinks when I saw him outside? Are you angry about this morning? I'm sorry.

Me'ps sh im not angry.

Mpe:okay. Move so i can join you.

I made space for him.

Me:where's Farai?

Mpe:he's at Pretoria West . Why?

Me:i called and he's not answering. I wanted to find out how the kids are.

Mpe:the kids are fine. How's little Gabriella treating

you today?

Yeah the doctor confirmed that it's a girl. So we are going to name her after him. Gabrielle from Gabriel. My husband is so happy.

Mpe:only two weeks and she will be here.

Me:what do you think about a pregnancy bath photoshoot?

Mpe:we can a normal photoshoot as we have done with our kids. But not those bath what what.

Me:but babe. I trust Bongi. She knows her work. It's going to be beautiful.

Mpe: on one condition. There must not be men there.

Me:well my man will be there.

Mpe:mmh. Ufuna ngibe khona kanti?

Me:aow. You're the father. You have to be there. So I'd like my husband to be there.

Mpe:okay. But i won't have to be in the bath what what right?

Me:i also don't know. It's my first time doing it.

Mpe:okay. Is it safe?

Me:very safe.

Mpe:then it's fine.

There was a knock on the door. He got up and went to get the door. When he came back his face had changed.

Mpe:when is the shoot?

Me:this coming weekend.

Mpe:that's better. Maybe this person who just arrived will have left.

Me:ke mang?

Mpe:it's my cousin. I don't want him here but what can i do? Nothing.

Me:why..

"Sanibona."

I looked at my husband and he wasn't even

interested in answering the man

Mpe:how long are you staying here?

Man:can you relax? I am not here for your girlfriend.

Girlfriend,huh?

Man:i just came to greet you. I'm renting a hotel room.

Mpe:how did you know this place?

Man:we are family so how come i don't know where you stay?

Mpe:what do you really want?

Man:you know what i want.

Mpe:leave. I don't owe you anything.

Me:babe i think something is wrong with our baby.

Mpe:are you feeling any pain?

Me:yes it hurts so bad. I think the baby is coming.

Mpe:we still two weeks to go.

Me:please. I don't want to lose my baby. Take me to the hospital.

He got up and pick me up.

Mpe:aah.

I looked at him and he was crying.

Mpe:you're bleeding.

He ran out of the house and my heart beat fast because of fear.

NARRATED

He rushed her to the hospital very scared. They lost their baby boy and now this? It would kill his wife. She wouldn't handle it if they lost this one too.

Mpe:help!someone help!

The nurses came running after and took her and put her on the stretcher. He wanted to follow them but they told him to wait outside. He sat by the waiting area and couldn't stop crying. He called the parents to let them know. Then called his brothers. The waiting was killing him. He felt like the doctors were

taking long. A doctor came to him and he quickly stood up.

Dr:we have to quickly perform a c-session. One of them might not make it.

Mpe:how is my wife?

Dr:we are still busy with her. We need you to sign some papers.

Shaka:bafo we are here.

Mpe:whatever you do doctor. Make sure you save my wife. I don't care if the baby doesn't make it. I want my wife alive

Dr:we'll do our best to save them all.

He followed the doctor and signed the papers then went back to the waiting room.

Mzwakhe:what happened?

Mpe:everything was fine and we were talking and laughing. Then kwa fika uMthandeni. I was talking to him and she started feeling pain and started bleeding.

Muzi:I'm sure he must have done something. We can never trust anyone associated with him.

Mpe:and now one of them might not make it. What will happen if my wife doesn't make it?

Shaka:don't talk like that. I'm sure she will make it.

Muzi:what's happening? Why are the doctors going that side with her?

He looked up and saw them pushing the bed with his wife. Tears rolled.

Mzwakhe:isn't there something we can do? Maybe call her friend. The one she goes to church with sometimes.

Mpe:i can do anything. I just want my wife to be fine.

He took his phone out and called Chris.

Chris:Mpendulo. How's everything going?

Mpe:things are not good. My wife is having a c-session and they say she might not make it.

Chris:eish. I'm sorry man. I'm still in Nigeria with my

family. But I can ask my mother to talk to the pastor from our church. Be strong. Your wife will be alright.

Mpe:yes. That would be very helpful. I'd appreciate it.

Chris:my mother says she will call the pastor. I'm sure he will come there. He stays in Irene.

Mpe:thank you man.

Chris:my mother is talking to the pastor now. We will also pray for your wife from here.

Mpe:thank you for always coming through for me.

Chris:you're like my brother. So anything you need just tell me.

Mpe:okay. I'll let you know how everything goes.

Soon the pastor and his wife called. They prayed with them. Praying to God to save both the mother and the child. They prayed for God to breath life into them. To give them the strength to overcome what they are going through.

Pastor:your wife will be fine. She will overcome this. Both her and the baby. God is with them. He will heal them. Amen.

Mpe:amen.

Pastor:when your wife is awake call this number again. We would like to pray for her and the baby. Tomorrow we will come to the hospital.

Mpe:thank you so much.

After he cut the call the doctor came to them.

Dr:i have good news. We managed to save them both.

Mpe:thank you doctor. Thank you.

Dr:you can go and see the baby. Your wife is sleeping.

The four of them went to where the baby was kept.

Nurse:i just finished bathing her. You have a strong baby. She's a fighter.

Shaka:she's a Khoza. They are all strong.

Mzwakhe:when will she be moved to her mother's ward?

Nurse:maybe in the afternoon. The doctor just has to check her. She's a big baby. So it's actually a good thing.

Mzwakhe:isn't she supposed to be in an incubator since she's premature?

Nurse:no she's not premature. This is her exact date to be born. Her mother's doctor must have made a mistake.

Mpe:can i hold her?

Nurse:of course. Press that thing if something happens.

Muzi:thank you.

Nurse:the doctor will come here soon.

She left. Mpendulo couldn't stop looking at his baby girl. His little Gabrielle. A tear fell.

Mpe:i can't believe you are here. My baby. Dad loves you.

Shaka:congratulations bafo.

Mpe:thanks. I can't even celebrate fully because my wife is still not fine.

Muzi:she's out of danger so there's more hope .

....

Even after visiting hours were over Mpendulo never left. His brothers left but he remained behind. When it was visiting hours again he went to his wife's ward. She was awake.

Mpe:how are you feeling?

Kea:it's still painful. How's our baby?

Mpe:she's so beautiful. And big. The doctor is bringing her.

Kea:i can't wait to see her. Were you crying?

Mpe:we almost lost you. The doctors didn't know who to save between you and our baby girl. I called Chris. Then the pastors from that church you

always go to prayed for you and they said you will both make it. Even though i had little hope i hold onto their promise that you will make it.

Kea:God is good.

Mpe:i never thought i would say this one day but God's really good. He showed up in the ER for you today. I will never forget this day.

Nurse:here's your girl. Congratulations mommy.

Dr:what's her name?

Mpe:s thandwa saam do you have another name for her?

Kea:Realeboga. We thank God for saving us.

Mle:it's a beautiful name. Gabrielle Realeboga Khwezi Khoza.

Dr:okay.

Mpe:how long are they going to be here?

Dr:just a week. But it'll depend on the mother's recovery.

Nurse:here. You can hold your baby mommy.

She gave her to her to her mother and left with the doctor.

Mpe:let me call the pastor.

When he got in the afternoon he found the kids in the tv room watching tv.

Mpe:where are the other three?

Lindani:they are sleeping. How's mom?

Mpe:she's fine.

Mngobi:when is she coming back?

Mpe:soon. Let me show you guys her pictures with the baby.

He sat down and went through all the pictures he took.

Sphe:is this my baby sister?

Mpe:yes.

Sphe:i love her.

Thando:nami i love her. She has brown hair.

He kissed their cheeks and went to check on the triplets. They were sound asleep. He kissed them and went to his room to take a shower. When he was at the hospital Shaka went to buy a t-shirt for him because the one he had on had blood on it.

.....

It's exactly 9 months after I've given birth. My baby is growing. She is also chubby, just like how her sister was. Her father doesn't care about that. He didn't lie when he said it's a little him. She's always in his arms. He even takes her to work sometimes. Yeah he went back to work.

Me:we won't leave anytime soon if you keep staring at her.

He does this all the time. He looks into her eyes and she starts laughing.

Mpe:youcan't blame me. I didn't say she must have

your eyes. You gave her beautiful eyes. Your big beautiful eyes are the ones i noticed first.

Me:stop being obsessed with my eyes tu. Let's go.

Mpe:hay nawe umuhle yazi

Me:ngiyabonga

Mpe:asambe.

When we get out there's so much noise. Even the securities are looking at my yard. These brothers like making noise when they are together.

According to them this is a celebration. Ndoni is pregnant. That's what the noise is all about. After they found the sangoma they got to the root of whatever was standing in her way then went to another traditional healer to cleanse her. They've been trying for a baby and Now she's 8 months and three weeks along. She's close to giving birth. I find this funny. I've been laughing at how she's been telling her husband to stop making noise. She's not liking the attention. We all get into our cars and drive to the airport.

Lisa:where are we going?

Mpe:don't start.

Lisa:but I'm just asking.

Mpe:i know. But don't talk too much.

Lisa:but i don't talk too much.

Mpe:you do.

Lisa:mpm. Tell him i don't. Mp

Me:tlogela monyana wame. She doesn't talk too much.

Lisa:you see mom gets me? I only ask important questions.

Mpe:you're smart neh?

Lisa:like my aunty Khanyo.

Mpe:who told you that?

Lisa:she did. She saidI'mlikeher. That's why I'm so smart.

We got to the airport and boarded the jet. After maybe 2 hours we arrived at Shaka international

airport. Cars were waiting for us. They drove us home. Then the following day we would have a celebration. When we arrived the others were sitting in the lounge. We all joined them. As usual the kids ran to hug their grandparents.

Dad:i want to hold my little girl and boy now. Get off.

Nkazimulo:but mkhulu we also want to sit with you.

Dad:yes you can. But not on top of me. I want to hold them.

Luu:but mkhulu the other one is too big. She's fat.

Mpe:don't call your sister fat. You were also fat like this. You and your brother.

Aya:no! I was not.

Lisa:yes you were fat and i used to pick you two.

Lu:but now I'm not fat.

Lisa:yes. Because i make you walk a lot. You love being with me everywhere i go.

Lesedi:and Natty is also fat. Thando too.

Lisa:they eat a lot.

Lesedi is also here. Lisa wanted her to come with us and her parents agreed.

Lesedi:even Lethu is fat.

The kids laughed.

Lisa:you see mkhulu my friend also talks a lot?

Ma:just like you.

We left the kids arguing about who talks a lot. I went to change as we were about to peel things for tomorrow. I found my husband sitting in our room.

Me:are you alright?

I opened the closet and took a dress.

Mpe:mr Pereira passed away.

Me:oh. Im sorry. I know how much you cared about him.

Mpe:yeah.

He looked hurt by this . I understand how he must be feeling.

Mpe:i was thinking of going to his funeral. It's this weekend.

Me:oh.

Mpe:I'm just going on friday then come back right after the funeral.

Me:okay.

Mpe:i know it doesn't sit well with you. But I have to go and pay my last respect. Sphesihle also has to say her goodbyes to her grandfather.

Me:ke go utlwile. I don't have a problem with it.

Mpe:Khanyisile! Uyaphi manje?

Me:i have to help the others.

Mpe:we both know you're running away from this

conversation.

Me: what do you want me to say? We both know that if i were to say no you would still go.

Mpe: It's the least i could do. If it wasn't for him maybe I would be dead.

Me: go and pay your last respects. I don't care. Anyway the person I had a problem with is dead, his daughter. Not him.

Mpe: so you're glad that she's dead?

Me: yes. Or you want me to lie to you? If she was alive maybe all our children would be dead along with me. If you bring us another Agnes this time I will leave and never come back. I will leave you to continue with your Anges's.

Mpe: did i say I'd bring another woman into our home?

Me: who knows? I don't want to count on someone and end up being disappointed.

Mpe: so you think that I'm going to disappoint you one day?

Me:...

Mpe: I won't go then.

Me:i don't want you to blame me one day.

Mpe:come here...

I sat next to him.

Mpe:I would do anything for you. I'd kill anything or anyone that threatens your life. So this is nothing.

Me:did you kill John? Is that why Farai had a wound on his shoulder?

Mpe:yes. But when we got there he was already dead then the people there started shooting at us.

Me:oh.

Mpe:don't doubt our love. I won't hurt you. You are my life. Without you I'm nothing. What i promised you back then i will stick to it. I know i have hurt you in the past. But you know I'm doing my best to change that. If something doesn't sit well with you i won't do it. I want you to be happy. Don't ever forget that.

Me:I'm sorry for doubting you. I promise i will try and do better.

Mpe:i know.

I cuddled up to him.

Mpe:do you think they will need you for the next thirty minutes ? I was to sleep next to you. J ust to feel you close to me.

I think my husband's love is too much now. Even now that he temporarily went back to work he always calls every hour. He wants me next to him. His phone beeps.

Mpe:gogo is here. Siya says she's looking for us. Tomorrow is a big day. Let's go and greet her.what did you feed her? The first thing she asked Siya is to tell me to come with you.

Me:someone is jealous.

Mpe:as long as you don't love her more than you do me.

I laughed. We went outside and there were lots of

people.

Me:wow so many people.

Mpe:Shaka and Ndoni are at their place now. They don't know what's going on here. Tomorrow it's their traditional wedding. It's a surprise since they didn't have a traditional wedding. So we veat two birds with one stone by also celebrating their pregnancy.

Gogo:my child come here.

I went to sit next to her.

Gogo:you're so beautiful and smiling

It means he's doing a good job.

Mpe:uya bona nawe gogo ngiyakwazi ukumphatha kahle.

Me:how are you gogo?

Gogo:I'm good. Please make me tea my child. Come with this one's bottle.

She was carrying Lethu. I went to make her tea.

Me:Sethu can i have Lethu's bottle?

Sethu:i thought he was sleeping.

Me:he's with gogo.

Sethu:okay. Check in that bowl.

I took it and went back

They were chatting and laughing with my husband.
I gave her the tea and the bottle.

Gogo:I'm happy to see you. I hope you will come home this December.

I looked at Mpendulo and he smiled. I know he already said yes.

Me:yes gogo we will come.

You should have seen a big smile on my husband face. He was happy shame.

Mpe:gogo please stop feeding my wife whatever it is that you give to her. She loves you so much.

Me:but you said it's me who feeds her things.

We laughed.

Gogo:she's a humble and respectful woman. It

doesn't take much to like her. I loved her the first day you told me about her. I can see your love lasting for eternity. That's why I gave her my name. Khanyisile. She's brightened your life.

Wow. I didn't know Khanyisile is her name. I'm honoured to have her name.

Mpe:i know gogo. She's brought the light that was missing in my life and nothing matters anymore. Only her and our family. I love you Khanyisile Khoza.

Me:i love you too Mkhathini.

And this, this was the story of our life. Our love story. It wasn't easy but here we are. Went through challenges and overcame them together. And we are still going to make sure that we go through everything together as one and with love.