

Nobody messes with Lwando
Mbana's daughter and lives to tell a
tale

The Unplanned

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PROLOGUE

“GET ME OUT OF HERE!”

I scream banging on the doors refraining me from leaving.

“PLEASE SOMEBODY JUST LET ME OUT OF HERE”

I scream again but my screams fall on deaf ears.

“I’M NOT CRAZY”

I shout but to no response. I slide down and bury my face in my hands resting on my knees.

“I’m not crazy”

I whisper

“I’m not crazy”

I repeat with my voice failing me and tears rolling down my cheeks

“Why won’t they believe me?”

I ask myself as I cry with my face buried in my tiny hands.

I wake up still on the floor, I’m guessing I must have fallen asleep while crying. I look at my beautiful sparkly ring in my skinny fingers. All this is my husband’s fault, had it not been for him I wouldn’t

even be here today. He is the reason I'm even locked up in here. I get up and walk towards the corner that has a camera keeping an eye on me

"I JUST WANT TO TALK TO MY HUSBAND" I shout but to no response I guess

Minutes later the door swings open and the monster I married walks in looking all kinds of handsome but at this very moment he is not even handsome anymore, he's as ugly as the devil if you know what I mean. This creature that had me convinced he loves me is the reason I lay inside these four walls of a mental institution.

What did he do?

Oh I'll tell you what he did, heck lets walk through it together.

My name is Sinokuhle Mbana Langa, the daughter of the great Ayola and Lwando Mbana. All grown up and doing my first year in university of Western Cape in Cape Town. I am 17 years old and I'm studying Computer Sciences full time and Fashion Design as part time so I have a lot on my plate and I cannot afford to fail any of the two. It was pretty hard to convince the dean to allow me to do two courses so I cannot screw this up or else I'll have to drop one and only focus on one. I have a little brother, Thandolwethu who is 3 years younger than I am and is in high school doing commercial subjects and then there's my little sister Sanele who is 6 years younger than me and is a smarty with a

very loud mouth it's even annoying at times but we get along well, all of us.

My mother is a lawyer, greatest lawyer of her time and my father runs a strings of companies he acquired from my grandfathers with the help of my uncle Aphiwe of cause and the rest you'll learn along the way.

If you thought my parents love story was not a typical fairy-tale, I wonder what you'll think of mine. Mine's not a fairy-tale, it probably was at some point until I got married.

Nothing in life is ever planned, I mean we don't plan to be born nor do we plan to end up in a mental institution but hey, things happen. This is THE UNPLANNED life of Sinokuhle and it all starts at 17 only for me to be declared mentally unstable at age 27, who would have thought right?

CHAPTER 1

10 YEARS AGO

It's a Friday afternoon and I'm late for my 13:15pm lecture, it's already 13:13pm and my lecture is on the other side of the building, I'm running as fast as my little legs can carry me but I'm failing dismally. 'If only mom had bought me that car then I wouldn't be suffering like this right now', I think to myself but then again she's not to blame for my irresponsibility. As I'm running I bump into this rock hard wall. 'I don't remember there being a wall here', I think to myself. The wall sure smells good that's for sure but I don't have the time to stand and admire this tall structure before me

"Fuck!" I say bending down to pick up my books

"I'm so sorry Miss...." He pauses reading my book

"Miss Mbana", My surname rolls out of his lips like

melted chocolate. GOD my surname has never sounded better!

'SNAP OUT OF IT' my subconscious mentally scolds me and I'm reminded I was running late for class. I grab my book from his hand and get back up on my feet

"Thank you"

I say before continuing with my jog to class.

"Sinokuhle Mbana always late!"

That's my lecturer standing in front, MY GOSH he's always been dramatic that one. UWC is such a big campus for me to be early for class ok!

"Sir I'm sorry"

I say as I head to my seat that was saved for me by my friend

"You 10 minutes late, I should have locked the door already! this is your last warning"

he scolds as I make my way to my seat next to Layla

“hey friend, what have I missed?”

I whisper

“nothing babe, he gave us these”

She says handing me a booklet of slides

“thank you babe”

I say opening to the page she’s in

“what’s wrong with this code? Nothing’s been underlined but it gives out the wrong output. Miss Mbana”

Says Mr tight pants, looking at me behind his glasses. If I didn’t know better, I’d say he has a personal vendetta against me this man

“logical error maybe?” I say confidently

He looks at me for a while

“right, a logical error is an error that occurs when the program produces incorrect output which means that we probably did code the calculation correctly”

He says and continues lecturing us and tells us that this coming Friday we writing a class test that will contribute towards our DP's.

Whoever said university was fun clearly didn't do Computer Sciences else they wouldn't have said that. I hate my course but being the daughter of Ayola Majola and Lwando Mbana I have to do a meaningful course so that I don't struggle getting a job in future but with the mother I have who has my back, I am enrolled in fashion design as part time because she understands the struggle of not having your parents to back you up.

I finish up writing down notes as everyone walks out leaving me with Layla who thinks I'm ridiculous for doing two courses at the same time.

"So how was your test?"

She asks while packing her bag

"it was easy, I'm certain I passed"

I say proudly. I love what I'm studying and today we had a test so hence I was running late

“I bumped into some guy today but I didn’t even get the chance to see his face”

I say packing up my things into my handbag

“then how do you even know it was a guy?”

She asks sarcastically

“I’m certain it was a guy, his voice was heavenly and he had nice hands. He smelt heavenly and manly”

I say drooling

“Ladies”

Says a male voice walking into our class followed by laughter from other male voices that stop at the sight of us

“Miss Mbana, we meet again”

Says a tall light skinned brown eyed creature. MY GOD HE IS HOT! I look at him clueless, could it be the guy I bumped into earlier? His broad shoulder and rock solid looking chest seem like his and he definitely smells like him, what are the chances?

“Hi”

‘is that all you can say?’ my subconscious scolds me ‘I don’t know his name ok?!’ I scold back ‘play it cool’ she says

“I’m Bantubonke Mtwá”

He says with his hand pulled out to me

“Sinokuhle Mbana”

I say shaking his hand and quickly pull it away from him

“This is my friend Layla”

Layla waves

“Hi”

She says coldly, trust Layla to act all cold towards you making you feel ugly. Layla is coloured and she doesn’t trip. She never gives any guy so much attention that he’ll think he’s the shiit.

“We have to go, mom’s waiting outside”

She says pulling my arm

“Will I ever see you again?”

He shouts as we head to the door

“U’Dubs is a big campus”

Layla says pulling me outside. Soon as we outside she fans herself

“It has to be illegal to look that yummy together with your squad! Did you see the lesbian with a fade though?”

She says, I shoot her a look

“since when are you into girls?”

I ask with a raised eyebrow and she chuckles

“I’m not into her, I only said she’s hot! I would give up dick for a few days for her”

She says carelessly and I can’t help but laugh at her. She has to be joking right? We walk to the cafeteria over light conversations and she manages to convince me to stalk Bantu on Instagram and what do you know? his account is private

“request a follow”

She says poking me

“NO! I don’t want to give him the satisfaction!”

I argue

“Then make your account private so that he won’t be able to stalk you”

She says grabbing my phone

“WOW Lay!”

I say defeated and stuffing fries into my tiny mouth

“let’s wait and see”

She says handing me my phone, I shake my head thinking of how crazy this person I call my friend is. Just as we are sitting like that my phone beeps and it’s an Instagram notification. @Bonke_Mtwa has requested to follow me!

CHAPTER 2

“confirm”

Says my crazy friend grabbing the phone from my hand, MY GOD Layla is impatient!

“there, he’s accepted you already”

She says handing me back my phone all excited

“I’ll get to stalk my woman crush from you, what’s her handle?”

She asks that while punching on her phone

‘what have I gotten myself into?’ asks my subconscious

“fine let’s check her out”

I say going through Bantu’s pictures and good heavens the nigga FINE!!! Just as I’m scrolling I get a call from my father

“Hey daddy”

I say answering his call

“Oku hey I’m outside”

He says, my parents and treating me like a little kid,
you’d swear I don’t know my way around Cape
Town

“we coming daddy”

I say taking my bag and so does Layla

“Ok princess”

He says before dropping the call

“Your dad’s outside?”

She asks and I nod

“great!”

She says annoyed, we walk to the main gate over
light conversations until we reach dad’s car and
today he’s driving a Porsche, trust my father and
showing off. Sometimes I’m convinced he’s having
a midlife crisis and so is mom. He’s standing
outside wearing shades with a new haircut looking
all kinds of HOT you’d swear he’s my blesser

“Hey princess, Layla”

He says greeting us

“Hey Mr Mbana”

Layla says

“Dad did you have to?”

I ask rolling my eyes and getting inside the front seat while Layla settles for the back

“did I have to what princess?”

He says pretending to be lost

“let’s just go before people assume you my blesser”

I say putting on my seatbelt

“I think he looks pretty hot”

Layla says and I shoot her a look

“see? Layla gets it and so will your mom”

He defends. I find myself laughing because I know my mother more than he does and she will tell him to go and get a proper haircut, one appropriate for his age even

“Yeah right dad, we both know mom will take a pair of scissors and chop that fade off. Ouchea looking like a blesser”

I say still laughing at him, he increases the volume just to shut me up which makes me laugh even more

“Mall or straight home?”

He asks and I turn to Layla

“straight home”

She says, Layla and I are neighbors; as in her home is right next to mine

“Ok then”

He says driving straight home and just then he’s phone ring connected to the car and it’s mom

“Hey Kitten, I’ve got your daughter and her friend in the car”

He says and Layla and I both greet

“hey baby, hey guys. Honey where are you now?”

She asks

“I just pulled up in our street, whats up?”

He responds, she keeps quiet for a while

“I wanted you to pass by and place an order for pizza or something. I wont make it for dinner, I have a deadline”

She says and I see his face change from sweet to sour same time, dad hates mom working late. He never even understood her working when he has us set up for the rest of our lives

“Ok honey”

He says sounding really down

“We’ll talk later ok babe, I love you. Bye girls”

Mom says and we all say goodbye in unison making her laugh before ending the call

“so what do you guys want to eat?”

Dad asks turning to me and I shrug my shoulders, I’m not his only child after all

“lets decided when we get home and see what the others want to eat”

I say. We drop Layla off and then drive into our yard, our house is what you call a smart house. From the gate all the way to the house, my father gets really bored from time to time and spends his time finding ways to make our house smarter than it already is... if you know what I mean. I get out and head straight inside greeting our house keeper Nono and head to the lounge where my little sister Sanele is watching Regular Show, atleast I can watch that.

“Hey Sanele”

I say throwing myself on the couch she's sitting on with my head resting on her tiny thighs

“Hi Oku, get off of me you heavy!”

She complains pushing my head, I chuckle looking up at her

“you so cute, how are you? how was school?”

I ask sitting up properly

“school was boring, how was your school?”

She asks focused on the tv. Trust my little sister to pay attention to her favorite tv show despite the million times she’s watched it!

“it was ok, what do you want for dinner?”

I ask and she turns to me same time, this skinny thing eats like theres no tomorrow and never gains weight it’s annoying even

“you mean we eating out?”

She asks looking all kinds of excited, I nod

“I want Pana”

She says, I roll my eyes. What was I even expecting? She always wants Pana and Thando obviously wants Spur

“We’ll see what dad thinks first”

I say

“what about mom?”

She asks looking worried, my sister and her mother. She would kill you!

“mom is going to be late”

I say getting up from the couch to go and put my bag in my room. I put my bag in it's place and then take my phone and wear slippers before heading out. I head to dad's room and the door is half open, he's shouting someone on the phone

“How long has this been going on?”

He asks sounding really angry

“You mean to tell me that it's been a week and you only telling me this now?”

He paces around while listening attentively

“Find this person and take them to the warehouse!”

He says dropping the call, I quickly tiptoe a few steps back head towards his room pretending as if I heard nothing and I just got out of my room

“princess”

He says, I smile

“hey daddy, so I was thinking Mugg and Bean because Saney wants Panarottis and Thando will obviously want Spur”

I say, he looks at me for a while

“whichever is fine princess, please go fetch your brother at 4 theres somewhere I have to be”

He says heading past me

“ok dad”

I say heading towards the stairs to the kitchen, I need something to eat while I stalk my newly founded crush, I get a call from mom as I settle on the couch

“hey mom”

I say

“hey baby what are you doing?”

She asks

“I’m about to eat, dad seems a little pissed about something”

I snitch because I already know that's why she called, she sighs

"your father is dramatic, wherever you guys eat please order me something. My boss is flying in later and he wants a report as in yesterday"

She says sounding frustrated

"sorry mom you'll be fine"

I say

"yeah I will, where's your father?"

I don't know whether to lie or be honest but then again she'll know if I'm lying to her, we that close

"he went out a few minutes ago, I don't know where he went but he was talking to someone on the phone and he sounded really pissed ey. Said something about someone being brought to the warehouse"

I say

"ok baby, thanks hey. I'll see you later, do you have classes later today?"

She asks

“Not today mom, tomorrow at 5”

I say

“ok baby, let me get back to work. Greet your sister for me and your brother, actually let me talk to Saney before she throws a fit”

She says laughing and I hand Saney who’s been eyeing me since the minute she realised I was talking to mom my phone and she smiles talking to her mother.

CHAPTER 3

“Nigga I’m outside the first gate”

I text Thando agitated, I’ve been waiting for him for the past 15 minutes since the bell rang and no sign of him

“Coming”

A text pops through my phone and it’s him, I wait while texting Buntu telling him what I’m doing. Yes, he slid in my DMz and we’ve been talking since and let’s just say things are going good, he’s actually sweet and maybe I’d date him... never mind the fact that we would look good together! The door opens startling me

“Hey Sino”

Says my little brother settling in the front seat

“hi, where the hell have you been?”

I ask starting the car

“I was in the yard, I thought you’d text like mom and dad normally do”

He says defending himself, I turn to him

“yeah well I always find you waiting outside”

I say

“because you never this early, everything ok at home?”

He asks with his look piercing right through my skin,
I chuckle

“why would anything be wrong at home?”

I ask focusing on the road and he chuckles

“cause you early, you never early”

I chuckle shrugging my shoulders

“mom’s not going to make it for dinner and so we eating out”

I say and he sighs

“and that means we going to your choice of restaurant”

He says sounding really annoyed making me laugh

“YEP! You know how it is”

I say increasing the volume, I’m driving mom’s Jeep which she gladly told me I could drive. The joys!

“I’ll tell mom you drove the jeep”

He says and I just laugh at him

“nice try buddy, she knows!”

I say sticking my tongue out at him. His school is 30 minutes away from our house and it’s even more depending on the traffic and right now there’s traffic! GREAT! My phone rings and it’s mom

“Honey”

She says

“hey mom”

I say

“Hey Honey”

Says my little brother, that’s what he calls mom and has always called mom ever since I can remember

“great! How are you baby?”

She asks, I automatically assume she’s talking to her because she and I spoke earlier

“I’m good mom thanks, we on our way home and your daughter was actually earlier than usual. Should I be worried?”

I shoot him a look

“I will drive into this truck!”

I say and he laughs

“not in my car please! Plus, not with my baby”

Mom says making me laugh, she can be so dramatic at times. They both know I would never do such a thing

“I’m kidding geez, tell your son to watch it”

I warn and mom laughs

“baby wear a seatbelt in case your sister tries something”

I gasp

“MOM!”

She laughs

“I’m just saying. Get home safe ok? seemingly I’ll be out of here earlier than expected”

She says

“I’m sure dad must be happy to know that”

I mock laughing at her

“Shut up Sino! You must think you and I are the same age I swear! I am 20 years older than you little girl”

She says dramatically making Thando and I both laugh

“we love you too mom. Bye now”

“bye babies”

She says before dropping the call and all is well in love and war. We chill in silence with him pressing his phone while I listen to my music connected to the radio and cars hooting behind us and in front of us. Traffic is hectic around this time of the day

because everyone is either leaving work or school and rushing to get home.

“Sino”

My brother calls bringing me back to reality, I’m so lost in thoughts while listening to Jhene Aiko’s album sailed out or something. I love her music, I’m a fan and her voice is just calming

“What?”

I ask annoyed

“Geeez, what’s wrong with you?”

He says rolling his eyes

“I’m sorry for snapping, what’s up little bro?”

I ask politely this time around

“So there’s this girl”

I smile turning to him and he immediately rolls his eyes

“keep talking”

I say smiling widely

“Anyway, she’s pretty and she’s pretty much everything but I’m scared to approach her. There’s something about her that’s just intimidating sis. We do talk on social media but I can’t gather up the balls to approach her like that and I really like her”

He says making me laugh, I never thought he and I would have such a conversation considering how close he and mom are

“At least you already talking on social media, walk up to her and greet, start small. Talk about school and just take it from there. Nowadays girls just want a guy who’s honest from the get go. Are you still a virgin?”

I ask side eyeing him and he chuckles and looks outside

“I’m not answering that question Sino”

He says with his deep voice that sounds like dad’s. Argh my little brother is a photocopy of my father in all ways, the only thing he took from mom is the eyes otherwise the rest is all dad.

“So you’ve already had sex?”

I say poking him

“that is none of your business!”

He says and I can’t even hide the shock on my face but then again I’m not really shook because my little brother is as hot as they come. Your usual dark skinned guy with pretty much everything a girl could possibly want. I just hope he’s not a player

“So, when? Where? With who? Do you guys still talk?”

I ask turning to him and then back on the road, he huffs

“Because you not going to let this go. This is her, remember when I went to a sleep over? Or rather when I said I was at a sleep over?”

I nod doubtfully trying to remember and then it hit’s me. Last month little bro said he was going to sleep over at a friend’s place and came back the next day acting all weird

“When you was acting all weird and stuff?”

I ask

“I wasn’t acting weird! Anyway yeah that’s when it happened. I’m not going to go into detail!”

He says sternly and I just laugh at him

“And what about the girl whose virginity you broke?”

I ask driving into the drive way and he shrugs

“she and I are cool. She’s seeing someone”

He says almost as though he’s dismissing me

“Are you sure?”

I ask and he nods opening his door just after I finish parking. OK he’s being weird. I let him be and take my things and lock the car following him inside the house while responding to Bantu’s DMz and sending him my number. It’s not even 2 minutes since I sent my number and my phone rings with an unknown number on the screen

“Hello”

I say unsure

“Hey beautiful, you speaking to Bantu”

CHAPTER 4

I walk past the kitchen and dad is here dressed differently, drinking bottled water typing on his phone angrily or so it looks. I don't pay mind to him and continue talking to my newly founded crush. I walk into my room and throw myself on the bed laying on my back all giggly and smiling. He's such an entertaining person and he's making me blush, I think we might just date. I find out that he's doing his final year in Computer Science, he's the only child at home, he and the lesbian chick my friend is into are actually cousins, he is from the Eastern Cape and he's not your typical rich kid and all. I'm shook because I expected someone who was all that but he's actually very humble it's even annoying but very cute. I'm a sucker for such people.

“So tell me Miss, why Computer Science and Fashion?”

He finally asks, I breathe out

“Well... Being Lwando and Ayola’s daughter you have to have a serious degree behind your name and it doesn’t help that your father is a computer wizard. It was either two majors or i do something my father wants me to”

I say

“I’m confused, why would your father choose a course for you? What are you passionate about?”

I chuckle

“I love clothes and making them but I also love computers. When I passed my matric I had been accepted for clothing management at CPUT and DUT, accepted for Computer Science and Fashion here. I had to pick one and I chose fashion off which mom was cool with it but my father being himself told me flat out that no daughter of his was going to study Fashion and that I wasn’t going to go anywhere with my hobby. Said he wasn’t going to waste his money on a dying field”

“Ouch”

He says in between

“That’s harsh”

He says

“Yeah well that happened, mom managed to convince him that I loved fashion and that he should let me give it a shot, he flatly told her that he was only willing to pay for Computer Science and nothing else or rather I apply for another “serious” course or just sit at home and not study this year. You can imagine how that went. I sent my designs out to a few people and mom made a few calls which scored me a bursary to study my dream course but it wasn’t going to be possible to study both, we had to convince the dean that I was able to do both without failing either and here I am”

I say breathing out

“Damn! You have rich people problems”

He says laughing and I cant help but laugh too, his laugh is contagious and cute and very deep and bold

“you could say that, being born to my family is a blessing and a curse”

I say

“but you happy right?”

He asks and I stop to think for a second. Am I happy? I mean my family gives me life and I never need anything. You could say I’m my most happiest when I’m with my family and like any normal family we fight every now and then but no fight is bigger than us

“Yeah I’m happy”

I say with a smile

“you had to think about it first... says a lot if you ask me”

“Why?”

I ask confused

“Cause I believe that if you genuinely happy it's never something to second guess”

He says

“Sino dad says lets get going”

Says my little sister standing by the door

“Be there now”

I say sitting up

“I should go”

I say to Bantu on the phone and he sighs loud enough for me to hear him

“I'll miss you”

He says and I can't help but imagine him sulking and I chuckle thinking of how cute he must look

“don't sulk, I'll be back later and I will tell you all about my dinner with the family”

I say wearing shoes sitting on the edge of my bed and he chuckles

“You guys have dinner at 6?”

I asks almost shocked

“NO Silly! We going to eat out as a family, dinner is normally at 7 or 7:30pm”

I say

“Bye Bantubonke”

I say walking out of my room wearing a kimono

“Bye Sinokuhle omhle Majola-Mbana”

He says and I find myself turning pink. I just cut the call on him because I feel like we wont stop talking. I cant remember the last time a guy excited me this much... Ahh growth!

“you dating now”

Says my little brother startling me walking out of his room

“Don’t do that!”

I say shoving him lightly

“Wait! You really are dating”

He says with his mouth wide open, I roll my eyes

“Wow!”

I say annoyed walking towards the stairs

“come on spill, who is he?”

I turn to him and close his mouth

“shut up!”

He removes my hand

“who is he? Where is from? Finally you can get laid,
you’ve been too tense”

He says and I swear I almost slapped him had dad
not been standing at the bottom of the stairs

“Shut up!”

I say gritting my teeth with a fake smile. We get to
the bottom of the stairs and head to the car in
silence, I connect my music and we start jamming
to my songs

“So how was school?”

Dad asks looking at my brother through the mirror

“Theres a girl he likes and is afraid to tell”

I say not even turning to see the evil eye my little brother is probably giving me, serves him right for saying what he said earlier

“You like a girl”

Dad says

“Sino doesn’t know what she’s talking about dad!”

He defends

“I saw him walking with her as he was leaving school and it did not look like a friend to me”

I say annoying him

“Shut up Sino! She’s lying dad”

I don’t get why he doesn’t tell dad such things, I mean look at our parents. He could learn a thing or two from dad about women plus it’s not like dad will mind him dating. But me on the other hand, dad scared off every guy that smiled at me. I went with a family friend’s son to my prom... imagine! In a nutshell I have never really had a relationship, they always end before they even start thanks to my

father, I sometimes feel like his bipolar comes out where I'm concerned-rolls eyes-

"It's ok to date son, I mean you need to experience some things and that includes getting to know women"

Dad says proudly, I shoot him a look

"Wait so it's ok for my 14 year old brother to date but not your 17 year old daughter?"

CHAPTER 5

He chuckles and looks straight ahead

“Yes”

He says unbothered. Guys my father is something else I swear!

“You doing two courses and you cant afford any distractions Sino”

He says sounding more serious. Wow! So much for trying to put my little brother in the spot and actually end up being the one roasted.

‘Where Mrs Mbanana when I need her?’ says my subconscious sarcastically

“Ayt parent”

I say knowing how much that annoys him, well not really annoy him but he doesn’t like it when I call him that. He shoots me a look

“Don’t start with me Sinokuhle”

He says sternly making all of us laugh, our father is dramatic!

“fine parent I won’t”

I say proudly

“We eating at Pana, text your mother”

He says spiting me. We get to Pana, he parks the car and we all jump off and make our way inside over light conversations, I clung onto his arm just because I can and also because he looks like a fuckboi now and these thirsty girls will try flirting with him. It’s no doubt that dad is loyal to mom, trust me that man doesn’t look at another woman’s direction... even if he does, he is discreet I guess. I don’t think I’ve ever seen a man who loves his wife as much as my father loves mom. Just as I thought, the girls at the door can barely keep their eyes off of him as we head towards the door

“this is why I hook my arm to yours, these girls always want a piece of you and I have to protect mom’s snack”

I say giving him puppy eyes so that he hopefully ignores the stupid comment I just made. He chuckles

“Sino I am still your father and I’m not a snack, I’m a full meal and your mom can testify to that”

He says proudly making me laugh my ass off. WOW guys!

“table for 4 sir?”

Asks a pretty dark bone standing by the door with menus

“5 please”

I say proudly and she leads the way after asking us to follow her

“you are so dramatic, you really are your mother’s daughter”

He says nudging me

“you said it yourself, you mom’s full meal”

I say with a shrug while laughing. We settle down on the chairs and open our menu’s. Dad orders for

himself and the kids order their own things, I don't like panache much so I look through my menu

"Please come back after like 5 minutes, I'll have a bubblegum milkshake"

She nods writing down my order

"please make that two, my wife is on her way"

Dad orders

"will that be all for now?"

She asks while also confirming everyone's order. We all agree and she leaves. I look through while dad suggests I order for mom whatever I will be eating because I know her better. After 10 minutes she comes back and I've decided on pasta instead. She takes my menu and leaves, right after she leaves mom walks in and settles next to her husband kissing his cheek

"Hello kids"

She finally says and we all greet her in unison making her giggle

“how are you guys?”

She asks

“your meeting ended quite early”

Dad says

“yeah it did, lucky me”

Mom says sarcastically

“We good mom thank you and how are you?”

I ask

“it was ok baby, my job is draining yoh”

She says rolling her head back untying her beautiful long hair. My mother is the definition of perfection. If you thought perfect didn't exist then you haven't met Mrs Mbana. From the way she wears her hair all the way to the way she ties her 6 inch Louboutins. She's an hour glass, I'm talking Londie London vibes if you know what I mean. The way she's so beautiful and her body is so perfect you would swear she doesn't have 3 kids.

“that’s what you get for being super woman! Lets have a spa date this Saturday”

I suggest and she smiles same time

“on you right?”

She says and I laugh

“on your husband’s black card”

I say with a smirk and dad rolls his eyes

“I’m also coming right?”

Saney jumps in, I roll my eyes

“it’s just me and mom”

I say

“You either include my baby or you pay with your own card”

Dad says. WOW!

“fine then”

I say rolling my eyes

“So I can come right?”

She says with that innocent smile of hers that gets to everyone in the house. Saney is a master manipulator with her perfect little smile and puppy eyes.

“So what did you order for me?”

Mom asks

“pasta, they don’t have anything interesting on their menu”

I say with a shrug

“thanks baby. So honey how was your day? What did you do all day?”

Mom asks dad, I take this time to respond to messages on my phone.

I have a dozen messages from Layla asking me about Bantu. Trust my friend and news. She followed her female crush and they’ve been flirting and apparently they have a date this Saturday.

Me-“you don’t waste time huh?”

Her-(laughing emoticons) “you know me friend. Theres something exciting about her you know? I think I might just be into girls”

Me-(laughing emoticons) “yeah right, soon as you get tired of her you going back to dick”

Her-“you know me all to well friend. I’m strictly dicky but I like to keep my options open you know?”(smirk emoticon)

Me-(rolling eyes emoticon) “Whatever. Enjoy this game while you can babe”

Her: “Whats up with you and Mr Yummy-probably packed down there(eggplant)?”

I laugh out loud and the little ones turn to me with raised eyebrows

“go back to whatever you guys were talking about”

I say fixing my eyes back on my screen and responding to Layla

Me-(rolling on the floor emoticon) “WOW! Dude really?”

Her-(raised eyebrow) “yes really. So details”

Me-(zipped mouth) “theres nothing to tell. Love you, gotta go now!(kisses)”

I say logging out of Whatsapp and locking my phone. Layla is noseey. My milkshake arrives and I dig in, I’m not really hungry, I just love this particular milkshake.

“Mom’s coming to Cape Town next week”

Mom says and my siblings jump for joy. We love grandma Amanda. She’s... How can I put it? Awesome!

“and what about grandpa?”

I ask

“I don’t know, mom didn’t mention anything about him”

Mom says with a little uncertainty in her voice

“Honey did dad mention anything about coming to Cape Town to you?”

She says asking dad and dad shakes his head

“nope, we last spoke a few days back and it was all business”

He says focused on his drink, if I didn't know better I would say he's hiding something.

Our food finally arrives and we all dig in. When we finish, dad settles the bill and I drive with mom while the rest drive with dad.

“So today I bumped into a guy”

I say breaking the silence as we drive out of Pana with dad following behind mom's car

“Is that so? What does he look like? Is he cute? Does this mean you'll finally start dating?”

She asks with excitement in her voice. I cant help but laugh. My parents are the opposite of each other but they compliment each other perfectly

“Wow mom! Really now?”

I say rolling my eyes while paging through my phone going to my Instagram app

“what? I want to know. I mean baby you’re in Varsity and you’re still a virgin who has never had her first real kiss”

She says

“Shade caught mom”

I say poking her and she laughs

“He’s cute, here is his picture”

I say handing her my phone, she takes it and looks at it while we wait for the robots to turn green

“he is cute. Nice body. You have to date him”

I shoot her a look

“don’t give me that look. You old enough to date babygirl”

She says handing me my phone

“yeah but theres dad”

I point out locking my phone

“what about him?”

She asks

“he is my father and he believes I don’t need any distractions”

I say

“Honey, you need to have a bit of fun else you’ll be this bitter person. You could really use some sex in your life”

I shoot her a look and poke her

“MOM!”

“What? I’m just saying, at least if you were having sex you wouldn’t be this tense and uptight... that’s only if it’s great sex”

She points put proudly

“look at me? I’m a happy and satisfied soul”

She says and I cant help but be disgusted. Mom is too open for my liking

“MOM! I’m still your daughter, I need not know such details”

She laughs

“all I’m saying is that you could use some great sex!”

She says focusing on the road

CHAPTER 6

So it's Saturday!!!

SPA DAY!!!

I wake up and shower then fix my bed and wear my pjays then head downstairs to make breakfast listening to earphones and singing along to Wizkid - Fever, it's on repeat and I can't get over it! Why am I in such a mood? Well probably because yesterday I actually got my first real kiss from yours truly... Bantubonke Mtwala! Yes, we kissed and I think we dating. It was after our kiss that he told me flat out that he'd be a fool to let these Cape Town boys play me and that he wants me to be his alone and he will be mine alone!

So yeah! I'm happy.

I'm startled by someone unlocking the door at this hour, it's past 6, everyone is still in their rooms. It's dad and he is dressed in all black wearing a beanie

carrying car keys, his clothes are dirty. I look at him from head to toe and back up, he is as shocked as I am.

"Marhadebe what are you doing up this early?"

He asks. He only ever calls me by my clan name when he is about to bribe me or something along those lines.

"Making breakfast, where are you coming from Rhadebe?"

I ask with my arms folded in front of my chest

"I uhm... I went jogging. I needed to clear my head"

He says, I chuckle

"Sho"

"Uhm Rhadie can we keep this between us?"

He asks. This is my chance to actually ask for that car

"On one condition"

I say holding up my index finger

"That being?"

He asks eyeing me

"I need a car"

I say. He looks at me for a while before nodding

"Fine! When you get back it will be parked outside"

He assures headed towards the door. I watch him walk until I notice a gun tucked in his pants behind, I clasp my mouth and he turns quickly

"You'll text me the car you want right?"

He says nervously and I just nod like the confused person I am right now. My father owns a gun? How? When? Why?

So many unanswered questions. I decide to start chopping the things I'll need but my mind is still processing my father owning a gun. Soon as I am done I go to each and everyone's room and call them to the dining area to eat.

"Where's dad?"

I ask as mom settles in her seat

“he’s still sleeping, he went jogging this morning, must be drained”

She says. Part of me wants to tell her but then again why ruin a good thing? I mean what she doesn’t know isn’t hurting her right? If dad is dealing shady then there must be a reason right? Why else would he own a gun? GOD so many unanswered questions here. I let things be, we eat over light conversations. When I’m done I place my dish in the sink and head up to my room, my room is two doors away from that of my parents. Their door is half closed when I hear dad shouting at someone, pretty sure he’s talking on the phone. I walk towards their room and stand by the door

“If Ayola finds out about this I am dead!” he says pissed “I don’t care how you fix it! Just fucking fix, it and make sure my wife doesn’t find out about it!”

He says cutting the call. OK! What's going on? I tip-toe away from the door and head to where I am supposed to be.

N-D-I-Y-A-J-O-L-A (I'm in a relationship)

My phone is flooded with messages and missed calls, it can only be Bantubonke Mtwá. GOD he's so dreamy! You could say I decided to take mom's advice on dating, I need something that's going to distract me from school even if it's for a few minutes' face timing you know? All work no play kills! So far he's been an amazing person, every day I wake up to a poem... He writes. Who knew right? Anyway I'm happy with him even if it may not be real, I can't possibly believe it's real because no guy can be this perfect. Not in this life time! I play Mad Over You by Runtown while stripping my gown off to change into clothes, mom is probably showering and we leaving at 9, our appointment is for 10am. Just as I finish taking off my robe my phone rings and it's Bantu, I answer smiling from ear to ear

“Mr Mtwā”

I say and he chuckles

“beginning to think I’ve been dumped”

He says

“I wouldn’t dare dream of that, I was making breakfast”

I say

“So she can cook? Mmmh”

I giggle

“I said breakfast not the last supper now”

He laughs and so do I

“OUCH! well what are you up to? Can I take you out today?”

He says

“Uhhm”

“I don’t like the sound of that”

He quickly responds

“Well mom, my sister and I are going to the spa and I don’t know when we will be back”

I say

“Can I see you after if it’s not too late then?”

“of cause. I will call you”

I say

“let’s FaceTime. I want to see what you look like in the morning”

He says and I can’t help but giggle

“I look the same way I did yesterday morning”

He chuckles

“that was yesterday, I want to see how you look today”

I giggle

“Fine.”

I say rolling my eyes. I switch to FaceTime and Mr is laying on his back topless looking all kinds of

crusty in a very sexy cute way or maybe my crush on him is that intense. He is dreamy you guys!

“I take it you finished washing already”

He says looking at me

“yeah, I washed before I went to make breakfast”

I say and he smiles

“You beautiful”

I blush with my cheeks turning pink

“thank you”

I say. We talk for a while

“So I know it’s early in our relationship and all but I feel like you must know”

He frowns in anticipation of what I’m about to drop on him

“Bonke I’m a virgin”

I point out and he keeps quiet. The silence becomes deafening, awkward even. I’m about to cut the call when he starts talking

“I’m waiting for you to come up with your point beautiful”

He says and I frown, I’m confused, I just told this guy that I’m a virgin and he doesn’t see a point in what I just told him

“Sinokuhle listen, if I was in this for the sex then I wouldn’t be doing all this. Not to sound like a jerk or anything but I wouldn’t put in this much effort to get into your pants babe. I’m in this because I like you, I want to know you outside the bedroom and maybe with time inside the bedroom of which I’m in no rush for the bedroom part. You’re a cool chick, not all what I was expecting. There’s a mystery to you that I just can’t help but be drawn to and if you will let me, can we just do things in the right order?”

He says and for a second I suddenly feel bad for my thoughts about him on this whole situation. What if he’s not selling me dreams and he’s being genuine?

“Sure”

I say

“Sure as in we doing this?”

He confirms with a little enthusiasm and I smile and nod

“I could kiss you right now”

“Bye Bantubonke!”

I say

“Come on don’t be like that now”

He pleads

“I have to get dressed”

I say

“can I watch?”

He says giving me that naughty smile of his

“NO!”

I scold and he laughs

“I’m going to be starved in this relationship shame”

He says pouting, I laugh

“Bye Bonke”

I say dropping the call on him. I walk to the closet and take off my robe and wear matching underwear, Navy blue high waist jeggings, white vest crop top and white sneakers. I spray my braids and then leave them hanging loose. I look cute with my hour glass shaped body which I acquired from my mother. Yep. It's a thing because even my little sister has this sexy body. I take a few mirror selfies then walk out, I meet my parents walking out of their room and mom is wearing a white maxi dress with a navy blue hand bag, navy sandals and her hair is hanging loosely. She looks beautiful., dad whistles

“When you guys look this beautiful I am tempted to drop you guys off and fetch you when you done”

He says making mom and I blush

“stand together and let me take pictures of you guys”

He says and who are we to say no? We start striking poses until my little sister comes out and joins us. We take a few more just me and Saney then we head down. All 3 of us are wearing white and navy blue. We look good, I start posting a few of our pictures and within minutes' people are commenting and liking. That's what you get for being Ayola's daughter. Everyone is interested in your life hence my account on IG is now private.

CHAPTER 7

So... Dad had mom's car delivered to the spa, said something important come up at work and he cannot miss it. I bet it has something to do with the call he received earlier. Anyway mom parks behind a white mini cooper

"Were you expecting any visitors?"

She asks turning to me and I shake my head no

"nope"

She looks at the car one last time before getting out of the car. We all get out and head inside

"So Bantu called, wants to take me out"

I say as we walk inside the kitchen

"If that's your way of asking to go out then sure, as long as he brings you back before 7"

Mom says

"Hey Nono, whose car is that?"

Mom asks

“Hi Ma’am. Sir said it was Sino’s and the keys are in her room on her bed”

Nono says and mom turns to me, I shrug

“Thank you Nono”

She says to Nono and then gives me that ‘Explain’ look of hers

“I have no idea what made dad get me a car”

She gives me that bored look of hers and I don’t know what else she expects me to say

“Fine”

She says and heads upstairs

“So dad finally bought you a car”

Says Saney walking in behind me

“I guess so...”

“Let’s go for a spin”

She says excitedly

“NO! I have to be somewhere”

I say leaving her in the lounge. She can be very nosey. I bump into my brother walking down the stairs

“hello! So when are we taking your new baby for a spin?”

He asks and I shrug

“When I’m not busy”

I say leaving him there. I get to my room and change into a dress. It’s blazing hot I even regret wearing jeans. I wear a short umbrella dress, denim jacket and a sandal. I text Bonke my location and he responds same time telling me he’s on his way. I fix my lipstick and then head down. I’m nervous AF! I get to the lounge and little ones are watching tv and chatting about lord knows. I text mom telling her I’m on my way out and she sends me an ‘ok’... I don’t get why she doesn’t want me to own a car. It doesn’t make any sense! I get a call from Bantu telling me he’s outside. I walk out and head to his

car, he's driving a black BMW something-something... I don't know cars.

"You get beautiful by the minute"

He says as I settle in the passenger seat

"Thank you babe. You look good yourself"

I say kissing his cheek but he turns it into a kiss on the lips and it's whimsical! He breaks it and looks at me then clears his throat.

"So how was the spa date with mommy and Sanele right?"

He asks starting the car

"yes Sanele. It was relaxing. We came back glowing. How was your morning?"

I ask

"it was ok, went to the gym and then chilled with the guys while waiting on you"

He says and I smile

"So what's up with your cousin?"

I ask and he furrows his eyebrows

“My cousin?”

“Yeah, the butch”

He chuckles

“She wants your friend. Well she wanted you first
but I beat her to it”

I shoot him a look

“What? It’s not like you into girls”

He says unbothered

“So what? I was a bet?”

I ask with a raised eyebrow

“Not at all. You’d know already if you were. So
where do you want to eat?”

He asks and I shrug

“I don’t know, what’s your budget?”

I ask and he chuckles

“I’m not rich, I can afford so pick an affordable
place”

He says and somewhat I want to feel insulted but I overlook it

“Uhhm... Is Wimpy affordable?”

I ask and he chuckles

“do you feel like eating at Wimpy?”

He asks and I shrug. I don't know how much he has and I don't want to go for an expensive place

“I'm thinking about your wallet here”

I defend

“Fine, I'll pick a place then”

He says proudly. We drive to waterfront and he takes me to some Fish place

“You don't have any allergies right?”

He asks as we walk in and I shake my head

“none that I know of”

I say. We are lead to a table for two and given menus to look through. I opt for fish, chips and calamari rings. It's not more than R100, I opt for a

sprite and then hand the waitress my menu and he opts for what I'm having. She leaves us and then he takes my hand into his

"So tell me about yourself Miss Mbana"

He says

"What do you want to know?"

I ask and he chuckles

"Is that how you going to answer when you go for an interview?"

He says giving me a look

"No, obviously. I just wish you would ask what it is you want to know about me. Be specific you know?"

He nods

"I know your parents are the ISH, that's out of the way. I know you have a little brother and sister. Your best friend is Layla and she's your neighbour. Tell me something I don't know or won't learn about you on Instagram and Facebook"

He says and I think for a second

“Uhhm... Apart from doing 2 courses. I’m a simple person, I’m down to earth. Shy AF! I wouldn’t really say I have a personality as per say unless you know me. I consider myself as boring and uninteresting. I don’t like Panarottis much because of my siblings. My favourite drink is sprite, I prefer chocolate and bubble-gum milkshake. I like to eat healthy every now and then. I love writing”

He stops me

“Wait! You write?”

I nod

“Well I don’t write poetry like you, I’m more into short stories. I don’t have time to write a novel and stuff”

I say

“then why aren’t you studying literature?”

He asks and I shrug

“I don’t know; I guess I just want to make my parents proud”

I say

“I fell in love with writing when I got to high school but fashion was always my passion from since I was a little child so it was wise to choose it instead”

I say and he nods slowly

“your parents seem strict”

He says and I chuckle

“I wouldn't really call it strict, well my father is but it's only because he wants me to be something in life and with Computer Science my future is already secured. I mean I already have a job waiting for me”

I say and he nods

“So if you hadn't done CS then what? He wasn't going to support you?”

“Yes and no. My parents are two different people. mom is ok with me doing whatever makes me happy while dad on the other hand is strict. If I'm going to do something I need to have thought, it

through with it's up and downs and potholes along the way”

I say and he just nods

“Damn your life is not fun huh”

I shrug my shoulders

“Well with me what you see is what you get. I’m doing my course because I love it. It’s not often that one gets it right the first time”

I nod

“I have a scholarship paying for my fees so soon as I’m done, I’m leaving SA and going to live in Tokyo”

He says with a smile

“That’s awesome”

CHAPTER 8

'That means he's leaving next year. What's so awesome about that?'

My subconscious is kind enough to remind me but I don't need her now.

"So next year you leaving"

I point out

"After graduation though"

He says but that doesn't make me feel any better at all. I'm not ready. He takes my hand into his noticing how deep in thoughts I am with these news

"Look don't over think this, let's just enjoy today and the rest of the time we have together"

He says brushing my hand but I'm not convinced. He's leaving! Why did he even pursue me to begin with?

"What do you want from me?"

I ask and seemingly my question has shocked him

"I don't understand what you asking Sino"

He says

"What do you want from me Bantu? You leaving next year"

I point out

"So what? Don't you think we can make the distance work?"

He asks with a raised eyebrow

"Maybe if you were moving to anywhere here in South Africa I would believe we can but this is Tokyo a..."

I'm cut short by his phone ringing. He answers it and it's his father, judging by his face our date will be short lived.

"Lwando I thought we spoke about this"

Mom yells at dad

“Come on Ayola, it’s just a car”

He says

“She’s only doing her first year Lwando. You still have enemies out there or have you forgotten?”

Mom says sounding really pissed. I’m standing by their door eavesdropping. I just came back home, it’s around 5pm. Bantu had to rush somewhere so he dropped me off earlier than intended. My siblings aren’t in their rooms or the lounge. My guess is that they went to visit a family friend or something or they went out with Nono.

“I understand that Ayola but it’s been years since they did anything. We got rid of all of them”

He says

“NO Lwando! You are returning that car first thing Monday”

“And what must I say to Sino? She deserves it Ayola. We can’t keep worrying about people that died years before Sanele could even say her first word. That car stays and that’s that”

Dad says and that's que for me to tiptoe to my room. I get there and sleep almost instantly. I'm woken up by my little sister patting me lightly

"Wake up. Dinner is ready"

She says getting off my bed, I sit up

"I'm on my way"

I say getting off the bed to wash my face and my teeth. I get downstairs and everyone is settled in their sit's. I greet everyone and then settle in my sit

"Thank you daddy, it's beautiful"

I say and dad smiles faintly

"Glad you like it princess, tomorrow we taking it for a spin right?"

"Hell yeah we are"

Says my little siblings. GREAT!

"Dad was talking to me"

I say and they roll their eyes at me. They can be stupid and silly but I wouldn't ask for better siblings.

We eat over light conversations which mom isn't really into

“Desert anyone?”

Mom asks while getting up and we all chant yes at the same time making her giggle

“Sino you'll serve it, Thando and Saney the dishes are yours ok?”

We all nod our heads

“Tomorrow we attending the first services ok?”

We nod yet again. She goes to the kitchen and then makes her way upstairs

“Dad what did you do to mom?”

Asks Saney

“What makes you think I did something?”

He asks frowning

“Because mom is not happy and it can only be you!”

She points out and Thando and I can't help but laugh

“Now I'm forced to wash dishes with Thando”

She says frowning and we just laugh at her

“So your problem is washing dishes with your brother?”

I ask with a raised eyebrow

“yes and no. I'm tired”

She whines and we all laugh at her. She is a drama queen this one. I pack the dishes and take them to the kitchen and then dish out desert for everyone and serve them while we watch tv. When we all done I take them to the sink, say my goodnights and go to my room. My phone is ringing and it's Layla

“Miss Layla”

I say throwing myself on my bed

“Honey boo”

She says mumbling the words

“Everything ok?”

“Yeah Yeah Yeah. Gosh I’m so drunk. I’m at this party in Bellville”

She says rumbling

“but are you safe?”

“of cause. I’m here with your boyfriend and his cousin. We kissed”

I laugh

“That is great, I guess”

I say not knowing what to say really

“Yeah and I’m going home with her. Can’t you talk to your mom to let you come here?”

I laugh

“No Layla. You know how my parents are”

“I know that your mom is cool and your dad.... Your dad is an overprotective father”

She says making me laugh at how she said it

“Layla go and have fun ok. I am sleeping”

“NO! We are coming to fetch you and if you don’t come out I will blast the speakers until Mr and Mrs Mbanu wake up”

She says and knowing her, it’s possible. I know mom wouldn’t mind me going as long as I drink responsibly and be safe. But dad on the other hand... That’s a problem

“Layla come on, don’t be like this”

I plead

“Come through honey or else we going to blast some speakers outside your crib”

She says unbothered. Layla can be difficult

“I’ll go ask mom and then get back to you ok?”

“That’s all I ask. Your boyfriend is sulking here”

She says and I chuckle

“kiss him for me ok”

I say

“I love you but we not those kind of friends”

She says dropping the call. I laugh at how serious she got. I got to mom's room carrying my phone, I knock once and walk in. She's on the phone with someone and the call seems intense

"Mom"

I say sitting on her bed

"Listen mom I'll call you tomorrow ok?".... "Bye mom"

She says ending the call

"What if I wanted to greet grandma?"

I say sulking

"then you can call her from your phone. What's up?"

She asks and suddenly nerves kick in

"Layla invited me to a party in Bellville and it's totally cool if you don't want me to go"

I say speaking really fast, she chuckles

"sure. Just be safe and don't drink too much"

She says chilled as ever

“How come you not strict?”

She shrugs

“I don’t see reason for me to be. Sino I want you to live your life and enjoy it to the fullest so that when you ready to settle down you settle down without doing things you were supposed to do during your youth. I mean I had the best youth, thou I was doing the things I did out of rebellion but I had the best youth ever and I want you guys to do the same but responsibly and in the right way”

She says brushing my knee

“yeah but what about dad? He’s as strict as they come”

I say and she giggles

“let me deal with your father ok?”

She says

“go have fun baby. Just be safe ok?”

She says and I smile and kiss her cheek before leaving her room. I get to mine and text Layla then shower real quick and wear something decent. Jeans and a t-shirt with sneakers. I'm not trying to get laid now. When I get out I get a text from Layla all excited telling me that she's going to get me super sloshed.

I don't drink, I am an angel you guys. I am nothing like my mother was in her teen years. That woman lived her life to the fullest, she partied, drank, at some point she fooled around with girls. Mom's parents were always called to school for her behaviour but she was an A student despite all the things she did and when I ask her why she was so rebellious she tells me it's because her parents were never around and she did everything she did to get their attention, it makes sense why she's worked so hard to build such strong relationships with my siblings and I. I admire her for that. Mom was a wild one, this one time she told me how she and dad met and the story was pretty graphic, I'm

talking 18snpg. They had sex before getting into any kind of relationship. It's funny and crazy you guys. *(read Not Your Typical Fairytale)*

CHAPTER 9

Well the party was interesting. For the first time I tasted alcohol, wine... Bae was not so happy about that. Said he doesn't want me drinking and he likes me all innocent and what not and told me to never touch alcohol again and a whole lot more. He practically lectured me about it. On the other hand, Layla was excited.

Anyway it's Tuesday and Layla and I just got out of class and headed to the cafeteria before I have to attend my fashion classes. My life sucks! I get in and sit on Bae's lap hugging him, I haven't seen him all day ok? Shoot me!

"Hey beautiful"

He says kissing my neck and damn that feels good, that kiss alone sends an impulse to my nookie. OK!

"I missed you"

I say whispering

“I missed you too. What time is your class?”

He asks

“5:30”

I say eating his fries

“You’ll be fine babe”

He says kissing my cheek

“So Mrs B”

Says the cousin, name is Bathabile but prefers to be called Thap’s... I don’t know why and I never asked

“Yes Thap’s”

I say turning to her

“So there’s a party at my crib this Friday, you coming through?”

She says

“I have a test at 7 this Friday”

I say and she looks at me frowning

“What do you mean you have a test at 7? The party starts later than that”

She says

“Yeah but I can’t make it Thap’s”

I say with a shrug

“What are you afraid I’m going to do to you sweet cheeks? I mean you can only enjoy whatever it is I could possibly do to you”

She says with a smirk

“Bathabile watch it!”

Bantu warns

“It’s ok babe if you can’t make it”

He says

“Come let’s take a walk”

He whispers in my ear and so I stand up and we walk out leaving the guys chatting

“So tomorrow we have this thing at home whereby my parents do a thing for my late sister”

I look at him; I did not even know he had a sister

“You had a sister?”

I say

“Yeah. She died... or at least that’s what we think happened. She went to school and she never came back. That was 10 years ago”

Bantu is 19, that means he was 9 when his sister was taken from them

“I’m sorry”

I say not knowing what to say or how to offer comfort. I stop and pull him to my size and hug him tightly

“I’m so sorry babe”

I say

“It’s uhhm... it’s ok”

He breaks out of my arms

“I’m ok. So can you pull through after school tomorrow? Dinner is at 7pm”

He says and I just nod. Wednesdays I don't have Fashion classes anyway. We continued walking

“Thank you Sino. Quick warning, my parents are kind of weird in a way”

He says, it then hit's me. I'm going to meet his parents. Am I ready to meet them? It hasn't even been a month and already he's introducing me. FLIP! What am I going to wear?

“Babe isn't it a family thing?”

I ask hoping to get escape meeting the parents

“It is but you are part of my life and I would like for you to come spend tomorrow with me and my family. I love you Sinokuhle”

He says and my heart melts instantly. The way he says my name...aaaaah

“Uhhm I will be there then; I have to talk to my parents first”

He nods

“I love you Bantubonke”

I say and he chuckles and kisses me bending down to my level. I never knew I was this short. He breaks the kiss and looks into my eyes while still cupping my face

“You are so short you know that”

He says that pecking my nose, I push him

“Yeah whatever. Nobody asked you to be this tall smarty”

I say and he chuckles pulling me to him

“You cute so that counts for something, you being this short has the potential to get me to agree to whatever you want”

He says and I look at him and he smiles making me smile too

“Yeah whatever Bonke”

I say poking.

“need me to wait for you until your last class?”

He asks making that face of his I can never say no to. GOD I’m whipped!

“I have a car now... remember”

I say and he chuckles

“What’s your point Sinokuhle?”

I smile

“I can drive myself home...”

I say and he laughs

“Still waiting for your point here”

He says and I poke him making him laugh

“I don’t want you driving alone at night, it’s not safe”

He says

“yeah and I don’t want you driving alone at night
cause it’s not safe”

I say brushing his cheek, he leans in on my touch

“I’m the man here, not you”

He says

“Whatever babe. Let’s go get something to eat, I
am hungry”

I say

“Smart ass”

He says nudging me and I can't help but giggle. We walk back to the caffet, we get something to eat and go join his friends and Layla

“Babe, you not answering the question”

Says Thaps

“but I answered you, what more do you want?”

Layla defends

“B, Mrs B. The question here is What do you do when you catch your partner cheating? And Layla's response was, cheating is for married people”

I laugh because that answer really does sound like something Layla would say

“I don't know, I guess if you really love a person then you stay and work things out”

Bantu says

“And what about you Sino”

Asks Sizwe, another Hottie in Bae's squad

"I don't know. I mean I doubt things are ever the same again. The trust is broken and what's a relationship without trust"

I say

"So if Bantu cheated on you, would you leave him?"

Asks Thaps but I shrug.

"I don't know. If I stay, then he would probably live the rest of his life making up for things. I mean cheating is not a relationship up or down type of situation."

Layla smiles at me for my response

"I'm so proud of you. Your first relationship and you already know so much"

She says

"None of us are married here. None of us made vows to the other in front of a whole congregation and God and vowed to stay loyal to one person

until death. As long as we keep that in mind then it's not cheating, we just searching for The One"

Says Layla and Thap's smiles

"So if you caught me between some other girl's legs, you wouldn't throw a fit about it?"

She asks with a smug

"I wouldn't because I understand that there's something that she has that I don't"

Layla says cheerfully. WOW!

"But shouldn't love conquer all?"

Asks another hot friend of Bantu's, his name is Nathi.

"I don't think "Love conquers all" includes cheating and being cheated on"

I say

"I mean the bible is against adultery. It clearly states that if you look at another person either than your partner in any lustful manner then you've already cheated"

Says Sizwe

“If we going to quote the bible then we should also quote that sex before marriage is a sin but it hasn't stopped any of us now has it?”

Says Thaps

“You have a point. But...”

Says Bantu but Thaps cuts him off

“No buts cuz, we have all sinned one way or the other”

“I get that Thaps but if that's the case then why do we get horny before marriage?”

Asks Bantu and we all laugh

“I mean think about it. If we not supposed to have sex before marriage then we shouldn't be getting horny before marriage”

Says bae and I cant help but laugh at his logic

“That's why we have hands though”

Says Thaps

“Yeah but fondling yourself is also a sin”

I say

“Every nice thing is a sin according to the bible”

Says Thaps frowning

After all that talking and eating, Bantu accompanies me to class and when I get out of class he is waiting for me near my car... This boyfriend of mine!

CHAPTER 10

I take a deep breath before walking in, he's holding my hand but it doesn't change the fact that my palms are sweaty and itchy. *'I'm not ready to meet his parents just yet. Why did I even come here in the first place? Ok there's no going back Sino time to put on a smile on that pretty face and put on a show'*

"You ok?"

He asks as we make our way through the kitchen

"Yes I'm ok... just nervous"

I say, he chuckles

"Don't worry, they awesome and chilled people. They going to love you"

He assures but I'm not convinced at all. *What if?*

"Mom, dad this is Sinokuhle Mbana. Sino these are my parents Mr Bonke and Mrs Thandi Mtwá"

He says, his mother smiles

“It’s nice to finally put a face to the name. Nice to meet you Sino”

She says pulling me into a hug, *‘ok! not what I was expecting’*. I return the hug to be polite

“Nice to meet you too Mah”

I say breaking the hug

“Thank you for inviting me into your home”

I say and she offers a smile

“Sinokuhle Mbana, nice to meet you”

The father says shaking my hand

“You not in any way related to Lwando Mbana are you?”

He asks and I raise an eyebrow with a fake smile

“I’m his daughter”

I say breaking the hand shake. He and his wife exchange looks. *‘Ok what am I missing?’*

“Your father and I were once good friends that’s all.”

He says but I’m not convinced, his look says something else

“Ok dad stop being creepy”

Bantu says taking my hand

“Let’s uhm. Sit down while I go fetch dinner. You don’t happen to have any allergies right?”

I shake my head and she smiles and walks out. His father keeps stealing glances at me which make me feel uncomfortable

“So, my son tells me you studying Computer Science and Fashion Design”

He says and I nod

“Why two courses? Aren’t you a little young to be putting this much pressure on yourself?”

I shake my head

“It’s good pressure, I get to widen my options when job hunting”

I say and he nods

“I take it your father is the one who got you to do Computer Science?”

He says and I nod

“It’s just like Lwando. I’m not surprised. Your father and I went to university together, studied the same course and all. He was always top of the class while I came second. I guess our friendship ended when he went to work for your mother’s father”

He says and I just nod not knowing what to say

“Ok dad enough with the interrogation. You making her uncomfortable”

He finally rescues me brushing my hand

“I just want to know the first girl you’ve ever brought home that’s all. I mean there had to be something special about her for you to bring her home today of all days”

His father says. The wife walks in

“I hope you hungry”

She says that referring to me and offer a warm smile

“She diets this one”

Says Bantu, I shoot him a look

“What? You didn’t tell me not to mention it”

He says

“I don’t diet; I just maintain that’s all”

I say and his mother chuckles

“That’s ok, these boys will never understand”

She says sitting down

“May we uhhm bow down our heads and pray”

She says offering me her hand and the other her husband. We all close our eyes and bow our heads while her husband prays. He says amen and we all dig in. The food is good no doubt, we eat over light conversations with them getting to know me and me getting to know them. After dinner dessert is served and then we sit and talk over light conversations

“So Miss Mbana, did you enjoy yourself tonight?”

Asks Mr Mtwā and I nod

“Yes sir I did thank you. Mrs Mtwā your food was amazing”

I say

“Hope it doesn’t ruin your figure now”

She says and we all laugh

“it won’t.”

I say

“I should drive Sino home now”

He says

“Isn’t it a little early?”

Says his mother

“I have an assignment I have to submit before midnight Mah”

I say

“Ahhh mahn, I’m sorry”

She says

“It was really nice having you here honey”

She says pulling me in for a hug

“Thank you again for the invite.”

I say breaking the hug

“It was nice meeting you both”

I say shaking Bantu’s father’s hand

“It was nice meeting you too Miss Mbana. Greet your father for me ok?”

He says

“Will do. Bye guys”

I say as we walk out hand in hand. That was the weirdest dinner I have ever been too!

“You ok? I’m sorry my father can be a little too much at times”

he says opening the car door for me

“don’t worry about it. I had a great time”

I say

“you didn’t tell me you had an assignment”

he says and I chuckle

“no I don’t, seeing that you wanted to get rid of me I figured”

I say and he chuckles

“No actually I wanted to have you all to myself for a few more minutes before I take you home”

He says that kissing me which I gladly respond to. We break it when we hear someone call out for us, it’s his father.

“You forgot your phone”

He says handing it to me over the window on Bantu’s side

“Thank you sir, I don’t know how it must have fallen out of my bag”

I say, he smiles

“things happen”

He says

“Goodbye kids”

He says and Bantu starts the car. I really don't know how my phone ended out of my bag because I never took it out. I unlock it and I notice my father called and the phone was answered, why would he answer my phone without my permission? I check the time call and they spoke for a whole minute. Something is going on here! I lock my phone and put it in my bag. The only time I ever left my bag was when Bantu took me to the bathroom, could his father have taken my phone out of my bag then? I mean it would make sense... We drive in silence listening to music. He takes me to this place that has a beautiful view of the city

“This is where I come to clear my head”

He says. Cape Town is such a beautiful place at night! My phone rings and it's my father

“I have to take this, it's my father”

I say and he lets me be. I walk away from him answering the phone

“Dad”

“Sino where the hell are you?”

Dad asks sounding furious

“I’m Bantu’s home for dinner remember”

I say

“Come home now!”

He says

“But da...”

“NOW SINOKUHLE”

he says before cutting the call on me. I am
confused AF! *What’s the deal with him?*

I walk back to Bantu

“That was my father, he says I need to come home.

It’s an emergency”

I say and he frowns

“Is everything ok?”

I shrug

“I hope so, I’m sorry”

I say

“No it’s ok. let me take you home then”

He says taking my hand. He closes my car door and walks to his side and starts the car. On the way I’m texting mom on WhatsApp trying to find out what’s going on but she doesn’t respond. I let her be. We get to my home and say our goodbye then I head inside.

“You and that boy are done you hear me”

He says the minute I walk in the door. I’m dumbfounded.

CHAPTER 11

The hardest relationship is one between a father and a daughter. I was his first child ever, his first daughter, his pride and joy. I remember the first time I ever spoke, I said "Dada". That's how much of a daddy's girl I was and have been. Even now that I'm older I am still my father's little girl or rather he sees me that way. When he looks at me he still sees that little girl whose first word was "Dada". I said it before, I'm a both parents kind of girl but even mom knows she can never come between dad and I. He and I kind of went through a phase when I started my period needing mom more than I needed him but we still good friends. Still father and daughter.

I walk in and it looks like old man has been waiting for me.

"Dad"

I greet. My father is one person you can't hide anything from, I didn't tell him I was going out with Bantu but he knows. He even knows about the party and a whole lot more I didn't think he knew.

"You and that boy are done!"

He says walking to the lounge, I follow behind

"Why? What did he do to you?"

I ask trying very hard not to yell.

"Guys off to bed you go"

Mom says to Saney and Thando, they look at me with pity eyes passing by me. Saney kisses my cheek and walks up to her room following our brother

"Sino sit down please"

Mom says calmly, dad is focused on the TV. We both know he hates Generations but he watches it anyway

"Honey what's going on?"

Mom asks turning to dad

"Ayola there's no sweet talking me out of this. Sino is never seeing that boy again and that's final!"

He says sternly

"Why daddy? What did he do? Is it his father? I saw that you called earlier and my phone was answered"

I explain trying to at least get something solid from this man I love so much

"It doesn't matter! Stay away from them Sinokuhle! My word is final!"

He says then gets up about to leave

"No!"

I say. Now defying him may just be the death of me but it's worth a shot. He stops in his tracks

"Excuse me?"

He says

"Lwando!"

Mama warns

"Talk to your daughter Ayola because if I do blood will be spilt and it definitely won't be mine"

He says sternly leaving me with mom. I throw myself on the couch defeated. I feel moms arms around me

"I will talk to him don't worry"

She says but it's not enough to stop me from crying. I like Bantu, he seems genuine. He seems like a good person who is nothing like his weird father. He is an escape from my shitty life. He brings me peace and love and joy.

"I just wish he would understand. I love him mom"

I say wailing

"I know baby. I know"

She says brushing my hair

"I will talk to your father and try to make him see reason Ok?"

She assures

"What could be so bad about him mom? He's only 19"

I say still in tears

"I will talk to your father Sino, please just stop crying"

She pleads, I can't. I'm heartbroken by the one man that is not supposed to even break my heart to begin with.

"Come let's got you cleaned up and off to bed Ok?"

She says helping me stand up

"How was the dinner?"

She asks as we make our way up the stairs

"His parents are weird. His father mentioned that he and dad went to varsity together"

I say, she chuckles

"How are his parents weird baby?"

I shrug

"For starters I think his father stole my phone only to return it."

I say

"That makes no sense. Why would he steal your phone?"

She asks walking in behind me in my room. I shrug my shoulders

"I don't know mom. My phone was in my bag the entire time. The only time I left my bag was when Bantu was showing me to the rest room. As we are about to leave his father comes to the car telling me I forgot my phone and then leaves. I unlock my phone and notice that dad had called and they spoke for a minute or so but Bantu's dad did not mention that when he handed me my phone"

I say wearing my pjays

"That is strange, w..."

She trails off as my phone starts ringing, it's Layla. I tell her and she kisses me goodnight and walks out.

I answer Layla throwing myself on the bed. I tell her everything that happened.

"As a rebel, my advise would be to rebel but as your friend who knows your father and cares about you. Maybe your father has his reasons for wanting you to stay away from them. Maybe they are bad people and he's just trying to protect you from them"

She says but I'm not convinced

"No Lay, he's being dramatic for no reason"

I defend

"Look, I'm all for team rebel against the parents and all but don't gamble with your father, you'll lose!"

She says and she has a point

"But I like him"

I say

"I understand that babe, really I do but is it worth risking your relationship with your father?"

She asks and it hits home. Is it worth it? We talk some more until we both end the call feeling sleepy.

I wake up and I'm inside my blankets, that strange cause I don't recall getting inside them. Must have been dad. The time is past 9, today our class has been shifted to 1pm. I head down and everyone is gone while Nono sits in the lounge catching up on these SABC soapies

"Nono"

I greet

"Hey Sino, you're late today, everything OK?"

She asks with concern

"Yeah, my class is at one today. Lecturer said something about a doctors appointment"

I say

"Your father told me to tell you that a driver will be taking you wherever you want to go"

She says as I'm about to walk out

"Excuse me what?"

I ask stopping in my tracks.

"Yep that's all he said. He said you shouldn't drive your car today, says someone will come fetch it around 10 or so"

She says, I just nod and go the kitchen. I make myself a cereal and then sit down on the high chairs and eat thinking about how dramatic this father of mine is. I text Layla asking her to go out for breakfast and she says yes, she'll be here in 30 min. That's enough time for me to make my bed and shower. She walk as I'm about to lotion my body. She picks out my outfit while we chat lightly. I take my bag and car keys then we leave while Nono is in Saneys room cleaning.

We drive out as I tell her about dad telling Nono to tell me not to use my car.

"I'm liking this rebellious you"

She says laughing

I laugh at her

"You crazy"

Just then my phone rings and it's Mr Mbana.

"You goin answer that?"

She asks and I shake my head no.

"Dude come on"

She says

"He'll only be shouting at me Lay so no. He needs to chill."

I say and just then my phone beeps with a message from dad, I open it and it reads "Sinokuhle don't fucking test my patience! Answer that damn phone if you want to live til dinner"

I read out loud and Lay chuckles

"You in shiit"

She points out

"I know"

I say looking straight ahead. My phone keeps ringing and it's him, I finally pick up waiting at the robots

"What?"

I say annoyed

"I'm not your little boyfriend so don't you ever fucking answer my calls like that do you hear me?"

His voice is so scary I even regret answering his call.

"Dad I..."

CHAPTER 12

Lwando(Sino's dad)

As a husband and a father, your duty is to love and protect your family at all costs even if it means lying to them just so they are protected.

We did not relocate to Cape Town for the fun of it or for the change of scenery, I knew that if we stayed in Durban or Jo'burg then my family would always have targets on their backs so rather here than there as most of the gang is based this side. If Ayola knew I was still 'Sniper' then she would mos def snipe me out. The last time she got me out of prison I had promised to never deal shady again but can one ever really leave the \$pritz? Hell No! Not that I ever want to cross the general (Ayola's father).

My wife and I had agreed on not getting Sino a car until she completes school but with my dealings

and trying to keep Sino's mouth shut, it had to be done. Ayola likes to believe that the kids are not safe and that one of my enemies might try to get to them in order to get to me and she's right but as long as we are here and I have the best people keeping tabs on my family then I'm good but now I can't tell them that I'm keeping tabs on them because then Ayola would make a big deal out of it and then start digging and just a whole lot of unnecessary drama would implode.

Sino is out meeting her boyfriend's parents, even after I told her not to date she and her mother or rather her mother influences her and convinces me to let Sino be because she's in varsity now. How does a father accept that their little girl ain't so little anymore? It's hard! We sitting watching TV with my wife's head resting on my shoulder while the kids sit on the other couch watching what we are watching. I get a message from a friend informing me of Sino's whereabouts.

"Babe there's a call I need to make Ok?"

I say

"We said no bringing work home"

She says bored

"I know babe, I promise it will only take a minute"

I assure kissing her forehead. She removes her head and I get up and walk to the study dialing chip's number.

"Chip who lives in this house"

I ask settling on the chair in front of my laptop

"The boys parents"

He says

"I need names or pictures or something chip!"

I demand

"A Bonke and Thandi Mtwā. Today marks 10 years since the disappearance of their daughter. I'll have a file ready for you before the end of the day"

He says and just then I get an email from him with pictures of the family my daughter is currently visiting.

"Thanks. Talk later"

I say dropping the call not even waiting for his response. When will I ever get a break? My daughter is in my enemies house and who is to say she will come out alive? I dial her number and rings for a while before she answers

"Sinokuhle"

I say

"Sniper!"

Says a voice I last heard 10 years back

"Where's my daughter? Why are you answering her phone?"

I ask pissed and panicking but calm enough not to alarm him

"She's very beautiful. Filled with so much energy and life. She reminds me of mine"

He says proudly

"If you dare lay a hand on her... So help me God! I will kill your whole family while you watch a..."

He cuts me off

"She's pretty, I really hope you can protect her"

And there goes the beeping sound indicating that the call has been cut. I'm panicking, I'm scared, I'm worried. I'm overwhelmed with so many emotions all at once and I don't know what to do. If I talk to Ayola then she will start panicking and I might just lose my family. Think Lwando!

"Baby"

Shouts my beautiful wife while walking into the study

"I'm sorry that took longer than expected"

I say meeting her halfway grabbing her by the waist pulling her to me, she smiles

"Even after all these years"

I say and she smiles

"I'll always choose you"

She says and then plants a kiss on my lips which I try to respond to without giving anything away but this woman knows me. She stops

"What's wrong?"

She asks

"Nothing babe, I must be tired"

I say, she shoots me a look

"I know you Lwando! What are you hiding from me?"

She asks removing my hands from her waist

"That boy is bad news"

I say, she raises an eyebrow

"What do you mean?"

I shrug

"Don't tell me you went digging up things about him" she says and I shrug "Lwando he's 19! What's so bad about him? He is a child" she defends

"Sino needs to stay away from him!"

I say sternly walking to the table

"Lwando!"

She shouts

"Don't yell at me Ayola! Sino stays away from that boy and that's that!"

I say that calling her phone again while walking out.

Never has Sino defied me before, especially for a boy even! What if Bonke told her things about me, things I did in the past? What if she knows I was once a sniper before?

Ayola walks in the room, she's pissed.

"What the fuck was that?"

She asks and I shrug my shoulders

"No! You not going to give me that! You can't tell our daughter to stay away from the first guy she likes and expect me to just sit back and shut up. Why Lwando?"

She asks looking at me waiting for an answer, how do I tell my wife this without losing her and my entire family?

"Well?"

She asks

"I need not explain myself to you as to why our daughter must stay away from that boy! Need I remind you that Sino is doing 2 courses and she does not have the time to be playing around with some boy"

I say taking my T-shirt off

"Fuck that! My brother warned me against you Lwando but look at where we are today"

She says, which I think is a low blow really

"And? Do you regret not listening to him?"

I ask folding my arms with a raised eyebrow

"I'm starting to!"

She says and it cuts deeper than intended. She walks to the closet and I follow behind her

"You don't mean that Kitten"

I say, Kitten is a nickname she and her best friend came up with from a time she and I had just started fooling around, apparently I made her kitten wet and so I was called Mr Kitten Wetter. Girls give the weirdest nicknames for us when talking to their friends shame.

She shoots me a look and then turns to change into her pjays

"Kitten please"

I plead

"You ready to tell me what's really going on?"

She asks turning to me naked on top. Her body, her boobs are still perfect enough to turn me on. Even at 36 my wife is still able to do the damn things.

"Ayola"

My voice comes out lower than intended. She turns back and takes her sweat pants off revealing her sexy red lace underwear. How do you argue with a

naked person? Are you even able to think straight?
I'm tempted to pin her on this chest of drawers and
fuck the daylight out of her. I touch her shoulders

"Leave me alone"

She says sternly yanking me off then bends over to
wear her pjay bottoms. I can't resist that ass. I turn
her to me and pick her up placing her on the
ottoman in the center of our closet, she's yelling
and hitting me but I think we all know Ayola can't
rests me even after all these years.

"Lwando!"

She argues as i part her legs and rub her kitten
over her underwear

"Please"

I plead while kissing her neck, her body is my turf, it
doesn't matter how much she tries to fight the urge
not to respond but her body reacts to my touch and
kisses as expected. She let's out a moan. I take her
underwear and eat her up making her scream my
name as she orgasms. I pick her to continue this on

the bed. I'm hard AF for her, I place her on the bed and get between her legs grinding on her making her breathe out heavily. I take my pants off together with my boyleg and go all in making her gasp digging her coffin shaped nails on my back really hard. She arch's her back taking all of me in. This is my haven. This is home. Being inside her is all I could possibly need in life. We fuck until we both explode then change positions to doggy, she twerks on my D making me feel things only she is able to make me feel. I pull her up and play with her boobs while my other hand rubs her clit, her moans are music to my ears

"Come for me kitten"

I command

"Come with me"

She says panting, we release calling out each others name. She falls to the bed and I collapse on top of her kissing the side of her neck

"I love you Ma'Mbana"

I say

"I'm still mad at you"

She says trying to catch her breath. I chuckle and get up off her and lay on my back pulling her to me, she's drained she can barely do anything except sleep on my chest. Her home. I kiss her head and pull a throw over our naked bodies.

When I'm certain she's sleeping I get up and wear my pjay bottoms and place her inside the blankets careful not to wake her up and I succeed. I kiss her head and walk out taking my phone. I have an email from Chip, it's the file I requested earlier. I walk to Sino's room and open the door, she's sleeping peacefully over her bed covers. I place her inside, kiss her forehead and as I'm about to walk out her phone beeps with a message from Bantu, he's begging her to answer his calls and apologizing for whatever he did wrong. I take his number and save it on my phone then place hers back as I had found it then walk out. I check on Saney and Thando before walking to my study.

I open my email and it's everything I could possibly need about this guy. Bonke lost his daughter 10 years ago and I or rather the gang is behind him losing his daughter. She was 16 when she left and she never returned. She was beautiful or rather she is beautiful! She now lives in the states with a new identity which her family knows nothing about. I dial her number and call her, it rings for a while before she answers

"Boss"

She says

"You need to come back home!"

I command

"Sir what are you talking about? Why now?"

She asks concerned

"My daughter is dating your brother and you know your father. Get on the first plane to here Hlumelo!"

I say then end the call.

Bonke is a dangerous man, he and I went to school together, we were friends until I was recruited by Ayola's father to work for him of which that's when things went south between. He had himself recruited by our enemies and from there on it's just been war throughout, sadly his daughter got caught up in our crossfire and here we are today. I would hate for anything to happen to my daughter all because of this. I don't play nice where my family is concerned. No man ever does anyway. I turn off my phone and head back up to my room after making sure all door's are locked and security systems are on. My wife is still sleeping as I had left her. I get in next to her then pull her to my chest and sleep.

CHAPTER 13

LWANDO

I hear glass shattering on the line and car tires screeching. That's enough to scare the living daylights out of me

"Sino"

I shout hoping to get a response but nothing. There's people talking and cars hooting in the background. What have I done?! My only pray is that she is still alive that's all I ask for.

"Sino baby talk to me please"

I plead leaving the office but I get no response. I end the call and track her phone, it's not far from the company. I call some of the guys to check out the place and some to check the city's footage as I drive to where her phone points her out to be and the first thing I see is people gathered around what seems to be smoking. I make my way through the

crowd and there her car is, people managed to get her and Layla out of the car, their bodies are on the floor. I'm terrified to go any closer but I do anyway.

"Boss"

Says Sitha behind me patting my shoulder

"Pick up Layla while I pick up my daughter"

I say and we walk up to them

"Sir what are you doing!"

Asks a woman dressed in police uniform

"This is my daughter! I'm taking her to the hospital"

I say picking her up

"Sir the ambulance is on it's way"

She says. I look at her once and pick my daughter up while Sitha takes Layla. I drive as fast as I can to the hospital. She's still alive but she's bleeding from her face. At least they wore seatbelts so the damage is not that bad. They are rushed into the ER and I'm left to call my wife.

"Sthandwa Sam"

I say after she answers

"Hey, what's up? I'm rushing to a meeting"

She says.

"Sino's been in an accident"

I report, the line goes quiet

"Which hospital?"

She asks, I tell her and she drops the call on me.

"Sitha I want you to find whoever did this!"

I demand

"Of course boss. You think it might have to do with
Bullet?"

Bullet being Bonke

"If he is behind this so help me God!"

I warn. He pats my shoulder and walks out. I call
Hlumelo and she answers after a while

"S..."

I cut her off

"When the fuck do you land?"

I ask gritting my teeth

"Sir I can't just come there, there's a lot at stake"

She says

"Fuck that! My daughter was involved in an accident today. A day after meeting your father! If you want your little brother to live to see the next sunrise I suggest you get on the fucking plane now!"

I say and then drop the call. Just then my wife walks towards me and slaps the daylights out of me. I hold my cheek

"If anything happens to her Lwando I swear to God Bonke will be the least of your worries!"

She says and then leaves me to go to the receptionist.

"Ayola Mbana here for Sinokuhle Mbana"

She says and the girl checks her system and shakes her head

"What does that mean?"

My wife asks angrily. I didn't even have the time to fill in the forms for her.

"Ma'a..."

I cut her off

"I brought her in and I didn't fill in anything"

I say, she nods and hands me a paper to fill in and another for Layla. It then hits me, I haven't informed her parents.

"Kitten please call Layla's parents"

I say, she shoots me a look and takes out her phone walking away from me. I'm in shiit with my wife! When I'm done with the forms I hand them back and go make a phone call

"Sho Sniper"

Says chip

"Anything?"

I ask

"No sir nothing. No driver was found in the car that hit them. The car doesn't belong to anyone. There's literally nothing sir"

He says

"Keep looking, have one of the guys get me Bantubonke Mtwá, it's about time he and I met"

I say and then end the call. My phone beeps with a message

"Next time she won't be so lucky Sniper!"

I send my very own

"Check on your son!"

I call the principal at Sandy's school, Jack

"Sniper"

He says

"There's a war coming. Gear up!"

I say

"Don't worry the kids are safe in here"

I'm trusting you with my daughter, don't fail me!"

I say and then drop the call. I scroll to Lee, he's a security at Thando's school

"Sir"

He says

"Keep an eye on Thando. There's a war coming!"

I say

"Of cause boss"

He says and I cut the call making my way to my wife

"Don't touch me!"

She says hitting my hands

"Majola"

I plead

"You looked me in the eye and lied to me Lwando!
You said you were done with this life! You said
moving to here meant a fresh start"

She says gritting her teeth to not cause a scene

"Ayola"

Layla's mother shouts walking in. Ayola meets her half way and they share a brief hug

"Sinokuhle Mbana"

A doctor shouts coming our way

"How is she Ray?"

I ask

"Your daughter is fine. She hit her head hard on the wheel and sprained an ankle but she's ok"

She explains

"I want to see her"

Says my wife

"Mrs Mba..."

My wife cuts her off

"I want to see my daughter now Raven!"

She demands. The doctor hails for a nurse and ask that she take my wife to our daughters room.

"How is my daughter? Her name is Layla Jones"

Says Layla's mother

"Your daughter is fine, just a minor cut on her forehead but she's fine and good to go"

The doctor assures.

"Can I see her?"

She asks and the doctor calls a nurse. I'm left with the doctor

"Lwando Mbana can't stay out of trouble as always"

She says

"Trouble loves me. On the real, is my daughter Ok?"

"Yes Sniper she's all good. I need to do my rounds"

She says walking away.

Doc, Raven is a family doctor. She also works for us

I walk into the room and she and her mom are talking. She looks up at me and tears threaten her eyes, I can't hold back my own tears

"Daddy I'm sorry"

She says as tears stream down her cheeks. I walk over to her and pull her to my arms.

"It's Ok my love"

I say brushing her hair. Ayola looks at me and shakes her head. I mouth "I'll fix this" and she rolls her eyes. We break the hug.

"How are you feeling?"

I ask

"Like I got knocked by a car"

She says sarcastically

"Oh you got jokes now"

She chuckles

"Daddy I'm sorry for disrespecting you. I'm sorry for defying you and I'm sorry for everything"

She says, I brush her hand

"I'm sorry for how I spoke to you and I'm sorry for pretty much everything from since last night"

I say and she smiles

"It's all good parent. So when am I being discharged?"

She asking with that charming smile of her mother's

"When the doctor says you can get out"

Says her mother

"Mr and Mrs Mban, I am sorry to cut your stay short but this one needs to rest"

Says Raven walking in

"Come on Ray"

I say

"Those eyes don't work on me. Come back later during visiting hours Ok? Sino is fine, she just needs to rest and take it easy for the next couple of

weeks. We still need to run a few tests just to be sure"

Doc says

"Ay Ok. Baby we'll see you later?"

I say getting up, she nods. I kiss her forehead and her mother kisses her cheek and then we walk out. She walks out to her car, I get in the passenger seat and lock the doors

"Get out!"

She says

"No!"

I say, she chuckles in disbelief

"Lwando Mbanana don't you fucking test me right now! Get the fuck out of my car!"

She says pissed

"Can I tell you the truth first and then I will be out of your hair"

I plead trying to touch her hand but she removes it.
I am screwed!

"10 years back I got a call from your father to come handle business this side. You and the kids were visiting my parents in the Eastern Cape that time. I thought it was our usual money laundering schemes, art forgery or something along those lines but little did I know that your father had decided to join the drug dealing business and trading"

She shoots me a look, can't say I'm surprised by it!

"Let me finish!"

I plead and she closes her mouth

"I told him I couldn't get involved in this as it would bring unnecessary attention to you guys and also you would murder me. They had a plan already in place and they just needed me to create a chip that would help them do their transportation and trade successfully without being detected. They traded drugs, human organs and other things. My job was to create a computer chip that would bypass those

airport metal detectors as the drugs that they supplied or created had some metal in them. That's where Bonke's daughter comes in. She was one of the girls they recruited to do the job. Hlumelo was 16, she was in love with one of the group members and she wanted to rebel against her father so what better way than to join his enemies?"

I take a deep breath in and let it out slowly

"Hlumelo is alive and well living in the states heading the business that side for your father and advancing the technologies used by the gang! A week ago or so, I got a call from your father saying he had landed in Cape Town and that he wanted to meet with me. It was about a heist they wanted to pull. They wanted to well they actually highjacked a plane that was transporting international cars to here and it was a success. When I bought Sino the car it was to shut her up as she had seen me walk in in the early hours of morning so for her not to tell you I got her the car. She still doesn't know what I'd been doing though but yeah. That's everything I

have been hiding from you. Sino's accident was not an accident, it's revenge. Bonke thinks I killed his daughter or took her or something based on our beef or based on the hate he has for me"

I explain. She looks at me and I can't read her face. I don't know whether to get out or stay. I'm blank

"I'm guessing if I leave with the kids then I'm only putting their lives in danger?"

She says and I shrug. She breathes out.

"Sort this out Lwando! I want my kids safe and unharmed!"

She says firmly and I nod

"Of cause babe!"

I say

"If you dare hurt Sino's boyfriend..."

I cut her off

"I won't"

I assure

"Get out of my car. I need to breathe"

She says

"Kitten"

"Get out Lwando!"

She says even more agitated. I get out and head to my car. I watch her drive off and then call Sitha.

"Sho boss"

He says

"Where are you? Did you get the boy?"

I ask

"Yes sir. We are at the warehouse"

He says

"Take him to my office. Make him comfortable, I promised my wife that I wouldn't hurt him"

I say

"Sho boss"

He says and I end the call. I call up a few guys to come keep an eye on my daughter and her friend

then drive to the office. I change my shirt and tie then walk out to find him looking around.

"Bantubonke Mtwá"

I say walking towards him

"Mr Mbana, it's an honour to meet you"

We shake hands

"She's beautiful isn't she?"

I say as he places Sino's picture back on the desk

"Yes she is sir"

He says

"Word is you leaving for Tokyo straight after graduation"

I say offering him a seat on the couch. He sits down and so do I

"Anything to eat or drink?"

I offer and opts for something to drink. I tell my PA to bring us juice.

"Yeah I uhhm.. I'm leaving for Tokyo"

He says nervously

"And where would that leave your relationship with my daughter? I mean she got into an accident today, said some things to me last all because she thinks she's in love with you"

He looks at me shook

"Is she Ok? Which hospital is she in?"

He asks with panic

"She's fine. I asked you a question"

I say calmly. My PA walks on with our juice and then leaves

"I don't know. If there was a way for me to stay here then I would"

He says. I pour us juice and hand him a glass

"I can offer you a job, mentor you even. I did computer science myself you know but there's t's and c's."

I say, he looks at me waiting

"You break things off with Sino."

He chokes on his saliva

"As long as my daughter is dating you, she has a target on her back. Your father blames me for your sister's disappearance and to settle score, he caused Sino's accident and the more she sees you, the easier it is for him to hurt her"

I say sipping on my juice. He swallows hard

"Your sister is alive, and well. She didn't disappear, she left out of freewill running away with a boy she was in love with"

I say. I can tell he's afraid but he's a bit sceptical about what I'm telling him

"With all due respect sir, I'm pretty sure a man like you wouldn't have given up on the woman he loves all because her father warned him to stay away"

He says, I chuckle. He's charming, I see why Sino likes him

"You right, I would have never given up on my wife but you are still a kid. You could wake up tomorrow and decide to break things off leaving my daughter in pieces"

I say

"I'm not saying your daughter and I will be forever but I believe that it should be her decision for us to break up and not yours"

I chuckle

"Even so, you would risk the lives of your family for my daughter? Risk my daughter's life all because you believe it should be her decision to break up with you. Wow boy, you have balls! I'm a father and a husband, I will stop at nothing to protect those I love. If killing you myself means my daughter being safe then so be it!"

I say getting up from the couch

"Don't be smart, take the deal and all will be forgotten, heck I can even take you to see her one last time"

I say

CHAPTER 14

Dad walks in with Bantu, I'm shook to the core!

"Dad, Bantu"

I say still in shock and mom's just as shocked as I am. This is the same guy I was told to stay away from.

"Hey Sino, Mrs Mbana"

He says waving at mom and mom offers a warm smile.

"Hey."

That's all I manage to utter.

"We'll uhm, give you guys space"

Mom says getting up. He walks over and sit's where mom was sitting, they walk out together leaving us in awkward silence.

"You not as bad as I thought you'd be"

He says with a chuckle, I giggle

"Who told you?"

I ask

"Your dad"

I look at him, my eyes are about to pop out of their socket.

"My father?"

He chuckles nodding

"Yep! How are you? Broke anything?"

I chuckle

"Nothing major babe"

I say, he nods and smiles

"So... Uhm"

He says this time not smiling and looking down

"I don't know how to do this"

He says

"What?"

I'm panicking. I don't know what to expect here

"Sino I love you. I know I haven't made my intentions clear with you and telling you that I love you doesn't make them any clearer but from the very first time I met you up until now. I saw someone I could build a future with, someone I could be stable with... Just the perfect person if that makes any sense."

He chuckles

"Sino I don't know how to do this or how to say this but we won't work out. I'm leaving Cape Town, changing Universities. From here to Free State"

He says, my heart sinks to the bottom of my stomach, I can't hold the tears back. It's painful.

"I'm sorry to do this to you Sinokuhle Mbana. I really do but I have to leave."

He kisses my forehead and walks out without saying anything or waiting for my response. I'm left in tears. Mom walks in smiling but her smile disappears the minute she sees tears rolling down my cheeks

"Honey what's wrong?"

She asks placing her hand on my cheek wiping tears that won't stop coming out.

"He broke up with me"

I say wailing. She takes off her Blazer and shoes then joins me in bed pulling me to her chest.

"I don't understand. Things seemed fine. We were fine"

I say wailing on her chest

"As long as you guys are together, your life is at risk. He did what he did to protect you"

Mom says brushing my back. I stop and look up at her confused to the core

"What do you mean?"

I ask

"That his father caused your accident. His father and yours have bad history and so for revenge his father caused your accident"

She explains

"What did dad do to his father mom?"

I ask because I can't be caught up in a crossfire I
don't understand

"Nothing this time around. More like what did your
grandfather do?"

She says playing with my hand

"Mom what else does dad do?"

I ask looking at her

"He's a programmer"

She says loosely. I shake my head

"No! I don't buy that!"

"You don't have to buy it!"

Says grandpa's voice startling both of us.

"How are you?"

He asks walking towards us.

"Hello my babies"

Grandma greets walking in behind him. She comes and hugs both mom and I

"I'm good gran. I'm Ok and still alive for now"

I say as we break the hug

"I didn't know you guys were back"

Says mom, the look on her face tells me something

"We got on the plane as soon as we heard"

Says gramps.

"I should go fetch the kids"

Mom says

"Lwando is on his way there, we bumped into him as we were coming in"

Explains grandpa.

"Mh"

Mom says and then there's awkward silence in the room. I know that there's things they not telling me. Who is my father? Who are these people?

CHAPTER 15

LWANDO

Bantu walks out of Sino's room and he looks like he's about to cry, I don't blame him poor guy. I'd cry too if I had to end things with Ayola. I love my wife and kids more than anything in this world but if leaving them meant they would be safe then so be it.

"Everything ok?"

I ask as he makes his way towards us, he shakes his head no. Ayola was making a phonecall a bit far from us.

"allow me to drive you home"

I say and he looks at me

"do I have a choice to say no?"

He asks sounding annoyed, I shrug

"It's really up to you kid. I have to go and fetch m
kids"

I say

"I guess"

He says. We walk to the car and he gets in the
passenger seat, just then my in-laws come towards
me

"Lwando"

Mr Majola says shaking my hand

"Mr Majola"

I say breaking the hand shake

"Mah"

I say

"Son"

She says pulling me in for a hug

"How are you? How's my baby?"

She asks breaking the hug

"She's awake and it's nothing fatal"

I say

"Ok that's good to hear"

Says Ayola's father

"I'm going to fetch the kids, we'll talk later"

I say and they nod and head in while I get in the car. My phone rings and it's Hlumelo

"Yes"

I say answering

"I'm at the airport and the plane"

She says

"I'm with your brother"

She keeps quiet for a while

"How is he?"

She asks sounding like someone about to cry

"Here, talk to him"

I say handing him the phone

"Hlumi"

He says

"How do I know if it's really you?"

He asks. Moments later he chuckles

"Ok I believe you. Why did you leave? Where are you? When are you coming here? Gosh I don't know what to say"

He says a bit overwhelmed

"So I should trust him?"

He looks at me and keeps quiet for a while

"If you say so"

He says

"I hope to see you soon then"

He says and then hands me the phone

"Yes!"

She breathes out

"Please just take care of him"

She pleads

"If he takes my offer then I can guarantee you that nothing will happen to him. Hlumelo if Ayola's father finds out it was your father he will want to get even and your little brother won't be so safe"

I warn and turn to him, he's looking at me

"I understand that Sniper and I will talk to my father first thing tomorrow"

She pleads

"If anyone of my family gets hurt in any way I won't spare him"

I warn and then end the call. I drive to his home and park in front of the gate then get off with him

"Where are you going?"

He asks sounding nervous

"To talk to your father!"

I say and then head in. His mother welcomes him with open arms and eyes me.

"Thandi"

I say but she doesn't respond. Her husband walks in

"Sniper"

He says

"We need to talk!"

I say and point outside. He follows me and we stand by his car

"You have some nerve coming to my house"

He says gritting his teeth

"And you have some nerve messing with my family. Stay away Bonke! Next time I won't be so forgiving"

I say and then walk away

"You don't know me Sniper"

He threatens. I stop and chuckle

"Your son seems sweet. I'd hate for anything bad to happen to him. You've already lost one child, don't try to lose another one"

I say and head to my car. I start with Thando.

"Hey buddy"

I say as he gets in the car

"Hey dad. What's up?"

He asks throwing his bag in the back

"Your sister was in an accident"

I say turning to him starting the car

"Is she Ok?"

I nod

"Yeah she's fine buddy, she broke a leg and hit her head"

I say

"Ok dad"

That's all he manages to utter. I keep quiet, Thando is not one to get emotional and share his feelings. We drive to Saney's school in silence with nothing but music bumping. I park and she runs to the car the all excited. I get out and meet her halfway picking her up and spinning her around, she's one

happy child that I worry that she might just be bipolar or something because her being happy switches up real quick to anger. I put her down

"How are you daddy?"

She asks with her mothers smile

"I'm Ok baby and how are you?"

I ask opening the door for her

"I'm all good dad."

She settles in her seat buckling up

"Daddy I don't like it when you shout at Sino"

She says paying no mind to me or whatsoever

"You need to apologize and make things right with her. She's your daughter and she's human and humans make mistakes"

She says, Thando looks at her and then at me. I shrug

"I'm sorry baby, I won't do it again Ok?"

I say turning to her

"Don't apologize to me, apologize to her kaloku"

She scolds, I chuckle and nod

"Buy her flowers and sweets like you do mom. She likes roses. Red roses and prefers lindt. She hates Ferrero!"

Thando turns to her

"How do you know all of this?"

He asks with furrowed eyebrows

"Sino and I talk Ok!"

She says proudly. Who are we to argue?

CHAPTER 16

BANTUBONKE

I've seen Sino around campus, multiple times but when I always saw her I was always with my ex and I knew that if I approached her she'd probably ask me about her, she seemed like the type.

Bumping into her that day was by far the best thing to ever happen to me. I had a crush on her, it was insane but when she gave me a chance that alone turned into love or rather it seemed like love.

She's been my peace from since then, the more we grew closer the more I started contemplating going to Tokyo. I remember talking to my parents about applying to further my studies this side. It was hell. They were against it and reminded me of how many people lost this to me and here I am being ungrateful about it. So yeah, that failed!

The minute I heard she was in an accident I swear my heart stopped beating for a minute. I tried to picture life without her and it was nothing but misery.

Her father is a scary man. He has this intimidating look that makes you almost pee your pants and his status in the country doesn't help.

I'm not giving up on us but in order for us to work I need to be in South Africa at all costs and his deal seems better than the Tokyo one in all fairness.

Dad walks in and he seems furious but so am I.

"Stay away from that man"

He warns heading to the lounge

"I think the only one I should be staying away from is you"

I respond walking in after him, he turns faster than the speed of lightning

"What did you just say?"

He asks

"Why would you go after her? You know I love her dad"

He breathes out slowly

"Her father owes me a daughter"

He says with a look I've never seen before. It's cold and is out for blood

"So it doesn't matter to you that Sino means everything to me?"

I asks with furrowed eyebrows. He places a hand on my shoulder

"Look son, you young. You pretty, you can get any girl you want"

I look at his hand and then at him then remove it.

"Seeing that this is all so important to you than I am. Seeing that you are willing to gamble with my life in order to get revenge, I'm moving to Bathabile's home."

I say and then walk out to my room. I call my aunt(mom's sister) and brief her about what's going

on before asking to move in and she's more than supportive. I think it's also because she never liked my father.

I pack a few clothes, mom walks in as I'm packing

"Bantu Sthandwa sam"

She says with a scratchy voice

"Mom I can't stay here. He tried to kill her"

I say shoving clothes in my bag

"So it's Ok for her father to kill our daughter or to sell her to the highest bidder?"

She asks settling on the couch

"Hlumelo left because of your husbands shady dealings mom!"

I point out

"He poisoned you against us. What else did he tell you?"

She asks with raised eyebrows

"Your husband is not the man I thought he was"

I say and then turn back to packing. She starts shouting going off at me about the whole thing but I don't respond. Eventually she gives up and soon my aunt is parked outside with Thap's waiting for me. I drag a suitcase to the car with a small bag in hand.

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SINOKUHLE

Dad walks in with red roses, a box of lindt my fave and a teddy bear. I don't care what you say but that is enough to make my heart melt. Saney jumps on the bed and hugs me tight

"At least I know who will miss me most when I'm dead"

I say hugging her just as tight

"Shut up! Are you Ok? Am I not hurting you?"

She says breaking the hug. We all laugh and I shake my head no. She sits by my feet and starts greeting everyone else.

"This is for you, Saney told me what you preferred"

Says dad and I can't help but smile at my caring little one

"I'm sorry about yesterday and today. It was uncalled for"

He says looking down, my father and apologies... He sucks at those but he's at least sincere when he does.

"Thank you daddy"

I open my arms for him, he hugs me and then we break it. Thando sits by my bedside on a chair, he's worried. I think I'm the only person who understands my siblings at home. My parents try but they are more open to me about their feelings and stuff despite everything

"You ok?"

He asks taking my hand into his. I smile

"Yes Thando, I'm Ok"

I say

"Are you sure Oku?"

He asks with so much concern I can't help but smile

"I'm sure Lwethu"

I assure, he kisses my hand and turns to the rest of the family.

3 days later I'm out of the hospital and so is Layla. I'm going through the most with my break up. It's Sunday and the family is gone to church, I'm sitting with Nono channel hopping. There's a knock on the door, Nono goes to open then she walks in followed by a new face that looks like Bantu but except it's a woman.

"She says her name is Hlumelo Mtwana and she's here to meet up with your father"

CHAPTER 17

LWANDO

Things between my wife and i are tense AF! I don't know what to say to her even. We drive past Spur to grab supper then head home. The kids go to their rooms to change and so I'm left with my wife and in-laws

"If this, whatever it is ever comes close to any of my kids again I swear to God I will kill you!"

Says my wife angrily shocking all of us

"What are you talking about honey"

Her mother asks

"Ask your husband and the man I thought was my husband"

She says and that last line cuts deep.

"Even after everything that's happened they still involved in these shady dealings!"

Ayola says unable to contain her anger

"Keep your voice down! There's kids in the house"

Yells her father

"All due respect but you will not yell at my wife in my house"

I say to her father, he looks at me and chuckles sarcastically. He pours himself water and then walks out leaving me with Ayola and Amanda.

"I'll bring the food to the lounge"

She says

"Mah can I talk to my wife alone?"

I ask

"Just remember that Thando and Saney can walk in any minute now"

She says and then walks out. I don't know whether to walk up to her or stand where I am

"Majola"

I say

"Rhadebe"

She says sounding drained, it's all my fault

"I'll fix this"

I say, more like plead

"He dumped her. I hope you happy"

She says then goes to the cupboard with the plates and takes them out to dish up

"I'm not happy Majola but as long as she is safe"

I say, she chuckles sarcastically

"Safe? She broke a leg because she was arguing over the phone with you Lwando! She's lying in that bed because of you! Don't tell me shiit about safety!"

She says and then dishes up. I walk out with my tail between my legs.

For the first time in a while we sleep facing separate sides. It's tense but we try to hide it from the kids.

I get to the office and call Hlumelo, she should have landed by now.

"Sir I am stuck at the airport"

She says

"I'll send someone to fetch you"

I say then end the call. I get on with work and an hour later she's knocking on my door, she walks and we shake hands then sit down

"You need to go home"

I say after exchanging a couple of greetings

"What? No ways Mr Mbana. They think I'm dead"

She says

"If it means keeping my family safe, I don't care what they think. Sino is laying in a hospital bed because your father thinks I hate him so much that I would kill you or sell you"

I explain, she breathes out

"I'll talk to him"

She assures

"I need more than you talking to him, make him understand that I'm not to be messed with"

I warn and she nods

"Of course sir. Now may I?"

She says, we get up and as we open the door her father is standing on the other side

"Hlumelo!"

He exclaims shocked

"Tata"

She says, they share a moment just taking each other in. They then share a hug

"Where have you been? Are you OK? Did he hurt you?"

He asks while still holding her tightly. She breaks the hug

"Tata I'm fine. He convinced me to come back"

She says but that only shocks him

"Come in"

I say proudly. We all step in and I lock the door

"What's going on here Hlumelo?"

He finally asks

"The day I left was the day I found out about your dealings. Learnt that mom's accident which almost led to Bantu's death was caused by you. I saw the files, video footage and just everything about you was shady. I couldn't stay knowing the kind of ruthless monster you are. I went to school as normal but with a few things I'd need if I left. I dumped my phone and everything you could find me by and took off to the states never to come back again until now, when Mr Mbana told me about you causing his daughter's accident"

She explains and this whole time the guy is quiet taking it all in

"If it's possible, I'd like to visit Bantu and mom"

She says

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-Sinokuhle

"Hlumelo Mtwá?"

She nods

"Bantu's sister?"

She smiles

"Yes"

I look at her with so many unanswered questions

"I ran away from home with a boy and never looked back"

She says

"Well until your father contacted me a few days ago"

She says giving a polite smile. Her smile reminds me of Bantu

"So how do you know my brother?"

She asks

"He's an ex"

I say

"What business do you have with my father?"

I ask, I'm still confused by what the hell is going on

"Your father is my boss"

She says looking at me not even blinking. I nod

"I should uhhm go rest"

I say taking my crutch and getting up

"It was nice meeting you Sino, I've heard so much about you"

She says

"I wish I could say the same about you but your family believes you to be dead so... "

I say and then walk to dad's study. Today I'm going to snoop until I find something! I have an hour before he gets back.

I go to his computer and the password is our years of birth combined, starting with mine all the way to Saney's. Now that I'm in there's nothing interesting.

I search his desks and come across an encrypted laptop. I open it and it needs a pin. 4 digit's. I try mom's year of birth and it's incorrect. I try my year and I'm shockingly in. All I see on the screen is scrambled bytecode. The screen is black written in white. Wow so much protection on one laptop, that to me means he's hiding something. Growing up with a father like mine, you bound to know a thing or two about hacking into a computer. It was the first thing he taught me back in highschool. I work my magic and soon I'm in.

"Welcome Sniper"

Is what's written on the welcoming screen

Who is Sniper?

I open folders on the desktop and there's blueprints of a plane, pictures of the plane that crashed a few days back and stories about it. There's pictures of the cars the plane was transporting with their blueprints. What's my father doing with all of this?

I keep opening other folders and there's a blueprint of the house we live in but except the print has rooms that don't seem to exist in this house. Wow!

I'm so caught up in all of this that I'm startled by his bold voice saying

"What are you doing Sinokuhle?"

CHAPTER 18

What do I say?

He walks in further, fear starts to creep in.

"Uhhhm"

Is all I can say, he raises an eyebrow waiting for a response

"I'm listening Marhadebe"

He says with his arms folded

"Dad what's going on? Who are you? Please don't lie to me"

I say sternly but deep down I'm shaking, I'm so close to peeing my pants even

"You had no right to snoop through my things Sinokuhle"

He says closing the laptop screen.

"You will know what I want you to know!"

He yells, I swallow a lump

"Who is Sniper?"

I ask not wanting to know the answer but also
curious

He chuckles in disbelief at my sudden bravery

"You must have hit your head harder than I thought!
The less you know Sinokuhle the better"

He says gritting his teeth, I shake my head

"You either tell me what's going on or else I pack
my things and leave"

I say with a straight face

"Don't be ridiculous. Where are you going to go?
Don't be stupid Sino"

He says

"If I was able to hack into your laptop, what's to stop
me from taking this information to the cops?"

I ask with a raised eyebrow and folded arms. I'm playing a dangerous game here but this is the only way

"So you would risk your whole family's life over this?"

He asks, I think for a minute. He's joking right? I mean how am I risking their lives?

"If that information on that laptop lands on the wrong hands Sino all our lives would be in danger"

His face is cold and shows no emotion. Who is this man?

"When the time is right, you will know everything but until then don't go snooping around my things"

He says closing the laptop startling me.

"Your mother and siblings are in the lounge"

He says, that is code for 'get out'. I take my crutch and walk out to the family.

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LWANDO

There's no doubt that Sino is mine and Ayola's daughter. This sudden fierceness, the sudden tenacity, the bravery, the sticking to what she wants. It's all my wife and me. I should be mad at her but instead I'm proud of her. It's crazy right? I'm a proud father. Hlumelo sit's down

"You not angry?"

She asks, I shake my head

"I'm proud of her for being this strong, fierce and tenacious"

I say still in disbelief that, that happened.

"You're uhhhm... Weird"

She says, I chuckle

"How did things go?"

I ask settling in my seat

"Mom was happy and in disbelief. Felt good to be with them. They told me about how they never stopped looking and kept waiting for me to show

until eventually they gave up. I put them through a lot but they still good"

She says with a pleased smile

"And your brother?"

I ask, her smile turns into a frown

"He's gone. He hates me, he blames me for everything. Says if I hadn't left then he and your daughter would be together. He believes that the war between you and my father began because of me"

She says then breathes out

"Sir I know this is a lot to ask of you but there's no guy better for your daughter than my brother"

She pleads with her eyes

"This is not any of your business Hlumelo. The two of them are done. He is at a good university finishing something he loves with a job guaranteed and an opportunity to be mentored by me"

I point out, she nods

"But sir"

I cut her off

"Focus on trying to end this war that won't stop because of you"

I say

"I know and we've spoken about it and he said he would talk to his gang only if I join his gang"

She says and I shake my head

"You do know that the only way out is through death? Hlumelo you know too much. You can't just jump ship"

I explain

"I understand that sir and so does he but he's not willing to negotiate"

She explains

"So what have you decided on?"

I ask

"He said we have until the end of the week to decide"

She says with a heavy sigh

"Even if that's the case, he is your father Hlumelo, find his weak spot and manipulate it, use your brother if you have to."

I say, she shakes her head

"My brother has been put through enough. He will not be a pawn in your game with my father"

She says sternly

"Use me all you want but keep Bantu out of it!"

She says, I nod

"Your brother is safe and protected. Just keep your father in check!"

I say getting up

"You need to leave"

I say walking to the door, she walks out first

"Don't get too comfortable. You have a week"

I warn and she laughs

"I know"

She says and then greets everyone in the lounge while I lead her out

"Aren't you staying for lunch Hlumelo?"

Says my wife giving her the stink eye, I know my wife

"No thank you Mrs Mbana, my boyfriend is waiting for me at a restaurant"

She says giving a polite smile. Ayola smiles and nods. I walk her to her car

"Your wife scares me"

She says opening her door

"I know"

I say laughing at how terrified she is

"Bye Mr Mbana"

She says

"I sure hope we don't lose you, you one of our best there is Hlumelo. I would hate for us to be enemies"

I warn closing the door for her. She drives off and head inside.

"You have some nerve bringing your hoe into my house with my parents and kids around"

She says angrily, I chuckle and hug her from behind kissing her neck

"My only hoe, wife, side chick or whatever is right in front of me and my hands are squeezing her boobs"

I say nibbling on her ear

"One of the kids could walk in Lwando"

She says trying to break free

"Tell me you love me first"

I say sliding my hand under her skirt

"Lwando mahn"

She says trying to fight me

"Tell me Majola, I need to hear you say it"

I say with my hand between her thighs, she
breathes out

"Lwando!"

"Tell me Majola."

I demand

"The kids"

She says breathing heavily

"Tell me Ayola"

I plead kissing her neck, she gives up the fight

"Ndiyakuthanda Lwando Sniper Mbana Rhadebe!"

CHAPTER 20

7 Years ago

I'm a graduate working for my fathers company while trying to build my own thing on the side with the money he pays me every month.

I never bumped into Bantu ever again after he dumped me and I never kept up with his life, I didn't understand him choosing my dad's offer over us.

I've accepted that my dad is a low key criminal, I mean after finding out the things he was keeping from us. He, mom and I sat down and they laid it out for me. I could have stormed out and caused drama about it but then my father isn't killing anyone or hurting someone so I'm good with that.

Call me weird or whatever but he is my father and I wouldn't want him landing in prison because of me.

I am 20 years old and life can only get better. I'm doing my honours, it's a rollercoaster. My parents need an educated daughter.

I am at the mall on a Saturday with Saney, it's June holidays and Cape Town is freezing cold around this time. Saney is turning 14 years old in a couple of weeks and so we have to plan for that and my brother is 17 years old and he's such a gentleman it's even hard to believe at times, he on the other hand threw a fit when he found out about dad's dealings but I made him see reason and understand that it's got nothing to do with us. He packed up his stuff and went to study forensics at WIt's... I know right.

Anyway back to my lunch with my sister at Waterfront, we store hopping if that makes any sense and just chatting.

"So you mean to tell me that you still a virgin?"

She says clasping her cheeks with her mouth wide open. I cover her mouth with my hand

"Could you be any louder?"

I say looking around and the looks I'm getting aren't so friendly. She removes my hand

"I'm sorry. I'm just shocked that you kept it this long. I mean you recently graduated dude!"

She says

"Yeah but I'm no loose cannon"

She's about to cut me off when I continue

"After Bantu left I just decided dating wasn't for me"

I say with a shrug

"You really loved him huh?"

She says nudging me, I nod

"Look, you'll find someone better and won't leave you no matter what"

She says brushing my hand

"Uhhm... Hi"

Says a bold voice behind us making us both turn

"I'm sorry to disturb you guys, I think I'm a little lost here"

I hear everything he is saying but good God almighty! He is FINE! Not model fine but the kind of FINE that makes you stop and stare and his voice doesn't help this situation. My little sister pinches me

"Right Sino?"

She says

"Excuse me?"

I say clearing my throat

"I was saying we can accompany him to his car just to make sure he gets to it safely"

She says. I mentally bang my head against a wall. Saney has no shame.

"So you new here?"

I decide to speak rather than being creepy

"Uhhm yeah. I'm from Limpopo, was studying in PE and recently moved to here yesterday"

He says but you guys his voice is doing a number on me.

"That's Uhhm great. We were born in KZN Durban but relocated to here ages back"

I say and Saney chuckles

"Seeing that you new and have no friends, how about we become your friends?"

She offers and I pinch her arm. How could she?

"I would love that. My name is Lunga Khumbulani Langa"

He says and my sister and I exchange looks

"Your names and surname are Xhosa"

Saney can't help but point out

"My mother is Xhosa and my father is Venda, they never got married and he never gave me a name so"

He explains and we both nod

"I'm sorry for asking"

She says humbled

"Nah it's Ok, I get it a lot actually"

He says.

"This is my car"

He says pointing a Lexus. A whole black Lexus you guys. Who is this man?

"Thank you for accompanying me here"

He says offering a warm friendly smile

"What are you?!"

Saney asks unable to stop the words from flying out of her loose mouth. I smack her arm

"I'm sorry she asked"

He chuckles at my apology

"It's Ok. I am a psychologist"

He says, Saney smiles all teeth out kind

"Hand me your phone"

She says to him

"Why?"

I ask while he hands her the phone. She starts punching in

"Her name is Sinokuhle Mbana and I'm Sanele. I saved her number as Sino Mbana"

She says handing the phone back to him. What just happened?

CHAPTER 21

Saney is a pain in the ass! Who said I wanted a man? You'd think that after 3 years I'd be over Bantu but nope. Not over him. Looking at Lunga I see a decent guy but in my mind I'm ouchea comparing his looks to those of Bantu. Yes I don't know him yet but I'm scared to know him, what if I give him a shot and I end liking him more than I did Bantu?

"So Saney got you a boyfriend"

Says mom startling me walking into the lounge

"No! He's cute but I'm not about that life"

I say turning my focus back to the TV

"Sino"

She says settling besides me. Here comes the lecture

"It's been 3 years now, if he was coming back I'd like to believe that he would have made contact. I get it, your father gave him no choice but I believe that if he really loved like he said he did then he would have told your father to go screw himself"

I breathe out

"Why should I when I have you?"

Dad's voice startles us. We laugh, this dirty old man

"Dad please! Child ears!"

I say

"Where?"

He says pretending to search around making us all laugh

"So how was lunch with Saney? Layla came by"

Dad says settling on the double couch opposite the one we sitting on

"Lunch was interesting, your daughter never ceases to amaze me. I'll call Layla later"

I say

"What did my baby do this time?"

He asks laughing

"Tried setting me up with some guy again"

I say rolling my eyes

"That's the how manieth guy now?"

Mom asks trying to think

"Tenth and counting"

My sister signed me up on a dating site you guys. I only found out a few months back from a colleague, told her to delete my profile same time. She was monitoring it and giving certain guys my number, I stopped at number 9 and told him to forget it. He was too sexist for me!

My parents laugh

"So you have been on 9 dates and still no shag or boyfriend at least?"

Says my father in stitches. I throw a pillow at him

"Wow dad! Real nice! Whatever!"

I say rolling my eyes

"I'm just saying that when your mom was your age... Damn the things she did"

I block my ears while he and mom laugh. My parents are dysfunctional. I get up and dial Layla's number

"Hey baby"

I say

"Hi Sino"

She says sounding like someone who just woke up

"Dad tells me you came over, are you home?"

I ask

"Yes I'm home babe"

"Ok I'm on my way"

I say before cutting the call. I shout that I'm off to Layla's home and will be back later. I get to her home, knock and let myself in then head to her room, she's sleeping face down

"Hey honey"

I say closing the door

"Hey babe"

She says still not looking. I sit on the bed and put my hand on her back

"Babe talk to me, what's going on?"

She just starts sniffing, I'm worried and don't know how to handle this. I lay down next to her with my arm over her shoulders

"Lay talk to me please"

I plead

"I'm pregnant"

I gasp in shock. Layla and Thaps are or were still dating last I checked and they were serious. Fingers, tongue, sex toy... They can't make you pregnant... Or at least the last time I checked unless she cheated

"How?"

Is the best response I could come up with

"I cheated. It was one reckless night Sino, it was a one night stand and it meant nothing"

I can't even hide the shock

"Thaps and I were going through a rough patch with her accepting a job in the Eastern Cape. I was out with my colleague, one thing led to another"

She explains in between sobs. She and Thaps have been making it work. Thaps left last month, they always visiting each other almost every weekend even so I don't know.

"So what now?"

I ask, I don't know what to say you guys

"I can't keep it Sino. Thaps will never forgive me"

She says sitting up, her eyes are puffed up and her cheeks are pink

"I hate myself for this"

She says burying her face in her hands. I pull her to me and just let her cry until she's good. After what seems like an hour she breaks out of arms

"Please tell me you support my decision. I can't lose Bathabile over this. I love her Sino, she means everything to me"

She says clasping my hands really tight

"Layla I love you, I love you so so much but I cannot support this. What if something happens to you?"

I ask, she breathes out

"We will go to a private hospital. At least they will know what they are doing and will care for me as needed. Please Sino"

She begs, I can't resist those eyes and red nose. Her phone rings and it's Bathabile. We look at each other

"I've been avoiding her calls all day"

She says

"Layla!"

I scold

"No, she'll know"

She says shaking her head. I let go of her and answer it

"Bathabile"

I say

"You don't get to call me that wena"

She says and I chuckle

"Long time, what's up?"

I ask

"Nothing, where's Layla? Is she Ok?"

I look at her and she shakes her head no

"She's coming down with the flu. It's bad"

I say

"Come open the door for me I'm outside"

She says, Layla and I both gasp. I shrug questioning her with my eyes

"I'll be there in a minute"

I say

"Awesome"

We end the call.

"Sino!"

She says annoyed

"This is your chance to talk. Go get yourself cleaned up"

I say then head out

CHAPTER 22

I walk out to meet her halfway and you won't believe who is sitting in the passenger seat. The one that got away. The one that broke my heart into a million pieces, the way I was never ready I don't even know what to say. Our eyes lock into each other and he opens the car door. Thaps walks past me greeting but I'm too focused on this yummy thing walking towards me.

"Sino"

He says walking towards me it's as if everything is in slow motion. I start to fume and turn around and run to the house, he grabs my arm as I'm about to walk up the stairs

"Sino please can we talk"

He pleads. I turn and slap him. One slap turns into many and soon he's hugging me tightly as I start to sob. He keeps repeating the words "I'm sorry". Why did he have to show up now of all times? I don't need this! I pull away from his chest and run up the stairs to the closest spare room. Layla's parents are gone for the month on some business trip. I close the door and stand by it trying to process him being

here. His cologne hasn't changed, he looks 10 times hotter than the last time I saw him. Stop it! You mad at him! I think to myself but I can't help how yummy he looks and smells.

"Sino please just let me in"

He begs banging on the door

"No! Leave like you did 3 years ago Bantubonke!"

I say trying to hold back the tears but failing

"Sinokuhle please could you just let me in"

He says yet banging on the door. I keep quiet and walk towards the window, I need air! He doesn't stop begging me to open no matter how many times I tell him to go away. He's just there.

I hear the door nob turn and open, that's when it hit's me that I forgot to lock. His cologne is so strong I can barely feel the air I'm hoping to receive by standing here

"I know I fucked up and that what I did is unforgivable but Sinokuhle please can we at least talk so that I can try make you understand why I left then"

He says breathing down my neck with his hands brushing my upper arms. GOD I don't need this right now. I pray for strength to resist him.

"Please Rhadie"

He pleads and I melt. I want to hate him but I can't. He turns me around to look at him, he frowns at the sight of me. His eyes look teary

"Marhadebe I am so sorry for the damage I have caused"

He says wiping my cheeks, didn't even realize I was crying. He cups my face wiping me with his thumbs, God it feels good. I can't look at him, I can't stand his handsome face. I feel his breath against my face, we now breathe the same air. He pulls my face towards his and I let him. He kisses me passionately I can't help but respond. It feels so good. My vagina lips vibrate at this amazing sensation. I'm mad at him but I want him so badly! My morals flew out the window the minute I suddenly needed air. As we are kissing his hands leave my face all the way to my ass while I wrap mine around his neck. I really feel short right now. I push him to the chair below the window and sit on top of him while we kissing. I break it to close the curtains. I am thinking straight, I know what I'm doing.

We continue kissing with me grinding on him making his d grow by the second. Next thing I know our clothes are on the floor, he picks me and soon I'm being placed carefully on the bed with him getting on top of me. It feels right. He's looking into my eyes like he's soul searching.

"Are you sure about this?"

He asks and I nod. He kisses me then goes to my neck all the way to my boobs making me moan. I've even forgotten we at my friends home. He goes down to my navel all the way to my nookie and breathes out in appreciation. Good GOD! He ravishes me like his favorite meal. It feels so good I can't help the moans leaving my lips. He goes at it until I orgasm then he comes up to my lips and kisses me rubbing himself at the entrance of my nookie. He rubs me until I can feel his precum then he tries inserting himself, my nails dig on his back. I was never told it was this painful! He doesn't stop until the tip is in. He looks into my eyes, I'm crying. Not because of the physical pain but because of him

"I can stop"

He says looking worried, I shake my head no. He continues until my walls have stretched enough to accommodate all of him. He squeezes my boobs

while moving in and out. Nothing about this feels wrong, if anything it should happen. I need this closure. We go on until we both release but we don't stop there, we change to doggy and to me riding him. Layla gave a few pointers, I ride him until he groans calling out my name. We shag until we both release. I get off of him and go to the bathroom and sit on the toilet. That just happened.

He walks in naked

"Sino"

He says with that voice of his that does things to me

"Please don't Bantu"

And what do you know, my voice is back

"Sinokuhle we have to talk"

He demands

"This? This changes nothing. You dumped me. You couldn't fight for our love! There is nothing left for us to talk about Bantu. You can go get dressed and pretend you didn't see me!"

I say yelling. I'm angry all over again. I can't forget the pain he caused me on a hospital bed.

"I had no choice! I had to leave else your life was in danger and I could never leave with myself knowing that you got hurt because of me"

He says kneeling in front of me with my hands into his

"You broke me Bantu. You have no idea how much damage you caused"

I say sobbing

"It was never easy for me too Sino, leaving was more painful than you know"

He says then breathes out

"I fucked up. I know, can we please just fix things"

He says looking up at me. I shake my head

"We can't. I've moved on"

I say pulling my hands away

"You lying!"

He says

"Believe what you want Bantu!"

I say getting up and getting into the shower, do you think he let me be? Nigga joins me in the shower. I

open the water and turn my back to him, little do I know that that on it's own turns into a make out session. When we done we walk out and get dressed in silence.

"We need to get you the morning after pill"

He says, that's when it hit's me. We had unprotected sex at Layla's home! Wow! Mom would be so proud. Just as we walk out the room, Layla and Bathabile walk out of Layla's all smiles and happy looking like people who just made up. I wonder if she told her the news. Things between Bantu and I are tense, well not really tense but they not all roses.

"Bantu"

Layla says with a smile just as shocked as I am

"Hey Lay, I see you good"

He says with a smirk

"Just as you are Bantu.."

She says giving me that look. Oh God!

"Listen B, I'm taking Sino out. We'll be back later"

Bantu says to his cousin who just nods with a smile. We say our goodbyes and walk out to the car, the

minute he starts the car his phone rings, he looks at me before he answers it

"Hey"

He says

"Baby when are you coming back, we miss you"

Says a voice over the phone. We? Who is this we?

"I'll be back first Monday morning"

He says looking really tensed, I'm not even mad. I kind of expected such, he's a prettyboi after all.

"We love you"

She says, her voice sounds sweet

"I love you too. Bye"

He says then ends the call. He turns to me

"Whatever, just take me to the pharmacy please"

I say turning to look outside

CHAPTER 23

WOW! Men are something else. I can feel his eyes burn through my skin every chance he gets.

"Please just say something. Anything Sino"

He says while focused on the road. I turn up the volume, he's car is playing Nate ft Zola - Friend Zone, I'm in love with the song shame.

"Seriously?"

He says turning the volume down, I chuckle and turn it up again. He parks in front of the pharmacy

"You coming with?"

He asks, I look at him and turn to the other side. It then hit's me, this was how mom fell pregnant with me. Dad lied about the morning after pill and gave her an antibiotic or something. He gets out and I get out after him. We walk inside and would you guess who is here?

"Sinokuhle"

He says all smiles, I can't help but smile, also because I want to spite this player wanna be I'm with.

"Lunga hey"

I say pulling him in for a hug

"Play along please"

I whisper in his ear as we hug. He breaks it

"We still on for dinner tonight?"

He says, I smile

"Of cause babe. Wouldn't miss it for the world. Gosh where are my manners, babe meet Bantu my friend from Bloem. Bantu meet my boyfriend Lunga"

I say and the look he gives me when I say boyfriend is enough to send me 6 feet underground.

"Nice to meet you"

Lunga says, with his hand held out. Bantu looks at it and nods

"Sho bruh, Sino we running late"

He says leaving me

"And that?"

He asks laughing

"Bitter ex, we'll talk over dinner. It's on me Ok? Text me so I have your number"

I say hugging him. Good God he smells so good. Nigga is rocking Dior! Who the fxck wears Dior at this age? But then again he's probably a rich kid. We break the hug saying our goodbyes. I find Bantu waiting by the counter

"Aren't you a little disrespectful"

I say rolling my eyes

"So now you can speak to me. If only your boyfriend knew what we just did a few minutes ago"

He says gritting his teeth

"Just like your baby mama knows about us right?"

He keeps quiet

"So now you choose to keep quiet"

I say folding my arms

"We'll talk about this in private."

A pharmacist comes to us and hands us the pill giving is instructions on how to take the pill and other stuff. W walk out and I wave at Lunga who blows me a kiss. Bantu is so annoyed it's so cute.

"I'm transferring this side in a month"

He says, I chuckle

"So?"

I ask rolling my eyes

"I'd like for us to pick up where we left off"

He says, I chuckle

"You very funny you know that? There is no where that we left off Bantu. You ended things and I'd be an idiot to get back together with you!"

I say drinking the pill

"The sex meant nothing"

I say looking outside, he laughs at me

"Does your boyfriend know you no longer a virgin? Those moans and scratches on my back contradict your statement right now"

He says giving a cocky smile. I want to hate him but I can't you guys.

"Cat got your tongue?"

He asks starting the car. I don't respond

"Still like mugg and bean?"

He asks and I don't respond

"Cool"

He says driving out of the complex. We get to Waterfront and he takes me to this other seafood joint I'm crazy about lately. We get a table for two. He opens my chair for me then sit's on his

"Yes Ontlametsi is pregnant with my child. I met her when I got there, we lived in the same building, we grew closer and she made me forget about you. Well not completely but you get the point. There was something about her innocence that reminded me of you. Her childish voice, her laugh, the way she wore her hair and it didn't help that she was also studying fashion. We started screwing then turned that into a relationship, now she's 6 months pregnant with my baby"

He says, could me not crying or feeling anything mean anything? I mean the man I believed to be the love of my life is here telling me he's in a 3 year relationship expecting his first born and I have no reaction or whatsoever. Is that normal?

"Congrats. So where would that leave Ontla if you and I picked up where we left of?"

I ask leaning in on the table, he breathes out

"Sino I never stopped loving you, she was there when I felt like giving up."

I chuckle

"So you want your bread buttered on both sides?"

I ask and he shrugs

"Focus on your family Bantu. I'm not a home wrecker and I won't start because of you. She sounds sweet, don't hurt her as you did me"

I say then get up and leave him at the restaurant

Feels good being in control of my moods and feelings and just being. I mean it's everything! I request taxify and just after that I get a text from Lunga telling me the time and place. I get to Layla's crib and Bathabile and Layla are cuddled up

"When are you leaving?"

I ask Thaps while throwing myself on the couch

"So you and Bantu huh?"

She says with a smirk

"What about Bantu and I?"

I ask rolling my eyes

"Ayt cool, I won't ask. Babe convince your friend to work things out with my boy"

Says Bathabile. Argh this one must think I'm dumb and don't know the latest

"Nah, your cousin needs to focus on Ontlametsi and his upcoming kid"

They both gasp, shook by what I've just shared

"He told you?"

Thaps asks

"She called earlier on our way out so"

I say turning my attention back to the TV

"Wow! Ayt then. I'm sorry Sino"

She says sounding sincere

"Nah I'm ok Thaps, 3 years without any kind of contact, what was I expecting?"

I say rolling my eyes. He walks in and sit's next to me

"Thaps your mom called, we should get going"

He says, Bathabile seems annoyed but she drags herself up

"Babe I'll see you late?"

She asks and Layla nods

"Sino it was good seeing you. Bye ladies"

Says Bathabile kissing her girlfriend and then kissing me on the cheek. She whispers

"He never stopped loving you!"

She then gets up and smiles. Layla walks them out and soon I'm left alone until Layla comes in all smiles.

"So how was it?"

She asks throwing herself next to me

"It was painful at first but that turned into pleasure real quick. He handled my body like his most prized possession"

I say with an unintentional smile.

"You love him"

She points out

"Yes but what he did doesn't change how I feel about him. I thought I'd forgiven and forgotten until I saw him and then everything he said that day at the hospital came back in floods. I'm still mad at him"

"Same way you still in love with him"

She says brushing my thigh

"I take it you didn't tell Thaps"

I say turning to her, she shrugs

"I couldn't Sino. She would kill me with her bare hands. I tried but I couldn't. We were just so happy and I couldn't ruin that"

She says and I nod

"Tomorrow I'm going to do it, please come with me Sino"

She pleads taking my hand into hers

"I need my friend with me please"

CHAPTER 24

"Thank you for coming, I didn't think you'd come"

He says nervously

"Haibo why?"

I ask frowning

"Because of the guy you were with. I mean I was just a pawn in your game earlier"

He says with a shrug. My God he is so handsome. I suddenly see this thing with dark skinned niggas

"Firstly I am so sorry for using you like that, it was wrong of me and it is not something I normally do"

I say and he nods

"The guy I was with is my ex. He broke up with me 3 years back because of something my father said to him so that ship sank. He came back today thinking he can sweet talk me into taking him back but I lied and said I had moved on which was a lie"

I say playing with my hands nervously, the way he is looking at me I even feel like I'm blabbing

"So are you over him?"

He asks and I think for a second, then nod

"I can't say I'm completely over him but I believe that I am forced to give up all hopes of him and I ever being"

I say and he nods

"I'm sorry for telling you so much on our first date"

He chuckles

"So it's a date?"

He asks with a raised eyebrow. I suddenly feel like an idiot

"Uhhhm"

He laughs

"It's a date then. What do normal people talk about on their first date?"

He asks and I shrug

"I don't know. What do you do for a living? How old are you? I don't know, just tell me about yourself"

I say sipping on my drink

"Well I am 25 years old, I've recently graduated for my PhD in psychology. I'm officially a psychologist. Not that I wasn't but I was promoted to come and head the hospital this side so I'm excited about that"

He says with a smile, I can't help but smile too

"That's amazing Lunga! Congratulations!"

I say placing my hand over his and he looks at our hands

"I'm sorry"

I say removing my hand

"It's Ok. Anyway apart from what you already know about me that's pretty much it for now. What about you?"

He asks. I breathe out

"I am 20, recently graduated for a degree in Computer Science and Fashion Design, I work for my father while furthering my studies and trying to get the fashion thing going on the side. I have a brother and a sister, you met my sister already. My mother is a lawyer and my father is a Software Developer slash Accounting something... I don't

know what but yah that's him. And my best friend
and only friend is my neighbor Layla"

I say he nods and sips his drink

"Congratulations on graduating. So you majored in
two different courses?"

He asks and I nod

"Wow! Smart!"

I smile

"I try"

I say not trying to sound cocky

"My best friend works at the hospital I'm at now, her
name is Phila"

He says, I cringe for a minute. Why does he have a
female best friend?

"We grew up together, our mothers are best friends
and so they raised us together until we got to
university where she came to study this side and
me that side"

I breathe out of relief. At least they like brother and
sister

"She was supposed to meet me at the mall today but she bailed on me. Her fiancé's mom fell ill"

He says

"I'm sorry to hear that. What about your girlfriend or fiancé?"

I ask trying to fish for information

"She's sitting opposite me"

He says cutting on his stake. What? I choke on my food

"Sorry, did I say something out of line?"

He asks and I shake my head drinking water

"So you'll be my girlfriend?"

He asks and I shrug

"Let's get past today and see"

I say eating my food.

The date goes amazingly well, he's interesting to know. We get to my home and park outside the gate

"I had a great time with you"

He says

"Me too. Thank you"

I say unbuckling my belt. When I turn he pulls me in for a kiss. I shouldn't but who am I kidding? His lips are perfect. He breaks it leaving me breathless

"I've been wanting to do that from since the first time I met you"

He says, I'm still speechless

"I'm sorry for overstepping"

He says, I just nod and open the door taking my bag with. The minute I walk in Saneey is waiting for me in the kitchen

I head for the fridge and drink water

"So?"

She asks all excited, I down a whole 500 ml bottle because wow! Even Bantu doesn't kiss me like that!

"Sino!"

She shouts impatiently

"He kissed me"

I say going to the sink, she squeals in excitement

"How was it?"

She asks following behind me

"This is not a conversation I should be having with my mother's last born"

I say closing the fridge

"Don't be a bore! So share! How was it?"

She asks pulling me to the counter chairs

"It was whimsical. I feel like a hoe"

I say burying my head in my folded arms

"Why? It was just a kiss"

She defends brushing my hair

"I slept with Bantu"

I confess, I hear her gasp

"I thought we hated him and never wanted to see him again"

She says

"I know and we do but it just happened and I enjoyed every minute of it"

I say embarrassed, she laughs at me

"Great!"

I mumble

"I think you needed closure unless the sex brought back forgotten feelings"

She low key asks

"Maybe it did, maybe it didn't but all I know is that he and I are done! He's expecting, the girl is 6 months pregnant"

I say

"Wow"

That's all she manages to say. For a change Saney is speechless

"Look. You not a hoe, let's look at the sex as retirement benefit's Ok? I mean it had to happen! Now that Bantu is out of the way completely. You can focus on building something with Lunga, he seems genuine"

She says brushing my back. I feel like an idiot confiding in Saney and actually considering what she is saying

CHAPTER 25

6 YEARS AGO

My parents have met Lunga and they love him, well mom does and so does the rest of my family but dad can't seem to like him much. He says there's something off about him, the guy seems almost too perfect for his liking. He says if only I'd just waited for Bantu, of which he knows that Bantu and I can never be. He is engaged to the lady and she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. So that can never happen.

Layla has a beautiful baby girl, she and Bathabile broke up which was sad because Layla really loved her. She almost lost the baby during the time of the break up. Her baby daddy who happens to be a guy we went to school with is very much involved in his child's life so that's good.

Lunga and I are celebrating a year together and I'm happy, I'm in love with him just as he is me. He is such a great person I have no doubts about him. I've met his best friend and now he's taking me to meet his family, also during our relationship I've taken interest in his work though it's not for me but I like it. I slept at his apartment and now he is nowhere to be seen. I go wash my face and brush my

teeth while trying to call him but his phone rings in the room. Wow! I decide to shower instead, a few minutes into my shower the shower door opens and he walks in naked. I still can't get over how sexy he is, how lit his sex is. My GOD!

"Good morning mine"

He says kissing me, I respond then break it

"Morning babe"

I say

"I had to rush somewhere, didn't want to wake you.

You seemed drained"

He says pulling me by the waist

"It's Ok babe I really was"

I say and he gives a corky smile which always sends me over the edge. It always does things to me Ok!

"No!"

I say trying to be stern

"It's our anniversary and you need breakfast"

He says squeezing my ass, that alone does things to me. I stand on my tip toes and wrap my arms around his neck pulling him to my height kissing his lips. I've never tasted anything this good before!

He picks me up then eats me up against the shower walls, I am unable to can. What this man is doing to me should be illegal you guys. He goes at it until I release, the bathroom is filled with nothing but my moans, he lowers me down to sit on his dick

with my legs wrapped around his waist, it's a little painful from since the early hours of morning but I love it anyway. It's my favorite meal! He bounces me up and down on his hard D then just as I'm about to come he puts me down and turns me around to hit it from the back. It's so intense all you can hear are our moans and groans. We enjoying this, it's life! I stop him as he is about to come then go down on him. I'm not the Sino you guys met in university. This Sino is different. This Sino is a sex addict you guys□.

I blow him until he pushes me deep till I gag on it, I know he's about to release when he does that "Fuck Sino"

Is all he can mumble as he shoots in my mouth. He only ever comes in my mouth in the shower but either than that it's different. He helps me up and kisses me squeezing my ass pushing me towards his solid hard. We break it and just stare at each other.

"Marhadebe"

He says smiling while shaking his head

"Langa lokulunga"

I respond

"I still want to eat you up"

He says

"I want you to ride my face until you cum"

The way he commands it is enough to make my

pussy purr.

"What are we waiting for?"

I ask closing the water. We walk out to our room and he sit's down pulling me on top of him laying on his back. I crawl up to his face and ride him until I cum. We don't stop there, I go and sit on his dick and ride him for dear life. He can't even help but groan, this man right here sure knows how to hype me up. I increase my pace pinning his hands on the bed while doing my thing

"Rhadie I want to touch you"

He says kissing my boobs, I shake my head going real slow and just grinding and swirling on him.

We just finished taking a real shower now

"I went to get you this"

He says handing me 2 pregnancy test boxes

"For?"

I ask with a raised eyebrow. It's a rhetorical question

"Come on Rhadie wam just take the test"

He pleads with his gorgeous eyes

"I'm not pregnant"

I argue throwing the tests on the bed I was making and walking out, he grabs my arm before i can leave the room

"Please just take the test and prove me wrong"

He begs

"Please"

He says giving me those puppy eyes of his I can't resist

"Fine"

I say taking the box from his other hand. I walk to the bathroom with him following behind me. I pee on the stick and hand it to him

"Happy?"

I ask annoyed

"When we know what the results are, I'll be"

He says smiling. I walk past him and take my gown off. I feel his arms wrap around me

"Whatever the test says, I love you"

He says kissing my hair

"Fine"

I say and the walk to the closet. I open my underwear drawer and am met with a blue box with a blue ribbon on it. It's a Tiffany box. I turn

"Babe?"

I say only to notice now that he's behind me

"I've been cracking my skull trying to think of the perfect way to propose to you. You know me, I can barely ever decide what it is I want to eat or when I want it but I've never been so sure about a person before. I know it's only a year but when you know, you know. I've had this ring for 6 months now"

I clasp my mouth

"Yah I know, I thought if I had asked you then you would have said no but now I'm taking a leap of

faith with hopes you'll say yes to me"

He says and just then his alarm tone goes off

CHAPTER 26

I have no doubts about marrying this man. I know it's early and everything but he is all I want and will ever want. It's not often that you meet a person that compliments you the same way you compliment them. It's right, it feels right.

"Yes"

I say with a smile nodding my head

"You serious?"

He asks with teary eyes, I nod. He slips it on my finger then pulls me to him kissing me so passionately I even forget that we waiting to know whether I'm pregnant or not. I am still naked and he is wearing briefs, he's hands are on my ass squeezing and massaging it so good I let out a moan in between our kiss. He breaks it

"Get dressed before I sex you up in this closet"

He commands and who am I to argue? I just smile and nod taking out matching black lace underwear. When I turn he's gone, I walk out and he's holding the pregnancy test in his hand with a smile and glossy eyes

"What does it say?"

I ask him standing by the closet, part of me fears having a baby now. I'm young, I'm 21, the timing is

wrong. In my mind my fingers are crossed with hopes that I'm not.

"Marhadebe we 16 weeks pregnant"

He says. I swear I misheard him, did he say 4 months? I mean... I... When? How? Obviously through sex but I'm on the pill, I never miss a day. I wake up in bed, it smells like a hospital. I look around and he's holding my hand tightly I can barely breathe

"You fainted"

He says sounding really concerned, I thought us black people don't faint mos. How long was I out to not feel him drive me to the hospital?

"I'm 4 months pregnant?"

I whisper and he nods not knowing how to tackle this. I show no emotion, I have no idea how I feel about this.

"Sin..."

I cut him off

"When were you going to tell us our daughter is in hospital?"

Dad asks startling both of us. I'd normally ask how they know but we all know my father, he is a well connected man

"Baby are you Ok? What happened?"

Mom asks rushing to me in panic

"Either than being 4 months pregnant, nothing happened mom. All I did was faint"

I say sarcastically forgetting my father is in the room. Shit is about to go down

"What did you just say Sinokuhle Majola Mbana?"

He asks rhetorically, I know he heard me and I don't want to die

"On the bright side I'm engaged to my baby daddy"

I say trying to lighten up the mood but only to make it worse. Dad throws a punch at Lunga, I don't know for which news but he stumbles

"Dad!"

"Lwando!"

Mom and I shout in unison but it falls on deaf ears.

Mom runs to them but instead dad pulls him out by the hem of his T-shirt. He is pissed! I jump off the bed and follow, dad hasn't stopped throwing punches at him mumbling things we can't hear.

"Daddy stop it!"

I say trying to pull him off but he's a beast

"If you kill him you will never hear from me again"

I say, he's holding him by his neck with his feet dangling. He drops him

"What did you say?"

He asks turning to me, I'm not phased, I attend to my fiance who is trying to catch his breath. Mom shows up with a guard and a doctor

"Lwando Mbana. Why am I not surprised?"

The doctor says and dad chuckles

"Doc how's my daughter?"

He asks and the doc looks at me, I shrug helping Lunga up. Dad really fucked him up poor thing.

"Doc please have a look at my fiancé"

I say and help him inside the room. He sits down and the doctor starts observing him

"Seems like nothing's broken"

Doc says

"I'll give you a prescription letter for the pain meds and everything else. As for you Miss Mbana you need to take things easy. It's not going to be an easy ride from hereon"

Doc warns, I just nod

"Here are your scans, the baby is healthy. Here is a number of a gynecologist who will help you through all of this"

That's all I heard, I'm too busy admiring my baby that I can't even hear them.

"And she's not even listening to me"

I'm startled by the doctor and find myself laughing

"I am sorry you were saying?"

He just laughs at me

"It's Ok, we get that a lot with new mothers"

He says, dad is not happy at all. The doctor gives me my prescription letter and Lunga's then walks out leaving me with my family.

"Congratulations my baby"

Mom says pulling me into her arms. As long as she is happy then I'm good

"Thank you mom"

I say hugging her tightly

"As long as you will let me be there for you you throughout"

Mom whispers in my ear, I giggle

"Of cause mom"

I say breaking the hug. She's excited and looking at the scan

"I'm going to be a grandmother"

She says excitedly, I laugh at her and so does

Lunga

"How far are you? This is great news baby. And you engaged too"

Mom says admiring the ring on my finger

"This happened this morning. I'm 4 months mom"

I say

"Babe"

He smiles at me, dad really did a number on him

"Mkmk"

Dad says annoyed to the core

"I will meet you in the car Ayola"

He says and then walks out.

"Mrs Mbana I am sorry for.."

He says but mom cuts him off

"Look. I got pregnant at 19, gave birth at 20. I wasn't even engaged at least. I'm happy you and Sino are going about this your own way though you will be required to pay damages and stuff but either

than all that you guys have my full support"

Mom says. I can't even help the tears, I'm glad I have mom's support

"But dad"

I say and she cuts me off

"Let me worry about your father. Focus on my grand baby Ok?"

She says brushing my hand and I just nod. A nurse walks in to nurse Lunga's bruises. When she is done we drive to the pharmacy, his phone rings and it's his best friend Phila

"Phila you on loud speaker"

Says Lunga

"Hey Sino"

She says and I giggle

"Hey Phila how are you?"

I ask

"Did you say yes?"

She asks with excitement in her voice, he looks at me and I smile

"No"

I say and Lunga just laughs

"You not funny Sinokuhle Mbanani!"

Says Phila

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LUNGA

I am Lunga Khumbulani Langa. I met Sino last year

and I've never not once met anyone like her. She's the best thing to ever happen to me since the promotion. Her father never liked me from since the first time he met me and I never understood why. He believes I'm too perfect and there's no such. Trust me I'm as dumbstruck as you are. I've done nothing but love Sino the best way I know how. She completes me you know? I've never met someone so loving, so free spirited yet so shy, ambitious and is just the definition of perfect. I'm in love with her in a way words can't even describe. I've been trying to prove to her dad just how genuine I am but he wants nothing to do with me. How do you win such a man over? I've done my own research and I've come to learn that Lwando Mbana is not a man to be messed with. He is dangerous, I don't understand how the man is not in prison for the crimes he's committed... But then again with money and power you can get away with anything. We continue talking to Phila until we reach the pharmacy. Sino offers to get the medication leaving me to call my parents. Mom will love her even more in person that much I know

"Mama"

I say

"Lunga baby how are you? I hope you not calling to cancel on us"

She says with worry in her voice

"No mom it's nothing like that"

I assure

"We on our way, we had to stop at the pharmacy first"

I say

"Is everything OK? I hope none of you are sick or something"

She says with so much concern

"I had a run in with her fathers fists but I'm Ok mom"

I assure

"What do you mean? Heh Lunga the..."

I cut her off

"Mom see you in a bit. You better be dressed up ke"

I say before ending the call. I dial dad's number and he tells us we'll meet at the hotel he's staying in apparently the food there is nice. Sino comes back and buckles up

"We need to go and get dressed"

She says giggling, she's in a gown and I'm wearing sweatpants and a T-shirt

"Of cause babe we going home"

I say

"Honey I'm sorry about what my father did, he had no right"

She says brushing my hand

"I understand where he is coming from. I think I'd

feel the same way too towards the guy to knock my
babygirl up"

I say jokingly and she laughs poking me

"So you knocked me up on purpose?"

She asks side eyeing me, I chuckle

"Maybe"

CHAPTER 27

LUNGA

Ok so maybe I knocked Sino up on purpose. I don't doubt that she loves me but I can't help but fear that one day she'll wake up and leave me for Bantu. He's her first love and virgin breaker after all, so who am I to compete with him? Doesn't help that he is still hung up over her. Last I heard was that he and his baby mama broke up and were living separately. I've done my research on the guy or rather I've had someone look into him for me so that I know who I'm competing with.

I'm not crazy, I'm just a little territorial that's all. We get dressed and head to mom's hotel, she's already waiting in the reception for us.

"Mom"

I say hugging her

"What happened to your face?"

She says breaking the hug and cupping my face

"Mom I'm fine. This is Sinokuhle Mbana. Sino meet my mother"

I say

"Sino nice to meet you, I'm Anele Langa"

She says pulling Sino into a hug

"Hello mah, it's a pleasure to finally meet you"

She says and breaks the hug

"You even prettier in person"

Sino compliments

"Oh please child don't act smart with me. I see you treating my son well"

Mom says nudging Sino who just smiles politely

"I try mah, he's not a difficult person"

Mom smiles

"Keep her son, they don't make them like this anymore"

Mom says and Sino chuckles

"Mom stop you making her shy"

I say kissing the side of her head

"Let's get going, you don't want to keep the king waiting"

Mom says, sino gives me a look

"It's nothing"

I whisper and she just nods. We get to the hotel and I introduce her to dad but he does not seem too pleased

"So what do you do for a living?"

Dad asks keeping a straight face

"I'm a systems analyst at my Fathers company"

She says nervously. I don't blame her, the guy scares me too

"What does a systems analyst do?"

He asks leaning in

"I analyze systems and make sure that they meet

all the requirements set by the people who asked our company to create the system for them without any glitches or whatsoever"

She says and then drinks water, a waiter comes to our table and takes our orders then leaves

"Sounds interesting. And your parents?"

He asks

"My mother was recently appointed as a judge and my father owns a couple of companies around the world, accounting firms to programming firms"

She says

"I think that's enough now father, we have had a hectic morning as it is. This morning I popped the question"

I say brushing Sino's hand

"Oh honey that's great, I take it she said yes?"

Sino nods with a smile. My poor baby is nervous AF she's even shaking.

"So who did you get on the wrong side of?"

My father asks, I sigh

"Sino's father was not psyched that I got his daughter pregnant"

I say with a shrug

"Who did you say your parents were again?"

He asks turning to Sino

"Lwando and Ayola Mbaná"

She says

"Sniper is your father? Wow!"

He says sounding impressed

"Sniper?"

Sino asks confused

"It's a nickname people used to call him"

Dad says

"Wow son"

He says patting my back. I don't know how to feel about that really, it sounds as though it's accompanied by something.

My father is the chief and he's also into a few illegal activities. A man like him has enemies everywhere, which is also one of the reasons I don't use his surname amongst other reasons. The man has all kinds of money but I guess greed got the best of him hence the illegal things. I found out because he once tried to recruit me but I couldn't throw away my life and freedom like that. I love my job, I enjoy working with those kids at the hospital. I'm a child psychologist.

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SINO

I had to act surprised, the less this man knows the better. His family is better of not knowing about Sniper. Lunga thinks I don't know his father is a chief, why would I date someone I didn't do a background check on with a father like mine you bound to be paranoid.

His father and mine once worked on a project together back in the days, I saw it on dads hidden files. Yah I snoop. It's a thing.

After the dinner I ask him to drive me home (my parents house)

"I thought you were sleeping at my place"

He says disappointed

"That was before my father attacked you and before we found out I'm pregnant"

I say brushing his hand

"Oh"

He say sounding really hurt

"Babe I need to talk to my parents and try to make them see reason"

I say as he parks outside the yard

"I hope you not having second thoughts"

He says

"Not at all babe"

I say kissing his cheek

"Ok. I love you Sinokuhle Mbana"

He says and I smile pulling his face to mine to kiss.

I break it when it starts getting heated, he clears his throat

"I'll call you later Ok?"

He says and I just nod getting off. The guard opens the gate for me and I walk in greeting him. I knock and Saney opens, she hugs me in excitement

"I heard I'm going to be an aunt"

She says squeezing me, I chuckle unable to breathe

"Yes now can I please breathe"

I say struggling out of her arms

"Can I name her... Or him, it doesn't matter really"

She says still excited

"San.."

Dad stops at the sight of me

"Sino hi"

He says

"Hey dad, how are you?"

"I'm Ok, how are you?"

I just nod

"Good too"

I say

"You guys need to stop being weird and just talk it out"

We look at each other and laugh. My father and I will always be good friends no matter what happens. He loves me as much as I love him and I think we tend to disagree the way we do is because we so much alike.

"Shut up! Sino let's talk in my study"

He says walking out

"Here comes trouble"

Saney says as I head out. I bump into mom and we walk to dad's study together

"So you pregnant"

That's the first thing he says the minute we sit down. I don't know whether to answer or nod
"Yes dad I am"

I say looking down

"Can't say I'm happy about it. It's only been a year"
He scolds

"If I recall, we hadn't even been together for as long as 6 months when you got me pregnant babe. Sino is grown, she's engaged and has her own things already. I'm not saying she went about things the right way but we are the last people to freak out and say whatever"

Mom defends

"Kitten what happened in our day happened. You too chilled"

He says but mom cuts him off

"And you are too uptight. We didn't make our mistakes for our kids, we made them so they would learn from them. Sino we are here for you when you need us Ok? Your father is just scared, he feels like he's losing his daughter to another man. A stranger even. It's normal"

Mom says brushing dad's hand

"I guess you right"

CHAPTER 28

I'm in my room when mom knocks and walks in after my response, she's carrying a bowl

"Movie?"

She asks with that smile of hers, who am I to refuse? I nod like a little kid

"Yes!"

She gets on the bed under the covers with me, she has popcorn and a packet of sweets

"How are you with everything?"

She asks. I lean on her shoulder

"I don't know how to feel, it's all too overwhelming and happening at once. I'm not having doubts about marrying Lunga but the pregnancy I'm just not ready for"

She breathes out

"Look, the baby is here now and there's nothing we can do about it except to take it easy for the next couple of months and just enjoy the ride. Sino you are my miracle. Before you I was diagnosed with womb cancer but here I am today with 3 beautiful babies and the worlds best husband.. Though sometimes I wish I could kill him"

We both laugh at that

"My parents were absent in my life, I was practically

raised by matrons and housekeepers, I guess that's why I'm this chilled. I didn't want you guys to grow up the way I did, it wasn't nice. With my father as strict as he was... My GOD I feared that man you would have sworn he wasn't my father, I prayed to never be the kind of parent that my kids feared."

She says kissing my head

"I love you guys and maybe my parenting style is unusual but I have no regrets because you all know where my door is when you need a friend."

She says, I wipe the little tear that managed to escape

"There's nothing wrong with your parenting. As much as we not scared of you but we do respect you and that's all that matters and you right, if you weren't this chilled we wouldn't be able to come to you about anything. So thank you mom for everything."

I say pulling her into a hug which she returns. We break it and sit as we were before

"Are you sure about Lunga? Your father told me that he was too clean for his liking"

She asks, I sigh

"Yes I'm sure mom, he's father is an old friend of dad's"

I say

"Who is his father?"

She asks with shock in her tone

"A chief in Limpopo, Mr Mulalo Alfred Vhango"

I say, she thinks for a while

"You sure he worked with your father?"

I nod

"I saw his file in dad's computer a while back"

I say, she nods

"Oh. Does your father know? The last thing we need is a repeat of three years ago"

She says

"I don't think he does. Lunga doesn't even know that I know his father is a chief"

I say

"Why would he hide such detail about him from you? I don't understand"

She says sounding confused

"I don't know, maybe he's not ready to let me in on that part of his life"

I say with a shrug

"Yah but Sino he can't be hiding such if he wants to make you his wife."

She half scolds

"Yah but I'm keeping dad's criminal activities a secret"

"That's different and you know it, if those details about your father landed on the wrong ears hell would break loose, people would die Sino! Marry your guy but don't marry off your family's secrets to him"

Mom says, all I do is nod

"If he can hide such about himself, makes you wonder what else he's hiding"

She says and then turns her attention back to the movie.

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BANTU

Things between Ontla and I were never going to work out, we got too carried away and now things are over. The person I love is in Cape Town happy with another man if only I hadn't left.

Ontla reunited with her ex and picked up where they left off as for me, I'm just focused on my baby girl Lerato Isipho Mtwā.

My phone rings and you won't believe who is calling me. Theee Lwando Sniper Mbana! I decide to answer because despite what happened I wouldn't be where I am today if it weren't for him.

"Mr Mbana, this is a surprise"

He only ever calls the office

"Mtwā how are you?"

He says with so much power in his voice it's scary

"I'm good sir and how are you?"

I say

"Good!"

He says and then there's silence. I don't know what else to say

"If you don't mind me asking, what's this about?"

I finally break the silence that was beginning to be awkward

"I'm flying to Bloem in an hour or so, let's meet up for coffee"

He says, I'm as shocked as you are!

"Uuhm Ok sir"

I say still in disbelief

"Good. Bye"

He says dropping the call. I wonder what's going on! It's on a Monday morning and I'm driving to work bumping to Sino's kind of music. I'll never stop loving her.

Her father calls me on his way to the company informing that he landed and we will have coffee in my office. I continue doing my work until there's a knock on the door

"Come in"

I say with my eyes on my computer screen

"Mtwā"

Says that scary voice making it's way towards my desk

"Mr Mbana"

I say getting up off my chair meeting him halfway.

"How are you?"

I ask shaking his hand, his grip is as scary as his voice

"I'm well. How are you?"

He asks as we sit down on the couch

"I'm good thank you. To what do I owe this visit?"

Shoot me for asking but he and I are not friends

"Sino got engaged yesterday and she also found out she's 4 months pregnant this bastard's child"

He says, I take it he doesn't like him else he wouldn't call him such

"I guess congratulations are in order"

I say sarcastically. Sino can't marry him!

"I don't trust the guy, nobody can be that clean! It's impossible"

He says

"Maybe it is"

"If you love my daughter, you will find a way to win her back"

He says, i chuckle

"Doesn't this feel like deja vu? We were in your office, you told me that if I really loved your daughter then I'd pack up and leave?"

I remind him, I'm not his puppet

"I now realize my mistake. Had you stayed my daughter would have died! You have a daughter, try and understand where I'm coming from"

He says, I think for a second and he's right. I would have probably done the same but not how he went about it

"Look, I am sorry for the way I went about the situation. It was wrong of me. Please forgive me"

He says with so much difficulty. He sounds like a person who is not used to apologising
"I forgave you ages back but I can't always be your puppet, if Sino wants me back in her life she'll say so"

I say, he nods

"Ok. Thank you for meeting me. Listen I'm transferable you to the Eastern Cape to head up a division in my company. You have a month to decide on whether or not you'll take it"

He says getting up

CHAPTER 29

3 YEARS AGO

LWANDO

Sino went ahead and married her, I let her be because at least if he believes I've accepted him then he will let his guard down and that's exactly what I need, him to let it down. Their baby was born premature, 8 months but she is healthy now and the best thing to ever happen to our family. I love her!

She turns 3 this coming October, her name is Siphwokuhle Mhlabikazi Langa. A real beauty, shy but once she gets to know you you'll wish she never did. Sino's done a great job raising her. I'm not the best father there is but I always have my family's best interest at heart no matter what I do. I love them and would do anything for them just as long as I know they are safe and well taken care of.

I've tried to bribe people and gotten people admitted into the hospital Lunga claims he worked in but with failure. He seems to have been the best psychologist they had hence the promotion. He has went through great lengths to hide who he is to anyone, all I need is a slip up from him. One slip up

and I'm in.

After 3 whole years digging today I managed to track down an ex of his, they were together for 3 years, she's based in PE, she and I are meeting up for lunch. Ayola has her hands full with case after case that she has no time to find out what I'm busy with.

"Mr Mbana?"

Says a cute decent voice in front of me. I look up from my phone and nod

"Yes, Miss Young?"

She nods

"Please sit"

She pulls out a chair and settles in

"Do you want to order anything maybe?"

I ask flipping through the menu

"A drink will do thank you"

I hail up a waiter to take our orders, she leaves and again I'm left with Mikayla Miliswa Young. She's coloured.

"You said you wanted to talk about Khumbulani?"

She says, I nod

"Yes actually I do. My daughter married him 3 years back and they happily married but I can't seem to shake off his perfection"

I say, she chuckles looking at me

"Lunga Khumbulani has always been one to fool people. Your daughter is not safe"

She says, I frown

"How so?"

"Mr Mbana, I dated the man for 3 years and ended up in a psych ward for 3 whole years. Your daughter needs to leave before she finds herself in a situation she won't be able to get out of"

Our drinks are placed in front of us then the waiter leaves.

"Why were you admitted?"

I ask after taking a sip of my drink

"For drug addiction, mental disturbance... All things that I am not and never been. I found out things about him he wanted to keep hidden, I tried to report him at the hospital but the proof I had disappeared and I was a drug addict making shiit up."

She says angrily

"What did you find out about him?"

Curiosity gets the best of me

"Khumbulani seeks pleasure from kids!"

She says and I'm shook!

"You mean he's a pedophile?"

I ask still in shock, she nods

"I should have seen it coming. The signs were there, this one time he was at work and my laptop had gone for fixing. I found his hidden in his home office, the minute it opened what I saw on the screen was disgusting! He had been watching a

video of a child forced to strip and pleasure herself on camera"

I look at her unable to contain my shock

"I minimised the video and found that there was a whole folder. Some of the videos contained men raping kids and just a whole lot more I couldn't stomach. I confronted him and he calmly told me it was research he was working on. I believed him. I mean he works with damaged kids after all"

We are disturbed by a waiter placing food in front of us, we thank them and they leave

"You know when you feel like something is off with your partner?"

I nod

"There was a change in behavior after finding those videos but I was blinded by love and the gifts and money that I didn't see what was going on right under my nose. My sister was 9, he suggested that we have her checked out by him because kids her age weren't supposed to be a certain way or something. We believed him and had her checked out. When my sister came back she was more shy than before, withdrawn and just not herself. We tried getting her to at least talk to Khumbulani and they talked. The more they "talked" the more she changed."

She wipes a tear at the corner of her eye

"A few days later I walked in on her wrists slit with a

note saying "he's not who he says he is". I confronted him about it and he blamed my confrontation on grief. I still didn't leave him. I loved him. One day he was working late, I decided to go surprise him but instead I got a surprise of my own. I walked past a room of one of the kids that were rape victims and saw him. He was sitting on a chair watching her strip naked. She had bruises on her body, she was crying. She was only 13 an.."

She hitches. I hand her a tissue

"I'm sorry"

She says

"It's Ok. I understand your pain"

I say brushing her hand

"He saw me and pulled his pants up calmly and followed after me. I opened my car door but he closed it. Told me if I told anyone about what I saw then he would come after me and he did. I lost everything!"

She says through her gritted teeth

"Your daughter is not safe. That man is the devil himself!"

She says, all I do is nod

"If I told my daughter all of this myself she would never believe me"

I say, the thought of my baby girl ending up like this pains me. He and Saney are too close for comfort, makes me wonder if he hasn't done anything to her.

"I can contact her if you like. Warn her about him"

She offers

"As long as you don't mention my name"

I get on a flight back to Cape Town. It's already late and my wife is back from work.

Saney lives with us and her brother works in the same city but owns a flat in town. I walk in our room and Ayola is taking her clothes off. I walk up to her and wrap my arms around her from behind

"Kitten"

I say kissing her neck

"If you going to cheat, at least respect me enough to change clothes before you come home"

She says removing my hands walking to the shower naked. I follow her inside

"What?"

I ask

"She's pretty, young enough to be your daughter"

She says opening the tap. Everything is in my pockets. Phone and wallet.

"Majola!"

I yell taking my suit off my suit outside the shower

"Yell at your side dish and not me"

She says calmly as the water runs down her naked body. When I'm done taking my clothes off I join her

"I don't know what you talking about"

I say touching her shoulders

"Mikayla Young. She's pretty"

She says with envy. I chuckle, wow! I pin her against the wall and hold her hands above her head

"Lwando mahn!"

She argues

"I've had a long ass day and all I want to do is be buried deep inside of you"

I say while kissing her neck

"Go he buried inside of Mikayla"

She says trying to fight me off. My hand is rubbing her kitten, I know her buttons all too well

"I'm going to let your hands go, don't fight me on this kitten"

I say looking deep into her eyes while inserting a finger, she flinches

"Are we clear Majola?"

I ask fingering her, she nods. I know her, she's enjoying this but as soon as I let her hands free she will slap me

"Talk to me kitten"

I say breathing down on her with my thumb going in circles on her clit

"Yes Lwando"

She says with difficulty. I let her hands free and she slaps me. I chuckle going down on her, I put her leg over my shoulder and start eating her up

CHAPTER 30

Mihlalikazi is by far the best thing that's ever happened to me. My baby is sweet and lovely. Lunga Khumbulani Langa is an amazing person, life with him has been nothing but an amazing joy ride. I love him so much and his love for me doesn't come close to anything I've seen before. He's heaven sent, he's always there. It doesn't matter the time, place or weather he is just there.

Lunga is the best father I could ever ask for, he and Mihlali are so tight even I get jealous of their relationship at times. It's during the week and lunga is on his way to see me for lunch, work has me by the balls!

There's a knock on my door

"Come in"

I say with my eyes fixed on the screen

"Sinokuhle"

I look up and it's my father, either I'm in trouble or he has something important to tell me

"Daddy hi"

I say getting up but he gestures for me to sit

"How are you Sino?"

He asks sitting opposite me

"I'm Ok daddy thank you and how are you?"

He nods

"I'm Ok. Sino you know i love you right? You know the lengths I would go through to protect you even if it means you hating me"

He says and I'm confused what to make of this.

Why is he getting all emo on me?

"Dad is everything OK?"

I ask

"Your husband is a pedophile"

I laugh

"Nice one dad"

I say still laughing

"Sinokuhle I am serious! He is a sick monster who preys on young innocent children for his satisfaction"

I chuckle in disbelief

"All Lunga has ever done is love me, treat me right, be the best he can ever be. Yeah sure he's not perfect but he is not a pedophile. He is a child psychologist dad! He loves kids. I don't even know why I bother with you"

"Sino listen to me dammit!"

He shouts startling me

"No dad! I thought you'd come around but clearly I was wrong. I was an idiot! Please just leave"

I say getting up walking to the door

"Seemingly this guy has got you wrapped around his finger"

He takes out his phone and takes a pen from my desk

"Call her!"

He says and then walks to me by the door

"I love you"

He says kissing my cheek and walking out as

Lunga walks in

"Mr Mbaná"

He greets with his hand held out, dad gives him his killer look. I close the door

"Hey baby"

He says planting a kiss on my lips

"Hi babe"

I say

"Everything Ok? You seem a little pissed"

He says pulling me to the couch

"It's my father. The lengths he would go to... Do you know he just accused you of being a pedophile?"

I say with a sarcastic chuckle

"Why would he accuse me of such a thing?"

He asks me confused and shook, I shrug

"I don't know. He's crazy. He'll say anything to make me leave you"

I say rolling my eyes

"Wow. I knew he didn't like me, but to make up such things about me? That is... That's just cruel"

He says looking hurt. I get on top of him and cup his face

"I'm sorry my father is like this, I don't know why he would make up such lies about you but, i don't believe him because I know that you would never be that person. You save those kids, you're an amazing man and an amazing father to our daughter"

I say planting a kiss on his lips

"Thank you Rhadie"

He says pulling me in for a kiss. I feel bad for even telling him, dad needs to stop meddling in my business!

"Let's eat"

I say

"I'm not hungry anymore"

He says with a sigh

"Come on baby do it for me"

I say grinding on him and kissing him

"Ha.a Sino, you at work"

Says the person whom we screw in his office all the time

"That's not what your dick is telling me right now"

I say taking his belt off while kissing him, the rest is history. I go to my bathroom to freshen up leaving him getting dressed in the office. When I walk in he's fully dressed and pressing his phone

"So what's up?"

I ask

"Nothing, catching up on sport. Come let's eat"

He says with his hand held out for me, I join him and we eat in peace.

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LUNGA

Mr Mbana has gone too far, he needs to be stopped! What must I do to prove to him that I love Sino?

I took down Mikayla's number while Sino was in the rest room, she and I need to talk.

I have a friend of mine track her down and turns out she's here in the Western Cape. I find her in Bellville sitting in Spur alone drinking milkshake.

"Mikayla"

I say settling opposite her. She looks up and freezes, she tries getting up but I hold her hand "Don't cause a scene"

I say to her, she sit's down

Mikayla and I met first year university, she was doing Marketing while I did my course. Love lived there until her sister died. I loved Mikayla but there was something special about her little sister.

There's something about kids that just turns me on. Their cute smiles, those legs, how smooth their skin is, those angelic voices... Just everything about them. Mikayla looks really young, she looks 20 though she's past that and Sino? Her face, she has a baby face. She looks 16 and her height doesn't

help. She's perfect. I love her a lot.

"I'll talk and you will listen"

I say and she rolls her eyes, I slide closer to her

"Mikayla leave the Western Cape before you start losing people you love"

I say calmly

"You don't scare me"

She says. I take out my phone and go to videos and open a video of her son playing in her parents yard

"Let's try this again, leave! Tell Lwando you a bitter ex of mine who will say anything to taint my reputation"

I say then kiss her cheek

"You still adorable"

I say placing R100 on the table and sliding out of the booth

CHAPTER 31

LWANDO

I've been trying to reach Mikayla to no luck, she and I were supposed to meet in Bellville, my wife barely ever goes that side anyway. I told Ayola everything Mikalya had told me, I was recording our conversation but Ayola and her daughter are both as hard headed. Ayola believes I got someone to act out the conversation to try and convince her otherwise about her precious son in law.

I call Mikayla again and this time around she actually answers

"Where the fuck are you?"

I ask agitated and pissed to the core

"I'm at the hotel packing?"

She says

"What do you mean you packing? You haven't met up with my daughter yet"

I say gritting my teeth.

"Mr Mbana thank you for the trip and eve..."

I chuckle cutting her off

"Listen to me, whatever that boy said to you.

Whatever his threat was, it's nothing compared to what I would do so I suggest you meet my daughter and then do as you please"

I say dropping the call. This Mikayla chick clearly doesn't know who she's dealing with and Lunga is playing a dangerous game, one he won't win! How the hell did he even know she was in town? Unless he took her number down from Sino's desk.

DAMMIT.

I call Sino who answers after a long time

"Sinokuhle have you called the number I left on your desk"

I ask as soon as she picks up the call

"Hello to you too Mr Mbana, if this call is not business related then I have a meeting I need to get to"

She says, I chuckle. Sino doesn't know me as well as she thinks she does

"Sinokuhle I suggest you call the number I left on your desk"

I say

"Why dad huh? Why? So that whoever Mikayla is can try and convince me that my husband is wrong for me and that he's a pedophile and whatever crap you seem to believe about my husband"

She says, I chuckle in disbelief, in anger. I love my daughter but this stubbornness will get her killed!

"Call Mikayla"

I say and then hang up sending her the conversation between Mikayla and I. I drive to Cape Town and buy my wife lunch then drive to her

workplace. I find her in the office sitting with one of the Adams' twin. I never liked them, growing up Ayola had a crush on one of them, Ahlume Adams but the one she is sitting with now is Ahlumile Adams. He and her grew closer together when Ayola learnt she was pregnant

"Hey baby"

She says as I walk in without knocking

"Lwando"

He says

"Ahlumile"

I also say sternly.

"I didn't know you were busy"

I say

"if you'd called instead of rocking up babe, you would know"

She says faking a smile

"Maybe I should leave"

He says getting up

"Yeah maybe you should. If you here, who's bringing your wife lunch huh?"

I ask taking my blazer off. Please understand that where my wife is concerned I am territorial to the core. No guy can look at her, no guy can smile at her, just keep it to yourself and we wont have any kind of trouble.

"Ayola I will see you around ok"

He says pulling her in for a hug and a kiss on the

forehead. I chuckle, this guy is testing me I swear!

“Bye Ahlumile and thank you for the visit”

She says walking him out. She comes back and turns to me

“You welcome”

I say settling down where Ahlumile was sitting

“Your jealousy is not flattering”

She says throwing herself on the couch

“no wife of mine is going to sit in a closed office and flirt with her ex crush!”

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SINOKUHLE

I listen to the audio dad sent me on whatsapp. It's ridiculous, Lunga is not capable of everything this girl is saying in this audio clip. I take her number and call her, she answers after a while. Lunga once mentioned a Mikayla to me and he told me that she was later on found to be mentally unstable. He tried to help her the best way he knew how to but with no luck. She was just sick. Says she is a psychopath who makes up stories in her head and actually believes them. To satisfy my father I will meet with this woman.

“Hello”

She says with a very sweet low voice

“Hi you are speaking to Sinokuhle Mbana Lunga, I am the daughter of Lwando Mbana, he left me your

number”

I say, she clears her throat

“You married to Khumbulani Langa”

She asks

“Yes I am, can we meet? If you not busy or if you around in Western Cape”

I say, she goes silent

“Mikayla are you still there”

I ask

“Yes I’m still here. Yes we can meet, where do you work?”

She asks, I tell her my work place address and office floor and who to ask for in the reception

“Thank you, see you in a bit”

She says. I drop the call and head to my meeting. When I come out of the meeting she’s well shaped with nice hair hanging loosely on her shoulders, it’s copper red. She’s looking at the picture of my family and I that sit’s on my desk

“Mikayla”

She turns around

“I’m sorry for prying. Yes, Sinokuhle?”

She says walking towards me

“yes I am. Thank you for meeting me”

I say gesturing for her to sit on the couch

“Can I get you anything to eat or drink?”

I ask and she shakes her head no

“No thank you. Why am I here?”

She asks, I cannot get over how beautiful she is, she's cute. She looks 21 or something, talk about good genes. I take out my phone and play her the audio from my dad, she listens for a while and then asks me to stop it

"Mrs Langa that is me but I only said what I said because your father asked me too. Yes my little sister died but it wasn't Lunga, she was struggling with depression and Lunga did his best to try and help her but his best just wasn't enough to help her. I am sorry for all of this. Your husband is a good man, I messed things up between us while we were dating and I will forever live to regret the stuff I said on that clip. Khumbulani is a nothing but a loving guy and I'm just a bitter ex"

She says with a chuckle, I'm relieved. Now I need to talk to my father, how devious can one man be?

We talk for a while and I show her my daughter's pictures while she shows me her son's pictures.

When we done it's time for me to leave, we head to the parking together and my husband is waiting outside the car for me with our daughter inside. I smile and his smile turns upside down

"I should go"

She says

"Oh come on, a simple hello wont hurt"

I say pulling her, she's reluctant but she comes anyway.

“Babe look who’s in town”

“Mikayla what are you doing here?”

He asks sternly

“Babe come on don’t be rude”

I say brushing his upper arm

“I cant play nice and smile to the person who almost made me lose my licence Sino. I’ll be in the car when you ready to leave”

He says angrily.

“Mika...”

“No it’s ok Sino, I don’t blame him for his behaviour towards me. It was nice meeting you”

She says and then walks away. I get in the car and he’s looking straight ahead

“Babe”

I say but he doesn’t answer me

“Baby I’m sorry. I just met with her to get dad off your case and dad was wrong about you”

I say touching his hand

“so you needed my ex in order to confirm the kind of person I am? Wow Sino”

He says starting the car

“I thought you knew me, I don’t know anymore”

He says, now I feel bad

CHAPTER 32

LUNGA

I don't know what game Mr Mbana is playing at but he must know that he won't win. Sino loves me and I have her right where I want her. Glad to know that my threat to Mikayla went through to her, now she knows not to mess with me.

I continued being mad at her until we get home, I take my daughter inside with her following behind me, I put Mihilali on the couch

“Babe”

She says with her voice so low it breaks my heart, I look just look at her and not respond

“Mbutho please say something”

She pleads

“Something like what? That this marriage is not what I thought it was? That you don't trust me? That you would believe everyone else but me? I

thought you loved me Sinokuhle but clearly I was wrong”

I say

“Baby it’s nothing like that. Listen”

She says cupping my face making me look at her

“I am sorry. I messed up, I know. I’m sorry for going behind your back and meeting your ex, I’m sorry my father has been doing things to break us up from day one. If it makes you feel better I will quit my job and stay home and just. Baby I’m sorry”

She says pleading

“No you don’t have to quit your job but sort your father out. Your father cant always be the base of our arguments every damn time Sinokuhle. Your father needs to learn to mind his own business. He needs to stop digging things about my past. And you, you need to learn to trust me and if you want to know anything about me just simply ask me and not go digging things about me”

I say then get up and walk out. I take my clothes off and walk inside the shower. She joins me and hugs me from behind kissing my back

“I’m sorry”

She says with every kiss

“I’m really sorry”

She says turning me around, she stands on her tip toes and kisses my lips then goes down kissing me from my chest all the way down to my torso then goes on her knees and starts giving me head. My wife knows how to give head! She goes at it until I cum then comes back up and kisses me still pleading. She wraps her arms around my neck kissing my lips, I wrap her right leg around my waist and insert my shaft inside of her without warning, I’m assuming Mihlali is sleeping or she’s with the nanny. We fuck until we both release then we take it to the room and go at it some more. By the time we done we breathing heavy and can barely do anything. We sleep, I wake up when I feel Mihlali

playing with my face with her tiny hands. Mihlali looks like her mother, my beautiful wife. Only thing she took from me are the ears and nose.

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LWANDO

Seeing that Lunga is amazingly good at hiding who he is to my daughter and wife, I need to find a way. I need to be 10 steps ahead of him. I send him a location to meet up in, it's a restaurant, nothing fancy about it.

He walks in and immediately spot's me. He sit's down opposite me, it's in the morning, the restaurant opened 30 minutes ago.

"Mr Mbana"

He greets

"Call me Lwando, you've earned it"

I say calmly

"I don't understand sir"

He says looking lost

"The way you play is unique, nothing like what I'm used to. You were able to fool my daughter and wife, so please. Call me Lwando"

I say with my hand held out. He looks at my hand and then up at my face

"Mr Mbana, I'm confused"

He says with a confused face, I chuckle sarcastically

"You had me fooled i'll admit. I mean the fancy English, suit and tie, how you carry yourself.. Everything. At some point I even believed you were perfect for my daughter. Heck you were perfect for me too even. But this is the thing. Nobody is perfect Lunga, not in this planet. So I started digging, I thought maybe you'd be part of your father's branch or something but nope. Nothing. Then I thought maybe you really are clean. I mean someone like you. Someone of your status, calibre, nature

couldn't possibly be a pedophile. I mean I would have never guessed it"

I say drinking my coffee in between as he listens attentively

"I didn't think it possible until I hired someone at your work to keep a close eye on you and how the kids reacted towards you and there it was. Some of them were afraid of you and some worshipped you"

I breathe out calmly

"Something had to be up. I'm one of the worlds most dangerous people but even I'm not squeaky clean like that. You seem like you like my daughter"

He cuts me off

"I love Sino. She's my life"

I chuckle

"And just as you say that. You understand where I'm coming from. You understand that I will go to hell and beyond to protect her even if it means killing you right here and right now"

This whole time I'm calm AF! What annoys me is how chilled he is

"But I'm not going to kill you"

I pause just got dramatic effect

"Just yet. I'm not going to kill you yet. I'm here to give you an ultimatum. Leave. Leave Cape Town and go be a chief as the rightful heir or I kill you"

He chuckles

"You kill me then you risk Sino hating you. Mr Mbana if you may"

He says getting up and walking out. I chuckle to myself. Ndiyalingwa!(I'm being tested)

I call the waitress and settle the bill then take my things and leave. I head out to work, on my way I get a call from Sino

"Marhadebe"

I say calmly

"Dad you taking this too far!"

She says angrily

"Keep doing this and I swear to you I'm leaving! I'll job hunt and we both know I'll get the job!"

She says and I chuckle

"Dad this is not funny! I will leave!"

She says, she's literally breathing fire reminding me of my wife when she is pissed

"Where will you go baby? We both know I have connections everywhere. Even so, you are the most paid person in this country for your job position, stop making unnecessary threats now"

I say calmly pissing her off even more

"Dad"

She says with a sigh

"All I've ever done was to live my life how you wanted me too, please just this once let me live it for me and me only. Sure you don't like my husband but this obsession needs yo stop. It needs

to end daddy please. We can't go on like this else we will end up losing each other in the process"

She says sounding defeated, I'm defeated too. I love Sino, I think I love her more than the rest since she was my first and since she was partly the reason why my wife is my wife even today. It pains me to hear her speak like this but my fatherly nature refuses me letting my daughter stay with that monster. What about my granddaughter?

"Sino I love you, I really want us to sort this out and be how we used to but with this monster you married to, baby I'm afraid I can't. You my daughter, what kind of father would I be if I didn't try protect you? I'd hate myself if anything ever happened to you or Mihlali"

I say, she breathes out

"Dad I understand but this has to stop"

She cries out. My baby speaks so painfully

"Ok, for your sake"

I say knowing very well that I can't.

"Thank you daddy. I love you"

She says

"I love you too Oku"

I say before we end the call. I get to the office and everything starts spinning, I'm dizzy. I don't know what's going on with me, my head is suddenly painful. I try getting to my office as fast as I can but I fall to the floor.

CHAPTER 33

AYOLA

I get a call from my husband's job telling me that he collapsed and they've called an ambulance to fetch him already, my heart starts pounding. All I'm thinking is the possibility of an episode, it's rare that he has those. Quite frankly with growth it's like the bipolar is slowly fading(I doubt that makes any sense but it does to me). I pack up my necessities and leave

"Mrs Mbaná there's.. "

My assistant says walking in as I'm walking out of my office to which I quickly dismiss her

"My husband is on his way to the hospital. Cancel all my meetings"

I say

"Ma'am Mr Bess requested..."

I cut her off again

"Did you miss the part where I told you my husband is being taken to the hospital? Cancel all my

meetings, Mr Bess can get the report some other time"

I say leaving her with her mouth hanging loose. I lose all senses when it comes to my family. I call Sino, at least she can take this more than the others

"Mommy"

She says answering her phone

"Baby your father is being rushed to the hospital, meet me there"

I say speaking really fast and starting my car. It then hit's me. What if it's serious? What if I lose him? I can't afford to lose Lwando Mbanu. I would die! I don't mean that figuratively, he is literally my ride or die. Without him I'd be nothing.

"Mom what do you mean?"

She asks panicking, I know things between them haven't been good but they love each other and would kill for each other despite their fights and disagreements

"Baby calm down. Just meet me at the hospital"

I say ending the call, tears run down my cheeks. I wipe them away and drive through traffic til I get to the hospital. I see them rushing him in, I follow behind them but now I am not allowed beyond a certain point. His doctor assured me he will be fine. I sit on those cold benches and wait. Sino walks in, we meet halfway and share a hug

"Mom what happened to him?"

She asks, even I can't answer that question. Lwando never gets sick, apart from his mental illness but either than that he's as strong as an ox. He takes care of his body.

"I don't know baby"

I say, my phone rings, it's Saney

"You have to answer her or she'll get suspicious"

Sino says, I answer her trying to sound live

"Hey baby"

I mentally slap myself. I never call her that, it's always Saney or Lala

"Hey mom, is everything ok?"

She asks sounding concerned

"Yes lala, what's up?"

I say

"Dad's not answering my calls any idea where he might be?"

She says, I look at Sino who just shrugs. I sigh

"Baby your father is in hospital. I don't know what happened to him and none of the doctors have said anything as yet"

I say then sigh. I wait for her to say something but nope, she's quiet

"Saney?"

I say

"Uhhm yes mom I'm still here. Which hospital?"

She asks sounding too calm

"Baby go to your class. I've got this, Sino is here with me"

I say hoping to dismiss her

"Yola he's more important than some class. I'll call Thando to come fetch me"

She says then drops the call on me. My daughter is truly something else.

"She just dropped the call on me"

I say turning to Sino who chuckles

"That's Saney for you"

She says and just then his friend appears

"Tell me he's Ok"

I say, she sighs

"He's Ok. He's great actually, we don't know what could have caused him to collapse. What I don't understand is how one minute his heart is faint and the next it's beating normally"

She says with so much confusion

"Where is he? I want to see him"

I demand

"I uhmm... Please follow me"

She says leading the way. We get to his room and he is chilling on the bed like nothing happened

"Baby"

I say running to his arms

"Majola"

He says squeezing me tight

"Don't you ever scare me like that"

I scold still in his arms

"I wouldn't dream if it"

He says kissing my neck. I break the hug up and he gives me a smirk

"Oku"

He says

"Daddy I'm so sorry"

She says with teary eyes

"Baby it's OK. Come here"

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SINO

Dad scared us. It's painful seeing him on that bed and I can't help but blame myself for what happened to him.

I walk over to him and hug him. We make up and then my siblings walk in, I texted them the room number. Dad seems fine for a while and then suddenly he's acting weird almost as though he's having an episode. One minute he's laughing and the next he's cursing, Saney goes out to call his doctor who asks us kindly to leave the room as nurses come in floods to his room. I'm scared, I can't even remember the last time his bipolar acted up.

"Mom who are you calling"

I ask walking to her

"His doctor"

She says and soon greets the doctor, she walks away from us leaving us dumbfounded

"He's going to be Ok right?"

Thando asks and I shrug

"He's going to be fine. If everything looks normal, like his brain scans and stuff then they won't admit him to the loony bin"

Saney says, I'm scared. Dad doesn't belong there. He does everything to make sure he doesn't end up there

"So what did his doctor say?"

Saney asks, I turn and mom's behind me

"That he's not in town and he won't be for the next 2 weeks but he'll send someone"

Mom says with clear disappointment

"Can't Lunga do something to help him out?"

Thando asks

"I'll call and ask"

I say taking my phone out

"Sino you know how your father feels about him. Let's wait for the doctor first"

Mom says calmly. As if I listen, I text my husband but don't get a response, I then remember he said he had a meeting today at 10.

"Doc?"

My brother says making us all turn

"Well I sedated him. I'll call his psychologist to come have a look at him and we'll take if from there"

She says

"How bad is he?"

Mom asks

"We won't know until we do a brain scan. If it's bad we might have to admit him"

She says and mom clasps her mouth. I brush her back

"His doctor said he would send another doctor he trusts"

I say, the doc sighs

"Ok. When the doctor gets here have them page me Ok"

I nod

"Thank you doc"

With that she leaves

"Saney you should go back to school. Thando you should go back to work. You too Sino, I will call you when or if anything happens to him"

Mom says calmly

"No mom we not leaving you here alone"

Saney argues

"Saney this is not open for discussion!"

Mom says walking into dad's room

"Well the queen has spoken"

Thando says

"You can't possibly tell me you guys are leaving?
This is our father for heavens sake! You guys can
leave if you want"

Saney says standing her ground

"Saney mom has her reasons for sending us away"

I say

"I don't care. I'm not leaving this hospital until I hear
that my father is fine"

She says leaving Thando and I.

We sigh at the same time

"Come"

He says pulling me to a bench

"What's up?"

I ask, he pats the bench. I sit down

"What's going on?"

He asks, I pop my eyes waiting for him to elaborate

"What's going on between you and dad Sino. You stressed, he's been stressed out lately. I saw how you were with him. So talk to me"

He says, I breathe out tucking hair strands behind my ear

"I don't know T, dad believes that Lunga is a pedophile"

I say, his jaw drops to the floor for a second and I nod

"That's extreme. You think he's lying?"

He asks, I nod

"Yes, dad has hated him since day one. He felt like he was too perfect and he still feels like he's too perfect. He never stopped digging until he came back telling me he's a child abuser and he came to me with Lunga's ex who said she made everything up together with dad... I don't know T. I'm just being played here"

He looks at me for a while and then nods

"When have you known dad to make such shiit up?"

I chuckle at his question

"Dad manipulates. That's all he ever does, meddle and manipulate"

He chuckles

"He may manipulate and meddle but his heart is always in the right place. Dad would never go through such lengths to get you to break up with someone. If he wanted Lunga out of our family he would have called up his people and got him a job elsewhere, like he did with Bantubonke. Think about this Sino"

He says patting my knee

"He loves you, maybe more than any of us. Don't overlook this one, he's probably right"

He says and then walks inside dad's room. I don't know how to feel about what Thando said, he has a point but what if he's wrong? Am I ready to go to war with my husband over something that might not even be?

I walk in and he's sleeping, he's so peaceful and handsome. Thando is a replica of him. A Doctor walks in with some guy

"Doc you came"

Says Saney walking to the guy, how does she know him?

"This is my therapist guys. Dr Lewis Bar"

She says turning to us.

"Lewis hi"

Mom says

"Thank you for coming"

Mom says shaking his hand

"Nice to meet you all, can we have the room please"

He says and we all forced to walk out.

We stand outside and just be until Lunga shows up

"Baby I saw your message when I got out of the meeting. How is he?"

He asks pulling me in for a hug

"He'll be fine. Thank you for coming"

I say, he turns to the rest of my family.

We home and I'm worried, scared for my dad.

"Maybe it's a good thing they sending him in the mental institute"

He says and i'm immediately brought back from my thoughts

"Excuse me"

I say

"Babe hear me out, I took a look at his file and he's not mentally stable yet to be out. He could harm your mother or anyone around him"

He says tucking behind my ear

"I'm sorry but this is how it should be until they declare him fit"

He says

"Are you a sick perverted monster who prey's on kids?"

I ask looking down

"Not this again Sino. It's getting old"

He says walking away from me

"You still haven't answered me Khumbulani"

I say

"What do you want me to say Sino huh?"

He asks angrily

"My question remains the same. Are you a pedophile?"

I ask again

CHAPTER 34

He chuckles sarcastically

"I'm not going to answer that. If you want to believe fabricated lies about me then so be it. I can't be with someone who constantly questions the person that I am when all I've ever done is love them and treat them right. If you believing me to be a pedophile makes you sleep at night, then so be it Marhadebe"

He says and walks out.

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6 Months Later

Dad is still in the loony bin and refuses to see any of us, I don't know what to make of it really and mom is just not coping. Dad doesn't even want to see her, imagine. I don't know what's going on with him. I'm so confused and trying to keep the company afloat is a struggle, uncle Aphiwe who is mom's brother recently came to help out with keeping the companies up where they belong. It

hasn't been easy but what choice do we have really?

Lunga and I are good, we talked things out and we good. He got a job offer in PMB, imagine. We argued for a week about it and he ended up not taking it. How can I leave at a time like this?

Mihlali is my little haven, every time I look at her I realise how blessed I am. I think I'm ready for another one. My baby is bubbly and live and just everything. She and her grandma are the best of friends, every weekend and sometimes even longer, she spends with her granny.

It's Friday and I'm driving with Mihlali, I'm taking her to mom's place, my phone rings and it's Thando

"Sino"

He says

"Hi bro, unjani?"

I ask and he suddenly makes unpleasant sounds

"Eish Sino. What are you doing? Can we talk?"

I worry when anyone asks to talk

"Everything Ok?"

I ask worried

"Late lunch?"

He asks

"Let me drop Mihlali at mom's and then I'll be there."

I say

"Ok cool"

He says and like that the call is ended. I get to my parents house, park outside the house and make my way to the door, we knock and let ourselves in

"We both know my husband would never not want to see me! Make a plan that I see him, tomorrow Steve"

Mom says yelling

"Mrs Mbana we doing our best, he just doesn't want to see anyone. Your father has called anyone and everyone but nothing"

He says defeated, we walk in and Mihlali throws herself at her grandmother

"Mom, Steve. How are you?"

I say, Steve is mom's go to guy for things to happen

"Hi Sino, how are you?"

He says

"I'm good thanks and yourself?"

I ask throwing myself on the couch

"I'm good ma'am"

He says

"What's new with dad?"

I ask as he gets up

"He still refuses to see anyone. He only meets with his doctor. I've tried everything possible"

He says

"Clearly not everything if they won't at least give me a minute with him"

Mom says with clear annoyance in her voice

"Ma'a.."

Mom cuts him off

"Go do your job Steve. If I don't see my husband tomorrow, you fired"

She says dismissing him, he looks at me and I shrug. He walks out

"Mom"

I say but she cuts me off

"How are you? How are things with Lunga?"

She asks. I already know she doesn't want to talk

"All is good. I should get going, I'm meeting your son for lunch"

I say getting up

"Ok, have fun. I'll come drop her off Sunday or Monday after school"

She says, I just nod and kiss their foreheads then say my goodbyes.

I call Thando and he tells me where he is, I get there and he's with Saney. I greet them giving each of them a hug

"How's mom?"

Saney asks as I settle on the chair

"She's stressed. Today she was shouting at Steve about this thing of dad not wanting to see anyone.

She even threatened to fire him if she doesn't see dad tomorrow"

I say and Saney gasps in shock

"Come on the guy is trying. Dad is the one who doesn't want visitors mos"

She defends, I shrug

"We all know how our parents are, do you honestly believe our father of all people would refuse to see his wife? Come on, something's not right here"

Thando points out. A waiter brings my drink and leaves

"We will never understand why dad does half the things he does"

I say

"Argh let's talk about something else, like why we here"

Says Saney dismissing the whole topic

"Well I popped the question"

Thando says, we both look at him

"What question?"

Saney asks and I poke her

"You getting married?"

I ask in shock and he nods, I get off my chair to hug him

"I didn't even know you were dating. Is it a girl?"

Saney asks laughing

"Mxm Saney"

We say at the same time while I return to my seat

"So who is it?"

I ask all excited

"Her name is Thabisa. I met her in my final year in varsity and we've been kicking it since. Last night I popped the question and she said yes. She's a chemical analyst. You'll meet her tonight at mom's house"

I say

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LUNGA

I don't know why Mr Mbana won't see his family. I saw his file and he seems normal, if I didn't know him I wouldn't say he's bipolar... That's how stable he is. While the girls are out I take this opportunity to go and see him.

"I'm here for Mr Mbana"

I say to the receptionist showing her my card

"Head down the corridor and take a left. Someone will take you to him"

She says. I do as told, someone takes me to his room. I find him laying on his back doing nothing. I walk in and sit on the chair

"How the mighty have fallen"

I say, he turns to me and looks up again

"Mmmh"

Is all he says

"What? Don't you have anything to say to me? No threats? Nothing?"

I ask and he shakes his head

"Nope, I'm at peace here. I need not worry about you or your lies"

He says calmly, I'm lost for words. Why is he this calm?

"I got a job offer a few months back but I couldn't take it because of your daughter"

I say hoping it gets to him but nothing

"Anyway I'm thinking I take that job, leave with my family and be far from you"

I say

"Congratulations"

He says

"I look forward to the day my daughter sees you for who you truly are"

He says and turns the other way

"You'll see yourself out"

He says, I get up and leave. I don't know what game this guy is playing but it won't end well. Why won't he give me a reaction?

I meet up with one of the workers

"I'm Dr Khumbulani Langa, I need you to keep an eye on Mr Mbana for me. I want to know his visitors, his sleeping pattern... Just everything!"

I say and he nods

"Your name is?"

I ask

"Steve Sir"

He says, I nod and leave

CHAPTER 35

PRESENT - 6 MONTHS AGO

I'm on my way to work when I get a message with a picture of Khumbulani in his office with a child sitting on his lap and his hand under her skirt, the child looks scared. A message follows

"The monster you married. I hope you happy"

It reads. I'm stunned, what am I looking at? I'd try calling the sender but it's private

"Hey baby"

He says hugging me from behind startling me, I lock my phone

"Hey babe"

I say unwrapping his arms around me

"You Ok? You seem a little tense"

He says turning me to look at him

I nod

"I'm fine, I just got disturbing news that's all"

I say moving back from him

"Well, what's these news that got you all worked up?"

I turn and walk to the sink

"Layla lost her father"

I say

"I need to go see her"

I say

"Need me to come with you?"

He asks walking towards me. Lord I'm so disgusted by him I puke in the sink just by smelling his cologne. In my mind I'm trying to play it cool, trying not to give anything away but how do I pretend? Gosh what would dad do? Dad's not even in the country at this moment. I'm legit on my own here.

"Baby, you ok?"

He asks holding my hair back, I nod rinsing my mouth

"Are you sure Sino?"

He asks

"I am fine!"

I snap and pull myself away from him. I walk up to our room

"Sino"

He says walking behind me

"I'll fetch Mihlali today"

I say packing my work things

"Why? I normally fetch her"

I nod

"I know but I'll have a half day today so I figured why not"

I say walking out

"Oh"

Is all he can say. I get inside my car and another message beeps, this time it's a video and it's captioned "I hope this is enough to make you leave him"

I dumbly open the video and it's a video of him and the kid from the picture, he's doing more than just fingering her. I'm so disgusted that I turn my phone off quickly and just drive. I don't know where I'm

driving to but I can't go to work. Not now, not like this. I drive to a place Bantu once took me on the night my father called demanding I come home immediately. I get out of the car and just scream. The sharp pain in my heart won't stop. Dad was right about him. All those years I thought he was making shiit up but he wasn't. Everything he ever said about Lunga was true. My husband finds pleasure in kids. Oh my God Mihlali! The thought of my baby girl going through that breaks my heart into a million pieces. Tears stream down my eyes as I get into my car. I get to Saney's place and they about to Leave. I grab Mihlali and hug her tightly

"Sino what's going on?"

Saney asks as confused as Mihlali

"Mommy stop"

Hlali says giggling. I put her down

"I have to take Hlali to the hospital"

I say taking her bag from Saney

"Why? She's not sick mos"

Saney says with that confused look of hers.

"You've been crying"

She points out.

"Thank you for keeping her, bye sis"

I say walking with my baby to the car. I strap her in and get in my seat then drive off to the hospital. I ask that they examine her and they tell me that she's fine. Never been touched or whatsoever. We get to the car and Saney is standing outside my car, I open the door for Mihlali and strap her in then lock the car

"What's going on Sino?"

She asks. I breaths out

"Dad was right. He was right about Lunga"

I say

"Sis you'll have to be a little more detailed"

She says

"Lunga is a pedophile"

I say and she shakes her head

"Nah, you seeing things. Come on Sino"

She says dismissing me. I open the car, find my phone, switch it on and unlock it then show Saney the messages

"The fuck is this. How? Wh... Sino you have to show this to the police"

She says. I didn't think that far. We get into our cars with her driving behind me, I get to the station while she watches Mhlali in my car then ask to talk to someone who can help me. A big guy looking like a person who is in charge leads me to his office

"Mrs Langa"

He says, I frown. How does he know me

"You married to Lunga, the daughter of Lwando Mbana"

He says and for a second I let my guard down. I'm probably known because of my father

"And you are?"

I ask

"Malwande will do. How can I help you?"

He asks placing his hands on the table

"My husband is a pedophile"

I say

"Those are some wild accusations Ma'am"

He says

"I have a video and a picture as proof. Will that be enough to arrest him?"

I ask unlocking my phone

"Let's see"

I hand him my phone where the message is and he plays the video, apparently it goes on longer than I thought. Saney said it's 20 minutes long

"This is uhhm"

He says handing me my phone

"We will have to copy the video to our system and the picture too then have a warrant of arrest made for him"

He says getting up

"I'll be right back Ok"

He say and walks out

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LWANDO

My wife had to go away on business in the states for a month or so. She doesn't leave the country without me unless I'm busy and her stay is less than a week.

She's at work, I get a call from Bantu

"Long time"

I say answering

"Mr Mbana Hi, how are you?"

He says

"I'm alive and well. How's the Eastern Cape?"

I ask

"Steve got the video we needed, I sent it to Sino anonymously, let's hope she does the right thing"

He says

"You did good. So what does this mean for you? What do you want in return?"

I ask

"I just want Sino and her daughter away from that monster"

He says with so much determination in his voice

"Let's hope she does the right thing. Thank you for your help"

I say

"It's nothing, bye Mr Mbana"

He says then ends the call. I call Steve, he answers after a while

"Steve where we at with my daughter?"

I ask

"She's at the police station sir."

He says

"Talk to our contact and make sure that my daughter is helped. I don't want him in prison when I'm back"

I say

"I'll deliver him personally to you at the warehouse"

He says

"Great. Thanks Steve"

I say

"Not a problem sir"

"Also take care of my children."

I say before dropping the call.

When I was hospitalized, we found out that my pills had been switched with hopes to make me crazy. Doc and I came up with this idea that she fakes my results and I'll handle the rest. Had my family convinced the bipolar is as bad so that they can get my doctor to have me committed into a mental institution and it worked.

Ayola knows me more than anyone and if I'd allowed her to visit me then I wouldn't have succeeded in trying to bring Lunga down. If he believed I was not mentally stable then he was going to let his guard down and he did.

The facility he runs is of high security. Hacking into their system took us 3 months, when they called in people to repair that's when my guys got the opportunity to plant cameras in there and it worked.

I also took the time to build connections because a man like him doesn't give up easily. So that's what I've been busy with

Now I'm just waiting for Sino to call me and ask for my help.

CHAPTER 36

LUNGA

Sino's been acting weird since morning and I don't know why. Last night was awesome that's why I had Mihlali sleep at Saney's place. I drive to work, greet the receptionist and meet Phila on my way to my office

"Mrs Ntonga"

I say

"Mr Langa. How did last night go?"

I smile

"She loved it, we had sex everywhere doable"

She chuckles

"Remind me not to eat on your counter"

We both laugh but I stop

"I don't know but this morning she's been acting weird"

I say as I open my office door

"What do you mean? You just said she loved the surprise"

She says sitting down

"I thought so too, even when we woke up she was fine. I don't know what happened. She lied and said Layla lost her mom or something"

She looks at me

"What makes you think she's lying?"

"Because Layla's mom died years back, 3 years ago to be exact. We attended the funeral together even"

I say and Phila looks at me confused

"Maybe it's something she can't tell you. I'm sure it's not that deep"

She says, I nod

"I hope so"

We sit and just catch up on work, an hour or so I get a call from my good old friend Malwande

"Lwash"

I say

"Lunga we have a problem"

He says sounding serious

"What's up?"

I ask

"Your wife is here"

He says

"My wife? What's she doing there?"

I'm shook, I'm also worried. Why would she go to the police and not inform me?

"She has a video of you and a picture. It's bad, it's enough to have you arrested"

I'm so shocked words can't even describe. Where could she have gotten all this? I've been discreet about my affairs

"Handle it!"

He says and ends the call.

"Is everything OK?"

Phila asks reminding me of her presence

"Yeah, I have to be somewhere"

I say taking my blazer wearing it

"Please lock up Ok"

I say walking out. How am I going to handle this
without having Lwando on my back?

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SINO

I walk out of the station and find Saney talking on
the phone, sounds like she's talking to one of our
parents

"She's here dad"

She says and soon hands me the phone

"Marhadebe"

He says making me smile

"How are you dad?"

I ask with a heavy sigh

"Is everything OK?"

I shake my head as thou he sees me

"Every thing is a mess daddy. You were right about him. I'm so sorry I didn't believe you"

I say speaking really fast

"Saney go to work, Sino come with me"

Says Steve behind me

"Why? What's going on?"

I ask

"Honey what's wrong?"

Dad asks with concern

"It's Steve"

He breathes out with relief

"He's there to take you to safety. Don't fight him"

Dad commands and I nod getting in my car in the passenger

"Give Saney her phone, I'll keep in touch Ok?"

He says ending the call. I give the phone to Steve who takes it to Saney then drives off

"Is there anything you need in your house?"

He asks focused on the road

"I don't know, my second laptop"

I say

"Steve what's going on?"

He sighs

"Your husband is well connected than you think.
The officer you spoke to is his long time friend. He
won't even get arrested"

Steve points out. I'm shook, my hand is clasping my
mouth

"How?"

Just then my phone rings and it's Lunga

"Should I answer him?"

I ask because I really don't know what to do or say
to him

"Answer him"

I take a couple of breathes in and let them out then
answer

"Hey"

"Is that how we answer the phone now? Sino did I
do something to upset you?"

He asks innocently

I clear my throat

"I'm sorry babe, just that a lot has been on my mind this morning"

I say

"I'm coming over to your office with your favorite"

He says

"We'll talk proper when I get there Ok? I love you Sinokuhle Langa"

He says, I'm dumbstruck

"I love you too Sthandwa Sam"

I say then drop the call. We drive into my yard

"You can't go in alone"

Steve says

"He's on his way to my work place"

I say getting out

"You don't know that!"

He points out and takes Mihlali out. We walk to the door, he unlocks my door then walks in first to check the place out.

"You can come in"

He says

"I told you he wasn't home"

I say bored

"The laptop is in my room, stay here with Mihlali"

I say and walk up to our room. It's empty, it's clean. I take a moment to take everything in, where did I go wrong? Why would he abuse kids?

"You lied to me again"

Says a voice behind me

"You always did suck at lying babe"

He says. I'm scared to turn but I turn anyway

"What are you doing here babe?"

He asks walking towards me, I move back

"I need my second laptop"

I say

"Why? You not leaving are you?"

I shake my head no

"Good. Can I kiss my lovely wife?"

He says stepping closer. I've reached the pedestal. He places a hand on the back of my neck and pulls me in for a kiss. I feel a bee sting on my neck and a second or less I'm out.

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LUNGA

I pick up Sino and place her in my car, Malwande drags Steve into his car and cuffs him

"So what now?"

He asks

"Keep him in a cell until I figure shiit out"

I say

"And Sino"

He asks

"I'll handle her. Get me a burner phone. Her father believes she's on the run, the least we could do is make him think they really are"

I say and the strap my sleeping daughter in the car seat in Malwande's car

"Have your nanny keep her for me, I'll fetch her later"

I say. He nods and gets in his car. I drive Sino's car into the garage then drive off to my work place. The only way to admit her is if she's convincing. I drug her with enough pills so that when Phila checks her blood, she'll admit her. Time to fake some tears. I walk in the hospital in tears

"Somebody help me please. It's my wife, I think she overdosed"

I say and a nurse runs to me

"Mr Langa"

She says

"Please get her a bed, I can't lose her"

I say

"You won't sir"

She says confidently. A bed comes and they rush her to the ER

"Lunga what happened?"

I'm startled by Phila touching my shoulder

"I found her in our room with these in her hand"

I say faking distraught

"These are dangerous. Why would Sino try and take her own life?"

CHAPTER 37

LUNGA

Malwande delivers the burner phones, I text Mr Mbana telling him that Sino is Safe. They've left the western cape and that this is how they will be communicating as of now for safety purposes and so that Lunga does not find them. He sends a text saying that he will transfer them money when they get to East London at Sino's great grandmother's house. I walk into the room she's in and they've strapped her hands on the bed as per my request. I kind of said she's a danger to herself so it's best they strap her down

She opens her eyes slowly.

"Water?"

I ask, she takes a little while to adjust to the light and soon her eyes are fully open. I take the time to get her some water.

"Why am I here? Why are my hands strapped to the bed?"

She asks, I help her up and help her drink water

"You here because you overdosed on pills my love"

I say, she looks at me confused

"What do you mean I OD'd? You drugged me! You injected me with some drug"

She points out trying to break free

"If you hadn't tried to leave me then I wouldn't have been forced to do that to you. You Sino I know people, people know me and I cannot afford you spreading such shiit about me"

I say brushing her cheek, she moves away from me

"YOU EVIL! YOU'RE A PEDOPHILE. YOU RAPE CHILDREN FOR YOUR OWN SATISFACTION!"

She says yelling

"Shhhh... Don't be so loud, you don't want them thinking you crazy"

I say brushing her hair back

"NURSE!"

She yells trying to break free, I untie one of the strap on her hand and arm, she slaps me

"Sino please! I'm trying to help you here"

I say innocently but loud enough, she doesn't stop hitting me

"Sthandwa Sam please"

I plead. She's busy cursing and calling me all kinds of names until someone comes in

"Mr Langa please get out, you seem to have upset her"

She says

"She's my wife. I can't stand seeing her like this. Is she going to be Ok?"

I ask with concern so as to not alarm the nurse

"I'm not crazy! My husband drugged me. Why would I try kill myself?"

She says sounding defeated. I hate seeing her like this but it's for her own good. If she had spoken to the wrong person lord knows where I'd be now

"Nurse please just get my wife the help she needs"

I plead walking out. I meet Phila

"I got you coffee"

She says, I sit on the bench outside her room

"When I found her today she had her things packed, Muhlali strapped in the car outside. The gate was wide open. I didn't know what to make of the situation. I mean Sino is the most sane person I know. She was busy saying things, yelling. A friend of mine at the police station called me earlier to go and fetch her. She believes I'm a molester. Everything her father once fed her, she now believes it"

I say in distress burying my face in my hands

"I don't know where I went wrong. I don't know how I failed her"

I say sniffing, Phila puts an arm around me

"I'm sorry my friend, we'll get her the help she needs I promise. I will handle her case personally"

Phila assures me. I smile to myself, at least one person is sold into this story. Now I need to convince Saney, which won't be easy. I still need to figure out how to handle Steve

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SINOKUHLE

When I titled my story '*The Unplanned*', this is what I meant. Lunga came into my life at a time where I thought I was better off without a man, me meeting him was not part of the plan. Despite what happened at the time I somewhat still had hope that Bantu and I would work things out in future but none of that happened instead I fell in love with him with each passing second. He completed me in ways even I couldn't understand. I never knew I needed him until he and I were together and I couldn't survive a night without him. He was perfect. Too perfect that I was blind to everything that was right in front of me.

I never planned to end up in a Looney bin but here I am, a week later from being released from the hospital to here.

“GET ME OUT OF HERE!”

I scream banging on the doors refraining me from leaving.

“PLEASE SOMEBODY JUST LET ME OUT OF HERE”

I scream again but my screams fall on deaf ears.

“I'M NOT CRAZY”

I shout but to no response. I slide down and bury my face in my hands resting on my knees.

“I’m not crazy”

I whisper

“I’m not crazy”

I repeat with my voice failing me and tears rolling down my cheeks

“Why won’t they believe me?”

I ask myself as I cry with my face buried in my tiny hands.

I wake up still on the floor, I’m guessing I must have fallen asleep while crying. I look at my beautiful sparkly ring in my skinny fingers. All this is my husband’s fault, had it not been for him I wouldn’t even be here today. He is the reason I’m even locked up in here. I get up and walk towards the corner that has a camera keeping an eye on me

“I JUST WANT TO TALK TO MY HUSBAND” I shout but to no response I guess

Minutes later the door swings open and the monster I married walks in looking all kinds of handsome but at this very moment he is not even

handsome anymore, he's as ugly as the devil if you know what I mean. This creature that had me convinced he loves me is the reason I lay inside these four walls of a mental institution.

I last saw him at the hospital I was in, where they believed I tried to kill myself. I've been in and out of sleep since then, I can barely remember what day it is now. It's bad. I hate him, I hate myself for not believing my father. Does he even know I'm in here? What about Saney? Oh God my daughter. Is she safe?

CHAPTER 38

"Sthandwa Sam"

He says sitting on the bed next to me. I move back until my back is on the wall

"Sino I will never hurt you"

He says innocently moving closer to me. I'm terrified of him, this guy holds more power than I had imagined

"You know I love you and I want what's best for you

Sthandwa Sam"

He says brushing my foot which I pull back

"Sino you requested to see me"

He says

"I want to see my daughter"

I say looking up at him

"Mihlali can't see her mother like this"

He says

"Look let's work things out first before you can get

out of here Ok?"

He says tucking hair behind my ear

"And drugging me is the way to go about it? Treating me like a mentally disturbed person is the only way to go about this?" I say gritting my teeth angrily. He breathes out "As long as you believe all these lies about me then I can't let you out of here. You see Sino the more you talk, the more you convince everyone that you sick"

He says, I look at him and he's serious. It sucks being in here, I'm losing all hopes. I hate him, I hate myself for believing him over my father "My father was right about you. Mikayla was right. I'm the idiot here, I've been the idiot here from the very start. You had me fooled this whole time" He puts a finger on my lips and chuckles "Watch what you say to me while you in here babe, you don't want them to really believe you crazy. Sino I love you, you and I were fine before all of this. We were good, we were happy, you knew nothing about my life outside our home. Let's go back to that" He pleads or more like tells me. I don't know what's

what anymore

"Look, if you continue like this then you'll never get out of here"

He says

"My parents are looking for me"

He chuckles

"I doubt they are. Your father thinks you made it to the Eastern Cape alive and well. So no, nobody is looking. Speaking of which we need to call him before he gets suspicious"

He says taking out a phone

"If you want to see our daughter again don't say anything stupid Ok?"

I look at him and chuckle in disbelief

"You would really harm your own daughter? Your own blood"

I say gritting my teeth, he chuckles and places a hand on my knee

"Oh Sino. If I was able to do this to my infant of a sister, what's to stop me from doing the same to Mihlali?"

I pop my eyes out at him. I'm shook! What?

"You sick!"

I say angrily and disgusted but mostly fearing for my daughter's life

"I know. Mom thought she died of natural causes"

He chuckles

"Now let's make that phone call"

He says showing me a picture of Mihlali and handing me the phone

"Think about your daughter"

He says as running his fingers on my cheek. The phone rings and within seconds dad answers

"Sino"

He says with so much worry

"Daddy"

I say with a shaky voice, he shows me Mihlali's picture

"How are you? Are you safe?"

He asks with so much concern

"Yes daddy I'm fine, we fine. I just miss you guys so much"

I say, he sighs

"Your mother and I are flying in tomorrow, I'll sort

everything when I'm there"

He says giving me a bit of hope but there's no hope

with me stuck in here

"Where's my baby, I want to say hi to her"

He says, I look at Lunga

"She went out for ice cream with Steve"

I say, Lunga smiles appreciating the lie I just told, I

roll my eyes

"Ok my angel. Talk when I get to SA, I'll fly to EL

soon as I land"

He says, I look at Lunga who gestures I should end

the call

"I'd love that. I should go"

I say

"Ok I love you princess"

He says making me smile

"I love you too daddy. Bye"

I say then drop the call.

"Well played. What else have you been lying to me about?"

He asks, I raise an eyebrow

"You're a good liar"

He says, I think to myself how my father didn't buy that performance. That man knows me and if he's with mom he'll know that it was all an act
"Nothing"

I say
"A nurse will come give you your meds, tomorrow you have a session with Phila"
He says getting up off the bed
"When am I seeing my daughter?"
I ask, he looks at me and blows me a kiss then walks out leaving me shouting for him and screaming his name.

CHAPTER 39

"Phila why are you doing this to me?"

I ask as she sits opposite me

"You sick and you need medical attention"

She says

"Now Mrs Langa, tell me. What brought about these stories?"

She asks while holding her notepad

"These are not stories. My husband... Lunga is a pedophile! He seeks pleasure from these kids that you guys believe to be mentally ill"

I say gritting my teeth angrily

"Mrs Langa"

"Call me Sinokuhle"

I say, she swallows hard before talking

"Sino your husband runs this hospital, watch what you say or you might never leave this place"

She says whispering

"I spoke to your parents and they working on a way

of getting you out of here but you have to work with me"

She pleads, I look at her and she seems genuine. Philasande has worked for this hospital from since it was built. He and Lunga went to varsity together and that's how I know her. We became friends via Lunga.

I nod my head yes
"What makes you believe that Mr Langa is a child molester? I mean you and this man have been married for years now and you have a daughter with him, why now?"

She asks lowering her glasses. I shrug my shoulders

"You yourself doc should know by now that you can never really say you know a person. I mean we all have skeletons that we prefer to keep hidden from everyone... Even our spouses"

I say
"Yes but it still doesn't answer my question. I mean if he really was then you would have seen signs already don't you think?"

She says, I chuckle
"I walked in on your boss having sex with one of
your patients"

I point out

"If that was so, how come this patient you speaking
of denies these accusations? Mrs Langa you are
Bipolar and making up stories in your head is very
common in people with bipolar"

She says

"I'm sorry what? Phila I am not bipolar!"

I yell angrily

"I'm not bipolar!"

"Mrs Langa"

She says calmly. Yes my father has it but I do not!"

I say. If this is her way of helping me then I don't
like it! Of all of my siblings and I, Saney was the
one to end up with the bipolar and it hasn't been
easy for us and her. The reason we even built this
hospital was to help kids with bipolar disorder and
other mental illnesses but little did I know that this
place would turn into a candy store for my husband.

"Look Mrs Langa, we have records of you having

been locked up in a mental institution when you were younger"

She says looking through her file

"Those are Saney's records from when she and our grandmother got into a terrible accident where she was driving!"

I say really angry and really hurt. My heart is in pieces at the thought even. How could Phila do this to me? Never mind that how did I end up with my sister's records?

"I understand that Mrs Langa, maybe that incident may have triggered your disorder?"

She asks and for a second I'm tempted to grab her by the neck but I don't. I look at her calming myself because she's just doing her job and she's trying to get me out of here right?. There's a knock on the door and it's my husband smiling. He opens and walks in

"Phila, honey"

He says kissing my cheek

"Mr Langa"

She says

"Such formality Mrs Ntonga"

He says sitting on the bed

"Something you clearly know nothing about. Mrs

Langa we will continue our session tomorrow"

She says closing her file

"Of cause"

I say rolling my eyes

"I'll come to your office later Ok?"

He says as Phila packs up her things

"Of cause"

She says walking out

I'm left with my monster of a husband. Me ending

up in here was never part of the plan. Well at least

not my plan. I thought I'd be in East London by now

with my baby but nope. I'm stuck in Cape Town, in

a mental hospital!

"You look better"

He says with a smile which I don't respond to.

"Sinokuhle I love you"

I chuckle sarcastically rolling my eyes

"I know you probably don't believe but I really do

love you. Tell me what you want me to do and I'll do

just as long as you don't leave me"
He pleads. Now I'm convinced he's the bipolar one
here

"Please Sino. I can get you released out of here
and we can go home and pick up where we left off.
Our daughter misses her mother"
I don't respond. It's this same charm that made me
blind to all his shenanigans.

"Say something dammit!"

He says hitting the bed startling me. I look at him

"I'm sorry"

He slides closer to me but I move back hugging my
knees

"Sino I would never hurt you. You know that!"

He says but I'm not convinced, I've never seen this
side of him. One minute he's soft and the next he's
yelling... I don't know.

He takes a deep breath and let's it out slowly

"Marhadebe please say something"

He pleads placing a hand on my foot

"I want to see my daughter"

It's been a week locked up in here yet it feels like

months.

"And you will see her as long as you play nice"

He says brushing my foot. He takes his shoes off and his blazer placing it nicely on the chair next to my bed

"I miss you. Don't you miss me?"

I don't respond. He climbs on the bed coming to me

"I miss you Sinokuhle. I miss your sex. I miss the way you scratch my back when I go deeper. I miss the face you make when you cum"

He says that brushing my cheek, I'm disgusted by him. I'm disgusted by his touch. His smell. I hate all of it! He places his index finger under my chin and makes me look up at him.

"I love you Sino. What I do doesn't change how I feel about you. They can never be you. Things between us were good remember? You got everything you wanted, our daughter was happy.

Everyone was happy Sino including you"

He says then brushes my lower lip

"It was all a lie. I was living a lie. Ignorant to everything that was happened under my nose.

Under my roof Lunga"

He places a finger on my lips

"Shhhh, let's not dwell on the past"

He removes his hand then kisses me. I bite his lip and he pushes me so hard I hit the wall with my back

"The fxck did you do that for huh?"

He asks pissed as hell. I fear the look he has right now.

"I'm trying here but you always have to be difficult!"

He yells punching the wall it almost feels like he's punching me. I don't respond.

"I'll see you tonight, better be ready for me!"

He says then gets up on his feet and wear his shoes then blazer.

"I love you Ok?"

He says after kissing my cheek

CHAPTER 40

AYOLA

There's this thing called a mothers instinct. You know that pit at the bottom of your stomach? I was at work when I just got sick out of the blue, this is coming from a person who barely gets sick. The last time I got sick this quick was when Saney got into an accident that took my mother's life. I feel it in me when something happens to any of my children. My flu was the kind where I burnt up real quick and needed medical attention ASAP. I woke up in a hospital bed a few hours later with my husband by my side

"Majola"

He said looking worried
"Lwando how are the kids?"

I asked him trying to sit up but too weak to do so
"Don't get up. Saney and Thando are fine. Sino found out that Lunga is a child abuser"

He said
"She received a video and took it to the police station. Now she and Steve are on their way to your grandmother's house"
He said calmly. I coughed
"What do you mean? I don't understand Lwando"
I said because it was all too much. Lwando was right about him all these years? To think we almost ended over this only for it to be true
"Lunga should be getting arrested as we speak. Mihlali is safe with her mother"
He assured me brushing my hand
"Lwando something is not right"
I said trying to sit up again but failing again
"Honey relax ok. Sino is fine. She will call as soon as she settles in"
He said trying to assure me but I couldn't shake off this weight on my shoulders and the pit in my stomach. Something was wrong with my daughter. I got out of the hospital the next day but doc said he was putting me on bed rest. Lwando received a message saying Sino was safe and then we got a

call from her.
Sino is Lwando's daughter more than she is mine.
By this i mean she is as strong and emotionless as
her father, she sucks at this whole getting
emotional over the phone thing. It takes a lot to
break her and based on what I heard on that
phone. Something was shady, instead of telling us
she misses us she would have opted for asking us
to drop by when we back. Soon as Lwando
dropped the call I turned to him
"Our baby is in trouble"
I said
"Nah. You worried over nothing"
He said sounding confident
"Lwando I gave birth to that girl. She may be able to
fool you but she can't fool me, something's wrong"
I said panicking. He threw his hands up in
surrender
"Ok Majola. What do you want me to do?"
He asked
"Call the house keeper"
I said searching for her number, I found it and gave

him my phone to copy the number. He called her
putting the phone on speaker
"Bongeka"

He said greeting her
"Mr Mbana hi"

"Hey Bongji, this is Ayola. Did Sino make it there?"

I asked, I don't like wasting time over useless
conversation

"Sino? Was she supposed to come here?"

She asked confused

"Bongeka are you sure?"

Lwando asked

"Yes sir I'm sure. I have not seen your daughter
since last year"

She said

"Thank you Bongji"

I said and ended the call

"Sino wouldn't lie to me like that"

He said still in shock and worried

"She would if Lunga got to her first"

I said

"Look, you need to call all your contacts and find

out what happened to our daughter"

I said, he was so stressed he buried his face in his hands

"What have I done?"

He said sounding worried, scared, terrified... Just all emotions at once

"Honey"

I said placing a hand on his back

"We won't rest until we find her"

I assured. My father left us with all kinds of connections. Yes I hated my husband dealing shady but I accepted that by force. I love him and love requires compromising. I couldn't leave him because of the shady businesses, it's not like he kills anymore... Or maybe he does and I just don't know it, I asked him to keep me out of it and make sure that our family is safe.

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LUNGA

I get into my office and take off my blazer throwing

it on the couch in frustration. What the hell is wrong with Sino? She has no right to be mad at me after what she did. If it's anything I should be pissed at her for trying to get me arrested. My phone rings, I answer without looking

"What?"

I say

"Lunga?"

Says mom's voice

"I'm sorry mom. There's just so much going on in my life"

I say in distress

"Why? What's going on?"

I sigh

"My wife is in a mental institution"

"What? When did that happen? Where is Mihlali?"

Lunga"

She says sounding worried

"I'm not coping mom. Sino accused me of being a pedophile. Her father filled her head with all this nonsense to an extent that Sino tried to get me arrested on Tuesday"

I say
"What? Lunga why didn't you tell me all this?
What's wrong with Sino?"
I let out a heavy sigh
"I don't know mom. When I got home Tuesday I
found her lying on the floor with a bottle of pills"
"Oh baby"
She says with so much sadness
"Listen I am coming to Cape Town to fetch Mhlali
while you deal with this Sinokuhle thing"
She says. It's not such a bad idea now that she
mentions it
"I would love that. I'll book you a ticket tomorrow"
I say
"Ok baby see you then. I sure hope to God Sino
gets the help she needs"
She says
"She's getting the best help mom"
I assure. We talk a little and say our goodbyes.
There's a knock on my door, I open the door and
stand aside. It's a nurse
"Mr Langa"

She has a crush on me, she's Saney's age and recently started working here

"Miss Thuthukane"

I say pointing her to a seat opposite mine

"Sir I've brought miss Khungo's results"

She says placing a file in front of me

"Listen, I need you to up her dosage ok. And also I need you to give my wife her meds, she told me she hasn't gotten any since morning. Get her food while you at it"

I order as she writes things down on paper

"Will that be all sir?"

"If you don't mind, please give Mrs Langa sleeping pills. She's been struggling to sleep"

I say and she nods. Miss Khungo is the child Sino has a video of she and I in my office.

"Yes sir"

We talk a little before she leaves the office. I decide to go see Miss Khungo. The minute I walk in she slides to the corner of the room curling her legs up
"Kholiswa"

I greet sitting on the bed

"I denied everything"

She says holding back tears

"I know. Good girl, they keeping a close eye on you
so I won't be visiting you for a while"

CHAPTER 41

SINO

A nurse walks in, she's not my usual nurse. I've noted all the people that take care of me and she is not one of them.

"Who are you?"

I ask the minute she's fully in my room

"Nurse Ntombi. I'm here to give you your meds"

I look at her stunned

"What meds? I've already taken my meds for the day"

I protest, she chuckles

"Onke nje amahlanya ayafana. Angna skhathi sakho mina yezwa?(all you crazies are the same. I

don't have time for you) just because you Mrs

Langa you think you deserve special treatment?

Well you don't"

She says handing me the pills, I look at her hand

and back up to her face

"My husband put you up to this neh?"

"Mrs Langa take your medication or else I will force it down your throat"

She says, I chuckle. She's so cute and so young she reminds me of Saney even

"Mrs Langa!"

She scolds, I hit her hand and the pills fall to the floor. She's pissed

"Fine. We'll do it the hard way then"

She says turning to her cart. I pull out a syringe from her pocket and stab it on her neck then run out. I don't know where I'm going but I will find my way, I get to a corner and hear guards, I walk back a little into an open double door. It's dark, I walk with the help of the walls until I reach light. It's only now that I notice I'm in the passage that leads to solitary. I walk down the stairs as cautious as I can with hopes not to alarm anyone. There's kids locked in these cells, I try to open but to no luck. They look scared, terrified even. I walk in further down the corridor, I pass this one cell where a child is screaming in pain. I stop and walk back to that

cell and peak by the little window. I see a man pleasuring himself and having his way with the screaming little girl. I bang on the door shouting, he hears me and looks up pleased with himself. It's Malwande the police officer I reported Lunga to. I clasp my mouth in shock and run back to where I came from

"Somebody help."

I scream running out of the doors only to be caught by security and nurses who hold me down

"He's going to kill her. You have to help her please"

I plead as they hold me down. I feel a bee sting on my arm, soon I'm out like a lamp.

I am woken up by someone kissing my neck. I smell him on me before I am able to open my heavy eyes.

"Get off of me"

I say angrily trying to fight him off only to realise my hands are tied down together with my legs

"Lunga get off of me"

I cry out wiggling my body. I cannot afford to get raped. He stops

"Why does everything have to be difficult with you huh? You messed up today. I should be punishing you but here I am trying to pleasure you. You know what! I'm done being nice to you" He says ripping my T-shirt off. "I tried to be nice to you Sino. I never wanted you to meet this part of me but you've forced me. He says. He walks over to a chair with a bag on top of it. He takes out cuffs "I'm taking you somewhere" He says walking to me with the cuffs. He undoes my feet, I kick and scream but this sick man feeds off of my screams. He cuffs my legs and then cuffs my hands. He puts a gown on my shoulders "What are you doing? Where are you taking me?" I ask as he walks me out "You dare talk, I swear to God you will never see Mihlali again. Walk!" He says pushing me. We walk into the solitary rooms corridor, we pass a couple of rooms and he stops at this one room, he opens the door and Saney is sitting on the floor with her mouth taped

and her hands cuffed
"Say hello to your little sister"
He says. I'm lost for words. How could he do this?
Saney looks at me with eyes filled with tears
"What am I saying. She can't respond. He pushes
me inside and walks over to Saney
"Don't you dare touch her or I swear to God"
I threaten
"You'll what? Leave me? Sino in case you haven't
noticed, I am God! I run this place"
He says feeling proud
"Saney I'm so sorry"
That's all I'm able to utter, he removes the tape
from her mouth and Saney let's out a sob
"It's my fault. If we hadn't"
She says in between muffled sobs
"It's Ok baby sis"
I say walking to her but Lunga stops me
"Look, I like Saney. She's bubbly and cute and has
a great personality. If it were up to me she wouldn't
even be here but because of today's incident. I had
to take her in and keep her as leverage"

He says brushing her cheek at which she cringes
"I am a married man, you cannot deprive me of
what's mine Sino. So if you refuse, remember
Saney is here... And she's still a virgin"
He says making my skin crawl. The thought of him
taking my little sister's virginity makes me cringe
"Do whatever you want to me but please leave her
out of this"
I plead
"Please Lunga"
I beg, he thinks for a second and then nods
"My office is safer"
He says. We walk our leaving my sister crying
silently. We get to his office and he pins me to the
door and kisses the life out of me. He's rough with
me, he's even choking me while biting on my lips.
He rips my pants off and then leads me to the desk
where he pushes me and I land on my hands. I
hear him take off his pants and seconds later he's
penetrating me from behind. It's painful but I bite
my lower lip to just take in the pain as it comes. He
humps me while spanking my ass and his other

hand working my clit. I'm as dry as the Sahara desert but it doesn't stop him until he fills me up.

"This is home Sino"

CHAPTER 42

LWANDO

I feel as though I've failed my daughter. With everything that's happened, I've failed her. Lunga no longer stays in his and Sino's house. The guy is hard to touch! We on our way home when we get a call from an unknown number "This Lwando Mbana speaking, who is this" I say "Sir you don't know me but we met at Sino's wedding. My name is Phila and I work with Lunga" She says and I remove the phone from my ear to put her on speaker "How may I help you?" I ask "Your daughter is being held at the institution. Lunga has people keeping a close eye on her. Mr Mbana you have to do something" She pleads. The fear in her voice is enough to guilt

trip me

"Why do you want to help us?"

I ask and Ayola shoots me a look

"Sino is my friend and it pains me seeing her in there. She doesn't belong there and after what I heard today, her life is in danger"

"What do you mean her life is in danger?"

She sighs

"Lunga mentioned that he was working late and that he would be visiting her later"

She says

"Ok thank you Phila. I will send in someone to the institution. Her name is Hlumelo Mba. She works for me but she'll come there and pose as one of the nurses that attend to Sino. Make sure that Lunga doesn't notice her. She'll fill you in on everything"

I say, Ayola is looking at me this whole time

"Ok Mr Mbana. I hope your plan works"

She says. I say my goodbyes and end the call

"What's your plan Lwando? My daughter had better come out of this alive and well"

She says

"Ayola I know what I'm doing here. Please let me
Ok? I will get Sino out of there"

I assure. I'm Sniper for heaven's sake!

"And Muhlali?"

She asks with so much worry

"Let me handle this Ayola"

I say. Deep down I'm scared, worried, panicking
and praying to God that my baby girl and her
daughter are still alive and well.

We get home, our driver parks in front of the front
door. We get off and walk inside

"Nono"

Ayola greets. I wave

"Sir uSaney called and her call was cut before she
could finish what she was saying"

She says making me stop in my tracks

"When was this? Did you hear anything else in the
background or something?"

She thinks for a second

"I heard a man's voice"

I walk out leaving her with Ayola to my study room.

I log onto my laptop while dialing Hlumelo's number

"Mr Mbana"

She says

"I need you to come to my house ASAP with a couple of our guys. The best"

I say

"Is everything OK? Steve is missing"

She says

"Have someone look for him"

I say sternly

"On our way sir"

She says, I end the call and put on my earphones to listen to the last call Nono had with Saney.

There's not much to go on either than two male voices and my daughter screaming. My best bet is

Lunga. It's time he and I met face to face!

I dial his number

"Mr Mbana"

He says sounding super calm

"I've let you play on my turf long enough. Bring my daughters back and your parents go unharmed"

I threaten, he chuckles

"You are in no position to make threats Sniper.

Maybe you once ruled this city but it's mine now"

He says laughing

"You don't know who you messing with"

I say and then drop the call. I'm pissed to the core!

There's a knock on my door as I'm busy trying to

trace Lunga's call.

"Come in"

I shout, Hlumelo and 5 other members of our crew

walk in. I greet and they respond settling on the

chairs and couch

"It's simple. My daughter is locked up in a mental

institution, Saney is missing. I need you to infiltrate

the hospital and get Sino out while finding out

whatever you can about where Saney maybe held.

Chip I need you here with me to help hack into the

system . Hlumelo, you'll meet with a person named

Phila and she will tell you what to do. Don't blow

your cover. How far are we with finding Steve?"

They scratch their heads

"Uhhhm"

I huff

"Anything on Lunga that I should know about?"

I ask, chip nods
"I downloaded all his cellphone records and
conversations, his mother should be landing today.
She's here to fetch Mihlali"
He says.

"Hlumelo you going with Cole and Scar for back up.
Star you fetching his mother from the airport and
taking her to the warehouse"
Hlumelo shakes her head
"Mr Mbana why not wait for her to have Mihlali with
her and take it from there. Their plane is supposed
to land in PE mos, have someone fetch them there
instead that way Lunga can't use Mihlali against
you"

She says and she has a point. At this point he has
the upper hand and I have nothing against him.

"When is she leaving?"

I ask

"Today sir"

Chip says.

"Ok everyone knows what they have to do. I will
update you on what to do and how to do it. You can

all go"

I say returning to behind the desk where Chip sit's trying to o break into their system. It's in the morning around 9, Saney had called last night.

"Anything?"

Ayola asks walking inside the office, I shake my head and walk over to her pulling her into my arms

"We going to find them"

I say brushing her back and kissing her head

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SINO

It's the morning after. I feel numb. I hate him. I hate myself for falling in love with him. All I feel in my heart is resentment. If only I'd listened to dad when he warned me against him. I just hope Saney is Ok.

My vagina is painful and I didn't get any sleep crying and replaying last nights events in my head like a movie. A horror movie even.

"Mrs Langa"

Says a nurse walking into my room. I don't respond, my head is buried in my knees curled up in a corner. She touches my shoulder making me cringe

"It's Ok, I'm here to help you Sino. It's me Hlumelo, Bantu's sister"

She says helping me get up but I'm weak, I have no energy in me

"Saney"

I say as weak as I am

"Huh?"

"Saney's here, she's in solitary"

I say with my voice failing me as much as my eyes are. Before I know it, I'm out.

CHAPTER 43

1

WEEK

LATER

AYOLA

Saney is home, safe and unharmed. Sadly I can't say the same about Sino, I'm sitting by her bedside in hospital hoping and praying she wakes up but to no luck, I don't know how she'll feel after hearing what happened. I can't believe I was unable to be there for my daughter "Mrs Mbanana, how is she?" I'm startled by Bantu walking in, he's so handsome and looks like he hasn't slept in days. I shake my head no with a sigh. "Still the same" I say. He sits on the other side of the bed "She's going to wake up, she has to" He says kissing her hand "I don't know anymore" I say defeated. He's won!

Hlumelo managed to get Saney out of that place, when the guys went there for Sino she was no longer in her room. Lunga got to her before the guys could. After searching for 3 days Lwando found her in an abandoned hospital, drugged and raped. My baby looks nothing like my daughter, she's skinny and pale and just nothing like the Sino I know. Lwando's contacts caught him and Malwande just as they were about to cross the border to Nigeria. He's keeping him at the warehouse doing lord knows. Mihlali is safe with Nono. The institution is now run by Phila under strict supervision.

"Mom how is she?"

Saney and Thando ask simultaneously while walking into the room

"Still the same"

I say

"She's going to be fine right mom? She's going to wake up?"

Saney asks with worry in her voice

"What did her doctor say?"

Thando asks
"Whatever he drugged her with is illegal in South Africa and that it's enough to kill her with the amount of dosage in her system. We just hoping she'll wake up without any internal damage"
Saney clasps her mouth in shock with this information.

"Hasn't she been through enough"
Saney says gritting her teeth. Warm fresh tears roll down my cheeks

"Mom what aren't you telling us?"
Thando asks looking at me, I can feel his eyes on me

"She had a miscarriage"
I say

"No mom. No that can't possibly be!"
Saney says shaking her head falling to the floor on her knees. Bantu gets up off the chair and walks out. We are disturbed by a throat clearing, it's Sino.
Saney gets up to get her water
"Baby how are you feeling? Should Thando call a nurse?"

I ask, I don't know what to make of the look on her face.

"Here you go sis"

Saney says helping her drink with a straw. None of us can hide the pity looks on our faces.

Saney puts the glass on the pedestal and tears roll down Sino's cheeks.

"Baby please"

I plead with my voice husky holding back my own tears

"All I ever did was love him"

She says in between her loud cries that cut deep

"He broke me mah. He broke my heart"

She cries out. There's not a dry face in the room,

Thando walks out. Saney and i group hug her with

our own sobs. As a mother you never think such a

day would cone whereby you'd have to witness

yourv daughter broken to the core because of

loving the wrong person. I blame myself for being

too understanding, too chilled, too friendly, maybe if

I'd been a bit harsh none of this would have

happened.

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LWANDO

I shot his friend dead. He killed one of my best man, Steve. As for Lunga, I'm keeping him hostage, you see I thought about shooting him but then that would be too easy and less painful. I need him to suffer 10 times my daughter did. How is a father supposed to react when he finds his daughter in a pool of her own blood tied up and sexually violated more than once? Drugged and bleeding as evidence of having a miscarriage. Tell me what punishment is good enough for such a person who put so much effort into breaking my daughter? A bullet to the head is way too easy and quick. I need him to suffer as much as Sino did and even more. If Mihlali wasn't my grandchild, I'd skin her alive in front of him just to torture him but nope. Cant do that to my baby. We've drugged him, hit him a couple of times, drowned him and he's still alive.

Bantu budes in and grabs a scapular.

"What are you doing here?"

I ask pulling his arm back

"Ndizosika lendawo imhluphayo"(I'm here to cut if this part that's giving him problems)

He says overwhelmed with rage

"Bantu think this through, you not this person"

I say, I admire him for wanting to fight for Sino but

Bantu is soft and wouldn't be able to live with himself after doing this

"Think about this"

I say. I'm startled by a man's cry. Thando has just cut if his dick with 'izembe'

"Thando!"

I scold, he looks at me and walks to the sink to wash his hands. I walk over to him

"Ibimhlupha mos!"(it was giving him problems)

He says loosely like he did not just castrate the guy

"That's not how things are done!"

I yell

"Get him cleaned up, he's losing a lot of blood!"

I yell and they get to work

"Sino lost a child because of him. She lost her soul.
She's broken dad!"
He yells with tears in his eyes
"He broke her and we did nothing to stop him"
He says
"My sister is laying in a hospital bed right now and
she can barely say anything"
I pull him into my arms and comfort him
"Lunga will pay for all his crimes son. I will make
him wish he was never born"
I say gritting my teeth. I break the hug
"Come let's go see your sister"
I say taking off the plastic cover I had on
"You need to go change, you can't rock up to your
mother with blood stains"
"Noted dad"
We go to our separate cars and drive off.

CHAPTER 44

SINO

If it's anything I've learnt about this thing called life it's that you can never plan it because if it were like that then I wouldn't be laying in this bed right now. I wouldn't have married Lunga, let alone end up in a mental institutional. It's been a traumatic experience for me and I don't know how to move on from this particular obstacle. I take a deep breath and let it out slowly, mom and Saney feel bad, I know they somewhat blame themselves for some of the events that occurred. I blame myself for it all. I don't just blame myself, I hate myself. If only I'd listened to dad when he warned me. If only I'd gotten back together with Bantu maybe I wouldn't be here today. God it's just painful!

They sit back on their chairs
"How do you feel about seeing someone?"

Mom asks. I shake my head no instantly.

"Baby"

I shake my head

"No mom"

I say cutting her off. The last time I trusted a psychologist, I ended up here.

"Mntase"

Saney says with a very low voice

"It's good to see you awake"

Says a doctor walking in

"How are you feeling?"

She asks holding up my file. I shrug

"I don't know"

I say

"May I have a word with my patient in private"

She says looking at me, mom and Saney look at me and I nod. They walk out leaving me with the doctor

"I ran a couple of tests on you and I'm glad to say that there are no internal damages"

I just nod

"When your father found you Sino, you were

bleeding"

I nod. The way she's speaking I'm really expecting
the worst news ever
"I'm sorry to say that you lost the baby you were
carrying"

She says, I chuckle in disbelief
"What baby?"

She sighs
"You bled due to a miscarriage. The medication he
used on you was enough to lead to a miscarriage.

I'm sorry for your loss"
She says

"Please leave"
I say with tears rolling down my eyes involuntary
"Sino.."

I cut her off
"I want to be alone please"

I yell. She's about to speak but she decides not to
and just walk out. I start wailing. I just cry for
everything wrong that's happened thus far. I'm filled
with regrets. I'm filled with hate. I'm just
overwhelmed with so many emotions. I hate him. I

hate him so much I want to kill him.
My heart physically hurts, it's so painful I can't even breathe.

Mom and Saney walk in
"I want to be alone"

I yell curling myself into a fetus position

"I'm not going anywhere"

Saney argues. I know her, she's not going anywhere. I just wail even harder, I feel the bed move and soon someone is cuddling me. It's

Saney, it can only be her.

"I'm sorry sis"

I just wail, I can't even put to words what it is I'm feeling but there's a thin line between pain and anger. Lunga has made me in his image now, I'm an empty shell. If that's what he wanted then he succeeded. I'm broken, I let him.

"I'm really sorry Sino. You don't deserve this! You shouldn't be hurting like this"

She says brushing my arm as I cry

"I came as soon as I heard you're awake"

That is no doubt my father.

He sits next to mom, Thando's cologne gives him
away as he walks in.

"I'm glad you're awake"

He says touching my hand

"Where are you keeping him?"

I ask gritting my teeth

"Sino"

I cut mom off

"I want to see him"

I say looking at dad

"Baby"

"No dad I want to see him. I want him dead!"

Mom clasps her mouth in shock

"You don't mean that"

Mom says

"Dad"

He looks at me with so much pity, I know he can't
resist my puffy eyes. He sighs

"Sino think about this. If tomorrow you still feel the
same way then I'll take you to see him"

He says brushing my hand

"Lwando you can..."

Dad shakes his head cutting mom off. We all know
what that means.

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LUNGA

What's a man without his manhood?

I don't know why I did all the things I did to Sino, she didn't deserve any of them. She was good, she was sweet and she loved me despite what her father said to her about me and I took her love and threw it back to her face and now I'm paying for it. Mr Mbana hasn't been so kind to me, he's hit me, shocked me with electricity, drowned me and now his son has cut off my dick. I think I've paid for all my sins now.

"Are you happy now?"

Bantu asks sitting on a chair opposite me. My hands are tied up above my head and I'm hanging and tired and just want to die

"What do you want? Don't you have a wife?"

I ask trying to catch my breath

"You killed her"

He says sounding pissed

"She didn't die"

I say rolling my eyes. He chuckles punching me

"You killed her spirit. You raped her. She lost a child because of you!"

He says angrily yelling at me

"She lost a child?"

I ask,he throws another punch

"Because of you she will never be the same again!"

He says angrily

"She lost our baby"

I whisper. I start to date back, she missed her period last month but then it happens with the contraceptives she was on. I killed our baby

"I killed our baby"

I say with my voice failing me. I can't breathe, the pain of losing a child cannot be compared to any.

Sino must be a mess and it's all my fault. I denied

Mihlali a sibling.

"How is she?"

I ask looking down. I feel cold water being thrown at

me.

"You don't get to ask about her after leaving her for dead!"

He yells.

That night I wasn't planning on leaving Sino, I wanted to leave with her but as soon as we realized her father was on our tail we had to do something to get him off our track. It was the only way. We were supposed to start over elsewhere together and be new people in a foreign country. Despite everything I loved her, I love her still and I hate myself for the pain I caused her. She must hate me wherever she is. God Muhlali. Muhlali's going to grow up believing I'm a monster who tortured her mother.

If they tell her.

"I hope you happy"

He says and then walks out

CHAPTER 45

LWANDO

Ayola is mad at me. She's pissed actually, she's been quiet from since the hospital until our house. I follow her into the room

"Majola"

She doesn't respond

"What do you want me to do ke Ayola? You saw how our daughter is, we owe her this much"

I say, she turns to look at me

"He's put her through enough. Sino doesn't need to see him!"

She yells, I chuckle in disbelief

"If our daughter wants to see him then she'll see him and none of us are going to stop her!"

She shakes her head

"You might as well set him free if that's the case.

This man has put our daughter through hell

Lwando!"

"You think I don't know that Ayola? How do you think I feel huh? How do you think I feel knowing that this could have been prevented but I sat back and let her be. All of this would have never happened if I hadn't broken her up with Bantu. Our da..."

My breath hitches, my heart is painful. It's in pieces, I can't stop the tears I've been holding back "I killed our daughter. If it weren't for me she would have never met this monster, she would be fine. She wouldn't be laying in a hospital bed having lost a child"

Ayola pulls me to her level and hugs me tightly "There was nothing you could have done honey" She says brushing my mini fade "Sino doesn't blame you and neither did I. It was inevitable, we wouldn't have guessed this would have happened"

She says trying to comfort me but it doesn't change how shiity I feel. If I hadn't forced Bantu to leave maybe Sino would be happy now with an amazing family on her hip. She wouldn't be in a hospital bed

hating herself. It's my fault. If only I'd been a better
father to my baby.
"It's not your fault"
Ayola says comforting me. I'm helpless, I feel
helpless actually. I just wish there was more I could
do for her. I can just kill him, he's still my grand
daughter's father and despite everything she loves
him. She worships the ground he walks on.
We break the hug and my wife wipes my tears
"Sino is going to get through this. We are going to
help her get through this"
She assures but I'm not convinced. My phone rings,
it's the hospital.
"Lwando Mbana"
I answer walking towards the window
"Mr Mbana you have to rush to the hospital"
Says a panicking doctor
"Why? Did something happen to Sino?"
I ask with my heart racing out of my chest
"She uhhmm... She overdosed on pills"
My phone falls out of my hands
"Lwando what's going on? Is Sino fine?"

Ayola asks walking over to me, I fall back on the chair by the window
"Honey talk to me"
She pleads
"It's Sino, she tried to kill herself"
"We have to rush to the hospital Lwando"
She says in panic running around the room like a headless chicken. She finds the car keys and we rush to the car and drive to the hospital.

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SINO

"I own you baby"
He says walking into my room after Hlumelo has left it
"Lunga please. All I want is to see my daughter"
I plead, I beg sitting on the corner where Hlumelo left me. He chuckles
"Oh Sino. If only it were that simple. You messed up yesterday, so today I'm taking you somewhere"
He says fixing his tie, he opens my door and a

couple of nurses walk in with a bed
"Where are you taking me?"

He chuckles

"Home, isn't that where you've been wanting to go to?"

He says. The sarcasm in his voice tells me otherwise.

"Behave and this won't hurt"

He says before sticking a needle in my arm that makes me pass out instantly.

I wake up to him and Malwande arguing

"What do you mean they have mom?"

He asks frustrated

"I mean they caught her as she was about to board the plane with your daughter"

He chuckles and punches the wall

"Lwando Mbona clearly doesn't know me"

The tone in his voice is scary, I'm terrified to even alert them that I'm awake. My hands and ankles are tied up so running is not an option

"What now?"

Malwande asks

"We have to skip the country. We'll drive"
He tells, Malwande sees me and Lunga turns
"You're awake. Hey babe"
He says walking over to me
"Give us space, go get us some supplies"
He commands and Malwande leaves me with this
monster. He touches my face
"You so pretty"
He says then kisses my forehead
"Your father is giving us a hard time"
He says
"Where's my sister?"
He breathes out
"She's safe if that's what you want to know. Your
Fathers people took her"
I mentally thank God, at least she's back home
"It's a pity you won't get the chance to say
goodbye"
He says
"What do you mean?"
I ask feeling all kinds of helpless. My head is heavy
"We have to skip the country. We'll leave in two

days, we'll come back for Mihlali"

He says brushing my cheek

"Lunga please"

I beg and he shakes his head

"I've done everything for you Sino, do this little thing

for me"

He demands brushing my lower lip that's quivering.

The thought of leaving all my loved ones, at this

moment I'm just praying for death. I can't take this

anymore.

"Lunga please just let me go, I promise I won't

press charges and dad won't go after you"

I plead with the little strength I have to talk, my

throat is dry AF and painful when I talk for long

"I can't trust that Sino. I can't leave the love of my

life behind"

He says and then kisses me. I respond because I

know better than to fight him. He breaks it

"You learning. I'm impressed, remember how we

used to be? How sexually compatible we were

before you went crazy?"

I don't respond

"Sino I never stopped loving you, I just got greedy and I let my greed get the best of me"

He says brushing my thigh

"May I?"

He says kissing my neck

"Lunga please don't"

I say trying to stop him somehow but can't, I'm weak with whatever he drugged me so automatically I'm at a disadvantage. He pushes me back and gets on top of me

"Honey please don't do this. Lunga I'm begging you"

I beg and plead while shaking him off but he's stronger. He stops and slaps me. He's never hit me before. Yah sure he's been rough before but he's never hit me. I'm as shocked as he is. Tears roll down my cheeks

"Look what you made me do Sinokuhle"

He yells startling me

"This is all your fault!"

He says but it doesn't stop him from continuing with what he was about to do. I just cry as he penetrates

me as he please. He fucks me until I can't feel my legs. By the time he's done all I can do is puke my insides out. He comes and cleans me up then dresses me up and drugs me again. He wakes me up with food, the sun shining through the little window opposite me alerts me it's the next day "I'm sorry about last night, I bought you your fave" He says, I just look at him and cry as memories come back in floods "Sthandwa Sam I'm sorry I got a little rough with you"

He says kissing my forehead. I'm disgusted by him, I'm disgusted by myself for ever loving him. I hate him. I hate that we share a child together. "Baby please eat, you haven't eaten in days" He says, in my mind I'm like 'kill me now' "Why are you keeping me alive? I want to die" I plead crying. I'm wailing even, this man right here is the root of me being like this "Sino I said I was sorry" He says

"Now please eat"

He says sitting in front of me. I look at him and turn the other side

"Sinokuhle I don't have time for this! Eat dammit or I will make you eat!"

He yells. I give in as he feeds me. As soon as I'm done eating I feel myself dosing off.

The way he's had sex with me or rather raped me I don't see myself getting intimate with anyone if I make it out of this alive. I despise sex! I hate it!

Today is no different than yesterday, morning glory, lunch time it's the same. He leaves me to go get supplies for his trip. My womb feels like it's being ripped out of me. It's painful like I'm about to go on my period except it's 10 times worse. I start bleeding more than usual, I collapse and like that I'm out.

I wake up screaming, I hear machines beeping. I remember everything, it wasn't just a bad dream, it all happened. I'm in hospital because of him, I lost my baby because of him.

A nurse walks in to check on me, my parents are gone. I must have dozed off while they were here. She gets called elsewhere forgetting her tray of medication. I take a couple of bottles from her tray and drink them all at once

CHAPTER 46

SINO

Waking up means I didn't die. The fact that I am still breathing means that I failed at killing myself, one more failure to add to my list of failures. Mom and dad look tired, they look drained. Dad's been crying, please don't tell me he blames himself.

"I am so sorry baby"

Dad says brushing my hair back.

"If I hadn't broken you with Bantu none of this would have happened"

He says taking hand and kissing it

"It's not your fault dad. You did nothing wrong. I'm sorry I didn't listen to you. I just wish I'd listened to

you then I wouldn't be here"

I say with tears rolling down my cheeks. I don't blame my father at all

"Baby what happened last night?"

Mom asks, I shrug

"Every time I close my eyes I see him mom. While I was sleeping the last 3 days of when he was holding me captive play out like a movie. I remember everything so vividly like it happened yesterday. I remember his smell, his touch, his voice... Just everything about him mom. How powerless I was, how I just wanted to die because I couldn't anymore. I loved him, I worshiped the ground he walked on, I was perfect for him, i went out of my way for him mom" My breath hitches and dad brushes my hand "It's Ok baby, you didn't know" Mom says trying to comfort me "I want him to pay for this" I say angrily "Mommy"

Her tiny little voice shouts as she runs into the room followed by Saney "Hlali"

I say as mom helps her up the bed. One look at me and her smile turns into a frown "Saney said you sick"

She points out, I nod

"Yes baby, mommy is sick"

I say kissing her

"Where is daddy? He will take care of you"

She says making me cringe

"He uhhmmm"

"He's gone. Last minute business meeting outside the country"

Saney says, I just nod. I'm ready to tell her that her

that her father is dead

"Oh. When is he coming back?"

She asks

"Soon baby"

Mom says, I'm annoyed by these little questions of hers. I love my daughter but I don't want to talk about her father!

"When are you getting out of here?"

She asks touching my cheek. I shrug

"I don't know baby, soon I hope"

She smiles and rests her head on my chest. My doctor walks in, she greets everyone and then updates me on how I am and when I might be

discharged if I don't try anything stupid. She places a card on the table of a therapist she knows and it's Phila. She suggests that I start seeing her and talking to her about this ordeal in order to find healing.

"Can't you discharge her today?"

Dad asks as she's about to walk out

"Mr Mbanja we can't do that. After last night we have to monitor Sino closely now for any kinds of symptoms or side effects the pills she took may have on her body internally"

She says, dad sighs and nods

"Thanks doc"

He says and she nods and walks out.

I spend the day with Saney and Thando, visiting hours are long over but they refuse to leave, I think they keeping me under suicide watch

"Guys I'm fine. You can go"

I say trying to assure them

"We can't look past you trying to kill yourself Sino"

Saney says

"Look, we don't know what you going through but

please Sino. You have a daughter dependent on you. Mihilali can't lose both parents, she's too young."

Saney says, more like reminds me "Thando don't you have a family to get to?"

I ask trying to avoid Saney. They both chuckle

"Nice try Sino. My wife's gone home for some family thing, she'll be back next week"

I just roll my eyes annoyed

"You stuck with us sis"

Says Saney squeezing my hand. I fake a smile, we are startled by someone clearing their throat by my door.

We all turn our attention to whoever it is and GOD DAMN he's gotten hotter, cuter, sexier, finer than the last time I ever saw him.

Guys Bantubonke Mtwá is standing by my hospital room door. What's he doing here? How did he know?

"We'll uhhmm..."

Saney's as dumb as I am

"See you tomorrow"

Thando adds walking towards him, they greet each other and he and Saney share a hug before she

walks out. His eyes are full of pity and sadness. Silence fills the room. I don't know whether to break the ice or what. I can't remember the last time we spoke on the phone but the last time I saw him was the day I let him break my virginity. It's not awkward but it's definitely something. He takes deep breath and let's it out, we looking at each other and none of us is saying anything "Hi"

He says, his voice has only gotten better. It's sexier, more bold and screams 'look at me when I speak'. I just stare, I don't know what to say, is that all he can say to me after all these years? Looking at him now I actually believe that feelings never die, you just focus on other things or rather you wire your brain into believing what you want to believe is.

It's not that I don't want to talk to him, I'm still shocked and then I have this thing against men.

"Sino I am"

He is cut short by Layla walking in talking but stops in her tracks

"Bantu what are you doing here?"

She can't even hide the shock on her face.

"I am here to see Sino"

He says calmly settling on the chair Thando was sitting on

"I can see that much but who called you? How did you even know she was here? I mean when did you even come back?"

She asks not giving him a chance to respond until she's asked all her questions

"You will never change"

He says with a chuckle

"Sino I'll come back later."

He says getting up. He kisses my forehead

"I will see you later. Take care. It was nice seeing you Layla"

He says fixing himself while about to leave

"Nice seeing you too"

Layla says as he walks out. This gives her an opportunity to throw herself at me and squeeze the life out of me. Last time I checked she was in the states for work and was going to stay there for 3

months.

She breaks the hug

"How are you?"

She asks sitting back down, I shrug

"I don't know Lay. I just don't know. Today is harder than yesterday was. I just want to die, death seems better"

She takes my hand into hers

"You don't know that"

She reminds me

"But I do know that there's peace in death"

I defend, she sighs

"What actually happened? Where did things go wrong?"

I shrug my shoulders. I really wish I knew the answer to that question.

"My prince charming turned out to be everything he was not. Or maybe he always was but I was blinded by the love, the house, the dreams, the family and everything I've only ever dreamed of. He raped me Lay. I lost a child because of him."

I say and by now I'm in tears, I'm more angry than I

am sad. I gave him everything! I was everything a wife should be to him and this is the thanks I got from him. I hate him so much! "Sino no!" Layla exclaims in shock "My friend I am so sorry. I'm sorry for the things he put you through" She says wiping her tears sniffing.

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LATER

"I wish I hadn't left. Gosh if I could turn back the hands of time I would do everything differently." He tucks my hair behind my ear "I'm so sorry God if only things weren't as they were back then you wouldn't be laying here right now. I'm sorry Sino. I'm sorry for everything." He sniffs "I wish there was more I can do than apologizing. Seeing you lay here breaks my heart into a million pieces, it kills me Sino. Seeing you lay here makes me want to kill him, it makes me want to make up

for ever leaving."

He sighs. Bantu shouldn't even be here. He has a life, doesn't he have like a girlfriend or something? Where's his baby mama? Just... I don't want him here. I keep quiet as he pours his heart out to me thinking I'm sleeping. I can't sleep, the pills they give me manage to knock me out for about an hour or less and then I'm awake. He kisses my lips and then leaves me like that. I open my eyes and just then my father walks in carrying a bag dressed in all black.

"Glad you're awake. Get dressed into those, we leaving now. We only have 3 hours so be quick"

He says walking out. I should be asking what's going on but I decide against it and get dressed in these things. It's an all black outfit and a beanie. I

walk out

"I'm done"

I say. He's sitting with a girl that looks like me if you didn't look closely. The hair colour and all. She's cute.

"She'll be posing as you until you come back"

He says, she walks into my room and dad takes me hand leading me to the emergency exit.

"Where are we going?"

I finally ask when we get into his car

"I'm taking you to see Lunga"

CHAPTER 47

I am reminded of our trip when the car suddenly stops. All I've been thinking about is what I'll say to him, what I'll do to him when I see him. He touches my knee, I turn to him. He looks at me for a while before getting off. He walks over to my side and opens the door, it's not that I've been waiting for my door to be opened but I'm contemplating if this is what I want.

"You have two options. You can either turn back, there's a car waiting to drive you back or you can go through that door with me and we can end this once and for all. If you not inside in the next 5 minutes then I'll personally get rid of him"

He says, kisses my cheek and walks inside leaving me with my thoughts. Do I even want him dead? What about Mihilali? What will I say to her?

"Hi Sino"

I'm startled by Hlumelo who seems to have just jumped off a car in front of me

"Hi"

I say in a very low confused voice
"It's not easy. It doesn't get easy but whatever
decision you make just know that you can't undo
any of it so make it count. Let it be what is best for
you now and in future"

She says, pats my shoulder and leaves walking
inside. This is it! I think to myself, it's now or never.

The warehouse has different stations with different
people doing different things. You have those busy
with weapons in one corner, on the other they busy
with gold, on the other they busy with diamonds
and so forth. I don't even want to know, nerves are
kicking in as I walk in further. Reality sets in. I can't
see my father or Lunga.

"Sino follow me"

Says a young lady leading me to a room, she
opens the door and the first thing I see is him beat
up, cut up here and there, he looks terrible. I can't
seem to see the handsomeness I fell for. They beat
the looks out of him. My breathing has risen sky
high, he looks like he's still alive. I notice dad

standing by the side. Finally Lunga looks up and acknowledges my presence. I look around and there's a table with different kinds of weapons, some I've never seen before. "I will leave you to it. Knock on the door when you done"

Dad says then walks out.
"Marhadebe"

He says. If it were 6 years ago I would have melted but now I'm just disgusted. I'm angry. I want him to pay but I also want him to suffer like I did.

"Sino I am sorry"

He whispers with his voice failing him

"I am so sorry for everything"

He says with tears rolling down his cheeks. I walk over to him and slap him so hard my hand hurts. I move to the table and gun. I'm not thinking of anything, I just want him dead. I want him to feel what I feel. I walk over to him with the gun and point it to his chest

"This is where it hurts the most. Physically and emotionally"

I whisper pointing at his heart
"This is where you ripped my heart out and crushed
it in front of me Lunga"
I yell with tears creeping up to my eyes
"You broke me! You made me want to die!"
I say gritting my teeth in anger. I breath
"Because of you I lost a baby. I didn't even know I
was pregnant"
I say hitting his bruised chest with the back of the
gun. He's crying. The mighty Lunga is in tears
"I'm sorry"
He says, pleading with his eyes. It angers me that
he can cry after what he put me through. I pull the
trigger and it hit's his thigh, he cries out in pain. I've
never fired a gun before so it's shocking, I'm
shocked that I even throw it on the floor
"Sino please"
He begs crying out in pain
"Death would be too easy, you'll be at peace while I
suffer. While I beat myself up for hurting you back
or killing you. How am I supposed to explain to our
daughter that I killed you because you were a

pedophile, a rapist and the man who killed my
unborn baby?"

I ask pacing around in anger and a whole lot of
emotions at once

"Sino"

He says helplessly

"No!"

I snap turning to him

"I don't want to hear it! You sorry right?"

I shout angrily

"You know what? I'm not going to kill you. I want
you to be tortured until you break. I want you to beg
for death because being alive is so damn hard!"

I say. I take a deep breath and walk back to him
and poke the gun wound with the back of a knife

"Let this be a reminder of what you made me do"

I say and then bang on the door as told. I meet dad
as I'm walking out

"I don't want him dead. I want him in the most
ruthless prison sharing a cell with the most
dangerous criminal there is. I want him to suffer 10x
worse than I did. I want him to beg for death"

I say and dad nods. He calls a couple of guys
"Take him to prison. Call up Han and tell him I have
a new cellmate for him"
Dad says and one of the 3 men leaves. He puts his
arm around my shoulder and walks with me
"Mr Mbana the uhhm co..."
He stops in his tracks as soon as he notices me
"Sino what are you doing here? You should be in
bed resting. Mr Mbana why is she here?"
He asks my dad as though I'm not even here
"Hi Bantu"
I say calmly. I can't get over how ridiculously
handsome he is.
"You were saying about the company?"
Dad asks calmly, chilled even
"Sir"
"Speak Bantu, I still need to drive Sino to the
hospital"
He says impatiently. The way my father switches up
"I need your signature. The company just got a
Russian account. We'll discuss the details when
you get back"

He says looking at me and only me. His eyes burn
my skin I want to hide.

"See you then"

Dad says as we walk past him. I am tempted to turn
but I fight every urge to. We get into the car and
drive off

"How are you?"

He asks, I shrug. I thought I'd at least feel a little
better but nothing at all

"It gets easier my baby. I know it hurts now and
healing seems like a dream but baby all will be well
with time. Don't force it, let it come naturally.

There's no time frame to the right kind of healing"

He says brushing my knee. This man is by far the
only man I am comfortable touching me like this, I'd
probably cringe if it were someone else. He makes
me feel safe, I don't think he failed me at all. He
never gave up on me and I know he had something
to do with the video I received.

"I'm sorry I never listened to you"

"Sino"

He cuts me off but I shake my head

"Dad you tried to warn me, you did everything you could to show me the kind of man he is but I never listened. I should have listened to you daddy and I should have seen it all when you showed me. I'm sorry I didn't listen to you daddy. I should have known better"

He offers a smile

"With my stubbornness and your mom's you were bound to be. It's Ok Sino, let's just focus on you getting the help you need Ok? I'm proud of how you handled yourself in there"

He says proudly

"Thank you dad"

He parks the car, we not at the hospital.

"Come let's get out"

He says, I get off just as he is getting off. He leans by the bonnet

"This is where I come to think"

He says. I nod

"You know I suck with advice, that's your mothers department"

He says, I chuckle and so does he.

"Sino I'm not perfect. Like you I have had my fare share of life's hurdles. I've almost lost your mother on many occasions. I've had my mental breakdowns here and there, breakdowns so bad I just wanted to die. I remember this one time Ayola left me. She had had enough of my dealings, you were still the only child then. She went to stay in her parents house, I was going crazy. I wasn't taking my pills. I was literally a mess and I wasn't thinking straight. I went to the house with intentions to get her back but instead the situation ended up with me and a lighter. The gas was on, you were sleeping in the other room. Ayola tried, she did everything and said whatever she possibly could but to no luck. I was ready to burn it all down and then you showed up and said Daddy. You were happy and cute. I couldn't do it, I wanted to but I couldn't. She picked you up and walked over to me. You cupped my face and just called out Daddy. Ayola looked me in the eye and said 'you need help. Don't do it for me, do it for our daughter' I nodded. Since that day I have lived for you guys. I vowed to never hurt you

or your mom. I should have approached the situation with Lunga in a different manner. Soon as I found out who he was all I thought of was getting you and Mhlahli out of that house safely. I didn't think about what it would do to our relationship and now I realize that I should have done things differently."

He says looking ahead, I'm still shook by what he just shared

"I'm not proud of the incident I just told you but I rose from it. Your mother and I rose from it and came out stronger. We all get to a point where life is not worth living anymore but there also comes a time where you will look back and thank God you failed. You not alive by mistake Sino, you have a daughter to take care of. You have us to help you through this, use it to motivate you and inspire you to get the healing you require"

He says, I turn him to me and hug him tightly. I can't stop the tears, I needed this talk. I just cry in his embrace until I am unable to cry anymore, he

doesn't say anything except brush my back as I sob.

After the water works daddy drops me off at the hospital warning me not to tell mom about tonight, we linked our pinkies together and made a promise to not speak of tonight's events.

1 WEEK LATER

The nightmares are still there, some better than others and some worse. I'm terrified of therapy, yes I need it, it's pretty clear that I do because being in the hospital alone became really bad. The smell of the places started reminding me of where I was once confined and how I was treated. My memories haunted me and broke me into not wanting to be in hospital such that my parents had me moved home with a home nurse that would nurse me back to health.

With every passing day accompanied by a nightmare, the harder it became to be in that environment without thinking about how they drugged me, how Lunga was a monster to me.

Seeing him didn't make me feel better, it made me feel worse. Maybe mom was right about seeing him. I should have went to see him, I should have just stayed in hospital because every now and then I am haunted by images of him all beat up, the gun shot wound, the cuts and just the way he looked when I last saw him. It's like my brain formulated a story whereby he was the man I saw a couple of days back in the terrors I'd been having before seeing him. In my nightmares I never saw him clean as he was when he tormented and tortured me, he looked as he did in the ware house. The amount of emotions I felt all at once cannot be measured.

"Sino"

Mom says walking outside to the pool, I'm sitting on a pool chair starring into space, she sit's on the same chair blocking my view.

"How are you holding up?"

She manages to ask but I don't know how to answer her, I can't answer her. I've slowly allowed myself to drift into a dark hole where I am aware of

everything that's happening but I've shut myself in that dark space hoping and praying that I will become invisible. I never respond to her questions, it's not like I don't want to but I'm afraid I'll say one thing only to mean another. I'm afraid that if I say I'm better things will only get worse. They should be used to my silence now but they don't give up. How I wish I could give them what they want but I can't. I'm not as strong as she and dad are. I was told that Mihlali lives with Thando and his wife and kid. The last time I saw her I went crazy. Told them to get her out of my sight and that I never wanted to see her again. Images of the kids Lunga violated haunted me. In my head I was led to believe that he had hurt Mihlali too when we weren't looking. I couldn't look at her without thinking I failed her and that she deserved a better mother. As I said, with each passing day I became worse. I'd have dreams where kids Mihlali's age group confronted me about Lunga and why I'd stay with such a man for this long, asking me how I could

have been so blind to what he was doing, how he was hurting them.

Every other dream I had was worse than the last, I think I was even starting to see things.

My thoughts are cut short by mom touching my foot which I quickly pull back away from her reach. I can see her but it triggers the time Lunga bashed the wall as if he were hitting me. I cross my legs into yoga style. It breaks her heart but I can't mend it for her

"Sino it's me baby. It's your mother Ayola" She pleads with her voice breaking, if only she knew how broken I am then she would understand.

"I would never hurt you"

She pleads sliding a little closer to me but there's no where left for me to back up to. She looks at me with eyes filled with tears and then gets up to walk inside leaving me with my thoughts.

As I sit here watching the pool, it becomes red. The water has blood in it and I hear a baby's painful cry coming from the pool. I slowly emerge from the chair and walk towards the pool, the cry gets louder

with every step.

I look at myself and my trackpants have blood, I feel this excruciating pain in my womb but the motherly instinct tells me to get the baby. At get to the poolside and kneel by it looking for the crying baby but I can't see it

"Where are you baby?"

I ask searching in the water digging into it splashing water out of the pool

"Where are you?"

The cry is louder even I can't bare it. I'm looking but can't find anything, my frustration makes me cry.

I'm about to dive in when someone pulls me back caging me with strong arms begging me to snap out of it. It's my father

"Sinokuhle it's me baby, it's your dad. Look at me"

He says turning my face to him but I fight

"No! I have to get her out of the water. She's drowning"

I yell with a lump on my throat and tears rolling down my cheeks trying hard to break out

"Honey there is no-one there! There's no baby"

He says still holding me tightly

"There's no baby"

He repeats but i don't stop begging him to let me go

"Look at me Sino"

He demands

"Open your eyes baby, it's me-"

"I got the medic-"

Says a female voice, it sounds like mom's but dad

cuts her off

"No! Those things will only make her worse"

He says, I look up at him. His face is soft, his eyes

are teary

"You home. You safe, nothing can hurt you here"

He says kissing my head repeatedly. I look to the

pool and the water is clear blue. I'm wet but there's

no blood on my pants

"Come. Let's get you changed Ok?"

Mom says offering a hand to help me up. I look at it

and then up at her face and the take her hand and

follow her to my room. We walk in and she helps

me undress and takes the clothes to the bathroom.

I look around the room and it's nice, it's just as it

used to be before I left for marriage. I sit up on the bed and bury my face in my hands and cry, if only I hadn't met him. If only I'd stayed home none of this would have happened. I just cry because there's no words. I feel arms wrap around me. Saney hasn't changed her perfume. "It's going to be Ok mmtasekhaya" She says with a clear shaky voice "We going to get you through this together" She says and I feel tears on my arms. I feel more arms cage me, it's mom "Saney is right" She says "We going to be fine" They say together. It feels good being caged like this

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AYOLA

I walk into my room to find my husband curled up in a corner with his face buried in his knees, his

shoulders are shaking which tells me he's crying. I kneel before him and press my forehead against his "I don't know what to do anymore" He says with his voice breaking. Where do you start healing what you have no idea of how to heal. Sino's experience has affected us all one way or the other. After seeing how worse she got at the hospital I suggested that we move her home hoping and praying she'd be better there but she's gotten worse over the week and I don't know what to do anymore.

It's breaking us all. I've seen my husband at his worst but this, this is really taking a toll on him. He's always home keeping an eye on Sino making sure she doesn't do anything stupid.

"We going to get through this" I say, if only I believed what I was saying. Sino doesn't talk to any of us, and these nightmares she's been getting are the only time we ever hear her talk. We've tried getting her to open up but she

never does, the nurse just does her job and as for Mihilali.

I don't know what to say, Sino wants nothing to do with her. I did ask Phila about what could make my daughter desert her daughter and Phila told me that it may have something to do with hating her life with Lunga or the miscarriage or even the abuse those kids suffered from Lunga. It hurts seeing her like this. I want to help her but I don't know how.

"When Ayola? She's not getting any better and she won't talk to anyone. What if we weren't there today? What if she'd drowned? Our daughter is hallucinating, seeing things that aren't there"

He whimpers. I don't know what to say anymore

"Maybe if she just continues with the medica-"

He cuts me off looking up at me

"Medication won't help her Ayola. Can't you see it's only making her worse? Our daughter needs our love and support and that bastard dead!"

He says, I shake my head

"No! You are not killing him"

I say, he gets up

"I'd like to see you stop me Ayola"
He says with so much coldness in his voice
"Lwando you are not killing him. He's Mihlali's
father!"

I say
"Sino is Mihlali's mother but it didn't stop him from
breaking my daughter now did it?"
He has a point but if Sino wanted him dead then
he'd be dead. Lwando can't lie to me, he told me
about Sino shooting him
"If she wanted to kill him then she would have killed
him"

I say
"Ayola move aside"
He says as I stand in front of our room door
"You not leaving me Lwando. We need you!"
I say trying to touch him but he catches my hand
before it reaches his face
"Move out of my way Ayola Majola Mbanani!"
He demands
"No!"

I say standing my ground, he chuckles

sarcastically. He's pissed but he can't hurt me even
if he wanted to

"Ayola!"

He says gritting his teeth

"Is it weird that you turning me on right now? Your
aggressiveness is sexy"

I say cupping his face, he goes from beast to soft
instantly

"I need you Lwando. I need you to take my mind off
of things for a while"

I say brushing his lips with my thumb as my hand
digs into his sweatpants

"Fill me up, make me forget today's events"

I plead kneeling before him fisting his hard on

"Majola"

His voice comes out as a whisper as I take him into
my mouth

CHAPTER 48

6

MONTHS

LATER

Recovery hasn't been easy but slowly I'm getting there with the help of a new therapist. One who hasn't necessarily been in my shoes before but has also gone through something similar with her own husband. Unlike me her husband actually managed to skip the country with her and a year later she was rescued or rather she ran and got the help she needed. Dr Angela Moses saved me, she tricked me into seeing things differently from that dark whole. Thanks to my father I met her, Mr Mbana will do anything and everything for his loved ones. I've been trying to conquer my fears lately and took interest into self defence classes to help keep my mind off of things. I live with my parents full time just until I'm fit enough to stand on my own. Mihlali turned 6 last year in October and I missed her birthday, I couldn't celebrate it as I was still trapped in my thoughts and everything.

We are now in February the following year, this year I'm turning 28. I can't believe I actually made it this far.

My baby and I are building the relationship we lost along the lines and when she asks about her father I tell her flat out that he's in prison being punished for hurting me. I can't tell my 6 year old that her father raped kids as young as her now. I'm slowly gaining back my weight from before, I'm at size 30 now going to my usual 32 and this is from a size 24 by the way so it's progress. I am going out for lunch with Layla and Saney with our kids, Layla's is turning 8. "Siphiwokuhle finish up already" I yell standing by my room door "Coming mommy" She says "You don't get to yell at my granddaughter" Dad says walking out of his room "Maybe I should move out then" I say and he chuckles "If you mean you want to yell at her away from us

then you leaving her behind"

We both laugh, feels good to laugh again. It feels good to be me, if it hadn't been for the love, support and Patience I received from my family I don't know where I'd be.

"Hey! She's mine"

I say punching him lightly, we both laugh

"How are you my baby?"

He asks pulling me to him rubbing my shoulder

"I'm getting there dad. Thank you for everything, I wouldn't have done it without you guys"

I say and he kisses my head

"Just being a parent. It's good to see you smiling and laughing again. I'm proud of the progress you've made baby girl"

He says making me feel 20 years younger

"So do you think I can come back to work?"

I ask looking down. He removes his arm from my shoulder

"You want to go back to work?"

He asks with so much concern in his voice

"Yes I'm ready dad. It's been 7 months since

everything happened"

I remind him

"I'll think about it Ok?"

I just nod. He leaves me and I walk back into my room to find Mihlali talking on my phone

"Is that Saney?"

I ask and she shakes her head no

"Then who is it Hlali?"

I ask with a hand held out to her for my phone

"It's uhmmm"

She says lowering the phone from her ear and giving it to me

"Ok"

I say taking the phone into my hand and to my ear

"Hlali baby"

He says and I literally freeze. Where did he get my number? I changed phones and changed numbers.

"Hello?"

He says but I'm too shook, I'm scared, I'm worried...

I just don't know how to feel. Do I even answer him?

"Don't you ever call this number again"

I say and then hang up
I turn to Mihlali who's playing with her hands
innocently. I can't even shout at her.
"Come let's go, your aunt's are waiting"
I say taking my things, she gets up and walks out
without saying a single word. I keep asking myself
where he got my number and how?
"You Ok?"
Mom asks after seeing how disturbed I am as we
meet by the stairs on my way down and her on her
way up
"Lunga called my phone"
I say, she's as shook as I am
"What do you mean he called you? You changed
numbers"
I shrug at her response
"What did he want?"
She asks, I shrug again
"He spoke to Mihlali so I don't know Mah"
She looks at me trying to think
"But who could have given him your new number?"
She asks with furrowed eyebrows

"I don't know Mah. We should get going before
Saney calls"

Just then her name pops up on my screen

"Speak of the devil"

We both chuckle

"Yep"

She says, I kiss her cheek answering

"We on our way"

I say as soon as I answer and she laughs

"I'm leaving my place, that's the only reason I was
calling"

We both laugh

"You can't blame me. It's unlike you to run late"

I say

She laughs at my statement

"Something came up"

She defends

"Something or someone?"

I ask and she chuckles

"We'll discuss at lunch"

She says and we both laugh

"Bye Saney"

I say walking to the door after hailing for Hlali who is now in a lighter mood than before. I strap her in the car and I drive off "What did your father want?"

I ask eyeing her from the rearview mirror "He was saying he misses me, he misses our family"

She says playing with her hands "And what did you say?"

I ask, she shrugs "I miss him too"

She says "He asked me to visit him"

She says, I halt at the robots after almost running into a car going up. I was never ready for this, I'm shook actually.

"And do you want to see him?" I ask eyeing her, she's looking down "Yes"

She whispers. I don't ask any further questions but instead drive off in silence. We get to Waterfront, I park and call Saney asking where to meet. They at

the food court. We make our way to them and they
all there.

We greet each other and place our orders while the
kids go and play

"You look pretty but stressed"

Layla says and Saney nods agreeing with her. I
sigh

"Lunga called my phone today"

I say

"What?"

They say in unison

"Ufunani?"

Saney asks with clear anger in her voice, I shrug

"Where did he even get your number?"

Lay asks

"I don't know guys. He spoke to Muhlali and she
says that he asked her to visit him and that misses
our family"

"Excuse me? What family?"

Lay asks just as pissed. Saney is fuming she's
even pink

"Guys can we just talk about something else. Like

you Saney, what's up?"

She smiles foolishly

"Only a man can make a person smile like that"

Layla say and we all laugh

"I got a promotion"

She says happily. I hug her across the table

"I'm so happy for you. Where?"

I ask, she frowns

"LA"

She says looking down playing with her hands

"LA. That's uhhm.."

I don't know how to respond, I'm happy for her but

I'm not ready to lose my sister

"Saney that's amazing!"

Layla says hugging her too.

"We should celebrate later today with some adult drinks"

She adds and we chuckle

"Sino"

Saney says

"I'm happy for you baby sis, I really am"

I say with a fake smile. Excuse me for being selfish.

"Thank you sis. We going out then"
I add

"Awesome"

She says happily.

"I should go check on the kids"

I say getting up from the chair to check on the girls

but I bump into a brick wall that almost lands me on

the floor but the person holds me before I fall

"I am so sorry, I should have been looking where

I'm going"

I say pulling away from this wall, it smells like Bantu

but nah it can't be

"Sino"

He says. I know the voice all too well and curiosity

gets the best of me, I look up and our eyes lock

"You look as beautiful as the day I first bumped into

you on campus"

He says and I chuckle, I blush thinking about the

first time we ever met

"Daddy I want to go play"

A cute voice says from behind him, he moves aside

to reveal a photocopy of him. A very adorable boy.

"Ok baby, but first meet daddy's old friend.
Sinokuhle, Sino meet my son Lerato Bikokuhle"
He says and the cutie waves at me. My God he is
all kinds of cute
"Hi Biko"
I say holding my hand out to him with a smile
"Hi sis Sino"
He says and I'm flattered
"Nice to meet you. Dad can I go now"
He says pulling his hand away from his fathers and
runs to the play area leaving me with his father
"He's adorable"
I say as we both watch him run
"Thank you, just as Mihlali is"
He compliments and I smile lightly
"What are you doing here?"
I ask
"To grab something to eat before I take him to his
mom. Where were you off to?"
He asks
"I was going to check on Hlali"
I say

"Let's go together then"

He says and we walk towards the play area. I greet

the person watching the kids

"I'm just here to check on my daughter"

I say

"Your daughter is wearing? What's her name?"

She asks

"Mihlali, this is her picture"

I say showing her a picture I took of Mihlali before

we came here. She goes to the monitor that shows

the kids playing. I see Layla's daughter Kayla but I

don't see Mihlali

"I don't see her here, are there any blindspots?"

I ask and she shrugs

"What do you mean you don't know, go in and

check for her"

I say, she nods and goes in to look for her

"Everything Ok?"

Bantu asks and I shrug

"It's nothing"

I say

"Sino you shaking. Talk to me"

He says, I didn't even realize I was
"Today I got a call from Lunga"
I say
"What? What did he want?"
He asks with clear shock
"I don't know Bantu, I really don't know. He on..."
I'm startled by the lady walking to me without my
daughter
"Ma'am there is no Mihlali in the play area"
She says, my heart stops and everything goes
quiet. Maybe I heard her wrong
"What do you mean there's no Mihlali. Go back and
tell your colleagues to help you"
Bantu yells
"What kind of place is this that has blindspots in a
kids play area?"
He yells and people can't help but stare at this
commotion. All I'm thinking of is the worst possible
scenario. I can't lose my baby.
"She's probably playing with other kids"
Bantu say brushing my shoulders trying to comfort
me but is only making me cringe.

Securities come to us and ask about the disturbance we are causing, Bantu tells them. A while later the lady comes back and still no Mihlali. At this point I'm in denial. I walk in and bump into Kayla asking her about Mihlali and she herself last saw her in the slides. I go in and check but get nowhere. I shout for her name but nothing. I can't find her. This can't possibly be happening. My daughter can't possibly be missing. "Sino"

Bantu says touching my shoulders, I turn to him "She's not here Bantu. She's missing"

LUNGA

Growing up I wasn't your normal child. Yeah sure I seemed normal but deep down there was always that hole that could never be filled by anything.

The absence of a father figure didn't quite affect me, I wouldn't blame the things I've done on not having a father figure. It's deeply rooted. It's mental.

My mother's cousin moved in with us, she was 18 and I was about 10 at the time. She was sweet, fun and loving. Maybe too loving than she should have been.

When she washed me she would stroke my balls and milk my dick, it seemed normal and there was nothing wrong with it. She made it seem normal like it was right for me. She would say it made me a man to get hard. This went on until I was 13, I guess that was the perfect age for her to do what she wanted with me. She told me it was a nice feeling to stick my thing inside her, told me it made her feel good and that I would go on and enjoy it with time and she was right. I did enjoy it with time. It was our little secret but she still didn't fill that deep dark hole inside of me. I loved the attention she was giving me, it made me feel good about myself until mom fell pregnant and gave birth to a baby girl. Things were Ok for the first 6 months until she felt she didn't need her cousin anymore, her

cousin got a job outside of town and I was left with mom and my little sister.

It's not easy to let go of something you are used to, it's human logic else we wouldn't have addicts. Saturdays mom would leave me with her for a couple of hours, I didn't hate her but I just wanted something from her. First I stuck a finger to see how she'd react, whether she'd like it as mom's cousin did. I'd watched her finger herself every now and then so I knew what to do and she'd guided me to finger her at times so it was normal. Clearly she didn't enjoy it as much cause she would cry.

Weekends went by and it was a routine, sometimes I'd even do it to her while mom was sleeping and she was in her baby cot. This went on until one day I decided to stick my dick inside of her. She was tighter than my aunt was so it was a struggle. Her cries bought me pleasure, I enjoyed that she would cry that much. I shouldn't have but I did. Mom didn't suspect a thing because I was her precious son.

This one Saturday she was at work, the baby wouldn't stop crying, normally i covered her mouth with my hand but I got tired and took a pillow instead hoping to contain her cries but seemingly I went at it for too long than I should have cause when I removed the pillow she wasn't breathing.

I called mom in panic and explained that the baby wasn't breathing, said she'd been sleeping for too long. Mom bought the story and so did the doctors.

My fetish for kids started then, they were tighter than any other girl. It was rare for me to date people in my age group unless they had those cute baby faces like Sino.

When I got to university it was easier, I dated kids in grades 7-9... Not date as per say but that's where I got the most satisfaction. Even the porn I watched was child porn, they pleased me in ways people my age or older couldn't. They filled that emptiness.

It's partly why I studied psychology, I wanted to figure myself out and why I was the way I am but no

amount of research was enough. I was never satisfied with the research, I was indignant to be exact. When I passed I got an internship at this children's hospital, I was like a kid in a candy store. We dealt with different kinds of children. The easiest was those that were rape victims and those that were mentally disturbed cause no-one would believe them.

Marrying Sino worked for a while until her father brought it up, until he brought up my ex. I couldn't hold myself anymore, it was the only way to forget, it was the only way to ease the tension. I'd get tempted with Mihilali but I could never bring myself to do anything with her so I started talking to someone to help me not hurt my own daughter.

It worked for a while, the therapy but my job didn't make things easy for me and with Malwande having the same fetish we'd work best late at night when it was easier to tweak the camera's.

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Thoughts of what I put those kids through haunt me til date and being in here hasn't made things any easier. I now know how it feels, I know what rape feels like. I live it almost everyday that the only option is death. I've tried but instead I failed. I'm paying for my sins but I'd be damned if anyone ever hurt my daughter the same way. I hate myself for what I put those kids through, the thought of my baby girl going through the same pain kills me. I haven't been Ok ever since that phone call.

"What's up with you?"

My cell mate asks as I walk in

"My daughter. If anything happens to her it's all my fault"

I say breaking down into tears.

I understand it all. The pain I put Sino through, the pain I put those kids through, I understand it all and I hate myself for it. Mihlali is the only person I am living for right now and I'd die if she went through

that. At this point I'm just praying they find her alive and unharmed.

No child is ever the same after going through that, it messes with them mentally and I can't imagine Mihlali would be any different.

"Sniper won't let anything happen to his grandchild"

He says. I pray he doesn't. If Mihlali makes it out of this alive I promise to stay away from them. They deserve better.

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SINO

Everyday I curse the day I ever met Lunga and Saney curses it with me but she always reminds me that I wouldn't have Mihlali, at this point I would have preferred not having a child if this was her fate.

"I'm coming with you"

I say to dad as he heads to the kitchen on his way
to meet the guard from the prison

"Sinokuhle I'm not doing this with you"

He says

"You right, we wasting time standing here arguing"

I shoot back at him, he raises his hands up in
surrender

"What are you waiting for?"

He says walking out. I follow behind him. It's the
next day in the early hours of morning

"When we get there you stay in the car"

He warns, I chuckle

"This is where I draw the line Sinokuhle"

He yells

"She's my daughter dad!"

"So? Sino if anything happens to you I'd never
forgive myself"

He argues

"Good thing you'll be there to keep me safe then"

I say folding my arms. If I wasn't wearing a safety belt I'd probably fly out the window with the speed he's driving at. We park at their warehouse, I'm confused

"Dad?"

"That guy is a police officer, there's no telling whether he's people won't try to find him"

He explains clearing my confusion. We walk inside and some of the members are busy as usual. Memories come back of the day I shot Lunga.

"What have you gotten out of him?"

Dad asks walking in rolling up his sleeves

"Nothing sir, he won't speak"

Hlumelo says, dad chuckles

"You losing your touch"

He says and then walks to the table with weapons

"So you won't talk? I have other ways to make you talk"

Dad says. His face is cold, no emotion what so ever

"Get Sino out of here"

He says

"Don't touch me. I'm not going anywhere"

I say to Hlumelo as she tries to walk me out

"You as stubborn as your mother fuck!"

Dad exclaims agitated, I shrug. He turns holding a pliers

"What are you going to do with that?"

I ask shook

"If you going to ask questions then I suggest you walk out of here"

He warns coldly. I stand by the corner and watch him

"I could pull a tooth out or I could cut your ear off. Choose"

He says spinning the scissor around his index finger

"Lunga deserves everything coming to him"

The guard says gritting his teeth, dad chuckles

"You see that's the thing, this is no longer about Lunga. It's about my granddaughter Mihlali. Where are my manners, I'm Lwando Sniper Mbana, I'm sure you've heard of me"

Dad says settling on a chair in front of the guy, the look on his face is enough to tell me that he didn't know

"Now which one should I remove for you to talk?"

Dad asks

"I'll talk. Please don't kill me"

He pleads

"Now we getting somewhere. So where is my grandchild?"

Dad asks with the scissors gripping his ear

"I don't know sir"

"Wrong answer"

Dad says pressing the scissors making the guard cry out

"Sir I don't know where she's being held, I'm just the messenger"

He cries out pleading

"What do you know?"

Dad asks still pressing tightly

"That he wants revenge at all costs. He wants Lunga to feel the pain he felt when he had to bury his daughter"

He says

"Who is he? Give me a name"

Dad says pressing, his ear is bleeding. I don't know the person before me, I've never met him before and he scares me

"Name is Vezikhaya Gudla"

Dad removes the scissors

"Was that so hard? If I find out that you lied I'll do more than almost cut your ear off"

He says getting up the chair. Hlumelo walked out the minute she got a name.

"So what now?"

I ask

"We find this person"

Dad says chilled as ever wiping the scissors

"What else do you know?"

I manage to ask sitting where dad was

"That you won't find him. Gudla moves in the shadows. If he was able to take your daughter in a mall full of people undetected, what makes you think you'll find him?"

He asks, dad turns

"I'm nothing like you and your team, I can find anyone anywhere"

Dad says

"You see his mistake was calling you on your phone. In a minute now I'll have a loca..."

Dad is cut short by Hlumelo walking in

"Talk to me"

She smiles

"This is the man. He was in the army, retired a while back and helps the cops every now and then. Has a wife, his daughter was suffering from a mental illness when they decided to have her admitted. He has a house here in the Western Cape in Belleville and another one in the Northern Cape in a small village there. My best bet is that we check in the NC and take his wife who so happens to be here"

Hlumelo says proudly. I'm tempted to object but this is personal

"Did you send someone to get his wife?"

Dad asks browsing through the file

"Yes sir they on their way as we speak"

She reports

"Call the airport to get the plane ready"

Dad says throwing the file on the table

"I'm coming with you, it's not up for discussion"

I say, he just nods. I don't know how to feel about that.

"Have someone come clean this up. Sino let's go"

He says walking out. I follow behind him and he stops and turns to me

"I love you Ok?"

He says and I respond by hugging him and thanking him until I feel a bee sting on my neck that knocks me out.

When I wake up the sun rays are coming through the closed curtain. I sit up and notice Bantu sleeping on couch opposite my bed

CHAPTER 49

I am pissed! I'm overwhelmed with so many emotions right now, how could my father do that to me? We were supposed to go together but instead he drugged me and had me delivered home

"Morning"

Bantu says stretching

"Where is he?"

I ask gritting my teeth

"Look your father did what was best for you"

He explains walking towards me

"She's my daughter Bantu"

I yell

"And she's his granddaughter. He would die if anything ever happened to any of y'all. He couldn't go there with you Sino you have to understand"

He says settling down on the corner of my bed

"He had no right to drug me Bantu"

"He had no choice. You and I both know you wouldn't have come here willingly. You must be hungry, come let's go"

He says offering his hand, I look at it. He's about to talk when his phone starts ringing

"Sho Ta"

He says. He listens and then eyes me then nods

"Yah she's awake and she's mad pissed"

He says getting up from the bed to the window

"Yah I know and I got it covered"

He says. He goes silent for a while and then turns to look at me, he's a little tense

"I'll let her know. Bye"

He says and places his phone in his pocket

"That was your father checking up on you. He's on his way back with Mihlali."

I smile involuntarily but he's not smiling

"What is it? What's wrong? Is my baby fine?"

He nods with a sigh

"Mihlali is fine and untouched, your father will have her checked out as soon as they land"

I nod

"That's a relief. But you still hiding something from me"

I say, he sit's on my bed

"It's Lunga, he was attacked last night and they don't think he's going to make it"

He says. I should be happy, I should be celebrating but instead I'm hurting. Why do I feel sorry for him after what he put me through? Why am I not happy about this? Why am I secretly hoping he doesn't die?

I feel Bantu pull me in for a tight squeeze

"He's going to make it"

He assures

"What if he doesn't?"

I ask sobbing. He just brushes my hair and kisses it. It feels good. I shouldn't be feeling anything for Bantu but I can't help it, it's been long Ok?!

"It hurts Bantu"

I cry out

"It hurts. Everything I've been through because of him, almost losing my daughter because of him and now this. When do I get a break? Why do I feel sorry for him?"

I say in between sobs.

"Because despite this anger you feeling towards him, deep down you know you love him. Love doesn't change"

He says

"And you two share a child together. You have a good heart Sino, don't let situation turn you into someone you not. Yes you angry. Yes pain can change you but your heart Sino, your heart doesn't

change no matter how hard you pretend to, no matter how many walls you try to build around it, it remains the same"

He says comforting me. I pull away from him and look up at him, my God he is such a beautiful man!

I pull him close to me and kiss him. I shouldn't but I want to, I want to forget even if it's for a minute or so. He breaks it after a while with our lips still latched onto each other refusing to let go

"We shouldn't"

He says looking deep into my teary eyes

"Please Bantu. I need this"

I plead with our lips still locked together. He's hesitant at first but after a few sucks on his lower lip he finally kisses me back. Slowly, unrushed, hungry and devouring me as his favorite meal. I'm at peace. He tugs my hair tightly and I pull him to the bed on top of me, he rests between my legs. He belongs, it feels amazing.

"This is wrong"

"Why does it feel so right?"

I ask taking him all in. My hands move from his head to his body, it's still as rigid and hard as it was years back. Bantu takes good care of his body. I pull his shirt up and help him take it, I feel his nature poking at me. I'm wearing a silk night dress, easy access if you ask me. I help him take off his jeans which he pushes off with his feet. I'm hungry for him as he is for me. I need him inside of me. He grinds on me making me extremely wet. I'm so horny it's painful. He grinds on me hard I'll even cum at this rate. Don't judge me! I'm soaked. He kisses my jaw and goes down to my neck all the way to my chest. My body responds to every touch an every kiss my body aches for him.

He goes all the way to my underwear and I hear him breathe out in appreciation. He take them off and looks up me with that sexy smug of his.

"You dripping wet"

He says, I can't even hide my blush. He opens me wide and licks my clit going down to my folds. I let out a moan. It's so good. He eats me up and sticks a finger, I flinch. It's been months! He twists and turns his finger inside me while working my folds with his tongue and working my clit with his thumb.

"I'm going to cum"

"Cum for me Sino"

He commands and my body jerks off violently letting it all out to him. He licks up and then comes up to kiss me. I pull down his boyleg which he helps me push down. He takes out his finger and tries to push himself inside of me. This I did not account for. His size. It's been too long really.

He touches my face wiping tears off my cheeks

"Look at me Sino"

He commands at my closed eyes

"I will never hurt you. I made that mistake once and I don't intend on repeating it"

He says kissing me. I relax and welcome him in until the tip is in.

I push myself towards him to accommodate all of him inside of me until I gasp for air. He goes in and out slowly with his eyes locked into mine making me feel different kinds of things. We go at it until I release and he tries to pull out but I hold him tight pleading that he doesn't pull out. I need him. This is where I want him to be.

"Sino"

He says hoarsely releasing into me. I needed this. I run my hand up and down his spine

"We should get get up"

He says

"Yah we should"

I agree. He pulls out slowly and gets off of me. It's partially awkward for both of us. I know he's not seeing anyone, Saney did the research for me together with Layla so yah... He's available. I get up and walk to the shower where he's standing as the

water runs down his naked sexy ass body. I hug him from behind

"Sino"

He says removing my hands and turns to face me

"That shouldn't have happened. I took advantage of the situation you in and you didn't stop me"

I touch his cheek and he leans in on my touch

"I wanted you as much as you wanted me Bantu. Consent is everything and I gave you that"

He shakes his head

"Do you regret sleeping with me? Cause I don't regret sleeping with you"

I say, he takes my hand and kisses it.

"We should wash and get out there before they send a search party"

He says. I nod. He makes me look up at him and plants a kiss on my lips

"Sino I never stopped loving you and I want to love you again. I want to love you so much that you forget the pain Lunga caused you but we can't be together now, at least not like this. You married. You still love the guy and that's not a bill problem but you need to heal first"

He says with a heavy sigh. I breathe out

"I understand"

I say

"I'm here Ok? I'll never leave you again. Seeing you on that bed Sino"

His breath hitches and he blinks a couple of times holding back tears. I put my finger on his lips

"Shhh"

He shakes his head

"I thought I'd lose you. I thought I'd lost you for good. I hated myself for ever leaving you, leaving us like that. If I'd stayed then you would have never met him. He would have never gotten the chance to

hurt you like he did Sino and I'm sorry. I'm so sorry I
ever left you Sino"

I wipe his tears

"It's Ok. It had to happen"

I assure

"It had to happen Bantu, you did nothing wrong"

I say. It breaks my heart seeing him like this but
what are we to do, I don't blame him for anything

Our moment is ruined by a knock on the door

"We should get out"

He says, I chuckle and nod. He wipe our bodies
and walk out. It's no use hiding our bodies from
each other. I lotion my body while he gets dressed.
He leaves me in the room and heads downstairs. I
finish making my bed, get dressed and head down.
Saney is here with my brother and his wife. The
room goes pin drop silent the second they notice
me

"Morning"

I say

"You look better"

Saney says eyeing

"Maybe because I know that my daughter is on her way home"

I say faking a smile, I know Saney knows or suspects something. I take my food and start eating, I never knew how hungry I was until I started eating.

Thando and his family left after breakfast leaving me with mom, Saney and Bantu

"Thank you for the breakfast but I should go home and shower and change"

He says awkwardly I'm tempted to laugh

"You will be back right?"

Saney asks, I side eye her but she pays no mind to me

"If your father needs me for anything"

He says

"This is your home Bantu, you always welcome.
Thank you for everything"

Mom says with her warm motherly smile. I feel awkward with how these two are being. The minute he walks out they turn to me full teeth smile

"You glowing"

Mom says

"Sex glow if you ask me"

Saney says. I roll my eyes at her

"So you two working things out?"

She asks leaning in on the table

"No! I'm married"

I say looking at the finger where my ring used to sit.
It's funny how things have a way of turning out. One minute you happy, the next you depressed. Life really cannot be planned.

"Marriage you forgot the minute Bantu got naked. Look there's nothing wrong babe, you rushed into things. Use this time to explore and do all the things you never did cause you married"

Saney says touching my hand. I look at mom

"This is your life baby and I can't tell you what to do. But close one chapter before moving to the rest. Don't make Bantu a rebound. Figure everything out about yourself, your marriage.."

Saney cuts her off

"The marriage died mom the day he started raping kids!"

Just the thought makes my body cringe

"That's Sino's decision to make Saney not yours."

Mom says

"She'd be a fool to get back together with him. He almost killed her mom! Don't tell me you thinking about it Sino!"

Saney says, more like scolds

CHAPTER 50

It feels good having my baby back in my arms, I watch her sleeping on the hospital bed. Nothing is wrong with her either than a fever, doctor examined her and found nothing, she was never touched by Gods grace!

Dad tells me that the guy who took her was just keeping her in his house in the rural areas and kept her clothed and fed. Mihlali wasn't scared or anything when they found her, instead she thanked the man for watching her and keeping her safe from bad people. I don't know what the story is there but seems like the guy couldn't bring himself to hurt her. Trust me Mihlali would have said something if the guy had done or said anything to her.

"Hey"

Bantu says walking in. I smile

"How is she?"

He asks, I shrug

"She seems fine, doctors can't find anything"

I say, he nods

"So we spoke to the guy"

I turn my attention to him

"He says he wanted to scare Lunga. He's a father that's hurting over his own daughter and would like justice for her"

I nod

"Yeah well I don't blame him but I hope he knows that Lunga is on his death bed"

I say, he eyes me. I know he wants to say something

"Are you Ok?"

He asks, I nod looking at my baby

"I'm ok, I'm happy she's home"

I say brushing her hair. She has an afro so big tied up into two pony tails

"And Lunga? Aren't you going to see him?"

I shake my head no

"Sino"

"No Bantu. I can't. I don't want to"

I say, he nods

"Ok, I won't pester you"

He says.

"I should go, Biko is waiting for me"

He says

"He's here?"

I ask turning to him. His son is too cute for words
you guys.

"Yeah, he's waiting in reception or at least that's
where he was last I checked. He's incapable of
being in one place"

We both chuckle

"You have a beautiful child Bantu"

I compliment, he smiles

"Yeah well, he is mine after all"

He says with a smug making me laugh so hard

"No need to get corky now"

I say, he chuckles

"Bye Sino"

He says kissing my forehead and Mihlali's

"Bye Bantu"

I say as he walks out.

"You know she's safe here right?"

A doctor says walking in

"You never know"

I say

"Well you can take her home soon as she wakes up"

She says, I smile

"Thank you so much"

She nods

"How's therapy?"

I shrug

"It's Ok"

"You are still going right?"

She asks eyeing me

"With Mihlali's disappearance I couldn't"

I say looking at my baby

"Yes but Sino you suffered a traumatic experience,
you can't afford to miss sessions with your doctor"

She half scold, I just nod

"I'll make an appointment for tomorrow doc"

I say dismissing her. She nods and walks out.

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I'm visiting Dr Moses, she managed to squeeze me
in for an hour. It's a day after Mihlali's return

"Walk me through Mihlali's disappearance"

She says pressing record on her recorder

"I was scared, worried. I thought I'd lost her. I
thought I'd never see her again"

I say, she writes down on her pad

"What happened?"

She asks, I turn to eye her and back up

"I received a call from Lunga"

I start but she cuts me short

"How did he manage to get ahold of you?"

I shrug

"I don't know but he called my phone and spoke to Mihilali while I was out of my room talking to my father. When I asked Mihilali, she told me that he missed her and his family"

I say

"Did you get to talk to him?"

I nod

"A little, I told him to never call me again"

I say, she nods writing something down

"How did it make you feel that he would reach out to you? Now especially"

I shrug

"Hearing his voice angered me and also scared me. As much as I know he's locked up it didn't stop me from fearing for my life, he's capable of anything"

I say

"I see. And then what happened? You could have stayed home but decided to go out despite him calling you and despite you being scared"

I sigh

"I couldn't let him have this hold over me. He's in prison, he shouldn't scare me"

I say angry at the thought

"He put me through hell, hearing his voice triggered something"

She closes her book

"It's normal, you haven't heard from him in a long time and hear him after so long was bound to trigger fear in you. Fear that he was coming for you, fear that he wants to finish what he started. It's all normal but you did t succumb to that fear which means you making progress"

She says with a smile

"You can continue"

She says opening her book

"The kids went off to play. The girls and I sat and caught up a bit until I decided to go check on the kids"

"Why?"

She asks and I shrug my shoulders

"I don't know, mothers instinct maybe. Something told me to go check and I got up to. I bumped into Bantu and his son. We spoke a little and he accompanied me to go look for Mihlali"

She stops me

"Do you maybe feel like if you hadn't bumped into Bantu then you would have gotten to her a bit earlier than you did?"

She asks, her question hit's a nerve. At some point I did kind of feel that way. I nod

"Maybe if I'd went sooner, maybe if I hadn't let myself be delayed then I would have found her still there"

"But she wasn't. How did that make you feel as a mother, as a survivor? As a person who was once haunted by strange dreams?"

I take a deep breath and let it out

"I felt like I failed her as I'd failed those kids. I felt like a careless mother. I was scared, I was worried, I thought I'd lost her. At that moment nothing else mattered except finding her alive and untouched. I just wanted to save her, I wanted to save her from the trauma those kids had experienced at the hands of Lunga. I blamed him and I blamed myself"

I say wiping tears out of my eyes

"But you didn't fail her because kids get taken everyday in South Africa"

She says trying to comfort me

"Yeah well turns out my daughter was abducted because of him. Even if he didn't take her but it was still his fault she was taken in the first place"

I say angrily

"And now I find out that he was attacked and it's really bad, he might not even make it"

I say frustrated. I'm drained at the mere thought

"When did this happen?"

She asks and I shrug

"I don't know, Bantu told m yesterday"

She nods writing something down

"And how do you feel knowing that he might die"

I shrug my shoulders

"I don't know how I feel. I want him to die but I also feel sorry for him."

I sigh

"Why do I feel sorry for him? He ruined my life and so many kids lives!"

"Because you human Sino, despite what he did you do still love him as your husband and daughters father. After spending that many years with someone, it's not easy to just stop loving them. As long as you try to unlove him, the harder it will be to really unlove him. He's played a huge role in your life Sino so it's not easy"

She explains. I don't know how to feel about her theory but it makes sense

"As your therapist, I would suggest that you go see him for your own conscious but it's also Ok if you not ready to see him just yet"

She quickly interjects closing her book

"We will talk more in our next session tomorrow. My receptionist will give you tomorrow's time"

She says, I just nod getting up off the couch. We share a tight hug saying our goodbyes. I schedule for tomorrow's appointment before going to my car.

I'm stuck in the middle of crossroads on whether or not to visit Lunga. What if he died?

My phone rings and it's Saney asking where I am, I notice a number of missed calls from her

"Baby sis"

I say answering her call

"Big sis how are you?"

She says

"I'm Ok I guess. I just got out of therapy, whats up?"

She sighs out in relief

"Glad you still alive Sinokuhle, everyone was worried"

I chuckle

"Keep worrying this much and y'all goin die"

I say

"Whatever. I just got home, where are you?"

"I'm on my way home too. I'm leaving the doctors office"

I say

"Bring us something nice Ok?"

She says

"Ok then"

We say our goodbyes and drop the call

EPILOGUE

I sit in my room, in my house with a box of things that contain my ex-husband's belongings. There's a book, I've been contemplating cleaning out his things but I think it's time now. Two years should be more than enough time right?

The day he died I received an envelope with signed divorce papers and a will that said he was leaving everything to Mihlali and me. I did sign the papers but I submitted them a month after his funeral. Many would ask me why wait? Because I loved him. Maybe I don't understand the concept of love but I'd like to believe that I loved Lunga with my all; he was always going to be the man that gave me my beautiful daughter who is now 8 and as talkative as can be its even annoying at times.

I moved back into our house, had to remodel it here and there of cause just so I don't get reminded of the man I once gave my all to.

I open this journal and its research, research about him. There are medical reports from a psychologist and a whole lot of information about Lunga and his fetish or obsession with kids. In this journal he speaks about when everything started, how he got messed up by his mother's cousin, how he killed his sister, how he fell for me because I had a baby face, the innocence of a child and just everything.

I don't know what to make of this journal of his; I don't know what to do with it. I close it because it's too detailed and I just can't go on anymore. I put it aside and dig into this box in front of me, I'm astonished to find the underwear I wore when we first had sex, the pregnancy test of when we found out we were having Mihlali, a necklace he got me for our first anniversary. The box is filled with good memories that I will live to cherish

"Mom"

Mihlali says entering my room with one knock

"Yes baby"

I reply looking up at her

"Uncle Bantu is here"

She says smiling; her haughty smile reminds me of Lunga

"I'll be there just now"

I say packing things back into their box including the journal

"M-O-M!"

She yells in the passage, she's so persistent I even think I took the wrong baby at times. I leave the box on the bed and walk out. I'm wearing sweatpants and a loose oversized crop top

"Hey"

I greet soon as I reach the lounge, he's all dressed up

"Hey Sino, how are you?"

We share a hug

"I'm Ok, what's the occasion?"

I ask breaking the hug, he's smiling

"Get dressed and I'll tell you over lunch"

He says, I look at him squinting my eyes

"We don't have all day Sinokuhle Mbana"

I changed my surname back to Mbana, it was a lot of admin but I did it

"What should I wear?"

I ask confused. The man is in a suit Ok!

"Don't play dumb with me"

He says, I roll my eyes at him and he chuckles

"Don't try me Sino"

He warns, I giggle and leave him there headed up to my room. I put the box in my closet and wear a red body hugging dress that's slightly below the knee with spaghetti straps and a gold open toe heel. I put on red matte lipstick and tie my hair up into a neat bun, do a young face beat and put my necessities in a small gold clutch bag and walk out with my phone in my hand

"M-I-H-L-A-L-I"

I yell walking towards her room

"Downstairs"

She yells, I make my way down the stairs and the minute I hit the last stair I notice Bantu drooling, I smile to myself thinking about how lucky I am to still have him in my life the way he is after this many years. He's been literally my everything. When I say I don't know where I'd be without him, I mean I'd be lost!

"You look-"

He hitches, he's speechless

"Mom you look stunning"

Mihlali says walking in

"Thank you baby"

I say with a smile

"You missing one thing"

She says and runs up the stairs leaving Bantu and I standing awkwardly

"I hope I'm not too much"

He quickly shakes his head

"You perfect... I mean you look stunning. Beautiful"

He blabs making me giggle and blushy.

"Thank you. Gotta keep up with you Mr. Mtwá"

I say, he chuckles

"Wouldn't want to taint my rep now"

He says with a smug. His confidence is a total turn on!

Mihlali walks down

"This is what's missing"

She says handing Bantu something

"What's that?"

I ask and then exchange smiles; then Bantu comes and kneels in front of me. At this moment I don't

know what to say, if it's a ring I don't think I can. I don't think I'm ready for marriage

"Relax Sino"

He says and goes to my right leg and wraps something cold around my ankle, it's an anklet. Mihlali laughs at how terrified I am, my baby loves drama too much that she's capturing all of this.

"Perfect"

Bantu says getting up. I clear my throat

"Yeah"

Is all I manage to slip out of my mouth.

Mihlali walks us to his car over light conversations. I remind her of everything she needs to get done and to not give her nanny a hard time.

"Bye mommy"

She says kissing my cheek

"Bye baby"

I say and she runs into the house

"She's precious"

He says starting the car, I smile

"Indeed she is, where's Bk?"

I ask turning to him

"He's at a friend's birthday party"

"Aaah mahn. I miss him"

I say with a little disappointment

"And he misses you too. He was saying he wants to come sleep over at your place"

I smile

"I'd love that, he's a great kid. You raising an amazing boy Bantu"

He shrugs

"What did you expect from such an amazing man?"

He snorts making me hit him lightly. He's so full of himself!

"You are so full of yourself"

I say laughing

"Yah but that's why you love me babe"

I kiss his cheek

"It's not why, it's one of the things I love about you"

I correct and he laughs at me

"However you put it just as long as you love me!"

He says proudly

"Can I ask you something?"

He says stopping at the robots

"Yeah shoot"

He takes a deep breath and let's it out

"You panicked when I went down on my knee"

I swallow hard

"No pressure or anything but does that mean you done with marriage?"

He asks nervously. How do I answer this without hurting him. Bantu and I have been dating for almost a year now. He's my best friend, he's caring,

loving, understanding, seems genuine enough and the sex is mind blowing.

"It's not that I don't want to get married again but I'd like things to go slower than they did before. Last time I rushed into things, you know what I went through so I'd rather take things at a reasonable pace"

I say

"So if I asked to marry you, you'd say no?"

He asks

"I don't know what I'd say babe"

He sighs. I pull his hand to my lips and kiss it

"Let's not complicate this Ok. Let's just enjoy ourselves Ok?"

I say, he nods. I can't read his face. He's neutral

"You didn't tell me about your presentation"

He says changing the subject

"It went really well. Everyone pitched their ideas that were all so unique, I don't know which one to choose"

I say, he brushes my thigh

"I know you, you'll pick one that works best without any flaws"

He comforts

"Flaws and all, it has to be perfect. The client was not specific about what she wanted us to do"

I sigh

"You the best in your department. Re-read her file and go over each and every piece of information and you'll know"

He says, I smile thinking about how lucky I am

"Thank you"

I say as he parks outside the restaurant. He unbuckles himself and leans over to kiss me. I don't hesitate at all at kissing him back. I've been wanting him from the minute I saw him!

"I've been craving you from the minute I saw you"

He says breaking the kiss

"I'm glad I'm not the only one. Why didn't you come up?"

He plants a kiss on my lips

"Because i was afraid we'd miss our reservations"

He says, I giggle

"If we don't get out of this car I'm afraid we'll miss this reservation"

I say moving back from him. Bantubonke is a temptation. The kind that can make you skip work, the kind that can make you skip church, the same kind that can make you do things you never thought you'd do. He's the right kind of temptation. He's a basic human need!

"You right. Let's go inside"

He says opening his door, I've gotten used to him opening my door for me. It's a thing of his. He

comes to my side while I'm fixing my lipstick and opens the door for me.

"Here, wipe your lips"

I say handing him a face wipe. I step out and he closes the door. He uses the side mirror to clean his lips then we walk to the restaurant.

We are escorted to a table where our friends sit, I'm surprised to see them here. It's Saney, Layla, Bathabile, Siwa(Thap's girlfriend) and his friend from school.

We greet each other, he opens my chair for me, I sit and he pushes it in then sit's on a chair beside mine. Things seem a little tense between Layla and Thaps, knowing them both they probably fucked. My friend though!

"So why we here?"

Thaps asks we finish eating. It's been a great meal with good friends over light conversations. Felt like varsity all over again

"Well. I made partner"

Bantu says. I'm as shocked as everyone!

"Congrats" "congratulations"

They all chant congratulating him and finally when the commotion is over I pull him to me in a tight squeeze

"I am so proud of you babe"

I whisper in his ear

"Thank you my love"

He says, we break the hug and I kiss him. Just a peck on the lips

"It wouldn't have been possible without you Sino. Slave driving me constantly. Forcing me to take risks and just being in my life. I love you Marhadebe"

He says clicking his glass to mine.

3 years ago if you had told me that today I'd be sitting beside Bantu sharing a glass of champagne I would have told you that you were ridiculous and

that a person like me can never be loved like this and can never love like that. I would have told you that I'm doomed for unhappiness because that was how I felt then. Doomed. Miserable. But life had other plans for me, God had better plans for me. I am forever grateful to have met Lunga cause then I wouldn't be where I am today with a man I have always loved and will always love. My life was unplanned according to my wishes but it was planned according to God.

I am Sinokuhle Mbana and this was my life.

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The

End!